LISTENING TEAM
GLOBAL MENNONITE PEACEBUILDING CONFERENCE & FESTIVAL

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1. IMAGES AND METAPHORS THAT GUIDE US

- New ideas lead to new metaphors which change language which brings change
- What trees can teach us: to move from the branches to roots, towards systemic violence
- Decolonization: the act of tearing down the colony
- To have roots and wings
- Sitting- standing - laying down
- Aikido: one hand up in resistance and one hand reaching out in friendship

2. CREATIVITY WHICH MOVES THE SOUL

- Thula Thula Mama – Shosholaza – liberation is nigh; the oppression will end; Nkosi Sikelele iAfrica
- future of the church requires genetic diversity
- Hezbollah and Mennonites rebuilding homes together
- Mennonite Menace – Yellow bellies
- Christians and Muslims work to prevent violence together in Nigeria

3. BROKENNESS

- Kidnapped Yazidi girl dressed in black – handcuffed by barbed wire – flags of Canada, USA, Germany, France, Britain in the backyard – doing nothing
- Confession of 500 years of church conflict
- War comes to us! Genocide comes to us!
- Violence against mother earth- “what happens to her happens to us”
- We need to receive stories of war atrocities in silence, tears, mourning and lament. Silence is preferable to arrogant pretexts.
- It is our secrets that keep us sick
- We are living in a crucified land
- Hallelujah things fall apart

4. HUMILITY

- We don’t know what is needed for peacebuilding
- Peace theology would not be the same without interaction with other denominations -- there is much to be learned from other traditions
- At some point humility and gratitude leave no room for conflict
- To be willing to be publicly vulnerable
- Caution against pacifist triumphalism
- Addicted to conflict? Blessed be the tie that binds.
5. IMAGINATION THAT OFFERS HOPE

- Calling for a Decade to overcome violence
- Coffee for peace – reaching out to the ruling military and the militants at the same time – there is capacity in our theology to try crazy things; don’t be militant against the militant
- Israeli soldier in response to help: “You’re just making my heart hurt”
- Offering an alternative narrative to Canada’s celebration of the anniversary of the 1812 war
- The Colombian military and revolutionary leaders ask for prayer and forgiveness
- Islam taught at a Christian school in Somalia

6. COMPLEXITY THAT CALLS FOR INTROSPECTION

- Peacebuilding is rooted in the cross and resurrection – not in reason. Non-violence is not always reasonable.
- Peacebuilding is first the work of God – we don’t have to save the world.
- COs in WWII worked in residential schools
- History is the stories we choose to tell
- Most aid workers are “settlers”
- Be prepared to jeopardize your own position – peacebuilding is decolonization
- a stolen person on stolen land
- I have never held a pencil in my hand – how do I draw a picture of peace

7. CHALLENGES THAT DEMAND RESPONSE

- Visa refusals to ten conference registrants
- Peace includes naming violence – the loss of stories is an act of violence
- When we accept imperial propaganda we unwittingly legitimize brutality
- The whiteness of kindness and programmatic arrogance
- to grasp on to a smallness that does not make us smaller
- Our churches are on Treaty land –we are all Treaty people
- Settler privilege – we need to decolonize the system – the only hope is for people to give up privilege
- We’re not much bothered by the intractability of sin. If we forget the cross, our peacebuilding morphs into an ideology.
- Are we willing to be real and messy with each other?
- How will people view us 500 years from now?