



MENNONITE *Air* MISSIONS

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January, February 2017

San Cristóbal

In 1993 Brother Victor Ovalle's family moved to the city of San Cristóbal. While living there, they attended the Guatemala City church, Lirio de los Valles, and helped in the church work.

A work was begun in El Amparo, another part of the city, under the direction of the Lirio de los Valles church. Brother Victor was in charge of this work. Several people became members, but over time this work was closed because several lost interest and left the church.

For this reason the Ovalle family felt the need to share the news of salvation to the people of San Cristobal. They began to have occasional services in their garage to gauge the interest of their neighbors.

When people began to attend the services, Brother Victor and his two sons built a chapel. The first service that took place in the chapel was on August 27, 1995 when Brother Victor and his wife Anita celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary. They invited neighbors and friends for this special occasion, and about 100 people arrived.

Thus it was that several came to know Christ and surrender their lives to Him. The people showed a lot of interest and the church began to grow. The brethren decided to name the church "Emmanuel," which means "GOD WITH US."

The church grew to approximately forty-nine active members at its peak; then some were sent to serve in other church outreaches in different areas, some got married, some passed away, and unfortunately, several became discouraged and left the church.

Brother Victor Ovalle has been the minister of the Emmanuel congregation since the beginning of the work. He was ordained minister in San Bartolomé in 1976; in 2010, he was ordained bishop. No North American missionary has served in a ministerial role in this church. For the most part only Brother Victor has served in leadership.

Three years ago the Emmanuel church was moved to a new property in an area of San Cristóbal called

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The congregation in San Cristobal currently includes twenty-three active members.



EDITORIAL

GM

Hunters of Men?

Many years ago Jesus walked along the shore of the Sea of Galilee and called out to two fishermen tending their business: "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."

These were normal men doing their job, catching fish for their living. Maybe they had wives and children at home, and they were working to supply their needs. Maybe they were still single; we don't know. But when Jesus called them, they left their nets—their job, their form of income, and their livelihood—to follow Him. Theirs was not just a new business, recently started and still a little shaky. Theirs was a business they had inherited from their father; their roots went deep in the fishing industry.

If they were married men, they could have started to sputter and say, "But—but we have to provide for our families. We have debts to pay on the house and the new boat we just bought. We have children to think of too. Our business is at its prime, and if we leave now, how will we ever recuperate all our investment? We have customers to supply. Dad left us with this fine business and we've worked hard to build it to this point, how could we just let it go right now?"

But they didn't. They straightway left their nets and followed Him.

Maybe they were still single men; no wife or children yet. When Jesus called them, they could have said, "But . . . we're in the prime of our life. How could we leave our dreams of the future to follow you, Jesus? If we follow you, how can we make payments on our truck?" (Speaking in today's terms.)

"How can we develop social relationships in our youth group? We just finished high school and started working for our dad; we had plans to really make some money." They knew that if they left their fishing and followed Jesus, they weren't going to make it to the volleyball game every Friday night. They knew they may not be able to get married when they turned 21. They didn't know how many years this call was for; this wasn't a two-year term, this was for life.

Regardless of the thoughts that ran through their minds, they immediately left their nets when they received Jesus' call and followed Him.

Behind our house here in Guatemala runs a river that also runs close to the church house. One day I decided to walk the river trail on the way to a church service, and the idea for this article came to mind. The trail, the trees, the river, the leaves on the ground all reminded me of what I used to do every fall before I moved to Guatemala: hunt deer. I loved to hunt. I was a bow hunter at heart and would often take a deer with my bow and another with my rifle every year.

Today I and the fellow I live with walk the same kind of trails we so enjoyed at home. Even the river and the trees seem the same. But instead of a bow is a Bible. Instead of a well-planned strategy for the hunt, we consider who we should be praying for. Instead of thinking of a big rack and jerky and summer sausage, we think of souls of men. Eternal souls.

Hunting deer is fun, but Jesus calls us to the pursuit of souls of men.

If Jesus would be here, would He say, "Follow me, and I will make you hunters of men"? Does He want you to leave your camouflage and tree stand to serve Him in a different way?

Jesus said, "I will build my church."

Last summer Answers in Genesis undertook the immense project of building a replica of the Ark. They hired a contractor named LeRoy Troyer to build the replica. How did he do it? Did LeRoy build the replica all by himself? No. According to one news article, in one week's time there were over 300 workers on site from 12 different Amish communities.

The work of building the church is also an immense project. Does Jesus do it all alone? No, He uses you and me to do the groundwork. He's in charge; He knows the blueprint and tells us how to do it, but we are the ones He uses to make it happen.

Do you like to hunt? Jesus is calling you to be a hunter of men. Do you like to fish? Jesus is calling you to be a fisher of men.

When we hunt or fish, any meat we harvest is consumed in a short time. Then we must go out and find more or wait for next year. But when we hunt or fish for men, the results are eternal.

Men's lives are at stake; someone is searching for truth today. Are you willing to be the one Jesus uses to help them find it? Maybe they don't know that they're lost, but you have a message that can change their life. Are you willing to share it?

Guatemala has a great need for laborers. If that is where God is calling you, then you had better go without excuse. But Guatemala is not the only place where God needs workers. Do you know where I went to hunt deer? I went to where the deer were. God wants you to be where the people are that need Him. God wants you to be involved in their lives, to point them to Him. He wants you to leave your past life; to leave whatever it is that would hinder you from attaining this goal so that you can dedicate yourself to Him and fulfill His plan for you.

The disciples straightway left their nets and followed Him; what will you and I do?

San Cristóbal . . . continued

Balcones; the original property did not belong to the church.

A few months ago a group of young men from a Mennonite Church in Pennsylvania came to help with construction. We thank you and appreciate your help in building the second-story walls of the church house.

We were also blessed to have a visit from four Missouri couples who came with Roy and Rebecca Keller. We thank you for your willingness to donate for the roof on the second level. It is not yet fully completed, but we are confident that God will supply what is lacking. If some of you have an interest in helping out financially to finish the work, we would be grateful.

Emmanuel currently has twenty-three active members and two sisters in baptismal classes. Despite the different struggles that the church has faced, God has always been faithful.

The Emmanuel Church feels the need for a minister and a deacon. If God permits, there are plans for a commissioning service in early 2017. Let us pray for the brothers who will be chosen. May God help and prepare these brothers to serve in the work.

We ask for your prayers for those who are members and for those who were previously part of the church. May God continue to touch their hearts in some way to turn to Him.

Our desire and prayer is that the light of Christ may continue to shine through the Emmanuel church in our community, while we look for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Mary Cristal



The new second story, thanks to hard-working volunteers and timely donations.

Personnel Needs

We appreciate your interest and prayers for the work of MAM, and especially ask you to pray for workers as we begin 2017. We stand in immediate need of families for church planting and church support. We really need a middle-aged couple for Headquarters leadership. We could also use single fellows for material support and church support roles. We are currently understaffed.

If you are open to learning more about these positions or could recommend someone you know, please contact Wesley King at wesking@afo.net or by phone at (717) 994-6395.

Current Events

Fall youth institute was held at the farm in Sumpango on November 15-18.

The church in Porvenir had revival meetings from the 29th of November through the 4th of December.

The yearly Bible conference in San Bartolomé was held December 6th through 8th.



Last

I find that I have been welcomed to the world of last. I do not really like it, but what are my options?

Some lasts are yet to come. Last day in the clinic. Last church service in Santa Rosita. Last boat ride on the San Pedro river. My last ant bite. (Those big ones can draw blood!) My last tamale. My last day in this house in El Naranjo. Last childrens' class in Naranjo. Last microbus ride to Santa Elena. Last day in Guatemala.

Some lasts have happened already. The last time I will get to consult certain patients. The last time that I will see many of them. The last time I will have to sterilize our suture kits. The last time that I count the money at the beginning of a clinic day. The last Youth Institute in Sumpango, Guatemala. My last volleyball game there.

My last living grandmother just died. I had my last visit with her in May. I didn't know that it would be the last time, but I had wondered if it would be. Life is full of lasts . . . It is the way of life. Happily I have not gotten to my last chance at eternal salvation. I have accepted that gift and by God's grace I will always embrace it. I have had my last chance to show God's love to some people. Did I do it right? I still have a chance to allow God to use me until I breathe my last or until the last trumpet sounds, whichever comes first!

Fear not; I am the first and the last.

— Jesus (Revelation 1:17b)

May our lives leave a lasting memory of God's love and grace!

Dorcas Miller

Editor's note:

The clinic in El Naranjo, which has served the people of Santa Rosita, El Naranjo, and surrounding areas for twenty years, will close at the end of 2016, largely due to a shortage of long-term administrative missionary personnel. The nurses currently serving in El Naranjo, including Dorcas Miller, will either relocate or return to the US.

Thank You

Dear fellow laborers and supporters,

We have been blessed by another year of generous giving by you, the supporters of Mennonite Air Missions. The work of MAM is funded by individuals like you who gave through your church, your business, and personally. Thank you for joining the MAM team with your prayers and generosity during this important time in Guatemala. We look forward to your continued support in 2017.

Amos Hurst

MAM Board Treasurer

Financial Report for Mennonite Air Missions

January 1, 2016 to December 31, 2016

Beginning Balance	41,818.51
Income	<u>467,400.04</u>
Actual Operating Income	509,218.55

Loan Income	<u>0.00</u>
Total Income	509,218.55

Disbursements

Literature	0.00
Newsletter	10,452.41
Travel	9,739.07
Retirement and Medical	3,000.00
Worker allowances	157,214.87
Bank & miscellaneous charges ..	653.14
Transfer to Field	266,800.00
Supplies	1,006.91
U.S. checks for Guatemala funds	<u>9,066.76</u>

Actual Operating Disbursements	<u>457,933.16</u>
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Loan Repayment	<u>0.00</u>
Total Loan Repayment	<u>0.00</u>

Ending Checkbook Balance	\$51,285.39
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Amos Hurst

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

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