

English

Español

Français

Deutsch

Transmission 2024

Peace and Justice

Study Guide

Video stories of faith in action

Historias en vídeo de la fe en acción

Histoires vidéo de la foi en action

Video-Geschichten über den Glauben in Aktion

The Transmission series

Meet your global family

Commemorating the 500 years of the Anabaptist movement, this series of five short videos offers glimpses into how Anabaptists in various parts of the world are living out their faith. You will meet dedicated individuals and communities who face specific challenges and yet find their own unique ways of practicing an active faith as Jesus' disciples.

Young Anabaptist hosts guide you to over a dozen countries and help you understand the shared identity of the Anabaptists around the world. Hearing these stories, you will be inspired for your own Christian journey, in your own setting.

Transmission 2020 Ethiopia

Members of the Meserete Kristos Church, an Anabaptist faith community of over 500,000 members, share about their struggles with persecution, the involvement of youth in the church, cultivating spiritual maturity, and the importance of music and prayer. (Video length 10:16 minutes)

Transmission 2021 Indonesia

Two young adults talk about the cooperation and dialogue between Mennonites and Muslims as part of a peaceful witness. A small group in the Netherlands explores the realities of interfaith dialogue in their setting. (Video length 10:44 minutes)

Transmission 2022 Latin America

Inspirational stories from Colombia, Brazil, Ecuador, and Honduras focus on how people of faith are living out, in practical ways, their commitment to care for God's creation. (Video length 11:14 minutes)

Transmission 2023 Migration

The video looks at the realities of refugees and other displaced persons in United States, Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Lebanon, Greece, and it highlights how Christians are offering them love and practical help. (Video length 10:26 minutes)

Transmission 2024 Peace and Justice

Anabaptist young adults live out their commitment to peace amidst conflict and injustice in Ukraine, Northern Ireland, Rwanda, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Canada. (Video length 15:53 minutes)

Videos and study guides

The five videos inform, inspire, and invite discussion in various settings such as Sunday school classes, youth meetings, worship services, Anabaptist schools, small home groups, and more. Individual study guides provide background information and include questions for discussion and study.

The videos and study guides are available in various languages spoken by members of the Anabaptist/Mennonite family around the world. You can access them, for free, at these websites. (Search for Transmission.)



Mennonite World Conference
mwc-cmm.org



CommonWord
commonword.ca



Affox AG
affox.ch



**Mennonite
World Conference**

affox
production of film,
television, multimedia

For leaders

Planning the sessions

Preview: To understand the entire series, you might want to watch all five videos before leading any sessions. Notice the different themes that emerge and the geographical areas that are covered. Ideally, you should plan for enough sessions to show and discuss all five videos with your group. But if that is not possible, pick the videos that will best fit with your group's interests and the time available.

Adapt: The videos in this series can be used in a variety of ways. As a leader, you will decide what will work the best with your group, so feel free to adapt the ideas here to suit your setting and the length of the sessions. For example, you might show only part of a video, if the time is short. Or break up each video into smaller segments to be viewed at various points in one session.

Dig deeper: As you plan, see the "Background information" section of this guide (p. 10) for additional information, such as historical background, maps, statistics and more.

Sharing the guide: Consider whether you want to download and print the discussion pages from the study guide to share with group members. This is not essential, but paper copies would provide a space for participants to take notes and would make the discussion questions available for everyone.

Leading a session

1. Begin today's session with a brief welcome and an opening prayer.
2. If your group has viewed a video in a previous session, do a brief recap on what was viewed then. You might ask group members about a story, idea, or question that stuck out for them from that previous session.
3. If you copied pages ahead of time for the participants, hand them out now. Invite group members to take notes as they watch, or to identify discussion questions they would like to talk about later.
4. View today's video together. You can watch the entire video, or you could break it up into smaller segments, interspersed with conversation.
5. Invite responses from the group members to what they have watched. To lead toward deeper conversation, you can offer a discussion question, a quotation, or a Bible passage to guide the conversation. These are suggested for each video segment.
6. In your conversations, make sure to guide the group's thinking toward your own setting and community. Did the video present any ideas that inspire your group to do something right where you are? What might be a next step for your actions?



Concluding a session

As you come to the end of each session, feel free to pick one of the prayers or blessings below.

1. To close, invite group members into a short time of silent reflection. Then, as a parting blessing, a participant could offer a spontaneous prayer, or you could do together one of the suggested prayer and blessings. Another option is to end the session by singing a song together.
2. Remembering all the stories you witnessed in this video, what new understandings have you gained about the global family of Anabaptists? How do these stories encourage or challenge you? Take time as a group to pray for your siblings around the world—people like you who are partners with God in spreading peace and justice far and near.
3. Scripture has many reminders that the Creator is a God of peace and justice. Ponder together the words of Psalm 85:9–10: “God’s salvation is very close to those who honor him so that his glory can live in our land. Faithful love and truth have met; righteousness and peace have kissed.” Offer words of thanksgiving for the witnesses of God’s peace in this video.
4. For a closing prayer, invite the group to pray together the Lord’s Prayer (Matthew 6:9–13). Tying it with the stories you have just witnessed, you might highlight verse 10: “Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it in heaven.”
5. Offer a simple sending blessing: “The Lord lift up his face to you and grant you peace” (Numbers 6:26).
6. Explore other prayers and blessings from the Anabaptist family in North America:
 - Anabaptist Worship Network www.anabaptistworship.net
 - Together in Worship www.togetherinworship.net/Home
 - Leading in Worship www.leadinginworship.com

Invitation to respond

After the session, you might want to give feedback to the producers of this series. Feel free to send your comments to info@affox.ch.

Share the stories

Ranging from 10 to 16 minutes, the five videos inform, inspire, and invite discussion in various settings:

- Sunday school classes
- Youth meetings
- Worship services
- Anabaptist schools
- Small home groups

Individual study guides provide background information and include questions for discussion and study.



Indonesia



Netherlands

Transmission 2024: Peace and Justice



Zurich, Switzerland

Transmission is a series of five video productions leading up to the year 2025, and the five-hundredth anniversary of the Anabaptist movement.

This video is the fifth in the Transmission series. It shows Anabaptist followers of Jesus living out their commitment to peace amidst conflict and injustice in Ukraine, Northern Ireland, Rwanda, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Canada.

The host of the video is Andrés Pacheco Lozano, a Colombian Mennonite scholar currently living and working in the Netherlands. He speaks from the city of Zurich, Switzerland, the location where the first Anabaptists emerged, in 1525.

The video runs 16 minutes, with four distinct segments. Information on the individual segments is on the following pages. To find background information for the segments, go to pages 10–14.



*Andrés Pacheco Lozano
Amsterdam Center for Religion
and Peace and Justice Studies*

Living in peace in Ukraine

In the midst of the war in Ukraine, Christians are expressing God's love by addressing people's physical and spiritual needs. Living and working in atmosphere of violence, they consider how to listen and to help bring healing and forgiveness to suffering people.

To ponder and discuss

1. The people interviewed offered various perspectives on their situation and their calling. Which perspective especially resonated with you? Explain.
2. Consider what the Bible says about offering comfort to people in times of affliction. Can you think of examples of Bible stories of help being offered to people who are suffering?
3. What can we learn from stories of healing in the Bible? Read and discuss the story of the good Samaritan (Luke 10:25–37) and the account of Peter healing the lame man in the temple (Acts 3:1–10). What can you observe about the attitudes of the people who were helping in those situations?
4. Aleksey has conversations with soldiers who are on the frontlines and in hospitals. Sometimes he doesn't know what to say to them, but he affirms, "God provides me with the words." Have you ever had the experience of not finding the right words in a difficult situation? What does Aleksey testimony tell you about God's role as you try to people who are suffering?
5. Kateryna and Oksana emphasize patience, love, and forgiveness in a setting of war. How is patience helpful in times of distress? What other attitudes and practices might be needed to help people come to a point of forgiveness? Might there be right times and wrong times to call people to forgiveness? Explain your answer.
6. Consider other aspects of war that weren't discussed in the video: accountability for war crimes, restoration of property, and steps toward justice after the war. How might followers of Jesus help those things happen in the country of Ukraine?
7. Read together Psalm 10:12–18. Note the laments of the psalmist as well as the affirmations about God. Which lament or affirmation is especially meaningful to you right now? As a group, pray those verses together, keeping in mind the people of Ukraine.

"Right now, I preach and pray only about God's peace—in my country, in my family, in my life."

Alexey Yuditsenko – chaplain, pastor, Mennonite Brethren Churches



"Peacemaking during the war is being patient. We don't have. . . right answers, and sometimes it's good just to listen."

Kateryna Danilevska – member, Mennonite Brethren Church



"Peacemaking is more about people who are suffering, how to help them to continue to love God, to love one another while being in pain."

Max Oliferovski – member, Mennonite Brethren Church



"The peacemaker is able to wait, listen, and pray. Then you can talk a little about forgiveness. Because forgiveness is the true way to heal the heart."

Oksana Makaiova – member, Mennonite Brethren Church



"Peace and justice are more than just the absence of war. It means hope, freedom, and safety."

Andrii Kyselov – member, Mennonite Brethren Church



Hearing God's voice in Northern Ireland

At a dividing wall in the city of Dublin, Mary Matute Castro, a Mennonite psychologist from Colombia, meets with pastor and mentor Gordon McDade for a conversation on violence and peacemaking in a city that has experienced much conflict over the decades and continues to face challenges today.

To ponder and discuss

1. As a group, read aloud Psalm 85:8–13. Together, identify the affirmations about God in this scripture passage. What are the points of hope? Notice in particular verse 10. What does “righteousness” look like to you and how might it be tied to an enduring peace? Can you describe in visual terms (or draw) the picture that verse describes?
2. The violence in Northern Ireland was intense in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, but Gordon points out that a different kind of violence continues in generations after that, through violent attitudes and words. Why do you think that violence continues in these ways? Have you seen this process happen elsewhere as well?
3. What kinds of language seem to perpetuate violence among people? Have you seen how the words of the Bible are used to stir up conflict and injustice? How might peacemakers address this distortion of the Bible's message?
4. The story of Abigail, Nabal, and David in the Bible (1 Samuel 25:2–39) tells of one time when several courageous people took steps to avert impending violence. If you have time, read the story as a group or have someone summarize the story. (You might find a shorter version in a children's Bible.) What do you think motivated the young man and Abigail to disarm the angry words uttered by David and Nabal? Notice the blessing that David gives to Abigail in verses 32–35. He attributes the peacemaking to God. At what points in the story do you see God at work?
5. Ephesians 2:11–22 speaks of the reconciliation in the body of Christ. Despite the human differences, he broke down “the barrier of hatred” between Christ's followers. What does this passage suggest about how Christians might move beyond the walls that divide people from each other and build peace together? Imagine together: What might the “good news of peace” look like in Northern Ireland? And in the place where you live?

“I was working with human rights... I wanted to help others like Jesus did—whatever I was doing, they can see Jesus through me.”

Mary Matute Castro –
psychologist, member of the
Honduran Mennonite Church



“We have an absence of violence, but I don't think we have peace... The violence has changed now. It's become a violence of language, attitude. Even Scripture gets weaponized to justify sectarian attitudes. And so, our hope and prayer, and what we're working toward as peacebuilders, is that there will come a day whenever not only these physical walls come down but the walls within people will also come down.”

Gordon McDade – pastor, mentor,
peacemaker



“I was looking for a new beginning, but I was not expecting it to be in so many ways. I have changed in every way of my life.”

Mary Matute Castro



“Searching for peace does not end with the silencing of the weapons or the end of a war. It is an ongoing process which includes healing deep wounds and broken relationships.”

Andrés Pacheco Lozano



Preparing for justice in Burundi, Rwanda and DR Congo

Peace coach Mulanda Juma organizes workshops, bringing together people from different backgrounds to teach them how to resolve conflicts non-violently. Participants' learnings inspire them to go back to their own communities in Burundi, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo and to start peace initiatives there.

To ponder and discuss

1. Mulanda emphasizes that it is important for peacemakers to practice the skill of good listening. Why is genuine listening so difficult? How would really listening to one another help advance peace? Can you think of examples in the Bible, in history, or in your life when good listening helped bring about healing?
2. The story of Jesus and the Samaritan woman (John 4:1–29, 39–40) depicts a conversation in which the partners listened well to each other. Because they belonged to people groups that were antagonistic toward each other, the woman and Jesus could have said hurtful things to each other. Try to identify places in the story where a conflict could have broken out but both partners kept the conversation from becoming destructive. Notice what that good conversation led the woman to do next!
3. Read Colossians 3:3, 11–17 as a group or individually. Notice the traits God's people are to "put on" or wear. Which ones of these might be especially important as Mulanda trains peacemakers? Which of these attitudes might you cultivate for yourself in the coming weeks, in your home, work, and community?
4. Besides the skill of listening, the video doesn't explain what other practical skills Mulanda is teaching. As a group, brainstorm about what some of those skills might be. Tell the group about specific skills you as an individual try to practice for more peaceful relationships. What are some skills that you still need to learn? What skills would you like to teach to others in your home, work setting, church, or community?
5. Read together 2 Corinthians 5:14–20 and discuss the ministry of reconciliation that Paul describes to the church in Corinth. Imagine your group as a modern-day Corinthian church. Discuss together the role your group or church has right now as Christ's "ambassadors" in the place where you live. How is your life together representing Christ to the world? In what ways might your group increase its effectiveness in modeling and teaching peace?

"We Christians don't give others a chance to tell their stories. We don't listen to them. We pretend to listen, but in fact we don't listen. If there are problems, you have to deal with them. First, we have to remove these barriers, look at yourself from the inside, if you have the will to help."

**Mulanda Juma –
MCC Representative for
Rwanda and Burundi.**



"Peace education and formation are crucial in building cultures of just peace. Violence and injustice are embedded in structures, institutions, and cultures. Making space for training and formation is key to nurturing the imagination and creativity needed for peace."

Andrés Pacheco Lozano



Finding hope in Canada

In Canada, Mennonites who are descendants of the early settlers are beginning to understand some of the harms done to the peoples who already lived on the land. Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church in Kitchener, Ontario, is taking some steps to repair relationships.

To ponder and discuss

1. Who were the first inhabitants on the land where you live? How have relationships been damaged or nurtured between the first inhabitants and the people who came later? Has your church taken any steps to mend or built good relationships between the original peoples and the ones who arrived later?
2. Jonathan Neufeld, who serves as Indigenous Relations Coordinator for Mennonite Church Canada, states: "We [white settlers] were brought here as part of a colonial project, to dispossess land, to make it usable, to turn it toward profit for the nation." How does this statement strike you, as a member of either a colonizing group, or as a descendant of people who were colonized by others? What might it relate to the good news that Jesus preached?
3. "We are meant to have a relationship together and be able to be in the land together," says Adrian Jacobs. The First Nations people see the land, and all of nature, as something to be shared. Do you find it helpful to think of the land you live on as a "dish with one spoon"? Who are the other people around you who need to eat from the same dish?
4. Read Luke 19:1–9 together or individually and then discuss the injustice that is part of the story. How do you think Zacchaeus' cheating affected his relationships with others in the community? What was it about Jesus that caused Zacchaeus to have a change of heart and to acknowledge the wrong he had done to his neighbours? Do you think that he followed through on his vow to make restitution? If you had been one of his neighbours, how hard would it have been to forgive him? What might we learn from this story for our lives today?
5. Indigenous leader Adrian Jacobs says, "The strength of my ancestors is what keeps me moving forward in this conversation." How might we draw on the examples of our spiritual ancestors—the Anabaptists who lived five hundred years ago—to gain strength for the hard work of peacebuilding today?
6. Pamela says: "We need to go beyond words and move to action." Read together 1 John 3:18 and discuss situations where people find it easy to say the right words but find it hard to follow up by doing the right actions. How might they (and we) find wisdom and courage to move to "action and truth?" What is one thing you group could do in your own setting to further God's peace and justice?

"Our understanding... was that this land is the Dish with One Spoon Territory.... This land is the dish that feeds us all. So, this idea of covenant comes from that understanding of what the land means to us and what our relationships mean to one another."

Adrian Jacobs – senior leader Indigenous Justice and Reconciliation, Christian Reformed Church in North America



"I think it's that vision of interconnectedness, and also interdependence with the land that inspires me as well, and kind of calls us back to actually our Christian understanding of peace as well."

Laura Enns – pastoral team member and Missions, Peace and Justice worker



"We acknowledge the historical and ongoing wrongs committed by settlers and are mindful of the deep injustices in which we are complicit and from which we benefit. We seek to restore relationships with the Indigenous peoples who now live on this land."

Portion of the land acknowledgment

"The land acknowledgment is an important reminder that history on this land didn't begin with us and that we came to live on this land as the result of treaties and agreements that have been broken."

Pamela Albrecht – member Stirling Mennonite Church, Spiritual Covenant Working Group.



"Witnessing for peace implies recognizing and actively challenging the ways in which we have benefited from injustice and oppressive systems. Peace, then, is not only about transforming the unjust practices and institutions but also about being transformed in the process."

Andrés Pacheco Lozano



Background information



1

In Ukraine, the war between that country and Russia brings injustices, destruction, and killings. In the midst of violence, followers of Jesus help people in need by offering evacuation, food, clothing, and more. They walk alongside both civilians and soldiers, offering love and a listening spirit.

2

In Northern Ireland, two peacemakers walk along a historic wall and reflect on the fact that—while the decades-long fighting is over—the city of Belfast still doesn't experience true peace. Old religious differences and extreme political differences continue, and words create their own kind of violence.

3

In central Africa, a dedicated peacebuilder teaches people how to deal nonviolently with conflicts present in their own communities in Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi and Rwanda. He emphasizes the need for peacemakers to be honest with themselves and to truly listen to others.

4

In Canada, people of conscience are trying to address past wrongdoings toward the First Nations people living there. An Indigenous leader and a Mennonite peace worker discuss what it means to build good relationships between their communities. One Mennonite congregation is acknowledging the role Christians played in past injustices and is attempting to make reparations.

Ukraine

Ukraine has a long and intense history. Following the Russian Revolution of 1917 and the chaos of the Russian Civil War, Ukraine declared independence in 1918 but was quickly incorporated into the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) in 1922. During the Stalinist period, Ukraine experienced the Holodomor, an artificially created famine in the 1930s that caused millions of deaths.

In August 1991 Ukraine declared independence again, following the collapse of the USSR. In the years following independence, Ukraine faced political and economic instability, with internal divisions between the pro-European western part and the pro-Russian eastern part. Tensions were pronounced in relation to Ukraine's relationship with Russia and its desire to integrate more closely with Western institutions like the European Union and NATO.

In 2013, protests broke out in Ukraine after President Viktor Yanukovich, who was aligned with Russia, refused to sign an association agreement with the European Union. The protests, known as Euromaidan, grew into a larger movement calling for democratic reforms. In early 2014, Yanukovich fled the country, and a pro-European government took power. This shift in Ukraine's political orientation angered Russia, which saw it as a loss of influence over Ukraine.

In response to the change in government, Russia annexed Crimea in March 2014 and began supporting separatist movements in eastern Ukraine (Donetsk and Luhansk regions). This sparked the ongoing war in Donbas, where Ukrainian forces have been engaged in combat with Russian-backed separatists.

The current phase of the conflict began in February 2022, when Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine, dramatically escalating the war. The invasion was preceded by increasing military buildup along Ukraine's borders and diplomatic tensions.

On February 24, 2022, Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered a military assault on Ukraine, marking a significant escalation in the conflict. Russian forces initially attempted to capture Kyiv, Ukraine's capital, and other major cities but faced fierce resistance from the Ukrainian military and civilians. The invasion quickly became a war of attrition, with heavy fighting in various regions of Ukraine, including the east, south, and the Kyiv area.

The invasion has provoked widespread international condemnation. The United States, European Union, and other countries have provided significant military and economic support to Ukraine, including weapons, intelligence, and financial aid. Sanctions against Russia have been imposed, aiming to weaken its economy and military capabilities. NATO and European countries have provided extensive support, although NATO itself has not directly intervened militarily.

The conflict has been marked by brutal fighting, particularly in the eastern and southern parts of Ukraine, with heavy casualties on both sides.

As of 2025, the war is ongoing, with the front lines remaining fluid. The war has caused a massive humanitarian crisis, with millions of Ukrainians displaced internally and abroad. The international community remains engaged, with a focus on diplomatic efforts to resolve the conflict, but a lasting peace agreement has not yet been achieved.

North American organizations such as Mennonite Central Committee (www.mcc.org) and Friends of the Mennonite Centre in Ukraine (www.mennonitecentre.ca) offer financial and material assistance to people in Ukraine. They work in partnership with the Association of Mennonite Brethren Churches in Ukraine (AMBCU), whose members distribute food and supplies and offer spiritual and emotional support to Ukrainians experiencing the war.

To learn more about Mennonite-Anabaptists in Ukraine, see: www.gameo.org/index.php?title=Ukraine. Also, go to the Mennonite World Conference website (www.mwc-cmm.org) and search for "Ukraine."



Ukraine

Northern Ireland

The main conflict in Ireland, often referred to as the "Troubles," was a complex and violent conflict that took place between the late 1960s and 1998, primarily in Northern Ireland, though it also involved the Republic of Ireland, Great Britain, and various political and paramilitary groups. The conflict was rooted in centuries of sectarian, political, and religious tensions, but the modern phase of the conflict was sparked by a mix of social, economic, and political issues.

At its core, the Troubles were a conflict between two main communities in Northern Ireland:

- **Unionists (Protestants):** Predominantly Protestant, these individuals identified as British and sought to remain part of the United Kingdom. Unionists were often referred to as Loyalists and viewed their identity as tied to British rule.
- **Nationalists (Catholics):** Predominantly Catholic, these individuals identified as Irish and sought either greater autonomy or independence for Northern Ireland, ultimately leading to the conflict.

mately aiming for a united Ireland. Nationalists were often referred to as Republicans.

These two groups were divided along both religious and political lines, and tensions had existed for centuries. While the Republic of Ireland gained independence, Northern Ireland became a separate entity as part of the United Kingdom (UK), with a Protestant majority and a Catholic minority.

Several issues played a role in the conflict, including:

- **Sectarian divisions:** The Protestant Unionists and Catholic Nationalists were often in opposition over their political, social, and religious identities. Protestant Unionists felt threatened by Catholic Nationalists' demands for civil rights and a united Ireland, while Catholics felt marginalized and discriminated against in terms of political representation, jobs, and housing.
- **Civil rights movement:** In the 1960s, inspired by similar movements in the United States and around the world, Northern Irish Catholics began demanding equal rights, including an end to gerrymandering (the unfair division of electoral districts), access to jobs, and an end to discrimination in housing and policing. This was initially a peaceful movement, but it was met with resistance and sometimes violence from the state and loyalist groups.
- **Political instability:** Northern Ireland's government, controlled by the Unionists, was often seen as oppressive by the Catholic minority. The state police force, the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC), was accused of bias against Catholics, further exacerbating tensions.
- **Violence and armed groups:** In response to perceived injustices, both Unionist and Nationalist groups began to resort to violence. The Provisional Irish Republican Army (IRA) emerged as the main militant Republican group and sought to use armed resistance to end British rule in Northern Ireland and unite Ireland. In response, Loyalist paramilitary groups such as the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) and the Ulster Defense Association (UDA) formed to defend the Protestant community and maintain Northern Ireland's union with Britain.

The conflict began to escalate after the civil rights movement was violently suppressed, culminating in events such as the Bloody Sunday massacre in 1972, when British soldiers killed 13 unarmed Catholic protesters in Derry. The violence became widespread, and the British government deployed the British army to Northern Ireland to maintain order, though they soon became embroiled in the conflict themselves.

The 1970s and 1980s saw an increase in bombings, shootings, and attacks from both sides. The IRA carried out bombings in Northern Ireland and England, while Loyalists targeted Catholic civilians. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, efforts to bring an end to the violence intensified. The British government engaged in peace talks with various groups, including Sinn Féin (the political wing of the IRA) and the Ulster Unionist Party. The Good Friday Agreement

of 1998 was the culmination of these efforts, establishing a devolved government for Northern Ireland and providing for power-sharing between Unionists and Nationalists. It also outlined mechanisms for dealing with the legacy of the conflict and addressing issues like policing and disarmament. Though the agreement did not immediately resolve all underlying issues, it brought an official end to the large-scale violence and laid the foundation for peace in the region.

Even after the Good Friday Agreement, tensions and sporadic violence continued for years, with some dissident groups rejecting the peace process. The legacy of the Troubles remains deep. Social and economic inequalities, as well as segregated neighborhoods and schools, continue to shape Northern Irish society. Nonetheless, the peace process has largely succeeded in maintaining relative stability, and most of the population in both communities now supports peaceful coexistence.

The Troubles led to the deaths of over 3,500 people, most of them civilians, and thousands more were injured. The conflict remains one of the most painful chapters in the modern history of Ireland and the UK, but it also led to significant lessons about negotiation, reconciliation, and the importance of peacebuilding.

Gordon McDade is a mentor, mediator, and coach for community organizations and belongs to the Forthspring Inter Community Group (www.forthspring.org) in Belfast. He previously served as a pastor but is currently working in the peace center which is a part of the Peace Wall, the largest barrier in the city. The wall was originally erected to separate the Unionist and Nationalist districts.

Forthspring promotes dialogue and relationship building between divided communities along this wall. Gordon observes that the old religious opposition has now become a political opposition as well. He notes that younger people who did not experience previous times of violence seem to hold more radical views. Gordon tries to dampen these radical developments as much as he can.

There are no officially recognized Anabaptist groups in Northern Ireland. But you can find information about Soulspace, an Anabaptist-related group in Belfast, at www.amnetwork.uk/soulspace.

Mary Matute Castro served in Northern Ireland through YAMEN (Young Anabaptist Mennonite Exchange Network), a joint program through Mennonite Central Committee and Mennonite World Conference. For more information about Mennonites in Honduras, Mary's home country, search for "Honduras" at www.mwc-cmm.org. See also the Honduras entry in the Global Anabaptist Encyclopedia online: www.gameo.org/index.php?title=Honduras.

Central Africa

The African Great Lakes region, which includes the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Rwanda, and Burundi, has been the site of long-standing conflicts, with various peace initiatives and efforts to stabilize the region over the years. The conflicts in these countries are deeply interconnected, often fueled by ethnic tensions, political struggles, and the involvement of foreign powers and armed groups.

Peace workshops and peacebuilding initiatives have played a key role in addressing conflict and promoting reconciliation in the region. These workshops often focus on fostering dialogue, healing, and cooperation among different ethnic groups, political factions, and communities affected by violence. They aim to create spaces for dialogue, facilitate understanding, and build capacities for peace.

The **Democratic Republic of Congo** has faced continuous instability since the 1990s, due to internal conflict, the aftermath of the Rwandan genocide, and the wider regional dynamics in central Africa. The first and second Congo wars (1996–1997 and 1998–2003, respectively) involved various rebel groups, neighboring countries, and international actors. Even after the official end of the wars, armed groups continue to operate in the eastern provinces of the DRC, contributing to insecurity.

Given the widespread violence, the DRC has been a key focus for peacebuilding initiatives, and peace workshops have addressed issues like community reconciliation, demobilization, and the prevention of further violence.

Rwanda's history has been marked by ethnic tensions between the Hutu and Tutsi populations. The 1994 Rwandan genocide, in which an estimated 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus were killed, left a deep scar in the country and the region. After the genocide, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), led by Paul Kagame, took control of the government, and efforts were made to rebuild the country. However, Rwanda's involvement in regional conflicts, particularly in the DRC, has been a source of ongoing tension.

The country has made significant progress in terms of peacebuilding and reconciliation since the genocide, with the government implementing a series of initiatives to foster national unity. Peace workshops in Rwanda have been central to the healing process, focusing on reconciliation, restorative justice, and the promotion of unity among the country's diverse ethnic groups.

Burundi, like Rwanda, has faced ethnic violence and political instability, with a history of conflict between the Hutu majority and Tutsi minority. The most notable conflict was the Burundian Civil War (1993–2005), which followed the assassination of the first democratically elected Hutu president, Melchior Ndadaye. The civil war ended with the Arusha Peace Accords in 2000, but tensions remain, particularly after the 2015 political crisis that followed President Pierre Nkurunziza's decision to run for a controversial third term.

Peace workshops in Burundi have focused on fostering dialogue, reconciliation, and the prevention of future violence.

In the African Great Lakes region, peace initiatives include:

- **Reconciliation and trauma healing:** Many peace workshops in the DRC focus on healing the deep psychological scars left by years of war and violence. These workshops involve counseling, conflict resolution training, and community dialogue to help victims and perpetrators of violence come together and begin the process of reconciliation.
- **Community-based workshops:** Local communities are often involved in peace workshops where members are taught how to practice nonviolent conflict resolution strategies, how to handle ethnic or political tensions, and how to advocate for peace. These workshops often include representatives from diverse groups, including victims of violence, former combatants, and women, who play a key role in peacebuilding.

To read more about Mulanda Juma and his peacebuilding efforts, see "Displaced by War, Working for Peace" at www.mcc.org/our-stories/displaced-war-working-peace.

To learn more about Mennonites in the Democratic Republic of Congo, visit the Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online: www.gameo.org/index.php?title=Congo,_Democratic_Republic_of. Also, visit Mennonite World Conference at www.mwc-camm.org and search for "DRC." See also the entry in Anabaptist Wiki: www.anabaptistwiki.org/mediawiki/index.php?title=Democratic_Republic_of_the_Congo



Burundi

Canada

Injustice toward the Indigenous population in Canada is deeply rooted in the country's history and current reality. Between 1870 and 1990, more than 150,000 Indigenous children were taken from their families by the Canadian government to be placed in boarding schools and white foster homes, where they were to become 'civilized Canadian citizens.' "The Indian in the child has to die" was the underlying motto.

As a result, thousands of Indigenous children were abused, neglected, or committed suicide. More than seven thousand children died or went missing during this period and the real number may be higher. The last boarding school only closed in 1996; in 2008 the Canadian government apologized for this cruel policy.

Injustice toward Indigenous Peoples in Canada is addressed through a combination of governmental, legal, and community-based approaches.

In 2008 the government established the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that was active until 2015 and documented the history and impacts of the residential school system. At the conclusion of its work, the Commission issued a report with 94 “calls to action” related to reconciliation between Canadians and Indigenous Peoples.

Another serious issue is the disproportionate rates of violence against Indigenous women, injustice that includes discrimination, incarceration, disappearances, and murders. Although Indigenous women represent approximately four percent of the Canadian population, sixteen percent of the murdered women are Indigenous. Since the 1970s, more than 1,200 Indigenous women have been murdered or gone missing, the study states, but according to Indigenous advocacy groups, that number is likely much higher; estimates run to over 4,000.

While progress has been made, systemic issues remain, and ongoing work is required to address the deep-rooted injustices faced by Indigenous Peoples in Canada. Continuous dialogue, policy changes, and community empowerment are essential for effective resolutions.

Mennonite communities in Canada have taken various steps to address historical injustices faced by Indigenous peoples. Their initiatives often align with principles of peace, justice, and reconciliation deeply rooted in their faith.

Here are some ways they are contributing:

- **Education and awareness:** Mennonite organizations provide educational resources and programs that promote understanding of Indigenous issues and history among both Mennonites and the wider community. This includes workshops, seminars, and discussions focused on reconciliation.
- **Partnerships with Indigenous communities:** Mennonite churches and organizations seek to build relationships with Indigenous communities. This includes actively listening to Indigenous voices, supporting their rights, and collaborating on projects that respect Indigenous sovereignty.
- **Advocacy:** Mennonites engage in advocacy efforts to promote justice for Indigenous peoples, addressing issues like land rights, the crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, and systemic racism.
- **Financial support:** Some Mennonite organizations provide funding for Indigenous-led projects, initiatives, and cultural revitalization efforts. This financial support aims

to empower Indigenous communities and help address immediate needs.

- **Volunteering and service work:** Many Mennonites participate in volunteer opportunities that involve working with Indigenous communities, helping with various projects, and providing assistance in areas like education, health-care, and housing.
- **Conflict resolution:** Mennonites, with a strong focus on peacebuilding, engage in conflict resolution work, facilitating dialogues between Indigenous peoples and other communities to promote mutual understanding and healing.
- **Commitment to reconciliation:** Several Mennonite churches publicly acknowledge the injustices faced by Indigenous peoples and commit to engaging in ongoing reconciliation efforts within their congregations and communities.

These actions reflect a growing recognition within Mennonite communities of their responsibility to contribute to healing relationships and addressing past injustices against Indigenous Peoples in Canada.

For more on Mennonite Church Canada and its Indigenous Relations program, see www.mennonitechurch.ca/indigenous.



Canada

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**One generation shall declare
to another God's mighty acts.**

Psalms 145:4

**Una generación pondera tus obras
a la otra, y le cuenta tus hazañas.**

Salmo 145:4

**Une génération dit à celle qui la suit
combien les oeuvres de Dieu sont belles.**

Psaume 145,4

**Eine Generation soll der anderen
von Gottes Taten erzählen.**

Psalms 145,4

