



The Vine

March 2015

Becoming a community through which God's healing and hope can flow to the world

First Mennonite Church of Champaign-Urbana

217 367-5353

office@fmc-cu.org

http://www.fmc-cu.org/

Compiled by: Amber Anderson



VINE article from Sister Church / Colombia committee

Submitted by Jan Sabey

OK. Here is a pop quiz:

1. Who is Israel Martinez?
2. Where is Bucaramanga?
3. What is EDR?
4. What is the Giron feeding program?
5. Who is Rev. Sergio Talero?
6. What is a church sister --- oops, sister church?
7. What do Dan Schreiber, Wilmer Otto, and Ken Moyer have in common?
8. Why should you care about any of the above?

Notes from the Sister Church Committee

The Sister Church committee has recently been reminded that there are some folks in the congregation who do not know much about or who have lost track of our sister church connection. So this is the first in a series of planned brief articles to serve as an introduction and/or refresher.

For over a dozen years, FMC has communicated

with, visited, prayed for, partnered in outreach to displaced families with, and sought to build ever stronger ties with Iglesia Evangelica Luterana El Divino Redentor (usually referred to as El Divino Redentor or EDR) located in Bucaramanga, Colombia.

For most of those years, our main connection was through EDR Pastor Israel Martinez and his wife Loraci, who finally had an opportunity to visit FMC a few years ago. Pastor Israel retired at the end of 2013. The new pastor, Rev. Sergio Talero, came to El Divino Redentor in January of 2014. We have had some sporadic correspondence with him directly and look forward to establishing more regular communications with him this year.

Most of what we hear about Colombia is negative. The news media is full of stories of U.S. sponsored anti-drug military engagements with drug cartels, heavy-handed government regulations and bureaucracies working in slow motion. Our sister-church connection is an opportunity to learn about and consider Colombia in a broader context. Here are a few other facts about Colombia that often escape notice.

For our environmentally-concerned FMC folks:





“With its vast rain forests, sprawling savannas, huge mountains, and 1,800 miles (2,900 kilometers) of coastline on two oceans, Colombia is one of the most biologically diverse countries on Earth. Even though it takes up less than one percent of the world’s land area, about 10 percent of all animal species live in Colombia.”

Sadly, much of that diversity is at risk, especially because of the clearing of vast forests for farmland. The government is trying to set aside parks and reserves. However, damage to the environment continues. (from http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/content/kids/en_US/explore/countries/colombia/)

For the educators and those who care about education in our congregation:

The literacy rate in Colombia is 92.7%. Basic education is compulsory. (from: <http://www.mapsofworld.com/colombia/information/facts.html>)

[Note: U.S. adult literacy rate is about 80%.]

The sister church committee is investigating the possibility of sending another group of FMC visitors to EDR sometime in 2016. Please contact one of the committee members if you are interested in exploring this opportunity.

Current sister church committee members are: Randy Nelson (facilitator), Rebecca Bare, Jan Kellogg, Ken and Rebecca Moyer, Wilmer Otto, Jan Sabey and Janet Elaine Guthrie (Yeager?)

Ask Ms. Menno

Dear Ms. Menno:

I have been worrying about global warming. If the polar ice caps melt and the sea levels rise, isn't there a danger that gravity would become water-saturated and stop working properly? If that were to occur what would happen to the people in the Southern Hemisphere? Since they are on the bottom of the earth, might they fall off?

I Can't Sleep

Dear I Can't Sleep

I'm no scientist, but I think your fears are unfounded. It's been a few years since I've had Earth Science in high school, but my recollection is that gravity wouldn't completely stop working just because it's saturated with water. It would probably just become diluted and wouldn't exert as strong a force as dry gravity does. That's why ships can float on the surface of the water instead of sinking to the bottom of the ocean. You don't see ships floating off into space, do you? So, at worst, the people in Australia and New Zealand might appear to be floating several feet above the ground and have to walk on all fours, grasping the grass to stay grounded. Maybe

they'll need to install hand holds on paved ground, but it should not be a huge problem for the Aussies and New Zealanders. Speaking of which did you know that New Zealand has more sheep than humans? Thinking of that might help you sleep.

Dear Ms. Menno:

What would be a good Mennonite way to celebrate St. Valentine's Day? I see the red heart-shaped boxes containing chocolate in the drug stores, but they look a little worldly to me. Do you have any more modest suggestions?

Hopelessly Romantic

Dear Hopelessly Romantic

Chocolate is a good choice for any occasion. If you think the red chocolate heart boxes are too flashy, you could just remove the candy and present it in a plastic sack. Or you could try something a little more practical like pot holders. Nothing says, "I love you," like a nice knitted pot holder.



Water Use – A Creation Care Issue

As part of our focus on water this quarter, the Green Team is asking everyone to think of ways to conserve water, both at home and at church. Here is some information to help us think about our water use:

Why conserve water?

Clean water is a finite resource. Many of the world’s species rely on fresh, uncontaminated water for their survival – including us! Even in parts of the world where water seems to be in plentiful supply, there are environmental benefits to reducing water use. When we use water, we contaminate it. Water that has been used by humans contributes to serious environmental degradation if not managed properly (and it is often not managed properly.) Properly managing our water waste takes energy – so using less water will contaminate less water, thus helping our environment and saving energy.

Reducing water use

There are many ways to reduce your personal water use. Some of the biggest sources of domestic water use are leaks. It just so happens that March 16-22 is “Fix A Leak Week” – just google it or follow this link for information about how to find and fix leaks in your home: http://www.epa.gov/watersense/our_water/fix_a_leak.html

Other suggestions: Shut off the tap while you are soaping up your hands in the sink, or the rest of you in the shower. Scrape your plates instead of rinsing them before putting them in the dishwasher (if they are spotless before they go in the dishwasher you are effectively washing them twice!) Consider an “if it’s yellow, let it mellow” policy for the toilet. Native species planted in your yard should not need watering once established, unlike grass lawns.

Indirect use of water

97% of the water we use and pollute every day is not water we use directly in our homes, but water used by industry and agriculture in the production of other things we consume. Because of the nature of our global economy, your purchases use water from all over the world, not just your local aquifer.

The greatest amount of water used in the United States goes to agriculture. Eating meat, particularly factory-farmed meat, is a very resource-intensive activity, in part because the feed for the animals must first be

grown and processed and then given to the animals. So, for example, producing a pound of beef uses an estimated ---2000 gallons of water, where a pound of soybeans uses 206. If we eat the soybeans instead of feeding them to cattle, we are saving a lot of water and making more efficient use of our resources. So eating fewer animal products is a good way to save water. Eating organic and/or responsibly produced food can also prevent the release of agricultural chemicals into the water supply, which is a major concern for aquatic wildlife among other things.

One of the major sources of pollution in water is from industry. Every product we purchase has a water footprint - how much water was used to manufacture the item and what happened to the water after it was used (often called the ‘grey water’ footprint). A pair of jeans, for example, uses 2906 gallons of water in its production. A single microchip uses 8.5 gallons. If you needed more reasons to live simply and reduce, reuse and recycle, just think of the water used with every new thing you purchase or consume. Much of the true costs of our purchases are not reflected in the price, so just because something is cheap does not mean it is not costly in other ways.

I hope this information is useful in making decisions about water use. I realize that I am probably preaching to the choir for many of you, so for those of you who are old hats at water conservation, I have a request – email me your favorite water savings tips, and I’ll share them with the congregation!

References and Further Information:

www.waterfootprint.org

http://www.epa.gov/watersense/our_water/why_water_efficiency.html

(this is a powerpoint presentation – Hoekstra has many more technical articles but this is easier to read)

http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/animalwelfare/arien_hoekstra_the_water_footprint_of_humanity.pdf (accessed 2/27/15)

<http://www.gracelinks.org/blog/1143/beef-the-king-of-the-big-water-footprints> (accessed 2/27/15)

http://wps.prenhall.com/wps/media/objects/1027/1052055/Regional_Updates/update30.htm (accessed 2/27/15)

http://www.waterfootprint.org/Reports/Zygmunt_2007.pdf





Be the Re-Generation - Share Your Lenten Commitments

Bring home the Kingdom or Queendom (as in Christ's native Aramaic) with the FMC Green Team (not so pro-saically) this Lent, as an extension on your Re-Newed Year's Re-Solutions, to Reduce, Reuse and Recycle, stamping out contaminating and consuming days, and Re-Storing Life's richly abundant ways, Re-Membered upon our Tree of Life - as the Celtic Cross and Medicine Wheel are by some known - an Artwork of Great Heart in the works for you to contribute your commitments, hopes, dreams, callings... owned - in common space, sacredly scribed (anonymously - by you) on twigs, on snowflakes, on buds, raindrops and roots... and as the season rolls on, on flowers, on fruit, and on leaves... on other critters, donned blissfully as you please. While we welcome your intents, of all types to be posted, we also turn some hype to be seasonally hosted, by the Elements - of Water, Air, Fire, and Earth. Tis the season of Water, now, on our healing wheel, upsurgent from below - deeply we feel. So, we'll take a look at Life, and her callings, more wholly through her H2O lenses, holy. Lest, not to narrow your daze. Let our hearts - still,

amaze in broadening arrays of devoted frays, seeking fellowship, just, in Life's blessed gaze, to be honored. Earth communion includes beatitudes, for truths of all kinds, all kindness alike, between those dissimilar or striking chords familiar, all callings, for all plights. Conspire as you dare, on her Tree, as her roots inspire - wisdom decreed, aspiring freely through All - all Life's resonant care.

AKA Add your Lenten commitments (hopes, dreams... callings) to a Tree of Life artwork by FMC artists, to be located in the Fellowship Hall. Green Team will be focusing on our water impact this season. You may wish to commit to going vegan, saving water, planting native plants, biking to church, a writing or arts project, or other creative approaches for healing our world.

Bathroom!

Caden is comlening that the Girls bathroom is beter then the boys. He wold like som air freshener that worcks! The walles are white in the boys and Green in the Girls! Cold we pint them? The boyes also have a door stop that does not work! The Girls have 2 sinkes and the boys only has one! The Girls also have 2 diffrent kinds of sope! Coad we fix it????!!!

from,
Sophie

P.S. I agree whith Caden.

(Editor's note: On the front of this letter were the words, "Not Fair!" and "Help!")