



FAITH IN ACTION

... God is not far from any one of us. For in him we live and move and have our being ... —Acts 17:27-28

Charles Yiyoguae and Esteban Mashacori, participants in a youth retreat in Ecuador, absorb God's word as explained by Pastor Ramón Umenda. Jerrell Ross Richer holds the flashlight.

Sitting down while others stand up

Jane and Jerrell work half the year with indigenous church leaders in the Ecuadorian rain forest and half the year as mission workers and educators in the United States. It's an unusual model and we asked what feedback they have heard. Here's what Jerrell had to say:

One bit of feedback that has been important for us in learning to work in partnership came from a pastor we work with, Clever Machiant. Visitors asked what North American missionaries can do to support him. He said, "You can sit down, while we stand up." Then he explained what he meant. He recalled Ecuador's past when foreign missionaries stood to preach, teach and lead, and local people would sit, listen and follow. But when these missionaries

left, some of the churches collapsed due to a lack of leadership and a poor fit between North American worship and teaching styles and indigenous customs and ways of doing things.

Instead, by taking a seat and listening, the missionaries support indigenous leadership and learn a lot in the process. From Pastor Clever's perspective, the worst thing would be for North Americans to abandon them. Rather, he advocates working in partnership, North and South. ■



Jerrell Ross Richer, Pastor Clever Machiant, and Jane Ross Richer.

PRAY for guidance by the Holy Spirit as we learn how to best support one another.

Serve

Therapeutic recreation program assistant

Alaska

Assist therapists at Challenge Alaska with the day-to-day operating tasks and therapy programs. Possible responsibilities may include hiking, ski instruction, organizing a book club, and participating in cooking classes.

At-risk children's program assistant

Peru

Join the work of the *Iglesia Cristiana Menonita* congregation and serve through ministries for children, youth and families.

Community development liaison

Benin

Consult with exciting NGO partners in program development and capacity building. Assist in developing action plans, locating tools and resources, and providing logistical support.

Finance advisor

Nepal

Work alongside Nepali professionals in implementing sound financial practices. Experience with accountability is preferred.

Community peacebuilder

South Africa

Join in the transformational work of the Southern African Development and Reconstruction Agency (SADRA). You can assist in their peer mediation program, election monitoring, training pastors to be peacemakers, or you can put your administrative skills to good use as well.

TAP A SHOULDER

Apply or find other placements at
www.ChooseService.org.

Following Jesus' model

by James R. Krabill



Bonaventure Akowanou, Antoine Codjo, Alphonse Godonou, and François Bangbadé were selected from the first graduating class of Benin Bible Institute in the 1990s to receive additional theological training and to serve as BBI administrative and teaching staff. They have faithfully carried out these functions for the past 15 years.

Jesus mentored disciples to mentor still other disciples. And this became the pattern for the early church. At Mennonite Mission Network, we are committed to practicing Jesus' model of mentoring disciples. In the words of Pastor Clever Machiant, we take "sitting down so others can stand up" seriously. Over the century-long history of our mission initiatives, this commitment has taken different forms in different places. Below are four examples of how Mission Network has done this. Sometimes, sitting means remaining and accompanying; other times, it has meant releasing and returning.

- **Launching village health ministries** in Taiwan that today have matured and developed into the largest

locally-run medical complex in the Anabaptist world.

- **Offering short-term mission and service programs** for youth and young adults who today are serving the church in North America and around the world.
- **Planting churches in Colombia** that are in turn assisting in the planting of new congregations in other regions of Colombia, in Ecuador, and in Venezuela.
- **Partnering with local churches in Benin** to start a Bible school for training church leaders, and then helping to fund additional education for a corps of local administrators and professors to run the school for the past 20 years.

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

In God . . .

We live
and move
and have our being!

—Acts 17:28

Be the Gospel.



www.MennoniteMission.net
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