



**Indonesia**  
2022

# PROCEEDINGS

**Mennonite World Conference**  
Assembly 17

bersama sama **mengikuti Yesus melintas batas**  
sesarengan **ngetut wuri Gusti Yesus nratas wewates**  
**following Jesus together across barriers**  
**seguir a Jesús juntos, superando las barreras**  
**suivre Jésus ensemble à travers les frontières**

# Proceedings

## Mennonite World Conference Assembly 17

Central Java, Indonesia  
05-10 July, 2022

A compilation of  
speeches and greetings  
from Indonesia 2022



**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



# Indonesia 2022

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# Preface

## *Following Jesus together across barriers*



**César García**

MWC general secretary

**M**ennonite World Conference (MWC) global Assemblies are the equivalent of a Sunday meeting at a local congregation.

Through the liturgy, we declare the sovereignty of Christ in our global church, challenging nationalism, racism and other false ideologies that claim our obedience and following.

Through teaching, workshops and preaching, we affirm our Anabaptist identity and facilitate character building in our churches by exposing them to different perspectives and biblical emphases shaped by the context of many different cultures.

In informal activities, we appreciate the importance of each individual and their community, share the gifts we have received and mutually enrich ourselves with the new relationships that arise.

Through moments of prayer, we support those facing persecution, violence, extreme poverty and natural disasters.

We discover that we are not alone, that we are a living organism and that we are part of the body of Christ.

These are just a few reasons why MWC Assemblies have been an essential part of our global community for decades. In 2022, we celebrated the second world Assembly in Asia and the 17th since the inception of MWC in 1925.

When we started planning Assembly 17, we never imagined the magnitude of barriers we would have to cross. Indonesia 2022 will go down in history as one of the most complex and challenging events we have ever developed. In addition to differences in culture, social class and theological perspectives, some barriers we had to overcome included the following:

- **Finances:** Moving the event from 2021 to 2022 due to the pandemic resulted in substantial financial costs.
- **Health:** A significant number of people had to quarantine – myself included – due to COVID-19 and other viruses. That prevented the full participation of many attendees.

- **Technology:** With this being the first officially hybrid Assembly, many activities were planned to facilitate online participation. However, technical failures hampered the live broadcast and prevented reception of simultaneous interpretation on site, despite many tests and the apparent certainty of the experts that the technology would not fail.

The leadership of the Assembly prepared for seven years to carry out a successful event. The evaluation that we develop after the Assembly and the participants' experience will reveal the event's success level. However, as a church, it is worth remembering that we are called to have fruitful events more than just successful events.

It is in the sense of fruit that we can appreciate the value of the Assembly in Indonesia.

Thanks to varied barriers, disciples of Christ from many nations learned to practice patience with one another. People from many different cultures mobilized to work in unity and seek the welfare of those sick and needed support. The love and concern for others, in many cases, were evident. Misunderstandings and unexpected conflicts led us to practice the ministry of reconciliation in our midst. We discover again the importance of vulnerability and the confession of faults committed. We understood how crucial it is to humbly ask for and receive forgiveness.

Consequently, the Assembly in 2022 deepened the intercultural relationship of many members of our churches and facilitated unity amid diversity. Admittedly, Assembly 17 may not have been the most successful in human parameters that measure the quality of events. Still, it has been one of the most fruitful to grow in our call to be a global communion in the Anabaptist tradition.

Peace Sunday, 2022.

**César García**  
Canada  
MWC general secretary



# Introduction

## *World communion in planning mode*



### Liesa Unger

MWC chief  
international events  
officer

**W**hat makes planning a MWC World Assembly special?

If you ask me, you will get this answer: It is an experience in itself when a team of almost 30 people from 10 countries plan an event together for people from all over the world.

The planning for the global Assembly in Indonesia began in November 2016 with a meeting of the executive committees of the three Indonesian Anabaptist synods with the MWC leaders. Then, step by step, the planning team came together with people in logistics, communication, registration, interpretation and translation, volunteer coordination and program planning.

The theme of the MWC Assembly was chosen in cooperation between MWC staff and the National Advisory Committee in Indonesia: following Jesus together - across barriers.

The theme seemed to set the tone of the preparations. My personal first barrier was my cancer diagnosis in 2019, which meant that my planning work had to rest for a few months. Still, during this time we were able to put together a program team and meet in Indonesia in November 2019. Together we spent an intensive week looking at all aspects of program and choosing sub-themes for each day. Further planning continued at home and online.

In early 2020, planning coordinators met to prepare rooms, hotels, tours, the “Assembly Scattered” conference, housing for international staff and registration logistics.

Just before we left for home, the first COVID-19 case was reported in Indonesia. Indonesia closed its borders. Planning in all areas now continued across continents from home and via Zoom. Soon we were faced with the question: *can the MWC Assembly take place in 2021?*

By August 2020 it was clear: an event in 2021 would not be possible. In discussion with the Executive Committee, we decided to postpone the Assembly by one year to 2022 and at the same time allow online participation.

The decision to postpone by one year turned out to be a wise one. Indonesia was hit by the COVID-19 Delta variant in June and July 2021. There was no community – and hardly any family – without people affected. There were thousands of deaths nationwide.

Meanwhile, entry into Indonesia was not possible until November 2021. So all the

planning took place in the home offices of staff in different countries and we met regularly online for team meetings.

I remember one team meeting in particular. We put the planning issues aside and exchanged ideas about what was stressing us and what we were enjoying. The strain of the pandemic was devastating in many places. The loss and grief for loved ones was present. But joy was also evident – joy about the possibility of coming together. Some of the staff who had been at an Assembly before shared how it was a life-changing experience for them that they wished others will have.

Our planning required many steps into the unknown. While foreign entry into Indonesia was not yet possible, we rented two houses for staff in the hope that we would soon be able to meet in person. The first Indonesian staff members moved in.

In November 2021, I was able to enter Indonesia with a special business visa and five days in quarantine. The next two months were not only about mangoes in front of our office, but also about getting entry permits for staff from India, the Philippines, Ethiopia, Uganda and Burkina Faso.

One by one, people were able to come, even though crossing the border was a real barrier experience for some. Natacha from Burkina Faso (a participant in the YAMEN program) was detained at passport control without food, drink or a chance to sleep. I asked her how she got through it. Natacha's answer: *I prayed and said to God: This is your problem now.*

Later, we repeated this prayer many times when we found ourselves in critical situations.

Working together on-site not only sped up the work (we didn't have to keep track of so many time zones and Zoom connections), but there was also a great fun and experience factor. As an on-site team, we took turns cooking and eating together every lunch, getting to know each other more and more. The conversations went from cooking recipes to questions of faith to culture and politics.

And if the Assembly hadn't happened, all the work would have been worth it, just for that experience.

I now know that a good Filipino meal should have at least three sour ingredients. I have discovered that my "Enlightened" culture explains many things differently from a culture that acknowledges a spirit world. It was important to hear how young people understand the negative influences of colonial rule on their cultures and lives. And again and again, conversations ended with an internet search: *where does chilli come from, where are the origins of mangoes, what about chickpeas?*

An intensive community developed, much was prepared and yet we still did not know whether the Assembly could take place on-site or not, as quarantine and other requirements made planning difficult and expensive.

Due to a good vaccination situation in Indonesia and declining incidence figures, the entry restrictions were eased at the beginning of February. In cooperation with MWC and the national churches, it was decided in mid-February to hold the Assembly hybrid, i.e., on-site and online, but in a smaller setting.

In mid-February 2022, it was a matter of adjusting our venues to the lower numbers. At the same time, it was important to keep in mind that the pandemic was not over yet and that outbreaks could happen again at any time. Within two weeks, the team worked out a new concept for the logistics with five venues for the plenary events and two venues for the afternoon program so we would have enough flexibility in case of COVID-19 outbreaks during Assembly.

In mid-April 2022, the quarantine was lifted and the Executive Committee decided to allow meetings of the MWC delegates and commissions to take place after all. This meant more preparation of travel documents and logistics for 100 people at the beginning of May.

In our life together and in the planning of events, it was important for us to care for creation. This was shown by the fact that we not only separated the garbage in our house, but also collected compost. The challenge, however, was to find a suitable place for the collected recyclables. In separate packages, they were taken to different places by motorbike. The compost was taken over by the gardener of our housing complex to fertilize the mango trees. The biggest commitment to these efforts came from Lorenzo, a staff member from Indonesia.

On a larger scale, we tried to work plastic-free and also paperless where possible. Some things needed creative ideas. Reusable drinking bottles are not cheap. What can we offer daily participants so they do not need plastic bottles for water? The idea came from Ebenezer from the Philippines: *let's use bamboo cups*. No sooner said than done. We found two carpenters who made the necessary bamboo cups for us, which we then distributed to daily participants.

Besides the pandemic-related barriers, there were also many other barriers to overcome: problems with the immigration office continued; there were floods (the office was approximately 500m from the Java Sea coast); regular power cuts; and some other surprises.

Cultural barriers also played a role. In our household of eight different nations, there were always interesting conversations and learning experiences about cultural differences.



In early June 2022, the rest of the Assembly staff arrived from India, Canada, USA, Germany and Colombia. They were joined by the international choir of 10 people from five continents who began rehearsals. And the MWC global Assembly could begin.

Challenges remained on the agenda: participants tested positive for COVID-19; there were problems with internet; airlines lost luggage; and more.

In all the cultural differences, it was great to see the whole team working together to make the MWC Assembly an inspiring experience for many, and each person stepping in when help was needed.

In all the stress, the team having fun with the Ethiopian song – Geta Geta, coming on stage and dancing and enjoying the moment we have been preparing for so long.

**Liesa Unger**

Germany

MWC chief international events officer

**05** July 2022  
**Tuesday**

Assembly Gathered  
**Following Jesus together  
across barriers**



# Welcome from the National Advisory Council



## Paulus S. Widjaja

National Advisory Council (NAC) chairperson

**W**elcome to Indonesia, my dear siblings. Whether you are from abroad or from Indonesia, I am very happy to see you all in this place. I am also happy because I know that many more are participating in this event from all over the world through the internet.

It all started at the lunch table during the 15th MWC General Assembly in Asuncion, Paraguay, in 2009. As some of the Indonesian delegates and participants were enjoying lunch together, we started to wonder if we, too, can be the host for MWC assembly. As soon as we returned to Indonesia, the leaders of the three Indonesian Mennonite synods agreed to meet together to explore the possibility further. We then submitted an official invitation letter to the MWC Executive Board when they met in Ethiopia in 2010. We were eager to have MWC family come to visit us here in Indonesia. And praise the Lord that during the General Council meeting in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, USA, in 2015, our invitation was officially accepted.

We rushed to start preparing everything. But then COVID-19 came. And I have to confess that there was a time when I did not believe that the MWC General Assembly would ever be possible to happen at all. And yet, this evening we gather together at Sangkakala School of Theology here in Central Java, Indonesia, to begin our journey together. We rejoice that we can be together despite the precautions that are still needed. We may not be able to hug each other, or speak freely to each other without a mask, or even give a handshake to others.

The very fact that this event can take place is because God, whom we know in Jesus Christ, is so gracious to us. And of course, it is also because many good people have worked together very hard to make this happen.

This 17th MWC General Assembly also marks a new way of doing the Assembly by which we can learn, worship and fellowship with participants at satellite locations here in Indonesia and gathering online in groups and families around the world.

After Jesus has risen from the dead, the first thing that he said to his disciples according to the Gospel of Matthew is, “Do not be afraid” (Matthew 28:10 NRSV).

To some extent, we too have passed through death. After more than two years in the shadow of death – of grief and fear and feeling of loss of control – due to this global COVID-19 pandemic,

we are beginning again to open our doors to the world and to gather together in this Assembly.

And so we will begin this assembly with the very same message that Jesus gave his disciples, “Do not be afraid.”

Fear is the greatest enemy of all. In our communities around the world:

- We are afraid of losing our church members, therefore we reshape our churches to be centres for entertainment rather than communities of disciples;
- We are afraid of becoming poor, therefore we exploit the earth to feed our greed;
- We are afraid of being a minority in our societies, therefore we deny hospitality to foreigners and strangers who come to our countries in need;
- We are afraid of death, therefore we demand guns and other tools of violence in our hands so that we can kill those whom we perceive as a threat to us;
- We are afraid of losing power and control over others, therefore we exclude those of different ethnicities, religions, social statuses and even those of different sexual orientations and gender identities.

We need to remind ourselves again and again what Jesus told us two thousand years ago, “Do not be afraid.”

We are celebrating our fellowship this week under the theme, Following Jesus Together Across Barriers.

There is a line in the poem “Mending Wall” by the American poet Robert Frost that says, “Good fences make good neighbors.”

A good fence does seem to make many things in our life clear: my territory, my ethnicity, my religion and even my identity. We want to rely on a good fence to keep us safe and secure.

But this week we will walk and learn and share together to challenge this wisdom.

As members of the Anabaptist-Mennonite family, we should dare say to the world that this so-called wisdom has shown itself to be so destructive. Fences always divide. They divide people against each other, and people against the earth. These barriers, as old as the Great Wall in China, and as new as border walls in Southern Texas and Arizona (USA), Eastern Poland, Bethlehem, in the illegally occupied Donbas (a territory of Ukraine) are also found in our hearts and everyday relationships.

Jesus came to the world precisely to break down these barriers. For Jesus, the correct wisdom was never “good fences make good neighbours,” but always “good neighbours make good fences.”

It was for that very purpose that while Jesus is destroying any kinds of barriers that separate us from the others and the earth, Jesus is also

building up a *diaclesia*, not simply ecclesia, that is, an open church that passes through and crosses over boundaries (Adiprasetya 2018).

As members of the Anabaptist-Mennonite family, we have learned that hospitality is one of the main virtues that we all hold dearly and have strived to practice since our first Anabaptist ancestors in the 16th century. We need to offer unconditional hospitality. A hospitality where the host and the guest stand on the same and equal footing. There is only one set of rules for all; the host and the guest alike. The guest can even change roles and become the host (Derrida 2000), as Jesus did to Zacheus. And as the conversation continues, the roles of the host and the guest can be interchanged so that a true and genuine conversation, *konvivenz*, can take place between them (Yong 2008). It is that kind of hospitality that will enable us to cross all barriers, whether ethnicity, religion, denomination, nationality, sexual orientation and gender identity, and so forth and so on. But to open up our arms and offer hospitality so that we can embrace others and the earth, we must be willing to be vulnerable.

We have long been accustomed not to embracing, but to excluding others and the earth, because “we” want to feel safe and secure from “them”. Too many of us are not bothered by the great walls around us, between us, and within us, since those walls are in fact protecting “us” and keeping away our fear.

Yet the time has come for us to evaluate this kind of artificial safety and security, because if we keep doing what we are doing, no one will remain in the church and on the earth which God created for abundance.

If we can learn anything at all from the COVID-19 pandemic, it is the wisdom that “nobody is safe until everybody is safe.” As long as we are still excluding others and the earth, we will never know real safety and security.

So, dear siblings in Christ, let us join hands—in our hearts and spirits, even if not physically – in following Jesus together across all the barriers that have protected some of us, but not others, across the great walls that have made only a few, safe and secure.

Let us be vulnerable as Jesus was and is, so that we can embrace all our siblings from across God’s world and this earth, no matter how different they may be from us. We need to learn from the ecosystem, that it is precisely our diversities that hold us intact together. We are even baptized by water, so that we, human beings, and the earth can embrace each other and be integrated into each other, not destroy each other. It is not enough to claim unity in diversity. We should be able to go beyond that to claim diversity for unity.

I do not say that we have to embrace one another carelessly and uncritically, without any judgment at all. But I do say that the judgment should not come from a priori, from before we learn to be together. As the experience of living together here in this diverse nation of Indonesia shows us every day, crossing barriers is not about “cheap tolerance,” which requires little effort or commitment, but it is about creating space and time for others, about participating in hospitality.

That is the way that Jesus has demonstrated. He embraces us, and creates a space and time for us, while we are yet sinners. And that same Jesus is also the One who is now calling us, “Follow me” (Matthew 4:9 NRSV). So let us set out together, Following Jesus Together Across Barriers. *Berkah Dalem* (= God bless).

Kopeng, Salatiga – Indonesia, July 5, 2022

**Paulus S. Widjaja**

National Advisory Council (NAC) chairperson

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## Greetings from the host churches



**Teguh Prayoga**

GITJ president



**Agus Mayanto**

Representative of the GKMI synod



**David Meijanto**

JKI vice president

**Today, there are three Anabaptist-Mennonite groups in Indonesia:**

- Gereja Injili di Tanah Jawa (GITJ – Evangelical Church in the Land of Java)
- Gereja Kristen Muria Indonesia (GKMI – Muria Christian Church of Indonesia)
- Jemaat Kristen Indonesia (JKI – Indonesian Christian Congregation)



### GITJ

GITJ exists through the efforts of missionaries Pieter Jansz and Pieter Anthony Jansz. We also had an indigenous evangelist, Tunggul Wulung.

GITJ is the first one (Mennonite church in Indonesia) with 12 members but now we have 120 churches and 45 000 souls as our members

As representative of the GITJ synod, I have only sat in my office for 70 days.

We are a young church and we still have much to learn to work together in synergy with other churches.

Please pray for us that GITJ will keep on our faith in the light of the Holy Spirit to become a creative church, able to face the challenges of this age, so the sign of the kingdom of God will be manifested in this world.

Please pray for us so that we may share the gospel of Christ continually to reach souls for the glory of God.

Congratulations. Together, we celebrate the experience until Sunday.

May the true friend bless each one of us.

Rev. Teguh Prayoga



### GKMI

I stand here as a representative of the GKMI synod, one of the Mennonite churches in Indonesia. In December, it will be 102 years.

Romans 8:35-39 says: "Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will affliction or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or peril or sword?... For I am convinced that neither death, nor life,... nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

I believe the Word of God is fulfilled today.

In the middle of difficulties, we could not imagine that we could gather together as a community of faith together, yet that is what is realized today.

Our dream together seems to be vanishing, especially because of the pandemic which affected the whole world. Fear and worry were always with us. It was difficult to live with joy even for a moment because trauma was everywhere.

All of us here and the brothers and sisters out there; we are confronted by the same enemy that keeps our tears dropping because our hope had come to an end. Our remembrance of those loved ones who have been deceased and this drum of war keeps hitting us, as if our wound cannot heal. Social fragmentation has happened when the world longs to be together to overcome the problems.

But politics has done for the church a seeming beautiful thing. There are problems upon problems that made the word love disappear. Everything becomes amnesia. How to accept others with love and as they are when we can only hear bickering, abuse and violence?

Brothers and sisters, the world is not well.

We are running away from a multidimensional crisis which the world faces. Here, the Lord has reminded us that peace has to be manifested.

In a country that has various tribes, races and religions and belief, with beautiful scenery and culture which are taken by God to become one nation: I would like to say welcome to Indonesia.

In this nation we will make history of coming together in Christ across barriers and across all differences to fight together in Indonesia our homeland.

We are happy to welcome you all global Mennonite community.

We come together not just to share our desire to meet but also in unity we cry out that the possibility may come to this world again and peace become a reality and the Lord be exalted.

At the end, we are glad that you came. Enjoy the colours of our nation. Until you go back home may you have a good impression of us.

*Soli deo gloria. Hallelujah.*

Rev. Agus Wahyuning Mayanto



#### **JKI**

Shalom, brothers and sisters who are the love of Christ.

I am a representative of the JKI synod, the member of Mennonite churches which is the youngest.

I welcome all participants in the MWC Assembly today. It is a great grace of our God that we can celebrate the Assembly in Indonesia, especially in Central Java.

We are facing such a rapid change and we are entering a new normal. There are things we are freely doing but at this moment we cannot do it freely as before.

But the Lord has let this happen to bring us to understand that truly the Lord wants to equip us even more to be used by him.

In the end, enjoy this Mennonite World Conference, and may the Lord enrich each one of us with his wisdom. God bless you all.

Pastor David Meijanto

## President's welcome



### J. Nelson Kraybill

MWC president  
(2015-2022)

Sisters and brothers, welcome to Indonesia 2022; the 17th global Assembly of Mennonite people around the world.

The theme of our Assembly is following Jesus across barriers. When we chose that theme several years ago, we could not have imagined the barriers we would face.

The last several years have been challenging and sometimes very painful.

The pandemic closed many church buildings, but the church stayed open.

For some, COVID-19 brought the loss of employment or, even more painfully, the loss of loved ones.

But God brought us through the valley of the shadow of death. Nothing can stop us now.

And we've had opportunities for witness. I think of the Anabaptists of Holy Stadium who hosted vaccinations for 350,000 people.

During the pandemic, we met online to pray together as a global family for the first time.

And now we here have the joy of gathering in person.

Because of the pandemic our numbers are smaller, but the Spirit is here and we gather by the grace of God.

Thank you for joining this celebration. Expect God's move among us. Maranatha! Come, Lord Jesus.

**J. Nelson Kraybill,**  
MWC president (2015-2022)





**Timothy J. Geddert**

Timothy J. Geddert is a professor of New Testament at Fresno Pacific University (Biblical Seminary) in Fresno, California, USA. He is a member of North Fresno Mennonite Brethren Church, California, USA.

**This is a portrait of what God is like, hearing the pleading cries of those in need, breaking through the barriers in a response of generous grace.**

## Following Jesus together across barriers

Mark 7:24-30

Jesus is exhausted, frustrated probably! He recently planned a retreat with his disciples, but clamouring crowds get in the way. So, he spends a full day teaching and organizing food for 5 000 people.

Next comes a night of prayer and then a stroll across the Sea of Galilee. He sees his disciples struggling against the wind. His plan is to walk past them and reveal his divine identity, but they completely miss the point. So, he miraculously calms the storm, and sighs that they just don't understand anything!

Then comes a heated confrontation with narrow-minded religious leaders and a disappointing conversation with his *dull-minded* disciples (Jesus's words, not mine!).

He needs a break. So, he heads for the nearest resort town on the Mediterranean Coast – something like a beach resort on the coast of California, or Bali, or Tenerife or Rio. Again, his plans are foiled: (I quote) "He did not want anyone to know it; yet he could not keep his presence secret!"

Did you notice how the human and divine aspects of Jesus intertwine in this section of Mark's Gospel? Jesus miraculously multiplies loaves, walks on water, identifies himself as "I AM." Yet he's tired, frustrated, unable to follow through on carefully made plans.

"Jesus is the centre of our faith."

- the **human** Jesus, who learned and lived and served and suffered and experienced all sorts of human limitations, as we all do.
- the **divine** Jesus, who exists from all eternity as the second person of the Trinity, creator of heaven and earth, worthy of all honour and worship as GOD!

This "divine-human Jesus" is the centre of our faith.

The faithful church has always confessed that Jesus is fully human and fully divine. That is the mystery we call "the Incarnation": God becoming a human person, uniting forever in the person of Jesus, divinity and humanity.

The Incarnation is the greatest barrier-crossing event in the history of the universe. In Jesus, the barrier has been crossed between eternity and time, spirit and matter, Creator and creation. And because of this, we can be confident that the great barrier still separating God and God's faithful people will one day be gone forever.

After the great **barrier-crossing** event we call “Incarnation,” Jesus just kept right on crossing barriers: between rich and poor, powerful and powerless, male and female, sacred and secular, clean and unclean, Jew and Gentile.

Because Jesus is fully divine and fully human, we do well to explore Gospel narratives with two questions in mind:

1. What does Jesus, the *incarnate* Jesus, God in the flesh, reveal to us about what God is like? and,
2. What does Jesus, the *fully human* Jesus, reveal about how we should relate to God and to each other?

In many texts, the divine aspects of Jesus seem to be in the forefront. In Mark’s text about Jesus and the Syrophenician woman, the human aspects shine through pretty clearly.

God in the flesh cannot even keep his presence secret. A woman shows up – a very unlikely candidate for Jesus’s ministry. A woman, a Gentile, a Syrophenician; the nearest biblical equivalent would be Queen Jezebel! Jesus is not amused. And if we don’t listen carefully, it sounds as though Jesus simply insults her! “What? Throw good food to a dog? No way!”

Wait! What? Is this Jesus talking?

If that is all we hear, we are not listening carefully. It is true that Jews sometimes called Gentiles “dogs! (*kunes*.)” Not house pets: wild, unclean, dogs that roam the streets. Yet Jesus here uses a different word! If your translation doesn’t make that obvious, check the footnotes. He refers to (*kunaria*), puppies, “dear little puppies,” house pets surrounding “**the kids**” who are eating at the table. The text sounds quite different already, doesn’t it? And note that Jesus does not actually call her a puppy; he’s using a metaphor! And did you notice that in English I just called the children little goats? (That’s what “kids” actually means!)

Jesus’s metaphor is not designed to be offensive, any more than mine was. He’s not demeaning her. He knows that one day Gentiles will be fully equal partners with the Jews in the people of God.

The real problem with this text is not that Jesus talks about puppies; it is that Jesus denies her request! “I’m on vacation! It is not a good time. Sorry, your request is denied!” But again, let’s listen more carefully. “First, let the children eat all they want.”

“First...” Jesus is not saying, “No”; he is saying “Not, yet!” Some things need to happen first! Jesus knows the divine plan for the salvation of the world, “First the Jew, then the Gentile.” First the blessing to Abraham and his descendants, then *through them* to the rest of the world. Jesus came to save *the whole world!*

That is why he starts with Israel, recruiting and training those he will commission to spread the good news to the ends of the earth!

And this spunky, persistent, faith-filled woman agrees! “Yes! Yes, Lord! First, the children! So, I won’t ask for a seat at the table ... *not yet!* I’ll just wait for a tiny crumb to fall from the table *now already*. That’s all I’ll need!” Her clever and faith-filled response is enough to make Jesus change his mind!

Martin Luther put it this way: “Behind Jesus’s ‘No,’ she heard God’s secret ‘Yes.’”

Jesus did not come to Tyre to do ministry, but he ends up doing it. Jesus did not plan to start ministering to Gentiles, not yet, but he ends up doing exactly that. Jesus has his plans in place, but he changes his mind. Or maybe we should say *she* changes his mind.

In fact, she does even more than that. She becomes the instrument through whom Jesus learns which “next step” he should take in doing his Father’s will.

Why should that surprise us? He is showing us how to be responsive to the needs of others – others whom God will often use to help us discover our own ministry calling. Jesus is showing us what our redeemed humanity ought to look like. At the same time, this is a portrait of what God is like, hearing the pleading cries of those in need, breaking through the barriers in a response of generous grace.

May we learn from Jesus what God is truly like, crafting a plan to save the world, working in time and space to bring that plan to its glorious fulfillment and pouring out grace on individuals all along the way. May we learn from Jesus what we are called to be, barrier crossers who minister God’s grace to others. And may we learn from the Syrophenician woman what it takes to cross barriers, reaching out in courageous faith to connect with the heart of Jesus, the divine-human Jesus, who is the centre of our faith.

And may all that we do in these next four days together – listening, praying, singing, worshipping and celebrating the diversity of God’s family – give us glimpses of what Jesus is doing among us, and around the world that he came to save.



## **Location Host: Sekolah Tinggi Theologia Sangkakala**

Sekolah Tinggi Theologia Sangkakala (STT) is a Bible college run by JKI. This open-air venue hosted morning and evening sessions for on-site Assembly attendees.

**06** July 2022  
**Wednesday**

Assembly Gathered  
**Learning together**





**Anne-Cathy  
Graber**

Anne-Cathy Graber is a Mennonite pastor and theologian and a consecrated sister in the Chemin Neuf community in Paris, France. She serves the MWC Faith and Life Commission as representative to the Global Christian Forum and the World Council of Churches Faith and Order Commission. She worships with Église Évangélique Mennonite de Châtenay-Malabry, Paris, France.

## Faith & Life Commission **Learning together to discern the will of God**

*Acts 11:19–30*

“**L**earning together to discern the will of God”: the first Christians were confronted with this challenge from the beginning. Indeed, “learning together to discern the will of God” is not mere wishful thinking! It is not a comfortable process. In fact, it is the major challenge of Christian life; of our personal lives as well as those of our local congregations.

To consider this challenge, I suggest returning to a fundamental moment in time, an original moment: the time when the disciples were called Christians: “The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch” (Acts 11:26).

To my great surprise, reading and meditating on this episode in the history of the church would force me to question what I believed I knew. This shift came when I observed that the period in which the name “Christian” was given to believers was anything but idyllic. It was not so much the context of persecution – or “distress” as described in the text – that was the most dangerous threat to the emerging Christian church. No, the most surprising thing for me was to realize that this beautiful moment, this moment when they received a “name,” moreover including the name of Christ, corresponded in reality to a situation wherein the major threat for the new believers was one of division, that of internal division.

On one hand, there is the community of Jerusalem, the mother community, the oldest and culturally Jewish. On the other, there is the Antioch community: culturally Greek and a younger and more dynamic community with greater growth and more visible fruit! So, on one side there are those who proclaim the Word exclusively to the Jews, and on the other side, those who proclaim the good news to the pagans, the Greeks.

Two styles: the elders close to tradition, and the younger ones, without a doubt more inventive and with greater freedom!

Thus, two ways of being and two evangelistic projects. In such a situation, how can they continue to learn together? How can they discern the will of God together?

From the beginning, the first Christians were painfully confronted with this challenge. We can apply this to our situation today: What do the Mennonites of present-day Europe – where Anabaptism first got started – have in common

with the Mennonites of other continents, with the younger and more dynamic churches?

Let's return to our story of the Acts of the Apostles: what are the reasons that schism did not take place, at least not at that moment, even though all the ingredients of division were present? What were the steps taken in the process of discernment?

First, we notice that the mother church (that of Jerusalem) chooses to send a man, Barnabas, who is not a high-profile individual, at least not then. It is the attitude of this man that is the decisive factor and will make the bonds unity possible: "When he arrived and saw what the grace of God had done, he was glad and encouraged them all..." (Acts 11:23)

So, Barnabas first begins by taking time to observe, not scrutinizing with judgment, but rather with a gaze of amazement. He is not afraid of newness! Without a doubt he saw all the risks that this young, dynamic community was facing, all the potential deviations, and rightly so, since otherwise Jerusalem would not have sent him. But his first impression is one of amazement of what he sees the other is experiencing, giving thanks for the fruits others are bearing.

This is the first step in the process: to have a vision of kindness and admiring the good in the other, the good in the church of the other. Wouldn't the relationships between our countries and different cultures change if we dared to admire the other? Are Westerners ready to appreciate what is happening elsewhere and learn from others? Are we ready for this conversion of our perspectives?

Once again, let us return to our story! Barnabas is not blissfully optimistic for what is bearing fruit! True kindness, genuine goodness does not exclude the task of examining the truth

which makes things firm. And so, in a second step, we see how Barnabas takes the initiative to go find Paul and bring him back to Antioch so that the two of them can teach this new, young community for one year.

There is, however, a small detail, which, in reality, is not a small one: Paul and Barnabas do not only have the role of teachers. It is said that they "met with the church" (Acts 11:26) They are not afraid to be "one among others", to be on equal footing in a relationship of reciprocity where everyone takes part in the conversation. This happens over time; a one-year period, allowing them to build relationships and become familiar with the situation from the inside. This is the second step in the process.

Let us go back to the young church in Antioch. It is not afraid to welcome someone sent by the mother church, to accept being taught by a person coming from a community that is much less dynamic and apparently bearing less fruit. It is not afraid of accepting others.

But the story is not finished. The young church would, in turn, take care of the mother church. During a time of famine, it would organize a fundraiser and send money to Judea (Acts 11:27-30). There is genuine reciprocity in this concrete care of one another!

The moment when the believers receive the beautiful name "Christian," is therefore the moment when they accept not to remain in their way of seeing, only depending on their ethnicity, their culture, or their local reality. "To learn together" is accepting the risk of crossing boundaries, because we belong to one and very same body, because "we are members one of another" (Romans 12:5).

We are of the same flesh, that of the Body of Christ.





Larissa Swartz

Larissa Swartz serves as chair of the Young Anabaptists (YABs) Committee (2015-2022). Currently, she is transitioning to New York City to be a part of a house church movement.

As we become continually transformed into the image of Christ, may our ability to learn together in all humility and integrity lead to greater discernment through the Spirit to know the truth and display what it means to live our lives according to it.

YABs (Young AnaBaptists) Committee

## Learning together to handle diversity in faith perspectives

*Psalm 119, 1 Corinthians 2, 1 John 4:1, 1 Thessalonians 5:21, Luke 12:48, Ephesians 4:14-15*

There have always been two main kinds of learning: academic and experiential. Most of us have an inclination toward one or the other, but the reality is that both are necessary for learning. Knowledge doesn't do anyone much good if it's not applied. Alternatively, it's often counterproductive and wasteful to implement something without prior investigation. Navigating diverse perspectives could be understood in multiple contexts whether that relates to our global Anabaptist family, the worldwide body of Christ, or our broader multicultural society. Our ability to learn from someone is only limited by our ability to see the image of God in each person, and our openness to allow the Spirit of Christ in us to teach us through any person or situation – no matter how different, uncomfortable, or unlikeable. In thinking about what it looks like for us to learn together as a global Anabaptist family, four essential qualities that Jesus displayed come to mind: **humility, integrity, discernment and responsibility.**

### Humility and integrity

Humility and integrity are equally tied to our identity in Christ. Psalm 119 starts with: "*Happy are the people who walk with integrity, who live according to the teachings of the Eternal*" (The Voice). If we know who we are as beloved children of the Father saved by grace through faith, we are able to engage in conversations with diverse perspectives humbly and without feeling prideful or defensive. Knowing who and whose we are gives us security so that we can act with integrity in diverse settings.

Jesus is clear: if we abide in him, we will do what he commands, and our lives will show it. The more up front we are about who we are and who we follow, the less people are surprised when we behave a certain way, and they are forced to make a choice in response. In the same way, Jesus knew his identity as the Son of God and his calling from an early age, which shaped his priorities, his ministry and how people reacted to him.

To operate in our own calling as priests and ambassadors of God, we must know who we are in relation to our Father. When we are confident in who we are because of our Father's love and forgiveness, we are free to extend the same without expectations. Jesus knew he was the beloved Son of God and yet he came to serve, not be served. We are able to live in that same identity of divine sonship and servanthood that he modelled for us.

### Discernment

Discernment is not so glamorous, but I've realized lately it will become more essential for the church as the noise and news and never-ending reels inundate us with information – both true and false. How – amid the clamour of voices in the world – are we to learn from others while discerning and bearing witness to what is true and authentic?

A pastor recently reframed discernment for me as being able to identify the source: the world, our flesh, Satan or the Spirit. Our ability to do this is something that only comes through the Spirit. One passage of Scripture that illustrates this is 1 Corinthians 2: "for the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God .... Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that is from God, so that we may understand the gifts bestowed on us by God.... Those who are spiritual discern all things.... But we have the mind of Christ."

One of the most difficult things to learn to trust is someone else's experience of God. Among Christians, there is a wide range of how people experience their relationship with God and discern God's direction and guidance in their lives. Sometimes we evaluate learning from others as if we are always learning directly from God. But what we learn from others isn't always from God or aligned with God's Word. This is something that is discerned by the Spirit, with whom we should always be testing everything we receive (1 John 4:1, 1 Thessalonians 5:21) – whether prophecy, teaching, or experiences – and measuring it against God's Word.

### Responsibility

Responsibility is the most dangerous thing that comes with learning. It's a kingdom principle that with knowledge and blessings come responsibility to steward them well before God. "When someone has been given much, much will be required in return; and when someone has been entrusted with much, even more will be required" (Luke 12:48, NLT).

Therein lies the danger of one-sided learning: acquiring knowledge without putting it into practice. This particularly applies to the West and to those of us who have grown up in

Christian environments. Even so, having less does not exempt anyone from responsibility. There is so much available in my culture to resource people from books, to conferences, to social media content, to retreats to cohorts – any kind of content you want, you can find. I wonder sometimes what would happen to the church in the West if all of that was taken away. If all we were left with was the Word of God, the created world, and the people of God directed by God's Spirit, would that be enough for us to learn?

I'm not saying we need to disregard all the resources out there, but my concern, even as I evaluate my own life, is how easily I can turn to other sources for growth and knowledge than the true Source. And more importantly, what am I doing with all I have learned and gained?

This is my challenge to you, dear brothers and sisters, in these tumultuous times, to, as Ephesians puts it, "no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by people's trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming. But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ" (Ephesians 4:14-15). As we become continually transformed into the image of Christ, may our ability to learn together in all humility and integrity lead to greater discernment through the Spirit to know truth and display what it means to live our lives according to it.

This is the kingdom Jesus initiated, and this is our calling as the body of Christ: to flesh it out for the world to see.

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### Discussion questions

1. In what contexts do you find it most difficult to engage with diverse perspectives? Within Mennonite World Conference? Across different denominations? Between different religious? What is it about that specific context that makes it more difficult than others?
2. Evaluate yourself in light of these four qualities (humility, integrity, discernment and responsibility). How would you rate your reflection of Christ's character in these areas?
3. Share a story of when you learned something from someone unexpected or someone you disliked. How did Jesus teach you through that experience?
4. For personal reflection: What are some ways you can steward what you have received from the Lord in terms of knowledge, gifting, experience, finances, etc.?



**Salomé  
Haldemann**

**Salomé Haldemann is a trained occupational therapist and a graduate of theology and peace studies at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Indiana, USA. She interns as a pastor of Eglise Evangélique Mennonite de Béthel, Neuf-Brisach, France.**

## Practice before the storm

*Matthew 7:24-27*

**W**hen he was 17, my grandfather was forced to fight in World War II (WWII). When I started talking about my plans to study peace and peace theology, he got a little upset. He said: “You talk about peace and war, but you don’t know what you’re talking about! When war comes, you don’t have any choice. There is **nothing** you can do!” At that time, I believed that what Western Europe was missing during World War II was good peace theology. Which we have now, so we’ll be fine. Or so I thought.

A few months ago (and about 80 years after WWII), war broke out in Ukraine. And while our brothers and sisters in Ukraine face the evils of war, many Mennonites in Western Europe are shocked by the nearness and the reality of war. Our many years of good peace theology are forgotten. We feel again like my grandfather felt: “There is nothing we can do”. Suddenly, for many peace-believing Christians, the only possible option is violent engagement. We affirmed nonviolence when our context was peaceful, but in the face of war we see nonviolent resistance as naive and unrealistic. We have many good peace theologians, but now what they were saying has become irrelevant. Today, we are afraid that war may overtake Europe. Suddenly our theology and our beliefs feel obsolete. A storm took over Europe, and our convictions collapsed. Storms tend to do that: they break the things that we thought were solid and strong.

The Scripture we read today is the closing argument of the Sermon on the Mount. This sermon is a collection of teachings of Jesus, addressed to people living in difficult times. At that time, Palestine was under Roman occupation, and the Jews struggled under the oppression of a violent regime. Heavy taxation, forced labour and sexual abuse were part of their daily life. Yet, Jesus calls them, the people oppressed by imperial Rome, to collectively love their enemies and to not resist the evildoer. And he warns them that this will be really hard to do, and that they may pay it with their lives.

Somehow, the crowds seem to like what they hear. “Wow, Jesus sure has a lot of charisma, see how he teaches! The authority!” Jesus probably knows that many of his listeners are just curious. They’re here to see what the fuss is about, to listen, discuss, comment... and they won’t act on his teachings or practise them. But

a storm is coming that will put all their ideas and beliefs to the test. For the people sitting on the mount and listening to Jesus, the war with Rome is about to get a lot worse. For Matthew's readers, persecution will afflict those who decide to follow the Way of Christ. And these storms will break some of the opinions and beliefs that felt so very solid.

However, there is a way for beliefs to survive the storm. Jesus talks about two houses, one built on rock, the other on sand. The storm came for both. "The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house", but one house fell and the other one did not. The difference between the two houses is their foundation. The foundation of the house is not believing or not in Jesus. Jesus tells us that the rock foundations are the **practice** of his words.

In the story he tells, both men have heard the words of Jesus, but only the wise man **acted on them**. Other translations have "put them into practice." It's acting on the words of Jesus, again and again, day in and day out, that prepares us for the storm. Because the storm will come anyway. There's only one way for us to stand firm in the storm: practise! Practise the love of enemies, practise nonviolent resistance, practice disarming the oppressor without harming the oppressor. This is something we can all practise together.

If we practise together, we learn together. Before I was a pastor, I was an occupational therapist. The core idea in occupational therapy is that the brain and the body learn by doing. When we do something new, neurons in our body connect in new ways. When we repeat and practise, the connections grow stronger. After a while, we can do that new thing in different situations, without having to think about it anymore.

When we practise, we learn. That also means that if we want to learn, we need to practise. In theory, I believe I could run a marathon. But I'll only be able to do it if I practise running. The same goes for a radical peace witness, or nonviolent resistance. In Western Europe, when we Mennonites talk about peace, we spend a lot of time talking about how we should act in different situations. And most of the time, that's all we do. When the war actually comes, that's when we should start doing what we've been discussing. But the middle of the storm is not the right time to learn how to act.

Don't wait for the storm to figure out if your foundation is solid. Make sure it is. How? With practice! Mennonites are used to hearing calls to nonviolent resistance at Assembly.

At the 1967 MWC Assembly in Amsterdam, Vincent Harding called on Mennonites to come alongside our Black sisters and brothers in the

freedom struggle, to come alongside the many revolutionary movements around the world.

At the 1984 Assembly in Strasbourg, Ron Sider urged the church to develop a highly trained peacemaking task force – which sparked the creation of Community Peacemakers Team.

But most of us have stayed on the sidelines, where things are comfortable. In a nice little house on the beach.

What does it look like to practise love of the enemy on a collective level in our time and place? It may very well look like nonviolent war resistance. Maybe Mennonites could prepare for war resistance with an "anti-military service," like a nonviolent resistance boot camp. Nations prepare for war with military service. There is first-aid training for emergency health care. It might be time for us to create a widespread training for regular church people to learn and practise the basics of civil resistance.

Some people do and will commit their whole life to nonviolent peacemaking, and we desperately need people like that. But we also need a foundation of practice for the whole church.



In most of Europe, we have more experience in discussion and debate than we do in activism, war resistance, revolution or social change. We need the help of the global church if we want to find our footing in the field of practice. We know that we have brothers and sisters who have experience in nonviolent resistance. Please train us. Practise with us. So we can learn together. That's how we'll hold fast when the storms come.



**Location Host: GITJ Jepara**

GITJ Jepara is located in a regional city known for woodcarving and proximity to beaches. The congregation is active in preservation of Javanese language and culture and in interfaith relations with a nearby Sufi school.

**07** July 2022  
**Thursday**

Assembly Gathered  
**Living together**





**Adriana  
Belinda  
Rodríguez  
Velásquez**

Adriana Belinda Rodríguez Velásquez is a psychologist, counsellor, wife and grandmother, and a member of MWC's Peace Commission. She is a member of Caminando con Dios, part of the Iglesia Evangélica Menonita Hondureña.

## Peace Commission **Living the good life is good and even necessary**

*Genesis 33:10, Psalm 133:1,  
Ecclesiastes 4:9-12,  
Jeremiah 29:11, Mark 2:1-12,  
Hebrews 13:16, Acts 2:1-2*

“**H**ow very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity.” Psalm 133:1 is an affirmation of how the biblical David delighted in the company of his brothers. As a social species, humans need the fellowship of others. Through fellowship, we witness to and live out our faith; it is where we receive mutual support because we all depend on others in one way or another for material, emotional and spiritual support.

Fellowship, the opportunity to share life with others, is a gift from God. From birth, we seek acceptance from others and we depend upon the loving care of family. Sibling relationships and friendships encourage and guide us, making our lives easier, especially in those difficult moments we all must face.

Living in fellowship is God's gift to us.

We were created as social beings to share with others; this is part of God's plan for us – and God's plans are good and perfect.

Jeremiah 29:11 tells us that God's plans for us are to prosper us and not to harm us. We can realize that living with others produces many benefits that we ignore and therefore sometimes we work against ourselves and others.

Research has proved that fellowship is good for our physical and mental health just as Ecclesiastes illustrates in chapter 4:9-12: “Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up the other; but woe to the one who is alone and falls and does not have another to help. Again, if two lie together, they keep warm; but how can one keep warm alone? And though one might prevail against another, two will withstand one. A threefold cord is not quickly broken.”

In another example, when Jacob met Esau again after a lengthy separation due to their differences, his face displayed his joy of knowing that they could count on one another and he said: “... truly to see your face is like seeing the face of God” (Genesis 33:10). This anecdote is evidence that being able to count on one another is a gift from God.

According to the Apostle, Paul, this is a Christian obligation: Hebrews 13:16: “Do not

neglect to do good and share what you have” ... Sharing is an indispensable characteristic of living with or in fellowship and implicates other people with different ways of doing so.

We need to understand that as children of God, we are predestined to live well and we must do so while interacting with everyone else – in communion. This lifestyle that includes relationships with other people happens in a special way that overcomes all the barriers that can come between us. The Holy Spirit manifested powerfully during Pentecost when people were together in unity (Acts 2:1-2).

In the book of Mark 2:1-12 we find the story of the paralyzed man who benefited due to the efforts of friends, neighbours, siblings (I don't know; there aren't a lot of details). There were many barriers they faced, among them the great crowd that blocked the way, and they had to carry him.

Can you imagine how much effort it took to get him onto the roof of the house, make a hole in it, and then lower a dead weight? It took enormous strength and commitment. It is redundant to say that without the effort of those who carried the paralyzed man, he would not have experienced the miracle.

We can identify the characteristics of these people (the paralytic's friends) that enable effective fellowship – love, service, unity, empathy, kindness, patience and faith – without which it would not have been possible to attain the final victory for this man.

Throughout the Bible there are stories that help us identify the advantages of learning to practice healthy fellowship with others: the beautiful friendship between David and Jonathan; or Mary, Martha and Lazarus with Jesus.

It is important to note that time spent with friends, conversing about our projects, creates

emotional bonds; improves our self-esteem; releases stress; is therapeutic. We laugh and this produces positive reactions within our body, we share our concerns which lightens the load, and people enjoy being sociable creating healthier lifestyles as a result.

It is important to highlight that we build life through life-giving messages and actions. A positive attitude makes us likeable, sought after, followed.

If we want to be peacemakers, a positive attitude should be part of our daily lifestyle. Our world needs these peacebuilding actions that create healthy fellowship, tolerance and solidarity. We need to commit ourselves to doing good, to the divine project of love and at times give more than is expected of us. As children of God, we must make manifest the divine plan of abundant life, seeing the face of God in the face of our neighbour.

These characteristics have to do with harmonious relationships, mutual support, sharing time, laughter, agreement and even disagreement. That is life.

What is the key to living this way? Approach others with empathy, love, solidarity, willingness and faith. It will always be necessary to know how much life we have to offer others, how connected we are to the well of life so that we can definitely transmit it to others.

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### Discussion questions

1. How much are you doing to respond to the commitment to live with other people in healthy fellowship?
2. What does it mean for you to live with others? Are you part of a healthy body or part of one that creates pain?





**Ebenezer G. Mondez**

**Ebenezer G. Mondez is the YABs (Young AnaBaptists) Committee representative for Asia and the Pacific (2015-2022) and YABs mentor (2022-2028). He is a member of Lumban Mennonite Bible Church, Philippines.**

**Our struggles are our constant reminder that God is our help. Now, we need God more than ever.**

## YABs (Young AnaBaptists) Committee

# We are the hands of God in times of crisis

*Psalm 9:9, Romans 15:13*

**A** year ago, our conference leader – whom you might remember as “the Hallelujah man” – Bishop Ambrocio Porcincula died due to stroke. I want to remember him today, because he is close to me like my own grandfather. As far as I know, he never skipped the MWC Assembly ever since he started joining. I know he would be here too if he were still alive, and he would be proud of me standing on the stage today.

Three days after my bishop’s death, my father tested positive for COVID-19 and got a severe pneumonia. It was one of the worst crises we ever experienced as a church and as a family because my father is the next person to lead the conference after Bishop Porcincula’s death. During our time of mourning, my father’s life was also hanging on a thin thread.

I thought we will lose my father too, because we could not find a hospital that would take him in. But even though me and my siblings were deeply distraught, we gathered our faith and agreed to take care of our father at home. We did our best to get everything he needed as much as we could to help him survive.

I could not imagine a second death of a loved one and a church father to all; it would be devastating. But, in the middle of our struggle, we found comfort in the knowledge that God is in control. We found peace in faith that whatever happens, it is God’s will.

After two weeks of home care, my father recovered and was healed by the Lord.

I believe my family’s COVID crisis story is just one of millions. None of us are free from crisis these past two years, but despite the presence of affliction and pain, our faith is our constant source of peace.

Many people are suffering — crushed by the weight of their troubles. But Psalm 9:9 says the Lord is a refuge for them, a safe place they can run to.

Our struggles are our constant reminder that God is our help. Now, we need God more than ever.

As a communion, we are praying about the struggles of our churches in India as they are facing persecution because of their Christian beliefs. In Myanmar, our brothers and sisters are suffering from political uncertainties that resulted

in violence. And in Ukraine, many are displaced due to war.

But despite all of that, we are here: you came! For those who are online: you are showing up! (It's either you need to wake up too early or stay up late, but you show up!)

Isn't it beautiful to see each other again? Isn't it beautiful to see the gathering of your brothers and sisters in this place today?

Isn't it beautiful that despite the pandemic and war, we registered early this year and trusted that everything would be fine by July? That was a huge leap of faith!

As part of the registration team, I am amazed to see how a lot of you registered immediately as soon as we opened the on-site registration. You registered early despite the uncertainties happening around us. During that time, we didn't even know how the war in Ukraine would turn, but still people from Europe were some of the first people to register.

Today, I want to remember our brothers and sisters in Ukraine. Many of them choose to stay in the middle of the war and help with those who are in need. Anabaptist-Mennonite churches gather whatever they can to help the people of Ukraine. War is ugly but when people choose to come together, helping each other in times of need, it is a beautiful sight.

In times of trouble, we are the extension of God's hands. The miracles of God come through us.

That is what living together in times of crisis looks like. We forget about our differences, our disagreements, and find our common goal for peace. Peace is not a destination, but a journey and on that journey, we cannot walk it alone; we need each other.

To everyone who responds to their brothers' and sisters' call for help; to those who give donations; for you who volunteer; to those who help people find justice; to those who take care of people that are strangers – thank you!

You already took one step closer to peaceful world we all desire. You are the extension of God's arm.

Now I challenge everyone to do the same for our brothers and sisters in India and Myanmar too. Let us try to learn more about their situation and find out how we can be the physical hands of Christ in their time of need.

A year ago, during our COVID crisis, my family needed to stay in home isolation for more than a month while my dad recovered from COVID. We needed to depend on the generosity of our friends and churchmates for all our needs like food, oxygen refills and medicine. Looking back on how God used people to provide for our needs during the time we needed them most

still amazes me. Even in the middle of the night, there were people who did not hesitate to offer help. Even the most unexpected person, whom you think cannot give you anything because they are also in need, would knock on our gate to give us something out of genuine care for us.

Truly, crisis and hardships bring out the best in us. We see the hands of God working through all of us.

I want to end with Romans 15:13 which says: "I pray that the God who gives hope will fill you with much joy and peace as you trust in him. Then you will have more and more hope, and it will flow out of you by the power of the Holy Spirit" (ERV).

Trust in the power of the Holy Spirit that there is hope in this difficult time. We, as a communion of churches, will be each other's help in times of need. When the power of the Holy Spirit flows through us you cannot help but take action. The Holy Spirit is our driving force to reach out to those who are in need. And this is what living together in times of crisis look like for those who follow Christ.

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### Discussion questions

1. What is the worst crisis you experience these past years that tested your faith?
2. How did you experience God's helping hand in times of crisis?
3. If you had the ability to stop one crisis/conflict in this world, what would it be and what makes it important for you?

# We do not lose heart

## 2 Corinthians 4:1–17

Evening plenary



**Jeremiah  
Choi**

**Jeremiah Choi serves as pastor of Agape Mennonite Church, Hong Kong, and as Mennonite World Conference regional representative for Northeast Asia. He is also trained as a composer.**

In April, I received an invitation of sharing on the topic “living together in the hostile environment.”

The title really stirred my heart. And I think one of the reasons of my invitation is that they know we Hong Kong people were living in a hostile environment in the past few years, an environment that was not favourable to us.

And the Scripture that caught my eyesight was 2 Corinthians 4:1.

“Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not” (KJV).

As a man of 60-some years, I grew up in a very good environment, I would say. Before all these changes, when people asked me how good Hong Kong is, I would say that Hong Kong is very good. If you live in Hong Kong, you’ll feel safe – let’s say you can walk on the street even at midnight; you’ll enjoy freedom of speech; good education system; good and low-priced hospitals; access to a job if you’re willing to work. And most of all, things work in Hong Kong.

However, it has changed. The Hong Kong I’m living in now is not the Hong Kong I used to know. Some people will say that it started in the year 2014. For me, the significant changes started in 2019.

On 4 June 2019, more than 180 000 people gathered at Hong Kong’s Victoria Park to commemorate 30 years since the Tiananmen Square crackdown.

On 9 June 2019, more than 1 000 000 people went out to the streets: they struck, they sang hymns.

It was basically a peaceful protest. However, one day after, there were clashes between police and anti-extradition bill demonstrators.

On 12 June 2019, Hong Kong faced more protests against the extradition law change. This time, many church leaders came out and spoke to the government. Some brothers and sisters prayed and sang hymns in the spot. Christians were caring for peace and nonviolence in all the actions. Many people followed the Christians to sing the chorus: “Sing Hallelujah to the Lord” on the streets. This time, more than 2 000 000 people came out to protest for their freedom.

Since then, protest and demonstrations never ceased. As time goes on, both the police and the demonstrators have gotten more and more violent. I have never seen this since 1968.

The slogan of the demonstrators changed from “Hong Kong people: add oil” to “Hong

Kong people: protest” to “Hong Kong people: revenge”

For some time, there were protest almost every day. By the end of 2019, more than 7 000 people had already been arrested by the police.

“Where should we stand?” People outside the church want to know the church’s position. People inside the church ask their church leaders on which side their churches are standing.

In fact, Hong Kong people are divided into the Blue and the Yellow. The Blue are those who are for the government and the police. The Yellow are those who are against them.

There are conflicts in this society, in the families and in the churches. There is no peace. Our challenge is that: how to be a peacemaker when others choose to be violent? And how to live together in a hostile environment?

What positions are the churches taking?

I will never forget this: On 12 June 2019, I was standing in the middle of the road next to the Hong Kong government headquarters. On my right hand, there were Christians singing hymns and praying for Hong Kong, while on my left hand, there were protesters trying hard to block the main road outside.

In Hong Kong, some churches choose to stand on the Yellow side, and some choose the Blue. However, we Mennonites, as a Peace Church, we choose standing on Jesus’s side. We want to be a bridge between the Yellow and the Blue, a bridge between the peaceful and the violent, a bridge between the people and the government, a bridge between the protesters and the police. We have the obligation to promote peace. We regard that this is a way to follow Jesus and “Here we stand!”

Right now, people are leaving Hong Kong. In our church, Agape Mennonite Church, 10 percent of our members already gone, mainly immigrated to England. And people are still planning to leave Hong Kong, to seek for a place of freedom, a place of hope.

Many years ago, I wrote a song inspired by a poem.

The title is like this: “Running away from famine – 3 million refugees leaving their hometown painfully.”

The poem was written in the year 1933. It describes the situation and feeling of refugees who moved to the northeast of China from their motherland because they had nothing to eat.

However, by that time, the northeast of China was under the control of the Japanese army. For me, they were running away from a place of hopelessness to a place of hopelessness. It touched my heart, and so I wrote a 13-minute chorus.

For these people, they did not know what their fate will be. They would not know what would happen after they went to the northeast. One thing they did know was that if they didn’t leave they would die.

Many people describe the immigrants from Hong Kong as refugees. If you immigrate, you’ll make good plans. If you don’t have any plans or if it is not your plan to immigrate, then you are a refugee.

Why do they leave Hong Kong? They are afraid of tomorrow. They have lost their hearts for Hong Kong.

In 2 Corinthians 4:1, the apostle Paul encourages the church:

“Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not.” (KJV)

Paul encourages them not to lose heart. Why? Paul says that it is because “we have this ministry.”

Brothers and sisters, I’m telling you now that I’m not going to leave Hong Kong. We pastors are at high risk. We are the ones who need to leave. But I’m not going to leave because I am called to stay and to build the Mennonite churches in Hong Kong until I have finished my task and until I receive a new call from my boss, my heavenly Father.

Brothers and sisters, if you are in time of darkness, if you are facing an unpredictable tomorrow, if you are disappointed with people, just look up to God and look back to your calling.

At the end, I would like to draw your attention to the prayer of apostle Paul in Ephesians 1:17-19.

Paul asks God to open the eyes of the Ephesians in order that they will see three things:

1. the hope of his calling,
2. the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,
3. the exceeding greatness of his power.

May our heavenly Father open the eyes of the Hong Kong Christians.

May Jesus open the eyes of you and me.

May the Holy Spirit bless us all.

Because “Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen” (Ephesians 3:20-21, KJV).

# Liturgy of the Lord's Supper

Liturgy written by José Rafael Escobar of Guatemala.  
Translated and adapted in English by J. Nelson Kraybill.

Communion liturgy presided over by  
Sunoko Lin, MWC treasurer;  
Siaka Traoré, MWC Deacons Commission chair;  
Joji Pantoja, Peace Commission chair.

**Leader 1:** Sisters and brothers, it is by a miracle of God's forgiveness and mercy that we from many tribes, languages and nations gather for the Lord's Supper.

After blessing the bread and cup, we invite you to join the feast with the gifts you have received locally or prepared where you are.

## Opening

**Leader 2:** Sisters and brothers, Scripture says, "We declare to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. Truly, our fellowship is with the Father and with his son Jesus Christ" (1 John 1:3).

**Leader 3:** Welcome to this fraternal celebration of the Lord's Supper that calls us to deep fellowship with the people of God. In sharing this bread and cup, all borders are erased, all differences end and we find true union with the global body of Christ.

**Leader 1:** Together, because of Jesus, we dream and hope for a new day.

**Leader 2:** Together, we sound out rhythms of agape love.

**Leader 3:** Together, we celebrate the dawn of a new era.

**Leader 1:** Together, we raise the cup of a New Covenant filled to the brim with hope.

**Leader 2:** Together, we share the bread of life which is Jesus Christ.

## Invitation to the table

**Leader 3:** We believe that in our meeting as sisters and brothers we have nothing to fear. When we come together in a spirit of humility and openness, we discover that we have gifts to receive and gifts to share. We learn again that we need one another.



**Leader 2:** Today, we rejoice that the Spirit of the risen Lord convenes us in divine love, revealing the mystery of union with the body of Christ. We become a new people, a new community which embodies God's dream for all humanity.

**Leader 1:** Sisters and brothers, we invite you to participate! Come share in this table of redemption and hope.

Aside from visa problems and pandemic restrictions which have kept some of our faith family at a distance, only two things could keep us from this celebration:

We could decide to distance ourselves from our Creator and remain in the sin that separates us from God.

Or, we might come to see that relationships with our sisters and brothers are not in order, that we lack the freedom of healthy relationships.

If in fact we are alienated from God or from the people of God, this is a time for confession and reconciliation. In silence, let us confess our sin.

*One minute of silence*

**Leader 3:** The Lord's Supper is the most intimate act of the faith community. When Jesus broke bread, a new story began. In this act of love, God lavished life even upon the traitor.

This table draws us into fellowship which bonds and strengthens the body of Christ. This is union with the Father and the Son through the Holy Spirit.

**Leader 2:** We are at the table of redemption, the table of reconciliation, the table of abundant life. Everyone is welcome to this feast of blessing and eternal life

### **Presentation of bread and cup**

**Leader 1:** This bread remains bread – but it points us to the presence of Christ who is the bread of life come down from heaven.

This cup remains wine – but it points us to the blood shed by Jesus our Lord on the cross of Calvary, blood that brought a new covenant that has made us God's people, heirs to the glory which is to come.

**Leader 3:** Come to this table! Let no one be missing, let no one be left behind!

**Leader 2:** Come! This is the day of blessing, divine love and redemption.

**Leader 1:** The gifts of God for the people of God!

### **Bread Offering**

**Leader 1:** I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed – washing feet and loving his enemies – took bread.

And when he had given thanks, he broke it, saying, "This is my body broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me" (1 Corinthians 11:23–24).

**Leader 3:** Living God, today we take this bread in our hands – bread that means forgiveness, sustenance and hope. We do this in remembrance of Jesus. We eat this day in honour of him who loves us. By sharing in this meal, we commit to give ourselves to you and to others as Christ gave himself for us. Amen.

### **Cup Offering**

**Leader 1:** In the same way, after supper, Jesus also took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

"For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. Maranatha! Come Lord Jesus!" (1 Corinthians 11:25-26).

**Leader 2:** Creator of all, with gratitude we receive this cup that seals the new covenant in blood of the Lamb. We commit ourselves to live under the sign of your reign in abundant life. We drink this cup in hope of a new creation when all things are united in Christ.

**Leader 1:** Sisters and brothers, receive now this bread and cup from the table of our Lord!

*Communion is received*

### **Prayer after Communion**

**Leader 1:** Christ our Lord, we have fellowshiped with you. We have eaten the bread of life and have shared the cup of freedom. Now bless us your people and give your Holy Spirit so we can be bearers of your marvelous light now and forever. In your name we pray, with thanksgiving. Amen.



### **Location Host: GKMI Solo**

As the only Mennonite church in the city, GKMI Solo plays an important role as a peacebuilder, especially fostering good relationships between Muslim leaders and Christians.

**08** July 2022  
**Friday**

Assembly Gathered  
**Caring together**





**José Rutilio  
Rivas  
Domínguez**

José Rutilio Rivas Domínguez is a Mennonite Brethren pastor, theologian, social enterprise entrepreneur and peacebuilder in Colombia, and a member of the MWC Mission Commission (2018-2022).

**We serve as a space where inter-ethnic organizations and churches can connect and be strengthened as we support them in building and making their life-giving plans for peace visible in their territories.**

## Mission Commission **Interethnic and ecumenical work in violent contexts**

*Ephesians 2:14-17*

**“F**or he is our peace, in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, and might reconcile both groups to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it. So he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near...”

The varied global contexts characterized by polarized ideologies, culture, ethnicities, religions, technologies and economies – with their power structures that oppress societies – are what lead to war and all kinds of human rights violations. The hope of creating more just societies is frustrated, making reconciliation with God, nature and ourselves more difficult. In such circumstance it becomes possible to see the deep resentment in all its daily forms that occupies our human realities.

This reality demands that the Anabaptist church and other confessions and religious expressions urgently reconsider the importance of Christ’s gospel. The kingdom of God needs to be built in such contexts through reconciliation strategies that cross ethnic, economic, technological, religious, and cultural boundaries.

The apostle Paul was able to read the socio-political and religious situation between Jews and other first century societies well. He did so by virtue of his Judeo-Christian worldview informed by an understanding of Jesus’ ministry as the Son of God: **breaking down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us... thus making peace.**

Social dialogue becomes an essential tool for transforming society that has been forced to put up with incomprehensible wars for decades. The intentional and thoughtless practice of war has destroyed the social fabric and placed people’s ethnic and cultural identities at risk. War leaves ethnic, cultural and faunistic genocide in its wake that primarily affects the most vulnerable communities.

For instance, in Colombia, the groups most affected by the armed conflict have been Black and Indigenous communities in ethnic and

collective territories. They have been coerced into abandoning their amicable relationship with their environment and social context. When this happened, the conflict led to drastic changes in how differences are resolved between people. The use of weapons became the only tool for handling differences. This context has forced sectors of society to use develop a shared vision for building peace through the use of social dialogue.

Social dialogue entails finding common ground that allows for finding practical solutions for living together peacefully, with the goal of embracing the humanity and reciprocity in each other. This idea flows from the Bantu word used in southern Africa and popularised by Nelson Mandela and Desmond Tutu: *ubuntu*, which means “I am because you are”. We exist because of a community.

In Colombia, we have a strategy that seeks to respond to these challenges. We have begun interethnic and ecumenical work from a collective worldview that is more than a theological and religious posture. We start with various processes that are community-based, using local know-how and capacity, with a respect for autonomy. In this way, we work toward concrete actions.

We serve as a space where inter-ethnic organizations and churches can connect and be strengthened as we support them in building and making their life-giving plans for peace visible in their territories.

Our work is centred around reconciliation processes, ethnic peace and local development, through strategic alliances between churches, government bodies, the private sector, regional peace platforms and international organizations.

### **Core strategy**

Work in favour of holistic and sustainable ethnic community development in ethnic regions that facilitate linkages between base communities and regional organizations and peace agendas through dialogue that focuses on resolving conflict in local areas.

We use the following lines of action:

#### **Victims' rights: Life, dignity and justice.**

Holistic reparation for victims of the armed conflict (includes truth, justice, reparation, assurances of non-repetition), full enjoyment of their rights, safe return to their local communities with dignity (education, health, shelter, security).

#### **Peace education: Spiritualities, cultures and territories.**

Training in citizenship, human rights, cultural identity and democratic participation,

development of shared visions for the region, and nonviolent social and political conflict transformation.

#### **Citizenship participation guarantees: local autonomy and self government.**

Strengthening direct, participative and representative democracy; consolidating multi sectoral citizen pacts and moving towards an inclusive political climate that respect the ethnic, social and cultural pluralities present in the nation.

#### **Production: Ethnic development and creation care.**

Guarantee food security and sovereignty from an ethnic and environmental sustainability perspective.

#### **Reconciliation: Spirit of dialogue and social collaboration.**

Reach agreements based on justice and social inclusion; open a path to the future through building relational networks of trust amongst diverse social actors, the private sector and government bodies. Justice, peace, development and reconciliation all require space for transforming conflict through dialogue, participation and social agreement with respect to policies that deliver well-being to communities.

#### **Peaceful communication.**

This proposal is oriented toward strengthening the network of popular communicators so that they share, build and strengthen processes and communication skills rooted in afro, indigenous and mestizo communities that inhabit subregions of the country. Also, these communicators make actions related to peace building, historical memory, resistance, forgiveness, reconciliation and protection of the regions and their development visible.



**Oscar  
Suárez**

**Oscar Suárez is the YABs (Young AnaBaptists) Committee representative for Latin America and the Caribbean (2015-2022). He serves as a teacher in Colegio Americano Menno (a Mennonite school in Colombia) and youth leader for Iglesia Menonita de Teusaquillo in Bogotá. He is a member of Iglesia Menonita de Ibaguè, Colombia.**

## YABs (Young AnaBaptists) Committee **United in the defence of life: water more precious than gold**

Once the laws became progressively more flexible during the lockdown we all experienced in 2020, I was able to cycle through the mountains in my home city. Although we were not allowed to mill about on the street, we were allowed to go out and do sports for a few hours at a time.

During the pandemic that so radically changed our lives, the best thing I could do to remain grounded was go cycling. I enjoyed every outing, not only for the physical activity but also for the opportunity to take in marvellous views hidden within the mountains of the beautiful city where I was born, Ibaguè, Colombia.

Each morning, despite sometimes feeling sleepy, I got ready to go for a ride, anticipating discovering more of the beautiful work of our Creator. I was looking for a new, colourful scene to photograph, a new view from the top of the mountains, simple peasant families waving and urging me on along the route, and of course, a new physical challenge. I realized that, more than the physical exercise, it was like therapy, giving me peace of mind.

Each outing confirmed for me what the superlative emphasizes in Genesis 1:31: “God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good”. God’s creation is perfect! He put everything in its place, including us as human beings. This verse is included in the account of the sixth day on which God created humanity.

The scenery that I was able to take in, the vegetation, the animals and also the humans are all part of God’s creation. All of it together is included within the adjective used only at the end of the sixth day “God saw that it was good”.

After seeing these great wonders, I asked myself: Why do we want to destroy God’s perfect work? Why do we, as humans, expend so much effort in destroying it? Is this a reflection of our sinful nature?

I am convinced that a large part of the damage is due to the ambitions of powerful people. And yes, ambition and envy are what prompt them to ride roughshod over others and creation itself without considering the damage being caused for the benefit of only a few.

I have already told you that my city is surrounded by majestic mountains that harbour beautiful views and a wealth of natural diversity for all to see. Well, almost, but not quite all. In addition to peasants, indigenous communities and cyclists, a multinational company has discovered the wealth hidden beneath the soil.

They requested a licence to explore and then exploit open pit gold mines. This spectacular place – brimming with diversity – is a source of life not only because of the water that springs up there, but also because it produces a great quantity of food for the region. This is being put at risk, all for the sake of gold.

Naturally, the peasant, indigenous and civil society communities joined together to put a stop to this unprecedented ecocide in the region. My church community did not stand by idly on this problem. The Ibagué Mennonite Church joined the movement that slowly but surely turned into a symbol of resistance and love of creation. As part of our commitment to steward creation, we joined with other movements and expressions of faith that diverge from our own. We joined because of our love of the natural beauty and life itself.

In his book, *Anabaptist Essentials*, Palmer Becker reminds us of three core values that he says define us as Anabaptists. We are probably all familiar with them.

Can you recall them?

1. Jesus is the centre of our faith.
2. Community is the centre of our life.
3. Reconciliation is the centre of our work.

I can see these three values reflected in the Ibagué Mennonite Church's experience I just told you about.

Jesus is the centre of our faith, guiding us in love for one another and for Creation.

Community is the centre of our lives, reflected in who we care about and as we help one another to defend our territory.

And, reconciliation is the centre of our work, bringing together people around a shared problem in spite of their divergent thoughts and beliefs.

Beyond this, though, is the task of not only being reconciled to God and our neighbour, but also with nature – our sister and the work of our Father; pacha mama (Mother Earth); the source of life.

Thanks to God, and the unity of the people, a public consultation managed to stop the exploration and the exploitation of gold in our mountains. The project tried to sell the idea of development for the region, but the people came out on the side of water and life in place of gold.

I am aware that this does not make up for the suffering of our planet at this moment, but it is an example of the change that can be achieved when we work together as a community, caring for creation. Of course, small actions are also valuable and count, and even more so if each one of us practices caring for the environment.

So, I would like to conclude with a question.

- If all of us have heard of reduce, reuse, recycle, what are we doing to leave a small mark for the better in our environment?
- What changes are we bringing about in our communities?
- Are we impacting our contexts with the Anabaptist value of reconciliation with God, our neighbours and nature with the utmost of love?





**Cindy  
Alpizar**

Cindy Alpizar serves as a pastor and administrator at Discípulos de Jesús los Lagos, Heredia, Costa Rica, and with the national church (Asociación de Iglesias Cristianas Menonitas). She is passionate about serving people who live on the streets.

**Let us not continue wearily along our way; rather, let us be clothed with new energy so that we may also offer relief to those who have no idea how to continue.**

## **Let us mutually care for one another in times of affliction, fear, shame and blame**

*Mathew 11:28-30, John 8:1-11, Romans 15:5-13, 2 Corinthians 5:7, Colossians 3:15-17*

**C**ome to me, all you that are weary and carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light. (Matthew 11:28-30).

Jesus' message in this passage is so relevant and necessary today since, one way or another, we all suffer from pain, death and consternation. This message from our Lord is true and generous for all of us who are carrying sorrow, pain, anxiety, fear, guilt and so many other accusations. Now more than ever, life circumstances exhaust us as they weigh on our hearts and prevent us from living the abundant life that Christ offers us in his Word.

This is a universal promise of rest, full of grace and open to all who approach the well that is Jesus Christ, the one who is able to free us from the unbearableness of our situations. The rest Jesus offers is hidden from the wise and intelligent, and revealed to infants, according to Matthew 11:25, to those who are like children in their ability to hope, who are innocent and vulnerable. It is for those who have understood the good news, redemption, reconciliation with God, ourselves and others. We are expected to share this charismatic gift of rest composed of comfort, restoration and rebirth with others as a sign of God's protection.

The passage invites us to put on Christ's yoke, a crossbar that joins us to Jesus but also to those who need support to make their burden light and easy to bear. This yoke unites us in love that is free of pretense, showing a true interest, empathy and willingness to share with others, thus becoming God-made-flesh once again.

### **Bring healing and relief**

As a church, we are called to present to the Lord those who have been surprised by fear, guilt and shame so that they might receive healing and relief. We are not to be like those who were filled with rage and took the sinful woman before Jesus that he might condemn her to death by stoning in which they planned to gleefully participate (John 8:1-11). Jesus makes them

face their own sin and recall their fallen human nature and they withdraw, overcome.

Today, we are not to be informants who judge and exclude; we are to be therapists who bring rest and relief to those who are trapped in spiritual prisons, recalling the moments in our own lives when we traversed the valley of the shadow of death, trapped by yokes of various kinds of slavery that were destroying us. However, Jesus stood before us, looked us in the eyes with understanding, stooped down and untied our shame, thus releasing us to salvation.

That historic salvation offered to us at that precise moment is the same salvation that starts here with Jesus' Word and Spirit. That presence is alive and well among us, and all who are part of the body of Christ, as a tangible sign of the kingdom of God and God's shalom.

Following two years of pandemic, spiced with wars, ethnic and racial conflict, mass migrations and human protests, there are many survivors (some less scathed than others), but many of whom have lost almost all their material possessions in the fight for survival. They walk in grief for their lost fathers, mothers, siblings and children. They have lost their stability – mental, emotional and even spiritual. Entire towns have been razed and destroyed. Human greed incessantly consumes, sowing hopelessness wherever it goes.

The church was also shaken to the core, jolted out of its passivity that kept it at a distance from many sad and painful truths; it was forced to redefine its mission, re-read the Word of God through new eyes, and work beyond its walls.

### **Break the paradigms**

Now continues to be a perfect moment and opportunity to break the paradigms that accuse, build walls and keep us apart. May we allow the God of patience and consolation to give us this same sentiment of Christ so that we may unanimously give the glory to God (Romans 15:5-13) knowing that it means nothing more and nothing less than loving our brothers and sisters, receiving them as Christ received us.

Through friendship, hospitality and applying a balm to the wounds, shifting the gravestone where death once lay and untying the bandages, we can stabilize and affirm all those whom we should receive with open arms filled with the hope and promises of long ago that are made manifest here and now through men and women who do the will of God.

May we rejoice with praise, singing out God's name in the midst of all the people present, that we may be filled with joy and peace while we wait.

### **Clothed with new energy**

Yes, it is time for rest to be restored. We should proclaim this today in spite of what we see and experience because for a long while now we do not walk by sight (2 Corinthians 5:7) but by faith in what Jesus, our Sabbath, has proclaimed. Jesus calls us to stop, surrender our anxiety and pain to him, knowing that Jesus is able to care for us. Let us not continue wearily along our way; rather, let us be clothed with new energy so that we may also offer relief to those who have no idea how to continue. Let us pray that the Lord's peace reign in our heart (Colossians 3:15-17), being one body that is grateful for the presence Jesus left with us.

May we not abandon the little ones, the most vulnerable, those who have been left along the wayside. Oh Lord, may your Word abundantly abide in us, that we may be motivated to wisely care for one another while giving thanks, because we can say "Ebenezer, you have helped us."

In this beautiful country and this meeting of brothers and sisters from so many different backgrounds, let us celebrate life, our faith, our Anabaptist and Mennonite traditions, while not forgetting the point of this meeting: crossing barriers means going out to meet the other, discover who they are, and meet them in their otherness with love, just like the father who waited full of hope, day and night, for his son to return no matter his condition when he arrived home.

To conclude, in this Assembly, more than ever, may we stop and examine our faith and how we live. May God help us to promote life, justice, mercy and lots of compassion. May our faith communities, our ministries and our own lives provide rest to those who are weary and burdened so that their burdens may be light and bearable. Amen.

## President transition: conference endorsement



**Maria  
Spoelder**

**Maria (Miekje) Spoelder, chair, Algemene  
Doopsgezind Societeit, the Netherlands.**

### *Unity in diversity*

**A**s my husband and I came out of the airport arriving in Indonesia, the first thing I saw was a minivan with a sentence on the back: “unity in diversity.” I thought that was a good start of our trip to attend the Assembly!

This phrase “unity in diversity” was also used by Henk Stenvers in a national TV programme about a year ago. This was how Henk described our global family.

Today, I am very honoured to say a few words on behalf of the Netherlands conference. The Mennonites in the Netherlands have a very long history, as you know. Today, we are a small conference of aging people, and we know that we are but a small part of Mennonite World Conference. A very interested part, however; with many projects and friendships in other countries.

That is why we wholeheartedly supported Henk in the past years to travel a lot and serve in MWC.

Today, on behalf of the Netherlands Mennonites, I may express our continuing support. We pray for a fruitful time for Henk as president and we will assist him when necessary.

In that television programme, Henk also said that he believes in new opportunities.

As an old congregation, we also need to renew and we will help him in that.

But most importantly, Henk said that God is not in the bigger events, like an earthquake or a fire, but rather in a soft breeze.

May God blow many soft breezes to Henk and all those who serve in MWC in the coming years.





**Location Host: GITJ Margokerto**

Margokerto is one of the first Mennonite churches in the Muria area. It has a strong standing in the community.

09

July 2022  
**Saturday**

Assembly Gathered  
**Celebrating together**



Patrick Obonde was chosen as the Deacons' speaker for the morning session on Saturday; however, he was unable to attend due to visa complications.

His presentation is included here along with speeches from Tigist Tesfaye and Jürg Bräker who spoke on-site in Indonesia.

#### Morning plenary



**Patrick J. Obonde**

Patrick J. Obonde is an ordained pastor with Kenya Mennonite Church who currently serves as Africa Regional Representative of Canadian Peacemakers International. As mission director for Kenya Mennonite Church, he supervised the Muslim-Christian relations initiative at Eastleigh Fellowship Centre and at the Center for Peace and Nationhood in Nairobi.

He has degrees in science, finance and administration, theology and peace studies. Currently, he is working on a PhD in Leadership at Andrews University.

Patrick and his wife Pamela have two sons.

## Deacons Commission Transforming our doubts and contradictions toward *shalom*

*Psalm 92:1-2, Acts 2:44,  
Genesis 1:25-31, Romans 8 :16-17,  
Luke 15 :11-32, Luke 10 :25-37,  
Galatians 5:16-26,  
Matthew 28:19-20, James 2:8-9,  
Isaiah 2:4, 11:6-7, 43*

**G**reetings, brothers and sisters, *shalom!*  
Thank you for honouring me to  
address you.

I title my message "CTXD, a call to transform doubts and contradictions toward *shalom* mission."

### Definitions

Key words: **celebration, togetherness** and **diversity**. My research yields diverse and complex meanings. Simply put.

**Celebration** is goodness in giving thanks and singing praises to God for his everlasting kindness and faithfulness (Psalm 92:1-2). Scripture asserts that people from every tribe, language and nation sing praises to Christ (Revelation 5:9).

**Togetherness** establishes commonness, where hearts are bound in Christian love and fellowship of kindred minds (Acts 2:44)

**Diversity** is the nature of Triune God in whose image *all* are created! (Genesis 1:26-27). God's Spirit witnesses together with our spirit and transcends us to be God's children and heirs with Christ (Romans 8:16-17).

### Complexities, doubts and contradictions

Contrasting biblical truths with our lived realities unravels attitudes and practices that remind us of how complex and problematic CTXD is. In naming the emerging doubts and contradictions, I turned to the biblical parables of the prodigal son and the good Samaritan.

The prodigal son parable involves a youth leaving home. He squanders all his inheritance, ends up hungry, dirty and in a pigsty. He returns home into his father's loving arms and to a lavish party. In contradicting his father's love, mercy and hospitality, a self-righteous older brother resorts to hate and exclusion. The father believes that repentance is a time for forgiveness and hospitality. (Luke 15:11-32)

The good Samaritan parable presents a lawyer who asks Christ what it requires to inherit eternal life. Jesus refers him to Mosaic Law. The lawyer recites a Scripture confirming that loving God and neighbour is the greatest act of faith. However, he further asks “Who is my neighbour?” to which Christ replies by narrating the parable of an injured man, who a Priest and a Levite ignored. The two didn’t show love to the victim of violent robbery. However, unlike the two, the Samaritan took care, paid his hotel bill and deposited money for his future accommodation. He promised to revisit. (Luke 10:25-37)

### **My brief reflections**

Christ espoused ways of overcoming sinful doubts and contradictions borne out of fear, ignorance, injustice, hate and idolatry. Thus, our confessions must affirm community, Scripture, praise, songs and worship through public conventions. Still, baptism, Holy Communion and ceremonies of marriage, birth and bereavement ought to be understood as opportunities for transcending our lived challenges.

Transcendence is neither neglecting nor negating our established liturgy. As witnessed through the parables, transcending manifests truth-seeking, truth-telling, affirming and reforming our embedded roots of sin toward God’s *shalom* mission. Christ’s dialogue and witnessing invites leaders and communities to embrace these new lenses in CTXD.

### **Self-awareness transforming ignorance**

Carolyn Yoder writes that our backbone’s vague subconsciously stores our trauma-laden past. It remains alive and actively informs our attitudes and behaviour. Our victimhood or exceptionalist attitudes require repentance and healing.<sup>1</sup> CTXD means active self-retrospection. It is “truth-seeking” how structures and systems have formed our togetherness, in deceitful and segregationist ways. Despite our physical togetherness, sin has amputated us from the biblical truth (Genesis 1:26).

CTXD names historical narratives and misreading of biblical texts. It resorts to dialogue on the biblical texts which have been deployed to dehumanize, deculturize and dispossess people due to differences of geographies, colour, culture, gender and convictions. N.T. Wright asserts that centring spirituality elicits God’s power for our transcendence.<sup>2</sup> According to Paul, only the Holy Spirit guarantees fruit (Galatians 5:16-26). CTXD is the discipline for bible reading, contemplation, discernment,

prayer, praise, worship and fasting toward transcendence for reconciliation and healing of our sins (Isaiah 43:7, 21).

### **Love transforming systemic hate**

CTXD transforms harmful structures of hierarchical authority. Such hierarchies calibrate relations on discriminatory value spectra on various factors. CTXD is about relational intelligence made possible through God’s perfect love. Love re-imagines equality and inclusion into our relations with hurting neighbours. Love heals the lost and broken to partake of God’s *shalom* mission (Matthew 28:19-20). Our ceremonies are vanities unless we love neighbour as we love ourselves (James 2:8-9).

CTXD witnesses courage and hope despite the crisis in our times. It reverses overreliance on positional power and authority. It reforms compromised character, honesty, integrity and servanthood. Still, it means listening, and learning from each other.<sup>3</sup> CTXD is open communication and empathetic connection with our neighbour’s harm and its deepest wounds.<sup>4</sup>

### **Justice transforming unjust exceptionalism**

Christ employed intellectual discourse to accomplish restoration of impaired relations. Thus, CTXD means acquisition of technical competence. Scientific knowledge, technology and innovation are God’s gifting for analytical synthesis and data driven decision-making.<sup>5</sup> God grants gifts and talents to all. CTXD affirms that internet’s technology has sustained the church through the COVID-19 pandemic. Yet, God’s flocks of migratory birds do fly around the world day and night using God’s communication system.

CTXD is elicitive engagement with gifts beyond our traditional circles and boundaries.

It means re-evaluation of confessional vision, mission, values and goals.<sup>6</sup> It calls for an all-inclusive mission strategy development. Inclusivity is the bridge to the power of synergy and objectivity for *shalom* mission. Still, it’s about deployment of skills for resource budgeting, mobilization, cost-benefit analytics and accountability standards.<sup>7</sup>

### **Contentment transforming idolatry into eco-justice**

Our challenges of poverty, conflicts and immigration trace roots to our egregious appetites for material resources. Sadly, despite God’s hospitality, we are co-perpetrators in the exploitation and destruction of our ecosystem. CTXD means re-focusing on

God's purpose for humankind. Creation care is integral to spirituality and restorative mission (Genesis1:28-29).

CTXD is about inhabiting land with an attitude of contentment and reverence to God's created beauty and goodness (Genesis1:31). Theologian Steve Bouma-Prediger asserts that "all things are created to praise God." CTXD is discipline for safety and healthy enjoyment of food, shelter, rest and recreation (Luke 12:15). Still, faithful spirituality and science are deemed compatible gifts necessary for eco-justice ministry.<sup>8</sup>

### Conclusion: *shalom* vision

The Scriptures reveal the final picture of *shalom* as a fully restored order of creation without ignorance, injustices, hatred and idolatry (Isaiah 2:4, 11:6-7). P.B. Yoder describes *shalom* as a reconciled world of justice where all experience material well-being, righteousness and harmony.<sup>9</sup>

### Discussion questions

1. Diversity-driven differences and divisions will always exist within the church. What are some of the ways you wish to see your congregations demonstrate the reality of Christ's transforming love?
2. How would the joy of our togetherness become a justification to exclude those who embody doubtful theologies and at times do not look like us?
3. Why is it important to hold Scripture alone as ultimate authority on matters of faith and practice? Where do you see this authority being undermined in our present contexts of our local and global church community?

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**Jürg Bräker**

**Jürg Bräker serves as general secretary of Konferenz der Mennoniten der Schweiz/Conférence Mennonite Suisse (the Swiss Mennonite conference) and as elder and theologian for Mennoniten Gemeinde Bern (Alltäufer). He also serves on the MWC Deacons Commission (2015-2022).**

## Deacons Commission “Very good” in troubled times

**G**od saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. This is what Genesis tells us when God had created heaven and earth.

God is celebrating the goodness of all creation.

Is this still true? Is this “very good” still there in these troubled times? Where is it in the horror when a mother has to watch her children being killed by soldiers?

When women are raped, when terrorists attack villages? Sometimes this “very good” seems to sink back and disappear into deep darkness.

In Mennonite World Conference, I serve as a deacon. We visit people to stand with them to say that the global body of the church is here with you. We visit where the church celebrates in joy, like when a new church building is opened. We visit people in suffering, like in DR Congo, in Burkina Faso. And I have discovered: Yes, the beauty of God is still there dwelling here among us in these dark hours.

In DR Congo, an MWC Deacons delegation visited some of the churches that had opened their homes to displaced people fleeing from the war zones in the east. The visitors listened to stories of unimaginable horror, to women who had been forced to watch their husbands and children killed, to women who been raped and had barely survived. Many of them just sat silent, unable to tell what had happened to them.

As a visitor, what words can you find to comfort? The visitors often just sat, wept, helpless, left without words to respond.

And it was these women who found the strength and words to comfort their visitors left speechless when faced with these horrors. These women were standing alongside, comforting those who came to comfort them. I see the beauty of God the Creator in them in this deep embrace. The “very good” of God shines up out of all this darkness.

We visit each other like the friends of Job came to visit him in his sorrow. They came and sat in silence with him for seven days and seven nights. Sat with him in his darkness. They sat with Job who struggled to find the justice of God, struggled to find a God he can love.

The word deacon originally means 'acting in the place of the one who sends you.' A deacon is the presence of the one who sends the deacon. Close to those special envoys are the angels who bring with them the presence of God, bringing to light the "very good" of creation. Yes, there were angels present in these visits in the Congo. I hope sometimes they entered with the deacons. But in those moments of speechless tears, as they who had suffered terrible violence comforted their visitors – these women were the angels. In their faces, I saw the goodness of God shining out of darkness. We had been visiting in houses of angels.

So let us enter these houses of angels in this broken world, sit with them in sorrow, silently, sometimes with tears, and then, maybe much later, even with shouts of joy. Let us celebrate the goodness of God visiting among us.





**Tigist  
Tefaye  
Gelagle**

**Tigist Tesfaye Gelagle is a youth leader with Debub Meserete Kristos Church in Ethiopia. She is completing her term as YABs mentor (2015-2022) and will take the role of secretary of the Deacons Commission.**

## Deacons Commission How can I celebrate?

### 2 Samuel 6:5

“**A**nd David and all the house of Israel were celebrating before the Lord, with songs and lyres and harps and tambourines and castanets and cymbals.” (2 Samuel 6:5 ESV)

Even though I had only a short time to prepare for this, the idea comes from my heart that I was thinking about for a very long time.

I am tired of war, conflict, hunger, poverty, division, hatred, gun violence, black and white class difference, the oppression of women, slaughter of children and women, fake news, liars and unjust authorities and leaders and so many, many issues that you all are aware of.

COVID-19... during the high point of it in the news: we were counting numbers and when the number goes down, we feel happy that it's getting down. Yet, we missed that those are not just numbers, but people, Humans, created in the image of God.

It's sad!

In the middle of all of this turmoil around me, around the globe, how can I celebrate in a situation like this? When I am told that I can't cross over because I am black from a poor country? when I am interrogated like a criminal in most of the immigrations in most countries? when I am treated as burden and a problem? when I am treated as a terrorist? My uniqueness is being treated as a threat, my choices have been rejected: when I live in the mercy of my superiors, how can I celebrate?! Where there is no hope, why and how do I need to celebrate! How can I enjoy?

I paused and asked myself what do we mean when we say celebrate? So, I decided to consult my dictionary.

Celebrate: in one of the definitions, it is an acknowledgement with a social gathering or enjoyable activity a significant or happy day or an event.

Okay! So, Celebration is an acknowledgment! It's being together.

It's to see significance in others.

Unless you are significant to me and I am significant for you, there is no celebration of togetherness.

Seeing significance in others crosses barriers. It helps you and me to celebrate our togetherness regardless of what.

I can forget my pain if I am significant to you.  
I can pass the storm if I am significant to you.  
I leave my superiority if I am significant to you.  
I learn from my mistakes if I am significant to you.

My being rich or poor won't be a hindrance anymore if I am significant to you.

If I am significant for you and you for me, I can celebrate at any time and any place.

As David celebrated before the Lord with songs and shouts of joy, let us celebrate our togetherness in a time like this. As we celebrate our togetherness ... let us do it with the understanding of our significance to each other, with exuberance came from the heart, doing it in a genuine act of celebration and without exhibitionism or despising.

One way of the many we can celebrate our togetherness always in MWC is through the Deacon Commission work.





**Makadunyiswe  
Doublejoy  
Ngulube**

**Makadunyiswe Doublejoy Ngulube is the YABs (Young AnaBaptists) Committee Africa representative (2015-2022) and a member of the Brethren in Christ Church Zimbabwe. She currently lives in Canada where she pursues her passion for environmental science the God-given responsibly to steward the earth's resources well.**

## YABs (Young AnaBaptists) Committee **Intergenerational solidarity relationships**

*Deuteronomy 28, 1 John 1:9, 1  
Thessalonians 5:17, James 2:26*

**W**hen we think of older generations, we think of those who came before us, the ones whose shoulders we stand on. However, when we think about the solidarity of our relationship with those generations, there seems to be a gap.

Intergenerational relationships are of utmost importance. There is immense value in passing on wisdom from one generation to the other. We can learn from the mistakes of those who came before us, but that can only happen if we choose to stay connected. A strong connection allows for mentorship, advice and direction. Older people have lived through experiences and circumstances that younger people have not. This is the surest way to share wisdom.

Bridging the gap between one generation and the next is also a vital way of preserving the core values of the church and of passing on the baton to the next generation.

From a biblical perspective, intergenerational solidarity can bring about blessings or curses. In Deuteronomy 28, there is a list of blessings and curses.

“But if you will not obey the Lord your God by diligently observing all his commandments and decrees, which I am commanding you today, then all these curses shall come upon you and overtake you....

The Lord will send upon you disaster, panic, and frustration in everything you attempt to do, until you are destroyed and perish quickly, on account of the evil of your deeds, because you have forsaken me.” (Deuteronomy 28:1-6) “But if you will not obey the Lord your God by diligently observing all his commandments and decrees, which I am commanding you today, then all these curses shall come upon you and overtake you....

The Lord will send upon you disaster, panic, and frustration in everything you attempt to do, until you are destroyed and perish quickly, on account of the evil of your deeds, because you have forsaken me.” (Deuteronomy 28:15, 20)

In Deuteronomy 28, we can see how both blessings and curses can be passed on from

one generation to the next. Examples today include but are not limited to remnants of colonialism, racism, injustices, wars, violence, the merciless killings of minority groups or innocent people and jealousy.

We can see the negative impacts all these acts have had on different generations and different races. All these sins bring about curses which can destroy intergenerational relationships.

One generation may ask the other: *Why didn't you stand up for what is right? When black men or women were being killed, why did you remain silent? During the time of the Holocaust, why didn't you stand up for what is right? When war was erupting, why didn't you speak up?*

To this day, my question to older generations concerning injustices of the past is still: *Why didn't you stand up for what is right?*

How can we be sure that God will bless us and bless the ones who will come after us? By living the life of obedience that God has called us to.

What are actions we can take to create, nurture or repair intergenerational relationships?

### 1. Repent

We can ask God to forgive our fore-fathers and -mothers for the sins they committed knowingly or unknowingly. Sins that have brought upon curses on their generation, and the generations to come.

According to 1 John 1:9 "If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." We must confess our sins and that includes confessing the sins of the generations that came before us.

God will release a blessing over our lives and our future generations. It is one thing to ask for forgiveness, however it is important not to continue in those old ways or continue living in sin. If we have chosen to follow the way of Christ, then there is no room for malice, violence, racism or injustices.

### 2. Pray

We can seek God's face concerning the future of the church. We can pray that God will bridge the gap between generations and for meaningful relationships to be created. We can also pray that God reveals God's divine will and purpose for our lives. The Bible encourages us to "pray continually" (1 Thessalonians 5:17, NIV)

### 3. Act

We can be intentional about creating spaces for different generations and age groups to interact. We can find ways to build intergenerational relationships through our families, the church

and our communities. We can also create mentorship programs between young people and older adults. "For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is also dead" (James 2:26).

Intergenerational solidarity can also strengthen our relationship with God. "One generation shall laud your works to another, and shall declare your mighty acts. On the glorious splendour of your majesty, and on your wondrous works, I will meditate. The might of your awesome deeds shall be proclaimed, and I will declare your greatness. They shall celebrate the fame of your abundant goodness, and shall sing aloud of your righteousness (Psalm 145:4-7).

Faith can be passed on from one generation to the other. When we reflect on the wonderful acts of God in our lives, we can trace it back to generations before us. We can only have a strong appreciation for God's work when there is good relation between one generation and the other. Sharing our testimonies with each other can strengthen our faith in God.

### Discussion questions

1. The Bible describes God as a just and fair God. How can we reconcile God's character to God's divine judgment on humanity specifically cursing the next generation due to the sins of the previous generation? i.e., Are generational curses justified?
2. What are some actions of the previous generation or your generation that may rightfully have led or could lead to the next generation being cursed? Take time to reflect and repent regarding these actions.
3. Read Deuteronomy 28:1-14 and pray those verses over your life and over the generations to come. Ask God to bless your generation and the next. Ask God to strength those intergenerational relationships for the good of the kingdom.



**Barbara Nkala**

Barbara Nkala is the Mennonite World Conference (MWC) regional representative for Southern Africa (2016-2022). She headed International Bible Society-Zimbabwe and Malawi, coordinating Bible translations into Shona, Ndebele and Chewa. She founded Radiant Publishing and was one of the 40 National Arts Merits Awards Legends honoured and celebrated on 27 March 2021, an event organised by the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe. Barbara has degrees in communication, leadership and management. She is married to Shadreck Nkala and they have three adult children and six grandchildren.

## God's love, forgiveness and reconciliation

*Matthew 7:12, 1 Peter 5:7, Exodus 20:12, Luke 23:34, Matthew 6:12, Ephesians 2:14-19, Isaiah 49:15-16, 2 Corinthians 5:17-21*

In Africa, when we talk about celebrating, we are unpacking robust and unfettered joy, loud and heartfelt singing, vibrant dancing to music and drums, ululating, whistling, stamping of feet and clapping of hands. Celebration denotes a merry heart! We celebrate when there is love, joy, peace and happiness.

In Southern Africa we have a concept called *Ubuntu*. *Ubuntu* says, "I am because you are ... a person is a person because of other people." This concept embraces all sorts of values such as love, respect, togetherness, forgiveness, kindness and others. I believe that the *Ubuntu* concept is strongly akin to Christianity, because it says, "Do to others what you would have them do to you" (Matthew 7:12a, NIV). It is, after all, the Jesus way.

Having said that, *Ubuntu* does not always function perfectly. We live in an ailing planet, where people are broken, hurting and miserable as individuals; as families; as church and communities; as nations and globally too. Love, peace and joy are a far cry from many of us in a society filled with pain. Strife is rife within and without. There is need to rebuild destroyed relationships.

The story of the prodigal son has always been an excellent illustration of how we leave the comfort of God's goodness and push for our own way as our hearts direct. When we hit brick wall after brick wall and begin to suffer, we then come to our senses and plan to go home to seek forgiveness and reconciliation. And our loving Father is, in essence, always waiting to slaughter a fattened calf and call for celebration and jubilation.

I wish to share a testimony, which might be a reflection of what happens in families, in communities, in any nation and also world over. Though it happened a long time ago, I have witnessed similar happening all the time in families and in my community.

This is the story of a prodigal daughter, spiritually, and a prodigal father.

I was brought up in a home that espoused the Lord God deeply, a legacy of my paternal grandfather, further nurtured by my devout mother. Life was good. My father was brilliant, well respected and he had a very good and well-



paying job that cared for the family well. But in my youth, things began to change. Sin had been crouching at the door, and as Peter says, the enemy is forever prowling around like a roaring lion seeking for someone to devour (1 Peter 5:7).

Father strayed from home, then on his return, he decided to kick my mother out of her matrimonial home. I was the eldest child in the family. I began to see my siblings suffer at the hands of the new woman brought into the home. I was away from home at college most of the time, but I kept getting disturbing and stressful reports of how my siblings were being abused. So, I decided to keep a little diary where I recorded each negative action committed. Each time I made an entry, my heart became more bitter, and resentment created a cold hardness within. The wrongs recorded filled pages and pages. My heart was filled with venom and the wall of hostility toward a man I had loved and revered as a father grew thicker and taller.

It took one uncle that I highly respected to try and talk me out of that bitterness. He reminded me of the commandment that comes with a promise: "Honour your father and mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you" (Exodus 20:12, NIV). I thawed somewhat, but I still planned revenge. The very following weekend was Passion weekend. On the Friday, I attended a sermon where the pastor really nailed it as he emphasized Jesus' words when he hung on the cross. He said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34a).

I was not hearing that Scripture for the first time, but that day it pierced my heart. Jesus was wounded for me and was nailed on the cross for me. Jesus forgave me. So, who was I to hold a deep grudge against my one and only father who brought me to this world? What did I mean when I said the Lord's prayer, "Forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us" (Matthew 6:12, NLT)? I wept. I repented. I sought forgiveness from God. I could not wait to seek forgiveness from my father as I had become rude and disrespectful to him, negatively influencing the brood behind me.

When I got back to residence, I fished out the vile diary, shredded the pages and made a bonfire outside. As the soot particles blew away in the wind, I felt the heaviness lift off my heart and my shoulders. Sweet relief. When vacation came, I sought my father's forgiveness. It was a meeting of both the prodigal daughter and the prodigal father. There was rejoicing at the reconciliation. We became the best of friends from that time, and I even cared for my father when he was terminal with cancer until he passed on. Christ is our peace...He "destroyed

the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility..." (Ephesians 2:14, NIV).

It is good to have the love of family members, which does not depend on feelings and circumstance. That love should be like that of God, who says: "Can a woman forget her nursing child, or show no compassion for the child of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you. See, I have inscribed you on the palms of my hands ..." (Isaiah 49:15-16). This is deep love, unfathomable, without depth or breadth or height.

People are not really separated by race or creed or colour. We are separated by sin that grows and festers, spreading like a cancer within our hearts. In any one country in Africa, people are separated by barriers of ethnicity and tribe. Evil thrives when people focus on their own tribal groupings at the expense of those who are considered outsiders. The same applies anywhere else in the world. We need Christ, the Great Reconciler. The Word says, "... if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation." The Word goes on to say, "For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Corinthians 5:17,18, 21).

It is when we believe and live in Christ that we experience love, forgiveness and the joy of reconciliation. Those we considered enemies and foreigners before become "... members of the household of God ..." (Ephesians 2:19c).

In conclusion, there really is no love, joy and peace or any other spiritual gift when people dwell in sinful ways. Sin begets loneliness and strife. Only in Christ can we celebrate together true love, forgiveness and reconciliation. Hallelujah!



### **Location Host: JKI Ungaran**

JKI Ungaran initiated a youth conference called Unlimited Fire which draws thousands of young people from many denominations in Indonesia.

# 10 July 2022 Sunday

Assembly Gathered  
**Following together**



# Returning home

Morning plenary



**Nindyo  
Sasongko**

**Nindyo Sasongko is a teaching fellow at Fordham University, theologian in residence at Manhattan Mennonite Fellowship and a member of MWC's Creation Care Task Force. Originally from Indonesia, he served as a minister in Gereja Muria Kristen Indonesia (GKMI).**

*Ruth 1:15-22*

**R**uth is the only book in the biblical canon named after a foreign woman. The book centres on Ruth, a Moabite, and her mother-in-law, Naomi, who return to the land of Judah. Calamity, displacement, barrenness, death and survival can be found in the first five verses of this book. It opens with a famine in Bethlehem, a crisis which forced Naomi, her husband Elimelech, and their sons to migrate to Moab. Then, Naomi's sons took Moabite wives. As the story goes, the three men of the family died in this foreign land. Three women survived: one Israelite mother and two Moabite daughters-in-laws.

Our global Anabaptist family also faces these predicaments today. The COVID-19 pandemic has forced us to postpone MWC's Indonesia Assembly. These past two years, we have witnessed the horror of death because of the raging virus, a horror which we cannot see its end to this day. We heard deaths every day during the heights of the pandemic. Indeed, we have good vaccines, but the problem is not over. New outbreaks still take place in different countries, and these brought about shortages of food and daily needs. The virus separated us from our loved ones and isolated us from each other.

In the book of Ruth, the three vulnerable, disenfranchised women are at the frontier of strange lands, standing on the borderland between Moab and Israel. Moab is a still a strange land to Naomi and so she decides to go home to Bethlehem. But the land of Judah is a strange land to Orpah and Ruth. These childless



widows cannot know if they will find a place of security or a home in a new land.

Naomi admonishes her daughters-in-law not to follow her to Bethlehem. They must return to their homeland to find husbands. Orpah yields to Naomi and kisses her mother-in-law goodbye. Ruth, however, persists to follow Naomi wherever she goes.

Naomi, Orpah, and Ruth are us. Today, many people live like these vulnerable widows. This book is rich in depicting problems shared by our Anabaptist family: women and children who live under the trauma of domestic violence, the dire effects of climate change, hostilities toward immigrants, injustice toward people with disabilities or who are gender minorities and consequences of colonialism. As we conclude the Indonesia Assembly 2022, we are ready to depart from the island of Java. But where shall we return?

Naomi's return with her daughter-in-law Ruth is not only a story about the survival of two worthless women. Indeed, this story can be seen as one of the greatest stories of reconciliation in human history. In the Bible, the story of Moab and the Moabites is full of scandal and malice. For the Israelites, the Moabites were hostile pagans and thus forbidden from entering Israel's religious gatherings, even to the tenth generation. Foreign wives could be expelled among the Israelites in Ezra and Nehemiah.

The book of Ruth presents a different story, however. Biblical scholar Eunny P. Lee opines that Ruth offers "an alternative vision of a caring community." Moab is thus "a theologically evocative space, the boundary to the promised land," a liminal space at which "cultural negotiations and identity (re)construction take place." For Naomi, returning to her place of origin is a negotiation of identity and destiny.

Together with her daughter-in-law Ruth, a barren widow from Moab, the challenge could be more intense. Ruth's commitment to follow Naomi shows a profound courage to break the boundaries of ethnicity and race, nationality, religion, and age. Reconciliation cannot be achieved when there is no commitment to cross boundaries.

Ruth's commitment to her mother-in-law is depicted in an astonishing way: Ruth clings to Naomi (1:15). The Hebrew verb (*dâvaq*) expresses Ruth's deepest commitment. The same word can be found in Genesis 2:24 to describe a man's union with a woman in marriage. In leaving his father and mother, the husband clings to his wife and the two become one flesh. Ruth thus chooses to be "one flesh" with her mother-in-law over her family of origin. By venturing to a strange land and to an unknown people, Ruth refuses the status of a worthless woman based on heterosexual patriarchal definition of family and childbearing.

But there is more in this story. This unconventional bond between two women is between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law, a relationship which often filled with tension and rivalry in many cultures. In some Asian cultures, this relationship can be downright oppressive. Ruth's first words demonstrate her independent character: a marginalized woman who shows fidelity and solidarity with another woman. If fidelity and solidarity can be found among us, the seed of reconciliation has been planted in our midst.

As we conclude the Indonesia Assembly 2022, where shall our global Anabaptist family go?

Yes, we must follow Jesus across barriers, ones created by human structures which separate us from our neighbours. I recall one



event in my teenage years through which I was called into the ministry of the Word. In 1993, David W. Shenk of Eastern Mennonite Mission visited my home church GKMI Kudus and gave a message. In the past, Christianity was spread from West to East. Today, mission has changed its direction. The West, said Shenk, also needs missionaries from the East, thus breaking barriers between West and East.

The old paradigm of Christian mission, one centred on evangelism and church planting, cannot be sufficient. Spreading the gospel must not simply mean offering the good news for non-believers. The goal of Christian mission must be living fully in a new family, a kinship in which the loving presence of God can be experienced within, among and between all. In the gospels, this is called the kingdom of God. Indeed, in Christ we find new siblings from around the world. We are all loved by the Lord and, as Pastor Saptarjo Adi of GITJ puts it in a hymn, we come together “whether from West or East.” As such, living in a new family must encourage us to revisit our ministry. Ministry must mean a commitment to living out the good news with those on the margins of power.

Today, we are not only called to celebrate our faith together, but to dismantle the long repercussions of Western colonialism, resulting from the doctrine of discovery in the Americas, the imposition of chattel slavery on people from Africa and genocides of indigenous peoples. Today, migration to foreign lands because of climate change, war and poverty can be found in many parts of the world. Those immigrants are vulnerable to new surroundings. They often face intolerance and appalling hostility from the host country as they try to assimilate to new contexts and cultures. Today, we are challenged by young people who join hands, raising global awareness to the climate crisis. In Kenya, says MWC vice president Rebecca Osiro, young people of her local congregations know that creation care must begin with them.

Today, women are still living in a highly patriarchal and sexist society. As valiant survivors of sexual abuse are calling out the duplicity of religious leaders, entertainment stars, sport heroes and politicians, we are challenged to raise our voice together with these survivors. We must revisit our discipleship through the “wisdom of women” in their everyday struggle – “*en la lucha*” as Elizabeth Soto Albrecht says. “Through the eyes of women,” theologian Darryl W. Stephens writes, “we are reminded that the personal is political, that peacemaking pertains to the home as well as to the war and that the good news of Jesus Christ proclaims not suffering and docility but liberation and justice.”

Siblings in Christ, as we look forward to the next General Assembly in Ethiopia 2027, let us continue to follow Jesus together. Let us proclaim the gospel of liberating peace, breaking barriers and crossing boundaries set up by the unjust powers to isolate us from each other. May we find a home wherever Christ’s light will lead us, a home shared with those deemed worthless by the world.

Amen.

# Renewal 2022



## John Roth

Faith and Life  
Commission  
secretary



## Christen Kong

Global Youth  
Summit delegate  
for Mennonite  
Church Canada

**John:** On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit descended with a mighty wind and tongues of fire.

Transforming a group of uncertain disciples into a new community.

Since that moment the church that bears Christ's name has continued to be renewed by the surprising movement of the Spirit.

In the sixteenth century, the Anabaptist movement challenged catholic tradition and structure.

They imagined a church of voluntary disciples who shared their resources and lived peaceful lives.

In the nineteenth century, the mission movement challenged the inward focus of Mennonite communities.

Mennonites in Europe and North America began to share the gospel with other parts of the world including Indonesia.

In the 1870s a Javanese mystic named Tunggul Wulung challenged the western assumptions of missionary Pieter Janz and translated the message of the gospel into a Javanese context that brought new life and helped to give birth to the GITJ church.

In the 1920s, Tee Siem Tat, a Chinese businessman from Kudus experienced a miraculous healing, and became an enthusiastic evangelist of the gospel. That renewal movement led to the creation of the GKMI church.

In the 1960s and again the 1980s the Sangkakala young people's movement challenge the traditions of the church in their days with a strong focus on the Holy Spirit. Those movements ultimately gave rise to the JKI synod.

In all of these examples, renewal movements have been led by young people.

With me this morning is Christen Kong a delegate to the global youth summit from Ontario, Canada.

Christen, how do you see young adult delegates envisioning renewal in their churches and communities?

**Christen:** Renewal is at the foundations of the Global Youth Summit 2022. I heard and observed young adults from different cultures, places and experiences share a deep longing for spiritual newness. Renewal is not about the creation of something "original" or "brand new", but rather, the two letters "re" at the beginning of the English word indicates the



Renewal  
Renovación  
Renouveau

returning to. A returning to the Holy Spirit, allowing our hearts, minds and souls be reminded of our commitment and love for God's grace and mercy.

As young adults, we feel neither here nor there.

Too old to be a child and to young to be a fully grown adult. We live in the realm of the unknown, the in-between. Here, people often feel confused, anxious, and yearning to feel grounding. However, I saw and felt something much different at the Global Youth Summit.

Engaging in multiple delegate sessions and informal conversations, young adults were embracing the unknown. We asked questions about mental health, spiritual guidance, social, economic inequalities, the politics of living a Christian life authentically and so much more. Young adults have a unique positionality and dwell in the unknown. We envisioned a church led by the mystical spiritual guidance of the Holy Spirit.

We go places other do not; we say things that are not being said; we are doing daring things for Jesus; we are connecting in creative and unconventional ways; we use our gifts to complement others to serve; we are worshipping with hearts of praises. We young adults are mobilizing and transforming the landscape of church. We are urging congregations to return again and again to the radical faith of Mennonites.

**John:** What is one or two things that you will take back with you from the Global Youth Summit that might encourage renewal in your home congregation?

**Christen:** I have learned that our world has changed and is changing. Our global church is treading in an ocean of contemporary issues of controversies and contradictions. These wavering waves take us far from God's Spirit. However, I have also learned and witnessed the immense power of a "spark." One of my favourite evenings at the Global Youth Summit was being in the presence of the vibrant, warm and roaring flames of a communal bonfire. We danced, sang and praised God. It was meaningful because we were experiencing it together.

To best answer the question is to collectively engage in the power of a spark together.

I invite you to use your fingers and flicker them ever so gently in front of ourselves.

This is a reminder to not be afraid of small beginnings when we follow Jesus across barriers and borders. Do not underestimate a "hello" or a "how are you." Invite others with persistence into God's Spirit.

Now, take your flickering fingers and aim them side-to-side as if you were tickling your neighbour.

This is a reminder that learning together means using our God-given gifts to inspire and innovate. God designed us to live and be in community.

Let's bring our hands just a little higher near our hearts, letting our flickers grow.

The fire is now small but holding on. When we live intentionally together it requires understanding and patience to live in the unfamiliar, to practice wisdoms that may be different than our own. Hold on a little longer and watch how the fire grows just a little bigger.

Now, let's give our flickers a rest, turn to your neighbour and smile.

Smiles are kindling to the flame. Jesus calls us to suffer together and carry each other's burdens. When we extend the love of Christ in our words and actions, the fire burns brighter.

Now raise your hands to the sky, use your arms waving them side to side letting the flames dance.

This is a reminder to celebrate together in the victories God has overcome with us and for us. Lastly, like bursts of fireworks release the spark into the world using your hands and making a star-like motion. Together we are a vibrant, warm and roaring fire burning brightly for God in his glorious spirit.

I am a spark. You are a spark.

No matter how many tides wash over your fire, your spark will continue to glimmer and burn. Ignited and renewed by God's Holy Spirit again, again, and again. Choose to return to God.

**John:** Mennonite World conference is on a journey of renewal. Come, Lord Jesus, renew your church. Amen.

## Closing words



**Henk Stenvers**

MWC president  
(2022-2028)



**César García**

MWC general  
secretary

**W**ow! What a week!  
*Following Jesus Together  
Across Barriers*

How else can we describe these days? By affirming our identity in Christ and by the power of the Holy Spirit, we have overcome barriers of language, culture, social class, gender and even theology. We have enjoyed unity of the Spirit, the gift that makes it possible to be one as Jesus and the Father are one.

Global assemblies in Mennonite World Conference make visible and palpable the new reality of God's kingdom where "there is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all . . . are one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28 NRSV). God's kingdom is not an abstract concept. As ambassadors of Christ, God invites us to experience its reality as a transnational community here and now.

Global assemblies help us embody a new creation where nationalism is not our foundation, but Jesus is. A new creation where everyone is important, where we value local expressions of our faith but realize that the church of Christ is much more than our local congregations.

Global assemblies strengthen our identity rooted in the Anabaptist movement, allow us to overcome loneliness, and support those dealing with persecution, violence, extreme poverty and natural disasters.

Assemblies help local churches perceive our global communion. They make it possible for the global church to learn from local churches and receive gifts that they offer to bless the whole body of Christ.



We have come to the end of this beautiful assembly! How time flies when we are with friends! Years of planning have come together in these five days of celebrating the communion of Anabaptist-related churches here in Indonesia and – by Internet – all over the globe.

This was an Assembly greatly affected by a pandemic that continues to keep the world in its grip after more than two years. We've had a one-year delay, fewer registrants, a different program and many adjustments. And we learned much about how to organize a hybrid event and quickly change organization as new possibilities open.

But most of all, we learned to accept that things cannot always go as we want. We learned to live with unexpected and unknown circumstances. We received this with grace and adapted to new events. We changed planning time and time again, hoping, praying, and trusting that something good would come out of it, that there would be blessing in the end. And God brought something good out of it!

Dear sisters and brothers from GITJ, GKMI and JKI, we got to know you these days, and experienced your gracious hospitality. We witnessed your faith, worshipped with you and listened to your stories as you listened to what we offered. We shared communion and shared our prayers. We are most grateful for how you welcomed us and made us all part of your faith family. These experiences enriched us and will carry us through the coming years. *Terima Kasih! Terima Kasih!* May God bless you and keep you!

We express our gratitude to many people that made this assembly possible: local congregations that hosted us, MWC Staff, assembly staff and volunteers, the National Advisory Council, and donors worldwide who supported this event. In the person of our Chief International Events Officer, Liesa Unger, we see all of you represented. We give you all our heartfelt appreciation.

Now at the end of this great gathering, we look ahead with energy and hope for the future. We press ahead with newly learned skills!

And what lies ahead? In 2025, we hope to commemorate the birth of Anabaptism in Zürich, and of course, in 6 years, another assembly, God willing, in Ethiopia. New endeavours, new challenges in a rapidly changing world!

We will work hard to make Mennonite World Conference an even stronger community, a communion of faithful followers of Christ, bound together by faith and inspired by the Spirit. An Anabaptist communion that works globally for *shalom* between peoples and for creation care.

God bless us all as we travel back to the places where we live, near or far, and return to our daily lives. Physically tired, may we go enriched, inspired and encouraged. May it be that, though we leave from here, we take the light of this Assembly with us and let it burn brightly around the world through coming years to the glory of God. Amen!

Henk Stenvers, MWC president

César García, MWC general secretary



### **Location Host: JKI Holy Stadium**

JKI Holy Stadium can seat 12 000 people. This JKI congregation has social ministries serving their neighbouring community. During the pandemic, they worked with local government to host a vaccine clinic for thousands.

# July 2022

**Assembly Scattered**



# Assembly Scattered

## “Touring the History of Mennonite churches”

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GITJ Banyutowo (1-4 July)

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The church was pioneered by a Javanese missionary, Kyai Ibrahim Tunggul Wulung (1800–1885), a prominent figure in the War of Java (*Java Olog*). The congregation was established in 1861 when Kyai Ibrahim Tunggul Wulung sent out his followers to various places in Java to spread the gospel.



GITJ Banyutowo became a church under the ministry of Dutch Mennonite Mission in 1885. In a riot in 1942 (a 'holy war' waged against Christian missionary works in Java), GITJ Banyutowo's building was the only church structure not set on fire. Currently, GITJ Banyutowo has some 1,250 church members.



## “The Taste of Java”

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GITJ Kudus (2-4 July)

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The church was one of the founding congregations when the GITJ Synod was established on 30 May 1940. In 1932, prior to getting its current name, GITJ Kudus was a small group of Christians from nearby regencies (municipalities) of Jepara, Pati, and Purwodadi. They had been members of GKJ (Javanese Christian Churches) who then migrated to Kudus for work or marriage.

## Five first members

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GITJ Kayuapu – Kudus (1-4 July)

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The congregation of GITJ Kayuapu was founded by the conversion of Noeriman, a Muslim student (*santri*) and muezzin in Kayuapu. It was Yusuf Sadjó and Yusuf Tresno Rogo, friends of Kyai Ibrahim Tunggal Wulung, who introduced him to Christianity on their way to Central Java.

When the two stopped by the hamlet of Kayuapu in Kudus, Noeriman started to learn about Christianity. Alongside Noeriman, there were four more people in Kayuapu interested in the Christian faith: Singodjojo, Pramongso, Taruno and another man from Rembang. Noeriman and the four others came to Hozoo, a Dutch missionary in Semarang, to deepen their understanding of the new faith. They were subsequently baptized on 26 June 1853. They were considered the first members of GITJ Kayuapu while the date itself is marked as the date the congregation was founded spiritually.

## Harmonious community life

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GKMI Winong – Pati (1-4 July)

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GKMI Winong is an Indonesian Mennonite congregation uniquely situated just across from a mosque, Masjid Al-Muqorrobin. They might even be considered a single compound since it has a canopy connecting the two places of worship. It signifies how harmonious the community's life is.

Speaking of the church's building itself, it is one of few Mennonite churches with Dirk Willems's story depicted on a wall. The church also shows its strong roots in Javanese culture with wall ornaments full of Javanese philosophy.



## A community of witness-bearing disciples

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GKMI Anugerah, Jakarta (10-13 July)

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GKMI Anugerah is situated in the capital of Indonesia, Jakarta. We are ready to welcome you share experiences with fellow brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus. As a Mennonite congregation, GKMI Anugerah envisions a community of witness-bearing Christ's disciples.

Our members come from different backgrounds: families, young professionals, university students, migrants from other islands, and seniors. We are actively reaching out to people and invite them into our various ministries: Anugerah Kids, Anugerah Teens, Anugerah Youth, Sunday services, Elderly School, and Anugerah Worship Ministry.

## Souls for the kingdom of heaven

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JKI Bali Praise Community, Bali (11-14 July)

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JKI Bali Praise Community Church (BPCC) in Denpasar, Bali, Indonesia, was started by Rev. Peter Seniawan and officially established by Rev. Adi Sutanto on 8 October 2006 into the JKI Synod. The ministry was also supported by Pastor Peter's wife, Pastor Liliek, and their sons Joshua Setiawan and Michael Setiawan. Together with Pastor Ishak Gatot Suprpto and Pastor Umbu Rihi Meha, they serve the church along with 20 leaders who pastor in their own gifts and divisions of ministry.

The church ministry takes part in bringing influence and impact to the people on the island of Bali, to reach and win souls for the kingdom of heaven. We want to be faithful and consistent to bless Bali and serve with all our hearts.

## Love Sumba Foundation

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JKI Sumba (11-14 July)

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The island of Sumba is one of JKI's newest mission field in Indonesia. In 2013, thousands of people began to accept Christ. The people went to the regional kings to ask for leaders to help them learn more about Jesus. They eagerly welcomed and invited missionaries to work together to train the local members for leadership and outreach. Mennonite churches have partnered together to plant worship centers.

We have recently built a mission house and a few small churches in the local villages. The Love Sumba Foundation also works with helping children get education and sponsorship from supporters. The foundation also provides job training and helps export the local weaving so that the people can provide for their families. Currently, the missionaries have opened up an early education school. One goal is to help with alternative agricultural methods and irrigation systems to help get clean water and food to the villages.

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### A community for students

JKI Royal Family - Malang (11-14 July)

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This church was established in 2012 by Pastor Ricka Rooswijani, S.Th., renting a space in Joyo Agung Road, Malang. JKI Royal Family reaches out to many students in Malang who come from different regions of Indonesia. JKI Royal Family strives to build a community, a spiritual family, to support one another so they can grow in faith and society, finding their future and God's call for their lives as they finish college and return to their regions as a blessing.

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### Holistic ministries

JKI Keluarga Kerajaan, Salatiga (11-14 July)

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JKI Keluarga Kerajaan (Salatiga) was established by Pastor Jordan Joko Dwi Karyanto and Rev. Moyliana, located in Salatiga, a beautiful, cool weathered city that sits at the foot of Mount Merbabu and Mount Telomoyo. It has many students from many parts of the country studying at the Satya Wacana Christian University. It takes around an hour from Solo or Semarang, and around three hours from Yogyakarta. The church focuses on reaching families, especially in holistic ministries including its school, orphanage, creative ministries and online programs. The church often equips young people with skills to help them find their talents: multimedia, event organizing, make-up, cooking and other ministries. JKI Keluarga Kerajaan also supports members and the community socially, in handing out household food and essentials during the pandemic.

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### A caring community that feels like family

GKMI Yogyakarta and Pundong (10-13 July)

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GKMI Yogyakarta is known for being a caring community that feels like a family. It was present during the Merapi volcanic eruption and provided relief kits for COVID-19 impacted groups. The congregation itself is a supporter of Duta Wacana Christian University (UKDW). Some of the students attend services here and serve in fellowship events. GKMI Yogyakarta's young adult group is also active in local interfaith activities.

In its services, GKMI Yogyakarta integrates traditional and modern cultures. Along with a band, it has a Javanese gamelan group as well as a *keroncong* music group. The church's branch in Pundong, Bantul, has even more Javanese touches. The Pundong congregation has two traditional Javanese building structures, *joglo*, for community events including for the arts and culture.

# Tours

## Afternoon tours

**Banaran Coffee Plantation tour and Watugong Temple, Semarang Batik Village and Old City Tour, Fort Pendem, Salatiga Culinary & Coffee Tour, Rawa Pening, Durian and *Serabi Ngampin*.**

## Full-day tours

**Semarang, Ambarawa, Borobudur (4 July), Borobudur (11-13 July), Solo (2-4 July), Karimunjawa (10-13 July, 12-15 July), Interfaith Tour (10-12 July)**

## Afternoon tours

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Banaran Coffee Plantation Tour and Watugong Temple

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The Banaran Coffee Plantation is located on a hillside near Semarang, where participants can enjoy the surroundings and taste its homegrown coffee.



Watugong Temple is Indonesia's tallest Buddhist temple, reaching up to 45 metres high. It still functions as a Buddhist place of worship while opening its doors to tourists.



### Semarang Batik Village and Old City

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The Batik Village is a well-known centre for batik craftsmanship and marketplace that has been operational since the Dutch colonial time. Participants could learn to do batik painting to bring home or to purchase many types of batik products for souvenirs.

Semarang's Old City was where the Dutch community lived in during the colonial time.



### Salatiga culinary and coffee

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Enjoy Salatiga's specialty dishes – such as *wedang ronde*, beef satay (peanut sauce) and meatballs with broth – while experiencing traditional market of Salatiga. Then continue to Langit Senja cafe to enjoy Indonesian local coffee.



### Fort Pendem, Rawa Pening, durian and Serabi Ngampin

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Fort Pendem was built in 1834 and is one of the most well-known Dutch colonial remains from colonial times in Ambarawa.



Rawa Pening is a lake in Ambarawa surrounded by Mount Merbabu, Mount Telomoyo and Mount Ungaran, offering participants the idyllic mountain village atmosphere.



Participants can taste the local durian fruit from Ambarawa: durian *ketan* (or sticky durian).



*Serabi Ngampin* is one of Indonesia's traditional snacks originating from Ambarawa. Made of rice flour, coconut milk and palm sugar, it is called *serabi Ngampin* because it comes from Ngampin, one of Ambarawa's districts.

## Full-day tours

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### Semarang

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Enjoy a guided tour of Semarang as you visit places filled with history, culture and natural beauty. At the Kandri Cultural Village, participants can observe Central Java's village culture while enjoying the scenery. Participants have the opportunity to visit historical landmarks such as the Sam Poo Kong temple, Lawang Sewu colonial building and the Old City.



### Ambarawa

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Ambarawa offers exciting natural beauty and history. Participants will visit the Train Museum to view the colonial steam train collection. Afterward, participants will visit Rawa Pening and Pendem Fort. This tour also offers a taste of traditional snack *serabi Ngampin* and stinky durian, a famous fruit from Ambarawa.



### Borobudur (4 July)

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Mungkid is a village offering amazing history, including the Borobudur Temple, silver craft centre and the famous Borobudur Silver Resto. Other than enjoying good food, participants will try their hands at making silver jewelry in Mungkid and visit the Borobudur Temple, one of UNESCO's world heritage sites and the world's largest Buddhist temple.



### Borobudur (11-13 July)

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Magelang is well suited for participants who like adventure. In this tour, participants will cycle through the local village, with views of rice fields along the way.

Make sure you have enough storage in your camera, as you will have the opportunity to do a photo shoot wearing the Central Javanese traditional clothing. You will also enjoy the phenomenal sunrise at the Borobudur Temple. This tour also includes a meal at Borobudur Silver Resto and Kopi Mpat.



### Solo (2-4 July)

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Solo is home of two sultanates with many historic sites. It is a popular culinary centre with affordable food. Participants will try the famous *timlo*, a typical Solo dish, and try *wedangan* – a local custom of enjoying hot drinks or desserts in a street-side cafe that also serves rice topped up with side dishes of your choice.



Other than that, participants will see batik-making process and even try creating their own batik painting. Participants will also visit the Prambanan Temple, the largest Hindu temple from the ancient Javanese time. Coffee lovers would have the chance to taste local coffee at the Dinar Hadi Batik Museum.



### Karimunjawa (10-13 July, 12-15 July)

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The Karimunjawa group of islands is located 90 kilometers from Jepara, ideal for visitors who want a getaway from the crowd to enjoy the sea. Prior to departure, participants will stay overnight at Ono Joglo Hotel in Jepara.

Once an express boat rides to Karimunjawa, participants will visit a rehabilitation centre for sharks and stingrays, another trip by boat. Diving or snorkeling, swimming in the sea, and strolling along the beach will take up most of the time in this tour.



### Interfaith Tour (10-12 July)

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Indonesia has the world's largest population of Muslims. However, people of different faiths have co-existed for a long time.

If you want to get more insight into interreligious living within the Indonesian context, this tour will take you to an Islamic boarding school, a Hindu temple and a Buddhist temple in Jepara.

You will also visit the World Peace Gong and Wisata Tempur, a village on a hill known for its coffee.



# Ecumenical greetings



# Baptist World Alliance



## **Elijah M. Brown**

General Secretary  
and CEO  
Baptist World  
Alliance

**G**reetings to Mennonite World Conference:

In the name of Jesus Christ, and on behalf of the Baptist World Alliance, a Christian World Communion with 245 member bodies and 51 million individuals in 128 countries and territories, I send you warm greetings as you gather both online and in-person for your global Assembly. All of your brothers and sisters in the Baptist World Alliance rejoice with you.

The faithful way that Mennonite World Conference has worked for the kingdom of God reflects your great commitment to our Lord Jesus Christ. We thank God for your partnership in ministry and for our shared faith heritage. We appreciate your fellowship and our unity in the Lord. We remember that one of the convergences identified during our intentional dialogue held from 1989 to 1992, was our mutual affirmation that “witness for Jesus Christ in both word and deed as an essential dimension of the Church’s life.” We know this is as true now as it was then.

As you meet, we pray for God’s continued guidance as you seek to live your lives wholly committed to faith in Christ. May you experience God’s presence and leadership as you focus on the freedom we have in Christ and the opportunity we have as Christians to serve.

We know your celebration will be a source of true joy and a source of inspiration and challenge as you faithfully pursue our journey as a community of God.

We continue to pray God’s blessing on your witness and ministry.



**BAPTIST  
WORLD  
ALLIANCE**

# Friends World Committee for Consultations (Quakers)



## Tim Gee

General Secretary  
Friends World  
Committee for  
Consultation

**G**reetings from the Friends World Committee for Consultation: that's the body that connects around 400 000 Quakers all around the world.

When the Apostle Paul greeted the Christian communities of his day, he did so by wishing "Grace and peace in the name of Christ Jesus." And from this and other New Testament writings, I understand those communities to be something like what today we would call a Peace Church. That's something that unites Quakers with our Peace Church brothers and sisters.

What a time to try and be a Peace Church. How do we spread a message of peace when all of the talk is of war?

Well, that's what we need to work out. But there are some things that we can continue doing as we always have done. Those are helping refugees, promoting dialogue and seeking to strengthen understandings of religion in the wider Christian and faith communities that paved the way to peace long-term rather than justifying aggression.

Now, is this commitment to peace a vocation which is only for the peace churches or is it a command to everybody?

Ultimately, I think it's possible for both to be the case. The challenge is how we get from one to the other. In that journey, I think there are some things that we can unite on with all people, whether they are pacifist or not. Those include a commitment to rapidly phasing out nuclear weapons and other indiscriminate weapons; supporting those systems and those bodies that exist to prevent war crimes and trying to support those to be applied more consistently; and also preparing the way for reconciliation so that the conflicts of the present don't escalate or endure into longer-term or larger conflicts.

Now, no one said that a commitment to peace would be easy. We only need to read the Gospels to know that.

But we do know that Jesus Christ is the Prince of Peace and exists within every one of us and among us when we gather together.

So that means it's down to each of us individually and collectively to find our place in fostering God's peaceable kingdom.

Please know that as you gather together, Quakers around the world hold you in the light and I look forward to reading the outcomes.



Friends World Committee for Consultation  
World Office

# Global Christian Forum



## Casely B. Essamuah

Secretary  
Global Christian  
Forum

**G**reetings, my dearly beloved. I bring you greetings in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ as we gather together as a family of believers at the Mennonite World Conference to fellowship, to worship and to witness together.

I pray that your time in Indonesian will leave all who gather – whether in person or virtually – feeling renewed in your faith, your sense of community and your commitment to service in God’s world.

First of all, I would like to express my appreciation for the ministry of César García, my brother and friend, and especially for his leadership at the conference of secretaries of world communion. He is a gift to us all.

I also want to express my warm appreciation for the ministry of Larry and Eleanor Miller. Larry was my predecessor as secretary of the Global Christian Forum and he has been a faithful servant of the Lord within both the Mennonite fellowship and beyond in the ecumenical community at large.

I greet you on behalf of the Global Christian Forum, a body that seeks to provide a special space of welcome and hospitality for all the communities within the Christian faith. Our four pillars are the World Council of Churches, the Roman Catholic church through the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, the World Evangelical Alliance and the Pentecostal World Fellowship.

We seek to focus on bringing the various streams and families of Christianity together to share faith stories and to build relationships.

We seek to provide an open space where the spirit moves to bring people together in a community of belonging.

At this time in the history of the world, we realize more than ever the deep interdependence of humanity and our shared need for the new life that is promised to all of us through Jesus Christ our Lord.

It is in Jesus Christ that we look forward to the day when there will be no more sickness, no more violence, no more death.

We look forward to the day when we will all worship together as the family of God.

And when we gather to fellowship as you all are doing now, we have the opportunity to glimpse – even briefly – the beauty of that glorious day.

So, we pray for you all and we ask that you also would pray for us as we prepare for the Global Christian Forum’s fourth global gathering scheduled to be held in Accra, Ghana, during the week of April 15–19 in the year 2024. We pray God’s blessings on your time together and thank you very much.

# Lutheran World Federation (LWF)



**Anne Burghardt**

General Secretary  
Lutheran World  
Federation

**R**espected general secretary César García; respected president; officers of the general council; and the executive committee:

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,  
Greetings and blessings from the Lutheran World Federation (LWF).

In my first year as general secretary, I am grateful for your support and well wishes not only for myself but for the entire LWF communion of churches.

Over the past decades, we have maintained an important dialogue as we sought together the way from conflict to communion.

The text *Healing Memories* and the service of confession and reconciliation in 2010 are beautiful and powerful examples of mutual reconciliation.

We have set off on a journey that seeks to break down the historical walls that have divided us and other world communions. Such a journey we encounter with others brings about transformation – a transformation in each of us – but also in our communions and for the world so loved by God.

More recently along with you and the Roman Catholic church, theologians discussed baptism and its implications for our life and witness to the world. The resulting report *Baptism Incorporation into the Body of Christ, the Church* was published in English and German; Spanish and French are in preparation.

The report has a double goal: increasing mutual understanding between our communions and helping one another grow in faithfulness to Jesus Christ.

*Baptism Incorporation into the Body of Christ, the Church* reminds us of that deep bond in faith that unites us and encourages reflection on the living out of baptism in Christian discipleship. Baptism is the introduction into the body of Christ that transcends the borders of nations and confessions of faith.

The report also addresses challenges to the three world communions, calling us to be more aware of baptism as both gift and call for everyone's life of faith.

We at the LWF have been inspired by the approach you have taken in responding to these challenges, an approach that shapes your understanding of what it means to be a communion of churches. Following your initiative, we have set up a task force of Lutheran theologians from around the globe to explore the



THE  
LUTHERAN  
WORLD  
FEDERATION

challenges posed to the Lutheran communion, notably around the theology of the child and the communal implications of baptism, namely discipleship.

This study is continuing to open many doors for us.

We rejoice to be on the path of increased mutual understanding and cooperation as we help one another grow in faithfulness to Jesus Christ and respond to the many pastoral and missional challenges of today's world, a world continually broken by violence division and war.

In this regard, the Mennonite witness to peace and justice serves as a model for Christians around the world.

This past year has brought many transitions in our lives and work both individually and as communions. We continue to live in a form of ongoing pandemic, always navigating what it means for our work and witness. I give thanks to God for the many ways we have worked together.

And now as meetings increase, I believe it is important for our two communions to continue exploring ways of working ever more closely together, whether in theological study, in ecumenical prayer or in humanitarian efforts.

The Lutheran World Federation holds you in prayer for your ongoing ministry, your peace witness in the world and for your global Assembly meeting now.

We are grateful for your general secretary César García and for his leadership of the Mennonite World Conference as well as his leadership in the ecumenical world, particularly in the Christian world communions.

You are helping us live into that deep spiritual unifying communion that is the church. We entrust this meeting and the important decisions you are making to the triune God.

May God bless your deliberations and grant you always to follow Jesus together across barriers.



# Dicastery for promoting Christian Unity



## Brian Farrell

Secretary  
Dicastery for  
promoting  
Christian unity

**D**ear Reverend García,  
Down the years, a new climate of understanding and friendship has begun to pervade the Christian world. The ecumenical movement is now a consolidated and intentional search by Christians for greater unity, collaboration and common witness before the world. Catholics and Mennonites have been active participants in that movement, and there are many signs of renewed mutual respect and closeness between us. In that spirit, on behalf of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, I offer warm greetings to the Mennonite World Conference General Assembly.

As a traditional “peace church”, the Mennonite family recognizes that the search for greater unity among Christians is not merely an internal inter-church matter. It has enormous consequences for the future of the human family. As long as human relations, individual and collective, are based on political and nationalistic ambitions, or on economic self-interest, there will continue to be wars and tensions between people. Only if the peace of Christ enters human hearts will relationships, between single people or communities, lead to mutual respect and generous solidarity.

As indicated in the Report of the International Dialogue between the Catholic Church and Mennonite World Conference (1998–2003), Catholics and Mennonites share a common commitment to peacemaking: “That commitment is rooted in our communion with “the God of Peace” (Romans 15:33) and in the church’s response to Jesus’ proclamation of “the gospel of peace” (Ephesians 6:15). Christ has entrusted to us the ministry of reconciliation. As “ambassadors of Christ” (2 Corinthians 5:20) we are called to be reconciled to God and to one another” (*Called Together to be Peacemakers*, 145).

Our Pontifical Council has just held its own Plenary Assembly, and I think it worthwhile to highlight one of the thoughts that Pope Francis shared with us:

“Today, in the face of the barbarism of war, the yearning for unity must be fostered again. Ignoring divisions among Christians, out of habit or resignation, means tolerating that pollution of hearts that makes fertile the ground for conflict.



*Continued on page 89*

# Pentecostal World Fellowship



## Billy Wilson

President  
Oral Roberts  
University

Chair  
Pentecostal World  
Fellowship

I want to bring my greetings today to the Mennonite World Conference global Assembly and say, "Special greetings from your Pentecostal brothers and sisters, literally around the world."

You know, the cross of Jesus is horizontal and vertical: it's vertical, first connecting us to God, through the death of our Saviour, but it's also horizontal connecting us together with other believers.

Today, we join you at the cross of Christ in unity to join together for world evangelization. The Pentecostal World Fellowship is passionate about getting the gospel to every person on earth over the next decade and we pray that you're joining with us in the Mennonite fellowship to pursue getting the gospel to every creature.

You know, the Gospel of Mark gives his version of the Great Commission which is "Preach the gospel to every creature" – or, as some versions say – "To one and all: get this, good news to one and all

I've had a great privilege of meeting a lot of wonderful, Mennonite, brothers and sisters over the years. I know you're passionate about mission and about missions and about getting the gospel to the ends of the earth.

So again, on behalf of the Pentecostal World Fellowship, and all of our friends here at Oral Roberts University, I bring my greetings.

I pray you have an awesome gathering this year as you join together around the world to seek God for his favour and sharing the good news of Jesus with a world that's in need.

# Salvation Army



## E. Jayne Paone

Commissioner  
Salvation Army  
– International  
Ecumenical  
Relations

**W**hat a wonderful theme you have for this Mennonite global Assembly: following Jesus together, across barriers. And what a privilege to meet together for worship in Jesus' name. I bring you warmest greetings in Christ's name on behalf of brothers and sisters in the Salvation Army, and our world leader General Brian Peddle.

Over the past two years, through a pandemic, through conflicts, we have become more aware of our common fragilities; yet, no barriers can separate us from the love of God, that is in Christ Jesus, our Lord. I believe, through the difficulties, we have become even more conscious of that world-embracing love – the love that cannot be measured. We remember that we follow the one who is not only my Lord; he is Lord of the church; Lord of the world; he is Lord over all creation.

There has been a renewed sense of what it means to be a follower of Jesus individually and collectively. We have been challenged to become creative in overcoming barriers through Christ's love.

Following Jesus has brought us into closer contact with people who are hurting, grieving or desperately lonely. We, as the Salvation Army, serve suffering humanity without discrimination in Christ's name in over 130 countries. We may be an army, but our only weapon is love. So, we partner with different communions. We follow Jesus together, across barriers. We want, like you, that others may come to follow Jesus and see his kingdom come through small actions of love and peace building.

What does following Jesus together across the barriers look like on a day-to-day basis? It may be through providing practical help to those fleeing conflict; offering a safe place to victims of human trafficking; or simply seeking the welfare of our local community, accepting our responsibilities as followers of Jesus. We become neighbours, Good Samaritans, as Jesus asked us to be: there, where we live.

The task of meeting the world's need is so great that we cannot do it alone. We can only carry out our mission through the power of the Spirit of Christ. The word together makes all the difference. We are not alone

Have an excellent assembly! As you gather, I pray you will be conscious of the Spirit's power at work within you, renewing your desire to follow our Lord, more nearly, see him more clearly and love him more dearly.

Now to him, who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us: to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations forever and ever, Amen.



# Seventh-day Adventist Church



## Ganoune Diop

Director of Public Affairs and Religious Liberty General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church

**P**astor César García: Thank you so much for this opportunity that you are giving me to address the fellowship that God has entrusted to your care, to the care of your leadership.

Already, before I even say anything addressing to the whole family and fellowship of the Mennonites, I would like to express how deeply grateful I am to God for our partnership and in particular your leadership now as the chair of the conference of secretaries of the Christian world communions. Already your leadership is really making its mark and all these secretary generals around the world are really appreciating deeply – already – the impact that you are making. So, thank you very much for that. And I'm just privileged to be working with you as the secretary of this very distinguished group.

Now, I would like to address these following words to our dear sisters and brothers in Christ who are of the remarkable tradition of the Anabaptist-Mennonites.

You have distinguished yourself by calling the global Christian community to restore key New Testament values that Jesus himself promoted. And you use the mnemonic device BASIN: basically, we're talking about brotherhood of believers, so you insisted to restore that; adult baptism for the freedom of choice and so forth; separation of church and state, or religion and state – this is much needed today in a world of totalitarianism and so forth; and then, being in the world but not of the world, so your identity deeply rooted in Christ, you are calling all Christianity to restore that and that is very important; and then, of course, your unflinching commitment to nonviolence – now that is remarkable. In our day today where people talk about domination, dominance, dominion, you emphasize in nonviolence.

So, as you celebrate your heritage and how our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ has led you, in the name of the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist World Church, we wish you the renewal of the holy spirit for you to fulfill the mission entrusted to your care. So may God continue to bless you with his Holy Spirit until the second coming in glory which our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ has promised. So abundant blessing, my friend, you, and also my sisters and brothers in the Communion that God has entrusted your leadership which you are remarkably fulfilling.

Thank you so much.



Seventh-day  
Adventist® Church

# World Communion of Reformed Churches



## Hanns Lessing

Acting General Secretary World Communion of Reformed Churches

**D**ear sisters and brothers in Christ You have started your 2022 assembly with the call to “Following Jesus Together Across Barriers.” At a time when we feel that our world is falling more and more apart, this theme is an important reminder of the reality that Jesus has opened for us with his ministry. People might draw borders that separate people from people. They might close up their identities by excluding everything that does not conform entirely. They might engage in warfare to extend their rule. But all these endeavours cannot obscure the fundamental openness that Jesus invites us to join into. The world might try to separate us from each other by all means. But as human beings, we are created with the ability to reach out across barriers: If we see someone suffering, we sympathize; if our brother or sister is overburdened, we feel the urge to help; if there is an essential threat to our communities, we abandon our selfish interests and cooperate in the best interest of all; and if we experience beauty, we celebrate together.

Jesus does not summon us to something alien by calling us to move across barriers. On the contrary, the call resonates with a deep sense of truth that we are all aware of. During your assembly, you are exploring different dimensions of this openness. With all humanity, we share the experience that learning, living, caring, and celebrating uncloses. Jesus embraces this reality and calls us to trust our ability to move across the frontiers that the world is erecting everywhere.

This radical trust in the openness of our created nature is the new dimension that Jesus brings into our lives. This is often overlooked. We have become so used to limiting our openness to private spaces. In the family, among friends, in the congregation or safe village space, we feel secure enough to allow our created abilities to trust, sympathize and celebrate to shape our relations. But Jesus calls us to be more trusting and courageous and go beyond the limits of our comfort zone, where it becomes risky when we open up and start moving across barriers.



World Communion  
of Reformed Churches

*Continued on page 89*

# World Council of Churches



## Ioan Sauca

Secretary General  
World Council of  
Churches

**D**ear sisters and brothers in Christ:  
It is with great joy that I'm addressing the global Assembly of the Mennonite World Conference on behalf of the 352 member churches of the World Council of Churches.

Assemblies of a Christian world communion are turning points in the life of a church family.

Your global Assembly meets this time in a hybrid form with most of the participants attending online in the special circumstances of the crisis caused by the terrible pandemic of COVID-19 and its consequences which affected the life of millions of people in many ways.

Meeting in the context of Indonesia offers you the opportunity to encounter a great Christian ethnic diversity and to share each other's gifts in the joy of faith and in mutual accountability.

Such experiences strengthen the vision of Christian unity in diversity.

Despite the various global crises, the joy that I have already expressed in the beginning of my greetings is our guiding strength rooted in the message of resurrection and the cultivation of our Christian values of faith, hope and love.

The resurrection joy in our world dominated by fear, hopelessness and scarcity of love means the experience of Jesus Christ in our midst.

As we recall, the resurrection appearances, we are confident that Christ is continuously with us, loving, forgiving, feeding, healing and empowering us to becoming his visible signs of peace and reconciliation.

As Christians, we carry this great calling with humbleness and responsibility, working for and encouraging a sustained dialogue for peace while building bridges of reconciliation between people and churches.

It is our shared vocation to participate in the prophetic mission of Christ, proclaiming the kingdom of God, which is made visible by the testimony of our lives and in our charitable acts.

We all trust, in times like ours, that Christ's love can reconcile and unite us as churches and as humanity.

The theme of the next WCC assembly in Karlsruhe, Germany, in 2022 – "The love of Christ moves the world to reconciliation and unity" – expresses this trust and that the love of Christ compels us to be co-workers of God's initiative and action for reconciliation and unity.

Love is a deep and powerful attitude rooted in the compassion and true human relationships expressed through mutual belonging, service and sacrifice.



World Council  
of Churches

*Continued on page 89*

# World Evangelical Alliance



## Thomas Paul Schirmmacher

Secretary General  
World Evangelical  
Alliance

The World Evangelical Alliance is happy and proud to be in close cooperation with Mennonite churches around the world and the Mennonite World Conference. Many Mennonite churches are members of the national alliances and have a vital part in our ministries there.

The first Mennonite World Conference was in 1925 in Basel. I studied in Basel and I live in Bonn. And you know that this area of the world is the origin of the Mennonites. We owe as Christians, as Protestants, as an Evangelical movement two things to the Mennonites.

Number one is the topic of religious freedom.

Originally it was fighting for their own rights, that is, that the state may not interfere in the church, but it fostered a development in which later on religious freedom was made the DNA of a political conviction that church and state should not rule each other, but be kept separate. And that has built into the founding of the World Evangelical Alliance in 1846 in London where religious freedom became one of the major parts of what we are standing for.

The second, of course, is peace.

In the moment, that becomes a very important topic once again. In the discussion we owe it to the Mennonites to make it very clear that peace/*shalom* is what God wants. War is the evil exception. War is the thing we have to fight against. War is what we have to prevent. There are situations in which we need the police, in which we need security, in which we need to defend ourselves, but *shalom* is the real goal. And if you look into our ministries today of the World Evangelical Alliance, you will find it all over the place that *shalom* – the peace that only Jesus Christ can bring – is the goal of everything we do.

Thank you very much for this.

And I ask God's blessing for all the things you have to discuss. I know you have some very difficult things to discuss; we live in very difficult times. We are challenged as global Christian bodies in some very vital topics. I pray to God, that he may give you wisdom to find also *shalom* among each other as a global church.

Thank you very much.



Continued from page 82

### **Dicastery for promoting Christian Unity**

The proclamation of the gospel of peace, that gospel that disarms hearts even before disarming armies, will only be more credible if announced by Christians finally reconciled in Jesus, Prince of Peace; Christians animated by his message of universal love and brotherhood, which goes beyond the boundaries of their own community and nation.... today, we will either walk together or we will stand still.”  
(6 May 2022).

Our hope and prayer is that Mennonites and Catholics will increasingly work together for that world of fraternity, love and peace.

May the Lord, the Prince of Peace, sustain all those taking part in the Global Assembly.

Continued from page 87

### **World Council of Churches**

We are grateful for all you share in your Christian witness and ecumenical *diakonia*.

It is important that we carefully listen to and pray for each other, aiming to discern God's will for our times and to act as trustworthy witnesses of Christ's transforming love.

Let me conclude, assuring you of our prayers. Not only for your global Assembly. But also for the life and mission of your community.

May God bless us.

Continued from page 86

### **World Communion of Reformed Churches**

For us, as confessional church communions, this call is a huge challenge. In a way, it is our identity to maintain and foster our identities. For centuries we have cultivated our distinctiveness by pointing to the perceived limitations of other Christian traditions. The ecumenical movement is, in a way, the attempt to follow Jesus across barriers. In recent years, we have learned to offer our respective beliefs as resources to the whole church. This has allowed us to perceive the otherness of different traditions not first and foremost as errors but as impulses for our own discernment. This approach is particularly adequate for our relations as Mennonites and Reformed. Despite our differences, we are not alien to each other because we share a common origin. In our history, Zurich was not only the place of the persecution of the early anabaptists but also the location where the leaders of the Reformation movement studied Scripture together in the desire to give the church a new foundation. Unfortunately, this joint search for the truth divided the Zurich Reformation and led to persecution and division. As Reformed, we acknowledge our complicity in the atrocities and see our collaboration as an urgent warning on what may happen if we fail to follow Jesus' call to move across barriers.

Today, we must realize that the separation did not settle the controversies. In Reformed churches, the understanding of the church and the relationship between church and state has shifted over time. During our highly engaged discussions on apartheid in South Africa and the unjust world economic order, we have positioned ourselves at a prophetic distance from political and economic structures. Today we see ourselves as confessing churches that discern, confess and witness to God's calling.

In the light of these developments, we highly appreciate the willingness of the Mennonite World Conference to engage in a new round of dialogue. We believe that it will be fruitful to jointly reengage with our common origin if we want to live up to the challenges of our time. In many parts of the world, Reformed and Mennonite churches witness and worship in close proximity to each other. Indonesia is a very prominent example. We see a lot of improvement in our relations with each other. We hope and pray that the theme of your assembly may become a reminder to our communions and the churches they gather to increase our efforts to follow Jesus together across boundaries.

We wish you a blessed Assembly!

# Appendix



## Greetings from host country



**H. Ganjar  
Pranowo, Sh,  
M.Ip**

Governor of  
Central Java

Ladies and gentlemen,  
During many years of working with President Joko Widodo, I have ever felt more anxious than, until last time, he visited Ukraine and Russia. How come? As we all know that the two countries are still at war. But among the anxiety, there is a pride that I feel. Because, President Joko Widodo is the one only who concretely dares to mediate between the two countries to make peace. It is the same as he did to mediate the conflict in Afghanistan. The threat of bullets, bombs and rockets did not diminish his determination to prove Indonesia's position in wanting world peace.

The Constitution of our country in its preamble states, "Indeed, independence is the right of all nations. And because of that, colonialism in the world must be abolished. Because it is not in accordance with humanity and justice."

The reason of President Joko Widodo's courage because our country's intention is clear.

We don't have intent to seek support even less profit. So far, we are standing on a country whose get easy to talk about peace. Our country is not silent when it comes to campaigning for peace and solidarity. Because, indeed, we don't have the history burden of bloodshed on the world's people. So when there is a war, there is bloodshed in other countries, our duty is bringing a peace and love between them.

Honestly, it's really hard, ladies and gentlemen.

The mission of the Founding Fathers have chosen for us in the world arena is very difficult. However, if we think logically, without that choice of Founding Fathers' mission, we should keep be supposed to maintain the world peace. Because whatever the reason, war can never be justified.

So, in order to achieve peace on a large scale, we need a struggle in a large space. Of course, we are like a toothless cat if we only scream peace from inside the room.

I can't do it, ladies and gentlemen. Peace requires struggle. And the struggle requires a weapon. And the most powerful weapon is a rightness.

Without proper behaviour, we will only become victims in a game of cat and mouse. Without the right actions, we will only be blamed.

So, the Javanese have a principle, “*kudundeleng gethok e dewe*” means we have to reflect on ourself. I would not say, “Hey, you guys, imitate the Anabaptists or imitate the Mennonites in practicing and spreading peacefulness. Such as, when he saw a person who harmed him fell into a puddle of ice, he would not run away, but instead reached out to help. Even if in the end he sacrifice his life.” No, I wouldn’t say it.

Because the truthfulness has been embedded in every human soul. We all know right or wrong, because right and wrong are like day and night, the difference is very clear and real. The choice depends on us, want to make peace or conflict. Our president has set an example, who dared to spread peace in warring countries.

Happy celebrating my brothers and sisters, Mennonites. I am sure that the provision of truth and peace in this room will spread throughout the country. Thank you.



# Opening ceremony team

## **Production manager**

*Setya R.K.J*

## **Accompaniments/Composers**

*Setya R.K.J*

*Roni Driyastoto*

## **Choreographer**

*Arjuni Prasetyorini*

## **Art**

*Usmanto*

*Ajar Ardiyanto*

## **Puppeteer**

*Ki Suyito Basuki*

## **Musicians**

*Roni Driyastoto*

*Mikhael Tri Prasetya Morib*

*Joko Triswanto*

*Arya Gusega Wipardana*

*Bagas Arya Saputra*

*Ipuk Widyastuti*

*Rudy Santoso*

*Sukoco Hayat*

*Alang Budi Setiawan*

*Bethlehem Alexander Maxymilian Siwy*

## **Singers**

*Siswati*

*Setya R.K.J*

*Hertanti Widyaningsih*

## **Dancers**

*Anin Praditya Hartanto*

*Tesalonika Verona Yuwara*

*Vilia Angelica*

*Riri Natasya Elgiva Givela*

*Panca Kasih Atmajani*

*Irene*

*Leonie Aprillia Shallomita Adinda*

*Lovandra Elang Elisse Andini*

*Wieke Edgina Michaela*

*Michelle Christabel*

## **Fashion and make-up stylists**

*Dwi Nusa Aji Winarno*

*Nikita Adestya Yuliani*

## **Crew**

*Endra Maryanto*

*Triyono*

# Additional presenters

**5 July 2022**

North America

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**Master of ceremonies**

*Lisa Carr-Pries, Canada*

**Scripture**

*Mark 7:24-30*

*Elvin Floyd Sieber, Argentina*

**Music**

*Affettuoso Mennonite Ethnic Ensemble  
(Indonesian music and dance)*

*Jakarta Praise Community Church (JKI worship band)*

**Special focus**

*Banner procession*

**6 July 2022**

Europe

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**Morning**

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**Master of ceremonies**

*Daniel Talenta Tobing, Indonesia*

**Prayers and reflection**

*Sophia Mons, Netherlands*

**Testimony**

*Faith Abe Tanaya, JK1, Indonesia*

**Music**

*GKMI Salatiga*

*“Stomp des écoliers” by LightClubberz, France*

**Evening**

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**Master of ceremonies**

*Danang Kristiawan*

**Prayers**

*Indah Seftyaningrum*

*Pastor H. N. Widi Susabda*

**Reflection**

*Hani Yopita Setiawan*

**Testimony**

*José Arrais, Portugal (Video from Ukraine)*

**Scripture**

*Malin Voth, USA*

*Matthew 7:24-27*



**Music**

*Congdut GITJ Jepara feat Islamic Sufi's Community*

**Special focus**

*Global Youth Summit, Gaëlle Oesch, France*

**7 July 2022**

Asia

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**Morning**  
.....**Master of ceremonies**

*Daniel Talenta Tobing, Indonesia*

**Prayer and reflection**

*Kkot-lp Bae, South Korea*

**Testimony**

*Didik Hartono, GKMI Winong Pati, GKMI Interfaith Peacebuilding, Indonesia*

**Music**

*"Where is the love" by LightClubberz*

**Evening**  
.....**Prayers**

*Esterningsih Djartono*

**Reflection**

*Esterningsih Djartono  
Sadanand Hembrom*

**Testimony**

*Vikal P. Rao, India*

**Scripture**

*Sadanand Hembrom  
2 Corinthians 4:1-17*

**Music**

*Mennonite Keroncong Solo*

**Special focus**

*Lord's Supper*

**8 July 2022**

Latin America

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**Morning**  
.....**Master of ceremonies**

*Daniel Talenta Tobing, Indonesia*

**Prayers**

*Valentina Kunze*

**Reflection**

*Juan Manuel Guevara, Colombia*

**Testimony**

*Stefani Dimu, Love Sumba, Indonesia*

**Music**

*JC Band  
"Danse de la creation" by LightClubberz, France*

**Evening**  
.....**Master of ceremonies**

*Penta Kostafani*

**Prayers**

*Jeanette Bissoon*

**Reflection**

*Tri Atmono, Indonesia*

**Testimony**

*Willi Hugo Pérez, Guatemala*

**Scripture**

*Angie Tatiana Morales Florido, Colombia*

**Music**

*Edy Kristanto and children, angklung and gamelan*

**Special focus**

*Introducing the new president*

**9 July 2022**

Africa focus

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**Morning**

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**Master of ceremonies**

*Daniel Talenta Tobing, Indonesia*

**Prayer and reflection**

*Isaac Gborbitey, Ghana*

**Music**

*JKI Ayem Tentrem, JKI Ungaran  
"Converge" by LightClubberz, France  
Indonesian women's choir*

**Evening**

---

**Master of ceremonies**

*David Meijanto, Indonesia*

**Reflection**

*Ngire Jonah, Uganda*

**Testimony**

*Desalegn Abebe, Ethiopia*

**Scripture**

*2 Corinthians 5:17-21  
Nontokozy Moyo, Zimbabwe*

**Prayer**

*Cynthia Dück*

**Music**

*JKI Maranatha*

**Special focus**

*Introducing the next Assembly host: Ethiopia  
Desalegn Abebe, Meserete Kristos Church*

**10 July 2022**

Renewal 2022

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**Morning**

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**Master of ceremonies**

*Lydia Adi & Anton Siharta, Indonesia*

**Reflection**

*John Roth, USA  
Christen Kong, Canada*

**Testimony**

*Rebeca González Torres, Mexico*

**Scripture**

*Ruth 1:15-22  
Felix Perez Diener, USA*

**Music**

*Gamelan Ansambel, GKMI Lamper Mijen*

**Special focus**

*Presentation from children's and youth programs  
Jennifer McWilliams, Canada, and Jardely  
Martínez, Colombia*

# Global Church Village

The Global Church Village stage is an extension of the Global Church Village exhibit. Participants showcase music, drama, mimes, stories from their country and church in a half-hour or one-hour presentation.

**Akepogu John Michael**

*India  
Storytelling*

**Timo Doetsch**

*Germany  
Storytelling*

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## 8 July 2022

**Tri Gunanto**

*Indonesia  
Storytelling*

**Hakjoon Joe Ko**

*South Korea  
Performance: Korean game, song, dance*

**Simon Okoth Onyango**

*Uganda  
Storytelling*

**Luis Enrique Vizcaino Garcia**

*Colombia  
Performance*

**Andres Prins, Mathari Vidyasagar**

*Morocco, India  
Performance and storytelling:  
The Lord's Prayer in Arabic*

**Matare John**

*India  
Storytelling*

**Tri Gunanto**

*Indonesia  
Performance: song*

---

## 9 July 2022

**Ranjana Nath**

*India  
Performance: skit*

**Douglas Day Kaufman**

*USA  
Storytelling*

**GKMI women's group**

*Indonesia  
Performance: song*

---

## 6 July 2022

**Ayushi Masih, Archana Masih**

*India  
Performance and storytelling*

**Garry Janzen**

*Canada  
Storytelling*

**Sushant Nand**

*India  
Performance: dance*

---

## 7 July 2022

**Nancy Lynn Epp**

*Canada  
Storytelling*

**Pastor Moses and group**

*Indonesia  
Performance: song*

**Tin Wai Esther Choi**

*Hong Kong  
Performance: dance (5 different forms)*

**Juan Manuel Guevara**

*Colombia  
Performance and storytelling: The history of  
Colombia through dance*

## Youth Program (ages 13-17)

The program was interactive, fun and conversational. There was a “freedom wall” for the youth to express themselves with words, drawings and paintings to reflect visually on lessons learned.

After the evening plenary, attendees could do group activities in the late evening program.

### **Tuesday, 5 July 2022**

Treasure hunt

### **Wednesday, 6 July 2022**

Learning together:

Culture maker/God is close to the broken-hearted

Yonathan Setiawan

Psalm 34:18

Giant Dutch Blitz tournament

### **Thursday, 7 July 2022**

Living together:

The unity of the church

Christen Kong, Valary Otieno

1 Corinthians 12:12-27

Balloon race

### **Friday, 8 July 2022**

Caring together:

Following Jesus as a teenager

Floyd Sieber

Timothy 4:12

Tug-of-war

### **Saturday, 9 July 2022**

Celebrating together:

Called to serve/What does it mean to follow Jesus in your community

Deepson Masih

Talent show

*daily average: 7-8 participants; several international participants and different local drop ins*

## Children’s program

The big idea was that Jesus invited others to learn from him to be disciples. Through this, the children learn to understand that the church is bigger than they think.

Children attended a morning program with Bible teaching during the morning plenaries. After lunch, there were crafts, games and opportunities to visit the Global Church Village.

# Workshops

Hybrid and online workshops

View workshop recordings at [mwc-cmm.org/A17workshops](https://mwc-cmm.org/A17workshops)

## MWC workshops

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Creation Care & MWC: Responding as a Global Church

Declaration of Solidarity with Indigenous Peoples – I

Declaration of Solidarity with Indigenous Peoples – II

Declaration of Solidarity with Indigenous Peoples – III

Global Church Sharing Fund

Introduction to the Global Anabaptist Peace Network

MWC and political advocacy

Responding to Climate Crisis as a Missional Responsibility

The Coronavirus Task Force

## Other workshops in English

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Alone with God – The challenge

Anabaptist Mennonite Scholars Network: Scholarship across barriers

Breaking down barriers between Muslims and Christians

Bringing Voices Together: songs from around the world

Called to be holy: Integrating ministry into our daily lives

Christian hospitality: the church and global migration

Collaboration against all odds

Creation care that makes a difference

Discipleship and justice: What's your context?

Dutch colonialism, Multatuli, and Mennonite history: a drama workshop

Ecumenical peace witness across Europe

Evangelical faith and the Land of Israel



Integration of faith and health from an Anabaptist perspective

Introducing biblical multifaith hermeneutics in Indonesia and Asia

Land and water protection: peace work and the environment

Let's make a difference with what we have!

Mary breaking down barriers between Muslims and Christians

MEDA panel: business and faith in a post-COVID world

Meeting Muslims as guests, hosts and mutual partners

Mennonites in Indonesia and Radical Muslims making Peace

Muslim nonviolence?!

Nothing Remains as It Was – renewal yesterday ... and today?

Overcoming the Dividing Wall between Christ-followers and Muslims

Preventing child malnutrition in developing countries

Seeing power as God sees it: Herod and the child

Sexual Misconduct by Pastors

The "Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace" of the World Council of Churches

The Bible, the land and the Middle East conflict

The Lord calls devoted, transformational leaders

The Peace House: encountering the stranger

The walled world: breaking down the walls of hostility

When strong Christian leaders collide

## **Spanish workshops**

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A solas con Dios – El desafío

Aguas para la tierra

Buen manejo del poder y la sexualidad en iglesias

Colaboración contra todo pronóstico

Cuidado de la creación y el CMM

Diálogos Anabautistas "Como construimos espacios de discernimiento en tiempos de fundamentalismos religiosos y políticos"

Discipulado y justicia: ¿Cuál es su contexto?

El Señor llama a líderes transformadores

Evangélicos(as) y poder: ¿qué dice el Anabautismo?

Justicia Restaurativa, delitos y adicciones

Merienda Menonita: el arte de conversar y la práctica de escuchar

MTAL, servicio y salud integral ante la nueva normalidad

Pasos prácticos de la iglesia mundial para el cuidado de la creación

## **Workshops with French interpretation**

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Le "Pèlerinage de justice et de paix" du COE

## **Workshops with Indonesian interpretation**

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Hospitalitas Kristen: gereja dan migrasi global

Mengatasi tembok pemisah antara pengikut Kristus dan Muslim

## **Workshops with German interpretation**

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Maria zerbricht Barrieren zwischen Moslems und Christen

# Global Youth Summit

## Life in the Spirit: Learn, Serve, Worship.

34 delegates:  
4 from North America,  
4 from Europe,  
11 from Asia,  
6 from Africa, and  
9 from Latin America.

It is our joy to report on a successful Global Youth Summit. Successful, not because of the program, but simply because it was possible, even within a short amount of time in the midst of a pandemic. And successful because of the community and momentum for the work among young people that was built through it. It was also successful because the Holy Spirit was present and working among us, bringing unity, joy, encouragement, and empowerment.

We had 120 participants from 26 different countries, including 34 delegates with 4 each from North America and Europe, 11 from Asia, 6 from Africa, and 9 from Latin America. Our theme was Life in the Spirit: Learn, Serve, Worship, and our content was based on the book of Ephesians.

In our delegate sessions we looked at what are some of the common and distinct challenges for young people in their different contexts. Some common issues that surfaced were loneliness and the need for belonging, the need for good leadership, bridging the generation gap, and the need to redefine church in a way that the function of it can shift to the spaces where young people are present.

Not only did the delegates look at challenges, but they brainstormed some ideas and solutions as well and how they can be a part of bringing change by building relationships and sharing resources. More than just discussing, the delegates and participants enjoyed their time learning from their different cultures, sharing snacks from their countries, sharing words of encouragement and strengthening, and praying for each other.

One of the most impactful moments of GYS was after the delegates shared their conclusions with the participants and we spent time praying for each other's countries on a large floor map, as well as for each other personally. The Spirit was very present as we united in prayer, and people authentically prayed for the change they wanted to see in the world and in themselves.

As such, we really felt that Jesus met with us during GYS and we are looking forward to seeing what continued fruit the Spirit bears in us through prayer, relationship, and collaboration in the work of building the global Church.

**Ebenezer Mondez**  
YABs mentor (2022-2028)



# Other MWC meetings

**Officers:**  
29–30 June 2022

**Commissions:**  
30 June 2022, 5 July 2022

**General Council:**  
1–4 July 2022

**Global Youth Summit:**  
1–4 July 2022



# Indonesia 2022 Financial Update

Our joy in gathering at Assembly this year was immense. The outbreak of COVID-19 a little more than a year before we were supposed to gather for Indonesia 2021 cast much uncertainty on the event, even after postponing it for a year. So, it was a truly wonderful experience when we were finally together.

The financial challenges created by the postponement and the uncertainty due to the pandemic were significant, yet we crossed them with your generous support. We are very pleased to report that, as of publication time, we met the financial goal of breaking even. Our hearts are grateful for the faithfulness of our many supporters. Thanks be to God.

Total revenues amounted to just under US\$1.2 million with over US\$1 million coming from contributions and US\$138 000 from registration fees.

We are particularly happy to share that the combined contributions from churches, individuals, foundations and agencies exceeded the goal by US\$63 000.

This was MWC's first time hosting a hybrid event with in-person and online attendees. There were many unknowns that made it challenging to budget for registration fees. We fell short of the goal for registration fees by US\$363 000. In total, revenues were 80 percent of the amount budgeted.

Thanks to the careful planning and spending by Assembly staff, we were able to contain expenses, despite an additional year of commitments due to the postponement. Total expenses came in \$285 000 less than budget. These savings made up for the shortfall in revenues.

The net impact of the variances in revenues and expenses, along with a transfer of \$100 000 from general revenues that had been budgeted, resulted in the break-even position that we had hoped for. We are thankful to each person and organization that gave to make this result possible.

We are also thankful for each person who attended Assembly. We thank those who joined online – at home on their computers or together with others at a local church – for joining us as we learned to run a hybrid event.. We thank our Indonesian brothers and sisters who attended portions of the event in Salatiga, Semarang or at one of the satellite locations. We are confident that God's Spirit moved among us and it is our prayer that the blessing we received in gathering will carry us forward.

## Revenues

Contributions	\$ 1 034 334
Registration fees	\$ 138 007
Other	\$ 9 107
Transfer from unrestricted funds	\$ 100 000
<i>Total Assembly revenues</i>	<i>\$ 1 287 918</i>

## Expenses

Facility and program	\$252 331
Staff, travel, administration	\$672 583
Management fees	\$375 602
<i>Total Expenses</i>	<i>\$1 300 515</i>
<i>Net</i>	<i>(\$12 597)</i>
<i>Opening Balance</i>	<i>\$15 112</i>
<i>Ending Balance*</i>	<i>\$2 515</i>

*\*(A positive Assembly 17 balance will be credited toward Assembly 18.)*

A black and white photograph of a large audience seated in an auditorium. The perspective is from the back of the room, looking towards the front. Many people are wearing face masks. In the foreground, a woman with long hair is looking at her smartphone. Next to her, a man in a checkered shirt and glasses is also looking at his phone. The audience extends far into the background, filling the frame. The text "Attendance statistics" is overlaid in the upper left quadrant.

**Attendance statistics**

## Indonesia 2022

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Total full-time, on-site participants	482
GYS participants at Assembly	116
Daily participants	422

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Total participants 720

Total online registrations (may represent multiple viewers) 781

### Onsite participants (full-time)

Indonesia	183	31%	Online registrations	36	5%
Other Asia	78	13%		229	29%
North America	173	29%		278	36%
Latin America	61	10%		67	9%
Europe	54	9%		103	13%
Africa	4	8%		68	9%

## Pennsylvania 2015

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USA	5,755	68%	All North America	82%
Canada	1,152	14%	Pennsylvania	47%
Latin America	554	6%		
Europe	444	5%		
Africa	275	3%		
Asia/Pacific	274	3%		
Total	<b>8,454</b>			

## Paraguay 2009

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Paraguay	3,475	56.5%	All Latin America	66%
Other Latin America	590	9.5%		
North America	1,495	24.5%		
Europe	370	6%		
Africa	180	3%		
Asia/Pacific	90	1.5%		
Total	<b>6,200</b>			

## Zimbabwe 2003

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Zimbabwe	4,500	72%	All Africa	80%
Other Africa	485	8%		
North America	975	15.5%		
Europe	155	2.5%		
Asia	80	1%		
Latin America	75	1%		
Total	<b>6,270</b>			

# Personnel

## MWC Executive Committee

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**President: Henk Stenvers**                      **Netherlands**  
(2022-2028)

**Vice-President: Lisa Carr-Pries**                      **Canada**  
(2022-2025)

**Treasurer: Sunoko Lin**                      **Indonesia/USA**  
(2018-2025)

**General Secretary:**                      **Colombia/Canada**  
**César García**

### Africa representatives

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**Samson Omondi**                      **Kenya**  
(2018-2025)

**Sindah Ngulube**                      **Zimbabwe**  
(2022-2028)

### Asia/Pacific representatives

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**MZ Ichsanudin**                      **Indonesia**  
(2018-2025)

**Amos Chin**                      **Myanmar**  
(2022-2028)

### Caribbean, Central and South America representatives

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**Carlos Garcia Martínez**                      **Mexico**  
(2018-2025)

**Francis Perez**                      **Bolivia**  
(2022-2028)

### Europe representatives

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**Wieteke van der Molen**                      **Netherlands**  
(2018-2025)

**Jürg Bräker**                      **Switzerland**  
(2022-2028)

### North America representatives

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**Linda Dibble**                      **USA**  
(2022-2025)

**Doug Klassen**                      **Canada**  
(2022-2028)

## **Assembly 17 Coordination Team**

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### **Chief international events officer**

Liesa Unger (Germany)

### **National co-coordinators**

Agus Setianto, Yetty Sarah (Indonesia)

### **Registration coordinator**

Nelson Martínez (Colombia)

### **Marketing and communications coordinators**

Daniel Trihandoyo (Indonesia), Elina Ciptadi (Indonesia), Jardely Martinez (Colombia), Michael Darby (USA/Colombia)

### **Volunteer coordinator**

Tigist T. Gelagle (Ethiopia)

### **Interpretation coordinator**

Karina Derksen-Schrock (USA)

## **Assembly 17 Program Committee**

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### **Children's programming**

Jennifer McWilliams/Natalie Frisk (Canada)

### **Youth programming**

Jardely Martínez (Colombia)

### **Global Church Village**

Jessica Mondal (India)

### **Plenary worship sessions**

Frieder Boller (Germany)

### **Music**

Benjamin Bergey (USA)

### **Workshops**

Estifanos Gedlu (Ethiopia), Rianna Isaak-Krauß (Canada/USA/Germany)

## **National Advisory Council (NAC) chair**

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Paulus Widjaja (Indonesia)



# Acknowledgements & Photos

## Acknowledgements

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### **Publisher**

César García

### **Chief international events officer**

Liesa Unger

### **Chief communications officer**

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### **Editor**

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### **Translation coordinator**

Karina Derksen-Schrock

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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