



MENNONITE *Air* MISSIONS

"They that sow in tears shall reap in joy" Psalm 126:5.

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General Institute 2012

From November 5-9, 2012, the annual General Institute was held in Sumpango, Sacatepéquez, at Mennonite Air Mission's facilities commonly known as "The Farm." This was one of four Institutes planned every year, including a Spring and Fall Youth Institute and a Revival Institute.



Gathering for a service in the tent.

General Institute is a logistical challenge. Around 80 people stayed at the facilities throughout the week, and an average of 130 people attended sessions during the days and evenings. Thanks to Brother Jerlin López and a dedicated team of cooks, physical needs were met and good meals were enjoyed by all.

There was something for everyone at General



Mark Gingerich and Jorge Avila, enjoying a break.

Institute, beginning with classes for the children during many of the sessions. There were times of prayer, singing, and fellowship, all of which contributed to a time of encouragement for each person who participated with a sincere heart.

Topics throughout the day covered a wide variety of subjects. There were at least seven sessions



Cesar Vasquez and Wendell Diem chat between services.

aimed at families, which included such titles as: "Raising Children in a Perverse Society," "The Value of a Christian Education," and "The Family Altar." There were also two sessions that dealt with the responsibilities of married couples.

Other practical topics shared were "How to Guide a Person to Repentance," "Conserving a Biblical Church," and a study based on the book *The Upward Call*. There were also doctrinal messages: five on "The Ordinances" and three on "The Holy Spirit." In the evening there were revival and evangelistic sermons.

Was General Institute 2012 a success? From a human standpoint, I think that most who attended would say that it was. We could even look at the number of responses (around thirty) and say that it certainly was a good week. But what did God think? Did General Institute fulfill its purpose? I didn't ask the planning committee what their goal was for the Institute, but I think that we can find a few important goals in the Book of Ephesians: "That

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EDITORIAL

by Mark Gingerich

Grace and Truth

"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). John the apostle saw and personally knew the Saviour, the only begotten of the Father. He and others of his time beheld His glory, knew Him on an intimate basis, and saw these characteristics: "full of grace and truth." Let's define those terms.

Grace is from the Greek word *charis*, from which the word *charisma* (translated "gift" in our KJV New Testament) is derived. The Greek dictionary in *Strong's Concordance* gives this definition: *graciousness . . . of manner or act . . . especially the divine influence upon the heart, and its reflection in the life . . .* I'm not including the complete definition here, but underline this part especially, as it pertains to the life of the believer in relationship with Christ our Lord. As John knew Him, and Jesus knew John (the disciple whom Jesus loved), so we as believers may know Him, and He in turn knows and loves His own. Grace is the outworking of Christ's character in our lives.

The most common New Testament usage of *truth* comes from *aletheia* which means "that which is true," and "a verity." *Truth* is the best translation for *aletheia* in the English language. I also find it very interesting that the word *verily*, which Jesus often used (as in, *"Verily, verily I say unto you"*) comes from the Greek word for *Amen*. We often think of *Amen* as meaning "may it be so."

"Christians who lack integrity hinder the progress of the Gospel in this world and set the Christian message in a false light. Determine to be honest in thought and speech and act. Lay this down as a cornerstone of your life . . ." (Quote by Selwyn Hughes)

Christ's life was and is the essence of Grace and Truth. God has made the provision and desires that each of His children have His grace and truth, so that the Good News can be proclaimed to the multitudes and that Christ may be seen in us. 2 Corinthians 3:18 brings this out: *"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."*

Now the challenge: May we each ask ourselves, "Does my life reflect the Saviour's life in everyday living? Does my life glorify Christ?" And, not preten-

tiously, but by the grace of God may we ask: "Is my life full of grace and truth?" Grace, after all, is a free gift. Is this where we get the Spanish word *"gratis"* which means "free"?

Therefore, as grace is a gift available to all of God's children, let us avail ourselves of that gift, *by his grace!* (No redundancy here.)

If ever God's people needed God's grace to successfully carry out His work, it is today. We need to speak the truth, live it, teach it, exemplify it, and pass it on to others. No matter where we go, what we are doing, or whatever the circumstance, the light of the glorious Gospel will shine as we live and serve by God's grace, speaking and living His truth. Several examples:

- In the supermarket: We are often tested when we make small change, and people are often pleasantly surprised when we return to them the excess. It is encouraging when they trust you to run out to the car for a couple of coins, because the cash register was running short of change! Have they seen something of Christ in my character?
- On the busy highway, I am challenged to be gracious to the abusive "other driver." I need to remember to ask myself, "How would Jesus drive?" Can I be gracious to the one who cuts in front of me without so much as a wave?
- In a roomful of people, and when we are having a "good time" catching up with friends and family, are we careful to be accurate and honest in our banter and story-telling? Or do we like to embellish it just a bit to make it more interesting?
- In a private interview with a brother or sister, we need to always stick to the truth and encourage others to do the same. It is only by the grace of God and speaking the truth in love that we can help others in these areas.

"Marvelous grace of our loving Lord, Grace that exceeds our sin and our guilt;

Yonder on Calvary's mount outpoured, there where the blood of the Lamb was spilt.

Grace, grace, God's grace, Grace that will pardon and cleanse within . . .

Grace, grace, God's grace; Grace that is greater than all our sin."

General Institute 2012 . . . continued

[God] would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, *to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.*"

Was anybody strengthened in their inner man by God's Spirit that week? Was Jesus able to make His dwelling in any hearts at General Institute? Did anyone reach a higher level of understanding in their spiritual life? Was anyone convinced more thoroughly of Christ's love or filled more completely with God's fullness (and emptied of self in the process)?

Thanks to the faithfulness of God and His Spirit,

I think that we can say yes to these questions.

Individuals were strengthened and encouraged that week. I could hear it in the testimonies that were shared. At least eight young boys accepted the Lord as their Saviour, many more made recommitments, and others expressed their need for more of the Holy Spirit and His fruit in their lives. Prayers were being answered as sins were confessed and tears were shed.

We praise God for revival. He proved once again that He "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." Pray for the church in Guatemala and especially for the commitments that were made at General Institute. Pray that revival would continue and spread, for in these last days it seems that indeed the love of many waxes cold.

Wendell Diem

El Chal School Expansion

Greetings in Christ's name, the One who died and rose again that we might live eternally.

For several years we have seen the need for a structured Christian environment where the young people from our church and community could study. We have often been asked why our school only goes to grade six. Well, in Guatemala schooling goes by levels; first through sixth grade are called the primary level, seventh through ninth are called the basic level and then grades ten through twelve are a preparation for a specific career or profession. These two levels comprise what is called "middle school." Each level requires higher levels of teacher and administrator certification. We have been praying that when the time is right, God would open



New walls go up behind the old school building.



Hard at work.

the doors to add the next level of education to our school.

We believe that a Christian environment for our students through the "basico" level grades would make a big difference in their decision to walk with God.

Over the years we have seen a trend among our sixth grade graduates. Many who once showed interest in spiritual things continue their studies in other schools and become distracted by the worldly

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Personnel News and Needs

Steve and Valerie Diefenbacher and family left for their home in Canada after serving for two years in Santa Rosita. Thank you, Steve and Valerie, for investing in the lives of the people here in Guatemala. May God bless you.

We appreciate our fine nursing staff of El Chal and El Naranjo, but we face a nurse shortage in the near future. MAM is actively looking for nurses with the qualifications needed to serve in our clinics.

Please pray for the upcoming MAM board meeting in Guatemala, planned for February 12-14, 2013.

El Chal School Expansion . . . continued

influences and ungodly activities prevalent in Guatemala's educational system, and stop coming to church and lose the Way. Many of the students who attended our school years ago have commented that they wish they could have had the support of our Christian school during the difficult years between twelve and sixteen. Many of them do not have the support of a Christian family. Some are from broken homes. Some believe a lie common in Guatemala's Evangelical circles: "You cannot study in middle school and be a Christian." We believe that three more years of supporting these young people in a Christian environment would translate into many more souls won for the kingdom of God and fewer lives tangled by sin and unwise decisions made in middle school.

It seems that the door to expansion is opening. We have teachers with the needed certification. We have the MAM board's consent and blessing in pursuing the expansion. We have been granted the required legal permission to teach the next level of education. We have even pre-registered seventh and eighth-grade students for next year. What we don't have are enough classrooms . . .

Currently we have three classrooms. Grades 4 to 6 use them in the morning and Grades 1 to 3 study there in the afternoon. Guatemalan law does not allow private schools to have more than one grade per teacher per classroom.

With a vision for the future, we plan to do a two-phase construction. Phase one would consist of adding two classrooms behind the existing 30-year-old school building, covering both the old school and the new rooms with a flat cement roof, and then building a new tin roof above it. This cement deck will provide second-story floor space for phase two: the construction of more classrooms in future years. The new tin roof will keep the building cooler and protect the cement from the damaging effects of constant rain and hot sun. It would also be in place for the phase two construction. Raising the roof later would provide shade and rain protection for laying block, allowing phase two construction to take place any time of year.

In recent years, the school has provided us with an excellent opportunity to become involved in the lives of many school families. It has also been a place where new staff can learn the language and interact with Guatemalan culture beside Guatemalan teachers and students in a controlled, Christian environment. There are many opportunities to minister to the lives of hurting children, their parents, and their extended families.

We are deeply grateful to all who have contributed to this effort. May God bless you richly.

Stephan Gingerich



A Pennsylvania work team sped the project.

Please make donations payable to "Mennonite Air Missions" and send to: Mennonite Air Missions, c/o Amos Hurst, 140 Rothsville Station Rd., Lititz, PA 17543.

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