



MENNONITE *Air* MISSIONS

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Two More Souls Added

"And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."

Probably, for most of us in our Mennonite church experience, we are not seeing *daily* additions of seekers coming into our churches in these times; although no doubt there are people added the world over into Christ's body, the Church.

It is especially wonderful for us to observe when young people give their lives wholeheartedly to Christ. As we view the eagerness and enthusiasm with which they embrace the faith, it is obvious that it is real to them. It brings us great joy to "behold" them as new creatures in Christ, when "old things have passed away . . . (and) all things are become new."

Blanca and Izabel came to Christ at a Youth Institute in April of last year. Blanca is a school teacher, and Izabel a domestic worker at our mission house in El Chal. Blanca is from a large family "uptown" in El Chal, and Izabel comes from a Catholic family. All who are acquainted with the girls can see a marked change in their dispositions, countenances, and very lives. Iza (as she is fondly called) especially, no longer has the fearful, haunted look of before. While she is still quite reserved and shy, she now radiates joy and peace.

For the past months they have been discipled and have demonstrated growth in their lives, and a baptism was planned for April 3.

Sunday morning dawned bright and clear in El Chal,



Izabel and Blanca were baptized in April.

and there was a good representation of Blanca's family members, although only a few of Iza's friends were present. After the morning message, each of our now new sisters gave a meaningful word of testimony, followed by the baptismal vows, prayer, and baptism with water; in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

We rejoice with Blanca and Izabel that they are now members of God's family. The life of Christ can
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Building Projects

Ever since it began, the **Lirio de los Valles** congregation has met in a small chapel in one corner of the Mission Compound. Sunday morning attendance can be as high as a hundred people, which pretty much packs out the small chapel.

Several years ago, we decided to build another chapel that the congregation could call its own. A property was available about a mile from the mission, and building began in earnest in December 2009. It's been a long, drawn-out process, but we're

finally nearing completion. Plumbing, flooring, doors, windows, and a few interior walls stand in the way of a finished project.

The **San Cristobal** congregation is finding itself in a similar situation. The small chapel currently stands on land owned by Victor Ovalle, and is filled to capacity on Sundays. A property was purchased several years ago to build a new chapel, but permits were snarled in a long and impossible process.
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EDITORIAL

by Brian Yoder

Honest Seeking, Wishful Thinking

On a jungle-covered slope in western Honduras stands a cement water tank. Long after the rickety house beside it returns to the jungle floor, there it will be.

It was a free tank, provided by the government to help improve the lot of the poor. The government delivered blocks and cement to the end of the road, and *gave it away* to those who had signed up and faithfully came to their meetings. But the government stopped at the end of the road, and the individual willpower took over from there.

Secundina had a horse. With that horse, she hauled cement, two bags at a time, three miles up the muddy mountain. With that horse she hauled the blocks. She hauled sand from the creek at the bottom of the steep ravine, two miles away. And weeks later, her “free” *pila* stood, solid and permanent, outside of her flimsy house. She knew what she wanted, and she got it. It was free, but it wasn’t easy.

Life usually works that way. You can usually get what you want, if you want it badly enough to invest in it. But what separates the wishful thinkers from the honest seekers is the attitude of the heart. The will of the mind. The reality of the investment. Cement *pilas* don’t happen on jungle mountains by wishing them down.

Paul challenges the Christian with the following words from Col. 3:1, 2. *“If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above . . . Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.”*

Notice the “if”. When a man is reborn, seeds of eternal yearning are planted in the once-carnal soul. The being who once lived with his nose to the earth begins to lift his eyes toward heaven. The crumbs that once satisfied him now remind him of a better place, and better things. If a man is reborn, heavenly gravity begins to tug at his soul.

This new birth is a conversion of affection, a refocusing of energy. As physical beings, it takes energy to live, employment to earn, and money to eat. But if we are reborn, the love of our heart draws us to a higher aim. We live in a material world, but we actively seek eternal values. At least we say we do. Israel thought that, too.

As Jeremiah scrolled through God’s list of judgments on them, Israel felt confused. They asked: *but what have we done?* The Lord was still mentioned, and even worshipped in the temple. God’s answer was swift: “Your fathers have worshipped other gods

. . . and ye have done worse than your fathers.”

Mixed worship. Lip service to Jehovah, and life service to a myriad of other things. And God was not pleased. Wishful thinking is nothing but good ideas never carried out. That was Israel.

The true seeker knows what he seeks. He wants *“all things that pertain unto life and godliness.”* God’s will. God’s approval. God’s blessing. God’s Spirit. God’s solutions. God’s kingdom. God’s reward. All that Jesus meant when he said: *“All things that the Father hath are mine . . . he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.”*

The true seeker studies how to get what he wants the most. He finds that scripture isn’t silent about practical ways to reach out and grasp what God offers.

Prayer. Can anything be obtained without it? *Fasting.* Self-denial is a powerful way to pray. *Bible study and meditation.* How can we find God’s solutions if we treat scripture lightly? *Giving.* God loves a cheerful giver and rewards him accordingly. *Obedience.* Nothing opens heaven like humble obedience. Nothing closes it quicker than rebellion.

“Things of Above” and “Things of Earth” are mutually exclusive value systems. We can seek to excel in one only at the expense of the other. We cannot seek God’s approval while we seek man’s. Kingdom-building financial decisions do not guarantee pocket-lining results. *“How can you believe, which receive honour one of another?”* Jesus asked. *“Ye cannot serve God and mammon.”*

When spiritual life consists of wishful thinking and not honest seeking, the result is deep frustration. You want maturity, but do you pray? You ask for blessing, but did you spend more on Saturday supper than the Sunday offering? You long for spiritual insight, but are you obeying what you already know? Do you live for God’s approval, or do you secretly compete for man’s?

Like the tiger at the zoo, restlessly pacing his limited space, or the eagle in a cage, flightlessly perched on the highest branch, so is the Christian whose life is lived in contradiction to the upward yearning planted in his heart. Frustrated, not free. Empty, not fulfilled.

Like the *pila* in the jungle, the best things in life are free . . . but not easy. According to your investment will be your reward. Ask. Seek. Prove with your life the passion of your heart, and testify with your decisions the value of the eternal.

Building Projects . . . continued

Recently, after almost two years of waiting, the permit was given, and the way was cleared for building to begin.

Some funding is in place to begin, and ground

was broken the first week of April. The church has hired a local mason to oversee the work, and will proceed as funding is available.



The building began on San Cristobal's church project in early April.



The shell is almost complete on the new Lirio de los Valles church.

Pastor of the Month



Donaldo and Angelica Alvarez, commissioned pastor of the church in La Hierbabuena, San Sur.

Donaldo Alvarez is one of the few pastors in MAM who were born, raised, and chosen in the town and church where they now serve. Born in 1980, Donaldo was raised in the rural area of San Sur known as La

Hierbabuena. Only an hour away from Guatemala City, it was an area stuck in time. The hats, the horses, and the machetes made San Sur look like the Old West.

Donaldo received the Lord at fifteen, and was baptized in 1996, during a period of strong growth in the church. He was included in the Worker's Training program several years later, and worked under Levi Martin's leadership until Levi left in 2003. Dave Horst and Kevin Martin were the last two missionary couples to serve in San Sur, and in 2005, Donaldo was commissioned lay-pastor.

The church has gone through a series of struggles during the last decade. Deep bitterness in two ex-deacons affected the morale of the church, and carnality and unforgiveness has taken a toll. A congregation that once held almost fifty members has been whittled

back to almost twenty. Donaldo feels the struggle deeply, and sees a need for deeper brokenness and spirituality in the brotherhood.

Donaldo and Angelica were married in January 2004, and now have three children. He used to plant his own corn on rented land, but found that the harvest almost never returned his investment. Work is scarce, but he's managed to keep food on the table by picking coffee, hoeing corn, and doing day work for others.

Pray for the church at San Sur, and its young pastor, as he leads out in a congregation that has for years lived under spiritual attack. His struggle is against discouragement and disunity. His vision is for brotherhood agreement and an unwavering scriptural practice. He needs the grace that comes from being held in the hand of Jesus.

Personnel Notes

Lydia Martin returned home to Pennsylvania on March 31 after spending over three years serving in Central America. She began her time helping Peter Hartzlers in Chepelares, Honduras. After Peter's left, she spent a couple of years doing domestic work at Headquarters in Guatemala City. Her last eight months were spent doing domestic work in El Chal. Thank you, Lydia!



Lydia Martin

Ervin and Erma Horst returned to Canada on March 31, after five months serving as houseparents in Guatemala City. Besides houseparenting, Ervin helped with various work projects and shared the pulpit as opportunity arose. We appreciated their steady presence, comfortable personalities, and willing attitude.



Ervin and Erma Horst

Two More Souls Added . . . continued

already be seen and known in the lives of these our sisters. Please pray for them as they grow in their Christian lives, that they may be continually victorious. Pray that they may also be a light to others, especially family members, who are still in darkness; that they too may personally come to know the Light of life, and the One who brings peace, joy, and forgiveness.

A favorite verse that was shared in one of the testimonies that morning: *"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become sons of God, even to them that believe on his name"* John 1:12.
—Mark Gingerich

Georgia Work Group

Near the end of March, we were visited by a sizeable work group from Meigs, Georgia. Eleven young people and three couples came for a week, and were involved in a variety of work and mission activities. They handed out tracts, painted, helped with a roof project, and visited an outpost for Sunday services. We enjoyed their enthusiasm, and appreciated their work ethic and giving spirit.

Work groups are a great contribution to the work when planned for and handled properly, but they also can be an eye-opener and a changing experience for those who come. After spending a week in Guatemala, one young person commented: "When I get back home, I'll never again complain about my line being held up by someone who can't speak English!"

A deeper understanding is the first step toward engaging the world.



Seventeen people from Meigs, Georgia, spent a week with us in Guatemala.

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