



**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

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Cover Photo:

MWC member church Iglesia Evangélica Menonita del Perú hosted “Celebrar, equipar, adorar” in Cusco, Peru 18-22 January 2025 to mark 500 years of Anabaptism. Church members gathered for the event from 16 countries across the Americas.

Photo: Andrew Bodden

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Word from the editor



A challenge for the ages

It's a double – even triple – anniversary for Mennonite World Conference this year.

For one hundred years, Anabaptist-related national churches have been meeting together to acknowledge we are one body of Christ together, and to encourage and help each other in

fellowship, worship, service and witness.

For five hundred years, people who identify as Anabaptist have been reading Scripture together, affirming that we follow Jesus as an act of will, not mere happenstance of birth, that we hear God's voice as we serve together in community and that Jesus' reconciling work extends to us as individuals and worshipping communities to act as peacebuilders who reject violence in its many forms.

And even beyond that, for seventeen hundred years, despite schisms and divisions, Christians have affirmed the Nicene Creed, a summary of Christian belief that is spoken in worship services around the world.

At a moment when differences between people are creating sharp divisions and hostilities, it is a good time to take note of how we have found unifying threads in the past.

The theme MWC has chosen for this year is “The Courage to Love.” The phrase refers to a famous quote, not by Menno Simons or Pilgram Marpeck, but Ulrich Zwingli, the Reformed Church leader who called on followers of Christ, to “do something courageous, for God's sake!”

So we are calling each other and ourselves to be courageous. Like the first Anabaptists who defied authorities and even traditions to follow the higher law of love, we are challenging ourselves to action.

God's love for us is transforming us and setting us free from fear. We can courageously forgive those who offend us. We can boldly take a stand against injustice that makes peace impossible. We can valiantly reach across divides that make “others” of humanity. We can compassionately care for those who have been wounded. We can humbly repent of the times we have missed the mark and been complicit in harm.

This issue of *Courier* contains reflections on this anniversary and its theme by general secretary César García, and we share snapshots of member churches who form part of our 100-year-old communion.

We pray you are inspired as you read through this issue. We invite you to share your witness as you think about anniversaries: how is your church living out faithfulness in your context? How are you living out the courage to love in these fractious days?

Karla Braun is editor of *Courier* and writer for Mennonite World Conference. She lives in Winnipeg, Canada.

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2025

What does it mean for you today, in your location, to be part of this 500-year global family of faith?



We asked the Global Youth Summit delegates these questions. Their answers – or the answers they collected from a mentor – are found throughout this issue.

***Courier* is interested in your contributions. Submit your artwork/graphic art to photos@mwc-cmm.org for consideration for use in *Courier*. Please ensure images are full resolution. Include artist's name and local church. Include a short description of the artwork.**

The Courage to Love

Mennonite World Conference at 100

General Secretary of Mennonite World Conference since 2012, Colombian Canadian Mennonite César García spoke with *Courier* editor Karla Braun about MWC at 100 and *The Courage to Love*. This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

Some of us have a tendency of thinking that we should define right doctrine and from there go to practice. Scripture first; experience next. But in many ways – in our history and in our current reality – experience pushes us to think theologically to make sense of what is happening.

Consider the Council of Jerusalem. They were asking: *Can we include Gentiles or not?*

That was not clear in the Bible of their time.

The fact that Gentiles were receiving the Holy Spirit pushed the church to think in a new way – without contradicting the foundation that they had.

Their experience led them to raise the question to the Scripture and develop new understandings.

As Anabaptists, we have historically emphasized the local congregation and the centrality of the local congregation as the foretaste of God's kingdom.

But that doesn't help us to answer why there is a need of a regional or global church.

At the beginning of MWC, it was experience that pushed Mennonite churches to think about a global body.



Jeremiah Choi

All the Mennonite churches in Korea joined for a joint worship service and commemoration of the 500th anniversary of Anabaptism in February 2025 in Chuncheon, South Korea.



Karla Braun

Can you speak about similarity between today and some of the trends from 100 years ago when MWC started?

There was a global pandemic at that time. And many countries had just gone through the First World War. There is of course a financial impact which drives governments try to find scapegoat: who are we going to blame because of this? So that was an important component to the increase of nationalism in Europe.

And then our churches were also affected by the Russian Revolution and subsequent violent persecution in the area of Ukraine where we had a large concentration of our churches at that time.

So with the mix of nationalism, cultural differences, languages and both the recent and more distant past of violence between their countries, it was complicated for Mennonite church leaders in 1925 to think about being one.

Some people spiritualize the idea of unity, and say: *We are going to be one on heaven.*

Or say, *Yes, we are fighting violently with each other, but we are one in spirit.*

Both then and now, some churches think about other Christians with suspicion – even inside a denominational family.

MWC regional representatives tour the Mennonite Heritage Museum in Abbotsford, B.C., Canada after Renewal 2023.

But the Bible doesn't speak in that way. The Bible speaks of unity in a very practical way – visible even for the world. There is a level of unity that is a kind of miracle.

MWC founder Christian Neff and others were speaking and writing about the need for a global body for some time before 1925, but it was not easy to overcome lack of trust.

Finally, Christian Neff found a good excuse to bring people together: let's celebrate the 400 years of the Anabaptist movement.

And it was in that context that the church from Ukraine sent a letter to the people in this first global Anabaptist gathering asking for the formation of a global body that would coordinate the work of education, mission and support churches that are under persecution and suffering, among other things.

When the church leaders gathered, the experience of being together opened up their eyes to the need of a communion to emphasize that the centre is not political nor a national state nor even a culture. The source of our identity is Jesus.

“...if we want MWC to continue, it should be more than a global gathering. It should be part of the mission Mennonites are being called to in this world, a place where they clarify the meaning of faith in their diverse cultural contexts...”

The context then was very similar to the context today after a pandemic, amid rising nationalism and experiences of suffering from violence and persecution.

It is interesting and sad at the same time to see how the history repeats.

What has changed is that that experience has invited us to think theologically. Do we want to be one only because of pragmatic issues? or because our understanding of the gospel demands it?

What were some key moments where we leaned into becoming truly global?

To be a global family, we need some levels of reconciliation and forgiveness for our history of divisions.

We were not ready to think in that way 80 years ago.

At first, leaders said let's have an Assembly only. And that was the way during the first 40 or 50 years.

But more and more churches from the Global South were becoming members. And churches that are under suffering see with more clarity the need of a global church. You cannot face violent persecution or natural disaster if you are alone.

By the 1970s, presidents were beginning

to be appointed from the Global South. From the executive, C. J. Dyck said *if we want MWC to continue, it should be more than a global gathering. It should be part of the mission Mennonites are being called to in this world, a place where they clarify the meaning of faith in their diverse cultural contexts.*

That vision was the result, among other things, of input from Global South churches who were asking for more interdependency.

Pushed by those experiences, we have made theological developments of understanding the church as something that goes beyond the doors of my local congregation.

Are we where we should be?

I think we are going in a good direction, but we have theological challenges when we speak about the global church.

For many of the leaders and pastors in our global church, we are just starting to build a clear understanding of unity.

Too many times, our understanding of purity in our Anabaptist tradition has pushed us to fragment because we think to be holy or to be pure, we need to separate from those we deem are not.

Our history of divisions requires real reconciliation. There are some historic wounds that have not been healed and we continue to observe some divisions happening in real time.

The challenges of racism and colonialism are there. There's a tendency to have some sectors of the church make decisions without consulting others and impose their points of view.

There are challenges of privileging our own interests over the interest of others. Of saying we need to protect our budget first before thinking about other churches.

In addition, we have ambition and the desire to control, dominate and conquer others.

The kingdoms of the world are very appealing to us. We love the sense of being superior to other groups.

But God invites us to live in contrast to the kingdoms of the world. God's kingdom is a real alternative. We must recognize that we need the power of the Holy Spirit.

What do we mean by unity?

We must understand that unity doesn't necessarily mean absence of conflict. True unity implies different fragments and different shapes coming together.

By definition, unity implies diversity, because if there is no diversity of opinions, culture, theology or experiences, then there is no need of speaking about unity because everyone believes the same. The opposite of unity is not diversity, it is uniformity.

And as a peace church, we know that the problem is not having conflict. The problem is how we navigate those conflicts.

It's impossible to have a healthy relationship without conflict.

Today, many MWC churches are the result of a division from other churches. The fact that time has passed doesn't change the reality that it was an internal division.

In MWC, we try to encourage churches to keep together as much as possible and not split.

However, sometimes separation is necessary because there is a level of disagreement that is not possible to solve because of the nature of our heart. God allows us some level of distance, and we can still be part of the global family if we respect our differences even though we don't share a position about one topic.

That means the willingness to heal wounds. There must be intentional work in both sides to heal resentment, to avoid hating each other.

Here again, it is our experience that pushes us to think theologically about unity.

How is the theme The Courage to Love guiding us and shaping how we are thinking about this anniversary?

I think it is a crucial, relevant topic for today in this political world with so many people being bullied and bullying others.

There are many just causes, projects and demands. Many people say: *We have the right to defend our land. We have the right to demand that these abusers stop their abuse.*

But is there the possibility of doing something differently than asserting your rights?

I think Jesus invites us to another path.

To say *"I want to put my rights aside and love"* demands an unusual amount of courage.

It is not passive. It implies to have a very intentional, even assertive, way of responding that looks for the benefit of the other, that even looks for the well-being of the perpetrator.

The courage to love that our forebears discovered 500 years ago was not new. We see this invitation coming from God since the beginning of human history.

The courage to love also implies the dismantling of fear (1 John 4:18).

I perceive that many leaders act out of fear: fear of being contaminated, fear of being influenced, fear of change.

When there is perfect love, you can speak about any difficult topic without fear that you are going to lose something.



Nathan Mudiji Makumbi

Nathan Mudiji, pastor with the Mennonite Brethren church in Congo (CEPMC) and director of the Mission Department at the national level, baptizes a Batwa girl. At this event, 229 people were baptized.

There is no fragmentation, ex-communication or mutual condemnation, but there is respect for strong convictions.

As Augustine of Hippo said, a definition of sin is to be self-centred. So love is the opposite of that.

When you love, you are opening yourself to others and there is no room for fear.

One part of MWC's mission is to relate with other communions. How has that experience shaped you?

If you don't relate to other Christians, then you may end up having a very narrow idea of what the Christian church is.

By being a global body in MWC, we have the capacity to represent ourselves as an entity with other churches.

When you have clear identity and when you live out your values, experiences with other churches can be immensely rich and transformative. Then you can learn from others and also share your values.

That doesn't mean that is easy. For example, at the Conference of Secretaries

of Christian World Communions, there are a total of 21 global entities represented. And as you can imagine the diversity is huge. For some, there is a complicated past of persecution and mutual condemnations. And with other groups, there is not even a relationship.

And of course, the understanding of these churches about many things such as leadership and hierarchy are very different.



Henk Stenvers

Doopsgezind Gemeente Groningen in the Netherlands and other regional churches held a joint celebration of 500 years of Anabaptism for Anabaptist World Fellowship Sunday.

So, it was a challenge to think about how to represent MWC. How should I react to challenges? There are meetings when the topics are so controversial that the discussions get very strong.

But with the passage of the time, I began to see how the challenges of one communion are very similar to the challenges of another communion.

And then relationships started to go deeper. That helped me to value people above doctrines or doctrinal differences.

I remember a meeting where there were several general secretaries around a meal.

And one of them said to another, *Knowing you, I find myself thinking in such similar ways to you that I would be OK being part of your church* and the other replied, *I could also be a member of your church.*

So those experiences shape your way of understanding Scripture and transform you on the way.

How can MWC faithfully evolve into a strong and revived communion that is resilient to the challenges of the future that may look very different?

I would say that if we keep going in the same track, we will be resilient:

- build a global communion,
- seek interdependency,
- make decisions by consensus,
- consult one another,
- have good leadership,
- keep in a good relationship with each other in the Anabaptist family,
- build good relationships with other global communions,
- heal memories internally and externally.

But of course, we also need the courage to recognize our own weaknesses.

Sometimes we have a triumphalistic approach to mission and church planting, service and social development, our impact with business and peace making.

Of course, it's good to recognise the work that we have done. But it is also good to recognize all the weaknesses that we have.

To realise how much work we duplicate in church planting, how much colonialism has pervaded our work, how much paternalism is still there in our mission agencies.

How much good we have done with our service and at the same time, how many people we have wounded in that process.

It is also crucial to look at ourselves with humility and see how small we are alongside other global communions.

So to be a resilient, hope-filled church for the future, we must recognize the areas that we need to work on.

A strong communion is one that is capable of speaking about our differences with love.

"The courage to love": love gives us the open-heartedness and courage to do difficult things.



César García, MWC general secretary, originally from Colombia, lives in Kitchener, Ontario, Canada.



Freddy Barrón

Freddy Barrón, MWC regional representative for Latin America – Southern Cone, at the annual meeting of regional Mennonite churches in Choele Choel, Argentina, in 2024.

South Africa

Anabaptist church beginnings: A snapshot

Brethren in Christ Church (BICC) in South Africa

Brethren In Christ Church (BICC) South Africa was established in 1988 by the late Reverend Hamilton Madlabane in Soshanguve, located north of Pretoria. Even though a South African started the BICC in South Africa, it was largely unknown to most South Africans at the time. (In neighbouring Zimbabwe, however, the BICC had existed for close to a century at that time.)

During the 1980s, Hamilton Madlabane encountered Anna Engle from the Brethren in Christ in the USA, who was in need of interpretation services from English to Zulu. After her program concluded in South Africa, she extended an invitation to him to visit North America. Hamilton Madlabane was impressed by the manner in which BICC organized and conducted its services.

Upon his return to South Africa, he sought to persuade the elders of his church, the Body of Christ Church in Soshanguve, to consider adopting the BICC name. However, when his efforts to achieve this were unsuccessful, he made the decision to establish a BICC branch independently.

The church initially convened its services under a tent.

Over time, Hamilton Madlabane received support from the Brethren in Christ board in North America for mission-related activities. Unfortunately, this funding was insufficient to realize the project fully. In order to generate additional resources, he sold his truck. Ultimately, assistance came from a lawyer who facilitated the involvement of a construction company, enabling the completion of the church structure.

the encouragement of a BICC congregant in Zimbabwe, decided to start a church in Hillbrow, Johannesburg. The Zimbabwean BICC then went on to promote and support the uniting of the Soshanguve Church and the Hillbrow Church, through the efforts of Reverend Albert Gegana and Bishop Jack Shenk in particular.

The church held its first Annual General Conference as a unified church during the Easter break of 2007 at Blue Hills following successful efforts to unify BICC Soshanguve and BICC Hillbrow.

Over time, the church grew and held its first national conference years later in 2011 and it was conferred Conference status by the International Brethren in Christ Association (IBICA). It became a full member of MWC in 2014.

In 2024, BICC SA reported 1 988 baptized members in 24 congregations.

Sakhile Mashiri, administrator, Brethren in Christ Church South Africa (BICCSA)

Brian Maphosa, national overseer, Brethren in Christ Church South Africa (BICCSA)



Members of Anabaptist churches from South Africa and DRC attend AIMM meetings in October 2022.

Read more: [Brethren in Christ Church in South Africa celebrates conference status](#)

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What does it mean for you today, in your location, to be part of this 500-year global family of faith?



Being part of the 500-year Anabaptist movement today reminds me of the courage and conviction of those who sought to live out the radical teachings of Jesus, inspiring me to live authentically in my faith.

LAURA RODRIGUEZ-REYES

*Mennonite Church Canada
Canada*

The church initially convened its services under a tent.

In 1990, members of the Zimbabwean diaspora many of whom had been Brethren in Christ Church members in Zimbabwe, with

Thailand

Anabaptist church beginnings: A snapshot

Hmong District 20th of the Church of Christ in Thailand

The Hmong District 20th of the Church of Christ in Thailand began with three congregations: Khek Noi church, Khun Klang Church and Pa Kluai Church.

Later, the gospel was announced and spread to the Hmong hill tribe people during the years starting in 1987. There was a place of evangelism and a number of churches were established.

Members of Hmong churches experience life as a double minority: a distinct ethnic group within Thai society, and Christians in a largely Buddhist society.

It was not mission workers but the influence of Hmong Christians who had settled in the USA who planted these communities of faith.

In 1989 the Hmong church network resolved to establish a committee for coordination of the a district to be the centre of the mission between the various Hmong churches under the Seventh District Church of the Church of Christ in Thailand and to coordinate with other churches as well as other people or organizations. (This has included Mennonite Mission Network.)

Members of Hmong churches experience life as a double minority: a distinct ethnic group within Thai society, and Christians in a largely Buddhist society.

Living out evangelism thorough social services in our communities is important. We help people in the community with fixing motorcycles, cutting hair, treating diseases, educating about technology, giving out food, etc.

Every year, we encourage local congregations to participate in community development and services by cleaning up the garbage and clearing the grass on the roadside.

All these things give us a forum to share the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The popularity of Christmas celebrations in Thailand also provides an opportunity for evangelism. Hmong congregations hold a joint service. Before the service, we distribute flyers in homes, testifying about Jesus Christ, and inviting the community to join.

We are committed to Jesus' way of peace as we carry out evangelism, pastoral care, church planting, empowering leaders and living out unity.

We also care for each other: about half our churches can independently pay their pastors while the other half are supplemented by donations from HD20 or gifts of food.

In 2016 the 34th General Assembly of the Church of Christ in Thailand resolved to be the Hmong District 20th (HD20) of the Church of Christ in Thailand.

In 2017, we were accepted into membership of Mennonite World Conference.

In 2021, HD20 reported 2 534 baptized members in 38 congregations, all but two of which are rural, in northern Thailand.



Agus Mayanto

Hmong District 20th of the Church of Christ in Thailand participants at the 2024 annual meeting.

🌐 Read more: [Hmong committed to Jesus despite persecution](#)

🌐 Read more: [Life from a graveyard](#)

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What does it mean for you today, in your location, to be part of this 500-year global family of faith?



I am truly amazed by how relevant and modern Anabaptist values are in today's world! It fills me with pride to see how principles like horizontal leadership, community-oriented Bible reading, genuine interest in ecology, and peacebuilding continue to resonate and guide us.

BENOIT NUSSBAUMER

*Association des
Églises Évangéliques
Mennonites de France
France*

Portugal

Anabaptist church beginnings: A snapshot

Igreja dos Irmãos Menonitas de Portugal

A series of North American missionary couples came and went from the MB mission agency through the 1980s and 1990s but the seeds planted in a house church in the Lourés suburb of Lisbon have persisted in the form of a Mennonite Brethren church.

The first missionaries from Canada arrived in 1984 and began attending a local Bible school to enculturate. Notices were posted in the neighbourhood for English classes to get people in the door of a small house fellowship.

Some of the earliest church members were two Catholic couples who became pillars of the church. They would attend mass in the morning and come to the Mennonite Brethren church in the afternoons.

The fellowship outgrew the apartment and purchased a building. From 10 to 20 to 40, folks worshipped together in the afternoon – as they still do today.

In 1989, Igreja dos Irmãos Menonitas de Portugal was officially established and a building was purchased for the growing gatherings in Lourés.

The association expanded as it became connected with a community of believers from Angola and DR Congo. When the Swiss Mennonites who had been shepherding that community returned home, the African community joined the MBs.

There was also a group organized by the Bund TaufGesinnter in Germany who had planted a church among Slavic-speaking peoples. It also joined the Portuguese MB church.

For a time, Portugal was viewed as a case study of a diverse church in a small country.

There was solid preaching about Jesus, compelling gospel music for worship, teaching on how to pray and activities on Sunday on the weekends for children.

For several years, there was a ministry with children and youth at risk. Youth received basic workforce training alongside mentoring in discipleship.

Two congregations ran a thrift store which provided some income and a point of connection within the community.

There were community meals where everyone could feel welcome and socialize with each other. People who had been rejected in their lives found a home in the collection of Mennonite Brethren churches.

In 2017, the association joined MWC after being introduced to the global Mennonite family through ICOMB.

A series of changes in the relationship and financial support from the North American mission agency and some local leadership challenges reduced the church to one congregation in 2025 with 70 baptized members.

However, the spirit of welcome and inclusiveness from those first two Catholic couples remains and the church believes it will grow again.

How can you pray for Igreja dos Irmãos Menonitas de Portugal

- Pray for new opportunities for new projects to reach into the community with the good news.
- Pray for the bivocational leaders who shepherd the church alongside other jobs.
- Pray for the strength and the unity of Christ in the congregation

José Arrais, long time lay leader of IIMP and MWC regional rep for Europe.



Photo supplied

A gathering of the Loures congregation.

🌐 Read more: [Missional Frontier: Portugal](#)

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What does it mean for you today, in your location, to be part of this 500-year global family of faith?



Although I don't live in a context of persecution like that of the radical reformation that meant losing your life for Christ and the Word of God, I am inspired to give my life for Christ in the things that I live through as part of a society that denies Jesus Christ and the gospel.

SOL SILVA

*Iglesia Evangélica
Menonita Argentina
Argentina*

Paraguay

Anabaptist church beginnings: A snapshot

Convención Evangélica Hermanos Menonitas Nivaclé in Paraguay



Enlhet worship service in Paraguay, 1940. G. B. Giesbrecht is standing at left.



A total of 6 204 Anabaptists from the world gathered for six days of worship, study and fellowship in the Centro Familiar de Adoración, a three-tiered worship center in Asunción, Paraguay, for Assembly 15 in 2009.



Students at Mennonite-run primary school Colegio Gutenberg in Paraguay.

MBMA

Photo supplied

J Nelson Kraybill

At no time did we hear the word leaders, but instead we spoke of the missionaries. The first leaders of the church were Mennonite Brethren: Jakob Franz in the 1930s and later Gerhard Hein.

The people left, but they sowed the Word in the community. First it was in Philadelphia that a church was planted, then in Cayin ô Clim (today it is Neuland).

In the early days, the leaders' priorities were to proclaim the Word to other communities. They did so through worship services, Bible studies and translating songs into the language of the people.

In 1960, a group was baptized by the missionaries.

The organization Luz a Los Indígenas (Light to the Indigenous peoples) gave the opportunity for us as Indigenous people to be part of the church, people of faith in God. Since 2006, it has been called ACoMeM (Asociación Civil Obra Misionera Evangélica Menonita).

The church joined the Mennonite church as we became more aware of the Mennonites in our community.

Today, the church's strengths are our love for the Bible and our school to help members to study the Word. The important thing is to have faith, and that faith is not lost.

The organization Luz a Los Indígenas (Light to the Indigenous peoples) gave the opportunity for us as Indigenous people to be part of the church, people of faith in God.

Our challenge is to help other people to trust in God.

Around 2018, the church reported 2 600 baptized members in 12 congregations.

Elsa Pérez is a member of Iglesia Hermanos Menonitas Malaquías located in the Comunidad Campo Alegre, Paraguay. She is from the Nivaclé Indigenous tribe.

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2025

What does it mean for you today, in your location, to be part of this 500-year global family of faith?



In my daily life being an Anabaptist taught me about (Ubuntu) that a person is a person because of others. It means being part of a community that supports and encourages one another to follow Jesus' teachings.

NONTOKOZO MOYO

Ibandla Labazalwane kuKristu eZimbabwe (Brethren in Christ Church) Zimbabwe

USA

Anabaptist church beginnings: A snapshot

Rosedale Network of Churches in the USA

On a cold, Thanksgiving Day in November 1910, a group of five ordained ministers gathered with other guests at the Pigeon River Conservative Amish

Mennonite meetinghouse in Huron County, Michigan, USA, for the purpose of working together to further the mission of the church. Out of that gathering, Rosedale Network of Churches (called Conservative Amish Mennonite Conference at the time) was born.

The hosting ministers were bishop Solomon J. Swartzentruber and minister Michael S. Zehr. Bishop Joshua King from Stark County, Ohio, was in attendance, as were bishop John L. Mast and minister Jonas D. Yoder from Mifflin County, Pennsylvania, USA. While not in attendance at this meeting, other churches in the Casselman Valley of Pennsylvania and Maryland, Lewis County in New York, and Johnson County in Iowa were identified with this emerging group.

Pigeon River Mennonite Church, where the first meeting was held continues, to be a member of Rosedale Network of Churches to this day.

Priorities

Five primary priorities were addressed in that very first meeting: maintaining unity, nonconformity, maintenance of the German language, duty to spread the gospel and response to divisiveness.

The first outreach of this new group grew out of their conviction to spread the gospel and their concern for the poor and orphans.

At their second meeting in 1912 plans were put in place to start a children's home for orphans. Much of the strongest support for the children's home came from the congregations in the Casselman Valley of Pennsylvania and Maryland, so in 1914 the Children's Home was founded in Grantsville, Maryland, USA.

Today

Today Rosedale Network of Churches consists of 119 congregations spread across the USA who are working together to mature and multiply churches locally and globally.

The same commitment to Scripture as the authority for life and to carrying out

God's mission in the world that existed at its founding continues to this day.

Rosedale Network would not be what it is without its educational arm (Rosedale Bible College) and its mission arm (Rosedale International). These organizations help the church tremendously in accomplishing its mission.

Another strength of Rosedale Network is the support it offers its pastors through peer groups, cohorts, classes and annual gatherings that offer opportunities for fellowship, encouragement, inspiration and equipping.

As other church groups in North America can attest, significant challenges for Rosedale Network include the ever-present influence of materialism and the growing influence of nationalism.

Rosedale Network joined MWC as an associate member in 2000.

In 2025, there are 119 churches with 13 475 baptized members.

**Brian Hershberger, Executive Director,
Rosedale Network of Churches**



Participants represent a variety of Rosedale Network congregations at the annual Multiply Conference in 2024.

gys
2025

What does it mean for you today, in your location, to be part of this 500-year global family of faith?



Today it is a matter of pride for me to be a part of the largest global family of faith i.e., the global Anabaptist family of faith...[to] be able to walk in it well and able to do fellowship, worship, service.

AMAN GANJBOIR

*Mennonite Church in
India Dhamtari CG
India*

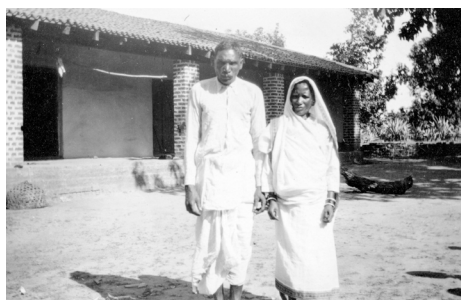
Anabaptist World Fellowship Sunday

Courage to love those who are different

“The love for Jesus Christ inspires us and motivates us to overcome all kinds of fear,” said Sushant Nand. The International Exchange Program coordinator and project officer with Mennonite Central Committee, India, spoke on Anabaptist World Fellowship Sunday at Mennonite Church Korba, a unit church of Bhartiya General Conference Mennonite Church, India.

“The early Anabaptists were people who were filled with the love of God and were deeply in love with Jesus because they had experienced his love and grace deep down in their heart,” Sushant Nand said to the 110-year-old congregation. “The Courage to Love” is the theme of the annual global worship celebration, and also the 500th anniversary event in Zurich in May.

The Korba church has been extended three times to accommodate the growing congregation. Kabra and his wife Manmati were the first fruit of Mennonite mission in Korba. They were baptized on 8 October 1915, followed by another 15 people on 9 December 1915. Today, Korba has 400 families and more than 8 000 members.



Copyright © Bethel College

Kubra and Manmatti, first Christians of Korba, India.

“The people who love Jesus with all their heart, all their mind and all their soul, no more worry about the internal and external consequences.... Jesus’ love provides us with courage to love people who are different from us, who are against us or who persecute us,” Sushant Nand says.

“Let’s grow deeper in the love of Christ so that we will be free from all kinds of fear to share God’s love to everyone.”



Jaap Brusewitz

Doopsgezind (Mennonite) congregations in Friesland and Groningen held a large worship service to celebrate Anabaptist World Fellowship Sunday. The national church board (ADS) plans to visit as many congregations as possible in the year 2025 to learn of their developments and align future directions.



BIC Community Church

BIC Community Church, Zimbabwe, celebrated Holy Communion together on Anabaptist World Fellowship Sunday. Bishop Danisa Ndlovu, MWC Regional Representative for Southern Africa, shared the sermon, followed by a Sunday School lesson from Bishop Sindah Ngulube, MWC Executive Committee Africa representative.



IMC North Luzon District

Mennonite congregations of IMC North Luzon District, Philippines, gathered to celebrate Anabaptist World Fellowship Sunday 2025 together: Binuangan Mennonite Christian Church, Teggep Mennonite Christian Church, Tamuyan Mennonite Christian Church and Carolotan Mennonite Christian Church.



Click here to view the AWFS worship resource



Camino de Santidad Mennonite Church

Camino de Santidad Mennonite Church, San Pedro Sula, Honduras, noted the 500th anniversary at the Anabaptist World Fellowship Sunday celebration.



Basna Mennonite Church

Youths from Basna Mennonite Church, India, presented a skit based on the theme “The Courage to Love” as part of their Anabaptist World Fellowship Sunday 2025 celebration.



Église Évangélique Mennonite de Orodara

Women danced in worship on Anabaptist World Fellowship Sunday at Église Évangélique Mennonite de Orodara, Burkina Faso.

From our Leaders

The beating heart of MWC

Deacons

The responsibilities of the Deacons Commission include overseeing the Global Church Sharing Fund (GCSF), fostering prayer within the Anabaptist communion (sending the Prayer Network email, hosting Online Prayer Hour and collaborating with the president on pastoral letters), and deacon visits.

From 2022 to the end of 2024, the Deacons Commission approved 20 GCSF proposals for around \$239 000 after careful discernment and evaluation. “The GCSF demonstrates that churches in Africa, Asia and Latin America are not alone and that the global faith community stands together in sharing and support,” says Tigist Tesfaye, Deacons Commission secretary.

Often in concert with related MWC specialists, the Deacons sent a delegation to visit member churches in duress to listen to, share with, pray and worship with the church. “This serves to strengthen the local church and their connection to the global fellowship,” says Tigist Tesfaye.

In 2024, alongside the Peace Commission, the Deacon Commission visited to 17 pastors from Myanmar in Thailand. Members made an unofficial visit to other member churches in Thailand also.

Every two months, the Deacons Commission invites all members to an online gathering. Online Prayer Hour was conducted in four languages – English, Spanish, French, Hindi – with 60-80 participants praying together in real time.

Faith & Life

As Faith and Life Commission, we seek to support MWC member churches in giving and receiving counsel – and so developing mutual accountability – on matters related to Christian faith and practice, and to Anabaptist-Mennonite identity and action in the world today.

Faith & Life promoted teaching,

conversations and resources with the publication of the study guide on the baptism report. It was distributed to General Council delegates with an invitation for them to promote, use and study it in their churches. Commission members shared testimonies from their baptisms on the MWC website to spark interest in exploring our convictions around baptism.

The Commission continued to discuss together and provide resourcing for MWC on being a global communion, being unified and also on concerns like creation care.

When Mennonite World Conference is invited to relate with other world communions, the Faith and Life Commission is called to represent. In addition to dialogues with World Communion of Reformed Churches, which produced a significant reconciliation statement for 2025, they also sent Anne-Cathy Graber to represent Anabaptists at a Vatican synod on synodality.



Commission chairs and secretaries fellowshiped and discerned in Brazil in 2024.

Structurally, the new Global Anabaptist Education Networks fall under the Faith and Life Commission. These emerging networks for primary and secondary and seminary education are learning together to resource students to become pastors and leaders around the world.

Mission Commission

Meeting together – online and in person – was a significant part of the Mission Commission’s work in the past three years. The 2023 gathering in Harrisonburg,

Virginia was a crucial event for the MC and its two networks as we had the opportunity to meet in person for a time of fellowship and resourcing. about 60 delegates participated from the networks.

The Mission commission supported the Global Anabaptist Service Network and the Global Mission Fellowship in offering numerous webinars that were both a learning and a fellowship opportunity. Their work was highlighted in the previous issue of Courier.

For 2025, we are looking forward to publishing an updated online bibliography of Anabaptism and Mission. Look for it on the MWC website.

Peace Commission

Each year, the Peace Commission produces the Peace Sunday worship resource that is shared with MWC member churches around the world. The photos and reports congregations send from their celebration are a testament to our work at building peace.

The Global Mennonite Peacebuilding Conference is sponsored by the Peace Commission. Organized by Eastern Mennonite University in 2023, it brought together 160 theologians, peacebuilders, pastors, activists, and artists from 20 different countries to Harrisonburg, Virginia, USA. They participated in conversations on theology and practice of Anabaptist/Mennonite peacebuilding and shared about the Declaration on Conscientious Objection (released in 2022).

Members of the Peace Commission joined with Deacons on a solidarity visit to Myanmar to encourage pastors in a time of war.

The Peace Commission has also been engaged with other partners in devising a path for conversations with Old Colony Mennonites who are part of family of Anabaptist believers but not a part of our formal association as Mennonite World Conference. Concerns about farming practices concerns have provided opportunities for building peace in conversations with other organizations, MWC partners and Old Colony Mennonites.

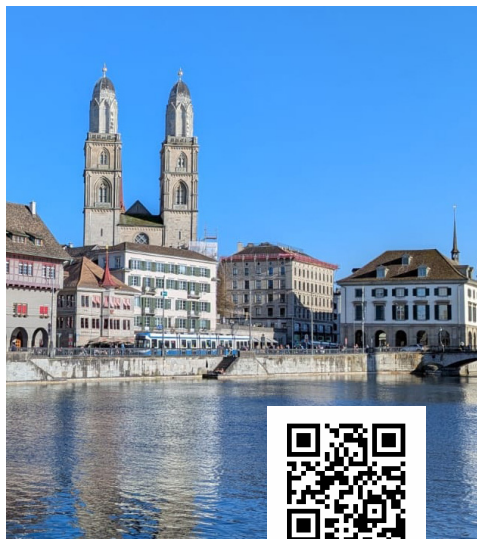


Photo: Liesa Unger

Share a gift today!

2025 is a year to remember.

For this year of global Anabaptist milestones, let your generosity shine by supporting the worldwide Anabaptist family through a gift to the Mennonite World Conference.

Together, we can make a difference! Thank you for your support.

Share the impact

"Thank you for sending!"
"News from *Courier* will add faith and knowledge to us."

These are responses we've received after *Courier* brings you testimonies, teaching and news from the global Anabaptist-Mennonite family around the world.

How have you been moved by the sharing you read in *Courier*? How have you shared that with your wider church community?

Tell us what you learned – and what you want to learn more about!

We welcome your feedback...



By email:
info@mwccmm.org

On our website: mwccmm.org/sharetheimpact

Facebook: @[MennoniteWorldConference](https://www.facebook.com/MennoniteWorldConference)

Via Instagram: @[mwccmm](https://www.instagram.com/mwccmm)

Join our anniversary campaign

Marking 100 years of living out unity in MWC through photos, music, trees and more

Following Jesus, living out unity, building peace. It's a new tagline for the mission we've always carried as Anabaptists.

This is a momentous year with two anniversaries for Mennonite World Conference: Five hundred years of the Anabaptist movement; and 100 years of MWC: a communion of Anabaptist-related churches linked to one another in a worldwide community of faith for fellowship, worship service and witness.

As an organization – a *koinonoi* – we exist to facilitate relationships with each other, in so doing to grow our Anabaptist faith and to relate with other communions.

Bimonthly challenges

We are inviting our members around the world to celebrate with us by participating in campaign of bimonthly challenges.

Each action will be announced on social media with a reminder in each issue of *MWC Info*.

All submissions can be sent to photos@mwccmm.org.

The challenge campaign will continue throughout the year. Follow us on Facebook and Instagram or subscribe to MWC Info, our monthly e-newsletter to discover the next challenge.

Growing roots

To mark our 100 years of Anabaptist congregations coming together like a stream of living water, we invite congregations to plant a tree.

"Faith grows less like a math equation and more like a living organism. A tree can be a monument, a marker to history. It is also a sign of care for creation, adding biodiversity and habitat. A tree is a gift to the community, providing shade, stabilizing soil, and cycling water," says Tigist Tesfaye, Deacons Commission, secretary.

In 1997, then-general secretary Larry Miller suggested that a tree be planted whenever Executive Committee meetings took place. It hasn't always been possible, but MWC has put down its roots in at least eight places since then.



Click or scan here for a guide for Tree Planting guide from the Creation Care Task Force



Liesa Unger

Liesa Unger and Ebener Mondez visit the "MWC tree" planted at Thomashof, Germany, by the Executive Committee in 2001 during meetings that included Mennonite-Catholic dialogue.



Scan to donate

Photo:
Nathan Mudiji Makumbi

Build on a foundation of love

We invite you to **join the MWC movement! Stand in solidarity** with Anabaptist sisters and brothers from north, south, east and west. When we work together, we **learn** from each other while **blessing** the world.

You can make a difference through **investing your financial gifts** in the worldwide mission of Mennonite World Conference as together we call on God to grant us The Courage to Love in a troubled world.

When you contribute, you are building on the faithful actions laid by Jesus followers across five centuries and in more than 61 countries today.

- resource and strengthen Anabaptist leaders around the world
- encourage congregations to live out Anabaptist faith
- nurture a thriving global communion through MWC gatherings in person and online
- equip MWC's commissions, networks, YABs (young adults) to serve the church

Visit mwc-cmm.org/donate to give now or send your contribution to

- Mennonite World Conference
50 Kent Avenue, Suite 206
Kitchener, Ontario N2G 3R1
Canada
- Mennonite World Conference
PO Box 5364
Lancaster, PA 17606-5364 USA

Thank you for sharing your gifts with the MWC global family!

Join us in prayer

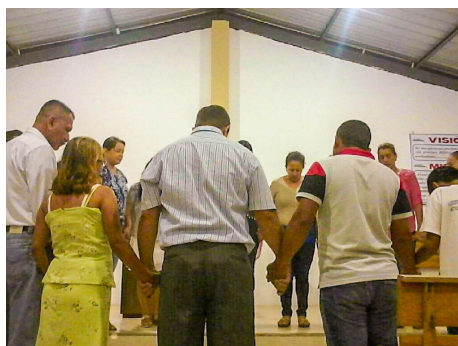
Prayer is a way to support our global family.

Over the past months, we have called you to prayer through pastoral letters and urgent prayer appeals.

We ask you to share these with your local congregations.

A pastoral letter from Anabaptist churches in Ecuador

- The three Mennonite national churches in Ecuador – Iglesia Evangélica Menonita Ecuatoriana (IEME – MWC member church), Iglesia Cristiana Anabautista Menonita de Ecuador (ICAME), Iglesia Cristiana Menonita (ICME) – call for prayer from our global Anabaptist family.
- We ask for your prayers because we know that God desires shalom and well-being for the people of Ecuador and our Mennonite churches.
- [Read more](#)



Iglesia Menonita Casade Oracion Jacuatas

Urgent prayer: earthquake in Myanmar

- A 7.7 magnitude earthquake struck central Myanmar, followed by a 6.4 magnitude aftershock. The earthquake affected the region as far as Thailand, China and India.
- "Please pray for Myanmar. Your prayers are the only solution to the problems of Myanmar," writes the leader of Bible Missionary Church, Mennonite, in Myanmar.
- [Read more](#)



[Subscribe to Prayer Network updates](#)

[Join Online Prayer Hour](#)



Rhoda Shirk

A pastoral letter regarding legal action for the protection of religious liberties

- We call you to prayer for our siblings in the USA who are taking legal action that seeks to restore the rights of people of faith to gather, worship and serve without government interference. Mennonite Church USA joins more than 20 Christian and Jewish communities in this action.
- [Read more](#)

A pastoral letter for Anabaptists in DR Congo

- Pastor Jean-Pierre Muya, president of MWC member church Communauté Mennonite de Congo (CMCo), writes: "This is a difficult time in our country. Please continue to pray for the restoration of peace and for the injured."
- [Read more](#)



Siaka Traoré

A pastoral letter for those affected by wildfires in Los Angeles

- The raging fires in Los Angeles in southern California, USA, have impacted many communities. Pray for Anabaptist church leaders and members as they respond to the great needs in congregations and throughout the region.
- [Read more](#)

MWC Publications Request

I would like to receive:

MWC Info

A monthly email newsletter with links to articles on the MWC website.

- ☐ English
- ☐ Spanish
- ☐ French

Courier

Magazine published four times a year (print: volume numbers 2, 4)

- ☐ English
- ☐ Spanish
- ☐ French
- ☐ Electronic version (PDF)*
(volume numbers 1, 2, 3, 4)
- ☐ Print Version



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Photo: Irma Sulistyorini

The Officers' column

An **Executive Committee** is elected from the General Council and meets annually. Two members from each continental region are elected from the Council; a President and Vice-President are also elected by the Council. The Treasurer and General Secretary are also members of the Executive Committee.

*A prayer from MWC
vice president Lisa Carr-Pries*

God of Abundance,

We come before you as a global family, gathered in faith and hope, seeking your presence in a world of deep need. In times of scarcity and fear, we hold fast to the truth:

"There's enough for all if we would learn to share it.

There's enough for all if we would learn to see it.

*There's enough for all; let's bring our loaves and fishes
and offer them to Jesus.*

There's more than enough for you and me."

Yet, O God, our world is troubled. War and violence break hearts and homes. Creation groans under the weight of our neglect. Inequality and injustice leave many hungry, lonely and without hope. The burdens of life feel too heavy to bear.

Help us, Lord, to see abundance where fear sees only scarcity. Open our eyes to your gifts, our hands to generosity, and our hearts to trust in your provision.

Give us courage to step up when silence is easy, to call out injustice when truth is hidden, and to act boldly for peace when the world chooses division. May we be bearers of your "enoughness" to all creation.

Bless the people of Mennonite World Conference, that we may be a light in dark places, a witness to your kingdom, and a people who live out your love with joy and justice.

In the name of Jesus, who multiplies our small offerings into more than enough, we pray.

Amen.

Lisa Carr-Pries is vice president of Mennonite World Conference (2023–2025). She is co-director of spiritual care & culture at Parkwood Mennonite Home and a member of Nith Valley Mennonite Church, New Hamburg, Ontario, Canada.

*Lyrics from "There's Enough for All" © 2004 Bryan Moyer Suderman/SmallTall Music. Found in the *Voices Together* hymnal #757