



EXTENDING BEYOND

Hope and peace shine through in difficult times

Photo taken by Youth Venture participant Matthew Rodenberg during a 2015 trip to MennoVillage in Japan.

By Zachary Headings

It's been two years. Two years since the first case of the virus that causes COVID-19 was confirmed in the United States. Two years since the country — and much of the world — ground to a screeching halt in the face of a public health crisis that exposed glaring weaknesses in our society.

It hasn't been an easy two years. Loss and hopelessness have run rampant. And even though the United States has vaccines and boosters and effective treatments, many other places in the world still do not — and there are more difficult times to come.

Human beings were created to be a resilient bunch. During difficult times, we turn to things that give us hope. Things that highlight the good in the world. People that show us God's love. Places that give us peace.

Mennonite Mission Network strives to be a place of hope and peace, but never has this been

more at the forefront of our minds than during the past two years. Very early on in the pandemic, we realized that we had an opportunity to be that place of hope for our constituency.

"The Hope Series" on Mission Network's

Facebook page was a series of more than 100 short videos with positive and encouraging messages from the Bible given by our church relations staff. Initially, the series was only those short devotionals, but eventually, our international coordinators got involved, sharing the good news from Mission Network partners and personnel from overseas in "Hope Around the World."

"The Hope Series" ended in December 2020, but we haven't stopped putting out positive messages. All throughout the pandemic, we've been sharing stories of hope, resilience and the joy found in all parts of God's creation.

Continued on page 2

During difficult times, we turn to things that give us hope. Things that highlight the good in the world. People that show us God's love. Places that give us peace.

"Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who has promised is faithful."

— Hebrews 10:23 (NRSV)



Photo by Lynda Hollinger-Janzen

On Oct. 13, 2021, in Bobo Dioulasso, Siaka Traoré (Mennonite pastor, left) and Ali Traoré (Muslim leader, right) dedicated the van their communities bought and converted into a hearse.

Like in October 2021 in Bobo-Dioulasso, Burkina Faso, when Muslim leader Ali Traoré and Mennonite leader Siaka Traoré partnered together to dedicate a hearse that would serve both communities. Even though tensions between the two faith groups are high, these leaders found a way to build peace and serve each other.

Or this story from Sara Kennel, a Central American Study And Service (CASAS) intern who served in Alta

Verapaz, Guatemala, but not long enough to learn much of the Q'eqchi' language. She sometimes felt left out, but not with children, with whom she played freely and gathered flowers. She expressed her immense gratitude to God and to the Q'eqchi' people she met for helping her more fully comprehend the impact of respecting the identity of the people with whom she worked side-by-side.

Or how about when Jeanne and Mark Birky participated in Service Opportunities with Our Partners (SOOP) in San Antonio, Texas. They served with the local church's hospitality ministry, which provides necessities and a safe space for asylum seekers from Latin America. When the couple returned to their rural congregation in Illinois, they were able to share what they had learned. They shared with their friends and fellow congregants on the truths of immigration and prepared the congregation to provide support for a woman and her daughter who were seeking asylum in the United States.

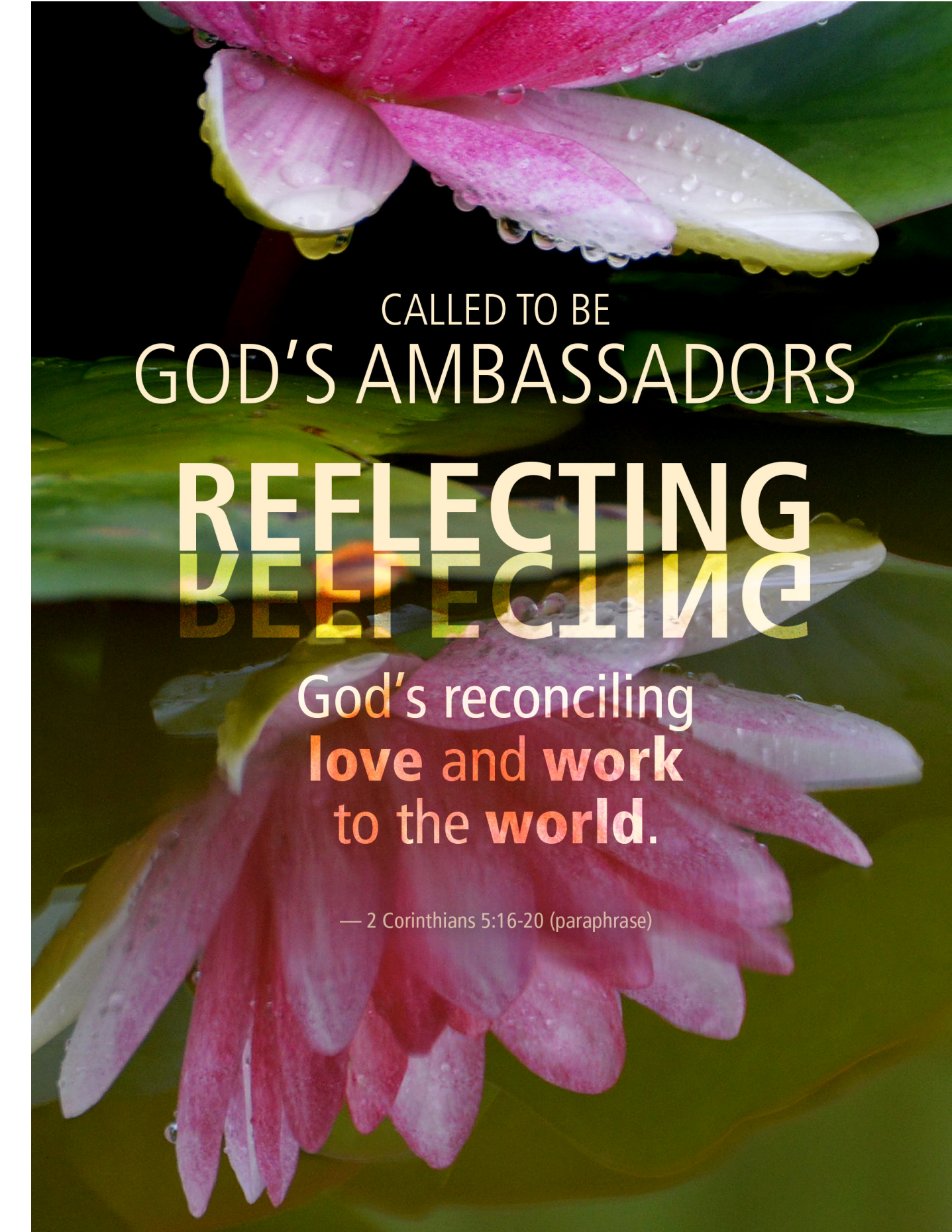
These are just a few examples of hope and peace, chosen from the plethora of good news we've put out during the pandemic. We hope that we can continue to be a place where you can find inspiring stories, hopeful messages and peace-filled resources for many years to come. ■



Photo by Dwight Mueller

SOOP participants Janet Horst, Jeanne Birky and Pat Strunk prepare meals at Haven of Hope, a campus that serves people experiencing homelessness in San Antonio, Texas.

Support **Mission Network's** call to hope and peace by visiting **MennoniteMission.net/Donate**.
Your gift will inspire more stories of God's love!



CALLED TO BE
GOD'S AMBASSADORS

REFLECTING
BEFECTING

God's reconciling
love and work
to the **world.**

— 2 Corinthians 5:16-20 (paraphrase)

Find more stories of hope on our website ...



Photo by Deb Byler

Trauma-healing workshops promote dignity for Kekchi women

As a part of closing worship at the Kekchi trauma healing workshop held in San Pedro Carchá, Guatemala on July 27-28, 2021, small group leader Maria Elena Caal serves communion to Lucia Cuc Caal. Observing are two other group leaders on the far right, Maria Pa Bol and Petrona Caz Xo.

Visit our website for the full story.



Photo provided

An open door to hospitality

Where do you see hospitality? Visit our website and listen to Horace McMillon, pastor of Open Door Mennonite Church in Jackson, Mississippi, as he shares what hospitality means to the Open Door community. Above: Pastor Horace McMillon and members of Open Door Mennonite Church participate in a blessing of Service Adventure participants Malachi Lind and Jocelyn Baker at the end of their time of service in Jackson, Mississippi.

Visit our website to see the video.



Photo by David Moreno

Generosity helps fire-ravaged Peru community rebuild

On Aug. 29, 2021, a fire destroyed Isla Iquitos Mennonite Church and the neighboring homes. Volunteers from the Mennonite churches of Iquitos and the local community worked together with an experienced carpenter and the families who now live in the new homes.

Visit our website for the full story.

We are being transformed

A message from Mike Sherrill



The only constant in the world is change, which most humans tend to resist. Change can be devastating — or it can be transformative. Sometimes change can sneak up on a society, like the multi-year pandemic that has sadly upended — and ended — lives all around the globe.

As we encounter change, how can we choose transformation over discouragement? Let us be mindful to take in the things that will bolster our commitments to follow Christ and leave behind the things that make us worry and give us

doubts. We are called to Be Transformed during this time.

Mennonite Mission Network is here for you with programs and resources to support your journey of transformation with hope, joy and peace. As followers of Christ, the good news we share as we accompany others will let God's light shine through in these extraordinary times.



Mike Sherrill
Executive Director

Thank you for being part of what God is doing! How is God calling you to share in additional ways with Mennonite Mission Network?

www.MennoniteMission.net
Toll-free: 1-866-866-2872

Office locations:
Elkhart, Indiana
Newton, Kansas

