



FAITH IN ACTION

“Each one must give as he has decided in his heart ... for God loves a cheerful giver.” — 2 Corinthians 9:7 (ESV)

Marc and Vonna Yoder on their porch in Cotopaxi, Colorado. Photo by Dwight Mueller.

Parted by miles, bonded in spirit

By Laurie Oswald Robinson

When Marc and Vonna Yoder, Menonite Mission Network donors, received U.S. federal stimulus funds during the COVID-19 pandemic, they wondered: How can we best share some of this with others who are in more need than ourselves?

For guidance, Marc Yoder reached out to Dwight Mueller, their current Donor Relations representative for the agency. Mueller, who wasn't able to visit the Yoders in person due to the pandemic, was only a phone call away.

“I trusted Dwight, and I knew that Mission Network would help us to make the most — and the best — use of this gift, because the agency knows where the needs are,” Marc Yoder said in a recent phone interview. “The agency provides us with good advice and good conduits for our giving.”

The retirees, who live in the remote mountains near Cotopaxi, Colorado, said Mission Network helps them bond

with the wider church, despite living far from Menonite centers. The closest Menonite congregation is the one that they attend — Alive With Grace Fellowship, a church plant 72 miles away in Pueblo, Colorado.

A shared vision with Mission Network helps them draw close in spirit to the wider Menonite community, even when they were separated from a physical church building, Vonna Yoder said. “We like how the agency is careful to mutually partner with the communities they engage with ... rather than showing others how it should be done, or attempting to change people's culture,” she said.

Vonna Yoder, who did not grow up as a Menonite, personally experienced this caring spirit as a child. She attended vacation Bible school and Sunday school at the former Pueblo Menonite Church. “My dad ran a drive-in restaurant across from the church,”

Vonna Yoder said. “My older brother and I had been going sporadically to the Episcopal church, but this little Menonite congregation had a different attitude — it was more open and loving.” For example, the congregation provided the children in her neighborhood with rides to the children's programs at the church.

Vonna Yoder later attended Hesston (Kansas) College, where she met and began dating Marc Yoder, a Menonite farm boy from Wellman, Iowa. They married in 1962.

Throughout the many seasons of the Yoders' lives, Mission Network — as well as one of its predecessors, Menonite Board of Missions — has provided a backdrop for their family stewardship goals, which included service-oriented vocations.

Marc Yoder was an educator at the University of Northern Iowa in Cedar Falls, Iowa, and finished his career as academic dean at Hesston College. Vonna Yoder engaged with self-help craft initiatives, among other pursuits. They raised one daughter, Stephanie.

Their stewardship as retirees, along with their financial gifts, includes providing hospitality for folks seeking retreat, such as white water rafting with Marc Yoder on the Arkansas River.

“We don't see ourselves as anything special or unusual in terms of being donors,” Marc Yoder said. “Though we feel very privileged to be engaged with a mission agency that keeps evolving and growing in its understanding of what missions is all about.” ■



Menonite Mission Network donor Marc Yoder, far right, enjoys white water rafting near the home he and his wife, Vonna Yoder share, in Cotopaxi, Colorado.

Photo by Dwight Mueller.

6 ways to share your gifts on behalf of global missions

1. **Contact a Donor Relations representative** to further explore the ways to give a gift to Mennonite Mission Network.
2. **Your estate planning** is your final faith testimony; please prayerfully consider including Mission Network as part of your gifting.
3. **Encourage** your family, friends and church to learn about and support Mission Network.
4. **Giving a gift to Mission Network** helps all age groups grow in their faith journey through volunteering and service.
5. A gift to the **Mission Network annual fund** supports all the work that we (you) endeavor to do in the name of Christ.
6. **Be the Gospel** — Be a donor to Mission Network!

For information regarding planned giving to Mission Network, contact Karen Horsman at KarenH@MennoniteMission.net.

"Donors to Mennonite Mission Network, like Marc and Vonna Yoder, are generous, prayerful, vitally interested people who Mennonite Mission Network relies upon for support. We could not fulfill God's call if it were not for our donors. They become far more than financial supporters — they become fellow workers and friends. We want you to become part of that special extended family. The Donor Relations representatives would love to hear from you! Thank you, Marc, Vonna, and all our donors, for your generosity and prayers."



Karen Horsman
Director of Donor Relations

Cut out or fold over, post and use this verse for contemplation and prayer over the next month.

CARRY ONE ANOTHER'S HEAVY LOADS.

— Galatians 6:2



Be the Gospel.



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