



World Fellowship Sunday 2018

Worship Resources

Prepared by MWC
Member Churches
in Africa for
21 January 2018
or at any time convenient
for your congregation.

1 Theme and texts

**a. Theme:
Holy Spirit
Transforming
Us**

**b. Why this theme
was chosen:**
Throughout the history
of the Christian church,
followers of Jesus have
been transformed and
renewed by the living
presence of the Holy Spirit.
The Anabaptist renewal
movement of the 1500s was
deeply shaped by the Spirit.

Today, the churches in the
Global South are especially
attentive to the presence
and power of the Holy
Spirit. The Kenyan planning
committee chose the Holy
Spirit as the theme for MWC
Renewal event in 2018. It
is because of the work of
the Holy Spirit that we as
Christians – in Africa and all
over the world – persevere
with hope in the face of
overwhelming challenges.

**c. Biblical
texts:**
Joel 2:28;
Micah 3:8;
Acts 1:8;
I Corinthians 12:13

**d. Relationship
between the theme
and the biblical
texts:**

The texts suggest some
of the ways that the
Holy Spirit moves in the
life of the church. The
Holy Spirit is constantly
at work, transforming
and molding us into the
pattern of Christ.

- The Spirit of prophesy, with vision and wisdom (Joel);
- The Spirit of power that names sin and calls for justice (Micah);
- The Spirit of mission that bears witness to the gospel (Acts);
- The Spirit of reconciliation that unites the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians).

2 Prayer Requests:

a. Prayers from African MWC members:

- Pray for those fleeing the unrest and violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo, including those who have fled to neighbouring regions within the country, and those who have fled to Angola. Remember the many Congolese Mennonites among the displaced and refugees, and the many Congolese and Angolan Mennonites who are hosting them.
- Pray for God's intervention in the deep socio-economic crisis in Zimbabwe, and that people might live with hope.
- Pray for individuals and institutions who can provide the much needed Word of God to enable believers to strengthen their faith.
- Pray for the many African churches which face financial and other leadership challenges to meet their goals.
- Pray that the Anabaptist African churches are truly the light that illuminates Africa.
- Pray that love, the gift of the Holy Spirit, will reign among the members of the African churches, and forge links among them.
- Pray for the Kenya Mennonite Church who will host MWC meetings in Kenya in April 2018 (Executive Committee, General Council, Renewal 2027).



Barbara Nkala

b. Prayers from MWC:

- Give thanks that Anabaptists around the world are united in faith across language and cultural differences.
- Pray that Anabaptist churches all over the world will be open to the ministry of the Holy Spirit within their churches, their communities and their countries.
- Give thanks for the growing networks in the MWC family – mission, service, health, peace and education. Pray that each Anabaptist participant will be encouraged and strengthened.
- Pray that MWC members who are suffering persecution and hardship may have courage and hope to persevere.
- Pray that our MWC member churches will be like the early church, driven by the Holy Spirit in their life together and their outreach.



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3

Song Suggestions from the MWC International Songbook 2015

- #3 Hamba Nathi
- #9 Woza Nomthwala Wakho
- #11 Sizohamba Naye (replace “We will walk with God” with “The Spirit gives us power”)
- #15 Make us One and Make us Holy
- #22 Kirisuto No Heiwa
- #32 Adorad
- #41 Spirit Open my Heart
- #53 Nothing is Lost on the Breath of God

4

Symbolic worship activities or visual resources

Throughout Africa, singing, clapping, drumming and dancing bring vibrancy to praise and worship. The loud noise of joyful worship helps people to feel the presence of God through the Holy Spirit. Joyful worship, especially in the context of many life struggles, is vital for both spiritual growth and witness.

Ayub Awich



Tesfatsion Dalellew

5

Offering

- The offering is a time as important as the sermon. Go to p. 13 to read more about offering practices in Africa.
- MWC invites congregations to take a special offering for our global Anabaptist church community on World Fellowship Sunday. One way to think about this offering is to invite every member to contribute the cost of at least one lunch in their community in order to support the networks and resources in our global faith community of MWC. Sacrificing one lunch is our humble way of giving thanks to God and supporting the ongoing ministry of God through MWC.

6

Additional resources

www.mwc-cmm.org/wfs

a. Additional resources in this package

- Suggested liturgies for gathering and for benediction (p. 3)
- Biblical interpretation for sermon content (p. 4)
- African stories for sermon content (p. 8)
- Offering ideas (p. 13)
- African cultural suggestions (p. 15)

b. Additional resources available online:

- Pictures (including all used in this package)
- Videos

Contact Information:

Francisca Ibanda, MWC Regional Representative for Central/West Africa, Franciscalbanda@mwc-cmm.org

Tesfatsion Dalellew, MWC Regional Representative for Eastern Africa, Tesfatsion@mwc-cmm.org

Barbara Nkala, MWC Regional Representative for Southern Africa, BarbaraNkala@mwc-cmm.org



Suggested liturgies for gathering and benediction

Gathering/Call to Worship

Call to worship #1 (loudly):

Leader: Give me a J

People: J

Leader: Give me an E

People: E

Leader: Give me an S

People: S

Leader: Give me a U

People: U

Leader: Give me an S

People: S

Leader: What do we have?

People: JESUS (2x)

Leader: There is POWER in the name of...

People: JESUS!

Leader: There is JOY in the name of ...

People: JESUS!

Leader: There is HEALING in the name of...

People: JESUS!

Sometimes the call is done with the word JOY instead of JESUS.



The celebration of World Fellowship Sunday 2017 in Bobo-Dioulasso, Burkina Faso, inaugurated the new Mennonite church building. Photo courtesy of Siaka Traore.

Call to worship #2

Often the worship leader openly invites presence of the Holy Spirit and people join in loudly by clapping and saying “amen,” “hallelujah,” etc.

Benediction

- Some leaders say, “Go well in the peace of God!”
- Some leaders say, “The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace.” (Numbers 6:24–26)
- Some leaders say, “Now unto Him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy.” (Jude v. 24)

- In some Brethren in Christ congregations in southern Africa, at the end of the service, everyone greets everyone else with a handshake or hug. This is done by people lining up, and greeting the first person at the door. After you greet the person at the door, you join the line that is forming on the outside of the doorway, so that as more people come out the door, they shake hands with everyone already in line, and then join the end of the line on the outside to greet others coming out. In this way, everyone greets everyone on their way out of the church building, strengthening the experience of community for all.



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Biblical background for sermon content

Joel 2:28 and Micah 3:8

- Spiritual transformation is a fundamental change in a person's spiritual life. It is an inward change that affects the outward action/behaviour.
- Spiritual transformation can be understood as a new way of being and striving.
- The coming of the Holy Spirit into a person's life in accepting Christ brings a dynamo-like force that affects one's movement, language and actions.
- The key to this kind of transformation is the connection of the Holy Spirit with ours (see Colossians 3:1–4). The union with Christ creates a new force in a person which brings a new manifestation in life.
- In the previous chapters, the prophet Joel pronounced God's judgment due to corruption and disobedience in the life of the people of Judah. Joel was very direct in naming these sins to the people. The prophet Joel spoke for God in saying that their actions deserved harsh judgment, and he called them to repentance (see Joel 3:28–32). However, regardless of how harsh the punishments for



Sisters and brothers greet each other after the Inter-Mennonite worship service for World Fellowship Sunday 2014 in Kinshasha, DR Congo.
Photo: Francisca Ibanda.

their sins were, repentance brought many blessings from God.

- The intention of God is not to make the people suffer. Instead, God's call is for repentance, a call to return, a call to change their way of life and join with God in becoming partners.
- The prophet Micah talks about the power of the Spirit of the Lord to call for repentance and for justice. (see Micah 3:8)
- The coming of the Holy Spirit results in being filled with power, the Spirit and with justice and might. The purpose this filling by the Spirit is to be spokespersons for God's justice, power, might and justice.
- These prophets have no fear whatsoever of authorities or wealthy people when they name their evil deeds and call to repentance. Micah lived in the times when there were many false prophets. However, equipped with the Holy Spirit's power, he did not hesitate to call the people from their evil ways.
- These calls for repentance and justice are the words the Spirit has given to God's prophets.



The Brethren in Christ Mozambique annual conference in July 2016. Photo: Barbara Nkala.



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Therefore, the spiritual transformation is about partnering with God, where both God and humans have roles to play. It is not that God cannot do it on his own, rather right from the beginning God has intended to make us God's partners. That is why God transforms us through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 1:8

Context:

- The last words of a departing parent or leader are noted and remembered. These are Jesus' last recorded words with his disciples, so they are vitally important.
- The disciples are confused, and concerned about when Jesus will restore the kingdom of Israel. Jesus responds with an answer that is about how the kingdom of God will be built, but not about when.
- Jesus tells them to wait for the gift of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.
- Acts 1:8 itself is the core statement about the key meaning of the whole book of Acts.

Power of the Holy Spirit:

- Jesus tells them that the kingdom of God is not about political power or power of



Brethren in Christ Church Zimbabwe, Women's Conference in July 2017. Photo: Barbara Nkala.

position, but it is about the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus reminds them that there are no selfish interests in the kingdom of God.

- In a traditional African context, it is often understood that there is mystical power in everything in the world, and that people need to please the ancestral spirits in order to be successful or to achieve what they want. Some people have access to the power of the spirits, and are able to hear and see and do things that ordinary people cannot do. There is much fear that people with this kind of power will use it to cause harm to others. In this context, the gift of the power of the Holy Spirit for all Christians is an amazing gift, and one that is stronger than the powers of those who would do harm. The Holy Spirit is a power that seeks good for others, and not to do harm.
- Some Scripture verses that are used by African Christians as they uphold the power of the Holy Spirit are: "Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord Almighty" (Zechariah 4:6); and "Don't be afraid ... Those who are with us are more than those who are with them" (2 Kings 6:16).
- The Greek word Luke uses for "power" is the same root word used for "dynamo" or



Brethren in Christ Church South Africa, praise and worship team. Photo: Barbara Nkala.



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Worship singing at Dzaleka Mennonite Brethren Church in Malawi.
Watch at www.mwc-cmm.org/wfs. Photo: Barbara Nkala.

“dynamite”. This is huge explosive power through the Holy Spirit.

- In our world there are many problems beyond our capacity to address or solve. It is when we seek the power of the Holy Spirit that we are empowered to be effective witnesses to Jesus Christ.

Witnesses to Jesus Christ:

- Luke is the author of both Luke and Acts. The reference to witnesses in Acts 1:8 is a continuation of Luke’s thoughts in Luke 24:47–48 about being a witness.
- Jesus tells the disciples to be witnesses. Jesus does not ask them to be or do anything else.
- Witnesses tell what they know, and they share what they have experienced. As witnesses for Jesus, we tell what we know about Jesus, and we share what we have experienced in our own lives.
- The Greek word for “witness” that is used by Luke comes from the same Greek root word for “martyr”. We are asked to be loyal witnesses, no matter what the cost. The power to be this kind of witness comes from the Holy Spirit.

In Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth:

- Jesus lets the disciples know that they are to be witnesses even to the ends of the earth; in other words, everywhere in the whole world. It took the disciples the rest of the Book of Acts to begin to understand what Jesus meant, even though this was prophesied in Isaiah 49:6.
- We often personalize this command, and we make our own hometown to be Jerusalem, and somewhere on another continent to be “the ends of the earth”. There have been more than 2,000 years of witness in Africa, starting with the story of the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8, so Africa is not the ends of the earth. The intent of this command is for every Christian to witness to the people close by, to those who are our enemies, and to those who are very far away.
- The Holy Spirit empowers all of Jesus’ disciples today. These Spirit-filled disciples are to be witnesses to Jesus wherever they are. We are all at the ends of the earth from each other. We are all sent to be Spirit-filled witnesses to Jesus Christ, throughout the whole world.



Children present solos to the congregation in the worship service at Central Legetaffo Meserete Kristos Church in Ethiopia.
Photo: Tesfatsion Dalelew.



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1 Corinthians 12:13

As Christians, we are the body of Christ. All of us are part of the body of Christ.

- The Holy Spirit has regenerated us so that we are no longer separate entities, or a separate people. We are one family.
- Hence, there are no longer sentiments of some being Jews, the chosen children of God, and others being mere underdogs.
- People have a tendency to separate themselves according to races and tribes; according to the different countries of our citizenship. There is no Shona or Ndebele (as often there is that tribal discrimination in Zimbabwe); there is no Nigerian or Kenyan; there is no African or European; there is no rich or poor, there is no elite or uneducated; there is no master or slave (no class, or culture, or race).
- The major distinction is we are now born of “water and the Spirit” (John 3:5).
- As the church, the Body of Christ in the Spirit, we come from different backgrounds and are each endowed with special gifts, talents and abilities. These are God-given and nothing to boast about. They should not be selfishly kept only for ourselves, or our families, or our races and tribes. They are to be shared. Only



A Kenya Mennonite Church congregation sings during the Sunday morning worship service. Photo: Liesa Unger.

in this way can there be true unity. Only that way can the Body of Christ function well.

- The Holy Spirit is not a gift that God gives to indwell only one person or a particular kind of people. The Holy Spirit indwells all of us who truly believe in one true God – “we were all given the one Spirit to drink.”
- So, we have different backgrounds, are different in colour, speak different languages, have different gifts and abilities...BUT, our belief in Christ and the regeneration of the Holy Spirit in us should enable us to feel for one another, to care for one another, to love one another for God is love (1 John 4:16), and in God we are ONE. We belong to one faith. This is the Anabaptist way.
- In Africa, there is the *UBUNTU* paradigm that says, ‘*Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*’. In essence, “A person is a person because of other people.” Ubuntu makes us love, respect, honour, recognise and acknowledge the dignity of other people. This then makes us a unified whole. We should not discriminate. We are one!



A worship service at Central Legetaffo Miserete Kristos Church, Ethiopia. Photo: Tesfatsion Dalelew.



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African stories for sermon content

These stories and proverbs come out of the African context, to provide inspiration for all of us. We encourage each congregation to identify their own stories of Holy Spirit transformation.

African Proverbs

In Africa, there are many proverbs used to teach various aspects of life. The following are Ndbele/Zulu proverbs.

- “*Umntu ngumuntu ngabantu*” – A person is a person because of other people.
- “*Ikhotha eyikhothayo*” – The cow licks the one that licks it. (A cow cannot lick its own back to shoo off troublesome insects or to remove dirt.)
- People who do not go to help in cultivating a neighbour's field will find that when they need similar help, it is not forthcoming. There are people who do not bother to visit sick neighbours or who will not show up at someone's funeral. They risk the danger of being alone in sickness or mourning.
- We need to practise the golden rule – do to others what you want them to do to you.



The celebration of World Fellowship Sunday 2017 in Bobo-Dioulasso, Burkina Faso, inaugurated the new Mennonite church building. Photo courtesy of Siaka Traore.

- “*Izandla ziyagezana*” – Hands wash each other. (One hand cannot wash itself adequately. It needs another to help to become clean.)

Healing by the Spirit

There are many in Africa who experience physical healing by the power of the Holy Spirit.

This is a story of two different types of physical healing, at the Meserete Kristos Church in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, by Tesfatsion Dalelew.

Some years ago, there was a week-long evening revival conference, which meant the entire church compound was full of people. Tesfa arrived a little late, and by then even the outside tents were full, so he squeezed into one, standing on the side. To his right was someone he didn't know, but on his left there was a young woman he knew from a local church choir. That entire choir had been arrested during the time of persecution of Christians in Ethiopia and they all had been badly beaten. This particular woman had been beaten on the bottoms of her feet, so that her nerves were damaged and she couldn't walk.

The preacher was preaching when Tesfa arrived, and it was a very short sermon. He finished preaching, and asked the people to put their hand on the part of their body that hurt, and then the preacher prayed for healing for all. Tesfa had had back problems for more than 25 years, so he put his right hand on his back. Somewhere in the middle of the prayer, the young woman beside him fell down and began convulsing. Tesfa thought she was possessed by a demon.



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Children sing in the worship service in Kisumu, part of Kenya Mennonite Church. Watch at www.mwc-cmm.org/wfs.
Photo: Liesa Unger.

The pastor finished the prayer, and then said, "There is a woman in the outside tent who has been having severe pain in her feet; the Lord has healed you. Please come forward and give your testimony." At that moment, the woman whom Tesfa thought had been possessed started to go forward. To everyone's astonishment, she told how she was beaten to the extent her nerves were affected. But during the prayer she felt the power she couldn't contain, and she fell on the ground shaking. From that moment on, she said she felt well as she walked to the front of the church, and healing had happened instantly.

As for Tesfa, since he did not fall, shake or shout and having just witnessed such a dramatic healing, he began to complain to God that he had not been healed after carrying his pain for so many years. He continued in this way for three days, until he finally realized that he was complaining about the pain, but was not feeling it. Then he tested himself doing things that he had not been able to do before, and there was no pain. Even after a difficult tennis game there was no pain. Then Tesfa began to talk about God's healing power in his own life.

This is another story of physical healing, as told to Barbara Nkala of Harare, Zimbabwe.

We took care of my husband's niece, Tatenda, when she was at A Level Secondary School, in Harare. We were disturbed by the illnesses she suffered and which threatened to disrupt her school work. There was a curious pattern to her ailments. She would complain about seeing red and having trouble seeing well enough to read on Monday; a terrible headache on Tuesday; sore legs and ankles on Wednesday and a hurting stomach on Thursday. It was surreal.

We took her to our family doctor who sent her to various specialists for tests. It was quite costly. The specialist doctors each said, there is nothing wrong with the eyes. Nothing wrong with the stomach. Nothing wrong with the legs and ankles. Headache...was she stressed about something? Nothing that we were aware of. Tatenda was not a cry-baby, nor was she the kind of girl who feigned pain or sought attention. Yet, we could all see that she was in real pain when these attacks came.

After about six months of these strange attacks, it dawned on me that these were spiritual



Inter-Mennonite worship service for World Fellowship Sunday 2014 in Kinshasha, DR Congo. Photo: Charlie Malembe.



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Congregants take notes during a worship service at a Kenya Mennonite Church congregation in Kisumu. Photo: Ayub Awich.

manifestations. We prayed even more during our evening devotions. When the next attack came, I took her to our pastor for prayers. We were in the middle of prayers when I realised I was suddenly praying in a language I did not understand. I tried to consciously stop that because I used to be sceptical about people who reeled off in tongues. My tongue could not stop. It just kept going on its own.

From that day on, Tatenda did not have those strange attacks. I remember a couple of times when she was at university, when she would call and tell me she was having “that” headache or “that” stomach ache; and I would say, “Tatenda, pray! Go on a fast and pray!” The pain would leave. She has never had the kind of attacks that she had before that day when we prayed for her with the pastor.

To me, that phenomenon signalled the manifestation of the Holy Spirit. I have never intentionally set out to pray in tongues, yet it happens once in a long while during some prayers. I do believe the Holy Spirit empowered me at that time for the purpose of bringing relief to Tatenda.

The Works of the Holy Spirit

by Siphathisiwe Mavengere, BICC Zimbabwe

“In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.” (Acts 2:17).

I believe the outpouring of the Spirit of God results in the above manifestations where the people of God begin to prophesy, see visions and dream dreams.

The Holy Spirit did an amazing thing in my life through a dream. On 30 December 2015, I had a vivid dream that was so peculiar that I could not ignore. I sensed deep down in my spirit that God was giving us a business vision to run with in 2016. As it is the norm that believers engage in prayer toward the year end, seeking God’s direction and protection for the coming year, we had also been praying to have a fruitful 2016.

In this dream, I phoned a certain shop attendant from a boutique in Harare, Zimbabwe where I used to buy my clothes from, four years back. I had this dream in Addis Ababa where we are currently based. In the dream, I asked the lady how business was and specifically how their second shop was doing and she told me that the owner was selling the business. I told her that I wanted the shop and she gave me the full contact details of the owner. I was contemplating in my mind whether to do clothing in that shop or turn it into a packaging shop outlet, as we ran a packaging manufacturing plant in Harare, Zimbabwe.

The dream was so detailed with names and I was even interested in taking over their ladies’ boutique. When I woke up the next morning, I sensed God was giving us direction although we were not planning to open a shop. However, I wrote the dream in my diary and shared it with my husband. I thanked God for it, but as time



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went on, I forgot about it until one afternoon in February 2016, while driving in the streets of Addis Ababa, when I suddenly felt that I needed to act on the dream.

The first thing was to try and locate the shop attendant in the dream. I did not have her contacts, but I remembered her name was Leah. When I finally got her contacts from friends in Zimbabwe, I phoned her and introduced myself, as it had been 4 years since I had last seen her. She was surprised to hear from me phoning all the way from Addis Ababa. Without wasting much time, I quickly asked how business was and how their second shop was doing. She responded just like in the dream, advising that the owner was selling it. I screamed in utter amazement and told her God had shown me this in a dream. She gave me the owner's contact details, and in August 2016, during our children's summer holiday, we travelled to Harare where we finalised the sale and I opened the shop called Yadpack where we sell a variety of packaging items.

I learnt from my experience that the Holy Spirit who is our Helper according to the book of John, is at work in our lives to give us direction and it is important for the church to be obedient, even if it sometimes does not make sense.

Testimonies as told by MWC's Regional Representatives in Africa

1) One of the young leaders in the Mennonite Brethren Church in Congo, a young pastor at the head of a community of pastoral ministers, provided leadership for many changes: healthy management, unity of the church by addressing the conflict between minority and majority groups, mobilization of resources, obedience and submission, social action and a strong administration. When the older pastors asked him "How is it that the pastors respond so well to your call for all these activities?" The young



Praying for the children during the worship service at Central Legetaffo Miserete Kristos Church, Ethiopia.
Photo: Tesfatsion Dalelew.

pastor replied "this is the work of the Holy Spirit moving in the church."

2) A woman in Congo who ministers to mothers struggled to read the Bible because of illiteracy. She prayed to the Lord to help her overcome this handicap. At a mothers' retreat, she prayed and asked the Holy Spirit to teach her to read the Bible. She is thrilled that she can read the Bible today.

3) The Holy Spirit is at work in the spiritual growth of a woman who, since her conversion and the love she bears for the Word of God, preaches as if she had studied theology. When people ask her if she is a pastor, her answer is fascinating: "I was at the school of the Holy Spirit."

4) One classic example of the work of the Holy Spirit is the case of a home in Zimbabwe where respecting ancestral spirits was important. This is Pastor Catherine Ndlovu's story, as told in *BICC History in Zimbabwe and Southern Africa*, by Barbara Nkala and Doris Dube.

First, the woman in the home repented and became a believer in Jesus. Her husband and other relatives remained steeped in ancestral veneration. On one occasion, when the family



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was going to conduct one of the traditional family rites, they decided to fix her by asking her to grind the grain for brewing beer, and for her to be present during the ceremony to invoke the ancestral spirit to rise up and bless them.

She came to me (Pastor Catherine Ndlovu of BICC Bezha) for counsel and she was distraught. She said, "Mama MaNdlovu, what shall I do? I am now a believer and I do not subscribe to ancestral rites. Nor do I wish to cause conflict in my home." I said, "My daughter, the Lord God knows your heart. Go and do as you have been commanded in order to keep peace in the home. But, PRAY throughout. Tell it to the Lord. He is good, faithful and just. Pray as you grind the grain. Pray as you brew the beer. Pray as you sit during the ceremony. I shall support you with prayer and fasting. As you grind the grain, sing your song of faith 'My Jesus I love Thee.'"

She went and did just that. She says she kept praying that if the Lord will, the ancestral spirit might never manifest itself before them. The relatives must have been surprised to see her comply without grumbling. But, she prayed throughout, and I prayed for her too. She reported that when the day came, they sang,



Worship service at Hillbrow Brethren in Christ Church
South Africa. Photo: Barbara Nkala.

and danced, but nothing happened. Singing, drumming, dancing continued for hours on end, and the spirit did not show.

After many futile hours of singing and dancing, the relatives began to quarrel amongst themselves. Some of them began blaming it on her presence. "What have you done? This is a church person. Why did you involve her? The spirits are fleeing her. The spirits will not partake a brew prepared by her!" On and on they bickered.

Soon after, the man of the family renounced ancestral spirit veneration and came to church, though reluctantly at first. He still believed only the ancestors could make him prosper. But we kept working at convincing him that in God there are blessings, and that the Holy Spirit is more powerful than the spirits of the ancestors. The Lord is true to his word. The man was given a promotion at work. His cattle multiplied and within a short time he could tithe one of his beasts. He says he cannot thank God enough for his amazing grace.



Fellowship after the worship service at a Kenya Mennonite Church congregation in Kisumu. Photo: Ayub Awich.



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Offering Ideas



Praying for the offering at Central Legetaffo Miserete Kristos Church, Ethiopia. Photo: Tesfatsion Dalelew.

The offering is a time as important as the sermon. Often someone will give a testimony and scripture on the theme of giving.

The pastor often asks one of the ushers to pray, to bless the givers, and also that those who are not giving may be blessed to give.

Sometimes the ushers take the baskets around, and at other times members are all encouraged to come up to the front to put their offering into a basket at the front. In many places the congregation sings and dances while giving their offering, because they love to give with joy.

MWC invites a special offering to be taken for the global Anabaptist church community on World Fellowship Sunday. One way to think about this offering is to invite every member to contribute the cost of one lunch in their own community in order to support the networks and resources of our global Anabaptist church family. Sacrificing one lunch is our humble way of giving thanks to God, and supporting the on-going ministry of God through the church.

This gift of “one lunch” per person once a year is something that all MWC members can do. Some people have resources to give much more than this, and should be encouraged to do so. Others with more scarce resources might be encouraged to hear that the Executive Committee of the Mennonite World Conference, with members from every continent, is confident that most adults all around the world can give the equivalent of one lunch per year for the work of the global church.

Here are some ideas on how to plan an offering like this work in your congregation.

- Plan for One Lunch offerings to be given in special envelopes or culturally appropriate lunch bags/containers during the worship service.
- Plan for a second offering designated for MWC during the worship service.
- Plan for a shared congregational meal together before or after worship on World Fellowship Sunday.



A Kenya Mennonite Church congregation's worship service in Kisumu. Photo: Liesa Unger.



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- This could be “potluck”, with each family bringing big dishes of food to share. Include an offering for MWC with the meal.
- Have people each bring a packed lunch, labeled “vegetarian” or “non-vegetarian” or any other culturally-appropriate labels. These packed lunches are then available for auction or for purchase or donation by everyone to take home, or to eat together after worship.
- Plan for a time of shared fasting and praying for the global church during a mealtime before or after worship on World Fellowship Sunday, and include an offering for MWC during that time, an offering that would be at least the value of the meal that is not being eaten.



MWC visitors Tesfatsion Dalelew (Ethiopia, left) and Thuma Hamukang'andu (Zambia, right) smile as they receive the gift of a goat from the Kayunga Mennonite Church, of Uganda Mennonite Church on a visit in 2016. Photo: Okoth Simon Onyango.

Funds that are gathered through this special offering in each congregation can be sent directly to Mennonite World Conference using the various mechanisms shown on our website (www.mwc-cmm.org/donate). Or, these funds can be sent to your conference office, clearly marked as designated for Mennonite World Conference and indicated as World Fellowship Sunday offering, and you can ask that they pass the funds on to MWC.

We are grateful for every congregation that is part of our global Anabaptist family. Together, we support each other and learn from each other so that each and every one can be a stronger servant and witness for Jesus Christ.



Singing in the worship service in a congregation in Kisumu, part of Kenya Mennonite Church. Photo: Liesa Unger.



Cultural suggestions from Africa

- The first hour of worship in Ethiopia is dedicated to prayer, including Scripture passages and songs to guide the hearts and minds of those who are praying (often on their knees).
- In African worship services, what feels African is the way even traditional hymns have been adapted to an African rhythm to suit dancing, clapping, ululating and whistling. These are actions that are used when people are praising God, or in a celebratory mood.
- In Ethiopia, right before the sermon, the leader calls on children who have memorized Scripture or are ready to sing a song, to come forward. There is a rush as the children push to get ahead of each other. If a child is to sing, the congregation joins as an encouragement to the child and in the end the congregation claps for them. Even children who cannot yet read will recite memorized Scripture, and receive cheering and clapping from the congregation.



Yabets (child standing in front of pastor) recites a chapter of the Bible at Central Legetaffo Meserete Kristos Church, Ethiopia. Photo: Tesfatsion Dalellew.

- In Central Africa, World Fellowship Sunday includes a special joint service among the different conferences and congregations, where external guests are invited. Generally, members wear their church uniforms, hats and gowns to add to the celebratory atmosphere with joy.
- Many churches use drumming to produce a special and unique rhythm that enhances the beauty of each song.
- Many African women wear beautiful traditional clothing or a women's church uniform (fabric, style, and head scarves or hats) when they go to church.



Women from the Brethren in Christ Church in Mozambique singing and dancing. Photo: Barbara Nkala.

