

**POLISI KIVAVA BAUDOUIN**  
**CANADIAN BAPTIST MINISTRIES**  
**RELIEF & DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST,**  
**AFRICA**

by Ruth Anna Dana



Based in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Polisi Kivava Baudouin has worked as a national field staff member on the Canadian Baptist Ministries (CBM) team since September 16, 2019. In his role as relief and development specialist for Africa, he provides oversight for the joint outreach of CBM and its many African church partners. This oversight includes food security projects through CBM and the Canadian Foodgrains Bank.

Polisi formerly served as director of the Department of Diaconia and Development of the Baptist Church in Central Africa (CBCA) before joining the CBM team. He was also the chairperson for the Action for Peace and Sustainable Development in the Great Lakes Region, a peace organization initiated by churches in the DRC, Rwanda, and Burundi. His experience and training, which includes a master's degree in organizational leadership and education, prepared him to serve with CBM.

As the Ebola crisis was coming to an end in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in the spring of 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic began. Because of the health crisis which the people had recently been through, they were more receptive to emergency measures and were aided by the pastors of the Communauté Baptiste au Centre du l'Afrique (CBCA) and the support of CBM to educate and help distribute prevention equipment and materials. In the summer of 2021, the number of COVID cases increased, and there is now a growing crisis facing low-income African



nations with limited or no access to coronavirus vaccines. Patients are dying from a lack of availability of medical oxygen. The livelihood and ministry outreach of pastors is also affected by health regulations limiting church attendance.

A volcanic eruption and the earthquakes that followed on the morning of May 22, 2021, led to the evacuation of 400,000 people in the Goma, DRC, area. Polisi's immediate family took refuge in Rwanda. A week later they viewed the damage and destruction of more than 3,000 homes, schools, and health facilities, and the Kivava Baudouin family was relieved to return to an untouched home. The Association of Baptist Churches of Rwanda quickly reacted to help victims even while their own buildings in Gisenyi were damaged by the tremors. In Goma, both of CBM's church partners, the CBCA and the Community of Baptist Churches of Eastern Congo, are working on joint relief projects to assist people affected by this natural disaster.

The food security development projects are having a positive, long-term effect. As they see the good results experienced by community members, other farmers are eager to adopt new farming techniques of conservation agriculture and the ecological production of crops. The joint efforts of farming cooperatives produced

pride within their communities as they were able to help others and did not have to depend on outside help during the pandemic. Polisi wrote these words of thanks in a spring 2020 CBM update: "We are grateful for the support, which enables CBM to reach out to hungry farmers living on unproductive and overexploited fields, people living with handicaps and trauma, who need socioeconomic integration, [and] poor households that have no secure income. This is a precious contribution to the mission of Jesus Christ, who came to 'preach the good news to the poor' (Luke 4:18)."

During the pandemic, travel, training activities, field visits, and meetings have been postponed, however much has been achieved through online meetings on relief and development. Pray for protection for Polisi as doors open to travel in countries which are in the midst of conflict, dealing with famine, and recovering from environmental calamities. Also remember those of Polisi's family who have been serving as frontline workers in the DRC. His wife Elizabeth is a nurse, and his daughter and her husband are medical doctors, all of whom are in regular contact with patients.



Victims of the May 2021 volcanic eruption and earthquakes in Goma evacuating the region.

Sources: [www.cbmin.org](http://www.cbmin.org); Kivava Baudouin CBM ministry updates; CBM Calling (April 2020); CBM Prayerline (November 17, 2020); email with Laura Lee Bustin; and BBC news updates.