

# IMAges

[the newsletter of the International Missions Association]



Prayer for the youth that came forward at the youth rally in the Philippines in 2006. Photo by Javier Soler.

## IMA members

The International Missions Association (IMA) is an association of Anabaptist mission bodies established for prayer, mutual support, and partnering in carrying out the Great Commission. It was begun in 1997 by four members (PIPKA of Indonesia, MKC of Ethiopia, Amor Viviente of Honduras, and EMM of the U.S.), and presently includes 14 members:

African Christian Mission International - Kenya  
 Agencia Misionera de las Iglesias de la Convencion Menonita de Costa Rica  
 Amor Viviente - Honduras  
 Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM) - USA  
 Honduran Evangelical Mennonite Church (IEMH)  
 Integrated Mennonite Churches of the Philippines (IMC)  
 Junta Misionera Convencion Menonita de Nicaragua  
 Kanisa la Mennonite Tanzania (KMT)  
 Kenya Mennonite Church (KMC)  
 Meserete Kristos Church (MKC) - Ethiopia  
 PIPKA - Indonesia  
 Pocket Testament League (PTL) - India  
 Rosedale Mennonite Missions USA  
 Spanish Mennonite Council - USA

President – Richard Showalter  
 Vice president – Henry Mulandi  
 Coordinator – Tilahun Beyene Kidane

## IMA Ten Years

**The IMA is a global mission network, born of the conviction that the Great Commission is for every church in the world.**

We held our first meeting in January 1997 in Calcutta, India, but our roots go back much further. In December 1994 I had sent an exploratory memo to the three Eastern Mennonite Missions program directors suggesting a meeting with the mission leadership of our international partners at the time of the next Mennonite World Conference in Calcutta. They were all affirmative.

Prior to that we had occasionally met in global gatherings with representatives of our partner churches, but those meetings had a broader focus. They were gatherings of related church leaders. The primary focus was not missions, though that was included.

This, then, was something new. We came together intentionally as peers in international, cross-cultural missions. Ethiopia, Indonesia, Honduras, and the United States were the first four countries represented. We were united in purpose to make disciples of all nations, going especially to places and peoples where the church was weak or nonexistent.

**going to places and peoples where the church was weak or nonexistent**

## President's corner

We convene on August 30, 2007 in Bechterdissen, Germany for the eleventh convocation of the IMA. We are excited by the opportunity



to meet in Europe for the first time. Of our first ten meetings, all except one have been held in the global south. Now for the second time we head north. (In 2001 we met in the United

States, just after 9-11.) Three different countries have hosted us twice—Ethiopia, Honduras, and Indonesia. Other meetings were held in India, Tanzania, and the Philippines.

This year, as always, we reflect on the past and focus on the future. What has God done? Where is He leading us?

We will pray together for direction. How can we support one another in sending cross-cultural witnesses to those places where the church does not yet exist? Who is the Lord calling? Can messengers from different nations come together to serve on the same teams as we go to new places? How can we best learn from each other?

At Eastern Mennonite Missions we are hoping to invite to Pennsylvania in 2008 a team of mission leaders from among our partners in the global south to review our work—what we are doing and how we are doing it, then give us a report with recommendations. We've never done this before, but we're eager to try it. We know that others see our blind spots like we cannot, and we expect God to change us as a result.

So we come together, rejoicing in God who has given us this treasure in earthen vessels, calling us into a priceless partnership in the gospel.

— Richard Showalter  
IMA President



## IMA at conference in Indonesia in 2005

Photo by Javier Soler

## IMA Ten Years

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We were excited by the rapid growth of the church in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. We rejoiced in the new centers of mission which were emerging in the nations of those continents, and we wanted to bless their development. We were concerned by the spiritual malaise of the western church, and we hoped that those of us from the west

could learn from our brothers and sisters in the global south.

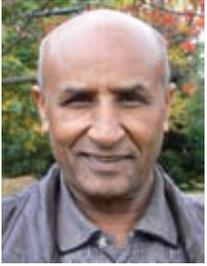
Even so, we did not anticipate fully what God would do among us after 1997. We have grown from four to fourteen members, with four more scheduled to join this year. We have met every year but one since 1997. We have held four mission study seminars and four conferences on the Holy Spirit in mission. Tilahun Beyene of Ethiopia gives quality time each year to coordination.

Each time we gather we divide ourselves into small international mission teams and go out to minister, pray, and learn. More than that, though, we have met God together. We have worshiped, prayed and fasted. We have repented together, and we have forgiven one another. In His grace, we are finding new ways to partner.

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IMA members on the day of prayer and fasting.



The Holy Spirit in Mission Conference started in 2003 as an annual event with the IMA in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. It was launched with much prayer but with little knowledge where the Lord would take it from then on. The theme for that first Conference was “I will pour out my Spirit” and truly the Lord was there among us as we entered into deep worship, heard powerful sermons and spent considerable time in intercessory and inspired prayer. In the words of a Spanish brother from

Honduras, “there was clearly an open heaven over that place”.

In 2004 we met in San Pedro Sula, Honduras, where the Lord put an affirming stamp on our gathering by a sudden burst of brief shower as the musical instruments were struck for the opening worship and we sang “Santo! Santo! Santo!” in Spanish. The theme for that gathering was “Word, Signs, Suffering”. The shower was changed into a drenching rain as we concluded the 30th Anniversary celebrations of Amor Viviente Church, one of the founders of the IMA, in Tegucigalpa later that week.

The Conference of 2005 took us to Samarang, Indonesia, where many had gathered for the 40th Anniversary of PIPKA, another founder of the IMA. The theme of that Conference was “Conviction, Truth, Glory”. Although we had not anticipated it in advance, the Lord took us to a whole new level in terms of not only being fed but rather ministering in teams in various communities. It was truly an amazing experience where new souls were added to the Kingdom of God, the sick were healed and the faith of the participants as well as the local community of believers was much strengthened.

“This gospel of the Kingdom” was the theme of the fourth Holy Spirit in Mission Conference in Lumban, Philippines. Participants came from many countries of Asia, Latin America, Africa, North America, and even Europe was represented. The Lord spoke to us in very powerful ways through the speakers, during prayer times, testimonies and reports from around the world. The team visits to various parts of the nation had a powerful impact both on the participants and the hosts. Vision for mission was tremendously energized with various groups of IMA members making commitments to network and work together cross-culturally.

We look forward to some unusual things at the conference in Bechterdissen, Germany. First, this is the first time we are having a gathering in a region of the world where the IMA does not have a member. Second, it is the first time that so many groups of sponsors have been involved. Also it is the first time that international attendance has more than doubled, representing a wide mix of mission and church leaders from around the globe.

We do not know where the Lord will take us through this Conference but we know that He will definitely surprise us, for He has led us to choose as the theme “Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit” (Zech. 4:6b). We go to worship, pray, hear the word, fellowship, minister, network, and wait on the Lord as He pours out His Spirit and unveils new and marvelous things for the Continent, the World, and all of us. I believe no one will be the same again after Bechterdissen.

– Tilahun Beyene Kidane  
IMA coordinator



In 2004 the Holy Spirit in Mission Conference joined in with the 30th anniversary celebration of Amor Viviente in Tegucigalpa, Honduras.



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Participants from IMA in the Philippines pray for each other. Photo by Javier Soler.

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As we approach the 2007 annual meeting, we are more and more reaching toward one another in sharing and training missionaries. We are developing a global mission training faculty. We held our first Asian World Mission Institute in Indonesia this February, and we plan for more, both in Asia and on other continents. We see ourselves increasingly as extensions of one another in mission, wherever we go.

### **Where do we go from here?**

We do not know, but we come together to surrender afresh to God, listen, and obey. As a western Christian, I anticipate receiving revelation from God through brothers and sisters from other parts of the world in ways I would otherwise not hear. I anticipate being challenged and changed.

### **Who knows what God will do within, among, and through us?**

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