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## MENNONITE - REFORMED DIALOGUE

WCRC begins dialogue with Mennonites

May 13, 2019 - Kloster Kappel, Switzerland

The World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) and Mennonite World Conference (MWC) launched a new dialogue under the title "Seeking a Common Witness: Restoring Our Family to Wholeness."

The title points to the priorities of the dialogue: right remembering, mutual reconciliation and intentional collaboration.

"I find the title itself profoundly meaningful, and it carries equally a deep challenge. When we say family, we share a common ancestry," said Tom Yoder Neufeld, member of the MWC Faith and Life Commission. "I look forward to this journey of reconciliation with you."

The initial history of the Reformed and Mennonite (Anabaptist) traditions, especially in Switzerland, was fraught with violence.

"Here we are together today, Reformed and Mennonite, sitting at a common table but separated by a common history," said Philip Vinod Peacock, WCRC executive secretary for justice and witness. "There has been a violent history that has been a part of our past. But there also are signs of hope and reconciliation that have happened at various levels."

"Both of our communions are now global churches and though our 16<sup>th</sup> century origins are important, for many of our brothers and sisters, that is no longer the starting point, and that's not the primary point of reference," said John Roth, secretary of the MWC Faith and Life Commission.

"We think it important that we engage this dialogue with a focus on common witness, and that we might ask where in the global church today there are countries with large concentrations of Mennonites and Reformed, and what are the common questions being asked in that setting—and let us see if in those settings, we can pay attention to a witness from there," said Roth.

The announcement about the dialogue came during a special plenary session of the WCRC Executive Committee, meeting at the Kloster Kappel, just outside of Zürich, Switzerland.

"Learning more about the Zwingli year, the contribution of the church and the Reformation from the point of view of the Swiss Protestant Church, we thought it would be important to start a dialogue with Mennonites," said Chris Ferguson, WCRC general secretary.

The dialogue will begin later this year.