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Global Health, Violence, Sustainability and  
a Culture of Peace:  
Forward Looking Vision



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## Summary

### **Global Health, Violence, Sustainability and a Culture of Peace: Forward Looking Vision**

A two day meeting is being organized in July 2015 under the auspices of the Mennonite World Conference in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania to explore the feasibility of developing a Global Anabaptist Health Network. Such a network is intended to be global in its nature as well as institutional and individual in its composition. We know in general that not a single professional network can be developed in a vacuum. In developing a professional network we must anticipate some of the key and current issues that might affect them. Among them are violence and culture of peace. When asked, I agreed to write a paper with a personal reflection on the theme of Global Health, Violence, Sustainability and a Culture of Peace: Forward Looking Vision.

As excited as I was about writing on this topic, with time I realized that it was not such an easy theme to write about. It was not the topic itself, but the timing of writing it. I was finalizing the paper in June, a month of my birthday and wedding. June was also the month of the birth of one of older brothers Tshinabu and my younger sister Tshamba. I was very close and attached to both them. They both died during the month June. In addition, it was as I was writing that I watched on the news about a young white man gunning down nine innocent people in a Black church in Charleston, South Carolina. I wondered where my motivation would come from in order for me to continue writing this paper.

As you see, I did write it. In this paper, I use the World Health Organization's definition, typology and nature of violence as my working terms. By using them, I realized that something was missing. What was it? For find an answer, I drew from my Chokwe traditions. In the broader category of acts of violence should be added natural and spiritual. Among the natural causes I can imagine earthquakes, cancers, tornadoes, etc. As natural as they may be, they are still acts of violence. They leave behind devastations, pain, trauma, physical disabilities, and psychological scars to name only a few. Although some would doubt the spiritual source as a category of violence, its realities worldwide cannot be questioned.

In this paper, I also ask the question of knowing why it is important for a new network such as our emerging Global Anabaptist Health Network to discuss the issue of global health, violence, and culture of peace. I believe the answers to be rooted in three levels of belonging for the network and its members. Violence and the need for a culture of peace impact each one of these levels. They are memberships in 1) local, regional and global communities; 2) global health communities; and 3) Global Anabaptist Communities.

Once we answer the above question, then we must deal with another question of knowing what a Global Anabaptist Health Network will have to offer to the global community dealing with the issues of violence and in search of a culture of peace. It is my conviction that we have four things we can bring to the global table: 1) Our histories and stories of pain, conflict, and trauma; 2) Our Peace Theology; 3) Our training Institutions; and 4) Going to the roots of the issues. In working with a community in the Congo and using the Nudge Theory, I was surprised about the way the community developed what I now call the "Seven Pillars of Community Development." This is only one example of stories of going to the roots of issues.

Finally, how was able to continue writing? It was by recalling a conversation on one of the Alsatian roads with my brother Larry Miller in regards to our personal perspectives on the meaning of cloud of witnesses in Hebrews 12. I shared with Larry about my imagination. Mine took me to a big stadium that was packed with thousands and thousands of people, some have passed on and others are still living but from many parts of the globe. I felt alone in this big stadium, however, there is one thing I continued to hear from all of them, "Go Pakisa Go, Go, Go... don't stop, you will make it. In spite of the violence in your host and home countries, a culture of peace is possible." Then gain I was reminded of our brother Jesus, Prince of Peace. I was told that He did not get discouraged, neither should I.

## **Introduction: Challenges of Writing about Violence and Culture of Peace**

The main vision for our gathering during these two days is to explore the feasibility of developing a Global Anabaptist Health Network. Such network is intended to be global in its nature as well as institutional and individual in its composition. We must remind ourselves that no health network or for that matter any professional network can be developed in a vacuum. It is my strong conviction that we cannot develop or talk about global health and networking without touching some of the key and current issues affecting them. Among them is our own understanding of health and violence and our place in promoting a culture of peace.

As excited as I was about writing on this topic, with time I realized that it was not such an easy theme to write about. I started writing very well, but then all of the sudden, I am felt like I could no longer continue. I could not concentrate.

**First**, my mind was struggling with violence in my host country, the US, especially racially motivated ones like what took place in Charleston, South Carolina. Can this happen when we brag about how much progress we have made in the area of racial relationships in this country.

**Second**, my own joy and yet struggles for the month of June. My birthday is in June. This year I received more than 300 messages wishing me well on my birthday. You see, for me, June is a wonderful month. I was born in June, I got married in June, my brother Tshinabu was born in June and my sister Tshamba was also born in June. The joys of the month of June has also been affected by both my brother dying just a few days before his birthday in June and my lovely sister Tshamba also dying in June as Linda and I were planning to have her join us in Southern California while I was studying at Loma Linda University. My brother dying in Paris by being hit by a train. My sister died from a complication of Sickle Cell Anemia compounded by the refusal of surgery by one stubborn and influential nurse at the hospital for fear of committing abortion or using the few bottles of oxygen they had in the hospital just for one person.

**Third**, my younger brother Wally, named after a family friend Tillie Wall from Reedley, California was abducted by UNITA Rebels along the border between Angola and Congo and was forced to serve on their side for several years. With time he became an Officer which created jealousy among his colleagues. Less than a year before the war ended and when Shavimbi, the head of UNITA movement was captured and killed, my brother Wally was killed. I found out later from another young man who had been with him that he had been shot from the back of the head by one of his colleagues. Is the war to blame for his death?

**Fourth**, as I have been writing this paper each night I follow on the news about stabbing or shooting that took place in one of our neighborhoods in Fresno. Usually, these are people who knew each other. On Al Jazeera and TV 5, they are showing the same sad stories of bombing in Yemen, Syria and the Israeli trying to kill as many Palestinians as they can. In the Great Lakes of Africa, they are still harvesting the consequences of seeds planted by the colonial powers.

**Finally**, it might have been easier if I was just writing on this topic. But I have been contributing to the development of the Framework of the emerging Global Anabaptist Health Network. I keep on wondering about how what I am writing in regards health, violence and culture of peace will impact the framework.

Where will my motivation come from so I can finish writing this paper on time? We'll see!

## Understanding Health, Violence, and Culture of Peace

**Lessons from my Grandpa Pakisa Kamwamba:** Health and violence are very broad concept to deal with and to understand. Each people, each culture have their own ways of understanding health and violence. Before I learned about the World Health Organization definition of health, it was my grandpa, my mother's father who assisted me to understand what the concept of health meant. By the way, it was not by accident that I was named after him and his name Pakisa meant one who brought peace in the family.

My grandpa lived until his late 90s before he died. When I was in junior high school, grandpa live with us. He died while I was in college in Fresno, California. One day I asked him about the secret to good health and long life. He did not blink. He told me that the secret was to live at peace with everyone, not intend any harm to anyone in the family or the community, and to be thankful to God. He was not a Christian. But what I learned was that my state of well-being did no depend on my individualistic satisfaction, but it was relational.

The concept of health was built on relationship within families and communities. Alone, I could not be health but together with my family, my community and God, we are bound to be healthy. When others are healthy, I will most likely be healthy. I must therefore live at peace with everyone and God. He was a very clean person. He always wanted everything around him to be clean. I am sure if he was alive today, he would have found a way of articulating the importance of our environment for our wellbeing.

With my grandpa's understanding of health, I learned that violence destroys relationships. When relationships are destroyed, my own health and that of the community are also destroyed. It becomes also difficult to practice justice when relationships are no longer at the heart of the family and the community.

**WHO Definition of Health:** According to World Health Organization, health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. Based on this definition, health is very individualistic concept. For one thing, it also lacks the spiritual dimension which is very important to all cultures.

**WHO Definition of Violence:** According to the World Health Organization, violence is defined as the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation.

### Typology of Violence

The typology used in the World Health Organization report on violence and health divides violence into three broad categories, according to who commits the violent act:

1. ***Self-directed violence:*** includes suicidal behavior and self-abuse such as self-mutilation. Suicidal behavior ranges in degree from merely thinking about ending one's life, to planning it, finding the means to do so, attempting to kill oneself, and completing the act.

## 2. *Interpersonal violence*

Family and intimate partner violence – that is, violence largely between family members and intimate partners, usually, though not exclusively, taking place in the home

Community: Violence between individuals who are unrelated, and who may or may not know each other, generally taking place outside the home.

3. Collective violence: Instrumental use of violence by people who identify themselves as members of a group against another group or set of individuals, in order to achieve political, economic or social objectives. It takes a variety of forms: armed conflicts within or between states; genocide, repression and other human rights abuses; terrorism; and organized violent crime.

**Nature of Violence:** The nature of violent acts, which can be physical, sexual or psychological or involve deprivation or neglect.

**Using Interpersonal Violence as an Example:** In the WHO 2014 follow up report on violence, focusing on interpersonal violence, it was shown that since 2000, about 6 million people globally have been killed in acts of interpersonal violence, *making homicide a more frequent cause of death than all wars combined during this period.*

The same report showed that beyond physical injuries, the health effects of violence include disabilities, depression, reproductive and physical health problems, smoking, high-risk sexual behaviors and alcohol and drug misuse – behaviors that link experiences of violence to heart disease, stroke, cancer, HIV/AIDS and a host of other chronic and infectious diseases and early death. Violence also can destroy the economic system of communities due to workforce absenteeism, lost productivity, loss of human capital, and face disincentives for investment and economic development.

### **Violence is Preventable Using Public Health Approach**

**Primary Prevention:** The primary prevention of violence aims to stop violent incidents occurring. As in the case of diseases, primary prevention is the most effective form of prevention but also the most difficult to achieve. Policy initiatives to address poverty and inequity could be classified as primary prevention activities in relation to violence, as could those directed at controlling the availability of firearms.

**Secondary Prevention:** Secondary prevention aims to minimize harm once a violent incident has occurred, focusing on immediate responses, such as emergency services or treatment for sexually transmitted diseases following rape. Secondary prevention could also include intervening in situations of high risk, such as reducing the risks of sexual exploitation in refugee camps or internally displaced person settings through better planning of facilities, better training of protection forces, and greater calls for accountability by those charged with the duty to protect victims of violence.

***Tertiary Prevention:*** Tertiary prevention aims to treat and rehabilitate victims and perpetrators. Approaches focus on long-term care in the wake of violence, such as rehabilitation and reintegration, and attempts to lessen trauma or reduce the long-term disability associated with violence. Examples include psychological therapies for abused children; screening and support services for victims of intimate partner, domestic or family violence; and specific recognition of the needs of survivors of torture.

### **Sustainability of Violence Prevention: Development of a Culture of Peace**

***UN Definition of a Culture of Peace:*** Culture of Peace according to the UN consists of "values, attitudes and behaviors that reject violence and prevent conflicts by tackling their root causes to solve problems through dialogue and negotiation among individuals, groups and nations"

***UNESCO Definition of Culture of Peace:*** The culture of peace and non-violence is a commitment to peace-building, mediation, conflict prevention and resolution, peace education, education for non-violence, tolerance, acceptance, mutual respect, intercultural and interfaith dialogue and reconciliation. UNESCO

### **Importance of Discussing Health, Violence and Culture of Peace**

As we gather to study the possibility of creating a new Global Anabaptist Network, we must from the outset be a forward looking group of people and institutions. Someone might ask, but why violence, sustainability and culture of peace? Let me suggest several reasons:

#### **1. As members of Local, Regional, and Global Communities**

We must realize that violence is a daily reality for many people in our communities. Violence is not something you only hear about on radio and TV or your read in the local newspapers. If I asked each one of us individually to take time to reflect, I am sure it won't be long before we realize that we all know someone who live with the consequences or died because of violence.

According to World Health Organization, each year, more than 1.6 million people worldwide lose their lives to violence. Furthermore, for everyone who dies as a result of violence, many more are injured and suffer from a range of physical, sexual, reproductive and mental health problems. Finally, violence is among the leading causes of death for people aged 15–44 years worldwide, accounting for about 14% of deaths among males and 7% of deaths among females.

As already indicate above, in the 2014 WHO follow up report on violence, it was indicated that since 2000, about 6 million people globally have been killed in acts of interpersonal violence, ***making homicide a more frequent cause of death than all wars combined during this period.*** Non-fatal interpersonal violence is more common than homicide and has serious and lifelong health and social consequences.

#### **2. As Members of the Global Health Communities**

We must shift our ways of thinking. Violence is no longer an issue of law enforcement or lawyers. Hospital and clinics around the world are full of people suffering because of the result of violence. We see our role as dealing with the consequences of violence. With sexual violence being used as weapon of war as we have seen in Eastern Congo, the time when health

professionals and health institutions see their role as that of only reacting to violence is past. We must be proactive in our approach.

Gro Harlem Brundtland, Director General of World Health Organization reminded us of that reality in the introduction to the 2002 report on violence as a public health agenda stating that:

*Public health has made some remarkable achievements in recent decades, particularly with regard to reducing rates of many childhood diseases. However, saving our children from these diseases only to let them fall victim to violence or lose them later to acts of violence between intimate partners, to the savagery of war and conflict, or to self-inflicted injuries or suicide, would be a failure of public health.*

### **3. As Members of the Global Anabaptist Communities**

As members of the Anabaptist family, we are not exempt either. I was invited by the German Mennonite churches to write a personal reflection on *African Anabaptists: Engaging the Global Family during the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. In writing it, I could not help but think of the impact of violence in Africa. In Africa, Mennonites and Brethren in Christ are located in 23 nations and yet only 8 countries have the majority of the baptized members or 657,146 members representing 93.2% of all the African Anabaptists. These eight countries represent 37.0% of the 38.3% of Mennonite and Brethren in Christ worldwide.

I was overwhelmed by the fact that out of the eight countries where more than 93% of these Mennonites and Brethren in Christ members live, only one could be considered as being stable, Zambia. The remaining seven have been experiencing major conflicts, civil unrest, and war with their neighbors or like in the case of the Democratic Republic of Congo you had what is now known as the African World War that drew in 7 countries. Be it in the case of Ethiopia fighting with its neighbor Eritria or Angola with a war that lasted for more than 30 years, or Kenya where the fighting had tribal lines or in the case of DR Congo with more than 5 million deaths and the strong economic component, the bottom line is the difficulty to watch the suffering of the people created in God's own image.

When I spent one year at our Seminary in Fresno, I was interested in studying Pastoral Leadership and Marriage and Family Counseling. One of my respected professors wrote and published an article regarding violence in Mennonite homes including our pastors'. Once published, she received many negative responses from individuals, especially church leaders. The irony of the whole situation was that some of the most vocal leaders were among those with several women from their churches undergoing counseling because of domestic violence and sexual abuse. Is it possible that these church leaders did not honestly know what was going on or just a case of leaders sticking their heads in the sand because it felt safe?

### **What do we have to bring to the global table?**

As can be seen above, no individual, community or nation can be exempt from experiencing acts of violence, directly or indirectly. This is the reason why Nelson Mandela, in his introduction to the 2002 report made a strong call to all the nations of the world to deploy as much effort as possible in the fight against violence. He reminded all of us about how we owe to our children a life free from violence and fear and why we must address the roots of violence because

according to Mandela, it is only then we will transform the past century's legacy from a crushing burden into a cautionary lesson.

Just like as in the arena of public health, we Anabaptists have developed a very strong theology of peace and peacebuilding. We have been known to do a good job in times of disaster. Unfortunately, it is my impression that we continue now to be a global quiet in the land when it comes to promoting a sustainable culture of peace, especially at the levels of policy and decision making of countries at war or with a long history of conflict. As we know, peacebuilding cannot be separated from sustainable development activities. The time has come for us to be not only forward looking within ourselves, but to also share the gifts God has given us with the global community.

I would like to suggest four elements that we can bring to each other's or to the global table that is waiting to hear from us. These four elements are meant to be interactive. They are interrelated. They are meant to support each other, not to be independent one from the other.

### **1. Our Peace Theology**

As a Global Anabaptist Network under the auspices of Mennonite World Conference, we are emerging from an already existing solid foundation of Peace Theology. We are not emerging from a vacuum. We therefore would expect all the institutions and individual members to be committed to Shared Convictions of Mennonite World Conference member churches. Furthermore, in the area of peace, we have a well-developed Peace Theology that we would expect our institutions and individual members to refer to as they develop their own peace strategies. It is this Peace Theology that we would also agree upon to bring to other global Networks as requested or as needed.

The best description of our Peace Theology is found in the Global Anabaptist Encyclopedia Online. Following are some key elements of our Peace Theology I am referring to in this document.

*Nonresistance was for several generations the key concept in Mennonite ethics. The term included a number of social implications: costly discipleship, relief and service efforts, attitudes on industrial (labor unions) and race relations -- in short, the way of the cross embodied in a faithful church community.*

*The major work of Guy F. Hershberger, *War, Peace, and Nonresistance* (1944, with new editions in 1953 and 1969) set forth a Mennonite peace position more fully than ever before. The book included both Old and New Testament exegesis, the history of peace thought in the Christian church with particular attention to Anabaptist and Mennonite experience, and discussion of the contemporary implications of the peace position. This landmark study functioned as a foundational peace theology for all the major Mennonite bodies in North America; the numerous denominational resolutions and position statements from the 1940s to the 1960s reflect a consensus based on Hershberger's views', with no significant deviations.*

*Hershberger's work enabled Mennonites to move beyond more than two decades of debate (especially in the Mennonite Church [MC]) over the proper political posture of the church. One wing of Mennonitism, influenced by Fundamentalism and dispensationalism, was critical of efforts to influence governments toward more peaceful policies. These critics claimed that*

*Christians were not called to prevent wars, but only to maintain their own nonresistant stance. Proponents of this view, fearful of what they termed modernist social gospel tendencies, also denounced Mennonite fraternization with other religious pacifists, including efforts to join in public matters with Quakers (Friends) and the Church of the Brethren as "historic peace churches."*

### **Biblical Sources for Mennonite Peace Theology**

*Throughout Anabaptist and Mennonite history, the nonresistance doctrine was grounded in simple faithful obedience to the teaching of Jesus, especially the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7). In Matthew 5.38-48, Jesus admonished his disciples, "Do not resist one who is evil," and illustrated this principle with the examples of turning the other cheek and going the second mile. The following command to "love your enemies" extended beyond the negative "defenseless" posture to call for positive reconciling action, in harmony with Matthew 5.9: "Blessed are the peacemakers."*

*In addition to the teaching of Jesus, traditional Mennonite thought also emphasized the exemplary "way of the cross," in which the Messiah accomplishes his mission as a suffering servant-savior. Nonresistance was found in the numerous teachings on peaceful discipleship in the New Testament epistles. It was practiced by the apostles, and further attested in the consistent witness of the early church against the taking of life.*

*The generation of Mennonite biblical scholars in the 1980s expanded and deepened the scriptural base of peace theology, with significant work on such themes as shalom, holy war, the politics of Jesus, and salvation and atonement theology*

*Unfolding the rich "shalom" vocabulary in the Old Testament has granted new insight into God's purposes for the community of the faithful. This Hebrew word, occurring hundreds of times, is often translated as "peace," but also includes a range of other meanings: health, wholeness, justice, righteousness, harmony, and well-being. Closely related to covenant and salvation, shalom in the Old Testament is both present reality and future hope, a harbinger of the "kingdom of God" theme in the New Testament.*

*Recent biblical theology has also emphasized the basic links between the cross of Christ, salvation, and ethics. In outline, this comprehensive view of atonement states that the God who made peace at the cross (Colossians 1) overcomes and defeats human enmity through this reconciling act ("peace with God," Romans 5), which serves as both example and power for peacemaking activity (Ephesians 2) by those who experience salvation and security ("the peace of God," Philippians 4) through their response to the gospel. For sources of this theological development, see the following: traditional views: Daniel Kauffman, Guy F. Hershberger, Henry Fast, Edward Yoder; shalom and holy war: Millard Lind, John H. Yoder, Perry Yoder; politics of Jesus: Ronald Sider, John H. Yoder; atonement: J. R. Burkholder and John Bender (ch. 4), John Driver, C. Norman Kraus, Perry Yoder.*

## **2. Our Training Institutions**

Besides developing peace theology, as Anabaptists we have also created environments that suggests ways to practice our theology. We have several peace centers and academic institutions where students, professionals, and interested individuals can learn not only about peace theology but to also study strategies for peacebuilding, conflict management, justice and peace studies, historic trauma, and research in peacebuilding and leadership development.

Among the academic institutions are US based Fresno Pacific University in California, Eastern Mennonite University in Virginia. Canadian based institutions are Canadian Mennonite University in Manitoba, and Conrad Grebel University College in Ontario. In addition are several peace centers.

Most of the centers are English based. Efforts will need to be made to make them global in order to reach out to a larger number of individuals. In addition, we should also realize that the Francophone community is a large one globally and yet such spaces for promoting our theology and a culture of peace are lacking

## **3. Our Holistic Approach: Going to the Roots of the Issues**

Not too long ago I was visiting with a friend on issues of violence around the world and Anabaptist silence where our voices are needed, my friend gave an answer that did not actually surprise me. “If people would just give their lives to Christ, I think we would not have much of those people you are talking about Pakisa.” I am a strong believer in sharing the Gospel with those who do not know Christ. But, but I can no longer accept this kind of simplistic answer to complex issues. When Congo lost half of its population while under the personal control of King Leopold and a question was asked about where were the churches? Someone said, “At least they died saved and went to meet their Lord.”

I have become allergic to simple answers for complex problems. After many years of working in health and development in Africa and after traveling around the globe, I have come to realize that there is no such thing a single solution to a single issue. In spite my allergy to single answer, we also have long histories of how we have promoted peace at family and community levels. Our histories of mission if full of stories about how missionaries established churches, schools, medical work, agricultural and other locally generated income activities. Unfortunately, most of them were destroyed when we established a subsidy system - funds coming from North America and Europe to support local activities. As difficult as it might be, but it is possible.

In the past five years I worked with Kajiji community to understand the roots of violence, conflicts, and underdevelopment in the region and the province. Using the “Nudging Theory of Development” the community was able to identify the roots of their issues then come up with what I now call “Seven Pillars of Community Development” that can assist communities develop their own forward looking global vision for global health, sustainability, and culture of peace. They are:

1. Banking/savings, loans and entrepreneurial development;
2. Energy and water;
3. Education, youth, and leisure;
4. Communication;

5. Peacebuilding, leadership development and good governance;
6. Primary health care;
7. Transportation, roads, and bridges.

It should be understood that in order for these seven pillars to be successful and sustainable, you also need strong and Christ-Centered leaders with seven habits of considerate people as developed by Ilena Hall:

1. Empathy;
2. Smile often;
3. Intuitive to people's needs;
4. Mind their own manners;
5. Put other first...sometimes;
6. Patient even when they don't feel like it;
7. Apologize when warranted.

The combination of the seven pillars for community development and leaders with seven habits of considerate people also means putting to rest the Band-Aids approach we have used for years and yet knowing full well that it does not work. We have an opportunity to change the course of history, Anabaptist Health History. Now is the time. If not now, then when?

#### **4. Our Histories and Stories of Pain, Conflicts, and Trauma**

We live in a broken world and where people are looking to hear from those who are also broken but had found ways to make it in life. They are not looking for the saints or super heroes. I think the time where some of us saw ourselves to be holier than others or with better knowledge than others has passed. There are many broken communities ready to hear about ways we have dealt with our brokenness and not just as experts in dealing with brokenness.

We carry many wounds from our past that we can bring to the table and together with others in search for healing. As Anabaptists, we can share about our struggles, pain and wounds from being the persecuted and the martyrs and yet surviving. We can share about our struggles to forgive those who persecuted and killed us. We can share about the heavy duty we carry from the division within our own family of faith and where some see themselves to be better than others.

We can share about how time brings healing. Our dialogues with the Catholics, the Adventists, the Baptists, and the Lutherans are examples of those journeys to healing. Our dialogues have shown that those journeys are not easy. Listen to one extract from the Martyr Stories and Right Remembering published in Bearing Witness – Stories Project:

*One of the complications of telling martyr stories is that they can deepen current divisions and animosities.*

*In a letter sent to Mennonite educators and historical societies in January of this year, representatives from Mennonite World Conference acknowledged that the way we tell and remember stories of costly discipleship from within our tradition has an impact on ecumenical and interreligious relationships today.*

*In the context of the Lutheran-Mennonite dialogues that took place from 2006 to 2010, church leaders were challenged to make “an effort to retell the history of our beginning—as Lutherans and Anabaptists—in such a way that both sides could affirm.” Even as they offered forgiveness to Lutherans for the treatment of their Anabaptists forbearers, representatives of MWC also confessed the ways that Mennonites and Brethren in Christ have perpetuated “memories of hostility.”*

*When stories of suffering and persecution are ‘glorified’ a clear villain usually emerges—whether it be the Lutherans, Catholics, or government officials—making reconciliation extremely difficult and even impossible.*

*As followers of Jesus one of our deepest callings is to foster reconciliation wherever we can, even in our storytelling. As the Bearing Witness Stories Project develops, we hope that the stories collected here can both honor the suffering and faith of the ‘persecuted’ while yet recognizing the humanity and need of the ‘persecutors.’*

## **Conclusion**

As we continue to dialogue on the possibility of developing a Global Anabaptist Health Network, it is my hope that we will not be happy to develop that will promote our status quo. We have an opportunity to give a respectful burial to that which has not work and celebrate the emergence of something new even if we do not know where it will take us. A new journey might always be full of anxiety but that should not be a reason to stop. Like in the case of violence around the world, just because there have been more than 6 million deaths in the Congo does not mean we cross our arms because that is just too much to tackle. One family at the time, one community at the time, one province at the time, that all it takes.

As for our own future in the area of violence, as I mentioned, violence is not something that is taking place out there. What we need is to find ways to impact our respective communities with our theology of peace as well as what is already approved by our global health communities. For instance, according to World Health Organization, a growing number of scientific studies demonstrate that interpersonal violence is preventable. There are strategies that have potential to reduce multiple types of violence and help decrease the likelihood of individuals perpetrating violence or becoming a victim. Below are some of these studies, where and how will we fit in?

1. Developing safe, stable and nurturing relationships between children and their parents and caregivers;
2. Developing life skills in children and adolescents;
3. Reducing the availability and harmful use of alcohol;
4. Reducing access to guns and knives;
5. Promoting gender equality to prevent violence against women;
6. Changing cultural and social norms that support violence;
7. Victim identification, care and support programs.

## **How did I finish writing this paper?**

As you can imagine, I did finish writing this paper which is really my personal reflection in case you have not realized it yet. So what was my motivation to continue writing with a global perspective in mind?

This time was not any different. Except the context was different. It was by recalling a conversation on one of the Alsatian roads with my brother Larry Miller in regards to our personal perspectives on the meaning of cloud of witnesses in Hebrews 12. I shared with Larry about my imagination. The size and the locations of the stadium might change but the feeling of support and a sense of belonging still remain the same.

I imagined being in a huge stadium in Kinshasa that can hold up to 80,000 people and I felt surrounded by my mother, my father, my mother and father in laws, my American father Wes Heinrichs, my siblings, my nephews and nieces who have gone ahead of me. The stadium was packed with many people who are still alive but living in many parts of the globe. As I looked around in the stadium, I felt surrounded by my cousins Tshilengi and Mahungu, former missionaries who believed in me although are now in heaven, Katie Penner, Elsie Fisher, Dorothy Kopper, Tillie Wall, my high school Principal Ben Klassen and his wife, my junior high teacher Kilabi Isaac, and my primary school teacher Kiwoma Jean who once told me that I will go very far in my professional life.

As I look far in the stadium I could also see those who have worked with my dad, Papa Lumeya Gideon, Djimbo Timothy, Malwano James, Lusoki Simon, Nganga Paul, Papa and Mama Prieb, Papa Doerksen, Papa Kliewer and Jake Nickel. As I struggled, I could also see my dear friends I had loved so much but who had become new members of the cloud of witnesses, Geri Friesen, Luis Janzen, Mary Loewen, and Dr. Wiebe my former college president.

Although I felt alone, however, there is one thing I continued to hear from all of them, those who have gone ahead and those who were still living, "Go Pakisa Go, Go, Go... don't stop, you will make it. In spite of the violence in your host and home countries, a culture of peace is possible." I was reminded of our brother Jesus, Prince of Peace. I was told that He did not get discouraged, neither should I.

## **Questions for Discussions**

1. How does our Global Anabaptist Theology of Peace fit into the Framework for Global Anabaptist Health Network?
2. How do you see our emerging network impacting the three levels of belonging as described above?
3. Review the four elements we bring to the global table and share some concrete examples from your experiences.