



# MENNONITE *Air* MISSIONS

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## Central American Ministers' Meetings

*Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

*Matthew 28:19-20*

Representatives at the Central American Ministers' meeting were not quite from *all* the world, but they were from most of the nearby countries and places quite far away. For example, those who travelled from Puerto Montt, Chile, flew for eleven hours. For comparison, that's eighteen minutes more than from Anchorage to Guatemala City, twelve minutes less than from Honolulu to

Guatemala, and an hour less than flying from London to Guatemala.

Those traveling from Brazil flew nearly ten hours. When I fly from Toronto to Guatemala, it usually takes six.

This year the meetings, an annual gathering of church leaders and interested people from Latin America, were held in Guatemala February 25-27. Pastors, missionaries, and visitors from all the Central American countries, except Panama, attended. Almost as many non-Central American countries were represented as Central American ones. There were visitors from Belize, El Salvador, Honduras,

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Ministers' Meeting



# EDITORIAL

by Brian Yoder

## She Did What She Could

You may be a mechanic or fisherman or farmer or housekeeper, but I'm writing to you in your capacity as Kingdom builder, in your call to "occupy till I come." Whatever your work or play, surely Jesus' four-word injunction has found a place to root and flourish in your life.

Those four words are lifted from a parable about a master and his ten servants. Each servant was a volunteer. Each belonged to his master—had a relationship with him. Each heard these words and understood the Master's will: "*Occupy till I come.*"

You, Kingdom worker, live in the age of accomplishment. You have learned to qualify your life by results. The clock rules your days; numbers measure your success. In this environment you have heard the call, "*Occupy till I come.*" Charged with vigor and ideas and romance, you have found a whitened field upon which to discharge your calling, with the drivers of our culture bound to your wrist and resting in your pocket.

Among the ten servants was a slacker. Notice him now, this disinterested waster of his lord's time and money. Put your mind to understand why this man stood aside while others worked, and avoid his mistake. Was he afraid of failure? Don't be afraid. Did he doubt his gifts? Don't doubt yours. Was the need so great that he felt it useless to try? Don't let the immensity of your task dissuade you from honest effort. The reward is not calculated by numbers, but by faithfulness. May the Master see His own desire burning in your heart, His own intentions fulfilled in your effort. Under-motivation is chief among the blights that disqualify a servant.

Under-motivation invites divine rebuke. But the super-motivated also face devastating pitfalls, though they seem less obvious. Ask the once-energetic missionary who shuts himself into his office for hours. Ask the one who lives on the verge of tears, though he doesn't understand why. Or the one who used to love people, but now cringes when the phone rings, trembles to answer the knock, and can scarcely force himself to face people. Their compassion has faded into dullness, emotional strength has crumbled.

Burnout is not always related to thinking patterns, but well-meaning workers sometimes have mistaken ways of qualifying themselves and their work. I've heard them described as "type A" and "type B."

Type A tends to build his worth upon accomplishment. Though he would never say it, his unconscious

thought is, *The more I do and the better I do it, the more God must approve of me and my work.* Type A tends to overplan, to overextend himself, to be extremely competitive, driven by the clock, impatient with interruptions and delays. Type A's feelings tend to swing between pride and inferiority: satisfied with achievement, dismayed with shortcoming.

Type B's is a slightly different struggle. His sense of worth and acceptance grows from continual giving, constantly meeting the needs around him. It's been called the "Messiah Complex." Type B's feelings tend to swing between goodness and guilt; goodness when meeting others' needs, guilt when those needs go unmet.

Type A thinks: *We could do great things for the Lord if we'd just get our act together.* Type B thinks: *I should be able to help anyone, if I'd just try a little harder.* Type A worries all the time. Type B goes around tired all the time. Both are zealous servants, but both are somewhat derailed by unconscious, wrong motives.

Dear worker, before you fly off to change the world, remember that Jesus measures the motive before He approves the action. Learn something from a debased, scorned woman upon whom Jesus heaped the approval we all seek.

It was night. Jesus sat at supper with men to whom religion was a matter of debate, a question of learning. Into the room crept an uninvited guest with an unprecedented gift: a box of ointment to pour out, to waste on the feet of the Master. The expensive odor filled the nostrils of men who appreciated it not a whit. Judas ripped out his scathing criticism. But Jesus wiped away the sting with words we would die to hear: "*Let her alone . . . she hath done what she could.*"

But what had she done? Jesus was facing the last week of his life, and she could do nothing about it. Jesus was weary, criticized, and unpopular; ointment could not touch that sorrow. Hungry orphans, desperate widows, dying lepers . . . her ointment did nothing for them. They were beyond her reach, above her capacity. Though hers was not an act of efficiency or tangible benefit, Jesus said, "She did what she could."

Hers was an act of devotion, an outpouring of love. May yours be so. Hers was an extravagant display of selflessness. May yours be such. Humility graced her touch; may it always grace yours. For when Jesus

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## Ministers Meetings . . . continued

Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, the U.S., and Canada.

Since the meetings are designed for church leaders, the topics mostly centered around things helpful to ministers, but there were topics of general interest as well: "How to Help People Who Lack a Proper Concept of Marriage," by Arthur Nisly from El Salvador. "How and When to Help People Without Creating Dependencies," by Daniel Stutzman from Belize.

Both of these topics are very important in our part of the world. It is much more common to "shack up" instead of getting married. It's so common that even some children from "Christian" families do it. The topic about giving to the needy is important because of the amount of people who seem to prefer being supported by missions or churches instead of working. It is the church's responsibility to help the poor, but not to support those who could work but don't.

Other general interest topics were: "Passing our Faith to our Children," "Christian Ethics," and "What is Evangelism?"

Some topics should have been a series instead of an hour. Marcos Miller from Costa Rica taught on "Christian Ethics." He raised his Bible and said,

"This is the Christian's ethics, and you want me to summarize it in one hour?"

It was a challenge to hear José Benito from Guatemala preach on "Faith Worth Dying For." José has had to choose between denying the faith and living, or keeping the faith and dying. Those who have read the book *Under His Wings* understand a little of his story and what he has gone through to stay true to the faith. It's one thing to hear this message preached by someone who never has had to make the choice, but it's quite another to hear it from someone who has.

Another blessing was hearing Chente Mejía from Costa Rica preach on the "Victorious Church." He challenged us with the thought that church members can either be like galley slaves forced to row a galley, or be like free men rowing the same galley toward a prize. Are we doing our part in the church? If we want a victorious church we must be victorious individuals and do whatever it takes to make it victorious, like freemen rowing the galley toward the prize of the spoils of the battle.

I am already looking forward to next year's meetings in Belize, if the Lord tarries, where I can leave the worrying and planning to other committees, and just sit back and enjoy the teaching and the fellowship.

—Steve Steckly



Mealtime at Ministers' Meetings

# Personnel News

The **Neil and Lucinda Burkholder** family returned to the States after serving in El Chal as houseparents for a year. **Tim and Rhoda Korver** also returned home after 10 months as houseparents at headquarters. We want to thank them both for the time and energy they put into the work.



**Earl and Hettie Barnhart**

to drive to church in Santa Rosita, they need to cross the San Pedro river on the ferry.

**Douglas and Kristina Vásquez** have agreed to serve as houseparents in El Chal. They have one boy, Caleb, who is nearly two years old. Douglas is also serving in the school as vice-principal and teacher, and has taught there since 2004. After they were married in 2009, Kristina worked in the Clinic until 2012.



**Douglas and Kristina Vásquez**

## She Did What She Could . . . continued

said, "Wherever this gospel is preached . . . this shall be spoken of . . .," he was not exalting the price of the ointment, but the attitude of the servant who wins His approval.

While Kingdom servants are not slackers, Jesus never intended for us to personally meet every need, to solve every problem, or to win every race. Though our talents be average and our opportunities few, it is enough that He look at what we have done for Him and say, "*You did what you could.*"

## Baptism in Santa Rosita

The wooden benches were well filled by friends and family members, the air was brimming with anticipation, and all Heaven rejoiced with the Santa Rosita congregation on March 26, 2014, as Amarilis spoke her baptismal vows with conviction. After accepting Jesus as her personal Savior about two years ago and participating in instruction class, Amarilis made the resolute decision to follow the Lord's command to be baptized. The sincerity and solemnity of her words, "I promise," rang clearly for all to hear, saved and unsaved alike. Bishop Isaías Muñoz officiated in the baptism. Please pray that this sister would stay faithful to the Lord until death, especially as she faces opposition at home from her father and most of her brothers.

—Janet Meyers



**Amarilis with her mother**

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