

EASTMINSTER EVANGEL

Most Memorable Mission Trip

By: Rev. David Joachim

Of the 9 adult mission trips and 9 youth mission trips at Westminster/Boardman, the first adult trip was probably the most-memorable (at least for the 12 participants!). John Sharick challenged our adult Sunday School class to put together an adult mission team. The response was solid and soon we were working on a January 3, 1998 departure date, for 9 days with the Presbyterian Border Ministry, Nogales, Arizona. January. Tucson. *Heat & Sunshine*, right? *Wrong*. The first thing we learned was that Nogales, Mexico, is cold in January. And with no heating to the homes. And none at the La Casa de la Misericordia compound where we stayed. This was going to be interesting!

The first evening, the Team was dropped off at the La Casa as Coordinator Randy Campbell and Rev Joachim crossed *back* over to the U.S. side in the evening in the van to get supplies. Consider: Christmas. New Years. And now *hundreds* of cars lined up at Customs coming back into the States after the holidays. The van was stuck for hours while the Team (no cell phones, remember) waited in the cold wondering what happened to the “45- minute trip” of Campbell/Joachim!

But the experience became a total “10” for the Westminster folks. Meeting and working with the *Presbyterianos* of Nogales, our eyes were opened, ears challenged, and hearts changed: renovating a church-run bakery, plumbing projects at

the church, and adapting to driving in Mexico. A 12 year old girl served as interpreter, escorting Rev J to purchase supplies and assisting in the projects discussions. She was fabulous! The lunch program: 300 children a day were fed at the La Casa. One mother and children we got to know (and picked up daily for our kids program) lived in an old dilapidated school bus. Yes, our eyes were opened to life on the Border.

On the last evening, all our new *Presbyteriano* friends and children came to the La Casa for a spaghetti dinner/fiesta. Postcards were signed by all, to be sent back to our Westminster supporters. And plans were made for the next trip to the Border in 2000....which was in April, not January!

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When Opportunity Knocks, Answer the Door!

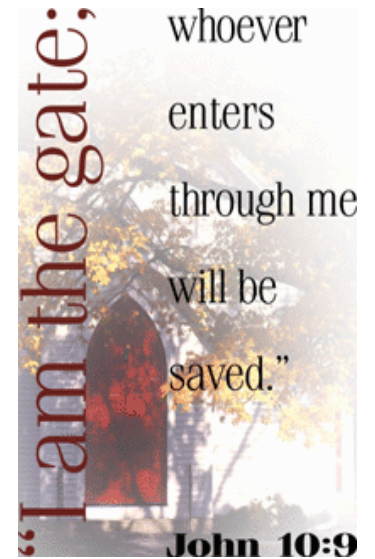
By Stanley & Irene Sams

Twenty years ago Eastminster Presbytery adopted goals for its Bicentennial Mission Fund project. One of those goals was to send one person from each Eastminster congregation for an overseas mission experience, expense shared by the individual, the congregation and the Presbytery. The participant would become a mission advocate in the local congregation.

Stanley and I served on the Eastminster Presbytery Global Work and Awareness Task Force chaired by Rev. Richard Braun. Its purpose was to choose sites and recruit participants. These mission trips were also open to any persons willing to pay their way.

We worked hard to encourage churches to send a member but were most successful enrolling ourselves. Under this program we visited Wanless Hospital, Miraj India, Bethel Evangelical Secondary School, Dembi Dollo, Ethiopia, Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Forteleza, Brazil, Payap University, Prince Royal’s College, McCormick Hospital, McKean Rehabilitation Center (originally an island leprosarium) in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

Those were life changing experiences for us. Thank you, Eastminster Presbytery, for challenging us to open our eyes to Presbyterian mission fields “ripe for the harvest.”



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Spring: New Beginnings in
Church and Life



World Communion Sunday

By: Rev. Carolyn Griffeth

On World Communion Sunday, Heritage Presbyterian Church welcomed the Youngstown Harambee Youth Organization. Harambee is a cultural, educational and recreational program which promotes racial harmony and provided African and African American cultural performances for people of all races.

The word "Harambee" is an African Swahili word which means "Let's All Pull Together."

Mrs. Lynnette Miller directs Harambee and youth from as young as 2 years of age to seniors in high school gave the sermon through music, dance and song. The 2 year old played the African drum - very well indeed! The authentic African dances were beautiful to behold. They even had Presbyterians clapping their hands, swaying to the music and dancing up the aisle!

Harambee's enthusiasm and obvious talent was a joyous way to celebrate our oneness in Christ on World Communion Sunday. We celebrated holy communion together and shared fellowship after worship.

Thanks be to God!

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EVANGEL

Reflections

By: Rev. Henry Pearce

You meet some interesting people on mission trips – some interesting buildings, too.

In 2008, members of several Eastminster Churches traveled to Western Ohio, near Findlay. The Blanchard River had flooded earlier that year, and thousands of homes had been damaged. We were helping Presbyterian Disaster Assistance rebuild.

My son Ben and I were assigned to help rebuild one of the oldest houses in the town of Ottawa. The supervisor on the job was a semi-retired contractor who was not only very knowledgeable, but also a “celebrity”; he had worked on one season of *This Old House*.

And it was definitely an “old house” we were rebuilding. The posts and beams had been hand-hewn from logs – you could see the marks from the hand tools the settlers had used. The ancient frame was saved, but the siding was so badly flood-damaged it had to be stripped off and hauled away.

The family who lived in the home had lost almost everything in the flood; the muddy trash out front included broken toys and Christmas decorations. But a couple of months after our mission trip ended, PDA sent pictures of the smiling family in front of their newly rebuilt home. What a blessing to be Jesus in their time of need!

What is Mission

By: John Schippert, LP

For most of us, when we anticipate going on a mission trip, our goal is often to help the poor and under privileged. We go with the altruistic attitude that what “we” do will make a difference in God’s world for people less blessed. We don’t often think of the blessing that the mission trip will have on us or how it will change us.

When I went to Ethiopia, it was with the full expectation that my understanding of proper building techniques would serve well as we went to Dembi Doli to help build a women’s dormitory for the Bible College. What I found in fact was that the Holy Spirit moved to show me that a different culture may have other methods for construction.

Another way I was truly blessed was in my being able to see for myself that despite the true poverty of the Ethiopians, they have a very deep sense of the Holy Spirit moving in their lives.

It was not until I stepped into my house upon my return that I realized what God had for “me” to learn. I have so very much of all the things that money can buy. They had so very little of what money can buy. Yet they are wealthy beyond measure because of their faith and the moving of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

If I am ever once again blessed with an opportunity to go back to Ethiopia, it will be with a totally different frame of mind. I thank God for my experience.

Spain Partnership

By: Rev. Dan Schomer

Claire, Sandra, Tere, Luisa, Abraham, Peter—these names may not sound familiar, but they are members of our family. They are the six persons who traveled from Cartagena, Torreveja, Alicante, and Valencia—mission partners through the Spanish Evangelical Church. I had only met two of the six previously—Claire (Amanda Payne’s daughter) and Tere (spouse of the Rev. David Manzanos)—but it didn’t matter. We are family—sisters and brothers in Christ.

The group was a contrast in backgrounds—21-yr-old Claire speaks both the Queen’s English and is fluent in Spanish while 75-yr.-old Peter prefers German to Spanish and can hold his own in English. Pastor Abraham would look me in the eye and wax on eloquently in Spanish while I gave him the deer in the headlights look. Before long, Claire would come to my rescue and translate for us. Awkward? No. We figured out how to communicate by whatever means necessary because...that’s what families do.

A lot of folks here in Eastminster Presbytery took a lot of time and provided a ton of hospitality to make this family reunion possible. Why did so many give so much time and expend so much energy to support this visit by our mission partners? Because that’s what families do. Whether we’ve been to Spain to visit our partners or not, when we get together, it feels like family.