



Waterford Mennonite Church | July 12, 2020

buzz

Intercultural Competency Workshop

A 2020 IMMC Annual Assembly Seminar

By John Kaufman, Delegate to IMMC

During this workshop, Nekeisha Alayna Alexis (who was listed in the Bulletin prayers for July 5), opened our eyes to seeing differences we (most of us) don't normally notice because of our predisposed pattern of seeing all things through eyes of white supremacy that has been passed down through many generations of white-dominant Mennonite culture. Whiteness takes away our awareness of cultural differences; if whiteness is the norm, we tend to see our patterns as right and disregard other cultural values that conflict with those norms. We were encouraged to be aware of the ways that power strategies are used to deal with the "underclasses."

Ms. Alexis introduced participants to the concept of Intersectionality. "Intersectionality is a theoretical framework for understanding how aspects of a person's social and political identities (e.g., gender, race, class, sexuality, ability, physical appearance, height, etc.) might combine to create unique modes of discrimination and privilege." (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intersectionality>)

This concept overlays and/or undergirds the schemas and paradigms by which we interpret culture. It may take some diligent, intentional work to integrate this understanding as we labor at comprehending the interplay between the dominant culture and various other cultural groups within the larger society.

Some quotes:

"There's no where you'll go where culture doesn't matter."

"There is a personal component to systemic change."

"If we're in a homogeneous white space, the theological work has to dis-order the racist component."

Ms. Alexis is working with conference leadership to assess the issue of intercultural competence in conference functioning and also within congregations. Our leadership has already completed the first survey in this process.

Some books to read to learn a history of racism from nonwhite perspectives:

In the Matter of Color: Race and the American Legal Process: The Colonial Period, by A. Leon Higginbotham, Jr.

Stamped From the Beginning, by Ibrim X. Kendi.

White Trash: The 400 Year Untold History of Class in America, by Nancy Isenberg.

Editor's note: You can watch the second session of Nekeisha Alayna Alexis' seminar at <https://im.mennonite.net/2020-annual-sessions/>

Being Church in a Time of COVID-19

The *Buzz* editor is looking for material that relays how we are staying actively connected to each other.

Are there ways that you have worked to be church to each other or to the broader community during this time of social distancing that you might not have done before the pandemic? Or perhaps someone has blessed you by being the church to you in new ways.

Or perhaps you have had something exciting happen in your life that you would like to share with your church family.

Share your stories, big or small—you may just inspire someone else! Don't be shy, be **BOLD**, and show how God is working among us even in this time of physical separation. You can send your story to office@waterfordchurch.org to be shared in the *Buzz*.



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The *Waterford Buzz* is normally published weekly for members of Waterford Mennonite Church. Items for inclusion should be given to the editor by 5 p.m. Monday preceding publication.

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Ecuador and Two Way Mission Partnership News

Mennonite Mission Network has produced two videos about the work of MMN in Ecuador that includes the Ross Richers. The introduction and the first video highlight the history of the Ecuador Partnership between the indigenous Kichwa Church, the Colombia Mennonite Church and Central Plains Conference, and the current work of Delicia Bravo and Peter Wigginton who are based in Quito. This provides background to the connections that have been made more recently between the Kichwa Mennonite church leaders and the Ross Richers' work through the Two Way Mission Partnership. In the second video Jerrell and Jane describe their vision for how this relationship could be a source of encouragement and support to the Cofán Christians in their desire to grow deeper in their understanding of faith and the biblical story. <https://www.mennonitemission.net/video/Videos-from-Ecuador-workers-highlight-ministries>

We also invite you to read the June newsletter *Scattered Seeds* from the Central Plains Mennonite Conference. It begins with the article "Seeing the World through Cofán Eyes" by a member of the Central Plains delegation, and this is followed by an account of Naomi Ross Richer's experience and perspective as a young adult living in the community, and a particular contribution she has been able to make over the past few months in writing and illustrating a book on baptism for the Cofán church. The newsletter is located at <http://www.centralplainsmc.org/uploads/1/3/1/1/13118061/ssjune2020.pdf>

Direct communication with the rainforest communities is not easy at this time but we invite your prayers for those affected by the disease and its disruption of the food supply, the ongoing environmental threats, and for the protection of the churches in Tena and Zábalo and their leaders.

With thanks for your continued partnership, prayers and financial support which are so deeply appreciated.

— Elizabeth Gingrich for the
Ecuador Ministry Support Team



**A worker on the
church grounds.
Can you find him?**