

Intersections

MCC theory & practice quarterly

Summer 2025

Volume 13, Issue 3

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As a “worldwide ministry of Anabaptist churches,” MCC accompanies congregations and national church bodies and agencies as they reach out beyond themselves in mission, carrying out ministries of relief, development and peacebuilding in the name of Christ. MCC’s mission of accompanying churches in outreach to their communities began at its inception in 1920, with MCC responding to the call of Mennonite churches in southern Russia (present-day Ukraine) to respond to the famine gripping the country. MCC’s partnership with churches expanded over the ensuing decades, not only encompassing work with Anabaptist communities of various types but including accompaniment of churches across the ecumenical spectrum, from Pentecostal and Baptist to Catholic and Orthodox. In this issue of *Intersections*, authors from several contexts around the world reflect on the theological grounding of the church’s practical ministries.

Several themes emerge in these gathered articles as church leaders and MCC staff examine the missiological visions that animate their relief, development and peacebuilding work together. In the articles from Ethiopia, Kenya and Guatemala, authors present the church’s humanitarian relief and community development efforts as more than the delivery of goods and services and even more than a response to Jesus’s commandments to feed the hungry and clothe the naked. More fundamentally, these articles underscore that the church goes out in mission to the world around it because Jesus has promised that we will encounter him among the marginalized and oppressed and that we will discover that God’s Spirit has been at work within all global contexts well before the church arrived.

Other articles explore how the church itself is transformed as it takes steps to participate in God’s reconciling mission. Swahili-, Spanish-, and English-speaking churches in Northeast Ohio gather for Bible study and fellowship and discover deeper understandings of God’s kingdom. Participants in MCC’s Seed program in Colombia cross into “borderlands” that unsettle received understandings of mission as the participants discover God’s Spirit at work in new and unexpected ways.

Still other authors examine how churches work for peace in their communities through efforts that strengthen bonds of social cohesion. The Anglican church in Egypt initiates programs that work to nurture bonds

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of friendship and collaboration between Christians and Muslims, while congregations welcoming refugees to Canada through church-based sponsorship programs contribute to the social inclusion of these newcomers.

This issue of *Intersections* also reflects the importance of young adults as the church reaches out in mission. The articles from Ohio and Colombia look at how young adults in MCC’s IVEP and Seed programs participate, support and strengthen the church’s mission, while the articles from Egypt and Guatemala were written by participants in MCC’s SALT program about the mission of the church bodies with which they have worked. Through these and other service programs (such as YAMEN, carried out on behalf of Mennonite World Conference), MCC equips new generations eager to join and lead the church as it reaches out in mission.

Alain Epp Weaver directs strategic planning for MCC. He lives in Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

The theological foundations of the work of the Meserete Kristos Church Development Commission in Ethiopia

Development and relief work of the Meserete Kristos Church Development Commission (MKC-DC) in Ethiopia has been integral to the church since its founding. During the imperial and Derg regimes, the church faced restrictions that prevented it from officially participating in spiritual or developmental activities. However, since receiving full licensure for holistic ministry in 1993, MKC has embraced the mission of providing holistic support to its community.

This commitment to holistic ministry is rooted in the teachings, life and work of Jesus Christ, who addressed the spiritual, mental, social and physical needs of individuals. The MKC views Jesus as the ultimate role model for believers, emphasizing the importance of caring for the whole person. His mission was one of liberation, enabling people to break free from the constraints that hinder them from living fulfilling lives as God intended.

In practice, this means that MKC does not merely provide food, clothing, education and medical services—it also empowers individuals to overcome external barriers to a better life. To achieve lasting change, the MKC Development Commission seeks to tackle the root causes of these barriers while also addressing the mindsets of the community. Jesus prioritized heart transformation over mere behavioral change, providing a model for the church’s approach.

The church believes that true, sustainable development can only occur when individuals’ worldviews align with biblical teachings, fostering an understanding of God’s perspective on development. Initiatives that ignore this critical mindset transformation tend to produce short-term benefits at best and can inadvertently lead to increased dependency on external support. Such handout-oriented approaches can ultimately perpetuate suffering rather than alleviate it. MKC is therefore committed to fostering genuine empowerment and transformation among the people it serves, paving the way for a more independent and thriving community.

As the development arm of the church, the MKC Development Commission is dedicated to fulfilling a vital aspect of the Great Commission of Jesus Christ: reconciling the world to God through the tangible expression of Christ's love. MKC's organizational mission statement declares that:

Our mission, as a Christian humanitarian organization, is to lay the foundation for a prosperous, just, and peaceful society in Ethiopia. Being inspired by the love of Christ for the poor, it facilitates sustainable and inclusive development, seeks and promotes justice, and builds resilience and capacities among the poor and vulnerable families and communities while partnering with the government, wider communities, faith-based organizations, funding agencies, and like-minded organizations.

For MKC, development goes beyond merely providing immediate assistance during difficult times—it reflects a profound expression of Christ's transformative love, aimed at liberating individuals so that they can fully embrace life in the present while also preparing them for the Kingdom of God to come. This love empowers people to enjoy their earthly existence and fosters a sense of fellowship with the eternal God.

When love is shared in a compassionate, understanding, caring and sacrificial manner, it has the power to change lives. It helps the most vulnerable recognize their worth, realize their potential and break free from the constraints that hinder their development. Furthermore, it equips them to become self-sufficient and encourages them to extend support to others, thereby creating a ripple effect of love and empowerment throughout the community. In this way, MKC's approach to development not only nurtures individuals but also fosters a network of mutual support and shared growth.

The MKC Development Commission sees itself as a catalyst for transformation rather than a decision-maker. Emulating the example of Jesus, the organization prioritizes the most vulnerable individuals—those who have been marginalized and denied the opportunity to realize their potential due to unjust systems. By empowering the impoverished, MKC equips them to change these inequitable structures, fostering a community where all members can coexist harmoniously and cultivate positive relationships with God, themselves, one another and the natural environment.

Through its initiatives, MKC facilitates internal change that catalyzes a transformative impact on the lives of individuals and their communities. Embracing an “in-out” approach to transformational development, the organization goes beyond addressing physical needs and immediate realities, aspiring instead for a boundless future where people can experience holistic transformation and true fulfillment in life.

As Jesus engaged people in addressing their needs and transforming their lives, MKC firmly believes in involving the poor in relief and development work. Jesus starts with what people already have to address their needs. Likewise, MKC tries to help the poor explore what they have that can be used as a seed to be planted and grown to bear much fruit. The church does not consider the poor as mere recipients of handouts. They are active participants and partners in transformational development work.



Mothers of the Meserete Kristos Church (MKC) maternal and child health support group learn how to make a balanced diet meal during their weekly meeting at the MKC compound in Batu, Ethiopia, in March 2024. (Nafkot Gebeyehu/MCC)

“ Development goes beyond merely providing immediate assistance during difficult times—it reflects a profound expression of Christ's transformative love, aimed at liberating individuals so that they can fully embrace life in the present while also preparing them for the Kingdom of God to come.”

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The MKC-DC envisions a holistic approach to relief and development, where individuals and communities come to know and experience the love of Christ while living dignified lives. While we address immediate needs, our primary focus is on long-term transformation, empowering individuals and communities to build resilience against shocks and disruptions that may threaten their progress. For MKC-DC, development embodies an expression of Christ's love, allowing people to recognize their inherent worth as beings created in God's image, each endowed with the potential to overcome their current struggles and contribute to a harmonious community.

Our development work is a journey undertaken alongside those in need, one that not only transforms their lives but also deeply impacts catalysts and resource providers. Through this collaborative process, all partners experience mutual transformation, fostering a shared commitment to creating lasting change motivated by the love of Christ.

Shambu Balcha is the executive director of the Meserete Kristos Church Development Committee in Ethiopia.

“A permanent project”: interfaith peacebuilding work in the Anglican diocese of Egypt

Egypt is home to more than 107 million people, of whom roughly ninety percent is Muslim and ten percent Christian. In Cairo, the capital of Egypt, the Episcopal Anglican Diocese of Egypt finds that interfaith peacebuilding is a crucial component of its mission—promoting a vision of a more peaceful society is a critically important responsibility the church carries.

Peacemaking has been a vital journey for the Anglican Diocese of Egypt in Cairo for decades. Most recently, this history of interfaith engagement culminated in the diocese founding the Center for Christian-Muslim Understanding and Partnership (CCMUP) in 2022. The Center draws on a long-standing commitment to hosting peacebuilding programs and highlighting interfaith work and understanding. The Center also fosters cultural appreciation events in which individuals of different faith backgrounds can engage one another in activities such as music, art and fellowship.

In an interview for this article, Anglican Archbishop Samy Fawzy Shehata went into depth about how crucial it is that the Anglican church works in tandem with other churches such as the Coptic Orthodox, Presbyterian and Catholic churches, as well as with the Muslim community. The removal of barriers is high on his priority list. One way that the Anglican church in Egypt carries out this responsibility for interfaith understanding and engagement is the agreement reached between the Anglican communion and Al-Azhar Al-Sharif, the premier Islamic institution focused on the training of Islamic scholars, jurists and other religious leaders. Through this agreement, the Anglican diocese and Al-Azhar organize shared community projects and an annual dialogue. Since signing this agreement, the diocese and Al-Azhar have maintained an interfaith connection that exhibits itself in the form of community projects as well as a dialogue meeting that occurs every year.

“Archbishop Samy states that there are three kinds of peace he deems important for a peaceful society: peace with God, peace with our neighbors and peace with ourselves.”

This year, I had the honor of attending the presentation ceremony for the Dr. Aly-Samman award for interfaith peace, dialogue and cooperation. The event highlighted Dr. Aly-Samman's life work in the advancement of interfaith reconciliation, dialogue and cooperation by recognizing individuals who advance peace and cooperation among people from different faith and cultural backgrounds through works of art, literature or community initiatives. Last year's recipient, Reverend Asaad Talaat, is a pastor for the Evangelical Presbyterian Church and founder of Al-Safina Centre for Culture, Arts and Psychological Support in the village of Balansoura in El-Minya province (200 km/125 miles south of Cairo). His project, "The Safina (i.e., Ship) of Balansoura" received funding to promote a culture of tolerance and peaceful coexistence between Christians and Muslims. The results of this project include more than 80 individuals educated in conflict analysis and initiatives fostering interfaith discourse, acceptance and peacebuilding.

Archbishop Samy states that there are three kinds of peace he deems important for a peaceful society: peace with God, peace with our neighbors and peace with ourselves. Peace with God comes through relationship with God. This happens through the ministry of discipleship and worship in the church. Peace with neighbors and service to others are what build community and harmony within the church and the broader community. God calls us to love our neighbor as ourselves--Archbishop Samy expounds on that call by observing that "everyone is our neighbor." We must also be at peace with ourselves, the archbishop stressed, paying attention to our thoughts and choices so that we cultivate a spirit of tranquility and ease.

This, however, begs the question of the role of forgiveness in our understanding of the Christian faith. Before the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus gives a teaching about forgiveness. Can peace be acquired without forgiveness? Archbishop Samy poses a reflective question: "Can you truly serve someone if you feel angry and not forgiving?" Forgiveness is a powerful act that makes an individual truly reflect on their actions and motivations and analyze if they are willing to set aside their own feelings for the sake of another. This is how, he notes, we display the heart of interfaith peacebuilding: truly loving our neighbor, serving them and forgiving them when they hurt us.

Bishop Emeritus Mouneer Anis has long experience in observing how extremism and ignorance have changed the relationships between Christians and Muslims in Egypt. Bishop Mouneer now serves part-time as director for CCMUP. The Center uses three different programs to build a more peaceful society: academic studies, community initiatives and dialogue, and peacebuilding and conflict resolution. Academic studies include conferences, seminars and events for different audiences. For instance, in 2023 learning journeys were established in partnership with Al-Azhar in which students of Islamic and Christian theology had a chance to study and learn together without attempting to convert the other to their religion.

In 2023, MCC partnered with CCMUP for a pilot project focusing on environmental education for Christian and Muslim grade-school students. This project was identified by Christian and Muslim leaders as a way to address the challenges of environmental pollution in the context of interfaith relationship building. MCC and the Center continue to work on how this interfaith educational project might develop further.



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—Kareem Gerges

The ongoing vision for the Center—and, indeed, for the Anglican Diocese of Egypt more generally—is to have a powerful impact for interfaith peace and to address real issues that arise between people in their communities. Such purposeful processing and follow-up action will have a significant impact. Kareem Gerges, the director of international partnerships and communications for CCMUP, sums up the vision: “Peacebuilding is a permanent project. It is an ongoing activity. We only lay the seeds for that on the ground and encourage community members to continue.”

Alexandra Ortiz-Avila is serving in the Partnership Office of the Anglican Diocese of Egypt through MCC’s SALT program. She is from Riverside, California. For this article, she collaborated with Ayman Kerols, MCC’s peace program coordinator in Egypt.

Seeing the face of Christ in migrants: the mission of Casa del Migrante Scalabrini in Guatemala City



A migrant child guests inspects the contents of the hygiene kit at Casa del Migrante Scalabrini in Guatemala City in 2022. (MCC photo/Meghan Mast)

Upon entering Casa del Migrante Scalabrini in Guatemala City (CdM SG), one finds a long corridor with offices to one side that opens onto a small patio and dining area. Two more floors complete the building, the second floor housing the bedrooms, bathrooms and showers for women and the third those for men. Storage areas on these upper floors contain clothing, sheets, blankets, towels, personal hygiene items and more. In the afternoon, when guests begin to arrive for the evening, the patio starts to feel busier, with people charging their phones, chatting with other families, kids playing and volunteers and staff bustling around to ensure that all are fed, clothed and have what they need to rest for the night and gather their strength to continue their journey. Casa del Migrante Scalabrini is a social service of the Catholic Church in Guatemala that offers beds, food, clothing, showers with hot water, internet, personal hygiene items, medical attention, legal consultation, assistance from social workers and informational talks on recommendations for the migratory journey, identification of human rights violations, physical and mental health support and spiritual care. The two of us, as authors of this article, serve at CdM SG through MCC’s one-year SALT program. In an effort to discover the relationship between faith and action at CdM SG and how its staff understand the organization’s work as an outreach of the church, we interviewed our coworkers to hear their perspectives.

In 1887, Juan Bautista Scalabrini founded the Congregation of San Carlos Missionaries in response to a period of Italian migration to the Americas. Italians had moved to areas where they did not know the culture or language and sometimes worked in harsh conditions. They began to write letters asking for a priest, with one pleading, “Sir, send us a priest because here they live and die like beasts.” Scalabrini sent missionaries to help guard the dignity and integrity of migrants and defend their rights, working to preserve their opportunities to seek a better life. He also worked to sensitize the community to the natural phenomenon of migration and the right to migrate. This continues to be the mission of Casa del Migrante Scalabrini today.

The Missionaries of San Carlos Scalabrini offer services that are not available in an area and aim to build capacity in the local church so that

“To disrespect a migrant is to disrespect God.”

eventually it can take over the mission. In Guatemala, the presence of the Scalabrini Missionaries began in 1992 when they were sent to assess the migratory situation and asked by the bishop to begin ministry. In 1994, after establishing an informational office in Tecun Uman, Guatemala, they began to search for concrete ways to provide humanitarian care. This led to the first Casa del Migrante in Guatemala being built in Tecun Uman. Nearly ten years later, another was founded in Guatemala City, followed by others in Peten, Izabal and Esquipulas.

A verse that encapsulates the work of Casa del Migrante is Matthew 25:35: “For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in” (NIV). Father Ernesto Álvarez, a priest involved in CdM SG, emphasizes that seeing the face of Christ in every person that we meet changes how we treat them. To disrespect a migrant is to disrespect God. Father Percy Cervera, the current director of CdM SG, highlights that this motivation pushes us past caring for physical needs to also care for emotional and spiritual needs, which is sometimes lacking in governmental or non-religious institutions. Without requiring religious practice or belief of those who enter, or accepting any discrimination on the basis of faith, race, gender or any other identity, CdM SG draws on the power of faith and love to continue working in strength.

Recognizing that migration journeys often leave people on the move feeling dehumanized, CdM SG’s mission pushes its workers to seek to get to know the people with whom they work, to listen to their experience and to make them feel heard, valued and human. Being rooted in faith helps us to go past our job descriptions and provide the best care possible. Jimena López, who is often the first face people see in the reception area, shares that her faith propels her to work from her heart and challenges her to be present and compassionate in situations outside of her comfort zone. Walter Galindo, a nurse, explains that while addressing physical pain, he also has opportunities to attend to the pain in people’s souls. He lends a listening ear, gives words of encouragement and is always ready to pray with his patients. Our goal at CdM SG is not only to give someone a plate of food, but to see a change in their face from when they arrive to when they leave. This fills us with more patience, love, respect and empathy, as well as the stamina to continue our work.

With work that attempts to address overwhelming needs and patterns of injustice, a frequent heartbreak is that we can only do so much. Casa del Migrante is intentionally designed as a temporary place to rest. Though CdM SG does accompany some cases for a longer term based on stated and assessed need, it is still hard to see people leave in the morning and sometimes not know where they will end up. Despite this, many of our coworkers express their amazement that even in times of limited resources, we always seem to have enough. Carlos López, the administrator of CdM SG, describes how the team did not feel prepared for the extreme number of people that passed through in migrant caravans at the end of 2018. However, he was shocked to see how the limited resources seemed to multiply to meet the needs. There was no other way for him to describe it but as the work of God, multiplying loaves and fishes. Josetxu Andicoechea, a CdM SG staff member who works with people who are deported in the Centro de Recepción de Retornados (returnee reception center), shares a story in which a man who arrived with no plan or resources ended up with a ride directly to his house a few hours later. There are many situations at the cen-



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ter that resolve themselves in ways only attributable to God. These are the stories that strengthen our faith and motivate us to continue as we remember that God accompanies us in our work.

While many interviewees share that in CdM SG they have developed professionally and increased their knowledge of migration, they also report they have grown more compassionate, understanding, patient and empathetic. This has not only affected the manner in which they work, but also their lives outside of their jobs. Some mention that before working in CdM SG, they felt either judgmental towards migrants and others living in the street or did not take much notice of them. However, now they will stop to interact with people and share food or other basic items. As one staff member observes, those who give from the heart will never be left empty-handed. For some, working in Casa del Migrante has also been an opportunity to grow in faith, as they place difficult situations in the hands of God, see God at work and are able to become more involved in a community of faith.

Casa del Migrante Scalabrini in Guatemala City works hard to live out the values and mission put forth by the Scalabrini Missionaries and the scriptures, embodying what it truly means to feed the hungry, give water to the thirsty and welcome the stranger. We remember that to love is to act and that beautiful things happen when we listen to Jesus' call. As logistics staff Nery Osorio put it: “Lo bonito aquí es que es incondicional. Todas las personas que han ayudado aquí, lo hemos hecho de corazón” (“The beautiful thing here is that it's unconditional. Everyone who has helped here has done it from the heart”).

Emma Groff and Olivia Hazelton are migrant shelter support workers at Casa del Migrante Scalabrini in Guatemala City. They have both served this past year in Guatemala through MCC's SALT program.

MCC's Seed program in Colombia and the church's mission

In an essay on interfaith peacebuilding, Peter Dula builds on the concept of ecotones, which designate “boundaries between two different ecological communities, where a ‘variety and density of life’ occurs that is not found in either of the other two alone.” Dula argues that although “Western civilization has often turned borderlands into spaces of desolation rather than fecundity,” as Christians we are called to live in frontier spaces where we can recognize and bear witness to the Holy Spirit operating outside the walls of the church. Dula exhorts Mennonites and their institutions to live a mission where fear does not reign but is instead guided by the King who has already triumphed over evil, fear and death. He continues:

“We live in a fallen world in which sin has distorted economic, political and cultural structures.”

What if we, as Mennonites and as MCC, inhabited these ecotones with hope rather than fear? What if MCC chose to inhabit these regions knowing that this is where creativity, rebirth, and what the church calls reformation occur? What if MCC chose to inhabit the frontier areas not because it has joined liberals and secularists in doubting the truth of Christ, but precisely because of its unshakable conviction in the lordship of Christ? What if MCC chose to transform the threat of otherness into opportunity, refusing to let itself be controlled by fear? (Dula 2007)

Dula is not satisfied with the arrogant exclusivism of thinking that we control the one and absolute truth or with liberal inclusivism and pluralism that dissolve difference and prevent us from taking any risks in our conversations with those who are different from us. Dula exhorts us to listen patiently to the “pagan parables” that make us uncomfortable and challenge and expand our understanding of Mennonite churches and institutions.

These spaces where we encounter difference change according to context—our understanding of mission must change as we enter these spaces. MCC’s Seed (Semilla) program in Colombia operates precisely in these border places where Seed cohorts are constantly rethinking the concept of mission that we have inherited from North American Protestant mission agencies. Seed participants accompany churches and community-based organizations in migration, education, food security, care for creation, agriculture and peace-building efforts. MCC hires Seed participants as “service workers”—but how do we understand mission and service from within these spaces of creative tensions between communities and evangelical theological discourse?

What is mission? Talking about mission is always a controversial topic within Christian circles that recognize, along with Samuel Escobar, “the need for a radical break with the Constantinian model of missionary enterprise that depended on military power, economic conquest and technological skill” (Escobar 1998). In many evangelical circles today, there is still a way of doing mission that operates by manipulating people through guilt, leading them to adopt not only a religion but a different culture. Too often the missionary acts with a paternalistic attitude and becomes a kind of mediator between the “one Truth” and non-Christians.

Along with critiquing this distortion of missionary work, the Anabaptist theologian John Driver was concerned by the separation of the ethics of the God’s kingdom and the acceptance of God’s forgiveness and grace in each individual. Driver forcefully insisted: “everything pertaining to the kingdom is gospel” (Driver 1995). In the ethics of God’s inbreaking kingdom, the mission is to bring healing and liberation, peacefully resist the powers that control the world and share goods—in short, to carry out the beatitudes. From a kingdom perspective, we understand that mission does not only have to do with transmitting information or with a personal experience, but with an invitation to live in community a life of service full of love for one’s neighbor, a life that does not look the other way when injustice arises, a life that does not believe that it can assume a neutral attitude in the face of the great injustices facing our peoples.

Incarnational service mission: “Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:28). When we talk about missiology, we must also talk about evangelism and service. Stanley W. Green and James R. Krabill (2011) have identified six ways that Anabaptists have related service and evangelism:

- Preparatory: service paves the way for evangelization.
- Complementary: service and evangelism go hand in hand.
- Separate: service and evangelism are parallel activities with little interconnection.
- Opposites: service and evangelism are in conflict.

“If we understand the mission of God through an incarnational lens, we can engage in a model of mission that recognizes that in all cultures we can see what God is already doing, even before Christian missionaries arrive (and sometimes in spite of Christian mission efforts).”



Mudimka Kassam is a 2024–2025 Seed participant in Montes de Maria in the Sucre region in Colombia. (MCC photo/Jonathan Minchala)

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- Priority: service is more important than evangelization.
- Successor: service has superseded evangelization and now replaces it.

In certain evangelical circles, a robust theology of the incarnation is set aside. Such a model of mission has contributed to simplistic talk about "good" and "bad" cultures. But if we understand the mission of God through an incarnational lens, we can engage in a model of mission that recognizes that in all cultures we can see what God is already doing, even before Christian missionaries arrive (and sometimes in spite of Christian mission efforts).

In thinking about the church's mission, we must remember that we live in a fallen world in which sin has distorted economic, political and cultural structures. Therefore, to think about mission is also to have a prophetic voice that can challenge unjust and sinful practices. Here we follow Juan Martínez and Jamie Pitts:

The incarnation is about connecting with others in their spaces. The Spirit calls us to cross social and cultural barriers so that we can be Christ's presence for and with others. This means adapting to them and their shapes. We learn their language, their customs and their ways of understanding. We discern carefully, through engagement and respectful listening, what God is doing in their midst. (2021)

Respectful and empathetic listening to and within other cultures are essential to discovering how the kingdom of God breaks forth in other languages and cultures—such listening in turn reveals to those already in the church aspects of God that we as Christians did not previously know. As the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, reminds us: "Christianity as such does not impose a single institutional project or a future in its encounter with other religions. . . . It engages in dialogue in order to discover itself more truthfully" (Williams 2000).

Incarnational mission is marked by a specific stance in the world, a stance expressed by the word service. Martinez and Pitts elaborate on this conceptualization of service:

Understanding mission as a service means addressing immediate needs. One of the key themes of the mission of incarnation is that we seek to serve the other, starting with where they perceive their initial need to be. The connection occurs at the point of immediate need, whether that need is related to health, natural disaster, emotional pain, financial crisis, relational issues, or other concerns.

Understanding mission in this way reveals the social commitment to the gospel. God's mission cannot be reduced to saving souls from a world that will be destroyed and abandoned to take them to a disembodied afterlife, leaving others to wander eternally in fire and brimstone. Salvation and liberation from a kingdom perspective includes working in communities where sin dehumanizes people and detracts from their dignity. This work for justice carried out in a spirit of neighbor-love comes from an attitude of service and not of imposition through punitive laws. If we fail to understand that mission has to do with a community of service rather than a government that believes itself to be omnipotent and from which all solutions to injustice are demanded, we can easily fall into a neo-Constantinian

Christianity that seeks political power to impose supposedly Christian values on all of society.

One of the particularities of the Seed program in Colombia (and in other contexts) is that it invites participants to be involved in working with partners and communities. Through Seed, young adults share two years of their lives in service to God through presence within and commitment to specific communities. Seed participants live in ecotones, dwelling in border spaces which generate new questions that spur learning and challenge preconceived notions of God's work in the world. Through their work with MCC's Colombian partners, Seed participants actively engage in all four primary dimensions of MCC's strategic priorities: caring for creation and responding to climate change; working with displaced and uprooted people; peacebuilding; and collaboration with Anabaptist churches. The Seed program is dedicated to the incarnational mission of service, service that is marked by fundamental values of seeking to live nonviolence as a biblical call and creating just relationships that reflect responsibility, reciprocity, integrity and transparency.

Francisca Pacheco and Jonathan Minchala lead MCC's Seed program in Colombia.



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Building connections within the family of believers: an IVEP participant's experience

One way that MCC accompanies churches as they reach out in mission is through the placement of young adults in churches who support and extend congregational and other church ministries. In this article, we hear from leaders in the Ohio Conference in the United States about how Elvis Otieno, a Kenyan participant in MCC's IVEP young adult program, has enriched the mission of deepening connections among churches in the conference.

The Ohio Conference (a Mennonite Church USA regional conference) is a "family of believers" (Gal. 20, NIV). We have changed in significant ways in the last 25 years. The Holy Spirit has been at work within Ohio Conference throughout this change, writes Thomas Dunn of Crown Hill Mennonite Church in Akron, Ohio. One historically small white congregation has grown into one of the conference's largest and most diverse congregations with bilingual worship services. Another congregation made up primarily of Congolese refugee families joined Ohio Conference as a member congregation.

These two congregations have been a rich blessing to the conference in general and specifically to the Northeast Ohio churches that fellowship more directly with them. Although there is joy experienced in combined worship services, meals and other gatherings it was clear that there was much work to be done to develop better relationships across cultural and language barriers. The Holy Spirit provided in the form of an MCC IVEPer who was bilingual in Swahili and English and who had pastoral experience and theological training. Elvis Otieno from Kenya arrived in the fall of 2024 with the assignment to build relationships between Swahili-, Spanish- and English-speaking congregations in Northeast Ohio.

“ One way that MCC accompanies churches as they reach out in mission is through the placement of young adults in churches who support and extend congregational and other church ministries.”

“ I have learned that the best results come when we embrace our differences with a lot of kindness, patience and understanding for a common goal.” —Elvis Otieno

Elvis' assignment was broken down into two major areas: connecting to the Bible department at Central Christian School and working with seven different Mennonite congregations. In both parts of his assignment, Elvis has deepened the witness of the church as it reaches out beyond itself.

Central Christian School in Kidron, Ohio, believes that education is about more than just academics—it is about nurturing the whole person and creating a community where students are invited to follow Jesus in every aspect of their lives. Elvis Otieno, serving through MCC's IVEP program, has become a special part of that mission this school year.

Elvis brings warmth, wisdom and a deep servant's heart to our school community, reports Nathan Holton, the school's superintendent. Whether teaching or assisting in the classroom, leading conversations about faith and culture or simply sharing his joy with students and staff, he models what it means to “do good to all people” (Galatians 6:10), says Nathan, continuing that Elvis' service reminds us that God's family stretches across cultures and continents. His dedication to the work of the Lord is a living example of Christ's love in action.

Through his work, students see faith woven into everyday life—not just in chapel or Bible class, but in the way they interact, serve and grow together. Central Christian School is grateful for this partnership with MCC, states superintendent Holton, which allows the school to experience the beauty of the global church and the call to serve.

Otieno reports that the highlight of his MCC assignment is the “diversity of the people” with whom he works. “I have learned that the best results come when we embrace our differences with a lot of kindness, patience and understanding for a common goal,” he reports. “God has good reasons for putting us together even though we have all these different attributes.” Otieno points to Paul's proclamation in Galatian 3:28 that “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” Paul, Otieno explains, “calls us to embrace the diversity as God's people.” His MCC assignment, he continues, creates opportunities where diverse groups “can learn from one another and rebuild broken *shalom* in society,” for the gift of God's holistic peace (*shalom*) is the perfect way.

Otieno's assignment is to build intercultural relationships among the Swahili-speaking Congolese congregation in Akron (Ohio), the primarily Hispanic Salem Community Church and predominantly white, English-speaking churches in Northeast Ohio. In strategizing about his assignment, Otieno and his supervisors developed the idea of a “Menno Table,” spaces in which people from different congregations would come together to study the Bible, worship together and discuss current issues. The idea has born fruit in the form of two successful combined Bible studies and one joint Christmas worship service. Northeast Ohio also organized an event in which the Congolese refugees narrated their long journey from East Congo from living for 20 years in a refugee camp before finally coming to Akron seven years ago. The story was one of sorrow, pain and loss of both property and lives because of violent conflict. Reflecting on the event, Otieno shares: “I was translating the whole story while in tears, processing the difficult life that they went through.” Telling the story was an important way for these Congolese Mennonites to share from their lives with their fellow Mennonites in Northeast Ohio.



Combined, multi-congregational Sunday service at Wooster Mennonite Church in Ohio during the 500-year anniversary of the Anabaptist movement in January 2025. (Thomas Dunn)

Menno Table events reflect the beauty of God-given diversity, with Congolese, Hispanic and white Mennonites sitting around tables to discuss a Bible passage from different perspectives. Communication struggles are common as participants navigate different languages, but people find a way to communicate and learn from each other. People both read the Bible together and share about things like favorite foods and movies. “One of my favorite Menno Table experiences was singing Christmas songs together,” Otieno shares. “That day I witnessed the beauty of people coming together despite their language, skin color or background—worship binds people together.”

“I enjoy being a missionary in the United States, working with diverse Mennonite churches,” Otieno proclaims. Grateful to his two host families (the Bixlers and the Jantzis) and to his supervisors, Otieno values how he has been part of churches reaching out beyond themselves in mission.

Elvis Otieno is a 2024–2025 IVEP participant from Kenya working with the Ohio Mennonite Conference and Central Christian School in Kidron, Ohio. Thomas Dunn is co-pastor of Crown Hill Mennonite Church in Akron, Ohio. Nathan Holton is superintendent of Central Christian School.

The theology of development of the Center for Peace and Nationhood (CPN) in Kenya

The Center for Peace and Nationhood (CPN) is a Kenyan non-governmental organization (NGO) promoting peace and social development in marginalized communities. As the socio-economic arm of the Kenya Mennonite Church Diocese of Nairobi, PCN mobilizes communities to realize their full potential and increase their conversion power.

Founded in 2012, CPN facilitates a synergized, proactive and robust response to the contemporary and everyday life challenges in marginalized communities within and around Nairobi in a bid to reduce the level of social vulnerability, poverty and intolerance within communities. CPN endeavors to address challenges such as violence and continued deterioration of living standards. It thus seeks to work with the underprivileged in a partnership aimed at transforming lives. MCC currently supports peace and maternal and child health initiatives in the Mathare informal settlement on

“ Menno Table events reflect the beauty of God-given diversity, with Congolese, Hispanic and white Mennonites sitting around tables to discuss a Bible passage from different perspectives.”

“ Through CPN programs, the church carries out its mission holistically, not just by word but also by deed, sharing our resources, time and skills to transform the community, reconciling them back to God.”

CPN envisions the reality portrayed in Isaiah 2:4 which describes a future world where peace prevails and nations resolve disputes peacefully instead of resorting to war.”

the outskirts of Nairobi. In a recent interview conducted by MCC Kenya and Tanzania’s health and education office, Judith Siambe Opiyo, Bishop George Ochieng reflected on the theology of development that undergirds CPN’s work and CPN’s place in the diocese’s mission.

How is the CPN program addressing maternal and child health part of the church’s mission? The church through CPN tries to solve the problems facing marginalized people, both those in need and those facing different social inequalities and injustices in the community. Most of these people have been neglected or find themselves in positions of disadvantage. The Bible from its beginning underscores that we are created in God’s image: “So God created humankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them” (Gen. 1:27), and so human dignity is elevated in the image of God. The identity of God is engraved in every human. Therefore, every human being, regardless of race, colour, social or economic status, sexual orientation, belief or faith, is in the image of God. When sin happened in the Garden of Eden, the relationship between God and human beings was disrupted, and somehow the image of God in us was distorted. The coming of Jesus Christ, who is the foundation of the church, restored the relationship of humanity and God and also renewed the human dignity that comes with the image of God.

The church, through CPN health programs, therefore seeks to bring forth reconciliation between people and between people and God. This is done by identifying people in vulnerable situations in life, like women in Mathare who lack information about health, some who do not even have the finances to access health care services, and these challenges expose them to mental pressures, therefore devaluing their human dignity as humans created in the image of God. Upon identification, CPN then comes forth with their interventions of sharing information about maternal and child health best practices and building financial capacity so that the women can access health care services and restore their dignity. That is the calling of the church.

The mission of Kenya Mennonite Church is to share God’s love and compassion, empowering members and impacting communities through various forms of outreach aimed at bringing about peace and reconciliation. Through CPN programs, the church carries out its mission holistically, not just by word but also by deed, sharing our resources, time and skills to transform communities, reconciling them back to God.

What is the biblical-theological foundation of CPN’s work? CPN helps the church in sharing biblical values like love, peace and compassion and in seeking universal reconciliation. We envision a society where people can share freely with one another regardless of their faith, sexual orientation, race, colour and socioeconomic status. CPN envisions the reality portrayed in Isaiah 2:4 which describes a future world where peace prevails and nations resolve disputes peacefully instead of resorting to war. The pretexts used for waging war and driving conflict and differences between different groups of people will be transformed to foster development and growth instead.

In his letter to the Galatians, the apostle Paul counsels the church to “do good to all people,” especially those of the “household of faith” (6:10). How does the church balance mutual aid within the church and the humanitarian call to do good to all people based on need? God is

The identity of God is engraved in every human. Therefore, every human being, regardless of race, colour, social or economic status, sexual orientation, belief or faith, is in the image of God.”

love, and when the Bible talks of love your neighbour as yourself, we are admonished to love all with the love of God, regardless of ethnicity, social status or class. At the same time, it is natural to think that one cannot love one's neighbour's children by giving them food when one's own children are going hungry with nothing to eat. Should we love ourselves first and then our neighbours? Some say we should first have projects that meet the needs of the congregation, and then we spread love to other community members who are not of our household. But in our case, it is not so. We feel the needs of others supersede our needs and so CPN has not done any projects exclusively within the church since its inception. We see that the overall needs in the communities we work in like Mathare are far greater than what we experience in our church.

We are called to demonstrate the love of God not just to those who do good to us, but to show love to all humanity. As we hear in Scripture: "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbour' and 'Hate your enemy.' But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:43-45). In the Kenya Mennonite Church's outreach through CPN, we demonstrate the love of God when we reach out people beyond our congregation.

How do you manage the congregants' expectations regarding projects within the congregations of the Kenya Mennonite Church? That is where CPN has the biggest dilemma when it comes to upholding the call of the apostle Paul in his letter to the Galatians, "do good to all people," especially those of the "household of faith." Some congregants perceive that CPN has sidelined them in the programs that they implement. Our congregations also have vulnerable people. Many of our church members are not employed. Youth do not have jobs, and most women just rely on a day wages or small businesses. CPN designs projects that focus on people living in particular specific neighborhoods or communities to improve the impact of those projects, with the projects bringing together community members for shared learning—including members of Mennonite congregations in those projects becomes challenging because they are dispersed in different parts of the city. Sometimes when congregants learn that CPN is carrying out projects that don't include church members, it generates tension. CPN hopes to find a solution to this so that we can reach out to the needs of the broader community and those within the church

CPN has been considering a livelihoods project called "church community mobilization and transformational development." The vision would be to mobilize church community members to form a savings and lending association, in which members would pool resources and strengthen their ability to save and borrow as a group. CPN would offer training in how to operate a community-based savings and loan association while also offering other life-skills training. At present, we do not yet have a budget for this initiative, but we are actively seeking funders. Through this envisioned project, we will not just be telling the members to go home, keep warm and eat well. Rather, we will be helping them figure out how to keep warm and eat well.

George Ochieng is bishop of the Nairobi diocese of the Kenya Mennonite Church and pastor at Eastleigh Fellowship. Judith Siambe Opiyo is health and education officer for MCC Kenya and Tanzania.



In 2021, health promoter Margaret Wambui of the Center for Peace and Nationhood in Nairobi, Kenya, provides training on antenatal care, child delivery and postpartum care for pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers who attend a care group. (MCC photo/Ruth Keidel Clemens)

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To put social inclusion into practice means to move alongside one another, especially those who suffer, without desire to change or direct the other, but with a disposition to be changed ourselves."

Church-based refugee sponsorship as a model for social inclusion

The Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) Program in Canada has been hailed by some as an exemplar for the integration of refugee newcomers into the host society. This program, overseen by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), gives Canadians the opportunity to use their own personal resources (monetary and otherwise) to assist in the resettlement of refugees from abroad. MCC has been a leader in this program from its inception and has sustained a vibrant refugee sponsorship program among Anabaptist and other church-based constituencies. For some long-time sponsorship groups, welcoming newcomers through the PSR program has become a part of their congregational culture, a tool by which churches build peace through relationships and welcoming the stranger.

Wanting to understand more about MCC's significant role in the PSR program and its relational approach to sponsorship, researchers at York University together with MCC Ontario's refugee program staff carried out a community-based research project between June 2017 and August 2018. Through focused discussions with church-based sponsorship groups, interviews with former refugees and exchanges with MCC staff, this research provided an in-depth look into the culture of sponsorship that has become embedded in many Mennonite churches in Canada. The findings suggest that MCC's approach to sponsorship expands sites of intervention to include interpersonal change, place change and even system change—these findings in turn suggest that MCC's approach to refugee sponsorship has provided a model for social inclusion.

A history of sponsorship: MCC played a major role in shaping the PSR program first launched in 1979 in response to the Indochinese refugee movement and became the first Master Agreement Holder (now Sponsorship Agreement Holder, or SAH) with the Canadian government. This status grants MCC the legal basis to work with local congregations and offer organizational and logistical support for sponsorship. MCC also has a unique approach to sponsorship and is committed to meeting the resettlement needs of any refugee, regardless of religion or culture. With over 45 years of experience sponsoring refugee newcomers and providing support to a wide range of congregations and non-faith groups, MCC has become well-known and widely respected within the refugee resettlement field in Canada and Europe. MCC resettled approximately one third of all Blended Visa Office-Referred (BVOR) cases in 2017—refugee cases identified for resettlement by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and paired with a willing sponsorship group, as distinct from PSR cases which are requested or "named" by the sponsors pre-arrival. This readiness to take on BVOR cases further emphasizes MCC's commitment to fostering new relationships between faiths and cultures and its commitment to "relationship-building as peacebuilding" (Epp-Tiessen, 235).

Social exclusion and inclusion: Within the context of refugee resettlement, social inclusion is commonly thought of as an objective that involves economic factors (such as employment and housing) and an emotional sense of belonging and trust for individuals who are marginalized or excluded in some way. We know, however, that many of our social institutions and communities function in ways that favour certain people over others. These dynamics of social *exclusion* are generally set in motion by mainstream



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values that promote personal gain, competition and a climate of fear and scarcity—dynamics that may seem inevitable and justified, even natural. Effective responses to social exclusion must challenge the ideas and social systems that give rise to conflict, fear and violence.

While social exclusion creates distance and division, social *inclusion* moves us toward one another—toward the reconciliation of social and economic divides, the transformation of fractured relationships and social healing. Social inclusion is dynamic and relational and has to do with the nature of our relationships and social processes rather than specific individual outcomes or conditions. To put social inclusion into practice means to move alongside one another, especially those who suffer, without desire to change or direct the other, but with a disposition to be changed ourselves. John Paul Lederach describes the importance of "alongsidedness," of accompanying those who suffer trauma.

Our research identified a variety of ways that social exclusion manifests within the refugee sponsorship experience: economic (such as un- and under-employment), spatial (such as separation from family, cultural community or within one's town/city due to limited public transport), socio-political (such as language barriers) and subjective (a loss of dignity and devaluation within the limits of the 'refugee' identity). Further, there were several roles that sponsors took on to address these areas of exclusion, with sponsors serving as settlement supporters, service connectors, social brokers, listening companions and cultural mediators or advocates. Existing within a space of alongsidedness, these roles help to cultivate a culture of social inclusion.

The research also found that social inclusion is cultivated simply through the sponsor and newcomer encounter, as sponsorship invites difference—on both an individual and collective level—into the relationship. This difference sometimes presented discomfort for sponsors or newcomers and created tension: for example, a sponsor from Niagara, Ontario, expressed an obligation "to make them [newcomers] good Canadian citizens" (through ensuring that newcomers secure employment, find appropriate housing, learn English and become 'contributing' members of society). In contrast, all newcomers noted their primary goals were safety, family and ultimately obtaining Canadian citizenship. In other instances, sponsors sometimes reported viewing newcomer choices as pride or a desire to live off welfare and "milk" the system.

When sponsors place value on certain decisions or behaviours rather than seeking to understand, they unintentionally chip away at the agency and dignity of newcomers and devalue difference. Sponsors therefore have a

“ How can church-based sponsorship groups be equipped to recognize and use their privilege in Canadian communities, workplaces, schools and health care systems to transform the stubborn dynamics of social exclusion?”

responsibility to be self-aware, check attitudes and look beyond good intentions or taken-for-granted assumptions that can cause harm. If we instead walk with humility and curiosity and engage with difference, we find our understandings of the world are reflected back to us through the lived experiences of another.

Future directions: MCC has been a leader in refugee resettlement since the inception of Canada's PSR program in 1979. Its church-based groups support and sustain a model of refugee sponsorship committed to fostering new and transformational relationships between faiths and cultures. The research suggests that this unique focus on relationship-building provides an effective model for the social inclusion of refugee newcomers. Despite this promise, there are limits to the impacts of sponsors' alongsidedness. Our research identified persisting experiences of social exclusion for many former refugee newcomers. For example, sponsoring relationships can provide social recognition among sponsors and their communities, yet many former refugees are still not afforded places of status, influence or value. Those who have employment are too often stuck in low-paying, precarious jobs with little ability to advance. They experience uneven access to material and symbolic resources in society.

“ For some long-time sponsorship groups, welcoming newcomers through the Private Sponsorship of Refugees program has become a part of their congregational culture, a tool by which churches build peace through relationships and welcoming the stranger.”

To continue to strive toward cultivating a culture of social inclusion, MCC might ask itself: *how can church-based sponsorship groups be equipped to recognize and use their privilege in Canadian communities, workplaces, schools and health care systems to transform the stubborn dynamics of social exclusion?* It is our hope that sponsorship groups will work towards dismantling these larger narratives and systems of social exclusion and continue to cultivate powerful relationships, move towards difference and embrace a culture of alongsidedness.

Luann Good Gingrich is a professor at York University. Thea Enns works on refugee resettlement policy and programming. Both live in Ontario.

Doing good: an essential expression of CEFMC's theological identity and mission

In the early 1960s, the Mulele rebellion that followed national independence made waves across the Democratic Republic of Congo. With the epicenter of the movement in Kwilu, the Communauté des Eglises Frères Mennonites au Congo (CEFMC), with its headquarters in Kiwkit, the capital of Kwilu, was particularly hard hit. Many families sought the relative safety of the forests around the town during the intense violence.

However, the church did not remain inactive at this critical moment in Congolese history. In 1964, CEFMC launched its first project with MCC to provide emergency humanitarian aid to severely malnourished forest returnees. Over sixty years later, CEFMC continues this work. Today, CEFMC helps families displaced by the Kamuina Nsapu conflict in 2016 and the Kwamouth conflict in 2022, providing clean water through the construction of wells, offering healthcare services, strengthening of food security through savings and loan associations and agriculture initiatives and building local peace infrastructure through women's crisis rooms.

What makes doing good an indispensable part of the church's mission? For the CEFMC, humanitarian work is not simply a response to human suffering, but a central expression of our theological identity and mission. Rooted in Anabaptist faith and values, CEFMC considers that "doing good" is both a sacred calling and a practical responsibility. This article explores the theological convictions and practical expressions that motivate CEFMC's commitment to humanitarian service.

Obedience to Jesus' teachings: Jesus commanded his disciples to love their neighbors (Mark 12:31) and to serve others (John 13:14–15) as part of obedience to Jesus' mandate to bring the gospel to all nations. As Christians, we are called to adopt the teachings of Jesus on justice, mercy and humility and to integrate them into daily life (Matt. 5:7). The church is entrusted with forming disciples who commit themselves to obeying Jesus' teachings, creating a community based on his word (John 8:31–32). By doing good, believers follow the example of Jesus, seeking God's will and responding to God's call.

Obedience to Jesus' teachings is a path to a spiritually enriching life, transforming personal and community relationships. It requires commitment, effort and a willingness to learn continually. In this case, MCC also means loving those around us, which requires personal sacrifice (Matt. 5:44). Obedience manifests itself in concrete actions, not just beliefs. It requires a conscious effort to be practical (Luke 9:23). The church guides believers in their behavior, their witness and their commitment to the world, while ensuring that their actions are in line with God's will.

Witness of faith: Caring actions are a living testimony to the Christian faith. They show that faith is not just an inner belief but is manifested in concrete actions (James 2:17). Faith witness is a powerful tool for sharing and connecting people, creating a rich and supportive spiritual environment and strengthening community ties. We encourage members to share their experiences of spiritual transformation, illustrating God's impact in their lives (Revelation 12:11), and organize events such as worship services, conferences and discussion groups where people can hear and share testimonies of their faith with confidence, providing them with tools and resources to share the gospel (2 Tim. 2:2).

The witness of faith in CEFMC's mission is essential to spreading the Christian message, encouraging others to believe and demonstrating the transformative impact of faith in everyday life.

Realizing the kingdom of God: Acting for the good of others helps establish the kingdom of God on earth and in the hearts of believers, bringing justice, peace and reconciliation (Matthew 6:10). Inner change and concrete social actions to promote justice and love go together. The church encourages followers of Jesus to adopt values such as love, justice, peace and compassion in their daily lives (Matthew 5:3–12) and to put into practice service and love towards others (the underprivileged in particular) to reflect the heart of God (Matthew 25:34–40).

CEFMC's mission to realize the kingdom of God rests on the proclamation of the gospel, the practice of kingdom values and active engagement in community and service to others. This helps transform lives and reflects the divine kingdom on earth.

Inner change and concrete social actions to promote justice and love go together."



Marie Jeanne Kudimuka fills up her water jug in April 2024 with clean water drawn from a borehole built recently by the Community of Mennonite Brethren Churches of Congo in Kikwit. (MCC photo/Felo Gracia)

“Doing good is a theological imperative rooted in the teachings of Christ and a practical expression of love, justice and compassion.”

Love and compassion: Doing good is a way of expressing God’s love and compassion for humanity, which translates into proclaiming the gospel message with love. The church’s mission includes meeting people’s physical, emotional and spiritual needs. The church is thus called to be a refuge for those who suffer, offering support, prayer and practical help (Luke 4:18–19). The church must therefore defend and work for fairness and justice in society (Isaiah 1:17). In serving others, believers reflect the divine character.

Spiritual growth: The church must preach and teach the scriptures to nourish believers’ faith, and disciple people through Bible studies, prayer groups and mentoring to help believers grow in their relationship with God (Matthew 28:19–20). Service to others also enables believers to grow spiritually. It fosters humility, develops interpersonal skills and encourages a life focused on others rather than oneself, creating a community environment where believers can encourage each other, share their struggles and celebrate their spiritual successes (Acts 2:42–47). CEFMC is committed to forming mature disciples who live their faith authentically and positively impact the world around them.

For the CEFMC, humanitarian commitment is more than a response to a crisis—it’s a faithful embodiment of the gospel. Doing good is a theological imperative rooted in the teachings of Christ and a practical expression of love, justice and compassion. In partnership with MCC, CEFMC seeks to meet the spiritual and physical needs of individuals and communities, working towards a vision of peace and holistic renewal. By participating in this mission, the church not only transforms the lives of others, but is itself renewed—spiritually, relationally and socially.

Antoine Kimbila is general secretary of the Community of Mennonite Brethren Churches in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (CEFMC).

Intersections: MCC theory and practice quarterly is published by Mennonite Central Committee’s Planning, Learning and Disaster Response Department.

Editor: Alain Epp Weaver. Opinions expressed in this newsletter reflect those of the authors and not necessarily those of Mennonite Central Committee

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Intersections: MCC theory and practice quarterly can be accessed online at mcc.org/impact/publications/intersections.

ISSN 2376-0893 (print) ISSN 2376-0907 (online)



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