



MENNONITE *Air* MISSIONS

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A Ministerial Ordination for the *Lirio* Congregation

"And he gave some . . . pastors . . . for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Ephesians 4:11, 12).

César Vásquez attended our Christian day school in his childhood and youth, and in spite of coming from a broken home, he came to Christ as a young man with a sincere desire to serve the Lord.

In 2004, César and his wife Eva were called to serve in El Porvenir, Pasaco, after the previous missionary family was relocated to another area of service. César accepted the call and was commissioned as pastor for two years. César had already completed the *obreros* program—a training program for our young men who seem qualified as prospective leaders.

When a new work was begun in Chepelares, Honduras, César was called to serve there along with another family. Again he responded to the call, and again he was commissioned for the ministry there. The work in Chepelares was eventually closed because of a lack of response to the Gospel, and both families returned to their respective congregations.

In January of 2012, there was again a need for an *obrero* (commissioned church leader) for the Lirio congregation. César was commissioned to serve in that capacity for two years. Last year that term was extended for another year. It was generally known that when that time was completed, the commission could be extended again or an ordination could follow.

César and Eva were interviewed in January about a prospective ordination and consented to serve as God would call them. On January 25, the congregation gave nearly unanimous support for his ordination.

The ordination was held on February 3, and César was given the charge as pastor. Several area congregations were represented in the service. Several MAM board members were present as well. It was also a unique service in that the three former bishops were all present for the occasion: Harold Kauffman, Duane Eby (who brought the message), and Brian Yoder.



César and Eva Vásquez and family

Please pray for César and Eva as they lead out in this new calling and responsibility.

For the sake of the Kingdom,

Mark Gingrich

Baptism in Oratorio

It was an important, special day in the lives of two young sisters in Oratorio—the day they would publicly and formally declare their faith in Jesus Christ, renounce sin and Satan, and promise to serve Christ and the church. Recognizing the importance of this day, brothers and sisters in the faith made special effort to attend and show their support of Arlín and Lidia Muñoz. Some traveled on foot down steep hill-sides and others by more modern means of bus and car.

Brother Ross's sermon that afternoon focused on the importance of baptism and some prerequisites, one of which is the confession of sin. Why confess the sins of the past? Satan works in the dark, and as long as sins are unconfessed, Satan is able to work. But once sins are confessed and brought to the light of Jesus Christ, Satan's power is gone.

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EDITORIAL

by Stephan Gingerich

The Fish Vendor

It was one of those days—a Saturday. I was trying to finish up an outside home improvement project for my wife so I could return the tools I had borrowed and not have to re-borrow them when I got back from my next trip out of the country. The dog that had been donated for the new ministry had died after being sick for several days. The baby was sick and fussy and wanted only her daddy to hold her. There were seemingly endless interruptions—the neighbor man kept coming and politely asking me questions about my old pickup that he wanted to buy. In my mind I was working on a message for Sunday and trying to figure out how I could give my wife the chance to rest for an hour since she wasn't feeling well. It looked like it was going to rain.

Around noon she asked me to grill some meat for my birthday dinner. I quickly agreed, took the baby, and invited the kind neighbor to continue our conversation in the garage.

I had finished my conversation and was holding my little girl and grilling in the company of our boys, who like to come around for a “sneak preview.” A motorcycle with a big cooler strapped on the back pulled up outside the gate.

“Fish for sale, buy your fresh fish here!”

Right! I thought. *Just what I need, a fish vendor!*

“What kind of fish do you sell?” I asked. I somehow felt drawn to the man. He was about twenty-five years old and seemed to have kind eyes.

“Tilapia,” he said.

“Oh, our boys prefer shark meat,” I joked, mostly for their benefit, because they always beg me to buy fresh fish. I rarely do.

The man laughed. “No sharks today,” he said, “just tilapia.”

I had finished grilling and sent one of the boys to ask Brenda if I could buy fish for supper or if she had other plans. I wanted to buy fish from this man even though I don't like fish.

We talked and haggled. A little embarrassed, he quietly asked, “Are you related to the other *gringos* that live over there?”

“Depends which *gringos* you mean,” I said.

“Don Marcos,” he said.

“Oh, Don Marcos hasn't lived here for about 10 years. You must not live here anymore. Did you know Don Marcos?”

“Yes, and Carlota, and Doña Norma and the boys . . .”

His eyes were soft and distant and a smile played at the corner of his lips.

I stuck out my hand. “I am Stephan. Do you remember me? What is your name?”

“Sure, I remember you!” He was smiling really big now. “All my brothers and sisters used to come every week to the children's class on Tuesday afternoons at two o'clock. We would color pictures and get a sticker if we said our verse. You know, I still remember some of those verses.”

I bought fish. I learned that his name was Mynor and that his family had moved to another town years ago. He is married and has a baby girl. He goes to a Christian church. He told me that as he grew he wanted to know more about God and His Son who could forgive our sins. I am so glad he found Him!

I well remember those Tuesday afternoon Bible classes. It was a smidgen of time out of my week that I and my siblings dedicated to the neighborhood children. I remember squirming bodies, dirty fingers that smudged clean coloring pages, and sparkling eyes that begged for more stories. Almost every day of the week children would come to the gate and wonder when we were going to have another Bible class. “Every Tuesday afternoon at 2:00,” was the standard reply.

The purpose of this personal little story is to encourage you as it did me. No matter what ministry you are involved in for the Lord, I would like to remind you . . . don't ever give up! Don't ever think your work for the Lord is in vain! There will be many people you will meet on the Other Side if you can just remain faithful until the end! And time with children is not wasted . . .

Jesus gave us a peek into the future when He described that Great Day in Matthew 25. I get little chills when I read it: “*Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.*”

The righteous don't remember the little ordinary things they did to “the least of these” that hold such value on that Great Day. Those “little things” were what they did automatically out of love for their King. It was the least they could do.

Baptism in Oratorio . . . continued

Upon their confession of faith, Arlín and Lidia were baptized and taken in as members of *Ríos de Agua Viva* Mennonite Church in Oratorio on February 1, 2015. Pray that these girls—our sisters in the faith—might remain faithful to their commitment to serve Jesus and be a testimony to God's faithfulness. Satan actively seeks to discourage followers of Jesus Christ, and the church in Oratorio has had its share of difficulties in the last years. But Jesus has promised that the gates of Hell will not prevail against His church. May He receive the honor and the glory!

Sara Breneman



Isaías Muñoz's two daughters, Arlín and Lidia, were baptized on February 1.

El Buen Samaritano

Back in the mid-1970s, Brother Harold Kauffman had a pilot friend whose wife was a church member. One day this friend asked Harold to go with him to a small town called Matías to visit his brother. After that visit, different brethren began visiting this small village with the intent of starting a church. For several years, they visited every other week and held services in homes. Several people, including the pilot's brother Juan Antonio Rodriguez, were interested in fellowship. Harold recalls that the fleas were so bad that they had to sleep on the pickup topper to get away from them.

Land for a chapel was purchased in a nearby village called La Sorpresa. In 1976, Juan Alpírez was asked to

move into the area to serve as local pastor. He served as pastor for about six years until 1982. During this time Rigoberto Portillo Rodriguez was ordained as deacon. After 1982 there was a period with no local pastor. Rafael Segura helped shepherd the church until Carlos Urizar was given charge. Carlos served as local pastor for nearly sixteen years until he stepped down. Again the church was without a local pastor.

During the next years, Deacon Rigoberto was moved from place to place in service of the church and was heavily involved in starting several new ones. He was ordained as pastor in Mixcolajá. In 2007 he was asked

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The congregation in La Sorpresa

Personnel

John and Betty Klassen, along with their son Conner, came in January to serve as houseparents at headquarters for two months. John and Conner have really put themselves into maintenance and other things that need to be done around the place, and Betty has adjusted well to the house-keeping and cooking and is making things run smoothly. We would like to thank them for the time they invested in Guatemala.



John and Betty Klassen and son Conner.

We are glad to have **Jonathan Bear** here as the newest edition to our North American staff. Jonathan came to us from the Sharon Mennonite Church in Elida, Ohio. He began the ever-difficult mastery of Spanish by spending two weeks in Spanish school and will continue to learn the language and culture by working with the Guatemalan people in the places he will be serving.



Jonathan Bear

El Buen Samaritano . . . continued

to move back to La Sorpresa to pastor the church, where he has remained ever since. Although his and his wife's health is failing, he is faithfully serving the Lord and the local church.

Today there are twenty-one members in the *El Buen Samaritano* church. They hold services each Sunday and each Wednesday evening. They have a small school with one teacher and five students. Pray for the growth of this church, not only in number but in maturity and strength. Pray that they could have a vibrant faith, and that the community could be influenced by the testimony of the Gospel.

Financial Report for Mennonite Air Missions

January 1 through December 31, 2014

Beginning balance	\$103,112.22
Income.....	488,155.94
Actual Operating Income.....	591,268.16

Loan income	0.00
Total income.....	591,268.16

Disbursements

Literature.....	\$0.00
Newsletter	6,901.41
Travel.....	10,380.39
Retirement and Medical.....	3,500.00
Worker allowances.....	168,190.25
Bank & Miscellaneous charges	0.00
Farm & Conference Property.....	0.00
Transfer to field.....	317,892.00
Supplies.....	534.27
U.S. checks for Guatemalan funds	9,041.97

Actual operating disbursements	516,440.29
Loan repayment	0.00
.....	516,440.29

Ending checkbook balance.....	\$74,827.87
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Amos Hurst

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or email your request to mennoniteairmissions.eey@gmail.com.**

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