



**Mennonite
Mission
Network**

The mission agency of
Mennonite Church USA

FEBRUARY 2014

Beyond OURSELVES



Finding refuge

Ecuador partnership
brings hope to refugees



Mission done best by invitation

By Sara Alvarez

During these first months on the job, I've appreciated Mennonite Mission Network's emphasis on partnership. We don't presume to understand another's culture, and we don't assume we'll do better than local organizations.

Instead, we wait for churches or organizations to ask us to join them. They come with the connections and vision, and look to Mission Network's resources and decades of experience to help them be more effective.

David Boshart illustrated it best in a letter to Mission Network that praised Linda Shelly's work as director of Latin America: "Rather than 'taking' the floor, she is most influential at the table of fellowship. She understands that it is more important to get the issues named so that work will be done on these areas, than it is to be a problem solver."

This example represents how Mission Network directors work. Although this model can take more time and energy, their role as counselors helps churches and other organizations maintain their independence.

Stronger congregations develop from this model that uses outsiders as guides rather than leaders. Local churches grow in the confidence that they're fulfilling their God-inspired vision of mission while they're still connected to a larger base of support.

William Valencia, an international partnership associate with Mennonite Mission Network, wrote this about the Ecuador Partnership: "The partnership's support has been instrumental so that each community can be the salt and the light in their respective contexts."



Mennonite Mission Network supports each church to be the light they are called to be for their context. Each light may be different, but they're all reflecting God's love to their communities.

Sara Alvarez is editor of *Beyond Ourselves*.

Feedback

▶ Let us know what you think of this issue. What inspires you? Engages you? Infuriates you? www.BeyondOurselves@MennoniteMission.net

Day of Prayer for mission

May 1, 2014



Look for resources at MennoniteMission.net/DayOfPrayer

Photo by David Fast



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COVER: Juan José and his mother, refugees from Colombia, sought help from Quito Mennonite Church in Ecuador. Photo by Juan Madera.



The nature of mission

By Stanley W. Green

Relationships are key to mission. Stephen Seamands confirmed this in his book, *Ministry in the Image of God: The Trinitarian Shape of Christian Service*, when he said, “Our most consequential failures in ministry are often failures in relationships. Who we are in our relationships with people generally trumps what we do for people.”

In the same vein, the Belgian Catholic Cardinal, Leo Jozef Suenens, at the time of the Vatican Council II, said, “Today’s pastoral effort will be a team effort, or it will be neither pastoral nor successful.” Suenens could just as well have said, “Mission will be a team effort, or it will be neither faithful nor effective.”

As we work at building meaningful ministry relationships, we have come to believe that mission requires collaboration and opens the door to the possibilities of partnership. John Hagel and his colleague, John Seely Brown, in their latest book, *The Power of Pull*, explain that collaboration is fast becoming the only way for organizations, individuals and countries to survive and prosper in the current conditions—open, connected, complex and contingent.

Partnership, as a way of being in mission, invites us to ministry in service to others, as we together serve a common vision, God’s vision, for a healed and restored world.

Partnerships, such as the one developed for ministry in Ecuador, announce to the world that a community of collaboration in the spirit of mutuality and respect is a much more faithful example of our Christian calling than a lone ranger mentality.

We believe that true partnership insists that all voices count, that all opinions are respected, and that everyone’s gifts are taken seriously in pursuit of our common goals. No one partner can make the claim that they have all the resources needed to advance the reign of God and transform our world through the love of Christ.

If all voices count and every contribution is respected, this forces upon us the discipline of listening rather than speaking, of being willing to learn rather than assuming our role is to teach. Or, as Hagel and Seely Brown put

it, “We have to be willing to risk looking like we don’t know the answer or maybe even the question; we’ve got to wean ourselves from overdependence on the expertise we’ve labored so hard to accumulate.”

In the Ecuador partnership, relationships are as highly valued as the tasks to be accomplished. Relationally-based partnerships not only assume, but also work diligently at building trust. In the spirit of trust, solidarity and mutual cooperation flourish. These values stand in stark contrast to the prevailing social, economic and cultural norms. They demonstrate that unity can be within diversity and that difference can be embraced as a source of enrichment.

Walking in partnership with sisters and brothers in Christ around the world shapes our mission so that we faithfully represent the person and message of Jesus Christ credibly and convincingly. Our witness becomes an invitation to others into the reconciliation and community that God intends.

This way of working requires an enormous investment. It takes considerable personal and organizational commitment, and calls into question how we define our sense of organizational achievement and success. It demands an absence of ego that individuals and organizations often find hard to surrender, and requires the courage to chart a new course from our usual Western command and control orientation to one that is open to listening, learning and collaboration.

And yet, as we have dared to walk in this way, the testimonies shared in this *Beyond Ourselves* and elsewhere bear eloquent witness to the amazing fruit and blessings that have resulted for each of the partners.

Thank you for your partnership in this venture, and in many others, that are bearing fruit in God’s mission. Your contributions and prayers that enable our ministry are equally important and valued parts of partnerships through which Christ’s kingdom is being advanced.

Stanley W. Green

Stanley W. Green
Executive Director

True partnership insists that all voices count, that all opinions are respected, and that everyone’s gifts are taken seriously.





Alba Silva helps Saul Moina and Gabriela Silva with computer skills while Mission Network worker David Shenk plays with local Ecuadorian children of families from *Iglesia Menonita Jardines del Inca*.

Ecuador Partnership: Caring for those on the margins

By Sara Alvarez

The fifth man that David Shenk interviewed one typical morning in Quito, Ecuador, came into his office just like all the other Colombian expatriates he saw daily.

As José Martínez discussed his situation, Shenk asked him what work he did in Colombia. The man opened his jacket and displayed a T-shirt that had a picture of a clown and said, “*Ecopayaseando por la tierra*” (“eco-clowning for the world”).

Shenk wrote in his blog post that his heart skipped a beat because he recognized the logo from a Witness for Peace delegation he traveled with to Colombia.

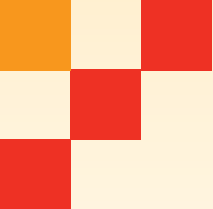
“I met you in Colombia,” Shenk said. “You were at a [community organizing] meeting that I attended. Our group wore blue T-shirts and you gave me a free DVD of your clown show.”

Martínez remembered Shenk and remarked about how thankful he was to see a familiar face. The tone of their conversation changed after that because they were elated by feelings of joy, said Shenk.

In Colombia, the man had also been a community activist. Due to his work with the displaced population and with the local police force, he got into trouble. When his life was threatened, he escaped to Ecuador. Now, the refugee project will accompany him as he builds a new life in Ecuador.

Shenk coordinates the Colombian Refugee Project, serving with Mennonite Mission Network and Virginia Mennonite Missions. The project helps families from Colombia as they start new lives in Ecuador and face prejudice, poverty and persecution.

Photo by Juan Madera



Ministry beginnings

This ministry of the Quito Mennonite Church started after César Moya and his wife and co-pastor, Patricia Urueña, began to receive a lot of Colombian refugees at their church. The refugees often had to leave Colombia due to drug violence, threats, or land displacement. Some of them struggled to get their feet on the ground in a new country, so in 2002, the church

Patricia Urueña lights candles during Advent at Quito Mennonite Church.



Photo by Juan Madera

began providing food, blankets and mats for the refugees. Now the church also helps with micro-loans, housing, and applying for asylum.

Two years earlier when the Moya Urueña couple was sent to Ecuador from Colombia, their mission assignment was to offer theological and leadership training for indigenous churches. However, their eyes were open to the opportunities God presented, and the project has helped 2,500 families in 11 years.

“The ministries of Ecuador are an expression of the love of God for the weakest in our society: the indigenous, abandoned children, people in poor neighborhoods, and refugees escaping violence,” wrote Moya and Urueña.

Many projects, from peace education to teenage pregnancy prevention, developed from the Moya Urueñas’ flexibility to adjust their plan and work with the church to develop programs to respond to the needs around them.

Network of support

Behind the Moya Urueña couple, who plan to return to Colombia in 2014 after 14 years of ministry in Ecuador, is a web of support from the Ecuador Partnership that initiated the mission in Ecuador in 2000.

Mennonite Mission Network, *Iglesia Cristiana Menonita de Colombia* (Colombia Mennonite Church), and Central Plains Mennonite Conference each bring different gifts that further the mission in Ecuador and in the communities of the partners.

Although the logistical know-how, the cultural expertise, and the financial assistance are all vital parts to the success of the collaboration in Ecuador, the relationships formed through the experience

1990 The Federation of Indigenous Evangelicals of Ecuador (FEINE) discusses the need for theological training with Mennonite Board of Missions.

1990

1991

1992

1993

1994

1995

Maurício and Sara Chenlo 1992–1995

enrich the mission and keep energy high among the partners.

Representatives from the partners meet regularly and facilitate trips that have allowed youth group members, lay people, and church leaders to understand each other better by sharing meals and conversations in all of the three countries represented. Two types of tours go to Ecuador: fellowship and learning tours, which focus on experiencing the culture, and fellowship and work tours, which offer construction labor for ministry projects.

Building relationships

Keshia Littlebear, from White River Cheyenne Mennonite Church in Montana, participated in a fellowship and learning tour in 2010. The most meaningful part of the trip for her was the opportunity to meet with the Quichua community in the Andean mountain town of San Antonio.

During their brief stay in the village, Littlebear saw



Photo by Juan Madera

Martha Ortiz makes coffee at the refugee house in Cardenas, Ecuador.

the commonalities between the culture of this indigenous community and her own Cheyenne community in Montana.

“It was interesting to see all those similarities,” said Littlebear. “An example was their hospitality. They gave lots of hospitality for those invited into the church.”

Although Littlebear visited Ecuador three years ago, the relationships that she established during that trip continue to this day. In 2011, a group from Ecuador came to visit the United States and she hosted some of them in her home.

“[When they visited,] it felt like seeing family again for a holiday,” said Littlebear. “We still keep in touch through social media.”

Doyle Roth of Central Plains Conference helps organize the regular fellowship and work teams, and sees the transformation people go through when they work with the Ecuadorians and Colombians. Roth invests lots of effort to ensure that the work teams only go when the Ecuadorian church already has projects they could use help with. He reminds work teams, many of whom have extensive experience in building, that the Ecuadorian project leaders are in charge of construction. Roth emphasizes that



Photo by Juan Madera

Former Mennonite Mission Network worker Alyssa Rodriguez, right, helps Alison Chicaiza with reading practice at Quito Mennonite Church.

1998 Representatives from Central Plains Mennonite Conference, Colombia Mennonite Church (IMCOL), and Mennonite Mission Network recommend the partnership.

2000 César Moya and Patricia Uruña are sent by IMCOL and Mennonite Mission Network to Ecuador as workers.

2001 César Moya and Patricia Uruña begin the Quito Mennonite Church.

1996

1997

1998

1999

2000

2001

César Moya and Patricia Uruña 2000–2014

in Ecuador the North Americans are to work as they are instructed and not try to impose the United States way of construction work.

“The work projects are not the most important part of the trip; it’s the relationships,” said Roth.

“[The U.S. American, Colombian and Ecuadorian workers] really get to know each other just by rubbing elbows. They can work all day long and not say a word because they can’t speak each other’s language, but they can still form relationships by working together.”

Littlebear says that being involved in the partnership has helped her church feel more connected to the global church. The White River congregation is small, and the visits build relationships and involvement, she said. Her church’s increased involvement in denominational activities led a large group from her church to attend Mennonite World Conference in Paraguay in 2009.



Photo by Craig Weiscott



Photo by Linda Stelly

Above: Oswaldo Ramirez and José Velazquez (of Colombia) work together during a service project in Arajuno, Ecuador. The entire group was made up of members from the Arajuno community, Central Plains Conference, and Colombia. Below: Peter Stucky, Don Kempf, David Boshart and Shana Boshart visit with two Colombian refugees during a learning tour.

The Ecuador churches also benefit from the connection to the global church. Moya and Urueña said that when the leaders from Ecuadorian churches visit Colombia and the United States, they get the chance to see how they are part of something bigger, and better understand the dynamics of churches in other countries—their leadership styles, internal and external conflicts, culture and history.

Looking ahead

As the Ecuador Partnership matures, the partners are planning for the future. Two couples will finish their terms as mission workers early this year. The Moya Urueña couple is hopeful that in the next two years, all three of the Mennonite churches in the Quito and Riobamba area will have licensed pastors. These new pastors are currently getting theological training through PROPAZ.

“Working with [the Ecuador Partnership] has challenged members of the churches to serve in other contexts and to put their resources toward the kingdom of God,” said the Moya Urueñas. “The partnership helped some people discover administrative and pastoral gifts, and it expanded the vision of the churches and awoke in us a desire to walk in solidarity with those who suffer.” ■

Video and stories online

Go online to see worship in Ecuador and Colombia, as well as footage of a church building project completed by mission partners from Colombia, Ecuador, and the United States.

www.MennoniteMission.net/BeyondOurselves/Ecuador

Read about Central Plains Conference.

www.centralplainsmc.org/ecuador-partnership.html

Read about the Ecuador partnership.

anabautistasenecuador.weebly.com

ECUADOR PARTNERSHIP TIMELINE

2002 Quito Mennonite Church starts serving refugees in their congregation.

2003 EDUPAZ peace education program for youth is formed.

2004 The church in Quito rents a house for refugees.

2002

2003

2004

2005

2006

2007

César and Patricia Urueña 2000–2014

Liliana Ocampo 2003–2006

Laura and Steve Nafziger 2003–2005

David and Ericka Gingerich 2005–2007

At a glance:

Projects in Ecuador

Colombian Refugee Project—Started by the Quito Mennonite Church in 2002, the project supports refugees as they start new lives in Ecuador. They offer assistance in the form of microloans, housing, food, and applying for asylum.

Programa de Estudios Bíblicos y Teológicos para la Paz (PROPAZ)—This program gives biblical and theological training from the Anabaptist peace perspective to develop church leaders.

Educación por la Paz (EDUPAZ)—A peace education project of the Quito Mennonite Church with monthly workshops and an after-school program for academic strengthening through homework help.

Vida Juvenil—A new program in the Jardines del Inca neighborhood that works with adolescents to promote self-esteem and healthy relationships.

Riobamba couples ministry—Couples experiencing difficult times in their relationships can meet with pastoral coordinators, Raúl Escobar and Ivette Alarcón, who lead a group Bible study and also offer individual counseling and assistance.

Valery and her family found a welcoming place to stay at Quito Mennonite Church while they were refugees in Ecuador. She is standing in the garden at the refugee house.



Photo by Linda Shelly

2009 Weekly services begin in Riobamba with the first Sunday of Lent.

2012 PROPAZ theological study and leadership development program starts classes.

2013 A board and constitution are prepared to form a new church conference: *Iglesia Cristiana Anabautista Menonita de Ecuador*. • First church service at the Calderón church plant. • The church plant in Jardines del Inca is established.

2008

2009

2010

2011

2012

2013

2014

Don and Jan Rheinheimer 2008–2010

David Shenk 2010–current

Rosebert Ipuz
2010–2011

William and Luz Marina Valencia 2012–2014

Caleb Yoder 2013–current

Love and respect in mission

The gospel message of peace overcomes human boundaries

By Kate Lichti

On our first day in Quito, César Moya, a mission worker from Colombia, recounted the difficult history of Christianity and the influence of the Western world in Latin America.

He discussed the conquistadors, and the subsequent centuries of missionaries, who viewed the indigenous as inferior and taught them to feel the same way.

After adding information about the effects of American imperialism in Ecuador, he presented two questions to consider during our time in Ecuador: How can Christians preach the gospel in a Latin American context? What is our role as Americans here?

My initial response was, “Leave. We should leave before we do any more damage.” But César believes that Christians, specifically Mennonites, have a vital role to play in Ecuador.

The answers to César’s questions came to me quickly, because every day we met people who lived out the answer.

There is the Catholic seminary that trains pastors from the indigenous community and helps them to integrate their culture into their faith.

There is the chapel that chose to forgo images of a Caucasian Jesus in favor of a Christ who looks like those who come to worship.

We helped with the Mennonite church’s Bible school that uses the Mennonite values of peace and justice to teach children how to respect cultures.

Doing missions well means being sensitive to cultural differences and separating “evangelizing” from “Westernizing.” It requires openness to Christianity manifesting itself in unique cultural contexts. And it is based in the expectation that the gospel message of peace will always overcome the human boundaries we try to place around it.

Missionaries, good ones, do not reflect that attitude of superiority so common among Western tourists. Instead, they try to create relationships based on love and respect. This is how we can work to heal the past. And this is the role of the gospel in a Latin American context. ■

Kate Lichti wrote this after returning from a youth trip to Ecuador in 2006; she was 19 at the time. She is currently studying for a Master of Divinity degree at Yale Divinity School, and plans to pursue a career in chaplaincy.

César Moya leads the children during a Christmas service at Quito Mennonite Church.





Church offers new life

Church leader found purpose and community at Quito Mennonite

By Sara Alvarez

The pastor told Alba Silva to tolerate her husband.

“People should not separate what God unites,” the pastor said. So Silva endured domestic abuse from her husband.

She stayed with her husband for 14 years, trapped in a bad marriage she couldn’t imagine escaping.

Her life changed in 2005 when she started cleaning the Moya Urueña house. Her employer, Patricia Urueña, a mission worker with Mennonite Mission Network, invited Silva to Quito Mennonite Church.

Silva first came to the peace education workshops, and later started attending worship. Her husband would drop her off at church, never going inside but never forbidding her to go.

The support that the church offered the refugees and others who needed it attracted Silva; she soon offered her gifts to the church. She taught Sunday school, led worship, and helped with the church programs. The church gave her a small offering for her help to clean the building, and soon her role expanded to secretarial

work and the refugee program.

“I like that when you bring a prayer request, everyone helps you,” said Silva. “They’ve been very supportive of me with some situations I’ve had. I liked that they invited me over [to their homes] and I got to know them better, and then I could return the favor and invite them over.”

The church offered Silva the support and sense of purpose that propelled her to take the bold step to take her three children and leave her abusive husband three years ago. Her work at the church and help from the congregation carried her through the difficult time.

“The pastors, Urueña and [César] Moya, helped me to love myself and not tolerate so much suffering at home,” she said. “They taught me that I was very loved by God and that God has a purpose for my life.”

Silva invited her family to the church as well. Her three sisters and brother-in-law got involved with the congregation and her two daughters have been baptized. ■

Alba Silva attends Quito Mennonite Church. She participates in the ministries of the church and has helped plant a church in her neighborhood.

Alba Silva (center) leads a prayer during a small group Bible study at the Jardines del Inca church plant with Gabriela Silva (left) and María Chuquimarca (right).

Photo by Juan Madera

Web extra

Read an article by Don Kempf, Ecuador partnership coordinator for the Central Plains Mennonite Conference.
www.MennoniteMission.net/BeyondOurselves/Ecuador



Janie Blough, Catherine Copol and Adèle Malonga (second, third and fourth from left) sing in the 1,000-plus voice choir at the four-day Protestant festival that culminated Sept. 29 in Paris, France. All three women are members of the Châtenay-Malabry Mennonite Church.

Photo by Richard Vandembrouques

Multitudes sang praises

Protestant minority led Paris in major worship service

French Mennonites participated in a 1,000-voice choir that sang at the grand-finale worship service of the four-day festival in Paris that celebrated Protestantism in France.

Seventeen choir members from the Châtenay-Malabry Mennonite Church, including four workers from Mennonite Mission Network, joined the choir that sang in the large *Palais*

Omnisport de Paris-Bercy—a glass-and-grass stadium built for professional sports competitions and rock concerts.

While bringing together 15,000 people to praise God is remarkable in any country, it is especially newsworthy in post-modern France with its deep Catholic roots. The country's tiny Protestant minority has been a source of derision for the past 500

years and is often caricatured as old-fashioned, strict and prudish.

"It truly was an amazing experience—an example of how singing continues to play a vital role in the development and transmission of our faith, as well as creating unity in diversity," said Janie Blough, who is completing a doctorate in congregational worship.

Global peace pilgrimage

Council calls for churches' commitment to peace

The World Council of Churches, at the organization's assembly in Busan, South Korea, Oct. 30-Nov. 8, called on global Christians to lead their communities to resolve conflict by launching a "pilgrimage of justice and peace."

Thirty Mennonites from about eight countries were among the more than 3,500 participants. James R. Krabill, senior executive for Global Ministries for Mennonite Mission Network, represented Mennonite Church USA. The assembly's theme was "God of life, lead us to justice and peace."

"When we go to a conference of this nature and meet Christians committed to working for God's shalom—justice and peace—we need to be at the table because we have a theology to share with people who are working at the same issues," Krabill said.

The council, which currently has 345 member churches, came together after the horrors of World War II in order to support churches as agents of peace.



Photo by James R. Krabill

The *Teatro Ekyumenikal*, a drama team from the Philippines, performs at the World Council of Churches Assembly worship in Busan, South Korea.

Service to law

MVS inspires Koop to pursue law career

By the time Lisa Koop ended her term with Mennonite Voluntary Service, she was certain she wanted to go into law.

Now, she works for the National Immigrant Justice Center in Chicago as an associate director of legal services. She helps individuals navigate the legal system, and advocates for systemic changes to the federal legal system.

In August 2013, Koop assisted a federal case (Cece v. Holder) that recognized human trafficking targets as refugees who were potentially eligible for asylum in the United States. The law was expanded to provide protection for young women with characteristics that make them targets for human trafficking.

When she started MVS, Koop didn't know what she wanted to do, but it became clear for her after two years working for the South Texas Pro Bono Asylum Representation Project, which gives legal advice to detained asylum seekers and immigrants.

After MVS, Koop graduated magna cum laude from the Indiana University McKinney School of Law, part of which was paid for by AmeriCorps funding earned through her MVS experience.



Photo by Kelsey Hochstetler

Mennonite Voluntary Service alumna, Lisa Koop, works for the National Immigrant Justice Center.



Photo courtesy of Mennonite Church USA Archives

Irene and Edwin Weaver immersed their own lives in the study of God's word in order to empower others to worship God in ways that are meaningful in their cultural contexts.

Mission transformed

Remembering worker who loved people into God's kingdom

Life-long mission worker, Irene Lehman Weaver, 103, died Nov. 22 at Schowalter Villa in Hesston, Kan.

She helped develop a post-colonial mission strategy, and her legacy lives on through her stories—written, recorded, and practiced in the daily ministries of those who continue to “simply love people into God's kingdom.”

She was born to mission worker parents in Bilaspur, India, Jan. 23, 1910. After graduating from Goshen (Ind.) College in 1932, she and her husband, Ed, began to serve with Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities, a predecessor agency to Mennonite Mission Network.

The couple spent 24 years in India, nine years in Nigeria, and several years traveling throughout West Africa and other parts of the world. Everywhere they went they modeled a way of mission that positioned themselves as learners, building relationships with those around them.

They helped start seminaries and build opportunities for mission around the world.

The teacher-learner approach was dear to Irene's heart. Loving people into God's kingdom was what she called “the grand finale of my experience in mission. The older I get, the more I realize that the whole purpose of life is to love people into God's kingdom, whether you are in India, Africa, or anywhere. That is my strategy of mission,” Weaver said.

Beyond
NEWS

God surprised us in Ecuador

Mission workers' open hearts brought fruitful ministry

By César Moya and Patricia Uruña; translated by Sara Alvarez

Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen. —Ephesians 3:20-21



The assignment we received when we left for Ecuador was to support the biblical and theological education within the evangelical indigenous churches. This excited us and at the same time challenged us because the indigenous context was different from the Colombian one. The mission was clear: We're going to Ecuador to support the indigenous churches, not to plant churches within indigenous communities.

Over time, we made friends with the indigenous people, but we also made friends with people from different denominations through classes and workshops we taught in the university and other institutions. These friends got interested in the Anabaptist theological perspective and asked us to start Bible studies in their homes.

Our assignment had been clear that we weren't starting churches, and we wanted to do things right. But our Quito friends asked us to start a church, which took us by surprise since we always encouraged them to attend their own churches.

We knew that in countries where a Mennonite conference is present, Mennonite Board of Missions, a predecessor agency to Mennonite Mission Network, preferred to support established ministries rather than start new churches. So we told Mission Network, Central Plains Mennonite Conference, and the Colombia Mennonite Church about the requests to start a new church. After dialogues with the existing Mennonite conference in Ecuador and Rosedale Mennonite Missions in the Guayaquil/Manta region, a decision was made that the new work would be separate. The Colombia Mennonite Church offered a spiritual umbrella, and Central Plains Conference and Mennonite Mission Network gave their support for

the new ministry. Worship services in Quito began in April 2001.

But God's surprises in our Ecuadorian ministry didn't stop.

We noticed that there were gangs in the neighborhood where we planted the Quito church. So we initiated a study that identified that the principle problems in the sector were domestic violence and fathers who abandoned their children. So we started the Education for Peace project, which more than 600 children and youth have attended throughout the last 10 years.

And surprises continued appearing in our ministry. Since 2002, many Colombian refugees have fled to Ecuador to escape the violence in their country. Various refugee families started to attend Quito Mennonite Church. This encouraged us to start the Refugee Project that has helped 2,500 families in the past 11 years.

Another unplanned event for us was the church in Riobamba. After many years of supporting four couples with their Bible study, in June 2007, two of them who were planning a trip to the United States followed our suggestion and visited the Mennonite churches in Central Plains Conference. As a result of the trip, where they experienced hospitality and the Mennonite tradition of faith, these couples asked us to help them plant a Mennonite church in Riobamba, which started Sunday worship in February 2009.

Other surprises in our ministry include the new congregations in Calderón and Jardines del Inca, the Mennonite Services project that helps school-age kids with their homework, the *Vida Juvenil* (Youth Life) project that works to prevent pregnancies in girls younger than 14, and the biblical and theological studies program. Not only were the congregations and projects a surprise beyond our initial plans, but also it was a surprise to encounter all of the different origins and nationalities of people who over the years have become involved in these ministries and have helped transform many communities through mission.

God surprised us in Ecuador!

César Moya and Patricia Uruña are Mennonite Mission Network workers in Quito, Ecuador.

Our missional purpose

Bless others with community-centered passion

By Ervin Stutzman



“It’s not about you.” That’s the first sentence of *The Purpose-Driven Life*, one of the most popular hardback books in modern history. The book shows the value of looking beyond ourselves to pursue God’s purposes in the world. Author Rick Warren insists that in contrast to the self-help fever of our day, his devotional book is the ultimate anti-self-help book. It points to God as the One to whom we should look for help and guidance.

I agree. Long before Warren wrote *The Purpose-Driven Life*, other teachers showed me the value of writing a purpose statement for my life. I wrote the following statement, which has guided my life and ministry for nearly three decades:

- “In response to God’s love expressed in Jesus Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit, I purpose to follow after God with all my heart, and to serve as a faithful steward of all the resources he has generously entrusted to me, so that God may be glorified in my life at all times and in every way. Since God has called me to be a leader in the church, I shall give priority to the:
- Cultivation of a meaningful personal walk with God.
 - Proclamation and demonstration of the kingdom of God.
 - Equipping of faithful men and women for ministry.”

As you can see, my mission statement primarily has to do with character and calling. Closely related to the idea of calling is passion. When we pursue passion with sensitivity to our community, it can bless others and bring glory to God.

I felt the need for a purpose statement as a way of heeding David Sanford’s warning: “The pervasive, subconscious values of our culture seduce us to focus on ourselves, cloud our vision of the ultimate, and consume our energies in the pursuit of comfort, happiness, success, power, self-worth, or any number of personal rights.” Rick Warren’s reminder—“It’s not about you.”—also helps to keep this worldly seduction at bay.

The mission partnerships described in this issue of *Beyond Ourselves* are a glowing example of God’s purpose in the world. While the individuals in these partnerships may not have a written statement of purpose, they show the value of focusing beyond ourselves to achieve God’s dream for the world, a dream that comes to fruition as we follow Jesus Christ, bringing healing and hope to the world.

Ervin Stutzman is executive director of Mennonite Church USA.

New workers enter service

Mission workers beginning assignments between October and December 2013

DOOR Discover

Chicago unit

Keystone Community Church, Ada, Mich.

UNC Wesley Campus Ministry, Chapel Hill, N.C.

Amy Whiteman Lake, Orion, Mich.

Willow Springs Mennonite Church, Tiskilwa, Ill.

Denver unit

Montview Boulevard Presbyterian Church, Denver

Hollywood unit

St. Peter’s By The Sea Rancho Palos, Verdes, Calif.

Miami unit

Sarasota (Fla.) Christian School

San Antonio unit

Southern Methodist University, Dallas

International

Deb and Wes Bergen

began a two-year assignment as international service workers in Ghana, where he will teach at Good News Theological College and Seminary. They are members of New Creation Fellowship in Newton, Kan.

Beth Martin Birky completed a one-month special assignment in Northern Ireland, where she volunteered with the Corymeela Community. She is a member of College Mennonite Church in Goshen, Ind.

SOOP

Connie and Gerri Beachy, Middlebury, Ind., First Mennonite

Church of Middlebury, served one month in Brooksville, Fla.

Jeanette and Thomas Bechtel, Goshen, Ind., Eighth Street Mennonite Church (Goshen), served more than one month in Tucson, Ariz.

Jane and Marion Beyeler, Orrville, Ohio, Orrville Mennonite Church (Ohio), served three weeks in Brownsville, Texas

James and Kay Burkett, West Liberty, Ohio, Bethel Mennonite Church (West Liberty), served one month in Americus, Ga.

Linda and Roger Clemmons, Normal, Ill., Mennonite Church of Normal, served three months in Gotha, Fla.

Dennis Epp, Freeman, S.D., Bethany Mennonite Church (Freeman), served three months in Atlanta.

Bruno and Rhama Friesen, Calgary, Alberta, Foothills Mennonite Church (Calgary), served two months in Glendale, Ariz.

Madelaine Friesen, Martensville, Saskatchewan, served two weeks in Glendale, Ariz.

Gene and Judy Gascho, Aurora, Ore., Zion Mennonite Church (Hubbard, Ore.), served one month in Glendale, Ariz.

Lois Shank Gerber and Lowell Gerber, Litzitz, Pa., Litzitz Mennonite Church, served more than one week in Elkhart, Ind.

Lorene and Walter Good, Minier, Ill., Hopedale (Ill.) Mennonite Church, served more than three months in Tucson, Ariz.

LeAnne and Norman Gross, Oneida, Ill., Faith Lutheran Church (Wataga, Ill.), served two months in Glendale, Ariz.

Carol and Martin Honderich, Goshen, Ind., Prairie Street Mennonite Church (Elkhart, Ind.), served more than a week in Reedley, Calif.

Joy Kauffman King and Titus King, Goshen, Ind., Silverwood Mennonite Church (Goshen), served two months in Tucson, Ariz.

Jeanette King, Louisville, Ohio, Beech Mennonite Church (Louisville), served three weeks in Elkhart, Ind.

Boyd and Mabel Knicely, Middlebury, Ind., Belmont Mennonite Church (Elkhart, Ind.), served three weeks in Glendale, Ariz.

Don Lichti, St. Louis, St. Louis Mennonite Fellowship, served two months in Tucson, Ariz.

Norman and Phyllis Lind, Salem, Ore., Salem Mennonite Church (Keizer, Ore.), served more than one month in Tucson, Ariz.

Ed and Rhoda Longenecker, Litzitz, Pa., Litzitz Mennonite Church, served one month in Gotha, Fla.

Dave and Karen Mast, Brownstown, Pa., Alive Church Ephrata (Ephrata, Pa.), served seven months in Toano, Va.

Matt and Mary Lou Matteson, Crossville, Tenn., Crossville Friends Meeting, served three weeks in Akron, Pa.

Eric and Jodi Miller and children, Walnut Creek, Ohio, Berlin (Ohio) Mennonite Church, served two months in Tucson, Ariz.

Larry and Maxine Miller, Macon, Miss., served two months in Washington, D.C.

Bill and Phyllis Miller, Goshen, Ind., College Mennonite Church (Goshen), served more than one month in Brooksville, Fla.

Carolyn and John Nitzsche, West Point, Neb., Beemer (Neb.) Mennonite Church, served two weeks in Glendale, Ariz.

Gregory Oman, Cordova, Tenn., served three months in Macon, Miss., and three months in La Junta, Colo.

John and Kay Reimer, Normal, Ill., Mennonite Church of Normal, served three months in Gotha, Fla.

Sue and Wesley Richard, Goshen, Ind., West Goshen Church of the Brethren, served three weeks in Gotha, Fla.

Betty and Dana Sark, Middlebury, Ind., Clinton Frame Mennonite Church (Goshen, Ind.), served three months in Brooksville, Fla.

Vera and Walter Schmucker, Goshen, Ind., College Mennonite Church (Goshen), served three months in Glendale, Ariz.

Elinor and Ted Shattuck, Grafton, N.H., Taftsville (Vt.) Chapel Mennonite Fellowship, served three months in Tucson, Ariz.

Robert Walson, Indianapolis, Ind., First Mennonite Church (Indianapolis), served two weeks in Tucson, Ariz.

Dottie and Roland Yoder, Litzitz, Pa., East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church (Lancaster, Pa.), served more than one month in Glendale, Ariz.



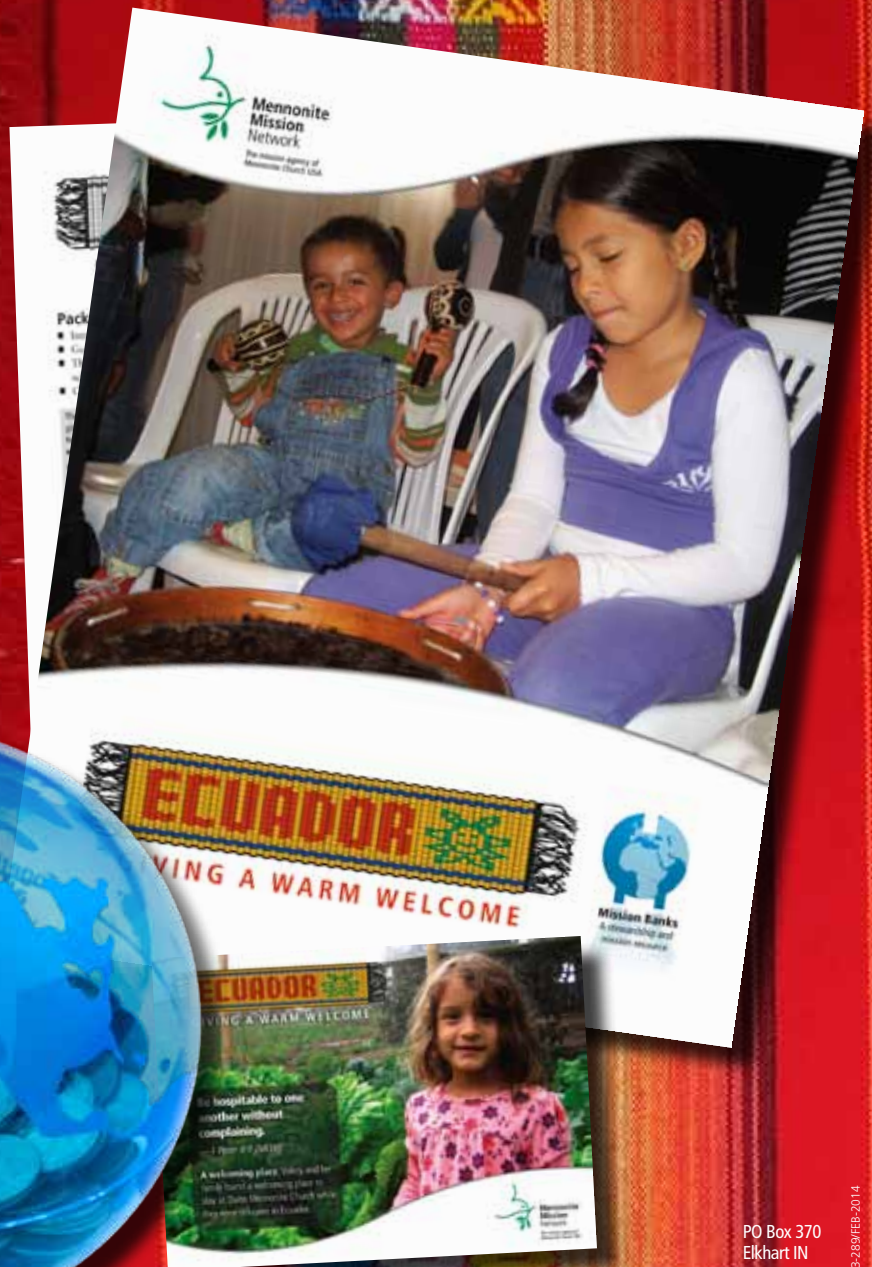
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New resource!

Do you need children's activities? Ecuador mission bank teaching tools are a great way for children to learn about God's work in the world!

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