



MENNONITE *Air* MISSIONS

Vol. XLVIII | No. 4

July, August 2013

Safely Home!

Back in July of 1977, our family returned to Guatemala after spending a year in Ontario. Our new assignment was in El Chal, a village along the only road that leads from Guatemala to Belize. Many stories have been told about traveling on that road way back then. There were about 120 miles of rough, pot-holed, dirt road, much of which permitted a speed of about ten miles per hour. Besides that, there was a river to cross by ferry, and sometimes we needed to wait two or three hours just to get on. A trip from the City to El Chal could take from twelve to eighteen hours.

When we first moved to El Chal, little did we know how that community would become an important part of our lives, and that our children would call it home for most of their growing-up years. Nor did we know how many new friends we would gain, how many lives would be changed by the Gospel, or how our lives would be blessed and encouraged as we saw God at work.

Four souls were baptized on our first Sunday morning there, the first baptismal class for the El Chal mission. There was also a farewell service that Sunday evening for the native family who had been serving there and was soon returning to their home community.

Two of those baptized that morning were Herminio and Paulina Monsón. They had come to the Peten to homestead and seek better opportunities, as many others had done. While there, they gave their hearts to the Lord.

Several months later, Herminio, Paulina, and family moved back to their home area of Pasaco. They had found that life in the Peten was very hard, and land was not as easily acquired as had been noised abroad. Sadly, we lost track of them for several years.

We got word from a family member that the Monsón family was hoping and praying for a mission church in their community. To the best of their ability, they had continued to love and serve the Lord. A visit was made to Porvenir, Pasaco, and steps were taken to establish a mission station there.

Several years later, around 1988, Herminio died in the faith, having loved and served his Lord faithfully since his new birth. I'm sure life was not without many trials and temptations. Paulina kept on faithfully serving the Lord and moved to place to place, where she was cared

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Paulina Monsón was born again in 1977, the same year that Stephan Gingerich was born.



EDITORIAL

by Ross Good

When Are You Going to Die?

Death is a part of life. It strikes near and far. Boston and China, Syria and Oklahoma. There are car crashes and cancer, farm accidents and suicide. Death is tragic, cold, and cruel.

And with reason Paul writes, *"The sting of death is sin."* Death is painful because it is so anti-life, anti-God. Death was "born" because of disobedience. The sting of death gives us a small picture of how sin repulses God. I avoid a scorpion's sting. I will run for the Raid bottle if I can't reach the scorpion with some other suitable weapon, all to avoid the possible sting. How zealously do I avoid sin?

When are you going to die? Are you ever going to feel that sting? Why is dying to ourselves so painful? Have you felt that sting of death to self when your dreams disappeared down the drain? Have you been mocked by your family? Been told "thanks, but no thanks" by that mission board? Prompted by the Spirit to confess that sin to the whole congregation instead of only in private? Deep repentance (death to self) hurts! Why else does Jesus call it carrying our cross? He knows and understands well that although painful, it is the door to freedom and life. It is totally necessary.

Our dear sister in Christ, Hermana Paulina, was trapped. She was 86 years old. She fought for her breath. Endured pain and sleepless nights in her tiny, bamboo and board-walled room. She had the eternal hope, but her body gave her no freedom to taste it, until she died.

Physical death is imperative for each one of us. Hebrews 9:27 gives us no wiggle-room. Paul testified of his inner life: *"I am crucified with Christ..."* *"Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus..."* And Paul commanded us: *"Mortify (make dead) therefore your members..."* Death is a must.

What farmer fertilizes his field but refuses to plant seed for fear he will lose his investment? Are we any better when we try to live productive lives without dying and without true repentance? Are you dying to your flesh, to the world, and to yourself? Are you trying to fertilize the ground of your life when the seed hasn't even "fallen into the ground and died"? Are you

trying to hang onto your life? Jesus says you'll lose it. Are you dead to popular opinion, the latest "fad" or "cool" thing? Constantly seeking others' approval? "Can't stand" that person? There's one solution. Death! Die! Scary? Yes. Necessary? Absolutely!

Who has ever lamented, while enjoying fresh corn-on-the-cob, that so much seed was spent to gain each cob? What farmer, walking through a field of golden soybeans ready to harvest, bemoans the fact that so many seeds had to die? *"Thou fool..."* we would echo Apostle Paul from 1 Cor. 15:36. We know that death and burial produce life and resurrection and fruitfulness. Broken wills and hearts are the seeds of the kingdom of God. Continual fruitfulness flourishes from continual death. *"I die daily,"* Paul testifies. God is not content with only one season of repentance and one crop of fruit, He looks for continual death, so He can reap continual fruit, *"... that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh."*

Paul wrote, *"So then death worketh in us, and life in you."* Paul wasn't just talking about spiritual death here. He was in real danger of losing his physical life because of his dedication to Christ and the church. Are you that committed to the work? Can you say those words of Paul to your church? Can we say that to the believers in China, Brazil, Panama, and Iraq? Are we sacrificing everything we can for the worldwide church? Ready to die for our Lord? We must be. We are not exempt in 2013 if we are disciples of Jesus. Not after...

The words, "It is finished" rang over the dark, deathly hill outside of Jerusalem, and the Seed of the universe "fell to the ground and died." The earth recoiled in horror. Rock atoms were paralyzed when their Creator "ceased" to live. Small wonder the graves of the saints opened up; the eternal Word had died! But what life! Abundant, cleansing life flowing down from the cross. Powerful, transforming life streaming from the empty tomb like the rays of a hundred suns. So every soul on earth "may have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." Here, and for eternity, where death is abolished.

Hallelujah!

Safely Home . . . continued

and provided for by family members. She lived to be about ninety years old. On May 15, she also died, happy in the Lord.

Others in that family have also become Christians, and today there are a few fourth-

generation believers in that family. Sadly, there are also a number who are living a very careless and lawless life. Let us pray for their souls' salvation. There is nothing too hard for the Lord.

All for His glory,

—Mark Gingerich

Where God's Change Begins

"My name is Humble." I was greeted a few weeks ago by a four-year-old boy as I was playing soccer with the youth and community children. We found out that Humble had been born on one of the public buses called "The Humble," and thus got his name. Humble proceeded to defy his name, though, as most of the evening he showed us how fast he could run and how hard he could kick the ball. For a little boy, he showed an extremely aggressive and defiant nature. This "humble" child has been on my mind a lot as I pack my bags, teach my final classes, and prepare to move back to the States.

Often we missionaries come to the field with lots of ideas and dreams for the people God is calling us to work among. Then we get placed with a group of other missionaries and find out to our surprise that not everyone has grown up with the same traditions, or knows what the word "spiffy" means, or knows how to correctly make potpie (Pennsylvania potpie, that is . . .)! Suddenly we have to work together with others who come from different backgrounds, church groups, and even different countries. Little by little, God begins to "rub away" some of our rough edges and pride as we learn to accept other people, learn from them, and not expect them to be perfect.

Often we expect great changes as we jump into the work God has called us to. Usually we discover that not everyone wants to change, nor thinks they need to change. Often our efforts are rejected, our plans fail, and our big dreams crash around us. Just when we think we have really mastered patience, the neighbor's pigs run through the yard for the tenth time in one morning. Just when we think we are really "making it" as missionaries, the water goes off for three days. Just when we become confident in our ability to help, a friend comes with hurts from an angry dad, a neighbor girl shares how

she is being abused, a neighbor is robbed, a friend threatened . . . and we find ourselves back on our knees again, bringing our concerns and fears to the ONLY ONE who can help.

Through all of this, God has taught me that He is not so interested in the great plans that I have for this people and country, but in the great plan that He has for me. I am the one that needs to change. I am the one who needs to grow in my relationship with God. I am the one who desperately needs my Heavenly Father.

So, why did God call me to Guatemala five years ago? Was it for all the children and girls that "needed" me? Did God need me? Somehow I suspect that God didn't really need me to get the job done. He could have used any one of you. I believe that God called me here because I am the one that had so much to learn and needed to grow.

There are many needs here in Guatemala. Children are dying for someone to show them love, youth need godly role models, churches need pastors, clinics and schools need workers. God wants to use you and me to reach these people with His love, and He delights in each life that is touched.



Melanie Mummert and one of the many lives she touched.

House Parent Changes

David and Erma Martin

returned home after a 3 month stay at headquarters as house parents. Thank you, David and Erma, for a job well done.



Tim and Rhoda Korver, from Mount Vernon, Illinois are back at headquarters to serve as house-parents for another 10 months. Welcome back!



Melanie Mummert left Guatemala on June 18, after serving in El Chal and Oratorio. She paved the way as a personnel worker, holding children's activities and classes for community girls. She also disciplined Christian youth girls by getting them involved in her work and letting them continue what she started. We deeply appreciate her work and wish her well as she plans to marry Adam Lehigh on September 7, 2013.

Where God's Change Begins . . . continued

Guatemala isn't the only country that needs the Gospel, MAM isn't the only Mission that needs missionaries, and Oratorio isn't the only community with lonely children and youth. The community where you live right now is and should be your mission field. Your neighbors, churches, and schools are the people with whom God is calling you to work right now.

The mission field is not only for the mighty and strong in the Lord, but for each one who is willing to fulfill God's commands to reach out to those around us . . . and who is willing to let God work in our own hearts and lives.

Next time you meet a little boy like Humble, remember that the greatest change that God wants to make might be in **you**.

Now unto **Him** that is able to do **exceeding abundantly above** all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto **Him** be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."

Eph. 3:20-21

—Melanie Mummert

Update on Yari Lancerio

Yarie's surgery went very well. Doctors amputated her whole leg, and she is now undergoing chemotherapy treatments, which have made her very sick. The family continues to stay at mission headquarters until she is stable enough to go home. Thank you for your continued prayer support in this matter.



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Mennonite Air Missions (USPS 383-570)

Mennonite Air Missions newsletter is published bimonthly by Mennonite Air Missions, Inc. Editor / Mission representative: Brian Yoder, 1896 Ferney Creek Rd., Willis, VA 24380; Mennonite Air Missions Board: Chairman: Duane Eby, 14438 Daley Rd., Hagerstown, MD 21740; Assistant Chairman: Wesley King, 30 Juliasam Dr., Belleville, PA 17004; Treasurer: Amos Hurst Jr., 140 Rothsville Station Rd., Lititz, Pa. 17543; Secretary: Lee Lehman, 2065 Sollenburger Rd., Chambersburg, PA 17202; Urie Sharp, Leon Yoder, Wesley King, Mervin Kuepfer, Pete Shirk, Stanley Neuenschwander, Jeff Weaver. The newsletter is sent free of charge. Send all newsletter correspondence to MAM Newsletter, Lee Lehman, 2065 Sollenburger Rd., Chambersburg, PA 17202. MENNONITE AIR MISSIONS is published on the fifteenth of January, March, May, July, September, and November. Application for Periodical Permit is pending at Harrisonburg, VA 22801.

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