



**Mennonite  
Mission  
Network**

The mission agency of  
Mennonite Church USA

OCTOBER 2011

# Beyond OURSELVES



## Our stories

**Mission workers blog  
about what's happening  
on the ground**

### **PLUS**

**Bathroom floor tiles  
inspire quilter [PAGE 2]**

**Is mission exclusive?  
[PAGE 14]**

# In service, Lord, to thee

By Andrew Clouse

All Christians—no matter what stage of life—are called to live their lives in service to others.

Service itself can be as simple as an afternoon work project, as demonstrated at the 2011 Mennonite Church USA Convention in Pittsburgh, when nearly 3,000 youth and adults served 47 organizations in the City of Bridges (page 13). This type of service is important, and provides a powerful witness to the goodness of Christ.

Moving beyond the mere project, however, is a lifestyle. Some people are called to a short-term stint with a service organization (see Alayna Hyde's reflection on page 9), or long-term international service (see Anna Sawatzky's and Terry Witmer's reflections on pages 6–8). Many—perhaps most—are called to serve the communities where they live.

The blog entries in this issue of *Beyond Ourselves* show how those who serve are transformed by the experience. Alayna Hyde, serving in Los Angeles through Dwell, is making the connections between relationship-based and results-based mission. Anna Sawatzky comments on how those involved in mission often affect change even when they don't realize it. And Terry Witmer writes about having the grace to be served by those they went to serve.

Service is multifaceted—sometimes a single isolated experience, but, at its best, a life to be lived. Over time, everyone—the “server” and the “served”—has been changed for the better. Faith is deepened, communities are strengthened, and the kingdom of God feels just a bit closer.

**“Accept my talents great and small, Choose thou the path for me, Where I shall labor joyously In service, Lord, for thee.”**

—*HWB 548* Teach me thy truth

Web spotlight



## Senegal bathroom tiles inspire quilter

Irene Bornman displayed her Senegalese-inspired quilts at Goshen College in August.

God's humor gets creative when it comes to grabbing people's attention. For Moses, it was a burning bush; for Balaam, a talking donkey. For Irene Bornman, it was bathroom floor tiles.

A ceramic floor tile pattern in a Senegalese guest house was the inspiration for two of the quilts that were showcased in the “Senegal Fabrics in Indiana Patchwork” exhibit at the Goshen (Ind.) College Library Gallery this summer.

Bornman chose beige fabric for the background of one of her quilts as a symbol of the ever-present sand in the region of Senegal where she ministered for nine years with Friends of the Wolof, a Mennonite Mission Network partner.

As Bornman worked on one of the quilts, called Sand and People, stitching the two squares of African prints together, she interceded with intense longing for those seeking a deeper meaning to their lives.

“O Lord, let them come together in churches,” Bornman prayed.



**Talking about textiles**  
Check out a video of Bornman's quilts by scanning the QR code or visiting [BeyondOurselves.MennoniteMission.net](http://BeyondOurselves.MennoniteMission.net)



### Feedback

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



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Cover: Mennonite Mission Network worker Anna Sawatzky shares the computer with her son, Jesse. Photo by David Fisher Fast.



# Where do you get your stories?

Poet Muriel Rukeyser suggests that “the universe is made of stories, not atoms.” Rukeyser’s observation reminds us that while we can advance our understanding of the discrete aspects of our lives (especially in the physical realm) through the analysis and identification of atomic and molecular structures, meaning is found in the stories that surround those physical particulars.

Ursula and I had the privilege recently to lead a learning tour to Mongolia and China. We were intrigued, inspired and encouraged as we heard stories from our workers and partners that told of transformed lives and healing and hope that came into the lives of prostitutes, prisoners, drug addicts and alcoholics, among others. In the past, these stories were told in Sunday evening evangelistic meetings when mission workers who were on North American assignment traveled to churches and shared stories accompanied by slide shows. How wonderful that we don’t have to wait until the next mission workers can come by our church when they’re back in North America! Instead, from our desks, or other preferred place, we can connect to these stories.

It is so easy to become trapped within the horizon of our own stories—those of our family, our culture and our country. When that happens, our view of the world becomes truncated, even tribal. Our lives become fragmented and we lose sight of our connectedness to the rest of the world. If the only stories we pay attention to are our own, we shrivel our own identities and those of our neighbors all around the world. They, and sometimes even we, become objects (the poor, consumers, workers, even victims) rather than flesh-and-blood persons who have unique stories, distinct hopes, and singular dreams. This fosters alienation that may even lead to war and destruction.

When, however, we pay attention to these stories that come to us from beyond our immediate context, we are able to weave all the fragments of our lives into a meaningful whole that reinforces our connec-

tion to God’s children everywhere and introduces purpose into our interactions.

I am convinced that if we are to become responsible global Christians, we must become curious, concerned, engaged—we must pay attention to the stories from other contexts. We must actively observe, listen, read and reflect on the experiences of others who are “with us on the road.” This commitment is a call to value sensitivity, learning and connection more than obliviousness, denial and alienation. The stories (and the reflections on those accounts) in the blogs help us to see and experience people around the world whom God loves and cares about, and whom our workers

**I am convinced that if we are to become responsible global Christians, we must become curious, concerned, engaged—we must pay attention to the stories from other contexts.**

are privileged to walk with and serve. Often these stories enrich our understanding of the global church and the context in which others seek to follow Jesus. As I read these stories, I find myself either inspired by stories of faithfulness (of the workers or of the people with whom they

serve), or I find myself grappling with prophetic challenges that I am confronted with as I experience the courageous, sacrificial and resolute witness of sisters and brothers who face incredible hardships and even threats to their life and security.

The world is filled with stories. Many are trivial, trite and banal. Some, like those in this *Beyond Ourselves*, help us to live into God’s vision and equip us to better play our part in God’s purposes responsibly and well. I encourage you to read these stories with sensitivity and care, to access the blogs of our workers that give us a window into a larger world, and I pray that what you discover there will inspire and equip you for your part in the larger story of God’s purposes for our world.

*Stanley W. Green*

Stanley W. Green  
Executive Director  
Mennonite Mission Network



## Simple pleasures

Menno Village in Japan offers children from Fukushima a safe place to play

One of the hidden costs of the nuclear reactor meltdown in March is the theft of the joys of childhood. Nuclear contamination of soils up to 60 miles away from the crippled nuclear reactors in Fukushima has meant that children are not allowed to play outside.

Akiko Aratani and Ray Epp, directors of Menno Village, are using the trying situation to help these children regain simple pleasures—playing outdoors, swimming, eating safe food, and drinking clean water.

Akiko spearheaded a community-wide volunteer effort that resulted in 15 children and three mothers from the nuclear contamination zone spending two weeks in August enjoying the spacious Menno Village grounds and hospitality in the small town of Naganuma.

“In the disaster zone children



Akiko Epp, co-director of Menno Village in Japan, helps children from Fukushima make rockets out of water bottles.

Photo courtesy of Ray Epp

cannot play outside,” Ray said. “They have to have their bodies fully covered at all times. They have to wear masks at all times. The older elementary children are nearly going crazy staying inside all day, and the masks are very hot and uncomfortable in the 95- to 100-degree heat.”

One mother from Fukushima reported that in spite of all of the precautions they have taken, their young toddler’s favorite stuffed animal that the child sleeps with is contaminated with radiation.

When Aratani and Epp floated the idea to others in Naganuma, many asked how they could help.

Church members from Sapporo, an hour away, helped organize activities and prepare meals; local families who live on farms hosted children in their homes. The mayor of Naganuma even offered to put the children up at the town-owned hot-spring hotel for one night.

Menno Village is also exploring ways to reduce the level of radiation in contaminated soils by growing vegetable oil crops that draw out radiation, and using the pressed oil for heating.

“The Spirit of God is at work in the lives of people whether they are aware of it or not,” Ray said. “We give thanks for God’s goodness.”



Kuaying Teng (left) met with Seng Soukhathivong, the Laotian ambassador to the United States.

## Peace ambassador

Meeting with Laotian official promotes healing

For years, Kuaying Teng has patiently nurtured a vision in which a new generation of Laotians in Asia and North America would lead their wounded land into an era of healing and lasting peace.

A recent meeting between Teng and the ambassador from Laos, whose elders remain pained by war during the 1960s and 1970s, has opened a key pathway for which Teng had been praying.

Teng, the denominational minister of Asian Ministries for Mennonite Church USA, met July 18 with Ambassador Seng Soukhathivong at the embassy in

Washington. After several meetings over the years with Laotian officials, this meeting was a vital step in securing a diplomatic visa and crucial government support for his ministry of reconciliation among the Laotian people.

“The purpose of the meeting was to let the ambassador know that when the Laotian people become Mennonite, their perspective changes from what it was before in terms of commitment to peace,” Teng said. “I want the ambassador to understand how to help me promote peace among the Laotian people.”

# Airmail

Children's paper likenesses travel the world

Marie Unruh, a Radical Journey participant from Peabody, Kan., took her class around the world—without leaving home.

Unruh, who served with Mission Network in Bradford, England, assisted teachers at Lidget Green, a primary school (pre-K to grade 6). One of Unruh's ideas was to do a "Flat Stanley" project with her kids, a class of 8- and 9-year-olds.

Flat Stanley is a character from a series of books by Jeff Brown. In these books, Stanley is flattened by a bulletin board that hung over his bed, and as a result, Flat Stanley can be sent around the world by mail.

Unruh helped her class create flat versions of themselves and send them to five different continents. Unruh's connections helped make it possible for the flattened students to "visit" South Africa, New Zealand, China, Germany and the United States. Unruh's friends and acquaintances, who received the flat students, responded with information about the countries where they live.

At an assembly that followed, the students took turns sharing what they learned about each country they "visited." They told about a safari in South Africa, performed a Maori dance called the Haka from New Zealand, and shared facts about China. They conversed in German and explained the United States' pledge of allegiance, as well as the differences between British and American English.



Photo courtesy of Marie Unruh

Lidget Green Primary School students Zishaan Rauf, Omar Bin Melha, Maryam Sadiq, Usaid Shah, Aysha Malik and Nafisah Kiran show off the "flat" versions of themselves that they shipped around the world. Marie Unruh, a Radical Journey participant who volunteered at the school, used the project to help the students learn about other countries and cultures.

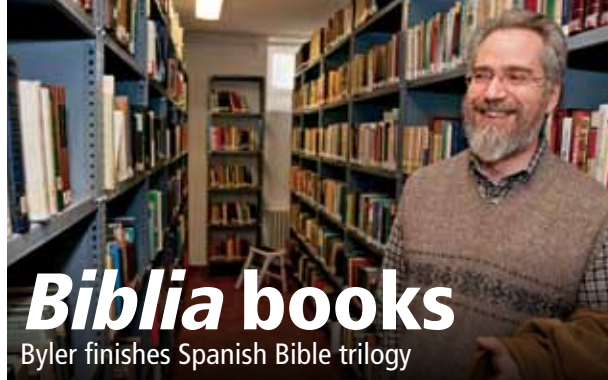


Photo by Ryan Miller

## Biblia books

Byler finishes Spanish Bible trilogy

Dennis Byler in the seminary library at El Escorial, Spain.

When Dennis Byler, a longtime Mission Network worker in Spain, released *Hablar Sobre Dios desde la Biblia* (*Talking about God using the Bible*) in March, it was the culmination of an unexpected labor of love that lasted more than 20 years and resulted in a trilogy totaling more than 1,000 pages. Here, he discusses the history and purpose of each one.



### *La Autoridad de la Palabra en la Iglesia* (*The Authority of the Word in the Church*)

In the first book, I wanted to explore how the Bible functions as authority for the doctrine and decision-making of the church. The working assumption for many Spanish-speaking evangelicals is that the Bible is

some sort of self-evident set of rules of conduct and set of beliefs, which, if held rigorously, delivers human souls from the threat of hell into the promise of heaven. This book explores what the Bible is, how it came into being, and how God leads the church by means of the Holy Spirit and the example and teaching of Jesus, as communities of believers gather around the Bible seeking God's leading.



### *Todo lo que te preguntabas sobre la Biblia* (*Y algunas cosas que preferirías no saber*) (*Everything You were Wondering about the Bible* [And a Few Things You Would Rather Not Know])

contains an overview of the Bible, brief reviews of each of the Bible's books, and a section of frequently asked questions about the Bible.



### *Hablar sobre Dios desde la Biblia* (*Talking about God using the Bible*)

Several years ago, I was requested by the seminary where I teach to write a course for congregational study in "biblical theology," which resulted in this book. While the first book was about how the

Bible functions in order to give shape to the teaching and practice of the church, this third book is about 12 specific sets of ideas we derive from the Bible as we think about God (and about life and meaning, and the universe).

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# Our stories

Mission workers blog about what's happening on the ground

## ANNA'S BLOG

### SOUTH AFRICA: Choosing life over death

By Anna Sawatzky

**A**t our Mennonite Ministries in South Africa retreat over the turn of the year, we were privileged to have several sessions with the former general secretary of Mennonite Church Canada, Jack Suderman. We spent mornings with Jack while he shared biblical insights for mission and discussed these insights in light of situations that we deal with.

Jack shared about the importance of good biblical interpretation. Looking at the story of the wise men who come to visit Jesus, we see the life and death consequences of incorrect biblical interpretation. The Magi came to Jerusalem following a star that signaled to them the birth of the “king of the Jews.” Based on their study, they believed that the king of the Jews had to be born in Jerusalem. And so they come to Herod to inquire about the new king. Herod, feeling threatened, summoned his wise people. His scholars read prophecies of a king to be born and saw that such a king must be born in Bethlehem—“geographically close, but theologically very far apart,” says Jack.

As a result of this exegetical “mistake,” King Herod has all the baby boys in Bethlehem killed.

The task for us is to at least do no harm through our exegesis.

Over Christmas, a woman from our church in Mthatha released her husband to go home to his family for part of the holidays. When he did not reach home, people began to look for him. He was found murdered in town. We attended his funeral several weeks later. The



Photo by Ryan Miller



pastor, Rev. Mthethiseni Ntapo, was to lead the service and Joe, my husband, was to preach. As is the custom, we gathered in the *rondavel* (a round, thatched-roof building) before the funeral, which would take place in a tent. The mourners sat on mats on the floor, and everyone took turns speaking, singing and praying.

During this session, Joe had been mulling over various texts on which he could preach. As the time for the service to begin drew near, the coffin was brought out from the wall for everyone to see the deceased in flesh one last time. As the murdered man's sons aged 12 and 10 circled the coffin, it became clear that this was not a situation of comforting the bereaved. In the community where the church is located, there have been several incidences of mob violence carried out against suspected murderers. In the most recent case, a widow of a pastor was murdered by her husband's congregants in a property dispute, and then the community around

**I am grateful to pastors and others who speak a prophetic word into the lives of people suffering, whether that suffering is known or unknown.**

carried out vengeance against the murderers, becoming, of course, murderers themselves. Our primary task was to prevent the sons of the murdered man from becoming murderers or being murdered themselves.

So Joe chose to preach on Cain and Abel and to relate the story of that death to Jesus' death as interpreted in Hebrews 12—the blood that “speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.” It was a strong message and was received with joy, but we knew no more than that.

The next day at church, we heard more of the story. Ntapo told us that during the early part of the funeral, which we had not understood, the friends of the deceased had stood to tell the story of the death. In their manner of telling, they implicated the widow in his murder. One man had begun wondering aloud why the husband had been alone in town without his wife, and had ended with: “I had better stop there.” Malice and ill will were running high when Joe got up to preach. Ntapo said, “But that word silenced them. It was a miracle since you didn't even know.”

I am grateful to pastors and others who speak a prophetic word into the lives of people suffering, whether that suffering is known or unknown. The word that comes from the Word can reverse the drive toward death and harm. It has the power to heal and bring newness of life. ■

## ▶ ABOUT US



Photo by David Fisher Fast

### **Anna and Joseph Sawatzky** with children Levi, Jesse, Moses and Isaac

**Location:** Mthatha, South Africa

**Term start date:** 11/01/2005

**Home congregations:** Assembly Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.; Shalom Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.

**Ministry:** Anna and Joe work with Bethany Bible School, a teaching ministry for leaders of African-Initiated Churches in Eastern Cape Province.

**Blog:** [joeannasawatzky.blogspot.com](http://joeannasawatzky.blogspot.com)





Photo by Phil Witmer



Photo by Terry Witmer

"Before we left, we told Fabian (center) that he had been our answer to prayer."

## COLOMBIA: God in the driver's seat

By Terry Witmer

Our family saw the amazing extent of Colombian hospitality recently when, on our trip back to La Mesa after traveling with Phil's parents, our vehicle suddenly would not start. After asking a nearby restaurant owner where the closest mechanic was, Phil climbed into the vehicle to try once more. We waited hopefully.

Nothing.

In the silence that followed, Luke's little voice piped up, "Well, there's only one thing to do: Pray!"

We were still hours from La Mesa, in a town where we knew no one, saw no hotels, and didn't know if towing service existed. We had no idea how to navigate car troubles in Colombia. We knew we needed God's intervention.

Phil said, "You're right, Luke. Let's pray." We bowed our heads as Phil led us in prayer. I could feel each one earnestly praying for God's help.

As Phil and I climbed out of the vehicle to walk to the mechanic, a man approached from the car that had just pulled into the empty space beside us. He must have heard Phil trying to start the vehicle, for he immediately offered help. Phil gratefully accepted, and opened the hood for the man, Fabian, to look in. He confidently



started checking the fuel injection system. It turns out he was a former mechanic who happened to have owned two Chevrolet Rodeos just like the one we were driving.

Within five minutes he had diagnosed the problem as a burned-up sensor on the fuel injection system. He called a friend in town, had him deliver the part, and installed it without any difficulty.

The vehicle started immediately.

As we drove home, we marveled at the ways God reveals his love for us, this time, hand-delivered by the husband of a woman three months pregnant...

information, offering hospitality in our respective towns. As we drove home, we marveled at the ways God reveals his love for us, this time, hand-delivered by the husband of a woman three months pregnant and the father of a 9-year-old daughter, who took an hour and a half out of his life to help a bunch of foreigners he didn't know. That's Colombia. That's our God at work. In our weakness, his strength is made known. ■

We found an ATM from our bank right across the street, withdrew the money for the new sensor, and sent it along with Fabian to the parts store owner. Before we left, we told Fabian that he had been our answer to prayer. He seemed surprised and thoughtful. Our families exchanged names and contact

## ▶ ABOUT US



### Phil and Terry Witmer with sons, Luke and Destin

**Location:** La Mesa, Colombia

**Term start date:** 10/01/2010

**Home congregation:** Mount Clinton Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Va.

**Ministry:** Phil and Terry work with the Mennonite church and *Colegio Americano Menno* in La Mesa, participating in a variety of local and regional ministries.

**Blog:** [colombianwit.blogspot.com](http://colombianwit.blogspot.com)

## LOS ANGELES: It's in the loving

By Alayna Hyde

**O**n a beautiful Friday in January of the most exhausting week of my time here in Los Angeles, with a tired and somewhat defeated attitude, my co-worker, Richard, and I turned down an alley in search of a client, who we'll call Jimmy.

After more than a year of working with him, Jimmy admitted he was ready for rehab. My supervisor decided Jimmy would be my first client, making it my responsibility to look into where he should go and what it would take to get him there. I did a little

## ALAYNA'S BLOG





## ▶ ABOUT US



Photo courtesy of Alayna Hyde

### Alayna Hyde

Los Angeles Dwell participants (L to R): Josh Orem, Alayna Hyde, Robert Morrison, Alex Davis, Brady Vanes, Kyle Clifton

**Location:** Los Angeles, California

**Term start date:** 9/1/2010

**Home congregation:** Madison Avenue Church of Christ, Pierre, S.D.

**Ministry:** During Dwell, Alayna volunteered at PATH Achieve Glendale, a homeless services provider in Glendale, Calif. Her work included assisting with outreach and case management, forming relationships with the chronically homeless, working at Glendale's winter shelter, and assisting case managers with clients who needed extra attention.

**Blog:** [alaynahyde.wordpress.com](http://alaynahyde.wordpress.com)

research, and the next time we found him, we scheduled a time to meet and drive to the facility.

After he failed to show up for the appointment, we finally found Jimmy and set out for the clinic in West LA, 30 minutes away if we were lucky, over an hour if we weren't. And we weren't. The whole process took forever. We got lost. Richard was late for his second job. Four families were waiting on us back at the office. I was an hour late to pick up my parents from the airport.

Despite all that, we sat there with Jimmy. We watched TV; we chatted. He opened up more about his past and his family than he ever had before. I couldn't just leave him there. I didn't want to make him sit by himself, nervous and alone. So we waited. After occupying several different uncomfortable plastic lobby chairs in several different waiting areas, Jimmy finally got to where he needed to be. I was anxious about leaving him, but I tried to be encouraging.

"We have to go now. You're OK, right? You'll do great. This will all work out. Do you have my number?"

He smiled and assured me he was fine. I was nervous to leave him. What if he walked out right after we left? What if we went

**"The success of love is in the loving—it is not in the result of loving. Of course, it is natural in love to want the best for the other person, but whether it turns out that way or not does not determine the value of what we have done."**

—Mother Teresa

to all this trouble for nothing? I knew I couldn't hold his hand through the whole process. We could only show him the door and hope he stepped through.

After the madness had all died down, I was still struggling with the possibility that it may all have been for naught; Jimmy might have decided to leave, and we might have failed. Then I happened upon this quote by Mother Teresa: "The success of love is in the loving—it is not in the result of loving. Of course, it is natural in love to want the best

for the other person, but whether it turns out that way or not does not determine the value of what we have done."

I invest my time and energy and passion into the people I meet. But I cannot make Jimmy stay at the rehab facility. I cannot wish him sober. Whether he stays does not detract from the fact that we cared enough to keep visiting him, find him help when he asked, and will continue to work with him, no matter the outcome of rehab. A success story would be great, but it's OK if it doesn't turn out just the way I hope because, as I'm learning, the success of love is in the loving. ■



# PHILIPPI, W.VA.: Simple living challenge

Compiled by Andrew Clouse

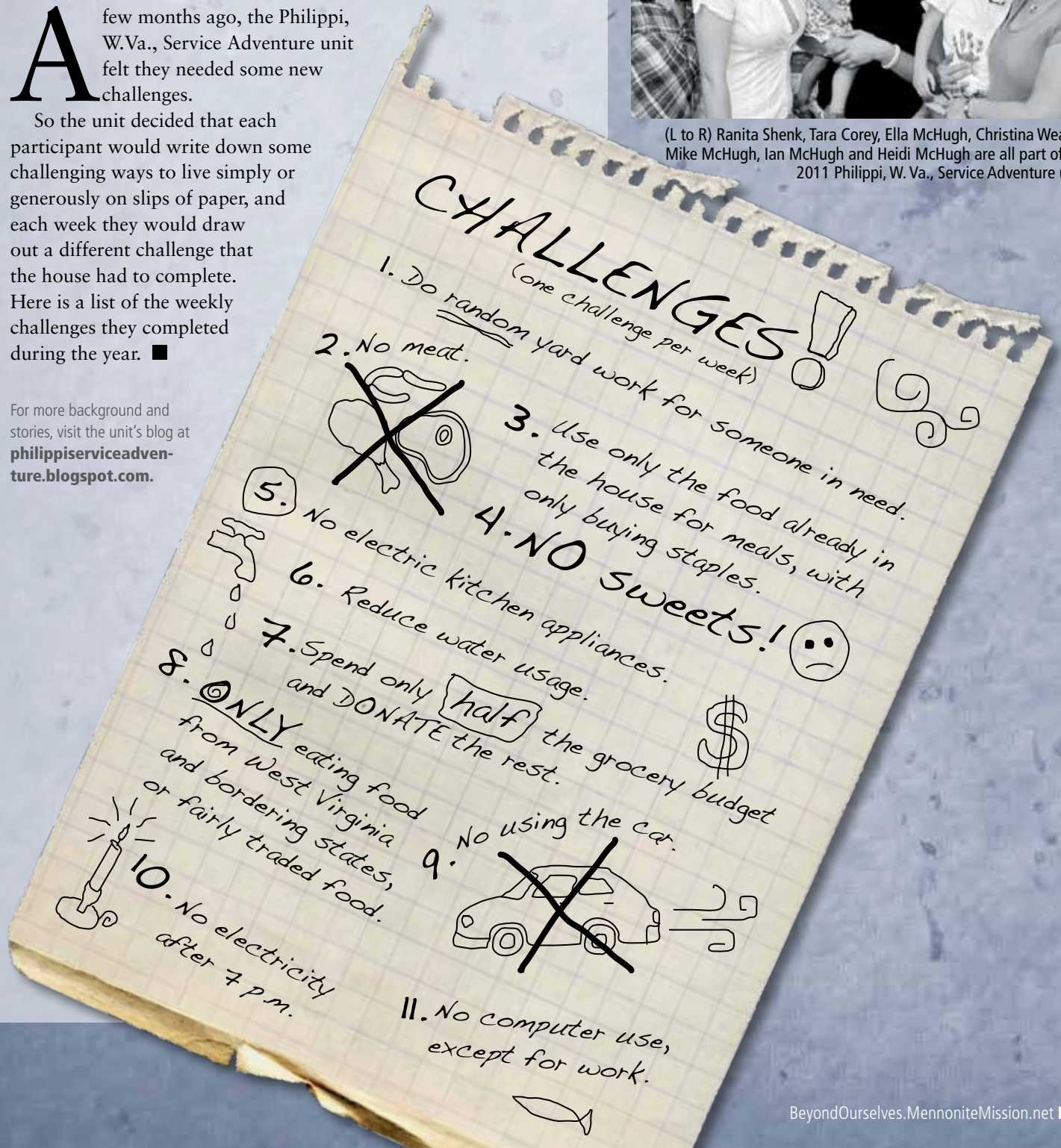
A few months ago, the Philippi, W.Va., Service Adventure unit felt they needed some new challenges.

So the unit decided that each participant would write down some challenging ways to live simply or generously on slips of paper, and each week they would draw out a different challenge that the house had to complete. Here is a list of the weekly challenges they completed during the year. ■

For more background and stories, visit the unit's blog at [philippiserviceadventure.blogspot.com](http://philippiserviceadventure.blogspot.com).



(L to R) Ranita Shenk, Tara Corey, Ella McHugh, Christina Weaver, Mike McHugh, Ian McHugh and Heidi McHugh are all part of the 2011 Philippi, W. Va., Service Adventure unit.



# New workers enter service

Mission workers beginning assignments between March and September 2011

## MVS

**Sara Beachy**, Baltic, Ohio, is a program assistant with Boys and Girls Clubs of Fresno County in Fresno, Calif.

**Elaine Birkey**, Foolsland, Ill., is an advocacy counselor with Project PLASE Inc. in Baltimore.

**Tina Bolt**, Grand Rapids, Mich., is a compassionate companion with Joseph's House in Washington, D.C.

**Aaron Clemmer**, Harleysville, Pa., is a volunteer and support coordinator with Mission Graduates in San Francisco.

**Audrey Engle**, Salem, Ore., is a paralegal with ProBAR in Harlingen, Texas.

**Jesse Erb**, Hesston, Kan., is a barista with Guadalupe Street Coffee in San Antonio.

**Mark Fenton**, Tremont, Ill., is a story production associate with Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service in Baltimore.

**Emma Fenton-Miller**, Marcellus, Mich., is a program manager with The Gubbio Project in San Francisco.

**Natalie Friesen**, Freeman, S.D., is a teachers' assistant with South Side Day Nursery in St. Louis.

**Rachel Friesen**, Filley, Neb., is a New Roots for Refugees community garden developer with Catholic Charities in Kansas City, Kan.

**Stephanie Friesen**, Denver, is assistant to the education director with the Boys and Girls Club of Hutchinson in Hutchinson, Kan.

**Denay Fuglie**, Harrisonburg, Va., is a medical clinic coordinator with Bread for the City in Washington, D.C.

**Laura Good**, Fisher, Ill., is an administrative assistant/client liaison/data analyst with Project PLASE Inc. in Baltimore.

**Megan Grove**, Greencastle, Pa., is an intake/outreach coordinator with Urban Justice Center in New York City.

**Johann Hertel**, Lemgo, Germany, is a housing and maintenance technician with Interfaith Housing Services Inc. in Hutchinson, Kan.

**Sarah Hiebert**, Fresno, Calif., is a children's program assistant with La Puente Home Inc. in Alamosa, Colo.

**Benjamin Histand**, North Newton, Kan., is a supportive housing associate with DISH (Delivering Innovation in Supportive Housing) in San Francisco.

**Justin Hochstetler**, Iowa City, Iowa, is a community literacy program assistant with Erie Neighborhood House in Chicago.

**Asha Holsopple**, Goshen, Ind., is a victim advocate with Tu Casa Inc. in Alamosa, Colo.

**Christopher Johnston**, Goshen, Ind., is a program assistant with Madison-area Urban Ministry in Madison, Wis.

**Scott Kempf**, Libertyville, Ill., is a farmers' market assistant with Tucson Community Food Bank in Tucson, Ariz.

**Hannah Kraybill**, Harrisonburg, Va., is a dependency drug court program assistant with Superior Court of California in San Francisco.

**Kristina Krieger**, Augustdorf, Germany, is a dietary/activities aide with Mennonite Friendship Manor in Hutchinson, Kan.

**Micah Kulp**, Salunga, Pa., is an IT consultant with Danenet in Madison, Wis.

**Kelsey Landes**, Harrisonburg, Va., is a middle school college and career planning coordinator with Treehouse in Seattle.

**Mark Massey**, Columbus, Ohio, is a sentencing mitigation specialist with Monroe County Public Defender's Office in Rochester, N.Y.

**Chloe Mathonnet-VanderWell**, Pella, Iowa, is a community support coordinator with St. Martin's on Westlake in Seattle.

**Clayton Matthews**, Wauseon, Ohio, is a gleaners' specialist with Community Action Coalition in Madison, Wis.

**Jordan Michelson**, Maple Valley, Wash., is an adult education instructor with Academy of Hope in Washington, D.C.

**Joshua Miller**, Fishersville, Va., is a case aide with Lutheran Social Services, Refugee and Immigration Programs in Sioux Falls, S.D.

**Sally Mitchell**, Chesterfield, N.H., is a program/campaign assistant with Global Exchange in San Francisco.

**Jason Mueller**, Halstead, Kan., is a mechanic/maintenance worker with Hopi Mission School in Kykotsmovi, Ariz.

**Maria Post**, Oak Park, Ill., is a paralegal with

ProBAR in Harlingen, Texas.

**Sierra Pryce**, North Newton, Kan., is a project volunteer with Migrant Farmworkers Project in Kansas City, Kan.

**Amy Regier**, Haysville, Kan., is a lead teacher with Daughters of Charity in San Antonio.

**Sarah Rich**, North Manchester, Ind., is a volunteer coordinator/trail crew leader with Washington Trails Association in Seattle.

**Brian Schaap**, Holland, Mich., is a refugee social services case aide with Catholic Charities in Kansas City, Kan.

**Laura Schlabach**, Goshen, Ind., is a marketing assistant with Grist in Seattle.

**Hannah Shelly**, Bluffton, Ohio, is a media arts assistant with Visual Studies Workshop in Rochester, N.Y.

**Nickolas Simons**, Bristol, Ind., is a CSA gardener with Rise Up Farms in Elkhart, Ind.

**Elizabeth Speigle**, Telford, Pa., is a case aide with Catholic Charities, Archdiocese of San Antonio, Inc. in San Antonio.

**Emma Stahl-Wert**, Pittsburgh, is a garden coordinator with Primavera Foundation in Tucson, Ariz.

**Alex Stucky**, Galva, Kan., is a program instructor with For Love of Children in Washington, D.C.

**Katherine VanderHeide**, Holland, Mich., is a youth program assistant with Erie Neighborhood House in Chicago.

**Paul Versluis IV**, Ann Arbor, Mich., is a pro-

gram staff member with Boulder Shelter for the Homeless in Boulder, Colo.

**Brittany Voth**, Newton, Kan., is a tenant advocate with Metropolitan St. Louis Equal Housing Opportunity Council in St. Louis.

**Katherine Walker**, Ephrata, Pa., is a World Vision intern with World Vision International in New York City.

**Chelsea Weaver**, Pinellas Park, Fla., is an ESL/computer adult education instructor with Mary's Center Even Start in Washington, D.C.

**Brett Wedel**, Hutchinson, Kan., is a communications and event planning assistant with Northeast Organic Farming Association in Rochester, N.Y.

**Terra Wiens**, Newton, Kan., is a case aide with Lutheran Social Services, Refugee and Immigration Programs in Sioux Falls, S.D.

**LynAnne Wiest**, Kingsburg, Calif., is an assistant manager with Plowsharing Crafts in St. Louis.

**Jessica Wright**, Bluffton, Ohio, is a home delivery and volunteer coordinator with University District Food Bank in Seattle.

**Stephanie Wyse**, Mount Pleasant, Iowa, is an elementary teacher with Hopi Mission School in Kykotsmovi, Ariz.

**Blake Zickafoose**, Lima, Ohio, is a church coordinator with Chicago Community Mennonite Church in Chicago.

## Radical Journey

**Paul Dyck**, Winnipeg, Manitoba, serving in China

**Joanna Epp**, Newton, Kan., serving in South Africa

**Laird Goertzen**, Newton, Kan., serving in China

**Andrew Gordon**, Harleysville, Pa., serving in Bolivia

**Rachel Mast**, Corvallis, Ore., serving in England

**Riley Pierce**, Pueblo, Colo., serving in Paraguay

**Timothy Regier**, Newton, Kan., serving in Paraguay

**Hannah Sauder**, Lititz, Pa., serving in South Africa

**Kaihle Sauder**, Archbold, Ohio, serving in England

**Cara Scandrett-Leatherman**, St. Louis, serving in Paraguay

**Isaac Shue**, Harper, Kan., serving in Paraguay

**Kathryn Swartz**, Spring City, Pa., serving in China

**Katie Wahl**, Phoenix, serving in Paraguay

**Brittany Wyse**, Archbold, Ohio, serving in England

## Service Adventure

**Lisa Bailey**, North Canton, Ohio, began a term in Johnstown, Pa.

**Jeanna Beiler**, Mobile, Ala., began a term in Anchorage, Alaska.

**Tylan Coblentz**, Goshen, Ind., began a term in Colorado Springs, Colo.



# BRIDGES TO CROSS

## Mayor praises Mennos

More than 2,900 youth gave 10,000 hours to 47 local organizations

**Y**outh at the 2011 Mennonite Church USA Convention in Pittsburgh didn't just go for the amazing speakers and music; they also donated their time—lots of it. During the weeklong event, 2,900 youth spent 10,000 hours working for 47 local organizations.

They cleaned up illegal dumping sites, restored riverbeds, helped build homes for Habitat for

Humanity, packed medical supplies.

Their work earned them city-wide recognition with a front-page article in the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, and a public statement of gratitude from the mayor, Luke Ravenstahl, who issued a public proclamation, calling the service “an enormous benefit to many communities and neighborhoods in the Pittsburgh area.”

Mennonite Mission Network coordinated the servant projects.



Youth from churches in the Mountain States Mennonite Conference clean up a ravine in Pittsburgh during the 2011 Mennonite Church USA Convention.



(L to R) Rebecca Padilla of *Iglesia Menonita del Buen Pastor*, Goshen, Ind.; Mendi Fritz of Community Mennonite Fellowship, Sterling, Ill.; Stephanie Chase of Chambersburg, Pa.; and Betsy Coleman, director of the garden program; celebrate digging out a stubborn root at the Manchester Native Plant Garden at Shelby's Corner in Pittsburgh during the servant projects at Pittsburgh 2011.

**Abigail Drader**, Valparaiso, Ind., began a term in Raleigh, N.C.

**Lauren and Mark Eash Hershberger**, Bristol, Ind./Pittsburgh, Texas, began a two-year term in Albany, Ore.

**Isaac Fox**, Blacksburg, Va., began a term in Anchorage, Alaska.

**Anita Garber**, Bainbridge, Pa., began a term in Johnstown, Pa.

**Cody Helmuth**, Lagrange, Ind., began a term in Johnstown, Pa.

**Sofia Hess**, Goshen, Ind., began a term in Raleigh, N.C.

**Juliane Horsch**, Schaenitz, Germany, began a term in Albany, Ore.

**Renee Hostetler**, Homestead, Fla., began a term in Philippi, W.Va.

**Dorothea Isaak**, Bruentrup, Germany, began a term in Raleigh, N.C.

**Jennifer Isaak**, Detmold, Germany, began a term in Albany, Ore.

**Melissa Jantzi**, Harrisonburg, Va., began a term in Albany, Ore.

**Linda Jotter**, Espelkamp, Germany, began a term in Johnstown, Pa.

**Amanda Keegel**, Apple Creek, Ohio, began a term in Anchorage, Alaska.

**Kelsey Klaiher**, Sugarcreek, Ohio, began a term in Albany, Ore.

**Carina Kuebler**, Haiterbach-Oberschwandorf, Germany, began a term in Colorado Springs, Colo.

**Peter Manickam**, Portland, Ore., began a term in Colorado Springs, Colo.

**Hannah Martin**, Greencastle, Pa., began a term in Albuquerque, N.M.

**Michelle Peachey**, Manheim, Pa., began a term in Albuquerque, N.M.

**Melanie Pilz**, Rangsdorf, Germany, began a term in Albuquerque, N.M.

**Erin Regier**, Newton, Kan., began a term in Albuquerque, N.M.

**Benjamin Reim**, Lichtenberg, Germany, began a term in Philippi, W.Va.

**Abigail Schrag**, Newton, Kan., began a term in Philippi, W.Va.

**Elizabeth Schrag**, Newton, Kan., began

a term in Anchorage, Alaska.

**Alexander Schuhwerk**, Durach, Germany, began a term in Johnstown, Pa.

**Allison Shetler**, Orrville, Ohio, began a term in Philippi, W.Va.

**Carl Snyder**, Danboro, Pa., began a term in Anchorage, Alaska.

**McKenzie Stutzman**, Albany, Ore., began a term in Albuquerque, N.M.

**Christopher Wagoner**, Newton, Kan., began a term in Raleigh, N.C.

**Bethanie Wedel**, Newton, Kan., began a term in Albany, Ore.

**Delaney Wilson**, Hopedale, Ill., began a term in Colorado Springs, Colo.

**Anna and Brian Yoder Schlabach**, Goshen, Ind./Denver, Colo., began a two-year term in Albuquerque, N.M.

**Micah Yoder**, Canby, Ore., began a term in Philippi, W.Va.

**Jack Younger**, Stratton, Colo., began a term in Raleigh, N.C.

*Continued on page 15*

## You can't do mission without inclusion

By Wil LaVeist



A recent opinion piece in *The Mennonite* titled, “Confessions of a white anti-racist,” gripped my attention. The commentary by Sarah Shirk is about her initially cold reaction to the changed worship style at the adult services during the annual Mennonite Church USA Convention in July. Shirk wrote honestly about how she was rattled and disappointed by the missing four-part harmony hymns she and other white friends had anticipated. Instead, the predominantly black Calvary Community Church band of Hampton, Va., led worship with contemporary guitars, syncopated drums, and keyboards blended with soulful voices singing unfamiliar gospel tunes.

“I didn’t know the songs the worship band led. I missed the hymns I had grown up singing and come to love,” Shirk wrote.

But as the week went on, something happened.

“I noticed a middle-aged black woman standing a few rows ahead of me. She had her head tilted back, face raised, and was swaying and clapping along with the music. I wondered how many conventions and how many church services she had previously sat through, feeling as I now did—disconnected and a bit out of my element. But today it was her turn to worship in a style familiar and nurturing to her. So this music is Mennonite music.”

As a black American and member of Calvary attending my first Mennonite convention, I was proud that God had used my church to be such a bridge to understanding. But I was even more intrigued by the reactions posted at the bottom of Shirk’s column, particularly those ripping her point of view.

Jono11 posted:

“...You don’t walk into an Amish service and demand that they stop singing the way they sing, or that they start driving SUVs and watching satellite TV... And you don’t join the Mennonite Church just to change the way we worship, change the way we sing, and ultimately transform us from a vital, unique peace church into just another bland vanilla-Christian nothingness.”

Hmmm. I respect Jono11’s valid point, which is shared by many Mennonites, I thought to myself. I wouldn’t want someone to attend Calvary and insist the *flava* be diluted from the worship music.

I get it because I, too, believe that my unique black

American cultural context is as equally relevant, valuable and godly as the European. The same is true for the Asian, Middle-Eastern, African, South American and Native American.

Anyone who understands the history of persecution that European Mennonites suffered over generations that forced them to North and South America, and how that has deeply shaped the church we appreciate today, should understand the need to preserve this great heritage, right? Is the distinctive European-inspired singing style as much a pillar of what makes Mennonites unique and attractive as our emphasis on peace, justice and missions?

Ironically, therein lies the angst and the answer.

Working as a staff member in the marketing department of Mennonite Mission Network, it has become clear to me that you can’t truly believe in missions without also believing in cultural inclusion. If you serve and witness to someone outside of your culture, as Jesus has clearly commissioned Christians to do in commanding that we “therefore, go and make disciples of all nations,” a natural result is that the people we lead to Christ would want to join us in worship at church. This has been my personal experience over the years and has been the experience of many mission workers I’ve been honored to write about recently. So, it must also follow that through missions, God is bringing about the “house of prayer for all nations,” and through our individual and collective spiritual growth, God’s will is being “done on earth as it is in heaven.” Inclusion is God’s intended consequence.

What Sister Shirk shared was that in experiencing what it is like to be a cultural fish out of water at church, and allowing the Holy Spirit to lead her beyond her initial discomfort zone, she grew another level closer to heaven. If we focus on the superior Spirit that unites us, we’ll find there is more than enough room at the table for us to sample, appreciate and value each other’s equally godly styles.

Personally, one of the most beautiful moments of the adult worship experience at the convention was when we took communion together and sang hymns in unity. Our blended voices sounded angelic, especially mine as I tucked it below the voice of the white brother next to me who could really sing.

Praise God for him.

Wil LaVeist is managing editor for multimedia at Mission Network.



## Not a sage on the stage, but a guide from the side

By Ervin Stutzman



This issue of *Beyond Ourselves* features worker blogs. It's a helpful way to get a perspective from the field. In June, I had a similar opportunity when I met with a small group of mission executives who were interviewing three veteran Mennonite Mission Network workers in the Argentine Chaco—Willis and Byrdalene Horst and Keith Kingsley. They shared about the dramatic shift in mission strategy and practice they had experienced among the indigenous people of South America. In keeping with the long-time mission workers who had preceded them, they paid particular attention to the ways that they could support the work that God was doing among the Indians of the Chaco. Rather than seeing themselves as a sage on the stage with authoritative answers, they committed themselves to being a guide on the side, learning from the Scriptures alongside the indigenous people. They learned to read the Bible in an intercultural way, exploring the meaning of Scripture as understood through a different cultural lens.

This idea, of course, is as old as Christianity itself. The early Christians (re)interpreted the Hebrew Scriptures in light of the coming of Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul learned to read the Scriptures alongside the Gentiles in Asia and Europe who embraced the way of Jesus.

The Horsts and Kingsleys learned to listen for the voice of the Spirit as the Scriptures were read aloud to the Toba people. They sat in a circle with the people, discerning together with them the meaning of Scripture for their lives. Whereas this was once called cross-cultural work, they prefer to call it intercultural work. The mission workers are not simply bringing insights and teaching from their own culture and background; they are receiving insights from those who are hearing the Scriptures in their own language for the first time.

As I interacted with these veteran communicators of the gospel, I thought about the priority of Mennonite Church USA that we call intercultural transformation. Like the mission workers from Argentina, we must learn to sit in circles with people from other cultures, listening for the Spirit of God in our midst.

Ervin Stutzman is executive director of Mennonite Church USA.

*New service workers, continued from page 13*

### SOOP

**Erma Edwards,**

Oskaloosa, Iowa, served one month in Elkhart, Ind.

**Florence and Vernard Guengerich,**

Goshen, Ind., served two weeks in Macon, Miss.

**Marilyn and Peter Hartman,**

Hesston, Kan., served two months in Lincoln City, Ore.

**Anne and Bruce Hummel,**

Millersburg, Ohio, served one week in San Antonio.

**Jennifer and Robert Koehn,**

Cordell, Okla., served one week in San Antonio.

**Elizabeth and Ronald Martin,**

Wooster, Ohio, served one week in San Antonio.

**Dave and Karen Mast,**

Ephrata, Pa., served three months in Ephrata, Pa.

**J. Kevin and Lorene Miller,**

Goshen, Ind., served one week in Macon, Miss.

**Frank and Helen Nachtigal,**

North Newton, Kan., served one month in Shipshewana, Ind.

**Fannie Schlabach,**

Middlebury, Ind., served one week in Meridian, Miss.

**George B. and Mae Stoltzfus,**

Landisville, Pa., served one month in Hickory, N.C.

**Cindy and Tom Yoder,**

Goshen, Ind., served one week in Macon, Miss.

**Elaine Yoder,**

Middlebury, Ind., served one week in Meridian, Miss.

### Youth Venture

**Laura Alderfer,**

Sellersville, Pa., served in Guatemala.

**Leah Amstutz,** Goshen, Ind., served in Botswana.

**Nicole Bartel,**

Hillsboro, Kan., served in Los Angeles.

**Lacey Brinegar,** Paoli, Ind., served in Botswana.

**Katelyn Derstine,**

Sellersville, Pa., served in Guatemala.

**Isabella Gomez,**

Los Fresnos, Texas, served in Los Angeles.

**Lydia Good,** Souderton, Pa., served in Guatemala.

**Chaz Graber,** Topeka, Kan., served in Los Angeles.

**Hannah and Justin Heinzekehr,**

Claremont, Calif., served in Los Angeles.

**Annaka Miller,**

Hanston, Kan., served in Santa Cruz, Bolivia.

**Elisabeth Miller,**

Laramie, Wyo., served in Santa Cruz, Bolivia.

**Laura Pound,**

Fresno, Calif., served in Santa Cruz, Bolivia.

**Jill Schmidt,**

Whitewater, Kan., served in Santa Cruz, Bolivia.

**Elizabeth Schrag,**

Galva, Kan., served in Phoenix.

**Kendra Scott,**

Newton, Kan., served in Los Angeles.

**Lynford Seibel,**

Lawrence, Miss., served in Santa Cruz, Bolivia.

**Justin Shenk,**

Lancaster, Pa., served in Guatemala and Phoenix.

**Valerie Showalter,**

Lancaster, Pa., served in Guatemala and Phoenix.

**Immanuel Sila,**

Denver, Colo., served in Botswana.

**Vanessa Silverman,**

Miami, Fla., served in Botswana.

**Marissa Souder,**

Souderton, Pa., served in Guatemala.

**Kaitlyn Terry,**

Federalsburg, Md., served in Santa Cruz, Bolivia.

**Braden Unruh,**

Canton, Kan., served in Phoenix.

### International

**Katrina Bechthold**

began a one-year assignment teaching English for the Korea Anabaptist Center in Seoul, South Korea. She is from Greentown, Pa., and a member of Lords Valley Community Church.

**Lois and Tom Harder**

served two months as fraternal musicians in Paraguay. They are from Wichita, Kan., and are members of Lorraine Avenue Mennonite Church.

**Sydney McCully**

began a one-year assignment teaching English for the Korea Anabaptist Center in Seoul, South Korea. She is from Wylie, Texas, and attends Lords Valley Community Church in Greentown, Pa.

**Brian and Jessica Reece**

began a one-year assignment teaching English for the Korea Anabaptist Center in Seoul, South Korea. They are from State College, Pa., and are members of University Mennonite Church.

**Donald and Marie Gaeddert**

have begun a two-year assignment teaching English in China with Mennonite Partners in China. They are from Larned, Kan., and are members at Berghal Mennonite Church.



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**LOOK  
INSIDE**

2011 GIFT CATALOG

# The Perfect Gift



God showed amazing love for us through the gift of Jesus. At Mission Network, we continue to share that love through mission and ministry.

Look for the enclosed gift catalog and discover ways you can help continue the work of God's perfect gift to us.

**A window into God's perfect love**—From front to back: Milenca Rios, Sebastian Justiniano and Herlan Zambrana, children in the *Samuelito Guarderia* Day Care in Santa Cruz, Bolivia, a Mission Network partner.

Photo by Alan Stucky, pastor of Pleasant Valley Mennonite Church in Harper, Kan.

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