



**Mennonite  
Mission  
Network**

The mission agency of  
Mennonite Church USA

NOVEMBER 2010

# Beyond OURSELVES

# Pray

"For everyone who asks receives,  
and everyone who searches finds,  
and for everyone who knocks,  
the door will be opened."

*Luke 11:10*



Ethel Harder, 86, is a mission worker. She's not in Mongolia, Benin, Burkina Faso, or Argentina. She's in her home in Reedley, Calif., praying for Mission Network workers all over the world while eating breakfast. Every morning, she says, she chooses a worker or a family from *Mission Mosaic*, the Mennonite Mission Network prayer directory, and asks God to bless their work.

Prayer or action? Which is a more powerful tool for mission?

Jesus prayed in the desert for 40 days before beginning his ministry; the Apostle Paul commands us to pray without ceasing; Martin Luther said paradoxically that his busy schedule did not allow for less than three hours a day of prayer. Yet in our own lives many of us feel lucky if we find a few moments before nodding off at night to say a few God bless 'ems.

Perhaps we even secretly think prayer is a waste of time. But there can be no Christ-like action without prayer. Prayer gets us out of our own heads, connects us to our neighbors, and puts us in communion with our Creator, who inspires, leads and sustains us. Prayer gives us faith that can move mountains. What if we lived as if this were more than a metaphor?

Overwhelmed and not sure where to start? Try praying. Pray alone; pray with a friend; pray with a small group. Not sure what to say? Try silence. For the contemplatives, prayer is about listening.

Finally, prayer puts the burden on God. As Martin Luther said, "Pray, and let God worry." We can trust God to lead us.

Ethel Harder knows that prayer and action must work in tandem. One suffers without the other. May our lives be living prayers, pleasing to God.

Andrew Clouse

▶ Become a **prayer partner**—receive monthly prayer requests. [www.MennoniteMission.net/Tools/Prayer](http://www.MennoniteMission.net/Tools/Prayer)

Feedback

▶ Let us know what you think of this issue. What inspires you? Engages you? Infuriates you? [BeyondOurselves@MennoniteMission.net](mailto:BeyondOurselves@MennoniteMission.net)

**Relate:**  
**Cooperation, with a candy coating**

By Steve Eigsti, who served with MVS in St. Louis from 2008–2010

Peace and conflict work is just that: work. Having spent two years with the St. Louis Mennonite Peace Center, I have seen the dedicated efforts of many individuals and organizations to bring peace and justice to the city of St. Louis. The most encouraging part of being in Mennonite Voluntary Service has been meeting extraordinary people and groups who invest their free time and abilities into helping others through peace and justice work.

I've seen and heard from many students who aren't able to achieve their goals because they can't control the decisions they make when they become angry. Equipping students with the skills to solve their own conflicts, rather than seeking out teachers or principals or resorting to violence, is not easy and often goes against what they are learning from society, their peers, and their parents.

**Materials needed**

- An abundance of candy. I use Skittles because of injustices related to global chocolate production.
- Tables, so everyone can sit across from someone.
- Watch with a second hand.

**Activity**

Invite each youth to sit across the table from a partner. Position yourself across the table from that person. Place your arm on the table in the typical arm wrestling position, but don't use that term. Tell them: "This is a silent activity. Put your hand against your partner's like this. Have you all done this before? Every time you get the back of your partner's hand onto the table, you get a Skittle. You have 30 seconds. See how much candy you can get. Ready, set, go!"

Typically, most will strain against each

other and "win" a few rounds—fewer than 10, perhaps. One or two pairs might do some quick nonviolent communication and realize that if they don't resist each other, they end up with more candy.

After 30 seconds, find out how many candies each person gets. Then ask how the people who got the most did it.

Even after we are trained to share and care about others at our expense, our knee-jerk response is to turn this into a win-lose situation to be certain that we get enough. We continue to operate as the world has taught us—if another person gets a candy, we don't—even though there were obviously more than enough candies and we believe in God's economy of abundance. We each need continual conversion if we are to live as Jesus taught instead of as society teaches.

▶ *Relate* is a free e-zine released six times a year for youth leaders and youth workers. Find more resources, or sign up for e-mail delivery at [Relate.MennoniteMission.net](http://Relate.MennoniteMission.net).

**Missio Dei series**  
**Biblical view of immigration**

*Immigration and the Bible*, written by M. Daniel Carroll R. and part of the *Missio Dei* series, tackles a hot-button issue from a biblical point of view: immigration.

"I believe the Bible responds to human reality right now. It can orient the national, it orients the immigrant, and it can orient us all as we engage each other and the government," Carroll said.

▶ Download *Immigration and the Bible* in English or Spanish: [www.MennoniteMission.net/Tools](http://www.MennoniteMission.net/Tools)

▶ Order printed copies: [Store.ThirdwayMedia.org](http://Store.ThirdwayMedia.org)



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Cover: Claudia Fontan prays in Roca, Argentina. Photo by Ryan Miller. Image processing by David Fast.



# Mission begins in prayer

**W**hen we pray, we are changed, and growth, healing, liberation and restoration happen.

Through prayer, we experience the opening of our hearts to embrace what God intends for the world. Prayer enlarges our vision regarding the possibilities that God is able to bring to life through us.

In the Acts of the Apostles, a history of the earliest church, mission and prayer were inextricable. Prayer led to mission. There was no prayer without mission and, by the same token, there was no mission without prayer.

Each time the believers prayed, amazing things happened:

New understandings and convictions were born—when Peter prays at the home of Simon the tanner, God gives him a vision that leads him to a new understanding of the inclusion of Gentiles as part of the church (Acts 10:1–48).

People were identified and made themselves available to be witnesses—out of the prayer in the church in Antioch, Paul and Barnabas are set apart as mission workers to the Gentiles (Acts 13:1–3).

Obstacles were removed—as the church prayed, Peter is released from his chains to continue his mission to the Gentiles (Acts 12:3–17).

Today, also, new opportunities, innovative vision, and fresh resolve are birthed when believers pray.

Our *Missio Dei* release, *The Patagonia Story: Congregations in Argentina and Illinois link ‘Arm-in-Arm’ for Mission*, recounts the remarkable growth of the church in the Patagonia region of Argentina. It begins in prayer, as Argentine Mennonites commissioned and sent North Americans Floyd and Alice Sieber to the community of Choel Choel in Patagonia. Prayer became the foundation

of a movement that saw amazing growth throughout the Rio Negro River Valley and beyond, as Argentine pastors developed a vision for mission across central and southern Argentina. Workers were raised up and churches were planted with a vigor and vitality previously unwitnessed in that region.

I worshiped with representatives from those churches. Prayer was the main agenda of a meeting that lasted well past midnight. With joy and abandon, the gathered believers opened their hearts to God’s vision and com-

mitted their lives to serve the gospel. That prayer has spread to Illinois, where Mennonite churches in the Southern Illinois Mission Partnership are following the prayerful Patagonia model of missional expansion.

Mission begins in prayer. Mission is renewed and sustained by prayer. Apart from prayer, the mission of the church is lost and the church declines.

We are truly grateful for Mennonite Mission Network’s prayer partners who volunteer their time to pray. We are also indebted to our partners around the

world for the inspiration and testimony they provide through their practices of prayer.

Through prayer, we are changed to be able to see with God’s eyes and discover anew God’s vision for the world. God graciously transforms us to become and to do all that God intends for us to be and to do, including becoming instruments of healing and hope in the world.

**Through prayer,  
we experience  
the opening of  
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God intends for  
the world.**

Stanley W. Green  
Executive Director  
Mennonite Mission Network





Rubén Alvarez, Rafael Mansilla and Richard Friesen revise the Toba New Testament.

Photo by Ryan Miller

## Richard Friesen (1944–2010)

### Family and friends remember long-term mission worker to Argentina

Mennonite Mission Network worker Richard Friesen, 66, died August 11 at a hospital in Formosa, Argentina, after suffering a cardiac arrest on August 3. Richard, who had lived and worked since 2004 among the Toba, an indigenous group, was buried in a Toba cemetery in the Chaco region.

### A sacred journey

By Gretchen and Keith Kingsley, mission workers in Argentina

We never anticipated, and would not have chosen, the difficult walk toward death with Richard and Ruth Anne in the last two months. But neither would we have chosen to miss this sacred journey. It has been an extraordinary experience of accompaniment, in which we have been both companions and accompanied.

In Richard's struggle for health, we felt, together with him and Ruth Anne, alternately heartened and desperate, trying to figure out what was happening to Richard's body, trying to discern his mind and heart, grasping hope—without seeing the way ahead. We began to see Richard in a new light, that of faith that suffers and

endures with enormous patience. We began to feel the reserves of strength that Ruth Anne has carefully garnered in the form of Scripture and song. Stroking Richard's thinning hair as he labored to breathe in intensive care, we deepened in our appreciation of prayer, both as stillness and as cries of deepest longing.

In the end, we were consoled and enlightened by words of a Toba pastor and friend, under a bright sun and the shade of tall trees in the small Toba cemetery of Mala' Lapel. "This is our richest land," he said, "because here have been laid to rest the histories of our ancestors and sages. And now, that of Richard is being added to this place."

To us this gave perspective on Richard's life—and death. Here was a man who lived 66 years, serving in mostly quiet, earnest ways in devotion to God's kingdom. Now, after a losing struggle to prolong his life and service, he was being buried far from the place of his birth and the centers of his cultural and familial world. And yet, in his death, he was being received with such tenderness and honor and esteem—a crown to his modest life.

## Fair trade

### French and American exchange students build relationships

A group of Mennonite students from across the U.S. traveled to northeastern France in August to see some familiar faces—the French students they had hosted the previous summer in an exchange facilitated by Mennonite Mission Network.

Last year, the young people met face-to-face, getting to know one another through planned events and outings. After the visit, the young people kept in contact through Facebook and e-mail, building anticipation of seeing each other again.

In this trip, the French and American youth together cleaned rooms, made general repairs, and washed dishes at *Colonia Joie et Vie*, a youth camp run by French Mennonites. They also sang at a home for children with disabilities in the town of Wissembourg and at a retirement community in the city of Valdoie. The last few days of their trip were spent in Paris seeing the sights, shopping and relaxing.

### Volunteers needed

#### Mennonite Church USA Elkhart offices building project begins

The Mennonite Church USA Elkhart offices project is underway. Skilled volunteers are invited to help throughout various phases of the construction process from now until October 2011. Skills needed include framing, finish carpentry, cabinet installation, electrical, plumbing, masonry, drywall hanging and finishing, landscaping, concrete work and painting. Housing will be arranged as needed. You can find schedule information and apply to volunteer on the project website:

[www.MennoniteUSA.org/JoiningTogether](http://www.MennoniteUSA.org/JoiningTogether)



Photo by Peter Graber



Photo by Hannah Heinzekehr

# Summer school

## Youth Venture teams up with church for summer camp

Children at a summer Bible camp at First Mennonite Church and *Primera Iglesia Menonita* in Reedley, Calif., surround Rosy Coronado (center), who was part of a 2010 Youth Venture team helping at the camp. Clockwise from left are Maritza, Rosy, Katherine, Jayla in the front and Daisy. The girl in the middle of the hug is unidentified. Coronado is from North Clinton Mennonite Church, Wauseon, Ohio.

For several years, the Reedley congregation, which includes both Spanish and English language services, has connected to the neighborhood where the church is located through block parties, regular worship services, and youth gatherings. Each summer, they've hosted a week-long vacation Bible school program for neighborhood youth, but this summer they wanted to offer more. So the church decided to provide formal programming in June and July with the help of four volunteers from Youth Venture, one of Mennonite Mission Network's Christian Service programs, which offers youth ages 14–22 the chance to serve for one to four weeks in the summer.

# New workers begin service

## International

**Elijah Martens** of South Bend, Ind., has begun a one-year term teaching English in China (through Mennonite Partners in China).

## MVS

**Chelsea Sleeth**, San Francisco, began a 14-month term as administrative support with DISH (Delivering Innovation in Supportive Housing) in San Francisco.

## Service Adventure

Beginning two-year terms:

**Matthew and Melanie Alwine**, Johnstown, Pa., began in Johnstown.

**Brent and Kirsten Estep**, Boswell, Pa., with their children, Logan and Caleb, began in Colorado Springs, Colo.

**Leah and Todd Gusler**, Goshen, Ind., began in Raleigh, N.C.

**Heidi and Michael McHugh**, Goshen, Ind., with their children, Ian and Ella, began in Philippi, W.Va.

## SOOP

**James Bachman**, Lowpoint, Ill., served one month in Busby, Mont.

**Grace B. Brenneman**, Souderton, Pa., served three weeks in Glendale, Ariz.

**Nicole Caparulo**, Corning, N.Y., served two weeks in Macon, Miss.

**Deloris Dueck**, Goshen, Ind., served one month in Washington, D.C.

**Jennifer Hart**, Hammon, Okla., served two weeks in La Junta, Colo.

**Eunice Hess**, Lititz, Pa., served three weeks in Glendale, Ariz.

**Rodney Hollinger-Janzen**, Goshen, Ind., served one week in Macon, Miss.

**Barbara Longoria**, Greenwood, Ind., served one week in Pembroke Township, Ill.

**Jeffrey and Kaylene Miller**, Goshen, Ind., served one week in Macon, Miss.

**John and Kay Reimer**, Normal, Ill., served two weeks in Ely, Minn.

**Lois and Harvey Thiessen**, Hesston, Kan., served three months in Brownstown, Pa.

## Youth Venture

**Isaac Blosser**, Goshen, Ind., served in France.

**Jennifer Boehs**, Laporte, Colo., served in France.

**Valerie Chacon**, Fresno, Calif., served in Santa Cruz, Bolivia.

**Rosy Coronado Maldonado**, Pettisville, Ohio, served in Reedley, Calif.

**Elizabeth Cortez**, Lindsay, Calif., served in Santa Cruz, Bolivia.

**Carly Cramton**, Hutchinson, Kan., served in Philadelphia.

**Erica Cuellar**, Sanger, Calif., served in Santa Cruz, Bolivia.

**Lauren Derstine**, Blooming Glen, Pa., served in Philadelphia.

**Ryan Goertzen**, Newton, Kan., served in Montreal, Quebec.

**Sadie Gustafson-Zook**, Goshen, Ind., served in France.

**Elijah Harrison**, Omaha, Neb., served in Montreal, Quebec.

**Joshua Helmuth**, New Paris, Ind., served in France.

**Mary Hostetler**, Goshen, Ind., served in France.

**Merle Hostetler**, Goshen, Ind., served in France.

**Samuel Kelly**, Fresno, Calif., served in Santa Cruz, Bolivia.

**Jonathan Kiser**, Souderton, Pa., served in Philadelphia.

**Megan Leary**, North Newton, Kan., served in Reedley, Calif.

**Sabrina Lengacher**, Loogootee, Ind., served in Santa Cruz, Bolivia.

**Kevin Lott**, Fresno, Calif., served in Santa Cruz, Bolivia.

**Eric Martin**, Cassopolis, Mich., served in Botswana.

**Kris Melban**, Visalia, Calif., served in Santa Cruz, Bolivia.

**Ryan Moyer**, Goshen, Ind., served in Philadelphia.

**Krysten Parson**, Goshen, Ind., served in Botswana.

**Ivan Paz**, Fresno, Calif., served in Santa Cruz, Bolivia.

**Esther Rosales**, Hanford, Calif., served in Santa Cruz, Bolivia.

**Maria Rosales**, Hanford, Calif., served in Santa Cruz, Bolivia.

**Bethany Sangl**, Pittsburgh, served in France.

**Hannah Sauder**, Lititz, Pa., served in Botswana.

**Aspen Schmidt**, Wichita, Kan., served in Botswana.

**Jill Schmidt**, Whitewater, Kan., served in Reedley, Calif., and in Santa Cruz, Bolivia.

**Kelsey Schrock**, Wellman, Iowa, served in Santa Cruz, Bolivia.

**Katie Shank**, New Paris, Ind., served in France.

**Jennifer Shenk**, Hamburg, Pa., served in France.

**Isaac Shue**, Harper, Kan., served in Montreal, Quebec.

**Alison Stauffer**, Millersville, Pa., served in Santa Cruz, Bolivia.

**Calla Stinson**, Salem, Ore., served in Reedley, Calif.

**Wade Troyer**, South Bend, Ind., served in France.

**Gonzalo Villegas**, Fresno, Calif., served in Santa Cruz, Bolivia.

**Grace Whiteford**, Goshen, Ind., served in France.

**Erin Williams**, Cleveland, N.Y., served in Philadelphia.

**Alena Yoder**, Elkhart, Ind., served in France.

**Valerie Yoder**, Millersburg, Ohio, served in Botswana.

**Rosana Zamudio**, Fresno, Calif., served in Santa Cruz, Bolivia.





Bolivian Mennonite Church planters Yolanda (in green) and Tito Castro (in yellow) worship with members of the *La Tejería* congregation.

# They agreed to pray.

That was all.

When leaders of Crystal Springs and Pleasant Valley congregations in Kansas and eight congregations in and around Santa Cruz, Bolivia, agreed to an initial partnership through Mennonite Mission Network in 2004, there were no elaborate financial arrangements, no specific plans for fraternal visits, no detailed lists of ways they would strengthen one another.

They agreed to pray.

The Santa Cruz churches would gather prayer needs from one another and from the surrounding rural churches and send them north. The Kansas churches would send their own requests south.

The arrangement was simple.

The results have been amazing.

In Bolivia, the act of collecting prayer requests from city and country churches has led to leadership development classes, increased relationships, collaboration, and a computer center.

In Kansas, the partnership has expanded as South Hutchinson Mennonite Church has joined. Four times, the Kansas congregations have sent youth to Santa Cruz. From those delegations, three participants are studying for pastoral ministry, six have returned to Latin America for volunteer service or mission work, and three more have participated in service work domestically.

Bolivian youth have traded mission visits with churches in and around Choele Choel, Argentina, and have expanded their circle of prayer.

They continue to pray.

Where might God take them next?





THEY  
AGREED  
TO PRAY



Bolivian Mennonite Church leaders Tito and Yolanda Castro and Fernando Hijojoza travel from their church in urban Santa Cruz to accompany the rural congregations of the Bolivian Mennonite Church.

Photo by Linda Shelly

# Uniting as one

Connecting with churches across international borders enriches worship and strengthens faith. But so does connecting with Christians on the other side of town.

By Tito Castro, Santa Cruz, Bolivia

**W**ith our eyes, we saw the needs: the economic needs of the countryside and the spiritual needs of the city. And with our prayers, we did something about it.

Recently, my wife, Yolanda, and I received a Bible study on CD from a friend about membership, maturity, ministry and mission. What we learned helped us to discover our purpose in life. It inspired us, and we knew we had to visit the churches in the countryside.

Our first visit was spent taking pictures and prayer requests. We were touched deeply by the churches that were struggling to survive in the countryside, and decided to connect each church with a church in the city of Santa Cruz.


Through the partnerships, we learned about prayer and sharing what you have, whether small or large. In Santa Cruz, *Iglesia Evangélica Menonita Príncipe de Paz* (Prince of Peace Evangelical Mennonite Church) partnered with *Iglesia Cristo Vive* (Christ Lives Church), about 18 miles outside of Santa Cruz.

I remember visiting *Iglesia Cristo Vive*. At the time, the church met in a humble building. While the wind was rushing and they were praising Christ in their native Quechua language, we were worried about the roof collapsing! But still they worshiped with such sincerity and deep intimacy that couldn't be found in our church at home.

We returned to Santa Cruz renewed and challenged by the fervent prayers of *Iglesia Cristo Vive*. Our small-group Bible study prayed and shared the living word together in our context, and as a result we became more honest with each other.

Arriving in the countryside, we were challenged again when *Iglesia Cristo Vive* asked for our support in constructing a new church building. The blueprint was much larger than their current building. How could we afford that? And who would fill it?

Despite the hesitation, we agreed. God heard our prayers and provided the material to build the church. Members from both churches responded by offering what we had: ourselves. Today, *Iglesia Cristo Vive* has a beautiful church building with 60 members, and is reaching out to almost 30 families in the area.

We've learned so much through this relationship. Prayer united us in a marvelous way: both with the churches in the countryside and the churches in Kansas. Our former way of life was challenged as the Spirit of God was revealed to us. We no longer sit in a church pew listening to the pastor without sharing what we've learned. We've learned how to truly love our neighbor, not only in words, but in concrete actions. 

Tito and Yolanda Castro spend most Sundays traveling to rural churches, building relationships among city and country congregations.





# Extending mission

When church members in Kansas began opening up to Christians in Bolivia on a spiritual level, they developed a better understanding of who their neighbors were at home.

By Doug and Lidia Zehr, Crystal Springs Mennonite Church

**T**he last Sunday of each month at Crystal Springs we take a collection called Bucks for Bolivia. During that time, we give updates from Bolivia or the churches there. People in our congregation now know names of the Bolivian Mennonite churches and some of the leaders, and we pray for them.

Crystal Springs, of Harper, Kan., has always had a heart for mission. The partnership, however, has helped people to share more closely in the joys and concerns of our brothers and sisters in Bolivia. The partnership allows us to feel engaged in God’s mission in the world on a front where needs are significant and growth is tangible.

In Bolivia, we can see that our efforts make a difference and are appreciated. Sometimes it’s harder to feel that “at home,” though the needs are great. However, when people see what a small donation can do, they are more inclined to reflect on how to renew local efforts for outreach. Lidia, for example, has been instrumental in organizing the summer food program. There are many Latino families that have moved to Harper in recent years, and she has included them in this local effort.

Lidia has invited many of the local Latino families to church, but their language and culture are significantly


different from most of the people at Crystal Springs. We are happy that a group of people from Mexico and Guatemala are gathering in Harper with intentions of starting a church, and we are glad to support their endeavor however we can. Any amount of interchange on the spiritual level gives people a better understanding of their neighbor, and the partnership gives us this window, too. 



Photo by David Fast

*Lidia and Doug Zehr spent more than eight years serving in Bolivia with MCC, where they attended the Príncipe de Paz church. This column was written while Lidia was pastoring at Crystal Springs Mennonite Church. They moved to Illinois this summer so Doug could take over the family farm.*

“There is great value in a global partnership such as our growing relationship with the Bolivian church. We become more aware of how big God is, and it is exciting to see the church alive and active in another place.”

—Sheri Saner, pastor of South Hutchinson Mennonite Church, spent March 2010 living with a Bolivian host family, working at the Samuelito Day Care center, and worshipping with Sinai Mennonite Church in Santa Cruz.

“The real value of our partnership has been the relationships that have been made between the churches, and the way our youth and even adults have had their worldviews expanded and their lives changed.”

—Faith Penner and her husband, Tim, served in Bolivia with MCC, then lived in Santa Cruz for four years, attending what is now *Iglesia Sinai*. They attend Pleasant Valley Mennonite Church in Harper, Kan.



# South/south exchange

The Kansas/Bolivia partnership is like a row of dominoes: The *Príncipe de Paz* church youth group in Santa Cruz, Bolivia, was inspired by the relationship with their sister church in Kansas, so they wanted to connect with another church in Latin America. So they prayed, and God answered their prayer. Danika Saucedo, a member of the youth group, reflects on how God responded.

By Danika Saucedo, translated by Kelsey Shue

**W**e asked, and God gave to us—abundantly. As a church youth group, we wanted to experience the church outside of Bolivia. So we asked Pastor Delbert Erb, a mission worker in Choele Choel, Argentina, how we could serve there. He made the arrangements so that our youth group might travel there for a mission trip.



Photo by Ryan Miller  
Danika Saucedo

The entire year preceding the trip, we raised funds, visited surrounding churches for support, and planned worship services for the trip. We needed a lot of money, but God abundantly provided. On December 3, 2008, we left for Argentina.

We performed dances, songs and dramas in the Mennonite church in Buenos Aires. In the city of Choele Choel, we visited a church plant and helped collect trash. Even though it didn't seem like a very significant gesture to us, they were still so thankful.

Since we stayed with families in Choele Choel, we made many friendships and continue to stay in touch by e-mail and Facebook. The exchange naturally strengthened the ties between the Mennonite churches of Santa Cruz and Choele Choel. It helped us not only emotionally, but also to grow as Christians. It's so nice to see that other countries are praising and glorifying the same God. We sensed the Holy Spirit guiding our lives and steps, because without God's provision, the service trip would not have been possible.

We give thanks to God for having helped us daily, because in the Bible it says, "Ask and it will be given to you." 🟩

“Praying with the churches in Kansas is important because it unifies our strengths and dependency on the Lord for projects, vision, needs and thanksgiving. Prayer strengthens our unity as brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ and draws us together, knowing that we are interlaced by our common purposes: to follow Christ, to evangelize, to serve. Breaking down the distance and barriers, we rejoice together, cry together, and give thanks together.”

—Leonidas (Ona) Saucedo, pastor of Iglesia Evangélica Mennonita Príncipe de Paz (Prince of Peace Evangelical Mennonite Church) and president of the Bolivian Mennonite Church Board



Ona Saucedo

Photo by Ryan Miller





THEY AGREED TO PRAY

# Preparing the way

Short-term mission trips are criticized for failing to leave a long-lasting impression on participants, but the trips that Kansas youth have made to Bolivia have been anything but shallow. Of the visitors, three are now studying for pastoral ministry and nine have entered service terms.

By DeVonna R. Allison

**J**osh Patterson was a teen when he visited Santa Cruz in 2006 as part of the Kansas/Bolivia partnership. He says he went with a narrow view of ministry, feeling he was there to help the Bolivian believers. He did *not* expect to be ministered to by the people he'd come to help.

"It was very humbling," Patterson said of realizing the mutuality of ministry. As a result of his trip, he said he discovered that "whenever we minister to someone else, they are also ministering to us. Everyone has something to offer."

He said this idea challenged his previously held view of ministry as one-sided. Patterson is currently enrolled in the pastoral ministries program at Hesston (Kan.) College and interning at First Mennonite Church, Indianapolis.

Nate Ramer says it was on a mission trip to La Paz in 2002 that he first experienced what he calls the joy and privilege of ministry.

"It's exciting," Ramer said, "encountering and participating in people's lives at their invitation."

Ramer said his international experiences led him to take a special interest in issues of justice and equality, realizing the position of privilege he enjoys by virtue of being North American and white. He carries this enthusiasm with him while studying at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary.

No less enduring or important a result of these young adults' mission experiences was an emerging desire to pray for people beyond the borders of their own church or country. And each admitted that after returning home

## Bolivia will be a part of me forever.

—Isaac Shue

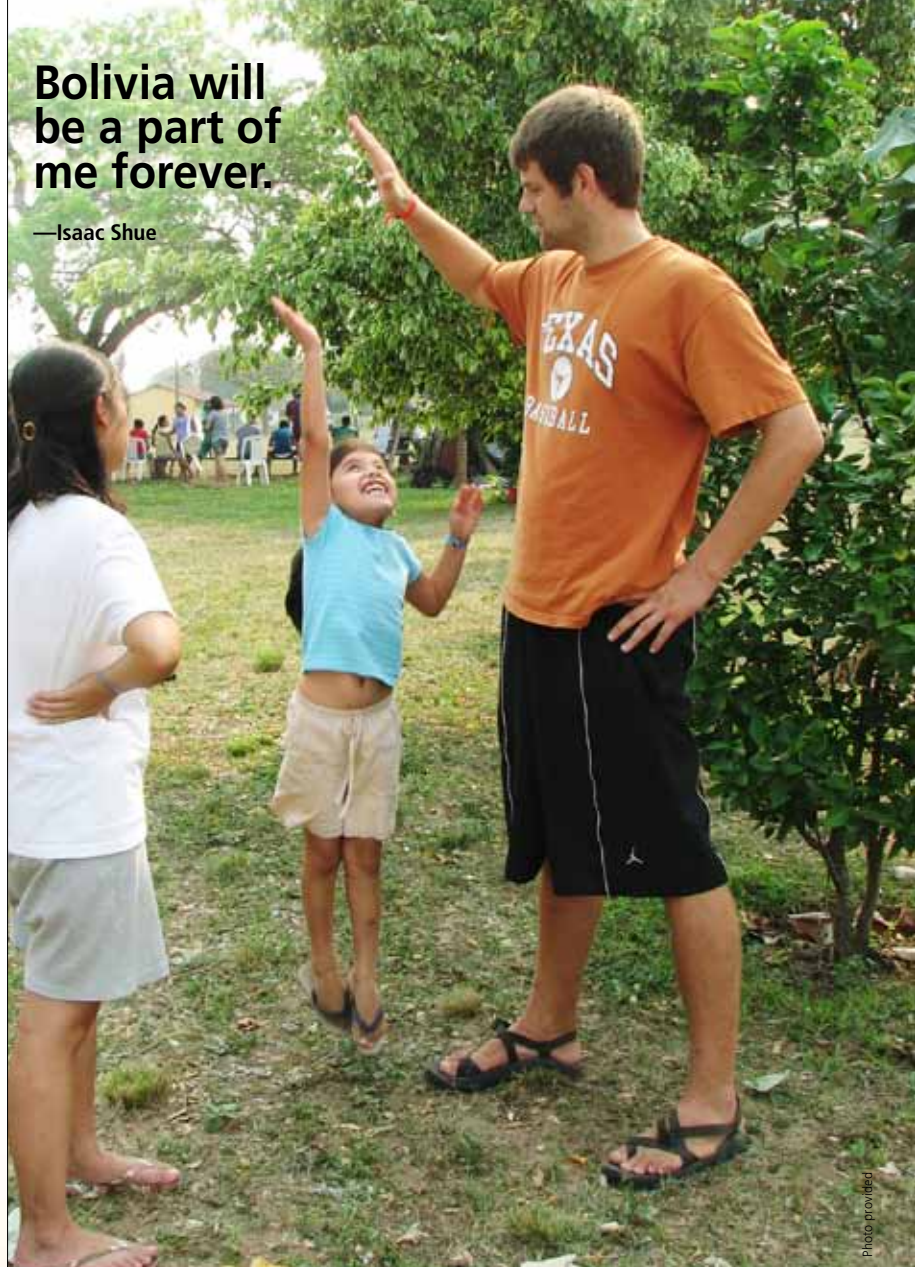



Photo provided

from their mission trips, their prayers for the people who hosted them became more personal, often evoking a particular place or person.

Patterson's trip led him to become more involved in the prayer ministry of his home church and to "definitely take more of a personal interest in the [Bolivian] church and its needs."

Isaac Shue took his first mission trip to Guatemala 12 years ago. That first trip led to a second trip to Guatemala and then one to Bolivia.

"Getting to know the people, they entered my prayers and thoughts," Shue said. "Both church groups [of the Kansas/Bolivia partnership] have grown to love and appreciate the other ... and [the prayer partnership] has built many lasting relationships between people. Bolivia will be a part of me forever."

Shue went back to Bolivia in September on a one-year service term with Radical Journey. 

Fernanda Becerra Paredes tries to give Isaac Shue a high-five. Shue is serving in Bolivia with the Radical Journey program.



▶ **Want more?** See video interviews with participants in the Bolivia/Kansas partnership at [BeyondOurselves.MennoniteMission.net](http://BeyondOurselves.MennoniteMission.net).

# Lift your glad voices

By uttering one simple prayer, we are instantly united with our brothers and sisters around the world who are lifting their joys and concerns to God in the name of Jesus. These prayers were provided by Mission Network partners and mission workers serving God's kingdom around the globe.

May they unite us all.

## 恵の食卓

主よ。み言葉に満たされて

守られることを感謝します。

この食卓に集う兄弟姉妹と

喜びも悲しみも分かち合うことが出来ますように。

主のために 働く力がわきますように

すべての人に あなたの恵がありますように。

主イエスのみ名により アーメン

## THE GRACE OF THE TABLE

Lord, We thank you for taking care of us by filling us with your word.

May we be able to share the joys and sorrows of the brothers and sisters gathered around this table.

May we be strengthened to do the Lord's service.

May all people receive your grace.

In the name of the Lord Jesus, Amen.

*Submitted by Mary Beyler, mission worker in Japan.*

## FATHER ETERNAL, I CALL ON YOU

'Am qarta'a mayi qaica ca loga't,  
'Am siŷaxanot, cha'ayi nachi 'am nca'alax qataq  
qaica ca caiuena'a.  
'Am siŷaxanot, 'am ito'olec,  
ca qarma' qataq  
ca qaro'onataxanaxac,  
yaqto'o 'enuac na iuale'ecpi mayi huetaigui da  
nque'enaxac.  
Aja', nachi 'eetec. (*Toba*)

Father eternal, I call on you,  
because you are life and abundance.  
I beseech you, my God,  
For land and work,  
For all of my people, who suffer. Amen.

*An extemporaneous prayer of Rubén Alvarez, a Toba elder in the community of Pampa del Indio, Chaco Province, Argentina. Submitted by Keith Kingsley, mission worker in Formosa, Argentina.*

## COUNT GOD'S BLESSINGS

Compte les bienfaits de Dieu!  
Mets les tous devant tes yeux.  
Tu verras en adorant,  
Combien le nombre en est grand!  
(*French*)

Count God's blessings!  
Place all of them before your eyes.  
You will see in adoration,  
How plentiful they are!

*A "table song" used to begin community meals in the Châtenay-Malabry (France) Mennonite Church. Submitted by Janie Blough, mission worker in France.*



## KNOW GOD

Sama naan mooy ma gen a zam  
Yalla, ma begg ko bu baax. *(Senegalese)*

My prayer is that I would know  
God more and love him very much.

*A prayer from Ami, one of the women leaders in Senegal who also leads the Kids Club. Submitted by Margaret De Jong, mission worker in Senegal.*

## GOD, I PRAY FOR UKRAINE

Боже, я молю за Україну.  
God, I pray for Ukraine.  
Боже, молю Тебе за людей.  
God, I beseech you for the people.  
Ти їх прости, Ти їх спаси,  
Forgive them, save them,  
І милість Свою нам яви.  
Show us your mercy.  
Боже, я знаю, що ти будеш з нами  
God, I know you will be with us  
В Храмi Твоєму під небесами.  
In your heavenly temple.  
Радість і мир Ти дарував;  
You've given us joy and peace;  
Життя для людей віддав;  
You gave your life for us;  
В книгу життя нас записав.  
You've written our names in the book of life.

*A prayer common to believers in Ukraine, part of the former Soviet Union, of gratitude and protection of their religious liberties. Submitted by Mary Raber, mission worker in Ukraine.*

## PRAYER FOR THE JOURNEY OF HEALING

We stand together, united as one people: proud of our ability to work together; grateful for our gifts; nourished by our diversity and our harmony.

Yet we turn to the original owners of our land and see, too, what we have taken. We weep for their loss of freedom, of country, of children—even of their very lives. We stand in awe at their survival, and in debt for their land.

We see the pain, feel the sorrow, and seek forgiveness.

Give us courage to face the truth, compassion to share the burden, strength to play our part in the healing, and hope to walk forward to a place of justice.

With courage, compassion, strength and hope, we will walk together on the journey of healing. Amen.

*An excerpt of the Prayer for the Journey of Healing. It is used specifically for Sorry Day, an Australian national day of atonement for the wrongs committed by colonials against the aboriginal people. Submitted by Mary Hurst, mission worker in Australia.*

## PEACE

l-lla y'sellemek

*(Arabic)*

May God grant  
you peace.

*From a prayer letter from mission workers in Morocco, unidentified due to ministry sensitivity.*

## True church growth

Quantity isn't important—discipleship is

By Steve Mthethiseni Ntapo



There was a city and there was a mountain. The Jews worshiped at the city. The Samaritans worshiped on the mountain. Jesus met a certain woman by the well of Jacob, between the mountain and the city. She was a Samaritan. She recognized Jesus as a prophet and asked which was the right place to worship—at the place of her ancestors or of his. Jesus told her that the time was coming when true worshipers would worship neither in Jerusalem nor on the mountain, but would worship the Father “in spirit and in truth” (John 4:23).

That time is now.

I don't like it when people ask at which church you worship. To me it shows that they don't know what it is to be a true worshiper. Jesus is not just concerned about ordinary Christians or the church-goers—he wants disciples.

I went to a pastors' meeting last week and everyone there was very concerned with church growth. I am not so concerned about great numbers. I think it is high time for us to focus on the concept of discipleship. That is our greatest commission.

Wanting to have great numbers in our churches can sometimes bring us the spirit of pride and fame, as well as greediness—a focus on tithing and money—and

**Jesus is not just concerned about ordinary Christians or the church-goers—he wants disciples.**

mine have supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions. In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: “It is more blessed to give than to receive.”

True worshipers worship God in spirit and in truth. My prayer is that God must trust us with great numbers in our churches after he has searched our hearts and found that we are hungry for souls, not money.

Steve Mthethiseni Ntapo is pastor of Harvest Time Ministries in Mandela Park, Mthatha, South Africa. Mission workers Anna and Joe Sawatzky are among his congregants. This column was excerpted from a sermon he preached July 25 and first appeared on [www.anisa.org.za](http://www.anisa.org.za), the website for the South African Anabaptist Network.

## Jesus' house

God is at work within these walls

By Clare Ferguson



In my role with DOOR San Antonio, I most often accompany service groups to the Catholic Worker House, a hospitality house downtown that provides breakfast and lunch, clothing, and a washer and dryer to visiting patrons.

I realized when I first walked in this place that God is at work within these walls.

The people who come to utilize services are not seen by the volunteers as clients looking for a handout. They are friends and guests who are welcomed with hugs and smiles, appreciated for their company.

The volunteers that keep the house running day-to-day exude a joy for their work and in their relationships with visitors. They exemplify the image given by Jesus in Matthew 25 when he says, “I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home. I was naked, and you gave me clothing. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you visited me.”

**The labels of “us” and “them” get stripped away. We realize we are no different from the ones we came to serve.**

I think if Jesus had owned a house, he would run it a lot like this one.

I am most pleased when our DOOR groups discover that some of the visitors coming in to eat are also preparing meals, harvesting vegetables from the garden, washing dishes, and repairing the house computer. The labels of “us” and “them” get stripped away. We realize we are no different from the ones we came to serve.

The people on the other side of our serving line have valuable wisdom to impart to us. John, one of the patrons, comes for meals, but he also helps cook and wash dishes. He entertains DOOR volunteers with stories of his childhood as they chop vegetables for lunch.

Another man, Fredrick, reminded me the other day of the ever-existent hope we find in each new day. He told me, “It's better to be a living dog than a dead lion.”

I sometimes wonder if our groups realize the significance of laying aside their stereotypes to open themselves to new friends at the house. It's the very nature of Jesus and his upside-down kingdom.

Clare Ferguson is part of the Discern program with DOOR San Antonio.



## Guilty conscience

Finding opportunities for reconciliation and re-creation

By James G.T. Fairfield



Jesus spent a lot of energy defending the people who came to him wounded by guilt. Guilt isn't the fault of the law, he argued. The law was a good thing, a picture of what is right and wrong, the ideals of life in the reality of God. But some guilt-makers used the law to gain an edge for themselves over others.

In effect, Jesus said to those people, if what you want in life is power over others, then that will be all you get as your reward.

And you will never know what you have lost.

This was the background for Jesus' beatitude-proverbs and his sermon on the mountainside in Matthew's Gospel. Don't walk over others. If someone treats you as an enemy because he thinks you owe him a coat and thrusts guilt at you, give him the coat and your shirt as well. Be a peacemaker, Jesus urged, and you will go beyond the law's requirement to its real intent.

I grew up thinking that the reconciliation of Jesus had to do only with being forgiven of my guilt and sin so I could get right with God. But being reconciled to God opened up a vast array of new possibilities, and that whatever remained of my lifetime called for me to work at reconciliation in my world—with my family, neighbors, enemies perceived and enemies real, the environment, the body public; in fact, every element in the world around me.

I was to "work out my own salvation" as the apostle Paul put it, by taking up the calling of every other human under the sun—to become as Christ to the world, to be a maker of peace, a reconciler, a forgiver of sins and transgressions.

Is this a great calling, or what? Not living as hustlers in the rat race, but as children of God in his total reality, as active peacemakers. And by opening ourselves up to God and his realm, his grace is there for us—abundantly. As the Gospel of John puts our evolution in grace, all who accept the new reality are given "the power to become children of God."

So what is required of us? Nothing but the willingness to practice—for the rest of our days—being another "child of God."

Then guilt becomes just what it is—an opportunity for reconciliation and re-creation.

Excerpted from Fairfield's memoir, *Frog Hollow Journal* and used on the *Shaping Families* radio program, a ministry of Third Way Media. Used by permission. Read more through *Shaping Families Update*, a weekly e-mail available at [www.Thirdway.com/subscriptions](http://www.Thirdway.com/subscriptions).

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## Prayer request

Listening to God before speaking

By Ervin Stutzman



Sometimes it's hard to know how to pray. I receive lots of requests for prayer. Sometimes I ask myself, "What difference does it make how I pray?"

It seems that I pray best when I seek to align myself with God's will in the world.

For me, that comes through the cultivation of a relationship with God. How could I know God's will without spending time in communion with God?

In the most meaningful relationships that I have with other people, I enjoy just being with them. Most times, I don't need to ask for anything or try to make something happen. The act of communing with each other is satisfying in itself.

I can hardly imagine a meaningful relationship with someone who asked for something every time we got together. If I had such a friendship, I'd soon get tired of it. It wouldn't nurture or sustain me. I know that God does not have human limitations, but I do wonder if God ever gets tired of a stream of requests when we pray. Might it feel to God like sorting "junk mail?" If so, it means that prayer in the form of communion should precede prayer in the form of intercession.

Instead of thinking about ways that I can get something from God when I pray, I try to think of ways that I might get to know God better. Often when I spend time listening to God, I find that my attitude and perspectives change. I am less self-centered or demanding in my requests.

I have come to enjoy daily morning walks in a wooded park near my home. I commune with God as I stroll on the winding path, listening to what God has to say and sharing the things that are on my heart, including the needs of others. As I leave the park each day, I usually feel restored, guided and sent. I'm ready, most days, to start my work with a sense that I am embarking on God's mission in God's way.

Ervin Stutzman is executive director of Mennonite Church USA.

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