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Mennonite World Conference
A Community of Anabaptist related Churches

Congreso Mundial Menonita
Una Comunidad de Iglesias Anabautistas

Conférence Mennonite Mondiale
Une Communauté d'Eglises Anabaptistes

News Briefs

Executive Committee plans for MWC future

Akron, Pennsylvania, USA – At their meetings 23-28 May, the Mennonite World Conference Executive Committee discussed important issues like networking capacity and fundraising possibilities.

The Executive Committee consists of two representatives

and Life, Peace and Deacons) and through the appointment of a staff person to relate with North American MWC members.

Currently, the four commission secretaries are paid a modest part-time salary for less than one day per week. The North American regional representative also serves part time. Plans are underway



MWC Executive Committee members plant a tree at the Mennonite Central Committee Welcoming Place in Akron, Pennsylvania, USA, the site of their May 2013 meetings. Taking their turn placing sod around the tree are (from left) Cisca Mawangu Ibanda (DR Congo), Ron Penner (Canada), and Adi Walujo (Indonesia). Photo by Janet Plenert

from each continental region in which MWC has member-churches, and meets once a year to do business. This year, they met near Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, USA, the site of Assembly 2015.

Chief among the discussion topics at the May meetings was how to make MWC more than a global assembly every six years.

In recent years, MWC has taken steps to this end through the establishment of four commissions (Missions, Faith

to create part-time regional representative positions for Europe and Asia and the Pacific, and representation for Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean is also in the works.

Naturally, such plans are contingent on securing the necessary funding. MWC has developed an “opportunities budget” to identify the costs of increasing its networking capacity, but without new revenue streams, MWC will not

be able to implement it.

In response to the financial challenge, the Executive Committee reviewed the current per-member Fair Share formula, which is designed to cover the MWC operating budget and the Travel Fund – a total of around \$985,000 per year. According to reports, however, only about 25 percent of this amount comes in, since not every member conference pays the requested amount.

“No one is so poor they can’t give the equivalent of one lunch per year,” noted César García, MWC general secretary. If that were to happen, he added, the budget goal could be achieved.

Staff members were asked to do further work on how the “lunch per year” idea might be implemented. They were also asked to continue imagining ways in which the Fair Share formula could be made more effective. Any change to the funding formula would not come into effect until 2016.

Project supports Congolese women students

Tshikapa, DR Congo – “We who were hidden in the shadows have just come out into the light!” exclaimed a young woman preparing for the ministry in the *Communauté Mennonite au Congo* (Congo Mennonite Church – CMCo) in a recent interview. “May this light last forever in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ!”

Four female first-year students, ages 21–62, are currently enrolled at the Kalonda Bible Institute, located near the CMCo headquarters in Tshikapa.

On the brink of its centennial celebration in July 2012, the central committee of the church, led by Adolphe Komuesa Kalunga, approved the ordination of women. Inspired by this decision, a number of

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Executive Committee takes action

In addition to discussions about networking capacity and fundraising possibilities, the MWC Executive Committee also:

- Affirmed the appointment of Rodrigo Pedroza García of Mexico as the new chair of the Young Anabaptists Committee, replacing Kristina Toews, who is now serving as web communications worker in the MWC office in Bogotá, Colombia; she has been replaced as North American representative on the YABs Committee by Lani Prunés of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

- Planted a tree on the grounds of the Mennonite Central Committee

Welcoming Place in Akron, Pennsylvania, USA

- Asked the Asia Caucus to prepare the World Fellowship Sunday materials for a Sunday close to 21 January, 2014, which is the anniversary of the first Anabaptist baptism in Zurich, Switzerland in 1525

- Created a task force to propose how MWC should celebrate its 100th anniversary and the 500th anniversary of the first Anabaptist baptism in 2025

- Visited and spoke in numerous Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches in the vicinity of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, USA on Sunday, 25 May.



From left: Students Thérèse Tudiakuile, Charlie Kasha Kamba, and Marie-Louise Tumba Yama in class at Kalonda Bible Institute. Photo by Joseph Nkongolo

Mennonite women are seeking support to pursue theological studies.

A cloth market in the exhibit hall of the Mennonite Church USA convention, held 1-5 July in Phoenix, Arizona, will fund scholarships for women preparing for ministry in the CMC Co.

The Congo Cloth Connection, a project of Michiana Friends of Congo, conducts African fabric markets to promote relationships between Mennonites in the United States and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The project will give scholarship priority to women like the Kalonda students, who come from regions far from the capital city of Kinshasa.

"A silent voice has always convinced me to serve the Lord," says another student. The mother of five is currently president of the Mennonite women of her province but says she decided to answer the call of God more specifically by studying for the ministry.

"Approval of women's ordination is a great miracle for us," says Thérèse Tudiakuile of Kananga. "It affirms our value as women in the church, especially in a culture that has treated women as objects."

The Institute's only female professor, Bercy Mundedi, will be among the first women ordained in the CMC Co this fall.

Adapted from an article by Charlie Malembe and Nancy Myers

Peacemakers film screened

Basel, Switzerland – More than 1,000 people saw the movie *Peacemakers* at the *Theodorskirch* during the first Festival of the Night of Faith that took place in Basel on 17 May 2013.

During seven screenings between 5:00 pm and 12:30 am, the 25-minute movie – created and produced by Max Wiedmer and his team – attracted many visitors in a contemplative atmosphere.

The movie tells the story of a young boy in search of peace and security. The silent story, performed by three main actors, alternates with biblical readings about creation, Noah, Moses, Jesus the peacemaker, and Jesus the Saviour. Each reading is set to a modern-day sequence that illustrates its message.

Musical snippets from children's choirs, as well as from a men's choir from the Mennonite church of Geisberg and from the multi-artistic show from the Lightclubberz (a group of Mennonite youth) resonated with the chosen themes which were highlighted with light-painting. Most of the sequences were shot in the region of Basel and its surroundings.

– Michael Sommer

First Nations woman wins peace prize

Freiburg, Germany – Judy DaSilva, a First Nations woman from Grassy Narrows, Ontario,

Canada, has been awarded the Michael Sattler Peace Prize from the *Deutsches Mennonitisches Friedenskomitee* (German Mennonite Peace Committee).

"We want to award the prize to Judy DaSilva in order to honour the nonviolent resistance of the Grassy Narrows First Nation against the destruction of nature and for the preservation of their indigenous culture," said James Jakob Fehr of the German Mennonite Peace Committee.

DaSilva is a mother of five children and has organized countless youth gatherings, women's gatherings, protests, speaking tours and participated in blockades to advocate for justice and a healthy environment. Her humble, passionate and relentless advocacy has resulted in a suspension of logging on Grassy Narrows territory for nearly five years.

She has also been involved in Grassy Narrows' grassroots boycott of Weyerhaeuser Corporation – the only multi-national logging company in the region that refuses to respect Grassy Narrows' right to say no to logging.

The prize ceremony took place on 20 May at the Abbey of St. Peter in the Black Forest. The prize, named after a 16th century Anabaptist leader, acknowledges groups or individuals who work for peace, for nonviolent Christian witness, for reconciliation work or for dialogue between religions.

"I am delighted that Judy DaSilva and Grassy Narrows have been recognized for their courageous and committed leadership," said Peter Haresnape of Christian Peacemaker Teams Canada.

"Thank you, Judy, for your continued defence of your land and people and for welcoming others to support this work."

– Dr. James Jakob Fehr

Young Anabaptists prepare for 2015 summit

Akron, Pennsylvania, USA – Preparations for the 2015 Global Youth Summit and transitions within the committee marked the annual meeting of the Young Anabaptists (YABs) Committee, held 23-28 May 2013.

The committee welcomed Lani Prunés of the United States as the new North American representative, replacing Kristina Toews of Canada who is now serving as the MWC web communications worker in Bogotá, Colombia.

Rodrigo Pedroza García of Mexico, YABs Latin American representative, was affirmed as the new YABs Committee chair by the Executive Committee, though he was unable to get his visa in time to attend the meeting.

The YABs Committee communicated with Pedroza frequently via Skype. However, "the lack of face-to-face communication was greatly missed in our discussions, and we felt the distance when making decisions by consensus," commented Sumana Basumata of India, YABs Asian representative.

In addition, the committee made key decisions about and preparations for the third Global Youth Summit (18+), to be held right before Pennsylvania 2015 on 17-19 July 2015. The YABs Committee toured Messiah

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Visiting the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society Museum during the YABs Committee meeting. From left: Tigist Tesfaye Gelagle (Ethiopia), Sumana Basumata (India), incoming member Lani Prunés (United States), mentor Ayub Omondi (Kenya), Marc Pasqués (Spain), and outgoing chair Kristina Toews (Canada). Missing from photo: Rodrigo Pedroza García (Mexico).

Commissions Updates

The four MWC commissions support and extend the work of our global communion between and beyond the assemblies.

The commissions have been described as the four chambers of one heart, which seeks to link the worldwide community of Anabaptist-related churches for fellowship, worship, service and witness.

Commissions prepare issues or materials for consideration by the General Council; give guidance and propose resources to MWC or member-churches; and facilitate MWC-related networks or fellowships working together on matters of common interest and focus.

Here are a few short glimpses into the work of MWC commissions over the last several months and in the near future.

Deacons Commission

Through the Global Church Sharing Fund, the Deacons Commission is supporting a number of projects worldwide, including the construction of a new church building for the Kutuzovka Evangelical Mennonite Church in Ukraine, and the translation of the book *From Anabaptist Seed* into local South African languages (an initiative of the Anabaptist Network of South Africa).

Faith and Life Commission

As part of its goal of promoting Anabaptist identity, the commission is planning to create and publicize a list of teachers that MWC can affirm.

Mission Commission

The Mission Commission is working to outline an Anabaptist theology of mission. The commission has identified several “core convictions” fundamental to Anabaptist missions, and hopes to synthesize these elements into a statement at its November 2013 meeting.

Peace Commission

The Peace Commission has prepared a document, “Guidelines for Determining MWC Response to Internal Conflicts of Member Churches.” The statement is now available on the Peace Commission page of the MWC website at www.mwc-cmm.org

“What do you love about Mennonite World Conference?”

MWC staffers describe their favorite things about our global fellowship

Howard Good

Nat'l Coordinator, Pennsylvania 2015
Lancaster, Pennsylvania, USA



“I love the global diversity of MWC as demonstrated in its leadership, focus and venues for events. In a world filled with political,

religious and ethnic divisions it is heartening to see MWC’s important efforts to create dialogue and commitment to a more unified faith community.”

Henk Stenvers

Secretary, Deacons Commission
Amsterdam, Netherlands



“MWC is for me like a warm blanket. A comforter made from many small parts, different in colour and texture, stitched

together by the strong thread of our shared faith. I feel part of a family of believers, many different people from many different contexts, still brothers and sisters, guided by the Holy Spirit, working in unity to live out and proclaim the message of the peace of Christ.”

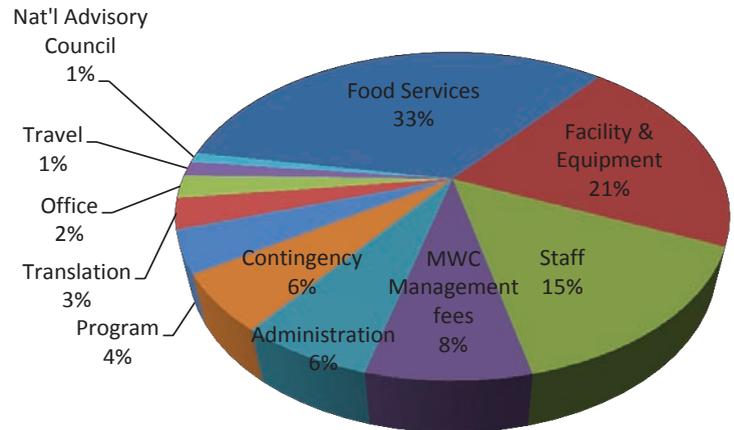
Financial Snapshots

The budget for the Pennsylvania 2015 assembly was based on a break-even attendance figure of approximately 6,000 (5,000 from the Global North and 1,000 from the Global South) meaning that

the final registration will need be at least at this level to break even or have a surplus.

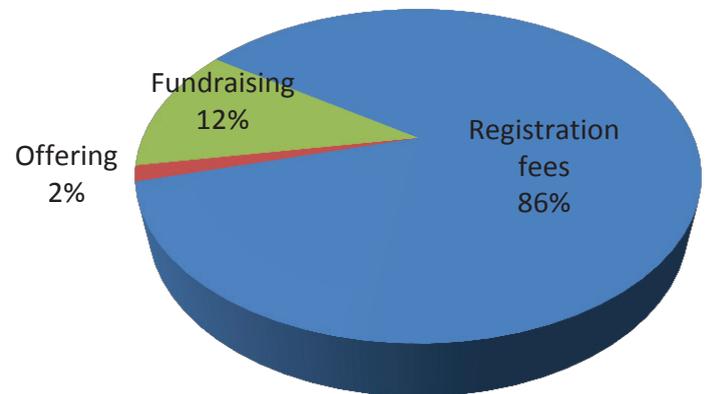
MWC anticipates (and can accommodate) between 7,000 and 10,000 to attend the five-day gathering in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, USA.

Pennsylvania 2015 Expense Budget



Total Pennsylvania 2015 expense budget: \$3,310,540

Pennsylvania 2015 Income Budget



Sign Up to Stay Connected

Write info@mwc-cmm.org to sign up for a monthly e-alert called *MWC Info* and to get on the list to receive MWC’s bimonthly newsletter and magazine by regular mail or by email: *Courier/Correo/Courrier*. These are available in English, Spanish or French.

When signing up for either or both of these publications, give your name, full address, country and language preference.

Also take time to be informed and inspired through the MWC website (www.mwc-cmm.org) and through the MWC Facebook page.

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College in Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania, USA, and confirmed the college as the location for the next GYS.

The theme of GYS 2015 is "Called to Share: My Gifts, Our Gifts." Explained Tigist Tesfaye Gelagle of Ethiopia, YABs

African representative, "We all have something to share, all the Global North and the Global South. Sharing is not only giving, but both giving and receiving what we gifts the global family have as gifts."

For more details on the YABs meeting, visit www.mwc-cmm.org

About Mennonite World Conference



MWC leaders at a tour of the Farm Show complex in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, USA, site of the 2015 assembly.

Pennsylvania 2015 Update

Preparations are moving forward for the MWC Assembly, Pennsylvania 2015, to be held at the Farm Show Complex in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, USA, from 21-26 July, 2015.

At the MWC Executive Committee meetings held in May 2013, "Walking with God" was selected as the theme for the next assembly. The theme will work with biblical texts and our own stories and experiences of

small gatherings of people from different areas of the world who will have the opportunity to meet, discuss relevant topics and build relationships.

Afternoon sessions will vary, from workshops to service opportunities to sports to local tours and more.

Each evening will feature a worship service with a focus on a different continent every day. During the worship service we will share our gifts and learn from each other.

Plans have also been made

walking with God
caminemos con Dios
en marche avec Dieu



joy and grief – stories that will encourage us to continue our walk with God and invite others to walk with us.

The daily program will start with music and singing accompanied by an international choir. Each morning will include a presentation and time for meeting as friendship groups,

for children and youth programming.

Giving leadership to the program for Assembly 2015 is a Program Oversight Committee. Members include Don McNiven (USA/Canada), music and worship; Vikal Rao (India), Global Church Village; Marius van Hoogstraten (Netherlands/Germany), workshops; Thobekile Ncube (Zimbabwe), morning speakers and friendship groups; and Egon Sawatzky (Paraguay), children's and youth program. MWC international events officer, Liesa Unger, will lead the team.

Registration for Assembly will

start in August 2014, both online and through printed forms. Registration with a full meal plan for an adult from the Global North will be roughly \$575 US; for participants from the Global South, roughly \$90 US. Family discounts and sponsorships will be available.

Housing options will include home stays with area families,

dormitories and hotel rooms of different price ranges. Shuttle service will be arranged from hotels, dormitories and meeting points for home stays.

For more details about Assembly 2015 and to view the latest issue of "Pennsylvania 2015 News," visit the MWC website at www.mwc-cmm.org

Prayers

Pray for the Mennonite Brethren Church of Chocó on the west coast of Colombia, and participants in the Weaving Hope agricultural project. Weaving Hope is an alternative crops project run by the regional Mennonite Brethren Church supporting over 200 families in the cultivation and processing of food crops such as rice and cacao (for making chocolate), providing an alternative to illicit crops – peacebuilding and community development all at once.

In May 2013, many participants of this project lost most, if not all, of their crops as a result of aerial fumigation by the Colombian government. The Mennonite Brethren Church is seeking to call out those responsible and find government compensation for those whose crops were destroyed, and is asking for prayer and solidarity from the global Anabaptist family.

Pray for Archbishop Mar Gregorius Yohanna Ibrahim of the Syrian Orthodox Archdiocese of Aleppo and his travelling companion Archbishop Boulos Yazaji of the Greek Orthodox of Aleppo, who were taken by unknown assailants on 22 April as they returned from the northern area of Syria close to the Turkish border where they had undertaken humanitarian work in the war-torn country. From that time there has been no confirmed news from them or about them. MWC is connected to the Syrian and Greek Orthodox Archdioceses of Aleppo through the Global Christian Forum.

Pray for the next MWC Assembly to be held in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, USA, 21-26 July 2015. Pray also for Liesa Unger, MWC chief international events coordinator, and Howard Good, national coordinator, as they work on plans for the 2015 Assembly.

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, Bogota Colombia
- 8 rue du Fossé des Treize 67000, Strasbourg France

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