



**Mennonite
Mission
Network**

The mission agency of
Mennonite Church USA

JUNE 2011

Beyond OURSELVES

Are you on the **welcoming committee?**



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new roots in
Kansas City**
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Radical inclusion?

But Mama said, 'Don't talk to strangers.'

By Andrew Clouse

One of the pieces of advice I took to heart as a youngster was, "Don't talk to strangers." In my adolescent mind, this refrain was lumped together in a soup of fear that put strangers into the same category as all of the other things that were out to get me: drugs, gangs and AIDS.

While I understand the supposed wisdom that undergirds this saying, I have to wonder if it still influences me today in ways that are at odds with Christ's teachings.

I'm tempted to be silent when I pass the throngs of homeless people in downtown Albuquerque.

I discount the panhandlers who approach my car at busy intersections.

I fail to welcome the seeker who walks into church for the first time.

I wonder how I can teach my 1-year-old son to avoid dangerous situations, but understand that a stranger to one person is a sister to another.

Jesus calls us to radical inclusion of those we do not know. The relationships he built with strangers and those deemed unclean are dramatic and challenging examples of the people that Jesus wants us to be. In fact, Jesus says in Matthew 5:46-47: "If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that?"

May we indeed talk to strangers, and, in so doing, be transformed by the conversation.

"Anyone who welcomes you welcomes me, and anyone who welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me."

—Matthew 10:40



Victory lap—From left, Patrick Douw, Henry Beyers, Wesley van Rooy, Sandike Qetwa, Brandon van Rooy, Leon Beyers, and Adian Kok read about their wire car race in *Beyond Ourselves*.

Photo by Martin Wilens

Wire cars keep rolling

Children in South Africa inspire reader to make wire cars



The kids featured in the February *Beyond Ourselves* cover story inspired, and it looks as if their energy and creativity is contagious. Last October, 16 kids ran their homemade wire cars through the streets of Philipstown, South Africa, in an event that brought people together from different communities, breaking down racial barriers. The race participants, above, got a chance to read about their exploits in our last issue.

B.J. Miller of Goshen, Ind., read the story and began building his own wire car—and he hasn't stopped. Miller has handcrafted seven cars, three of which he's sold to benefit the youth group at Walnut Hill Mennonite Church. Miller fashions the cars from recycled materials, using as many as 20 coat hangers in one car. Most models have rack-and-pinion steering and feature wheels made out of Ensure bottles or tuna cans. "We can't eat tuna fast enough!" said Miller.



B.J. Miller of Goshen with one of the wire cars that he made, inspired by the story of kids in South Africa who held a wire car race.

Photo by David Fast



Wheels on reels—Check out video of the South Africa wire car race: BeyondOurselves.MennoniteMission.net



Feedback

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



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Cover: Beh Paw Gaw and her sister, Pay Lay, from Burma, both now farm at New Roots for Refugees in Kansas City, Kan. Sara Forrest Photography.



Welcoming the stranger

In her book, *Lost in Translation*, Eva Hoffman says, “It is no wonder, in our time, of mass migrations and culture collisions and easy jet travel ... that we have devised a whole metaphysics for the subjects of difference and otherness. But for all our sophisticated deftness at cross-cultural encounters, fundamental difference, when it’s staring at you across the table from within the close-up face of a fellow human being, always contains an element of violation.”

I am mystified by Hoffman’s sense of “violation” in the face of the other. Her choice of words does, however, underscore that for the encounter with the other, or a stranger, to be constructive, it will require a conversion on a number of fronts.

One of these is a conversion to a biblical imagination. We need to have our response to the stranger shaped from within the framework of a biblical imagination rather than the polarizing political rhetoric of our times—rhetoric often grounded in fear and anxiety. Rather than resentment, Jesus calls us to compassion and care for the widow, the orphan, and the immigrant.

Another conversion is to our missional calling. Our missional identity is defined by a commitment to cross frontiers. In the ministry of Jesus, we are struck by the many occasions he crosses the boundaries of ethnicity, status, class, and even physical taboo (the woman with the issue of blood, the leper) to engage the other, usually the outcasts and those who are marginalized. Missional integrity is not measured by the numerical growth of our congregations (though this may be a fruit), but in our capacity to reach beyond the invited, accredited guests to those whom Jesus loves and invites to the banquet table of life in all its fullness. I like how the U.S. Catholic bishops stated it: “Through the members of the Church, solitary migrations are to end in the embrace of solidarity.”¹

¹ “Welcoming the Stranger Among Us: Unity in Diversity, A Statement of the U.S. Catholic Bishops”

We need to have our response to the stranger shaped from within the framework of a biblical imagination rather than the polarizing political rhetoric of our times.

Allow me to share my observation of the kind of conversion we are being called to: Each year, my wife, Ursula, reads to her fourth-grade class from Pam Muñoz Ryan’s book, *Esperanza Rising*, which is based on the true story of the daughter of a wealthy landowner who, after his death and their destitution, is brought by her mother to California to work in the fields for their survival. Esperanza faces incredible hardships and resentment from both the “Okies” and even from Mexican migrant workers because of her former wealthy status. She perseveres through her mother’s ill health and hospitalization, and saves enough money to bring one of the true riches of her life, her *abuela* (grandmother) to be with them.

A few years ago, one of Ursula’s students was so moved by the exclusion and struggle of Esperanza, along with her courage that brings great joy back into her life, that she asked if she could read it twice. By the end of fifth grade, this student had read the book 32 times, anxious to see that the exclusion and resentment shown to these strangers, Esperanza and her mom, does not keep them from their joy of familial love and care. I am not suggesting you read the book 32 times (though once would be worthwhile). I am hoping that all of us experience the kind of conversion that prays for strangers to be welcomed, and that allows us to act with the hospitality of Jesus and the generosity of God.

Stanley W. Green

Stanley W. Green
Executive Director
Mennonite Mission Network

Centennial celebration

Indian mission hospital turns 100

The night air in downtown Dhamtari, India, reverberated with energetic singing, the sharp crack of fireworks, and shouts in Hindi of “Hurray for Jesus Christ!” Shopkeepers and their customers were drawn from their shops to watch the lively candlelight procession pass down the street. It was Friday, Nov. 12, 2010, and the crowd was celebrating the 100th anniversary of Dhamtari Christian Hospital, an institution founded by Mennonite mission workers.

The gala continued for two more days on the extensive grounds of the hospital where staff hosted local and foreign visitors who arrived to take part in the festivities. There were worship services, feasts, recognition of retired staff, performances of dance, music and dramas, cul-



Night revelers celebrate the 100th anniversary of Dhamtari (India) Christian Hospital.

Photo by Dr. Mousam Jefferin

minating with a tree-planting ceremony and the dedication of a new hospital chapel.

Dr. Sunil Chatterjee, the hospital superintendent, praised the many mission workers who helped build the hospital into what it is today.

“The sacrifice and dedication of

the missionaries has motivated us,” Dr. Chatterjee said. “They said it was the love of Christ that constrained them [to serve the Indian people] ... the work in the cities has changed a lot, but one thing is the same – the desire ‘to serve and not to be served’ with the same compassion and love.”

Green jeans

Turning old clothes into blankets

Harold and Elaine Yoder were serving as first-time SOOP volunteers in Mashulaville, Miss., when Elaine had the idea to turn used clothing into blankets.

While sorting clothing for the ministry’s thrift store, Elaine saw a growing pile of donated clothing that was unacceptable for resale. She recognized the pile of cast-off jeans as a source of raw materials.

“We can turn these clothes into blankets!” Elaine told Harold.



Elaine Yoder

Photo by David Fast

her blanket project. From casual acquaintances at the post office to parents of her grandson’s soccer teammates, Elaine soon acquired a core group of five sewing volunteers.

Each night they would tote clothes back to the dormitory where Elaine would wash, dry and bag the clothing, preparing to take it back home to Middlebury, Ind.

Back in Indiana, Elaine enlisted friends and strangers to help with

The quilts have gone to the Mashulaville Dormitory and to American Red Cross offices in Elkhart, Ind., and New Orleans, where they are distributed to families who have lost their homes in fires.

▶ Serve with SOOP

Service.MennoniteMission.net



Jae Young Lee, peace program coordinator for the Korea Anabaptist Center

Photo by Todd Hanson

Hopes for a peaceful peninsula

>>> South Korean Mennonites pave the way to peace

[T]hough Jae Young Lee doesn't think the North Korean shelling of South Korea's Yeonpyeong Island last November will lead to full-scale war, as peace program coordinator for the Korea Anabaptist Center, he is alarmed by what is happening in both North and South Korea.

"I think it is seriously time for all of us—Koreans and others—to realize we need to create a concrete and peaceful resolution to our deadlocked situation," Lee said.

Due to the Korean peninsula's legacy of conflict, it is appropriate that South Korea is to be home to the newly formed Northeast Asia Regional Peacebuilding Institute, an outreach project of Korea

Anabaptist Center, a partner of Mennonite Church Canada, Mennonite Mission Network, and Mennonite Central Committee.

Karen Spicher, a Mission Network worker who is communication coordinator for the Institute, says this effort is needed more than ever.

"There are many different opinions in this country about peacebuilding efforts," Spicher said, "but right now, the media are raising a voice for retaliation and the need for increased defense. So thoughts of peacemaking are far from most people's minds."

With the project's creation, local peace leaders hope to encourage regional collaborative efforts that will pave the way of nonviolence.

Tough love

Ecuadorian church infringes on gang turf through peace

With Ecuador's high rates of teenage alcoholism, domestic violence, and soaring unemployment, many young people see joining a gang as their best option for finding security. The peace education workshops, a project sponsored by Quito Mennonite Church for children in the El Inca sector of the city, is meant to confront these social problems head-on and to create a safer neighborhood for families.

The monthly workshops attract nearly 50 children ages 3 through 11 and feature songs, games, theater, crafts, and discussions to subtly teach the children how to be peacemakers.

The project is an outgrowth of the ministry of César Moya and

Patricia Urueña, the original pastors who planted the church, and the Ecuador Partnership for Mission, a collaboration of Central Plains Mennonite Conference, Mennonite Mission Network, and the Mennonite Church of Colombia.

The church began the program, called the El Inca Neighborhood

Peace Project, about seven years ago after a shootout between rival gangs left a teenage boy dead a few blocks from the church.

Urueña said that since the beginning of the workshops none of the participants have joined a gang—a testimony to the church's powerful peace witness.



Daniela Sanchez, the coordinator of the peace education workshops, helps Danny Males, 7, paint his handprint as a promise to abstain from drugs and alcohol.

Photo provided

My neighbor

Journal explores biblical hospitality and immigration

Since Arizona passed the toughest anti-immigration law in the country in April 2010, the topic of immigration has ignited across the United States.

For Daniel Carroll, the author of Mission Network's *Missio Dei* #19, *Immigration and the Bible*, this tense environment presents an opportunity for Christians to consider what the Bible has to say about how Christians should treat their neighbors.

"I believe the Bible responds to human reality right now," Carroll said.

"It can orient the national, it orients the immigrant, and it can orient us all as we engage each other and the government," said Carroll.

The resource is designed to be used by small groups, Sunday school classes or congregations who are interested in studying the topic.

▶ *Missio Dei* #19, *Immigration and the Bible*, can be downloaded as a PDF from www.MennoniteMission.net/Tools in either English or Spanish. Printed copies for group discussion (also in English or Spanish) can be ordered from www.store.thirdwaymedia.org. Past issues of *Missio Dei* are also available.



Woodworkers needed

Volunteers are needed to build small furniture and display podiums for the Mennonite Church USA Elkhart Office project.

Architectural designs and wood provided.

Please e-mail Volunteers@MennoniteUSA.org or call toll-free 1-866-866-2876, ext. 23043.





Japan heals

Mission workers tell their story

In the aftermath of the earthquake and tsunami, and the ongoing nuclear contamination threats that have befallen Japan, Mennonite Mission Network workers and associates sent powerful and inspiring stories of their experiences and the relief efforts of the local Japanese churches.

Mennonite Mission Network launched a website, Messages from Japan, to highlight these compelling dispatches.

"I was near Shibuya station downtown when the quake hit, right next to a huge building under construction," said Michael Sherrill, a chaplain and associate professor at Aoyama Gakuin Women's Junior College in Tokyo. "All of a sudden, I felt a sense of disequilibrium and noticed everyone looking up... The building swayed back and forth like it was made of rubber."

Mary Beyler, a longtime mission worker in Obihiro, wrote: "Even here in Obihiro, our lives are affected because shipping routes to Hokkaido have been severed... Each opportunity to interact with people inside and outside the church is precious."

According to the Mennonite World Conference website, there are nearly 3,000 Mennonites in Japan.

▶ Messages from Japan
[www.MennoniteMission.net/
Stories/News/JapanEarthquake](http://www.MennoniteMission.net/Stories/News/JapanEarthquake)

Permafrost primer

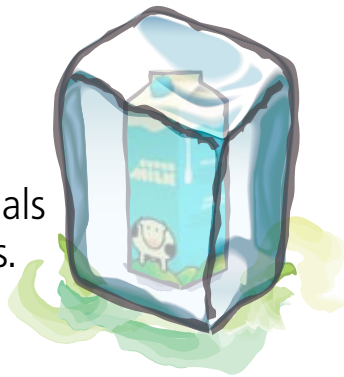
By Laura Schlabach, mission worker in Mongolia

Ahhh, the "Nine Nines" are finally over for this winter. Most of you know that Mongolian winters are long. Many people are making fire to keep warm in October, even some days in September, and this continues through April, and some days in May. However, the official part of winter only lasts for 81 days, or nine times nine. The characteristics of each set of nine follow.

Mongolia's traditional 'Nine Nines' of winter

1st 9

Milk congeals and freezes.



2nd 9

Vodka congeals and freezes.

3rd 9

Tail of a 3-year-old yak freezes.



4th 9

Horns of a 4-year-old yak freeze.

5th 9

Boiled rice no longer congeals and freezes.

6th 9

Roads become visible from under the snow and ice.



7th 9

Hilltops reappear.

8th 9

Ground becomes damp.

9th 9

Warmer days set in.



Illustrations by David Fast

WELCOME



UNITED STATES

Roots

for the uprooted

By Melanie Hess, Mennonite Mission Network

Kansas City, Kan.—In the midst of strip malls and apartment buildings sits a refuge: an eight-acre plot of farmland—a multicultural microcosm. What was once the site of a federal housing project is now 18 garden plots that provide refugee families from Africa and Asia with the income to start new lives.



Ray Nay Paw picks okra and roselle hibiscus leaves, a familiar vegetable in her home country of Burma.

Sara Forrest Photography

WELCOME



Kabibi Genevia, a farmer from Burundi, at the New Roots for Refugees farm.

The gardens sit idle in winter. But John VanderHeide, a Mennonite Voluntary Service participant from Grand Rapids, Mich., explains that, come spring, families from Burma, Somalia and Bhutan will begin to plant their crops for the season: crisp green beans, heirloom tomatoes, and pickling cucumbers.

VanderHeide works with New Roots for Refugees, a joint venture of Kansas City Center for Urban Agriculture and Catholic Charities of Northeast Kansas. The Center helps people in urban areas start gardens and grow food—and they do this work with the newly-settled refugees.

This year, there are 17 farmers in the program from Sudan, Bhutan, Somalia, Burundi and Burma.

“Most or all of them have gardening and farming experience, and they value it,” said VanderHeide. “Our role is to teach them about how to do it here. It never gets below 54 degrees in Somalia and Burma, so we have a very different climate and grow very different crops.”

Beh Paw Gaw, a Karen woman from Burma, has been growing for three years. “Growing the plants has been a good thing. It makes me happy that my sons and daughters can go to school. The food that I have grown is very useful, as is the money.”

VanderHeide said that while the Asian farmers gravitated toward common Asian vegetables their first year in business, when they saw that their American customers weren't interested, they quickly changed their inventory.

“Americans like green beans; Asians like long runner beans that are very different,” he explained. “They want to grow what will sell at the market.” At the same time, VanderHeide said, the most successful farmers grow ethnic vegetables to sell to their own communities.

“This ability to grow their business beyond selling to Americans seems to be important for their success,” he explained. “At the same time, they do tailor to what will sell. They don't harvest the ethnic veggies for markets where only Americans will be shopping.”



Photo by Ami Freeberg

Aye Aye Nu washes and bunches cilantro at New Roots for Refugees farm in preparation to go to market the next day.

During the farmers' first year, the program covers all of their expenses. By year two, they are buying their own seeds and paying for water. By year five, they are expected to be self-sufficient, paying for their use of farm equipment, a walk-in cooler, and the market



“Most or all of them have gardening and farming experience, and they value it. Our role is to teach them about how to do it here. It never gets below 54 degrees in Somalia and Burma, so we have a very different climate and grow very different crops.”

—John VanderHeide

John VanderHeide is in Mennonite Voluntary Service and works with New Roots for Refugees.



Khadijo Youseff from Somalia, with a pile of freshly harvested greens.

Photo by Ami Freeberg



Dena Tu from Burma, washing a crop of fresh cherry tomatoes.

Photo by Ami Freeberg

fees—for the local organic-only market, fees are more than \$400 a season.

“One of our farmers made \$10,000 last year,” VanderHeide said, “and when you add the value of the crops that she got to save and use at home, that’s a big chunk of change for someone who was on food stamps.”

At the end of the growing season, farmers write checks to cover the costs of what they owe to the program.

“It’s a really exciting point for all of them to see how much they’d saved and to write those checks to us for the cost,” VanderHeide said. “We explain how to write these numbers here, put your name here—and they get to do it in English.”

“I enjoy the financial classes,” Beh Paw Gaw said. “They have helped me know how to spend money and how to access money at the bank. The business classes have been very helpful in developing my self-sufficiency.”

The refugee farmers make most of their money selling to English-speaking Americans at local farmers’ markets. In addition to helping with farm maintenance and harvesting, VanderHeide goes along to help communicate with customers about the produce and how much it costs. He said he is continually amazed by the way the people he works with throw themselves into their work in the midst of huge challenges.

“They’re dealing with a new life, a new place, a new language,” he said. “Their struggles never end—they’re living in public housing, having to wade through the entire system of food stamps and bureaucracy. That process is massive and confusing, even for people who speak English and are used to paperwork.”

“The language has been a major challenge, the culture has been a major challenge,” said Beh Paw Gaw. “Learning all the laws in the United States has also been a challenge.”

The resettlement process is very similar for all of the refugees, no matter where they came from. All who have fled their home countries live in a United Nations refugee camp until placed with a receiving agency. They receive 90 days of intensive social services to help them figure out the basics—food, shelter, and maybe a job.



Halima Duro from Somalia sets up her market stall at the Brookside Farmers Market in Kansas City, Mo.

For the refugees placed at New Roots, they begin the hard work in the spring, with planning their gardens, receiving or buying seeds, and starting plants in the community greenhouse. This year, Beh Paw Gaw has started onion and cole crop (cabbages, kohlrabi, broccoli) transplants that she will move to the garden. And she recently graduated from the financial literacy class, so she can begin saving money in an individual account that will help her set up her own farm business once she has finished the program.

For VanderHeide, his time of service in MVS and at New Roots for Refugees grows out of his beliefs—in God, in welcoming strangers, in the importance of good food grown locally.

“A large number of the refugees are Christian, and it’s interesting talking about my faith and why I’m doing what I’m doing,” he said. “It’s hard to communicate deep feelings [because of the language barriers], but I tell them, ‘I do this because I’m a Christian and because I think it’s what God wants me to do.’”

Recipe: Somalia Stew (Maraq)

In a large saucepan, sauté in 1-2 Tbsp. oil:
1 onion, chopped

Add and brown:
1 lb. stewing beef, cubed
Cook 10 minutes over high heat, stirring occasionally.

Add:
1 cup squash, cubed
2-3 okra, sliced
3 carrots, sliced
Approx. ½ cup tomato paste
1 cup water

Continue to cook on high.

Add:
1 large potato, sliced or cubed
1 large green pepper, chopped
1 Tbsp. salt
1 Tbsp. ground cumin
2-3 cloves garlic, minced
1/3-1/2 cup cilantro, finely chopped
1 cup water or enough for stew consistency

Simmer until meat and vegetables are tender.
Somalis serve Maraq over rice or with Injera, known as *carjeero* in Somalia.

Feedback
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ETHIOPIA

Immigration becomes good news in Ethiopia

By Lynda Hollinger-Janzen, Mennonite Mission Network

Immigration is not a problem to be solved, but an opportunity to share the good news of Jesus Christ, according to Yemiru Tilahun, director of Meserete Kristos Church's evangelism and mission department.

Meserete Kristos Church in Ethiopia, one of the largest Mennonite World Conference denominations, sends out more than 150 missionaries nationally and internationally. Some of them serve among Sudanese immigrants along Ethiopia's western border, where they have worked to alleviate both physical and spiritual suffering in refugee camps since 1983 when Sudanese began entering Ethiopia to flee conflict in their own country. More than 100 Sudanese people have become followers of Jesus through these ministries. The seeds sown by Meserete Kristos missionaries are multiplied when the Sudanese believers return to their country of origin and plant new churches there.

Growing out of the ministries of Mennonite Central Committee and Eastern Mennonite Missions in Ethiopia since 1946, Meserete Kristos Church has 172,306 baptized members

and 367,710 worshipers in 518 congregations and 866 church-planting locations. Since 2005, Mennonite Mission Network has been a partner in mission with Meserete Kristos Church through grants.

Steve Wiebe-Johnson, Mennonite Mission Network director for Africa, credits African church leaders and scholars from Ethiopia, Nigeria and Sierra

Leone with helping him to become increasingly aware of the many ways that God uses immigration to grow the reign of God—and not only on the African continent.

"Working with immigrants makes use of today's reality. It allows us to work on two fronts from one location," Wiebe-Johnson said. "When the Christian immigrants interact with their families, they naturally share their new faith."



Members of Meserete Kristos Church worship in Ethiopia.

Photo provided by Yemiru Tilahun

SWEDEN



Bernt Skold (left) and Rev. Josef Nsumbu (center), both from Borås, Sweden, visited the Jokkmokk congregation during the tiny town's winter market celebration, which attracts nearly 50,000 tourists.

Small congregation, mighty hospitality

By Melanie Hess, Mennonite Mission Network

When members of the Jokkmokk (Sweden) Free Church met a group of Colombian refugees for the first time four years ago, one of the Colombian families asked a surprising question: "Is there a Mennonite church in the area?"

It turned out that Juan José and Alba*, along with their three children, had come to faith in a Mennonite church in Costa Rica (where they had lived prior to being resettled in Jokkmokk), and had even begun a Mennonite church plant there. They were thrilled to find out that the Jokkmokk congregation has Anabaptist connections, and they have been involved at the church ever since.

The Jokkmokk church, with weekly attendance of about 30, became part of the Colombian refugee reception committee because of the congregation's interest in showing hospitality. There were seven Colombian families who settled in Jokkmokk, explained Tom Rutschman, a Mission Network associate there. The church provided many of the things they needed to furnish their homes, and members continue to relate to all of the families, stopping in to visit, helping with paperwork and forms, and navigating unfamiliar bureaucratic systems.

*Pseudonyms

Welcomed as a stranger, now part of the family

By Margaret De Jong,
mission worker in Senegal



Penda, Margaret,
Soda, Anta, Sidi

Under the shade of a big tree in the center of a sandy courtyard, we sit together on a mat, 10 or more of us, sharing a large bowl of mutton with sweet potatoes and onion sauce. Using only our right hands, we help one another break the meat into bite-size pieces, savor the tasty meal, and talk about holidays past.

I enjoy these meals with my Wolof family. (Wolof people are the dominant ethnic group in this West African country.) While hospitality is a high virtue in Senegal, my Wolof family has gone far beyond the requirements of their culture.

Imagine hosting someone in your home who barely understands your language, who strongly believes in a faith other than your own, and who is quite baffled about how most things are done in your culture. Every time you try to explain something to your guest, all she can say is, “Repeat that, please. I didn’t understand.” How much patience would you have to show this guest every detail of normal living—how to wash her clothes, cook food, even how to use the toilet? It takes lots of time and energy to do this for someone every day for an extended period of time. Yet, I began experiencing this gracious patience and love from my Wolof aunt and her daughter soon after my arrival in Senegal.

But my hosts did much more. They welcomed me as part of their family. When their extended family formed a formal family association, they wanted me to be at the meetings. The membership criteria? You had to be part of the family bloodline, or married in.

“So where does that put me?” I asked.

The response of the collective family was, “Your aunt is part of the family line, so, of course, you are, too.”

Thus, I am an official member. When the extended family from all over the country gathers annually, they want to make sure I am one of the several hundred present. I pay my monthly association dues to fund this reunion. Any leftover money goes toward the dream of creating family business projects.


In West Africa, a specific fabric is often designated to show group solidarity at special occasions like weddings, funerals and anniversaries. I always receive some of the fabric chosen to celebrate the annual family gathering, so that I can be dressed just like them on these special days.

I once was a stranger here, but no longer. I have a Wolof family who has truly welcomed me in.

Margaret De Jong, a nurse practitioner and community health worker, has served in Senegal since 2006, walking alongside Wolof followers of Jesus through sharing Bible stories, health ministries, and participating in women’s groups.

**Thank
you!**

Because of your commitment
and generosity, we are able
to carry out our mission to
share all of Christ with all of
creation.



We are Mennonite Church USA
Let the light of your congregation shine

Giving

Mennonite Church USA congregations

Annual Report
2010-2011

Allegheny Mennonite Conference		Gulf States Mennonite Conference		Ohio Conference of MC USA	
\$41,841	13 of 29 conference congregations gave an average of \$3,219	\$3,404	3 of 13 conference congregations gave an average of \$1,135	\$827,966*	56 of 78 conference congregations gave an average of \$14,785
Atlantic Coast Conference*		Illinois Mennonite Conference		Pacific Northwest Menn. Conf.	
\$243,205	17 of 37 conference congregations gave an average of \$14,306	\$235,865*	24 of 50 conference congregations gave an average of \$9,828	\$94,165	25 of 37 conference congregations gave an average of \$3,767
Central District Conference		Indiana-Michigan Menn. Conf.		Pacific Southwest Menn. Conf.	
\$230,981	32 of 47 conference congregations gave an average of \$7,218	\$590,519*	53 of 77 conference congregations gave an average of \$11,142	\$39,966	15 of 44 conference congregations gave an average of \$2,664
Central Plains Menn. Conference		Lancaster Mennonite Conference		South Central Menn. Conference	
\$288,256	37 of 53 conference congregations gave an average of \$7,791	\$75,934	15 of 172 conference congregations gave an average of \$5,062	\$164,324	10 of 25 conference congregations gave an average of \$15,432
Eastern District Conference		Mountain States Menn. Conf.		Southeast Mennonite Conference	
\$81,463*	8 of 17 conference congregations gave an average of \$10,183	\$61,713	13 of 22 conference congregations gave an average of \$4,747	\$26,410	8 of 29 conference congregations gave an average of \$3,301
Franconia Mennonite Conference		New York Menn. Conference		Virginia Mennonite Conference	
\$232,860	28 of 43 conference congregations gave an average of \$8,316	\$20,017	6 of 15 conference congregations gave an average of \$3,336	\$180,942	26 of 70 conference congregations gave an average of \$6,959
Franklin Mennonite Conference		North Central Menn. Conference		Western District Conference	
\$8,500	1 of 13 conference congregations gave \$8,500	\$8,878	6 of 11 conference congregations gave an average of \$1,480	\$336,682	46 of 68 conference congregations gave an average of \$7,313

* Figure includes contributions from dual conference congregations

Businesses

\$302,433

ACM Technologies, Inc. Corona, Calif.
 Affinity4 Norfolk, Va.
 Crime Victim Services, Inc. Lima, Ohio
 Custom Mobile Equipment, Inc. Baldwin City, Kan.
 D.R.S. LLC New Paris, Ind.
 Dutch Flats Farm Wooster, Ohio
 Ebates San Francisco, Calif.
 Excel Industries, Inc. Hesston, Kan.
 Freedom in Him Ministries East Petersburg, Pa.
 Harrison Hauling, Inc. Goshen, Ind.
 HRM Enterprises, Inc. Hartville, Ohio
 Inter-Cambio Express, Inc. Elkhart, Ind.
 Keim Lumber Charm, Ohio
 La Luna Home Day Care Urbana, Ill.
 Middle East Media-USA Wheaton, Ill.
 Miller Poultry Orland, Ind.
 Mission Woodworking LLC Bristol, Ind.
 Pettisville Grain Co. Pettisville, Ohio
 Pioneers Orlando, Fla.
 Vistashare LLC Harrisonburg, Va.
 Wagan Corp, dba Honor Intl. Corp. Hayward, Calif.
 Willowdale Apartments Ltd. Frederickton, N.B.

Foundations

\$221,032

West Clinton EC Fund Archbold, Ohio
 Fidelia E. Plett Charitable Foundation Inman, Kan.
 Hospira Employee Giving Campaign Princeton, N.J.
 Lehman Family Foundation Kidron, Ohio
 Mennonite Foundation, Inc. Goshen, Ind.
 Mennonite Foundation of Canada Winnipeg, Man.
 Schowalter Foundation, Inc. Newton, Kan.
 United Service Foundation, Inc. New Holland, Pa.

Other organizations

\$254,116

Anonymous donors
 Central Plains Mennonite Women Kalona, Iowa
 Grace Community Church of God Auburn, Ind.
 ACC/DEMZO Partnership Administration Akron, Pa.
 Ada Bible Church Ada, Mich.
 Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission Goshen, Ind.
 Andover Community Church Andover, Vt.
 Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary Elkhart, Ind.
 Bethany Mennonite Church Virgil, Ont.
 Brethren in Christ World Missions Grantham, Pa.
 Calvary Evangelical Mennonite Church Washington, Ill.
 Canada Helps Toronto, Ont.
 Carlisle Evangelical Free Church Carlisle, Pa.
 Central District Mennonite Women Fort Wayne, Ind.
 Christliche Dienste Bammental, Germany
 Clovis United Methodist Church Clovis, Calif.
 College Hill Presbyterian Church Cincinnati, Ohio
 Community Bible Church Olathe, Kan.
 Community House Church Washington, D.C.
 Community United Church of Christ Morton, Ill.
 Cornerstone Church Garden City, Kan.
 Covenant United Methodist Church Bath, Pa.
 Eastern Mennonite Missions Salunga, Pa.
 Ebenfeld MB Church Hillsboro, Kan.
 Emmanuel Baptist Church Missoula, Mont.
 Fairview Mennonite Church Albany, Ore.
 Fairview Mennonite Church Fairview, Mich.
 Fairview Mennonite Home Cambridge, Ohio
 Fairview/Prairie Peace Fellowship Surrey, N.D.
 First Evangelical Free Church Wichita, Kan.
 First Mennonite Church Pretty Prairie, Kan.
 Friends of Mennonite Mission Network Elkhart, Ind.
 Gan-lin Welfare Organization—Taiwan Rocky River, Ohio

Garden Valley Church Garden City, Kan.
 Germantown Mennonite Church Philadelphia, Pa.
 Gibson City Bible Church Gibson City, Ill.
 Grace Community Church Great Bend, Kan.
 Grace Community Church Dallas, Ore.
 Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church New Orleans, La.
 Grace Gathering New Haven, Ind.
 Hereford Mennonite Church Bally, Pa.
 Hesston College Hesston, Kan.
 Rocky River, Ohio
 Rocky River, Ohio
 Harleysville, Pa.
 Riverdale, Ill.
 Hays, Kan.
 Goshen, Ind.
 Rocky River, Ohio
 Fort Wayne, Ind.
 Listowel, Ont.
 Wellesley, Ont.
 Akron, Pa.
 Goshen, Ind.
 Newton, Kan.
 Northfield, Minn.
 Pensacola, Fla.
 Hays, Kan.
 Wauseon, Ohio
 Meriden, Iowa
 North Canton, Ohio
 Kouts, Ind.
 Hillsboro, Kan.
 Berea, Ohio
 Petittodioc, N.B.
 Bowmansville, Pa.
 Millersburg, Ohio
 York, Pa.
 Protection, Kan.
 Davie, Fla.
 Goshen, Ind.
 Grand Rapids, Mich.
 Frederickton, N.B.
 Souderton, Pa.
 Navarre, Ohio
 Davie, Fla.
 Woxall, Pa.
 Greenville, S.C.
 Mountain City, Tenn.
 Harrisonburg, Va.
 Winnetka, Ill.
 London, U.K.
 Newton, Kan.

Estates

\$1,505,873

Vernon Aschliman Estate Archbold, Ohio
 Lawrence Bartel Estate Souderton, Pa.
 Anna R. Beck Estate Hesston, Kan.
 Gladys Becker Estate Fulshear, Texas
 Curtis Bergey Estate Souderton, Pa.
 John I. Bontrager Estate Goshen, Ind.
 Grace Brenneman Estate Goshen, Ind.
 Jacob Brenneman Family Estate Lenexa, Kan.
 Virgil Brenneman Trust Frederick, Md.
 Ruth L. Buller Estate Goshen, Ind.
 Warren H. Christophel Trust Goshen, Ind.
 Aaron J. Claassen Estate Goshen, Ind.
 Anna Margret Claassen Estate McPherson, Kan.
 Cora Crossgrove Estate Archbold, Ohio
 Phyllis J. Detweiler Estate Goshen, Ind.
 Joseph Drawbond Estate Fortuna, N.D.

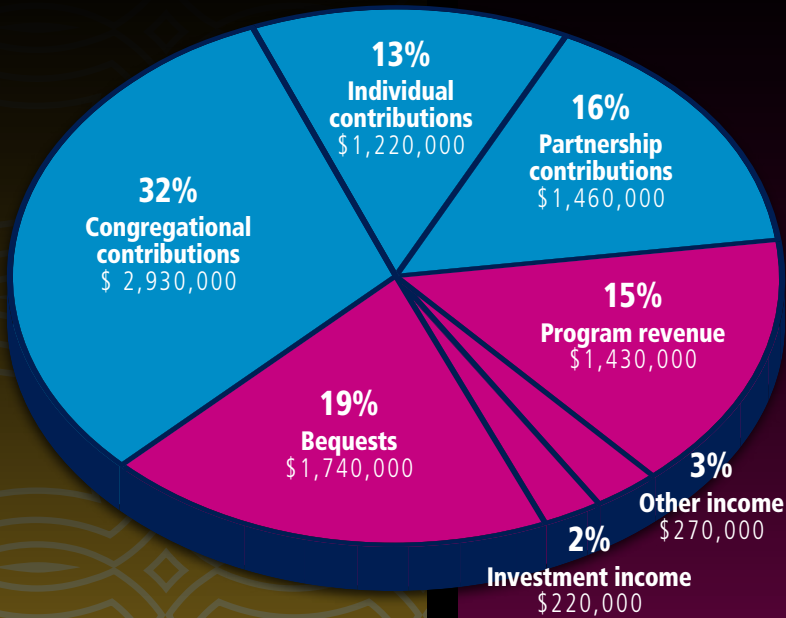
Mary A. Drawbond Estate Crescent City, Calif.
 Elon H. Eash Estate Archbold, Ohio
 Clayton Eigsti Estate Mackinaw, Ill.
 Lena B. Eitzen Estate Newton, Kan.
 Elma E. Esau Estate North Newton, Kan.
 Marie J. Ewert Estate Goshen, Ind.
 Gladys Friesen Estate Goshen, Ind.
 Jerry Gingerich Estate Mountain Home, Idaho
 Charles J. Graber Estate Stryker, Ohio
 Delpha W. Graber Estate Foley, Minn.
 LaVerne L. Graber Estate Wayland, Iowa
 Abe Graber Memorial Fund San Antonio, Texas
 Anna S. Halteman Estate Quakertown, Pa.
 Wilmer M. Halteman Estate Sellersville, Pa.
 Frances S. Harman Estate Harrisonburg, Va.
 Irene Hershberger Estate Sugarcreek, Ohio
 Merlin Hershberger Estate Wooster, Ohio
 Velma Hirstein Estate Eureka, Ill.
 Audrey Hochstetler Estate Iowa City, Iowa
 Peter Isaak Estate Aberdeen, Idaho
 Ivan Kropf Estate Molalla, Ore.
 Erma Lapp Estate Lansdale, Pa.
 Elsie M. Linder Estate North Canton, Ohio
 Luella R. Linder Estate Louisville, Ohio
 Linder Sisters Charitable Unitrust Alliance, Ohio
 Horace W. Longacre Estate Franconia, Pa.
 William H. Mann Trust Elkhart, Ind.
 Hilda Martin Estate Goshen, Ind.
 Irene N. Martin Estate Ephrata, Pa.
 Clayton J. Mayer Estate Sarasota, Fla.
 Robert Milne Estate Goshen, Ind.
 Willis D. Moyer Charitable Unitrust Goshen, Ind.
 Mildred Moyer Estate Souderton, Pa.
 Mary B. Moyers Estate Harrisonburg, Va.
 Palmquist Trust Highland Park, Ill.
 Irvin J. Peters Estate North Hollywood, Calif.
 L. Mildred Renno Estate Goshen, Ind.
 Oliver Roth Estate Milford, Neb.
 Mary E. Ruth Estate Goshen, Ind.
 Magdalena Salah Estate Goshen, Ind.
 Harley Sauder Estate Pioneer, Ohio
 Reuben Schantz Estate Beemer, Neb.
 Elmer Schrock Estate Wayland, Iowa
 Emily Shenk Estate Sarasota, Fla.
 Mary F. Shenk Estate Harrisonburg, Va.
 Erma M. Snyder Estate Goshen, Ind.
 Clayton Sommers Estate Kokomo, Ind.
 Ida R. Stoltzfus Estate Honey Brook, Pa.
 Regina Stucky Trust Marion, S.D.
 Marianna Stutzman Estate Goshen, Ind.
 Dwight Swartz Charitable Unitrust Harrisonburg, Va.
 Evelyn M. Troyer Estate Harper, Kan.
 Esther Waltner Estate Freeman, S.D.
 Edwin L. Weaver Estate Elkhart, Ind.
 Iona S. Weaver Estate Lancaster, Pa.
 Grace F. Weldy Estate Goshen, Ind.
 Mildred F. Wollman Estate Freeman, S.D.
 Ora Yoder Endowment Fund Goshen, Ind.
 Henry Zehr Estate Goshen, Ind.
 William M. Zehr Estate Hutchinson, Kan.

How we received and used your gifts

Operating income

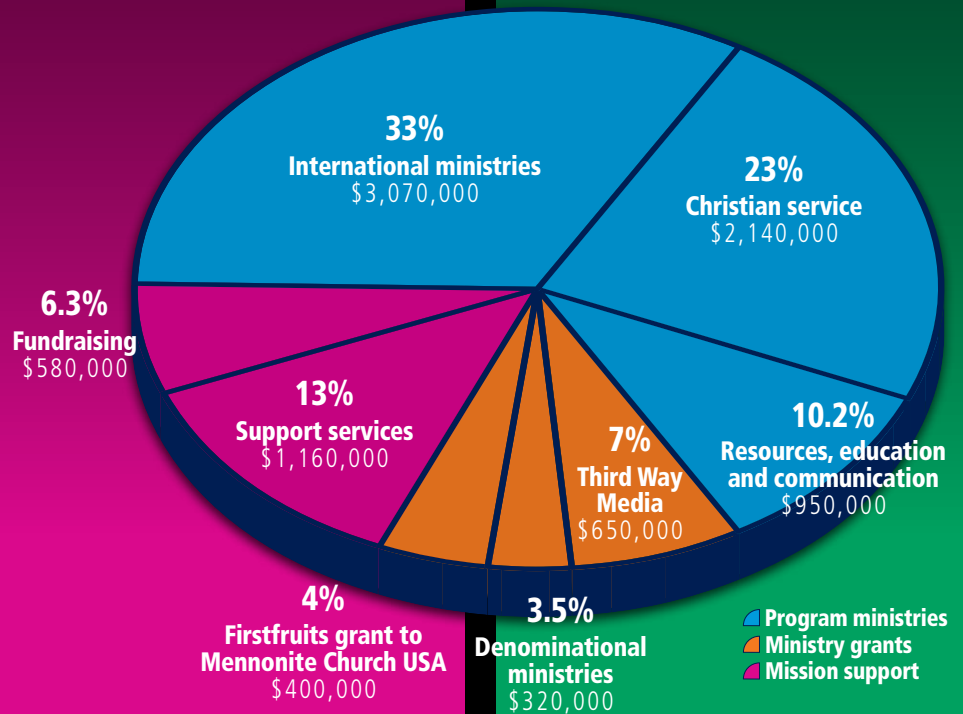
\$9,270,000

Contributions
Other resources



Operating expenses

\$9,270,000



Program ministries
Ministry grants
Mission support

Additional notes

1. Mennonite Mission Network 2010-2011 fiscal year was Feb. 1, 2010, to Jan. 31, 2011.
2. The total value of bequests received during the 2010-2011 fiscal year was \$1,330,000. These funds are used over a four-year period.

3. Program revenue includes funding from partner organizations, program fees, event fees, sale of publications and resources, and worker earnings.
4. In addition to operating fund programs, \$200,000 was dispersed to short-term projects funded by special contributions.

5. Cash held in reserve as of Jan. 31, 2010, totaled \$3,510,000.
6. Confidentiality policy: Giving information in the Mission Network/ Mennonite Church USA database will not be shared. Address information may be shared with other Mennonite Church USA agencies.



Miriam Regier with MVS and Walter Good with SOOP fix a water heater as part of a home repair ministry started by SOOPers and Shalom Mennonite Fellowship in Tucson, Ariz.

Photo by Arloa Bontrager

Short-term service

Mission workers complete assignments from Glendale to Ghana

SOOP

Bill Armfield and Mary Erb-Armfield, Hesston, Kan., served two weeks in Glendale, Ariz.

Betty and Ralph Aschliman, Archbold, Ohio, served three months in Brooksville, Fla.

Connie and Gerri Beachy, Middlebury, Ind., served two months in Brooksville, Fla.

Jeannette and Thomas Bechtel, Goshen, Ind., served one and a half months in Tucson, Ariz.

Evaleen and David Bertsche, Goshen, Ind., served two weeks in Glendale, Ariz.

Joyce and Leroy Bontrager, Goshen, Ind., served three weeks in San Antonio.

Janis and Sheldon Burkhalter, Woodburn, Ore., served 10 weeks in Elkhart, Ind.

Linda and Roger Clemmons, Normal,

Ill., served 11 weeks in Gotha, Fla.

Belle Duerksen, Goshen, Ind., served one month in Glendale, Ariz.

Edna and George Dyck, North Newton, Kan., served three months in Tucson, Ariz.

Esther and Leon Farmwald, Nappanee, Ind., served two weeks in Glendale, Ariz.

Kevin Farmwald, Goshen, Ind., served two months in San Antonio.

Mary Joyce Gingerich, Portland, Ore., served three weeks in La Junta, Colo.

Lorene and Walter Good, Minier, Ill., served two and a half months in Tucson, Ariz.

Cecil and Susan Graber, Eureka, Ill., served two and a half months in Tucson, Ariz.

Darryll and Linda Graber, Renton, Wash., served two weeks in Carlsbad, N.M.

LeAnne and Norman Gross, Oneida, Ill.,

served two months in Glendale, Ariz.

David and Jane Hess, Lancaster, Pa., served two weeks in Glendale, Ariz.

Jacob S. and Norlene Hess, Harrisonburg, Va., served two weeks in Glendale, Ariz.

Glen and Ruby Hochstedler, Wakarusa, Ind., served two weeks in Glendale, Ariz.

Mary Jane Hooper, Shipshewana, Ind., served one month in Kykotsmovi, Ariz.

Louetta Hurst, Lancaster, Pa., served two weeks in Kykotsmovi, Ariz.

David N. and LouAnn Kanagy, Archbold, Ohio, served three weeks in Glendale, Ariz.

Barbara E. and Byron F. Kauffman, West Liberty, Ohio, served one month in Akron, Pa.

Joy Kauffman King and Titus P. King, Goshen, Ind., served two months in Tucson, Ariz.

Gene and Virginia Kaufman, Parker, S.D., served one month in Glendale, Ariz.

Pamela Lamborn, Peabody, Kan., served one week in Glendale, Ariz.

Edward and Rhoda Longenecker, Lancaster, Pa., served two weeks in Gotha, Fla.

Milo I. and Nancy Mast, Goshen, Ind., served one month in El Dorado, Ark.

Eli and Irene Miller, Brandywine, W.Va., served two months in Tucson, Ariz.

Nathan and Viola Miller, Beach City, Ohio, served one month in San Antonio.

Phyllis and William Miller, Goshen, Ind., served two and a half months in Tucson, Ariz.

Wilma Miller, Goshen, Ind., served two and a half months in El Dorado, Ark.

Jordan Penner, Newton, Kan., served two months in Glendale, Ariz.

Douglas and Rita Peters, and their children, Andrea and Erin, Hesston, Kan., served two weeks in Gotha, Fla., and two weeks in Americus, Ga.

Ruth and Sig Polle, Winnipeg, Manitoba, served three weeks in Tucson, Ariz.

Kay and John Reimer, Normal, Ill., served four months in Gotha, Fla.

Bonnie and Dwayne Rufenacht, La Junta, Colo., served one month in Tucson, Ariz.

Karen and Lynn E. Rupp, Toledo, Ohio, served two weeks in Americus, Ga.

Annabelle and Arden Schmucker, Alliance, Ohio, served one and a half months in El Dorado, Ark.

Delbert and Linda Schrock, Bristol, Ind., served two and a half months in Gotha, Fla.

Eloise and Francis Schrock, Goshen, Ind., served two and a half months in Tucson, Ariz.

Emma Schrock, Shipshewana, Ind., served two and a half months in El Dorado, Ark.

Geraldine Schrock, Normal, Ill., served one and a half months in Kykotsmovi, Ariz.

Elinor and Ted Shattuck, Grafton, N.H., served two months in Tucson, Ariz.

Merrill and Violet Stutzman, Milford, Neb., served one week in Murdock, Kan.

Duane L. and Marlyns Tieszen, Marion, S.D., served one and a half months in El Dorado, Ark.

Clarice and Harold Troyer, Manson, Iowa, served one week in Murdock, Kan.

Sarah Troyer, Goshen, Ind., served one and a half months in El Dorado, Ark.

Emilie and Robert Walton, Indianapolis, served two months in Tucson, Ariz.

Ida Weaver, Lagrange, Ind., served one and a half months in El Dorado, Ark.

Elaine K. Widrick, Croghan, N.Y., served two months in Macon, Miss.

Alice and Gene S. Wyse, Wayland, Iowa, served three weeks in Glendale, Ariz.

Elaine and Harold Yoder, Middlebury, Ind., served one month in Macon, Miss.

International

Alice and Willard Roth of Elkhart, Ind. (home congregation is Eighth Street Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.), served for five weeks as ambassadors to Ghana Mennonite Church and Good News Theological College and Seminary.

Wilbert Shenk of Elkhart, Ind. (home congregation is Belmont Mennonite Church, Elkhart), served three weeks as a visiting missiology professor at Centre for Contemporary Christianity at United Theological College, Bangalore, India.

Mathew Swora, Minneapolis, Minn. (home congregation is Faith Mennonite Church, Minneapolis), served a month in leadership development for the Mennonite Church in Burkina Faso.

Kenneth and Raina Theiss, Galloway, Ohio (home congregations are Sharon Mennonite Church, Plain City, Ohio, and Reynoldsburg United Methodist Church), served two months at Dhantari Christian Hospital in India as nursing staff and construction worker.

Mission openings

Join God's work in the world

Do you have talents to share or a calling to fulfill? Consider one of the mission assignments below or other options online: www.MennoniteMission.net/Serve/International.

Argentina
Bivocational church-planting intern: Strengthen relationships with churches in the Patagonia region.
Term: 1 year

Ecuador
Education and ministry facilitator: Support the pastors and ministry of the young Riobamba church.
Term: 1 year or more

Benin
Community development consultant: Team with partners in program development and capacity building.
Term: 3 years

Democratic Republic of Congo
Logistics coordinator: Provide a link between Mennonite churches in the D.R.C. and the U.S.
Term: 3 years

Mongolia
English teaching, IT, communication, agriculture, etc.: Match your skills with the ministry needs in Mongolia.
Term: 1 year or more

China
English teaching: Teach English at a Chinese university under Mennonite Partners in China.
Term: 5 months–3 years

Nepal
Peacebuilding adviser: Organize conflict resolution training, and develop responses to post-conflict needs.
Term: 3 years

India
Bible and theology teachers: Teach at Union Biblical Seminary and in surrounding Mennonite churches.
Term: 3 months or more

Faith amidst disaster

Finding the reconciling Christ in Japan

By Ray Epp



In conversations I had with the Ministry of Agriculture, I learned there are 144,000 acres of farmland that have been damaged by the tsunami. This is about 3 percent of Japan's 4.3 million acres of cropland.

At Menno Village we have been promoting conversations between people in Hokkaido and in the nuclear contamination zone. We are beginning to realize that human beings are neither wise enough nor just enough to handle so much power. The reactors that were destroyed were built for people in Tokyo, but the local farmers are suffering the consequences of the system's failure. The local people have nowhere to go and no way to feed themselves. The destruction of local people's lives is being accomplished through the failure of the electrical company's supposed best intention of improving people's lives with electricity.

The nuclear contamination makes it difficult to make any long-term plans. Life is never again going to return to the old "normal." The old normal was about adopting high technology to raise the standard of living. The old normal has now turned into a living nightmare. I sense that people want to return to the importance of relating to one another and working together to secure a livelihood rooted within the local community and within the limits of nature. Exactly what that is going to look like I do not know, but I see the conversation beginning.

It is no longer strange to talk in public about life being sacred and to talk about God. This could be the beginning of a global change in which the forces of globalization and development come to a halt, and people work together to create a more humane and livable world.

To speak biblically, this is the work of reconciliation. God in Christ is reconciling the world that is all humanity and all creation back to himself. The church is invited to participate in the reconciling work as Christ's ambassadors (2 Corinthians 5:17-20). In the spirit of Christian service, we will continue to share in this work of helping people caught in this disaster.

Ray Epp is a Mission Network associate living in Sapporo, Japan. Ray and his wife, Akiko, are directors of Menno Village, an urban/rural food and agricultural initiative of Mennonite churches in Sapporo.

Prophetic voice

Calling the Ivorian church to denounce injustice

By Martine Audéoud



During the last few months of political violence between the opposing presidents, we at the Theological Seminary of the Christian Alliance in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, have been worried by the divisions that have developed in the evangelical Ivorian churches. These divisions are putting our society in this post-electoral period at great risk for continued violence and unrest.

Many churches have given into society's pressure to divide into political camps, leading to ruptures within church communities and families. Such churches are unable to take a critical stand against the positions of the broader society, prohibiting the church from being a prophetic voice in Ivory Coast politics.

In order to help the Ivorian church recapture its divine mandate, members of the Ivorian church must re-imagine the political role Christians should play in society; remember that a Christian's identity is firmly rooted in Christ and not in nationality or ethnicity; and live daily life rooted in the example Jesus set forth in the Gospels.

What strategies will the church initiate today to meet the fear and the violence that have destroyed our nation? We at the seminary call on the church to:

- Repent from its failure to adequately carry out the church's prophetic mandate in the political arena.
- Improve training for church leaders in the area of reconciliation.
- Denounce injustices and propose ways to responsibly manage political power.
- Regain its intercessory role before God on behalf of the Ivorian community and its political leaders.
- Model a society that is founded on the inclusion of all, regardless of identity and ethnic background.
- Help those in need by serving the least served and advocating for the forgotten.
- Consider ethnic, cultural, linguistic and political diversity as a source of mutual enrichment.

These steps will help the Ivorian church redeem the use of political power through peace and reconciliation.

Audéoud is associate director of Masters programs in holistic development at the Theological Seminary of the Christian Alliance in Abidjan, Ivory Coast.

Westside stories

Coming of age in Denver's oldest neighborhood

By Antonio Lucero



WOW! I can't believe it! I am actually working in the hood I grew up in—the Westside, the oldest hood in Denver. Gentrification is trying hard to take it over, but the heart and soul of the Westside is making it hard to do so.

It wasn't long ago that I was riding my Big Wheel up and down Inca Street hoping I could burn rubber. Little did I know the wheels were made of plastic.

It wasn't long ago that me and my li'l homies used to steal rhubarb from gardens and light fires in the dumpsters.

It wasn't long ago when I attended the Boys Club (Lincoln Branch) and got into fights with the other kids because they tried to steal my clothes.

It wasn't long ago my mom and I waited in line at the Denver Inner City Parish to get a block of government cheese. It made the best nachos.

It wasn't long ago that the immigrant neighbors and I played marbles for hours. We would stop when the cuticles on our thumbs were too bloody.

It wasn't long ago that we adopted one of the kids I used to play marbles with. His mom, a Mexican prostitute, dropped him off at our house with only the clothes on his back. She told him she'd be right back.

It wasn't long ago that my li'l sister and brother used to go to daycare at First Mennonite.

It wasn't long ago that I heard my dad's loud "AAANTHOONIO!" when he got home from work, calling me home for dinner.

It wasn't long ago that I saw a girl get raped and couldn't do anything about it for fear I would be killed.

It wasn't long ago that I got beat into the Inca Boys at my sister's house on Inca Street, becoming part of one of the most feared gangs in Denver.

It wasn't long ago that I gave myself to the Lord and started serving at His Love Fellowship.

It wasn't long ago that I accepted a position at DOOR to become the new city director. Now I can share my neighborhood and help lead young adults to see the face of God in the city.

DOOR, a joint program of Mennonite Mission Network and Presbyterian Church USA, invites young adults to "see the face of God in the city" through short-term trips for youth groups and longer periods of service for individuals.

Welcoming the stranger

Unplug your congregation's 'No Vacancy' sign

By Ervin Stutzman



Have you ever looked for motel accommodations only to discover there was no room available? Some motels flash a "No Vacancy" sign out front to spare motorists the trouble of inquiry. Have you ever seen a "No Vacancy" sign in front of a church building, or on the door of a Sunday school class? Probably not!

Nevertheless, churches often communicate "No Vacancy" to strangers in their community, perhaps without saying a word. Even churches with empty pews sometimes give clear signals to strangers that they have no space in their hearts and lives—especially for strangers who look different from them.

Throughout Scripture, God urges kindness to the stranger and the "alien." Moses told the Israelites that God cares for the stranger. "He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the alien, giving him food and clothing. And you are to love those who are aliens, for you yourselves were aliens in Egypt. Fear the Lord your God and serve him" (Deuteronomy 10:18-20).

To remind the Jewish people that God did not exclude people on the basis of national origin, the prophet Isaiah wrote: "Foreigners who bind themselves to the Lord to serve him, to love the name of the Lord, and to worship him—these will I bring to my holy mountain and give them joy in my house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations" (Isaiah 56:6-7).

Later, in Jesus' time, the Jewish people dedicated a special area on the temple grounds as a place of worship for foreigners. It was called the Court of the Gentiles. But it was there that the merchants and money changers set up shop, leaving no place for Gentiles to worship. No wonder Jesus made a whip and drove out the animals and the merchants. The area designated for prayer and worship for outsiders had become an open market for profiteering!

At a time when many states in our nation are passing anti-immigration laws designed to drive off immigrants in our midst, we as a church must be willing to "overturn the tables" that keep strangers from attending our houses of worship. May God grant us courage to welcome the strangers in our midst.

Ervin Stutzman is executive director of Mennonite Church USA.

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The Cooking Show Pittsburgh Convention

Join us for daily cooking shows at the Mission Network exhibit in Pittsburgh, July 4–9.

Or visit www.MennoniteMission.net/Pittsburgh to download recipe cards.

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