

Courier Correo Courier

Volume 41, Number 2



**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

3

Inspiration and reflection

Solidarity in action:

- A way of resistance
- Are we prepared for the true cost of solidarity?
- Forgiveness and a safe space

11

Insert

Annual report:
2025

13

Resources

- Assembly news
- Executive Committee news
- Online Prayer Hour
- A circle of partnership
- 40 years of solidarity
- The Officers' Column
- Unity you can hear



Cover Photo:

Our MWC tagline lists “living out unity” as a core part of our identity. We exercise solidarity with our fellow Anabaptists around the world, with the body of Christ more broadly, and with partners in building peace and pursuing justice. The Mennonite church in Rajnandgaon, Chhattisgarh, India, celebrated this on Anabaptist World Fellowship Sunday with a meal after the service.

Photo: Preshit Rao

Courier Correo Courier



Volume 41, Number 2

Courier/Correo/Courrier is a publication of Mennonite World Conference. It is published four times a year, containing inspirational essays, study and teaching documents and feature-length articles. Each edition is published in English, Spanish and French.

César García Publisher
Kristina Toews Manager of Communications
Karla Braun Editor
Irma Sulistyorini Designer

Translators
Diana Cruz English → Spanish
Karen Flores Vindel English → Spanish
Corentin Haldemann English → French
Marion Meyer Spanish → English

Reviewers and proofreaders
Marisa Miller Spanish
Valentin dos Santos French

Courier/Correo/Courrier is available on request.
Subscribe: mwc-cmm.org/courier-signup
Send all correspondence to:
Courier, 50 Kent Avenue, Suite 206, Kitchener,
Ontario N2G 3R1 Canada.

✉ info@mwc-cmm.org
🌐 mwc-cmm.org
📘 [@MennoniteWorldConference](https://www.facebook.com/MennoniteWorldConference)
📺 [@MennoniteWorldConference](https://www.youtube.com/MennoniteWorldConference)
📱 [@mwccmm](https://www.instagram.com/mwccmm)

Scripture quotations are taken from the New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition.
Copyright © 2021 National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

 **Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International**

Under this Creative Commons license, you may distribute the material in any medium or format for noncommercial purposes only, and only so long as attribution is given to the creator. If you remix, adapt, or build upon the material, please contact the author. You must license the modified material under identical terms.

Courier/Correo/Courrier (ISSN 1041-4436) is published four times a year: issues 2 and 4 in print and digital; issues 1 and 3 in digital format only.

Mennonite World Conference,
Publication Office: Courier, 50 Kent Avenue, Suite 206,
Kitchener, Ontario N2G 3R1 Canada.
T: (519) 571-0060.

Word from the editor



Walking with Jesus in costly solidarity

Solidarity. The word was chosen as MWC's theme word a few years ago. We had no idea how appropriate it would feel in 2026.

For some, the word is a warm embrace. Some fear the word. Maybe it is associated with resolutely secular – even avowedly anti-Christian – movements. Maybe the word conveys disappointment. It's a reminder of the times words failed to match actions. Of declarations of support that never bore the fruit of partnership. Of repentance professed but actions never transformed.

Solidarity is costly. It requires our egos to take a back seat. We're not the saviour, as Mikhael Ardiyanto reminds us (page 3–6). Solidarity requires that we resist romanticizing someone else's suffering. We have to truly listen. We have to come alongside in ways that are caring, not merely convenient.

At its best, our solidarity as Anabaptists is deeply rooted in following Jesus and characterized by a quality of mercy, as Jenny Neme says (page 6–9). We emulate Jesus as we live out solidarity that comes from deep compassion of an empathetic soul seeking transformation, not merely a compatriot in a particular struggle.

It seems that our Anabaptist community is primed for solidarity: we follow Jesus, who modelled humility. We are centred in community, understanding that God is manifest when we work with others. And we understand that reconciliation is the heart of the work God has called us to.

Our worship informs our work. Returning to our source, Jesus, sustains our joy and hope in the relentless work of advocacy for a more just world.

This issue of *Courier* has a different shape. Instead of five Perspectives from each region, we bring you extended conversations. Formed by their different experiences and backgrounds, our contributors exchange skills and stories across barriers of difference. After all, solidarity is not solitary.

As you read this issue, where does your heart burn within you? What sparks your “yes” to walk alongside others in humility and mutuality? Is your own spirit ready to follow in the humble example of Jesus toward costly solidarity?

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

***Courier* is interested in your contributions. Submit your photograph, 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.**

Solidarity in action: Anabaptist activists in dialogue

Solidarity is another word for the connection we exercise within the body of Christ. Unity expressed through actions reverberates beyond our efforts: we raise our voices and our finances in support; we stand together and lift each other up; we pay attention so that no one is left behind.



Submitted

Mikhael Ardiyanto (right) and Zachary Shields (centre) at the 500th anniversary of Anabaptism in Zurich, Switzerland, with Global Youth Summit participant Camila Perez-Diener.

This article is edited from a conversation between two young Anabaptists with questions from the Courier editor. They reflect on their understanding of solidarity and how they live it out today.

A way of resistance

Zachary Shields

I'm located in Langley, B.C., Canada. I go to Langley Mennonite Fellowship.

I'm currently in undergraduate studies in peace and conflict studies at University of the Fraser Valley in B.C., Canada. I also attended Goshen College, in Indiana, USA, for a year. I'm starting a peace club at University of the Fraser Valley alongside other students.

I am a regional organizer for Mennonite Action Canada in British Columbia and coordinator of Young Adult Anabaptists for Peace (YAAP), an initiative that started from conversations among young adult Mennonites to becoming a Mennonite Church British Columbia Task Group, to advocating for Mennonite Church Canada to engage with young adults nationally.

Mikhael Ardiyanto

I'm from a small city (around 800 000 people) called Kudus in Central Java, Indonesia.

I grew up with Anabaptist-Mennonite traditions, but "Mennonite" there is different than "Mennonite" where I live now in the Netherlands.

Theology was the focus of my bachelor studies. Last year, I graduated from the peace & trauma master's program at the Vrij Universiteit (connected with the Mennonite seminary in Amsterdam, Netherlands). At the moment, I work with the Amsterdam Centre for Religion, Peace and Justice Studies.

While here, I am also involved in the protests among students, and writing articles related to that struggle. I am also involved in making documentaries about ecological injustice in Indonesia in collaboration with Kerk in Actie (a Dutch Protestant relief and development organization).

How does your Anabaptist formation influence you?

Mikhael

The Anabaptist tradition has really influenced how I see social issues and structural problems.

When I was a child, I was always taught Mennonites: what makes Mennonites different is that we are a peace church. Whenever I identified myself as a Mennonite, what often followed was admiration for the pacifist movement.

Yet, things aren't that simple. We have a tendency to understand "peace" in narrow terms: as long as nothing appears violent, everything is assumed to be fine.

Moreover, there's often a gap between how faith is understood and how it's lived out. Much is taught and learned, but it does not always translate into action.

Studying in the Netherlands in a diverse community, I am learning peace is always related with ecological issues, domestic violence, gender injustice, etc.

Zachary

We (Mikhael & Zachary) got to meet last year in Zurich. People had come from around the world for the 500th anniversary of Anabaptism. We were all recognizing each other as people who are part of the peace church. It's something we share in the Anabaptist movement.

When I'm talking to Christian friends from non-Mennonite backgrounds, peace doesn't come up in their churches at all.

And yet, for us, what does peace mean beyond "not war," beyond doctrine? Even in our own tradition, we talk about peace but often fail to live up to it.

We can be averse to conflict, which is different than violence. In trying to avoid conflict, we create deeper issues that become harmful in verbal, emotional, spiritual ways.

An Anabaptist peace framework, in terms of faith perspective, informs everything I am doing, from my day-to-day living to my professional work to the position I find myself in with MC BC, it's about building toward a positive peace that works for everyone.

A positive peace is about solidarity for people across the globe as well as in local context.

Mikhael, you have a specialty in trauma: how do you think Anabaptist faith informs you in that area of study?

Mikhael

Sometimes our Christian formation collides with our cultures.

When I came to the Netherlands, I gained perspectives on how we have collective trauma in Indonesia about happened in the past.

Yet, things aren't that simple. We have a tendency to understand "peace" in narrow

terms: as long as nothing appears violent, everything is assumed to be fine.

Moreover, there's often a gap between how faith is understood and how it's lived out. Much is taught and learned, but it does not always translate into action.

Studying in the Netherlands in a diverse community, I am learning peace is always related with ecological issues, domestic violence, gender injustice, etc.

Trauma can pass into the next generation. It becomes collective when next generation builds on the trauma. People do not want to talk about this trauma, but then it disrupts society itself.

Zachary

Struggling to understand peace beyond the absence of violence: I think that's a global challenge for Anabaptists.

Growing up in the church, I thought peace is just like relief work, peace is just working against war and conflict overseas.

But often, people were ignoring conflicts in church. People were not addressing their own personal traumas, their family traumas, the traumas of the church.

I think it's important for the church to name that we have traumas that sometimes inhibit our ability to reach out and work with people with different backgrounds.

People might not be physically violent, but they might be talking about others behind their backs.

When we engage with Jesus' teachings, we find solidarity. In the Gospels, Jesus sat with people from all walks of life. One of the first spreaders of good news Jesus chose was the woman at the well (John 4).

For me, those core stories shape avenues for solidarity work.

Mikhael

There's also my struggle. When you learn a lot of things, you have a sense that you were called. Knowing what Jesus did in the Bible, it gives me a drive to do something.

But at the same time, I realize that I'm not a messiah, the one who can solve everything. I want to have solidarity *with* others.

I'm here, but I'm not the subject of the story. The focus of the story is people who are also working to right injustice. But even though we are working together, we are also in a different positions in terms of privilege.

Zachary

When you're equipped with knowledge, a bit of power to make a difference, there's a healthy instinct to help. That's not a bad impulse, but we have to heed the impulse and listen.

In the way that we listen, we can kind of bring on a kind of prayer-like practice. If I am not hearing others, how could I hope to hear God's guiding words?

What do you think of solidarity in terms of working with people going through tough times: what does solidarity look like for you?

Mikhael

It is important to recognize that the urge to "help" can easily drift from its original intention. The impulse itself is not wrong, but without the practice of truly listening, the desire to get involved can turn into a tendency to dominate. In this often-unconscious process, those who should remain subjects are gradually reduced to objects, no longer friends in the journey, but rather the recipients of our interventions.

But the problem is not limited to that. This shift also has the potential to strain relationships with those living in the reality being fought for. Instead of feeling part of the struggle, they may feel distanced or even displaced.

Solidarity, in this sense, risks being perceived as an intrusion – or worse: as a



Reynaldo Mercado Jr

Renewal is a series of events that brings MWC's Executive Committee to a different national member church each year for one day of worshipping together across cultures. Renewal 2026 at Lacao Mennonite Bible Church in the Philippines (left-right): Pastora Evangeline Filitado, Pastor Christian Conde, Bishop Eladio Mondez, John Roth, Myca Mansion-Titan.



Ashisha Lal

During the Global Youth Summit in 2025, participants attended a workshop with leaders from Mennonite Action, a grassroots movement of solidarity with Palestinian people.

threat. At this point, the question is whether we are truly present to walk along together, or whether we are unconsciously positioning ourselves as the centre?

And further still: might this become, in subtle ways, a new form of domination?

Zachary

Connecting with those different than us is foundational for those looking to engage with solidarity. It can be a beautiful thing.

Part of solidarity is letting the different worlds collide. We need to have “micro reformations,” not in faith, but in spirit.

When you find common threads of interests really meet, peace and love begin to flourish. We see the fruits of the Spirit come alive when we gather, listen, engage and also hear the dreams for the future of the people who are suffering.

Looking back to the first Anabaptists. They were talking about their issues, meeting regularly and they came to radical revelations and became Mennonites, right?

When people get together in groups and talk about the issues dear to them, it’s much harder for empire and other repressive forces to crack down.

Thinking about my context as a Mennonite in B.C., we like to have potlucks and we like singing in four-part harmony.

This has been a powerful tool of solidarity. In Mennonite Action, we have gotten to sing and share our music with others in solidarity.

I think that the Spirit really moves when people use their collective voices to talk out against violence and atrocities. Let peace and justice flow like a river.

Solidarity is something we build through right relationships. And I think this is a struggle because we want to rush to the

solutions. We need to get there, but we also need to get to know each other’s needs.

Mikhael

When listening is absent within a movement, collective actions are often reduced to mere acts of violence, while demonstrators get stuck blaming and criticising each other.

What is being fought for relates to the fundamental rights that arise from the experience of injustice itself. Yet in the public sphere, as the space for mutual listening grows ever narrower, what emerges is not merely suspicion or “troublemakers,” but also the risk of but also a deeper misrecognition—even domination—by those who should be the very subjects of the struggle itself; as if the struggle no longer belongs to them, but rather comes from elsewhere.

Without a willingness to be vulnerable – that is, the courage to open oneself, to listen, and to learn and unlearn – this situation will only continue to spin in the same cycle of misunderstanding.

When you listen to others, you learn why they do things. You may learn they are scared.

And you also unlearn. After that, we can have more fruitful conversations.

Sometimes when we are trying to fight injustice by ourselves, we feel like the world is so cruel. Like we cannot escape, like injustice is everywhere. That’s why I try to find a community who can work together.

When you go to the streets, organize structures, meet diverse people, you have a different perspective. We can share, we can work together. And when we have questions, we can come to each other and ask.

And then you feel hope.

It’s not only about a feeling, but about being present with others, and they are also present with you.

Zachary

In my Mennonite community, particularly with young adults, when I talk about peace and justice matters, it’s super electric.

Talking about solidarity is extraordinarily engaging.

Young people have energy and want to do something. But often, we’re lacking in experience. So finding those avenues to work together with can be energizing to congregations in a way that really expands a church body, addresses the powerlessness people hold and helps them grow.

We know the church can be a transformational place and I think we need that transformational church for peace in the world – especially for those going through tough times. So let’s let the energy of the spirit that people have and connect in solidarity.

Mikhael

And solidarity is not a solo act. Sometimes you feel paralyzed, overwhelmed; you cannot sustain it alone.

It always starts with the community. It’s always related to people.

In Indonesia, we have the word *tongkrongan*, an informal, low-key social hangout. People can exchange ideas in a relaxed setting.

The gathering itself is important because from there you start to know each other. It can be tense but when you are sharing food, there is space to start building conversations.

At this kind of informal gathering, conversation can go anywhere from your personal stories to political situations and the discussion can become bigger. It’s a way of sharing to pass the stories to others.

When we can’t find a space to address an issue in spaces like the church, this kind of informal gathering to share stories acts as a way of resistance.

Zachary

Yes, this all requires leaning on different people. If you’re not very good at media or public speaking, find a friend who can help you talk about this violence in your

neighbourhood or on the other side of the world that you're really concerned about.

And also reach out to people who aren't in your church. A big part of solidarity is that we should reach beyond our normal boundaries, even if it's a little bit uncomfortable.

Mikhael

In Indonesia, conversations about structural injustice run the risk of being seen as "too political," and precisely for that reason, the church tends to distance itself from discussions.

But when I see folks who are not in a position of suffering realize their privileged condition and also how they are connected through structures that perpetuate violence, and they find ways to protest in their own context (e.g., Mennonite Action's advocacy for Palestine), it gives me inspiration. I can also connect with people to advocate in creative ways for Indonesia despite being located in the Netherlands.

Zachary

I have a message to people across the world. Do not be afraid to extend church in your solidarity work, to extend what church means.

That's part of what solidarity is: the outpouring of love in cooperation, working together for peace and hearing and receiving as well.

We need to receive that kind of peace from people who are facing injustice to hear what their fights are so that we can work to address the issues that are keeping people hurt and suffering.

Mikhael

Solidarity begins with our recognitions: what do I have, what do we have, what do we carry and how privileged we are.

But it's not only about self-awareness. From those recognitions, we begin to see how our struggles intersect with others, what connects our struggles to other struggles.

Solidarity is when I choose let the suffering of others to change me, move me. And from that, we act together, standing for something different, learning new things and unlearning old ways that did not serve, and walking with others.

Are we prepared for the true cost of solidarity?



Anna Vogt

Pan y Paz (bread & peace) is an initiative of the Colombian Mennonite church. The goal is to engage local churches, people of good will and civil society in reflecting on the relationship between economic justice and peace, and between the basic well-being of people and the possibility of lasting peace. It bears witness to the world the voice of the church regarding critical issues of conflict and peace in the country.

This article is edited from a conversation between two long-time peace builders in Colombia who are living out solidarity in action and Peace Commission chair Andrés Pacheco Lozano.

Martha Inés Cortés

My name is Martha Inés Cortés. Ever since I heard the gospel, I have been a member of the Mennonite Brethren church in the city of Cali, Colombia. I have served as a pastor of the church and right now I form part of the leadership team at the Iglesia Misión Jesucristo Luz y Vida.

In addition, I am the director of the Foundation Edupaz: *Education for Peace and Conflict Resolution*. For 14 years I've been involved in working for peace within schools and local communities. I am a theologian and gerontologist. I studied theology at the Baptist Theological Seminary here in Cali, and I have also studied peacebuilding.

When I speak of peacebuilding, I do so through a number of lenses, including work to stem intimate partner violence, conflict

resolution in schools and the prevention of sexual abuse toward children and youth.

This inspired me to find out more, and this is how I ended up in new spaces of religious reflection about socio-political issues. It was fascinating and this became my doorway into the church.

Jenny Neme Neiva

I am Jenny Neme Neiva, from Bogotá.

I grew up in the Catholic church. I was baptized, took First Communion, was confirmed and all the rest. I was a teenager when I first encountered the Mennonite church of Colombia (IMCOL) and that was when I became a Mennonite.

It was through activism that I met up with the Mennonite church. A very strong social movement arose during the '90s as a result of the changes being made to the Colombian constitution. Along with that came an important cause, especially among the youth, to push for the recognition of the right to conscientious objection to compulsory military service. There was also a push to recognize religious freedom. Both these rights became enshrined in the new Colombian constitution.

At first, I found it strange that a church

would be advocating for these changes, and in the National Constituent Assembly to boot. Religious groups did not usually appear in these contexts wielding religious language.

Andrés Pacheco Lozano

Tell me about the solidarity you see in the contexts where you work, and what does it mean to speak about solidarity as an expression of faith?

Jenny

I think solidarity is part of life. I'm not sure whether we're born with it or whether it evolves over time. What I notice in almost every area of my life is that when there's a problem, I ask myself what I can do.

Currently, I occupy a number of roles, among them as special delegate of the World Council of Churches to the peace talks the government is holding with one of the armed groups. In that role, we must interact with the government delegation, with the armed group, with civilians, with international actors, among others.

Difficulties arise in that context. It's there that I ask myself in what ways I can help. However, the question and the answer isn't always easy.

For example, taking into account that the state is required to protect our rights, and when someone's rights are infringed and they are going through something difficult, it's tempting to step in and solve the problem. But it's not always possible to intervene directly and resolve the situation because the solution is often out of my hands. Rather, I should be thinking about how to set in motion the specific mechanisms available to find possible solutions.

We also interact with victims. Given that I am both a woman and I belong to a church, this creates a degree of trust that leads people to tell me what they need. Additionally, they trust that I will know how to find a workable solution.

Another role that I play is to participate in restorative justice programs with perpetrators of violence within the armed conflict. Within this context, it is of utmost importance to listen to and witness the needs of both victims and perpetrators. And it's important to work with them to design and generate ways to reduce harm, repair

harm, provide reparations for the damage they have caused, and ways of being that depart from the violence they have lived with.

Based on these roles, I believe that solidarity is an attitude and willingness to walk with women and men as they seek solutions together. In other words, solidarity does not mean giving hand outs.

Martha

For me, solidarity is closely aligned with empathy. It's about mutual fellowship and collaboration in the moment. We are connected through action: how we respond to the realities we must face that require an immediate response.

For example, a woman suffering intimate partner violence experiences hunger and must feed her children who are with her. She doesn't know what to do. In such a situation, we must ask: *what are we going to do and how can we act with solidarity?*

Empathy is key in moments like this. At the same time, it's important to channel her toward the appropriate legal processes that support her as a woman and a mother.

So, it's not just empathy and meeting her immediate physical needs such as hunger, nor is it just denouncing to the authorities what has taken place. It's also accompanying her and encouraging her to recognize that she can move forward without her identity being only that of an abused woman. Solidarity is about orienting and accompanying her while meeting her immediate basic needs. It's supporting her with her ideas and alternatives to get ahead, including financially.

So, solidarity means supporting the community, while teaching them about their rights and how to protect them. It allows me to unite with another person and collaborate.

Jenny

A word that comes to mind when I think about solidarity is *mercy*.

I think that different actors have different interests and different political, economic and ego motivations when it comes to solidarity. However, for people of faith, our solidarity is based on mercy.

Mercy is what moves me to solidarity because what happens to other women and men hurts me. It calls me to put myself

It is of utmost importance to listen to and witness the needs of both victims and perpetrators. And it's important to work with them to design and generate ways to reduce harm, repair harm, provide reparations for the damage they have caused, and ways of being that depart from the violence they have lived with.

in another's shoes and help with their catharsis, as well as considering possible solutions.

Andrés

If I'm understanding correctly, solidarity is more than empathy. Instead, it means searching for and providing tools that allow people to change or even transform their realities.

That's interesting because sometimes we think of solidarity as an event or an isolated act that responds to a specific and immediate situation. And what I'm hearing, rather, is that it is a process of walking with people; it takes time and commitment, and means building trust.

Martha

I think that what motivates our practice of solidarity is what's contained in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5–6). The text lets me understand my identity in Christ, where I have come from, and where I am going and this is what allows me to serve.

My faith identity is what has urged me to serve. And this is a model that other people can see and know that it's not just a case of religiosity; it's a lifestyle.

Andrés

So, is there something special or distinct about solidarity when approached through an Anabaptist lens?

Martha

In moments of trouble, I think that there are many organizations and spaces that are willing to accompany people. However, the big difference is that while many organizations will leave after a time, as Anabaptists, we stay. The Anabaptist world remains to walk the extra mile.

For us Jesus followers, it's not possible to simply leave or abandon people; we must follow the call to keep walking with people.

Jenny

I think it's a little risky to say that there is an element of solidarity that is distinctly Anabaptist. Although, I think our commitment to nonviolence could be a distinguishing characteristic.

It could happen that initially you help in a specific situation without knowing what the future consequences will be. For example, trying to help in a situation where a family is asking for support to rebuild their house that they lost in a flood, well, OK. But perhaps the house originally stood too close to the floodplain and rebuilding it there risks it being washed away again in the next flood.

This is a simplistic example. But the point is, there are so many risks in contexts where there are oh-so-many violent situations, as Martha has already mentioned: intimate partner violence, socio-political violence, armed conflict. These contexts demand nonviolence.

In other words, how can I live in solidarity without causing more harm?

Andrés

That is a good question. Sometimes solidarity seems like something unilateral in which I do something for others in a specific situation without counting the cost of the repercussions. So, we could have good intentions, but our expressions of solidarity may cause other types of harm.

Considering your accompaniment of Anabaptist and Mennonite communities in Colombia, what stands out for you in the solidarity you practice in the Colombian context?

Martha

There is a spirit of wanting to help each other, of wanting to be present. Colombian culture and what we have lived through makes us tough, and we look for ways to help and to cope; we help each other get ahead.



Under the theme “The Courage to Love,” Justapaz and the Colombian Mennonite church celebrated 500 years of Anabaptism in September 2025, highlighting conscientious objection and support for communities in Colombia. Standing before a large map of Colombia, attendees offered prayers for each region and lit candles that illuminated the national geography.

Jenny

It's difficult. I think of the violence in our country and the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few. Really, people have to think of each other. I think that acts of solidarity are forged within a context of limitations, violence and precarity. To some degree, faith (or various faiths) promote this sense of solidarity.

Within the scope of building peace, the government, embassies and other international actors are beginning to acknowledge local efforts to build peace, and the important work the communities do themselves.

This speaks to me. Although, this isn't something new for me because so many of us have had the opportunity to walk

with communities in their journeys toward peace. For a long time, we have insisted that building peace must come from our local communities based on their social reality. This is where the churches' solidarity and our communities of faith shine.

Andrés

What is the connection between solidarity and activism?

Martha

For me, activism can lead us to solidarity, so they are linked.

I think of the beginnings of Edupaz during the '90s at a time of great violence. At the time, it was clear that something had to be done about the violence that we lived under, even in the schools. It was a concrete action, and even though Edupaz's work began in schools, soon it travelled beyond the school walls so that we joined the universities in the streets.

We marched, we advocated and we talked about peace in many places in search of bonds of solidarity. This helped us understand we must strengthen our constituencies. And we started to reflect on how we could organize ourselves as a collective and a community of faith.

This reflection was born of activism.

At the same time, I also think that activism is one way we make solidarity concrete.

Jenny

I think the expression of solidarity has to go further than good intentions. Solidarity has to materialize in something. Perhaps activism is what helps us to materialize our good intentions. We have learned that activism isn't only about disjointed responses and simple actions.

Activism is becoming more and more exacting because it invites us to go beyond our solidarity and put ourselves in the shoes of others so that together we can envision various paths to transformation and different types of transformation. Examples of new criteria for activism include “do no harm” and “embracing difference” and these exemplify the costs inherent in solidarity.

It seems to me that our task requires more thought. In this, our Anabaptist tradition serves us well because our faith also calls us to deep theological and contextual reflection. For this reason, we cannot fall into

Supplied

the trap of acting out our good intentions in ways that end up harming others.

We need more inputs, including our Anabaptist faith, so that our reflections and actions may be potent. I believe these inputs make the connection between activism and solidarity more robust.

Another thing I wonder is whether solidarity is an individual or collective vision. And I ask myself how to live out nonviolence, especially when our response includes indignation due to injustices that produce anger and rage.

Some people may question us: “Didn’t you say you are non-violent?”, as if we are not entitled to feel indignation and discomfort at the things that are wrong and we don’t agree with. Or to start actions and processes in response.

For example, I’m thinking about how solidarity means looking after the people who are working on issues of intimate partner violence, which are so complicated. There’s so much to do, but I know that the burden of this work creates emotional, physical and economic fatigue, in addition to the safety risks. This requires a much firmer stance from the churches.

We have so much to give from our theological perspective and our understanding of the gospel. From what our Lord inspires in us.

Andrés

In the world in which we live, it seems that activism is often stigmatized. What do you think about activism being viewed negatively or with a certain reticence?

Jenny

I think that not everything should be considered activism. There are things that people come up with that perhaps have no effect even though they insist that they are transforming the world with what they are doing. That even happens within our Mennonite family.

For example, here in Colombia, deep tensions have arisen around situations that accompany the arrival of Mennonite colonists in the last few years. And, well, they have made offerings and made work available to Colombians living in the terrain they have bought, but there are also open court cases against them for violating the rights of Indigenous communities. That is juxtaposed against the long history of the

Colombian Mennonite church working to defend human rights and build peace.

Now we find Mennonite communities involved not only in land dispossession, but also environmental damage. I feel that a contextualized theological reflection is necessary. I would think that if we share an Anabaptist vision, where we make room for discernment in community, this should help us see whether actions are producing good or evil. We need to discern with honesty, facing these tensions head-on since they are a constant now.

Martha

Through the media and social networks, we now have access to information that was hidden from us earlier. Now, it’s possible to access information within minutes, even live as it happens. So, when our youth have lost their way or instead of embodying their history, they embody what these sources of information tell them daily, it’s easy to lose their grounding. Therefore, the topics of identity and what motivates and guides us become paramount. Especially in the face of activism.

With respect to the Mennonite world, sometimes certain forms of violence are evident in how people lead. Within our own family of faith, we have failed to acknowledge violent episodes, as Jenny has shared, and we have failed to attend to the people and victims within our own communion.

From my perspective, often solidarity sounds great when we are looking outwards. The real challenge is to recognize the implications of solidarity within our family, with those who have been victimized.

Andrés

Jenny and Martha, thank you so much for this dialogue; for your reflections, lessons learned and testimonies of solidarity. Thank you as well for drawing our attention to the dilemmas and conflicts that exist within our own Mennonite family. And for exhorting us to assume the responsibility we have toward the victims and people who have suffered within our own family of faith. It is there that our commitment to walk in solidarity – following Jesus’ example, as you have reminded us – must be made a reality too.

Forgiveness and a safe space

As told to the Courier editor by the chair of Peace and Social Justice Committee in Zimbabwe.

Rev. Dr. Nosten Ncube

I am passionate about pastoral ministry, peacebuilding and leadership development. I currently serve as an Overseer within the Brethren In Christ Church (BICC) in Zimbabwe, in Nono District, Matabeleland North. I am married to Thobekile Ncube, who serves as the women’s program director and an adjunct lecturer at the Theological College of Zimbabwe. We have been blessed with two sons, Nathan and Neville.

After sensing my call, I trained at our local Bible school called Ekuphileni Bible Institute (1993–1995). I became a voluntary evangelist and then a full-time pastor (1997–2014) at Maphisa and Nkulumane congregations.

When the church asked me to serve as chairperson of the Peace and Social Justice Committee, I discovered that I had some limitations in my peacebuilding skills. I then applied to Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Virginia, USA, and trained there (2015–2017). After I returned to Zimbabwe, I began conducting workshops and seminars on peacebuilding and conflict transformation.

After learning about the Peace Clubs from friends in Kenya, Zambia and Tanzania, we began dialoguing about peacebuilding in our church schools in 2017, and we introduced the Peace Clubs in 2023/2024. They are now established in six BICC high schools and in five primary schools.

The BICC in Zimbabwe is grateful for the financial support received from our partner, the Mennonite Peace Centre (Mennonitische Friedenszentrum) in Berlin, Germany.

Peace Club leadership

In our BICC schools, the Peace Club Committee is composed of the mission pastor, a patron (male teacher), and

a matron (female teacher), together with elected students. The involvement of mission pastors connects the Peace Club directly to the church.

Within the Peace Clubs, the students choose a president, vice president and other committee members who are supervised by the matron, patron and the pastor. The Peace Clubs have enjoyed cordial relationships with schools' administrations.

The main task of Peace and Social Justice is to train the Peace Clubbers through workshops so that they lead peace activities weekly.

noise making or sleeping during church services are minimized."

Solidarity

Jesus taught and showed mercy, compassion and solidarity to his followers. He commanded his followers to be merciful and to love their neighbours (Luke 6:36 and Luke 10).

We see that Jesus healed the sick, fed those in need and raised the dead. Jesus taught about repentance, helping people recognize their sinfulness and leading them

newsletter read by parents and other stakeholders.

Furthermore, the Peace Clubbers used their money to buy and print some T-shirts with messages about teaching peacebuilding and an anti-drugs and substance abuse message.

Practising forgiveness

I have realized that the most important thing is to give these young people a safe space to share about their conflicts, fears, traumas and confessions. And we have taught the young people to apologize when they have wronged other people.

The book of Philemon has been one of the tools used to teach about principles of forgiveness, dialogue and reconciliation. Paul models these principles through his handling of the relationship between Philemon and Onesimus.

Beyond the club

Currently, Peace Clubs are in our schools, but we also find conflicts within the church. We have done some workshops at local congregations, districts and even at the conference level to help people understand the principles of peacebuilding and conflict transformation.

We have identified and trained a pool of peace practitioners who have been instrumental in equipping both the church and the community. They have been assigned to facilitate sessions and raise awareness in church fellowships – including men's, women's and youth groups – during their camps and conferences.

In addition, we are reaching out to communities through workshops, and we have also been invited to help resolve conflicts at the community level. I also co-authored a peace manual that is currently being used by the BICC in Zimbabwe.

Anabaptists value peacebuilding! They are a peace community.

Speaking from my context, I think it is essential to identify the prevailing challenges and key people and then design a curriculum or a peace manual to address them. Identifying the needs will help the church to scratch where it itches. Networking and collaboration will help the church to collectively challenge structural violence and marginalization. Practical ways like music, sports, dramas/plays, and art have also been proven to be helpful.



Supplied

Peace Club Committee and facilitators at Wanezi Mission School, Zimbabwe.

Transformation among the students

We received reports from some of our schools that the senior students were bullying the juniors, and they were abusing drugs and alcohol. So the Peace Clubs were introduced to address the rising conflicts, violence and social challenges.

Peace Clubs aim to transform young people's mindset and help them make informed decisions to ensure a bright future. Role plays, dialogues, debates, poems and songs are among the tools used to teach peacebuilding and foster resilience, reconciliation, forgiveness and healing.

After training, there some transformation among the students.

Students now come to the tables to discuss whenever they have some misunderstandings. Issues of destroying school property and fights, as well as drug abuse, have been minimized through Peace Clubs' activities.

One pastor noted that the Peace Clubbers' "behaviour at church has changed as they listen and participate in church services, including giving. Behaviours like

to confess their sins. He put on principles of peacebuilding and conflict transformation. We are trying to influence Peace Clubbers to follow that example.

For example, the high school students at Mtshabezi bought 100 exercise books, 150 pens and 10 pairs of shoes to show solidarity to vulnerable primary school students who are needy.

Peace Clubbers take leadership

The commitment and dedication of Peace Clubbers are beyond our expectations and imagination. In some instances, they have encouraged each other to intentionally speak to their classmates about leading a life of peace.

One high school received negative publicity at some point. It was accused of being a haven for drug and substance abuse. The Peace Clubbers sprang into action to refute the allegations.

The Peace Club president used his camera to record the students' positive activities and sent the pictures to the



Mennonite World Conference

A Community of Anabaptist related Churches

Mennonite World Conference

Annual report: 2025

"Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. ...if we love one another, God abides in us, and his love is perfected in us." — 1 John 4:11, 12b

The Courage to Love

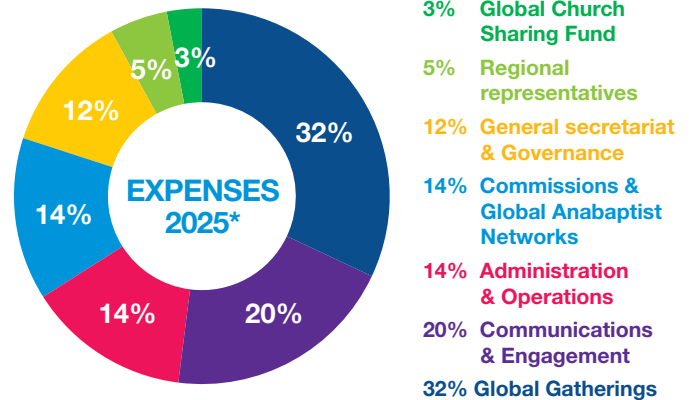
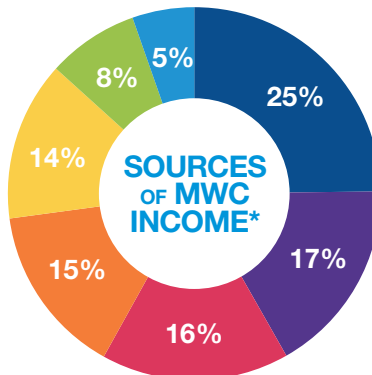
MWC's theme for the 2025 commemorative year was *The Courage to Love*. We love because God loved us first. And, we all know that love is at its best when it is lived out. God calls us to love courageously in a world full of challenges. As we work together in the worldwide Anabaptist family of faith gathered in MWC, we are a blessing for the world.

¡Gracias! Merci ! Thank you! Your courageous love for and Spirit-led engagement with the worldwide Anabaptist family of faith in partnership with MWC is a critical component of a faithful Anabaptist witness to Jesus' call toward abundant life for all of God's children.

Thank you for your investments in God's work in the world across MWC's 110 national member churches in 61 countries. Together, we continue *following Jesus, living out unity, and building peace*. May God continue to grant us wisdom and courage for the living of these days.

TOTAL REVENUES **1 858 531**

Congregations 5%
Businesses 8%
Other 14%
Agencies 15%
Member Churches 16%
Foundations 17%
Individuals 25%



*All amounts in US\$

Awakening

Rebecca Adongo Osiro was the first woman ordained by Kenya Mennonite Church in 2008. Five years earlier, Pastor Rebecca participated in her first MWC global Assembly in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. She describes that first Assembly experience in Zimbabwe as an *awakening*.

She quickly found opportunities to serve with MWC. Pastor Rebecca was a member of the drafting team for MWC's Shared Convictions. She participated in the Mennonite delegation of the trilateral dialogues with Lutherans and Catholics. The General Council elected her as vice-president of MWC from 2018-2021.

At the centennial celebration this year, Pastor Rebecca contrasted her experience in MWC with church contexts "where women are not seen". In MWC, Pastor Rebecca's gifts were recognized and she was given opportunities to contribute to faithful Anabaptist witness in many challenging contexts.

Since Pastor Rebecca's awakening at the Bulawayo Assembly in 2003, she has pioneered a path and inspired sisters-and-brothers around the world with her wisdom and courage.

Join us

Your gift can transform lives. Make an impact today! In a divided world, your support helps build a global church rooted in God's peace and reconciliation.

Invest in MWC's mission:

- Empower leaders to grow and serve like Jesus.
- Strengthen congregations to live out unity.
- Foster global communion that builds peace across cultures.

Help lay the foundation for a future filled with love, unity and hope.

Give - Serve - Walk Together Always.

Help the worldwide Anabaptist family thrive by making a gift to MWC today!

Scan the QR code, donate now at mwc-cmm.org/donate, or send your contribution to

Mennonite World Conference
50 Kent Ave, Suite 206
Kitchener, ON N2G 3R1
CANADA

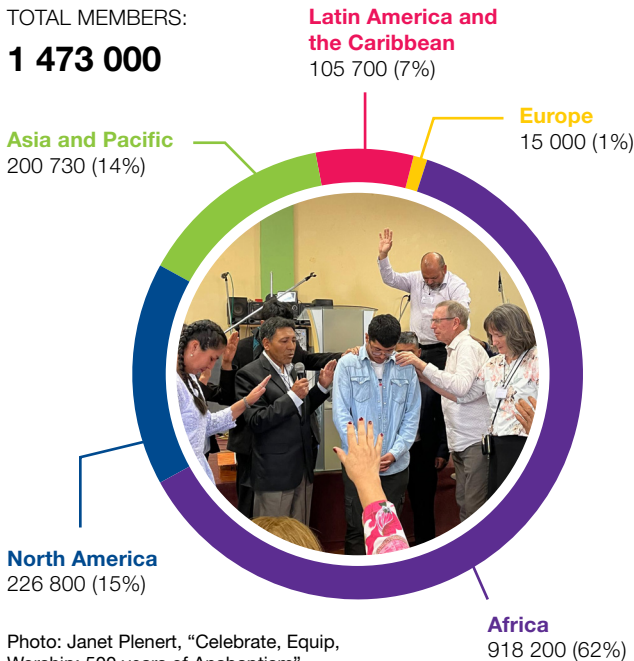
Mennonite World Conference
P.O. Box 5364
Lancaster, PA 17606-5364
USA



Baptized members of Mennonite World Conference member churches

TOTAL MEMBERS:

1 473 000



Living Stones

Around the world in 2025, members of the worldwide Anabaptist family gathered to commemorate how God has built us into a spiritual house over five centuries.

One of the first of those gatherings to reflect on these Anabaptist living stones took place in Cuzco, Peru in January. This gathering of Anabaptists from across Latin America was hosted by MWC member church Iglesia Evangelica Menonita del Peru under the theme "Celebrate, Equip, Worship: 500 years of Anabaptism."

The commemorative encounter gathered together participants from 16 countries across the Americas. They gained a deeper understanding of Anabaptism and also a perspective on its diversity even within one region with largely the same language.

"Who do you say that I am?" Featured speaker Alix Lozano, from Colombia and a founder of the Movement of Anabaptist Women doing Theology from Latin America (MTAL), spoke on Jesus' question for his disciples. This invites every community to understand Jesus in light of their own experiences and contexts.

The Jubilee Account of MWC's Global Church Sharing Fund provided financial support for this important space of encounter and learning.



MWC representatives at the 500th anniversary event in Peru (l-r): Francis Pérez de León (Executive Committee), Juliana Morillo (Creation Care Working Group), César García (general secretary), Sandra Báez (executive assistant), Cynthia Dück (former regional representative, Latin America – Southern Cone), Andrew Suderman (Peace Commission secretary), Janet Plenert (director of communion building), Freddy Barrón (regional representative, Latin America – Southern Cone), Pablo Stucky (regional representative, Latin America – Andean Region).



RG Photography

2025–2028 members of the YABs Committee: (back, l-r) Isaac Nii Torgbor Gborbitey (Ghana, YABs coordinator), Raphaël Burkhalter (Switzerland), Ebenezer Mondey (Philippines, manager of YABs); (front) Blessing Joy Turqueza (Philippines), Liam Kachkar (Canada), Valentina Kunze (Uruguay, chair).

Empowered by Love

MWC's fifth Global Youth Summit (GYS) took place in Germany from 30 May–01 June 2025. Under the theme *Empowered by Love*, 195 Anabaptist young adults from around the world participated in worship, discussion groups and workshops in different languages. Since the first GYS in 2003, these dynamic gatherings for youths aged 18+ create spaces for young adults from around the world to share experiences.

"The highlight of GYS was digging deeper into God's love with the global family," said Sunil Kadmaset, a GYS participant from the Brethren in Christ Church in Odisha, India.

Young adult leaders from among GYS participants are identified to form a Young Anabaptists (YABs) Committee. This leadership group is made up of representatives from MWC's five continental regions.

A new YABs Committee has come together since the 2025 GYS and includes three new members from Asia (Philippines), Europe (Switzerland), and North America (Canada). They join continuing members from Latin America (Uruguay) and Africa (Ghana). The YABs Committee represents Anabaptist young adults to MWC's governance through the Executive Committee and General Council.



César García, general secretary of MWC washes the feet of Rev. Dr. Setri Nyomi, interim general secretary of World Communion of Reformed Churches.

Dale Gehman

Remembering and Renewal

2025 was a year of remembering. We celebrated MWC's centennial in Germany. We commemorated the 500th anniversary of the birth of Anabaptism in Switzerland.

We are inspired by the faithful witness of our Anabaptist forebears across history.

Likewise, we are inspired by the faithful witness of our Anabaptist sisters and brothers across the globe today. God's love guides us and directs our ways across time and space.

In God's constant renewing of the church, we are called to love courageously and serve a hurting world. We seek God's guidance for our faithful witness now and for generations to come.

May God make it so!

Assembly news

Tanzanian Mennonites invite the world to Arusha

MWC Assembly stays in Eastern Africa



Liesa Unger

Tanzanian church leaders (l-r): KMT Presiding Bishop Nelson Makori Kisare and KMK(T) General Secretary John M. Sean.



Liesa Unger

Choirs, like this one in Arusha, are part of Sunday morning services in KMT congregations,.

"Together building the body of Christ and strengthening global fellowship [is the vision for hosting the global Anabaptist church]", says Bishop Nelson Kisare, Kanisa la Mennonite Tanzania.

The Executive Committee of Mennonite World Conference accepted the invitation from the member churches of Tanzania to host the global Assembly 18 in 2028. The five-day gathering of Anabaptists from around the world will take place in the first two weeks of June. The theme will be "Christ unites us."

There are more than 46 000 Mennonites in Tanzania in two MWC member churches: Kanisa la Mennonite Tanzania (KMT) and Kanisa La Mennonite La Kiinjili Tanzania (Evangelical Mennonite church of Tanzania).

"We expect approximately 1 500–2 000 participants from outside of the continent, 500–1 000 from other countries within Africa," says Liesa Unger, manager of international events. "Tanzanian church leaders expect more than 2 500 local participants to join the entire Assembly and another 200 for the closing mass worship service on Saturday."

KMT is the oldest national Mennonite church in East Africa, established in the 1930s. Waves of revival moved through Tanzania from the 1940s to 1960s. Tanzania evangelists from Mennonite churches carried the gospel into Kenya, establishing the Mennonite church there.

In 1971, the national church's name was changed from English to Swahili, reflecting the African leadership of the church which had begun with the appointment of pastors Ezekiel Muganda and Andrea Mabeba in 1950 and the appointment of Bishop Zedekiah Kisare in 1964. Currently, Emmanuel Hagai serves as general secretary and Nelson Kisare serves as presiding bishop.

KMKT was formed in 1988 as an outgrowth of KMT. In 2005, they were recognized as a church by their national government. Their mission is focused on sharing the gospel, engaging youth in

following Jesus and participating in church activities and in serving the community through voluntary blood donation and helping the poor. Currently, John Sean serves as general secretary and Lameck Manji as presiding bishop.

Mennonites in Tanzania run a number of schools from primary to post-secondary and several hospitals or health centres.

"Our Africa caucus supports this invitation for our worldwide Anabaptist family to come to Tanzania," says Samson Omondi, Executive Committee representative for Africa and bishop in the Kenya Mennonite Church.

"We hope to have Assembly Scattered options not only in Tanzania, but also other parts of East Africa," says Nelson Martínez, logistics coordinator. (Assembly Scattered are tours before and after Assembly Gathered that allow smaller groups to experience the region and worship with local congregations.)

The new venue for Assembly had to be selected with only a two-year lead time before the event after intended host, MKC in Ethiopia withdrew the invitation.

"For years, it has been our dream to hold Assembly 18 in Africa. This draws to a close our decade of Renewal, marking 500 years of Anabaptism with a celebration on the continent where Anabaptism is growing the fastest," says César García, MWC general secretary. "We look forward to this opportunity to build relationships and deepen our understanding of brothers and sisters in Tanzania as we participate in mutual gift sharing through this mass gathering."

"Despite some anticipated challenges, we think that holding the Assembly in Arusha will be a unique and positive experience. The fact that it is happening in a relatively small place will help us to come closer together. The engagement of the churches will bring joy and many helping hands to the Assembly," says Liesa Unger.

Executive Committee news

Guided by the Spirit

Executive Committee approves Assembly date, creation care group and new ways of working



Ebenezer Mondez

Mennonite World Conference has a tradition to plant tree on the grounds of a Mennonite institution when the Executive Committee meets: “in honour of God’s creation and the church universal.” Along with (r-l) Integrated Mennonite Conference President Zaldy Magansay and Bishop Moderator Eladio Mondez, the MWC Officers (Siaka Traoré, Sunoko Lin, César García, Henk Stenvers, Lisa Carr-Pries) planted a second kamias tree (*averrhoa bilimbi*) in the Philippines at Lansay Mennonite Bible Church. (In 2008, then-president Nancy Heisey and then-president-elect Danisa Ndlovu planted a tree at Lumban Mennonite Bible Church.) Photo: Ebenezer Mondez.

“The resurrection is not just an event; the resurrection is God’s power today,” said Sunoko Lin (USA/Indonesia), Mennonite World Conference treasurer, as part of morning prayers at the annual MWC Executive Committee (EC) meeting from 16-19 March 2026 in Lumban, Laguna, Philippines.

The meetings were surrounded by prayer. Each morning, MWC Officers led prayers focussed around the MWC tagline, “following Jesus, living out unity, building peace.” Each evening, a member of the staff leadership team ended the day with prayers.

The Executive Committee is made up of 10 representatives appointed by the MWC General Council (two from each continental region) and the five officers. Siaka Traoré (Burkina Faso) attended for the first time as the fifth Officer; his title was updated to Continental Adviser.

This was the first in-person meeting of the new EC after appointments were approved by the General Council in 2025.

The EC and Officers were accompanied by the staff leadership team, some senior staff and the YABs (Young AnaBaptists) Committee who held their own meetings, but joined together for times of prayer and learning.

John D. Roth (USA) led resourcing sessions from a historical perspective. He examined: “where is the church?” and “where do we experience communion in the Anabaptist tradition?”

Next Assembly approved

The EC gratefully approved by consensus the invitation to host the next Assembly in Tanzania in the first two weeks of June 2028.

“Our Africa caucus supports this invitation for our worldwide Anabaptist family to come to Tanzania,” says Samson Omondi (Kenya), EC representative for Africa.

Creation care affirmed

There was strong affirmation for continued work on creation care in the global church. The EC approved by consensus a proposal for the Creation Care Task Force to become a permanent part of the MWC structure under the name Creation Care Working Group. The Task Force had been created to explore what creation care means for MWC; the Working Group will continue to promote faithful creation stewardship in MWC’s operations and among its members. The Creation Care Working Group (CCWG) will work alongside and meet with the four Commissions.

In the spirit of reducing the high environmental cost of flying, CCWG will only meet in person during General Council and Assembly years.

New meeting cycle created

The EC approved a new cycle for MWC meetings. “Over the last number of years, MWC meetings have become unmanageable, as more members and

groups are added to MWC,” said Liesa Unger (Germany), manager of international events. Meeting space is difficult to secure. People with multiple roles end up double booked for meetings.

In light of these challenges, the EC approved a new cyclical plan that has the General Council and Networks (GAEN, GAPN, GASN, GMF) meeting in alternating years, beginning after the 2028 Assembly. The Commissions will meet each time.

Within this new plan, either General Council or Network meetings will occur approximately every 18 months.

The EC also approved updates to the Networks’ Terms of Reference and Networks’ membership fees documents.

Young adults plan and discern

The YABs Committee met for the first time in person with the new representatives (Asia, Europe, North America) appointed after Global Youth Summit (GYS) in 2025. In their report to the EC, they shared a road map for the years ahead to continue building the YABs network.

The YABs Committee continued to brainstorm their long-term goals, including ways to integrate YABs delegates with the General Council delegates in 2028.

“We want to honour the wisdom of the General Council and take time to test out changes to come up with a better proposal than the one that did not pass in 2025,” said Valentina Kunze (Uruguay), YABs chair and Latin America representative.

The Committee and YABs manager are now also supported by the new role of YABs Coordinator, filled by Isaac Nii Torgbor Gborbitye (Ghana), who is also the YABs Africa representative.

The EC were encouraged by the work of the YABs Committee. “You worked hard and you are an inspiration to us,” said Sipra Biswas (India), Asia representative on the EC.

Finally, the Executive Committee considered and approved the 2026 budget, 2025 financial reports and projections for 2027 and 2028.

“This important discernment meeting is also a space where the guidance of the Holy Spirit transforms us. It’s about a journey we make in communion with one another and with Christ himself,” says César García (Canada/Colombia), general secretary.

Commission news

A time for collective discernment

"I love seeing how the agenda for Commissions' meeting are set by member churches. As someone new to this role, it's really interesting to see this bottom-up approach, requiring listening. The essence of our meeting was collective discernment of important issues as raised at the General Council, and discerning how to better resource our global church," says Nelson Okanya, director of Commissions.

All four MWC Commissions met at Mennorode, Elspeet, Netherlands, 12–14 May 2026 prior to CEMERK.* In the three-day meeting, they reviewed their work in light of the MWC Strategy approved in 2025, and discussed priorities for the next three years.

Deacons

"We engaged in many significant conversations, including relationship building, deepening friendships and reimagining the future role of the Deacons Commission as one of the 'four chambers of the heart.' We reflected on how DC can walk alongside members of MWC churches in times of suffering and crisis as an expression of our solidarity," says Tigist Tesfaye, Deacons Commission secretary.

The bimonthly Online Prayer Hour (OPH) continues to be well attended with an average of more than 60 participants.

On solidarity trips, a small delegation of Deacons and specialists visit a member church in a country undergoing hardship. Three trips are currently in the planning stage.

The Deacons continue to refine the [Global Church Sharing Fund](#) to best meet the needs of MWC member churches.

A major area of discussion centered on strengthening pastoral care resources for churches. The Deacons Commission also acknowledged the increasing need for trauma-informed pastoral care and discussed developing practical tools and guidance for churches.

Faith & Life

Under a new chair, the Faith & Life Commission is taking on the challenge of how to study the Bible and interpret Jesus' teaching as one global communion when

multiple perspectives exist on issues that threaten to divide us.

"My hope and my prayer is that we learn to dialogue with respect and trust about a myriad of issues, and that we experience how much more important it is to build community together than to persuade everyone to believe the same," says Faith and Life Commission chair Tim Geddert.

Faith & Life also worked with Communications to create videos to highlight available resources on the MWC website and beyond.

"MWC has already produced many useful resources for church leaders. Watch for this series on social media in the coming months. We hope it will inspire you to discover tools that will help your faith and ministry," says Tim Geddert.



Elina Ciptadi

Commission meetings at Mennorode in Elspeet, Netherlands, in May 2026.

Peace

What does it mean to be a peace church in the world today? The Peace Commission plans to launch a 7-year journey to renew our understanding. This will begin in 2028 as the Renewal decade concludes, and run until 2036, the 500th anniversary of Menno Simons' transformation to Anabaptism.

Additionally, Peace Commission is representing Mennonite World Conference and participating in an ecumenical initiative "Blessed are the Peacemakers" that the Quakers started to commemorate the symbolic 2000-year anniversary of the Sermon on the Mount in 2030.

The Peace Commission has also received a request to work on a statement on freedom of religion which they are in the process of drafting. It also reviewed and edited the guidelines for political advocacy when it receives invitations from member churches for support in the event such advocacy is necessary.

Additionally, the Peace Commission is working on protocols for when MWC participates in solidarity visits to conflict zones.

"When our member churches request and invite actions of solidarity, we want to know how we can best support them and demonstrate our solidarity with them in their struggle. It also means being mindful of the risks that those who participate in such visits undergo and being wise in how we do this. Ultimately, it is important to demonstrate that our member churches are not alone in the journey towards a holistic peace that our world so desperately needs," says Andrew Suderman, Peace Commission secretary.

Mission

The Mission Commission is updating their resources on mission, which include stories, testimonies and articles.

Alongside the Mission and Service Networks, they are planning regular webinars to strengthen the connection between peace and mission in the global Anabaptist family.

"Under this plan, member churches can expect a Mission or Service Networks webinar every two months up from the current schedule of four webinars a year," says James Krabill, Mission Commission chair.

They also began planning for workshops and speakers at Assembly 18 in Tanzania.

"The MWC Commissions serve the worldwide church as it seeks to follow Jesus, live out unity, and build peace. Working closely together like the four chambers of the heart, the Commissions promote a holistic gospel and vision, giving guidance and proposing resources to MWC member churches and facilitates MWC-related networks working together on matters of common interest," Nelson Okanya says.

Online prayer hour

"Prayer is the backbone of the church. We need to practice it as a body of Christ regularly," says Tigist Tesfaye, secretary of the Deacons Commission.

Join us online for a live prayer hour with brothers and sisters from around the world.

"This boosts up our fellowship as a family of faith," says Tigist Tesfaye.

Visit mwc-cmm.org/oph/ to register for the next online prayer meeting.

Next events: 14:00 UTC

- Friday, 17 July 2026
- Friday, 18 September 2026
- Friday, 20 November 2026



Yonatan Singh

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@mwc-cmm.org

On our website: mwc-cmm.org/sharetheimpact

Facebook: @MennoniteWorldConference

Via Instagram: @mwcmm

News

A circle of partnership

Over the course of its 100-year history Mennonite World Conference has gone through many changes. As a living organization it continues to grow and change.

"Organizational structures need to be flexible and adapt to changes if they want to be effective in their mission," says César García, general secretary. "It has become clear that the staff structure we established in 2012 is no longer sufficient to ensure MWC fulfills its mission. As MWC grows, a new structure is necessary to ensure we remain healthy."

In 2026, the MWC team consists of 19 FTE staff positions, representing 29 people in 13 countries, and 15 staff-level volunteers in 15 countries.

These global servants are dedicated to supporting MWC in its calling to be a communion (Koinonia) of Anabaptist-related churches linked to one another in a worldwide community of faith for fellowship, worship, service and witness. MWC is facilitating relationships between Anabaptist churches in deeper ways, supporting church leaders through General Council meetings, the work of the Commissions and resources for all our churches.

At the end of 2025, MWC staff implemented a new staff organizational structure. The senior staff team designed it over the past 1.5 years with support from Credence & Co., an organizational health and change management consulting company with Mennonite faith roots.

The General Secretary continues to lead the entire MWC team, which is now structured into four departments:

Operations, Communications & Engagement, Commissions and Communion Building.

Each department is led by a director, who joins the general secretary to form the staff leadership team. They are supported by managers and secretaries in the departments, who form the senior team.

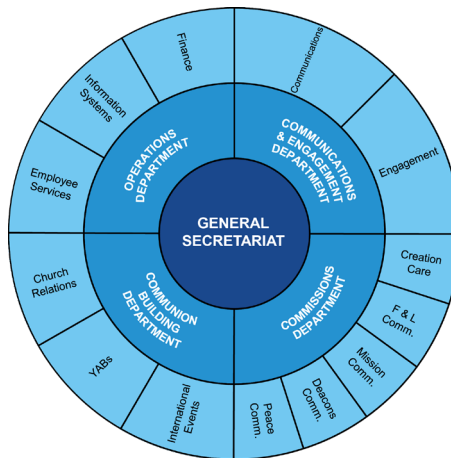
The different departments manage:

- **Operations** department: finances, administration and employee services.
- **Communications & Engagement** department: MWC's public communications and fundraising efforts.
- **Commissions** department: the work of the four Commissions, Global Anabaptist Networks and the Creation Care Task Force.
- **Communion Building** department: events, church relations (including

regional representatives) and the YABs network.

Together, the four departments carry out all aspects of MWC's vision and mission, from the logistics and programs to the ethos and relationships that are at the heart of the organization.

"Collaboration among departments is essential for the body to function efficiently and faithfully. Each area contributes unique strengths and perspectives, and when they



MWC's new staff organizational structure

work together in mutual respect and shared purpose, the whole organization thrives," says Jeanette Bissoon, director of Operations.

"Rather than a top-down structure, MWC operates as a circle of partnership; where communication, trust and shared discernment guide our common work in service to the global Anabaptist family," says Janet Plenert, director of Communion Building.

40 years of solidarity



www.mwc-cmm.org

courrier . correo
courier

Conférence Mennonite Mondiale • Mennonite World Conference • Congregação Mennonita do Brasil



This year marks the 40th anniversary of Courier as a messenger to and from the diverse Anabaptist family around the world.

We've highlighted a few excerpts from articles from previous years that touch on the subject of solidarity.

Menno Simons makes sense in Latin America

1986: Vol. 1, no. 4
by Jose Perez

We must bind our Christian life more and more every day with the poor, with the one who suffers, with the persecuted. We have to struggle for a Christian perspective that looks out more for the interests of those around us who suffer.

... we must step forward as leaders to help bring about a Christian practice that will reflect faithfully this sympathy with the people who suffer.

What kind of Christianity do Asian people need today?

1986: Vol. 1, no. 4
by Hiroshi Yanada

Jesus Christ invited people to repentance and faith in him, but he never treated people merely as an object of his "mission." ... People are the object of the love of God, so that Jesus came "not to be served but to serve, and to give his own life as ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). Jesus Christ was

not an expansionist. Instead of a forcible expansion of his kingdom, he loved and served people, and met the basic needs of mankind.

Russians hoped to repay aid; early MWC ideas

1986: Vol. 1, no. 2

Our misery and your noble spirit, our want and your kindness has again bound the old ties more tightly and firmly. But the relationships between us and you of which goes back to the beginning of our community of faith should become even more sincere and noble. We therefore greet with special joy the general celebration of the day that marked the beginning of our brotherhood.

MWC: Which directions for the future?

1986: Vol. 1, no. 3
by Robert Kreider

We have learned that we have higher-than-average ability as a people to listen to and to ponder painfully disturbing words laid on our consciences by our prophets. We can receive respectfully viewpoints from persons we consider "crazy" because they are brothers and sisters.

In our Mennonite World Conference gatherings we must find more ways in which everyone has opportunity to hear and to tell across cultural boundaries his or her faith story. We shall go away from

such conferences saying to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us" as we ate together and shared our faith together.

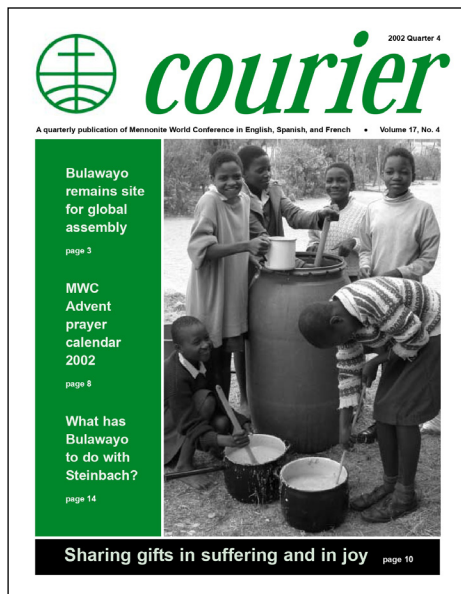
The church has always been renewed from the left and the right: the left-the young intellectuals who choose to return to be with their people; the right-those reared in rigid, traditional communities who find liberation in moving toward the center of the church stream.

International Summer Course in the Netherlands

1998: Vol. 13, no. 2
by Ed van Straten,
MWC regional editor for Europe

We commit ourselves to the ministry of reconciliation. We seek reconciliation between God and humanity by keeping close relationships with God and sharing them with others. We seek reconciliation among human beings by practicing truthfulness in our lives inside and outside the body of Christ.

We seek reconciliation between "vision" and "reality" by being grounded in Scripture, by drawing the best things from our Anabaptist/Mennonite heritage and other sources and traditions, and through the enabling of the Holy Spirit. So may God help us in this endeavour, Amen.



Come with eyes of faith

2002: Vol. 17, no. 4

by Larry Miller

[Regarding listening to leaders in Zimbabwe to proceed with the 2003 Assembly despite hyperinflation and hardships.]

Goodwill Shana says: "I'd rather have peace and justice than food. If no one comes to Zimbabwe, that changes nothing. You just leave us alone to starve. Even if you send relief, we still do not have the solidarity we need. If anyone objects to your coming to Zimbabwe, I would love to talk with him or her."

The African churches deserve to see our eyes and hear our voices of support and solidarity, both in their place during Africa 2003 and in our places before and afterwards.

What MWC churches say about the future

2004: Vol. 19, no. 2

Relationships (solidarity) are perceived as essential for effective witness and development (growth, survival) of the Anabaptist Christian community at local and international levels.



Humility and unity will carry us to victory

2008: Vol. 23, no. 4

by Elfriede Verón

In Anabaptist history, unity and solidarity have been important pillars which have helped the church to survive in very difficult and adverse circumstances....

Because humility is an important ingredient of unity, we can demonstrate both by respecting and sincerely recognizing other people's worth, no matter their different ways of doing things. By doing so we break barriers of prejudice, envy, jealousy and rivalry.

To pray is to say yes to God

2002: Vol. 17, no. 3

by Mario Higueros

Lord, we beg you to make us aware of the pain of others. Help us to pray from the anguish of the attacked, the oppressed, and the abused who claim liberation. Help us to pray from the tears of the dispossessed, flowing like rivers that end in your maternal bosom to be dried in your love and tenderness.

The Officers' Column

Solidarity: What Will We Build Together?

But the steadfast love of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear him, and his righteousness to children's children to those who keep his covenant and remember to do his commandments.

Psalm 103:17-18 (ESV)

Keeping God's covenant and doing God's commandments means firstly loving God with all your heart and secondly love the other like yourself (Matthew 22: 37-40).

In reaching out to the ones in need – with support, a comforter, a hygiene kit or even only an email or app message saying, "We pray for you" or "God be with you" – we show that love.

In forming a circle of believers around a synagogue or mosque that has been attacked; in using whistles to warn people in a neighbourhood to watch out for unlawful arrest; in peacefully protesting war and discrimination; in opening doors of our churches for everyone – we show solidarity with those who are oppressed.

In listening instead of judging and excluding; in accepting that people are different in many ways; in letting go of prejudice and being open to other cultures – we can show how every part is equally important to the body.

A hand on a shoulder, a hug, a piece of friendly advice, serving instead of expect to be served, a visit, washing each other's feet or even the simple question, "How are you?" – there are so many ways to say: "You are not alone!"

If we want to be true followers of Christ, we have to follow his prayer that we live in unity, even if it is sometimes difficult and rough. Only then, out of solidarity, we can work for peace.

Henk Stenvers is the president of MWC (2022-2028). He lives in Naarden, Netherlands.



Scan to donate

Photo:
Andreas Kohnsignal

Serving one another

We are called to serve one another with the gifts we have received. This is the work of being good stewards of God's grace as a worldwide Anabaptist family.

Working together in solidarity guides our steps as a communion as we reach out in courageous love to a beautiful yet hurting world.

You are helping to build thriving communities across 110 national member churches in 61 countries. Your investment in the global church expresses solidarity to 10 000+ member congregations spanning the globe. Spaces of solidarity enables us to learn deeply. God is using each of us for kingdom purposes.

You can make a difference through investing your financial gifts in the worldwide mission of Mennonite World Conference. We reflect God's light together as we serve our communities.

When you make a financial gift in solidarity, you are

- building leadership capacity among young adults;
- extending ministries of peace & justice;
- sharing with churches facing challenges;
- collaborating in fellowship, worship, service & witness.

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!

Digital only issue

Did you catch our digital-only issue, 41.1?
This is what you missed

Unity you can hear

Worshipping together, particularly singing together, is often cited as a highlight of Mennonite World Conference Assemblies. After all, there is nothing quite like singing in a gathering of several thousand people as siblings in Christ. Even when not everyone speaks the same language, music has a way of unifying that other experiences do not.



The purpose of this article is to explore how music has functioned across a century of MWC Assemblies, how it has changed as the Mennonite

communion has become increasingly global, and how singing together continues to shape a lived sense of unity.

Perspectives



A community act that shapes our identity

It's interesting how music can transcend barriers that sometimes theology, with its debates and formulations, is unable to cross as easily.



Blending traditional rhythms with contemporary music

The 2003 MWC Assembly in Zimbabwe marked a significant event in the global Anabaptist community. One of the lasting impacts of this gathering has been on the music styles of local congregations in Zimbabwe.



Practicing hospitality through worship

When we sing songs from Mennonite World Conference's international songbook, we are practicing hospitality

and belonging. Singing other cultures' songs also connects us with the global church.



Rhythms and melodies carry images of encounters

By practicing the songs in their original language, we feel a special closeness to the worldwide family.... Because these songs unfold their healing and joy-inspiring spirit – of course – in the global community.



Music as a unifying force

When our church members learn different words in a foreign language, it helps people experience the global nature of the song; it builds respect and curiosity for other cultures and makes the moment feel more united and meaningful. Ultimately it helps the congregation to find themselves united with the global family.

The Officers' Column



Solidarity: what will we build together?

Across the global Anabaptist family, communities are rediscovering their voices, their agency and their callings to live differently. Solidarity, as Mennonite World Conference understands it, is not passive agreement or distant

concern. It is a faithful choice to remain connected: choosing relationship over isolation, accompaniment over control, and hope over fear.

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



*Avoid mailing delays: subscribe electronically

Did you know? Subscription to *Courier/Correo/Courrier* is free, but it costs around \$30.00 to produce it, print and mail around the world. Your gift to cover costs is welcome.

Name

Address

Email

Phone

Mennonite World Conference
50 Kent Avenue, Suite 206
Kitchener, Ontario N2G 3R1 Canada



Photo: Ebenezer Mondez

Tenacious solidarity

"*I am not a social activist*" is the title of a book by Ronald Sider. By making Jesus the centre of our agenda, he demonstrates that issues of wealth, poverty, peace and nonviolence, and social action and politics are as spiritual as evangelism, family and marriage. Quoting Abraham Kuyper, he said that there is not one square inch of this whole earth that does not belong to the risen Lord.

For that reason, doing justice and caring for others are matters of interest not only to social activists. They are a core ministry for those who follow Jesus. Even more, as Sider notes, effective social action requires the power of Jesus' resurrection.

We can see how crucial it is to rely on the Holy Spirit and the power of Jesus' resurrection in the church's social action when we understand the meaning of the word "solidarity" from a biblical perspective. Solidarity can be used to translate the Hebrew word *hesed* in the Old Testament. Let's see an example:

"He has told you, human one, what is good and what the Lord requires from you: to do justice, embrace tenacious solidarity (*hesed*) and walk humbly with your God" Micah 6:8 (CEB).

Hesed combines pure love, generosity, and lasting commitment. It is an expression of character; therefore, it does not depend on how others respond. It implies being open to forgiveness and to acting to help the other. It refers to both attitude and actions.

Therefore, solidarity – understood as *hesed* – is not practiced vertically, from above. It is horizontal, implying mutual respect. As such, it cannot result from human determination alone. It is a consequence of a personal, real encounter with God. After all, we love because we were loved in the first place (1 John 4:19).

One reason Mennonite World Conference was founded a century ago was to stand in solidarity with our churches facing war, violence and persecution. Mennonite World Conference is our global church, where we follow Jesus, live out unity and build peace. We are a body of more than 10 000 local congregations, organized into 110 synods or national churches. We have about 1.5 million baptized members. We need each other to follow Jesus; we need each other to live out unity; we need each other to build peace.

God invites us to act as God does, with pure love, generosity and enduring commitment. God calls us to respond to the needs of other members of our global church with solidarity and selfless action, so that we can experience solidarity within our family of faith and carry it to the world – a world that suffers the consequences of its distance from God, the source of faithful love and tenacious solidarity.

Today, as we reflect on solidarity in this edition of *Courier*, let's remember our brothers and sisters who face war, violence, poverty and persecution. Let's pray for them. Let's share our resources with them. Let's advocate for them. Let's walk side by side with them. Let's ask God for the Holy Spirit's presence in our church so we may continue to respond with solidarity.

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



William Gibson

During the 150th anniversary celebration of the World Communion of Reformed Churches, The Rev. Dr. Setri Nyomi, WCRC's interim general secretary and César García washed each other's feet in the midst of a worship service.