

Icomb Report for Manitoba 2023

What is Icomb? Rudi, what is your job specifically? These are questions, I hear often. Sometimes, after trying to explain, they look at me, and their eyes say: “I don’t really understand”. Well, it's difficult to understand, if you do not have other identical or similar Organisations to compare it with. It seems that “Family” is a concept that resonates with most. It points towards something deeper as just a “same denomination” or “religious organization”. And we hope we can cultivate this family bond that helps local and national churches to be what they are called for.

I want to mention 2 highlights, that were part of “family life”.

Summit 22 in Curitiba, Brazil.



Singing: “We are caring your name to the ends of the earth..”



Paul and Reginaldo blessing Safari.

After two years of virtual meetings, ICOMB hosted a face-to-face summit in May of 2022, inviting close to one hundred global MB delegates from over twenty countries - leaders of both established conferences and representatives of emerging conferences - to participate, along with Multiply staff and global workers, in an unforgettable gathering of the nations. Apart from the ICOMB Assembly, where key delegates were involved with presenting their regional reports and leaning into challenging decisions facing their conferences and churches, there were various

presentations that refreshed our understanding of the Spiritual, Theological, and Organizational foundations of our shared MB history and strengthened our sense of kinship.

The summit was followed by a conference called Despertar (Awakening) 22, aimed at the awakening of our love for God, for his church, and for the lost. ICOMB itself was conceived at a Despertar conference in this same location in 1988, where first was envisioned a body that would serve to develop the global MB identity, connect national church leaders through an annual assembly of leaders, and strengthen national churches by coaching leaders through



Serving each other in the family

challenges they face in their global context. Despertar 22 included a refreshing of this vision through worship, testimonies, plenary sessions, and relevant workshops. Each session brought fresh opportunities for small group prayer, discussion, convivial mealtimes, worship, celebration and corporate grieving over our missing delegates from Ukraine. At the end of this conference, despite many having succumbed to mild COVID-19 infections, spirits were high. Those who could

then launched into preplanned excursions, some of which were primarily touristic and recreational, and others, such as the trip to the Amazon, facilitated ongoing outreach among indigenous people groups in Brazil.

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Visit in Africa, August-September 2022

I had the opportunity to visit 3 African countries. In Malawi I could meet many leaders and was present as the founding leader of that conference Safari (Mutabesha Bahati) was concluding his time and passing the Leadership to Shadreck Kwendanyama and a team. It was encouraging to see a new growing conference aiming towards being sustainable in all church plants and projects. We can pray, that this conference may continue with healthy growth.



Safari and his wife with their Farewell gift.

Together with Safari, I visited Congo after Malawi. We were able to meet with a number of leaders in different places, and visit churches and church projects. It was encouraging to see the actual leadership seeking to unite the conference, battle tribalism, and assist the local churches and pastors. It is a challenging task with the limited resources, and the vast territory in which they are spread, with Roads in deplorable condition, and deficient, in parts of non-existing electrical and communication systems. We can pray, that God will give them the wisdom to continue to grow in this situation. We can also pray, that God will give us wisdom on how other conferences can assist with their strengths.



Congo Conference leader Anoine Kimbila and his wife

In September I represented ICOMB, and Paul Dück representing COBIM (MB conference in Brasil) had the opportunity to visit IEIMA in Angola.



Meeting with Leaders in Malange, Angola



Worship in Melange with color, music and dance.

We had a meeting with the national and provincial leaders of this precious Mennonite Brethren family in Malange. The meeting was organized together, but coordinated by the leader of IEIMA, Pastor Daniel Canganguela. We were

able to have time for ministry, but above all to hear from the leaders about the vision of expansion, which God has given to each of the provinces, and to hear about the existing needs, which are not small. As Safari (Malawi) did not get a visa to enter Angola he made a very valuable contextualized contribution to African culture online. We closed the event with the washing of feet, celebrating the Lord's Supper, and much prayer. It was a very precious time with the leadership.

Then we visited some provinces to get to know their reality in practice and to have contact and dialogue with their local leaders and churches, reinforcing their importance to our family. Based on the visit we have already managed to raise some funds to buy sheets to cover some churches, built with mud bricks, before the rain.

The goal has been to bring ICOMB and IEIMA together (through COBIM) to systematically raise demands, and define priorities for strategic areas of help. Be praying that God will continue to give discernment and wisdom in the next steps. We can pay for wisdom and humility to resolve issues of leadership and training of workers.

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Summit 2023

This year we will organize our summit in Abbotsford, BC, May, 10-14. This meeting will not just be a gathering program, but a time to make further steps towards roads of communication and partnership to enhance the “global family experience”.

United in Christ,

Rudi Plett
Executive Director
ICOMB