



FAITH IN ACTION

How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news! —Romans 10:15

Juanita and Francisco Machado offer prayers of blessing to members in their congregation.

Paths of love through adversity

As was his habit, Francisco scrolled through e-mails before calling it a day. Almost ready to go to sleep, he saw the invitation to serve from Menonite Mission Network.

“When I read the word ‘Spain,’ my heart started beating faster,” he said. It had only been a few months prior that he had begun to think about his ancestors and their Spanish descendants. It troubled him that they might not know the good news of Jesus Christ. Receiving Mission Network’s invitation felt like God’s hand moving the right pieces into their places.

Francisco and Juanita Machado have been active practitioners of Jesus’ good news since the 1980s. First, in

Honduras, their home country, they took Jesus’ teachings seriously and began planting churches. They called out injustice, corruption and violence, and received death threats because of it. For this reason, the Machados, along with their four children, sought asylum in the United States, where they lived, worked, and served the church for seven years.

“We did not understand God’s purpose for us, but I am positive that God, in his immense mercy, kept us safe from death,” said Francisco.

In July 2017, Francisco and Juanita, jointly appointed by Mission Network

and Virginia Menonite Missions, moved to Hoyo de Manzanares, a small town in northern Madrid, Spain.

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Shortly after arriving in Spain, they enrolled in an education program and began attending a local church, *Comunidad Cristiana* (Christian Community). Their hope

is to continue their previous work of church planting and to take every single opportunity to share Jesus’ good news, which has guided and guarded them thus far.

“God makes paths of love even in personal adversity,” proclaimed Juanita. “Our lives are in his hands.” ■

PRAY that Francisco and Juanita can continue to model Jesus’ good news and grow God’s kingdom in Madrid. To support the Machados’ ministry with Mission Network, visit Menonite Mission Network’s donate page.

Serve

Program assistant

Anchorage, Alaska

Assist in office and miscellaneous work at Homeward Bound, a residential facility for homeless men recovering from alcoholism.

Camp volunteer

Colombia

Help with upkeep at *Finca CREER* (Center for Retreats and Meetings El Recreo), a 12.5-acre campground. Possible projects include painting, gardening, carpentry, cooking, construction and sewing.

Youth Venture

Barcelona, Spain

Serve alongside *Comunidad Evangélica Menonita* (Evangelical Community Menonite), focusing on youth outreach, teaching English, and cleaning and maintenance of the church facilities.

Farm volunteer

Japan

Assist Menno Village in building or demolition projects and with the regular workings of the farm. Volunteers would also participate in the daily prayer and food life of the community.

Community development liaison

Benin

Consult with existing NGO partners in program development and capacity building to develop action plans, locating tools and resources, networking, and providing logistical support.

TAP A SHOULDER

Apply or find other placements at www.MennoniteMission.net/Serve.

Embodying the church, part 1:

Being Christ's hands and feet

By Joshua Garber

The church—as the body of Christ—is at a pivotal moment in history as institutional religion continues to move further from the center of society. This reality requires a redefining of what it means to be “church.”

The central message of Jesus was “the kingdom of God,” for which he planted and spread the seeds during his time on earth. He then tasked his followers to continue cultivating the seeds after his departure. Specifically, the church (all of us) must take on the active role initially filled by Christ.

Reflect on these three principles of being Christ's hands and feet as you

consider what it means for you and your community to build God's kingdom.

1. Recognize God's kingdom is an inversion of the values of empire. Do your personal and communal values most reflect an orientation toward empire or God's kingdom?
2. Get your church community out of the building and into the neighborhood. Once you do, you'll certainly discover a kingdom-building project.
3. Ensure your faith community is at least as outwardly focused as it is inwardly focused. Even small concentrations of Christ-followers can profoundly impact a neighborhood.



This short reflection is part one of a four-part series contributed by Joshua Garber, who serves with his wife, Alisha, and their son, Asher, in Barcelona, Spain. His series will explore four core elements that light the way for faith communities as they engage in how to be the church today.

Keep up-to-date with Alisha, Asher and Joshua at www.WorthwhileAdventures.org.



Lent begins Feb. 14, 2018. Prepare for Easter and the peace work to which God is calling us. Visit www.MennoniteMission.net/Lent2018.

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

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Be the Gospel.



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