

Together at a distance of 18,365 km



“I almost can’t stand it anymore...for a few weeks I can’t talk to people about Jesus anymore, I can’t evangelize anymore,” was the sentiment from Ajaan (pastor) Naat, leader of the Thailand MB Church. But despite this lack she felt because of the quarantine, it also led to completely new opportunities. With Rebekah Hiebert (Multiply missionary in Thailand) they started to teach English online in other parts of Thailand, people they have not been able to reach until now. We have been hearing many examples like this from our global family

Since March, all Mennonite Brethren communities around the world have been affected by lockdown to some extent. This is also true for ICOMB as we try to connect our global MB family. With all the frustration of not being able to meet in person, we looked for alternatives to pursue our vision.

Thus, for the first time as a Global community, we held our Summit (May 12-15) online, with some at a distance of over 18,000 km. In Japan it was already 10 pm, and in Vancouver 6 am, but still a fellowship was possible. Two global and four regional meetings (Latin America, Europe, Africa, and Asia) were held with more people than we have ever had at a Summit meeting. We shared about the current situation of our churches, talked about our structure, future, and finances. We accepted the Mennonite Brethren Church in Malawi as a full member and exchanged ideas on how we can better support each other regionally. We plan to have several more online meetings later this year, and will continue to incorporate online meetings after restrictions are lifted.

We are thankful for the face-to-face visits we were able to make before the restrictions. ICOMB director Rudi Plett participated in a retreat in US with the Hispanic churches and personal visits with pastors in the Pacific district in August. Rudi was also able to participate in Equip with CCMBC in Waterloo in October. In November, he and Vic Wiens made a combined ICOMB/Multiply visit to the leaders and churches in Portugal, speaking with them about current realities and envisioning the future together. Rudi’s time in Europe included a visit to Germany. In February 2020, Rudi, Emerson Cardoso (ICOMB chair from Brazil), and Rodrigo Justino

(Brazilian translator) visited the MB conference of India, participating in a graduation ceremony for the theological seminary (MBCBC). They were able to visit leaders from many different churches who shared openly about their reality and the need for a different future. We are thankful that Doug and Sherry H traveled with them. In March, Rudi was able to participate in the SKMB Assembly just before the COVID-19 outbreak in Canada, and made it home before the borders closed. Since then, all meetings have been held online.

But ICOMB is not just about meeting, it’s about a fellowship that influences us, that helps us to grow together. It is a fellowship that influences each other to be more biblical, listen more to the Spirit, give honour to God, and use more of the opportunities available.

Prayer Requests

- Pray that during this time of change, we learn how to communicate so that we can be a global church supporting and meeting the needs of MB conferences.
- All MB conferences are going through a time of instability in finances. This naturally affects ICOMB. Please pray for wisdom for using available resources and finding new support.
- We have very special challenges in some conferences. Some are related to the pandemic, some are not. ICOMB wants to offer needed support. Pray for wisdom to recognize what gifts God has given us and how we can share them in the family.

You can support:

- Pray for your international family: sign up for the monthly Update at icomb.org
- Give: building up the global family involves time, skilled workers, and travel. Please pray with us for these needs.
- Volunteer: ICOMB needs people with experience leading at church and conference levels, who possess a heart ready to cross boundaries, to build up ICOMB leaders and conferences.

Dear ICOMB family in Canada, thank you for all your support for the global family!

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