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Mennonite World Conference
 A Community of Anabaptist related Churches

Congreso Mundial Mennonita
 Una Comunidad de Iglesias Anabautistas

Conférence Mennonite Mondiale
 Une Communauté d'Églises Anabaptistes

News Briefs



Bercy Mundedi – one of five women ordained by the *Communauté Mennonite au Congo* in late 2013 – pronounces the benediction after her ordination service. Photo by Charlie Malembe

Congo Mennonites celebrate women's ordinations

Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo – More than 1,000 Congolese Mennonites gathered on 22 September in Kinshasa, capital of the Democratic Republic of Congo, to witness and celebrate the ordination of two women, along with two men.

Sidonie Swana Falanga and Fabienne Kidinda Ngombe were the first women to be ordained to ministry in the *Communauté Mennonite au Congo* (Mennonite Church of Congo, or CMCo).

A third woman of the denomination, Bercy Mundedi, was ordained in Kalonda, Western Kasai Province, on 6 October, along with four men.

"This is a very special day for the Mennonite Church," CMCo President Adolphe Komuesa Kalunga proclaimed in his Kinshasa address. "The door is wide open to you," he said to the women in the assembly. "The barrier is broken."

The five-hour services in Kinshasa and Kalonda included

multiple choral performances, instructions to the candidates and their congregations and jubilant dancing and gift-giving. Sermons and comments from witnesses focused on the biblical and social bases for women's leadership.

"We have been practicing sexual discrimination. That is not good for the church," said Paul Kadima, a Kinshasa pastor. "Now we have put in practice Galatians 3:28. In the church we are equal."

Robert Irundu, CMCo's national youth president, said, "The young people are full of joy. We want to encourage young women to study theology."

Charlotte Djimbo Ndjoko, a Mennonite Brethren woman who attended the Kinshasa ceremony, said that Sidonie Swana and Fabienne Kidinda "have struggled along with men for years and years for this ordination. Men have resented them. Thanks be to God that these men have now recognized that women have a place in the church in pastoral ministry and evangelization. We are very happy. We will support them as

Mennonite sisters. And we invite other women and girls to join them."

CMCo is the last of the three Mennonite communities in Congo to ordain women. *Communauté des Églises de Frères Mennonites au Congo* (Mennonite Brethren Church of Congo) has been ordaining women since 2000. *Communauté Évangélique Mennonite* (Evangelical Mennonite Church of Congo) ordained a woman for the first time in July 2012, during celebrations of the church's fiftieth anniversary.

The struggle in CMCo for women's ordination has taken place over decades. While the struggle for women's ordination was long and exhausting, at times, Swana said, "We recognize that everything has its time, as written in Ecclesiastes 3."

In November 2013, two more CMCo women, identified by church leaders as Mubi Mutemba and Mundombila, were ordained in Kananga, Western Kasai.

– Nancy Myers and Charlie Malembe

Global North mission agency learns from Global South partners

Changi Cove, Singapore – President Nelson Okanya and others from Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM) found themselves celebrating the growth of and learning from Global South mission partners at the annual meeting of the International Missions Association (IMA), a group of 22 Anabaptist mission groups, held 26 August to 2 September 2013, in Singapore.

Asia Pacific Mission (APM), based in Singapore, hosted this year's week-long IMA gathering.

Highlights shared by Global South IMA members included *Organización Cristiana Amor Viviente* of Honduras reporting that they have three missionaries working alongside EMM workers in Asia and have started five churches in Costa Rica and Spain, with plans to enter Italy. They also plan to send a worker to Kenya in collaboration with EMM.

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Left to right: Yemiru Tilahun, director of missions and evangelism for Meserete Kristos Church of Ethiopia; Nelson Okanya, president of Eastern Mennonite Missions in the U.S.; and Amos Stoltzfus, partnership coach for EMM, huddle for prayer and conversation at the IMA meetings in Singapore. Photo by Javier Soler

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One of the Mennonite groups from Indonesia shared about their growing vision to engage their Muslim neighbours. Last year a new believer in their circle of churches was killed for his faith. Since then, many young people are praying and following Jesus more seriously.

Henry Mulandi of African Christian Mission International in Kenya reported that a member of his Kenyan network planted a church in Reading, England.

The EMM ministry in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, provides dormitories as a place of Christian witness for rural students studying in the city. Sokly Chin, a new believer at the dormitory who is studying fish farming, plans to return to his home in the countryside when he finishes his studies.

The IMA was founded by EMM, *Amor Viviente*, *Meserete Kristos* Church of Ethiopia and PIPKA of Indonesia in 1997. Members partner through prayer, mutual support and international mission teams.

Of the 22 mission groups now part of IMA, seven are from Africa, six from Asia, five from North America and four from Latin America. Some are from member churches of Mennonite World Conference. Others are not.

– Linda Moffett, Eastern Mennonite Missions

Walking together while speaking different languages

Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, USA – Conversations about language and effective cross-cultural communication filled the meeting of Mennonite World Conference's (MWC) Program Oversight Committee, which met in October 2013 to further plan the upcoming Assembly at the Farm Show Complex in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, USA, on 21-26 July 2015.

The committee members represent churches from Africa, Asia, Europe, and North and South America and each speak at least two languages. In order to communicate for their planning sessions, they use the one language they have in common: English.

While all committee members speak English fluently, they discovered that translating their

conversation into the languages of their homelands was not always as easy.

"When looking for a theme, we had wanted to use the word 'story' in the title," reflected Liesa Unger (Germany), chief international events officer for MWC. What they discovered, however, was that the English word "story" would translate into "history" in many languages and the idea of "history" was not what the team was trying



Members of the MWC Program Oversight Committee, from left to right: Egon Sawatsky, Marius van Hoogstraten, Liesa Unger, Vikal Rao, Fiona Neufeld, Don McNiven, and Thobekile Ncube

to say. So they settled instead on the theme of "Walking with God."

One of the committee's tasks during its October visit to Pennsylvania was to plan the subthemes for each day of Assembly. This task was more difficult than it seemed: how would they find simple, memorable words to describe the theme of each day that mean the same thing in all of MWC's worshipping languages?

They encountered their first problem in deciding on a word to use to describe the work of evangelism and social justice: words that translated well into Ndbele, the language spoken by committee member Thobekile Ncube (Zimbabwe), or French and Spanish but didn't have direct translations into modern German, for instance. Other words described only speaking the good news of Jesus without including caring for the poor or working for justice as part of evangelism.

Why so much effort for clear communication? Because communication is an essential value for MWC, said César García, MWC general secretary, in a recent article in the April 2013 issue of *Courier*.

"Communication has the same root as other important words in MWC's mission and vision:

communion and community," wrote García. "It is not possible to have real communion with those with whom we do not communicate."

And so the work for clear communication continues for an event that will include as many as 10,000 people from 65 different countries.

To that end, Fiona Neufeld (Paraguay), one of Assembly 2015's interpretation coordinators, joined the

their language, which allows you to get to know other people and their realities," reflected Egon Sawatsky (Paraguay), youth program coordinator. "Getting to know these people from around the world and their stories shows how great God is, and how diverse his creation is. Sometimes we think we [alone] have the image of God, but then we realize that his ways and his thoughts are way higher than ours."

– Emily Ralph

Sustaining the church through sustainable agriculture

Democratic Republic of Congo and Burkina Faso – Five Mennonite World Conference member churches recently collaborated on a project intended to build self-sustainable church programs within African Mennonite communities.

Communauté Évangélique Mennonite (Evangelical Mennonite Church) of DR Congo and *Eglise Évangélique Mennonite du Burkina Faso* (Evangelical Mennonite Church of Burkina Faso) partnered with Mennonite Church Canada, the Evangelical Mennonite Conference (Canada), and *Association des Églises Évangéliques Mennonites de France* (French Mennonite Church) to send two African Mennonite young people for training in entrepreneurship and small-scale agriculture.

Other project partners included Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission and Mennonite Mission Network.

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The gate to Songhai Center in Porto Novo, Benin, a research farm where two African Mennonite young people are studying sustainable agriculture thanks to sponsorships made possible by five MWC member churches. Photo by Mennonite Church Canada



Intern JeaHyun Nham stands with Lynn Roth of Mennonite World Conference at the Mennonite Central Committee United Nations Office where she works. MCC photo by Doug Hostetter

New intern brings Korean voice for reconciliation to United Nations

New York, New York, USA
 – JeaHyun Nham from the Republic of Korea (ROK/South Korea) is the latest Mennonite World Conference intern to join the staff of the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) United Nations Office. The intern is a joint appointment of MCC and MWC.

Nham is a member of Jesus Village Church in Chuncheon, ROK. The church, founded in 1996, models itself on the spirit of early Anabaptists.

Nham is an undergraduate student at Underwood International College in Seoul, ROK, majoring in international studies and comparative literature and culture. She also has worked at a refugee center in Seoul, helping people from other countries process their refugee status.

Nham first learned about MCC when she and her family visited the MCC East Coast Material Resources Center in Ephrata, Pennsylvania, USA, six years ago during her father's sabbatical year in Cleveland, Ohio, USA.

During her one-year internship, which began in August, Nham expects to learn more about how MCC works within the UN community to build bridges of understanding between peoples and nations. She also will bring her own background and experience on peacebuilding.

"I particularly wish to contribute a Korean voice for reconciliation and peace to the efforts to end the bitter war which has divided the Korean peninsula on the 38th parallel for 60 years," Nham said.

Nham is the seventh MWC intern to serve in this role. All were supported by MWC and were participants in MCC's International Volunteer Exchange Program (IVEP), a service opportunity for young adults from outside Canada and the U.S., said Doug Hostetter, director of the MCC UN Office.

To read more, visit the MWC website at www.mwc-cmm.org

– Joint release of MWC and MCC

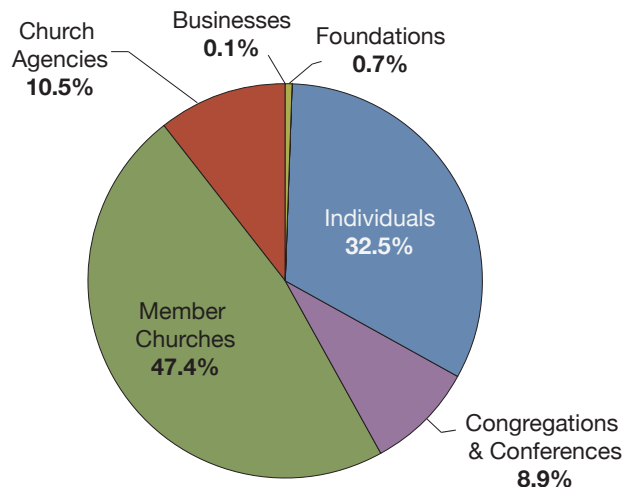
Financial Snapshots

Mennonite World Conference depends on the support of our member churches and generous individual donors. Each of our 101 member churches is given an annual fair share assessment based on their relative wealth and relative size, and their fair share contribution helps to sustain the work of our global community.

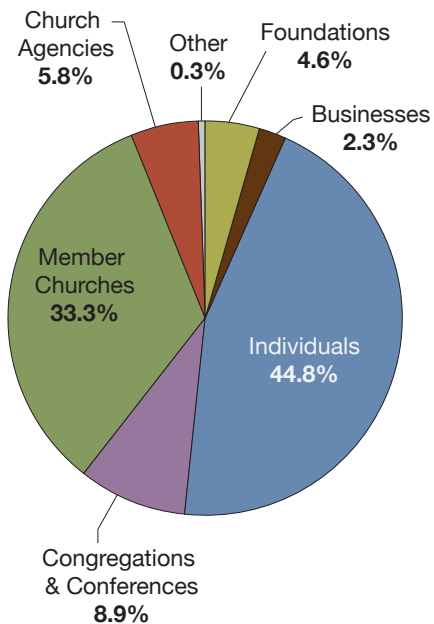
This chart shows that over the last decade (2003-2013), the proportion of our revenue that actually is given by MWC member churches has decreased while the proportion of our revenue that comes from individuals has increased. Our largest source of revenue now comes from individuals rather than from our member churches.

Donations to MWC by Source

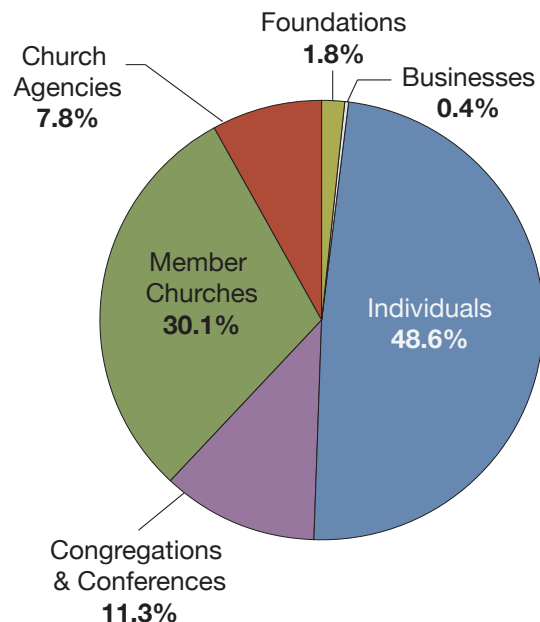
2003



2008



2013



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Jean Mbuabua from the Democratic Republic of Congo and Arouna Sourabie from Burkina Faso were selected by their respective national Mennonite churches as the recipients for this program. Together, they will receive necessary training at the Songhai Center in Porto Novo, the capital city of Benin.

The Songhai Centre is a zero emissions-model research farm that also educates students in ecologically sustainable farming practices in the context of an African environment. The centre is gaining worldwide recognition for its advances in ecologically sustainable agriculture in the African context.

Songhai's program is based upon a Zero Emission Research Initiative, or ZERI. Crops, animals and fish are raised with methods that allow the waste from each to be used as input

in another. Plant waste feeds animals and fish, and provides mulch for other plants to help keep moisture in the ground. Animal and fish pond waste becomes fertilizer in plant production. Waste waters are collected and combined with animal and human waste and chopped water hyacinth – typically considered a nuisance water weed. Then they are processed in a biodigester to create methane and electricity to fuel operations at Songhai.

At the end of their training, Mbuabua and Sourabie will return to their home countries to launch small-scale farming activities. Their new skills will help them earn an income for themselves and for their church programs. They will also train others who can then carry on this work elsewhere.

Adapted from a Mennonite Church Canada news release by Deborah Froese

About Mennonite World Conference

Young adults serve across cultures

Uganda – Among the many memories that Shammah Nakawesi of Uganda brings home from her one-year service assignment in Indonesia is her new understanding of loving God and others.

“Loving God and loving others is all that matters,” says Nakawesi, who served as an English teacher and community worker in the village of Margorejo.

Nakawesi was among 16 participants in the 2012-2013 Young Anabaptist Mennonite Exchange Network (YAMEN!) program.

This joint program of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) and MWC provides cross-cultural placements for young adults from countries other than Canada and the U.S. who are involved in their local churches.

Nakawesi says that one of the objectives of the program



Shammah Nakawesi. MCC photo courtesy of Evonne Komaromi

is to help young people grow spiritually in a cross-cultural setting. In the beginning she felt this could not be achieved because church services in Margorejo are in a language that she does not fully understand.

This language barrier, she adds, made her more reliant on God's word and prayer.

“The two greatest commandments are about loving God and loving others, and this seems easier said than done. One thing I have learned and am still learning is that I cannot truly love others if I do not love God wholeheartedly in truth, with all that I am and all that I have.”

For a complete list of 2012-2013 YAMEN! participants, visit www.mwc-cmm.org

– Joint release by MCC and MWC

Prayers

- Pray for Mennonites in the Philippines who joined with others to respond to the disaster created by Typhoon Haiyan in early November 2013. Since the congregations of Integrated Mennonite Churches, Inc. (IMC), a Mennonite World Conference member church, are all in the north, they were not directly affected by the storm. However, churches sent donations to Peacebuilders Community, a restorative justice ministry based in the southern Philippines city of Davao. Volunteers from churches have formed a Peacebuilders Community team in Leyto province, in Ormoc City. The team, led by Dann Pantoja, arrived right after the storm to provide rapid assessment and disaster management assistance. They helped local command centres map out and prioritize relief distribution. The team also worked with local pastors and congregations to help prevent conflict.

Some of the churches shared the following requests. *Arbeitsgemeinschaft Mennonitischer Brüdergemeinden in Deutschland* (German Mennonite Brethren Conference) is focusing on support of smaller congregations. Please pray for congregations that are struggling because of their size. *Associação dos Irmãos Menonitas de Portugal* (Association of Mennonite Brethren in Portugal) shares that a major economic crisis, unemployment and many young people leaving the country to find work in other places is affecting the church. Please pray for Portugal and the MB congregations there. *Anabautistas, Menonitas y Hermanos en Cristo – España* (Anabaptists, Mennonites and Brethren in Christ – Spain) is thankful for three new congregations who have joined: two in the island of Tenerife and another one in Barcelona.

- Praise God for an engaged meeting where representatives of Anabaptist churches in six European countries got together to listen, share and process decisions, from 18-19 October 2013.

Give a gift to MWC

Your prayers and financial gifts are deeply appreciated. Your contributions are important. They will:

- Enable expanded communication strategies to nurture a worldwide family of faith
- Strengthen our communion's identity and witness as Anabaptist Christians in our diverse contexts, and
- Build up community through networks and gatherings so that we can learn from and support each other

Go to www.mwc-cmm.org and click the “Get Involved” tab for prayer requests and on the “Donate” tab for multiple ways to give online. Or mail your gift to Mennonite World Conference at one of these addresses:

- PO Box 5364, Lancaster, PA 17606 USA
- 50 Kent Avenue, Kitchener, ON N2G 3R1 Canada
- 28A No.16-41 Piso 2, Bogotá, Colombia
- 8 rue du Fossé des Treize, 67000 Strasbourg, France

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César García Publisher
 Ron Rempel Chief Communications Officer
 Devin Manzullo-Thomas Editor
 Eleanor Miller Communications Assistant
 Sylvie Gudin French Translator
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