

Epistle from the Annual Conference held by the Community of Friends' Evangelical Churches in the Democratic Republic Of Congo.

Dear Friends.

The Community of Friends Evangelical Churches in the Democratic Republic of Congo is recognised by the Government by a Presidential layout N° 91-341, issued on December 9, 1991, three years after the Community of Evangelical Friends Churches in Congo had started its activities.

In the last 14 years. we have established 4 stations. 13 local churches and 30 centers. Our churches make up 4 quarterly Meetings, 13 monthly Meetings and one Annual conference. In December, 2001 we held our Annual Conference in Uvira, the capital ci.ty of Uvira Territory. Uvira is a small Congolese town located opposite Bujumbura, the Capital city of the Republic of Burundi.

Its population is estimated at 135.000 people, living on 7 square kilometers. The Mitumba mountains are on the west side and Tanganyika lake is on the eastside. Uvira' s altitude explains its tropical and humide climate whose temperatures vary from 15°C to 23°C.

The Annual Conference brought together delegates from all of our churches in the 4 stations from Goma, North-Kivu, to Bukavu centre till Uvira, Kigongo, Abeka (the headquarter of our organisation), Atungulu,.etc, In the South-Kivu.

The theme of the Annual Conference was: "May the world call us Christians or Quakers (Acts 11 :26)." The comments about this theme were given by Mkoko Boseka.

The origin of the name "Quakers" was explained to participants. This nickname 'Quaker" was used for the first time by judge Gervasse Benson, when he was questioning George Fox, concerning his religions activities. George Fox told judge Benson, "We quake in the name of the lord". Judge Benson replied, "you Quakers". From that time, we are called "Quakers

Friends are called Quakers, but they are also called the "children of the light". However. a real Quaker is the one who Quakes in the name of the lord, a person of piety , a person who does not separate people, but stirs them up to live together in harmony and does his best to arouse in them the desire to make the world a better place to live. The main speaker of the Annual conference, Mkoko Boseka, reminded the participants the following thought by

John Woolman, "let us pour out all of our treasure in the river of a universal love. That should be our main objective in life."

Inhuman and vile actions, such as murder hatred, ethnic discrimination, racism, were condemned by the participants. For that reason, Friends in the Democratic Republic of Congo were escorted to apply the charter established as a guideline in running the project "Femme et Famille pour la paix" which means "woman and Family for peace". This is one of the projects created by Friends Evangelical churches in Congo whose main objective is member and their neighbours in Peace education.

1. The following is the content of that charter "to train churches:"
2. We commit ourselves to spread the peace message and enhance the pacific co-existence
3. We commit ourselves to respect human rights, especially woman and child's rights.
4. We commit ourselves to respect private and public property.
5. We will maintain the spirit of voluntary work
6. Whenever there is a conflict, we commit ourselves to give preference to dialogue and to seek solutions by pacific means. We will never resort to violence of any type.
7. In our activities and services, we ban social, religious, ethnic, and gender discrimination.
8. We dissociate from any armed group and commit ourselves to discourage members of our families and our neighbors from getting involved into armed groups.
9. We will never join any political party, any movement or any association which intends to use violence in order to attain to its objectives.

This message is a challenge to all Friends attending the Annual Conference and requires an answer to this question: Friends, Quakers, known as "children of light," what should we do in order to upgrade the image of God in man so that the making may discover that the "MAN IS ONE" the main speaker, MKOKO BOSEKA asked. May everyone let his light shine through his testimony, his actions, so that the world may call us Quakers. MKOKO BOSEKA concluded.

Assumani wa Ndanga

Clerk of Congo Friends Yearly Meeting