



# MENNONITE *Air* MISSIONS

Vol. LII | No. 4

July, August 2017

## Four Baptisms

God continues to work in the hearts of men and women, and it is a blessing to see people surrender their lives to Him. Recently there have been eight baptisms here in Guatemala. Let's take a little peek at these baptismal services and the young Christians who were baptized.



**Victor Hugo Alvarez was baptized in La Hierba Buena.**

The church in La Hierba Buena was holding special meetings the third week of April, and the service on Saturday night, April 22, was extra special. It was a baptismal service for Brother Victor Hugo. Besides the church and community people in attendance, there were also visitors from other churches. There was special singing by a group of young people, and after the service, a snack of coffee and sweet bread.

Victor has a wife, who is not a Christian, and a daughter. Pray for Victor, that he would remain faithful and continue serving the Lord. Pray that his wife would also come to know Jesus. Pray for the church and its pastor in La Hierba Buena that the people would be encouraged to keep living for the Lord. Also, pray for the others that attended the service that night, that they would desire to serve the Lord.

Sunday, May 7, was a special day for the church in Oratorio. Three young people—Johana, Benedilda, and Edwin—were baptized. Three other people were taken in as members of the church that day as well. It was an afternoon service, and afterwards supper was served.

Johana (granddaughter of one of the MAM pastors) is a young teenager. Her parents were two of those who were received as members that day.

Benedilda is a young married lady. Her husband Kenneth (Bishop Isaias Muñoz's son) was also taken into the membership that day. Most of Kenneth's family are part of the church in Oratorio. Benedilda's parents, on the other hand, are not Christians. They are separated, and her dad is with another woman. Benedilda's mom left

when Benedilda was 15 years old, leaving her with her sister.

Edwin is a young man in his upper teens. His parents no longer live together. His dad is a faithful member of the church; his mother is no longer a member.



**Kenneth and his wife Benedilda (front left), Marco Antonio and wife Magali (back center), with their daughter Johana in front of them. Edwin (right) with bishop Isaias Muñoz behind him. These were taken into fellowship in Oratorio.**

May 21 was a special day for the church in Porvenir. The Sunday morning attendance was about twice the normal number; the church benches were filled with folks from the local church and visitors from other places. In this service three men were baptized: Gonzalo, Ervin, and Ricardo. After the service, lunch was served

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**Gonzalo, Ricardo, and Ervin were baptized in Porvenir.**



# EDITORIAL

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## When God's People Pray

We were gathered around her bed—the whole church group. She had been sick for some time, and the last few days she had eaten and drunk very little. She had fallen and couldn't get herself up, so others had lifted her into bed. Now she lay there, barely able to talk.

"Shall we carry her out to a doctor?" That would be difficult because we would have to carry her nearly half a mile to the nearest road, and it was now late at night. No normal medical center would be open; she would have to go to the emergency room in Chiquimulilla, a half hour drive away. Oh, and she didn't have the 200 quetzales the ambulance would have charged.

"Let's pray, and then we'll decide what to do." We bowed our heads in that small room and opened our hearts in faith to an almighty God who cares for the fatherless and widows. Several brethren led in prayer, expressing the faith they had in the power of God—He had healed in the past; He would do so again if it was His will.

Did she get up and walk right then? No. Did she start talking better? No. We had to decide what to do. Someone suggested calling a fellow who knew how to put in an IV. "You can buy what you need in the pharmacy, and he could put it in for you." A phone call later, he was on his way and the needed supplies were purchased.

"But she shows symptoms of a stroke," he said as he appraised the situation in the small room where we were. "If she had a stroke and I put in the IV, it could kill her." But what was the other option? The decision was made to put in the IV in the name of Jesus. As the precious liquid dripped into her vein, we sat, visited, and waited. What would the Lord do?

An hour later we could see the results. She was more alert; she was talking. She still didn't get up, but we felt confident that we could leave her for the night.

When I returned the next morning, she was still in bed but able to communicate. She was thinking normally. In the afternoon I was visiting the house next door, and to my surprise, who should walk in but our dear sister whom we thought was so close to death the night before!

We could say that the IV sure worked! We could say it sure was a blessing that that man was able to come and put it in. But who really healed her?

Was it the IV?

As you read this account, which do you think had more effect on the life of our sister—the IV that she was given or the effectual, earnest prayer of the saints?

Did God answer our prayer?

We read that there were times when Jesus continued all night in prayer to God. In doing so, He found complete spiritual victory in His life here on earth.

What are you willing to do to find spiritual victory?

What do you think Franklin D. Roosevelt would have done if he would have known early in World War II that by spending a night on his knees in prayer, he could win the war? It may be far-fetched to say that's all it would

have taken as he was in a different warfare. But for us that's what it takes. We are in a spiritual battle, and by spending time before the throne of grace, we are assured victory.

How often do we have access to the biggest source of power in the world—in the universe—and we don't use it?

An individual I know likes to encourage us with e-mails now and then, and one day a quote from Oswald Chambers arrived in my Inbox—and soon made it to a more permanent place above my desk. It says: "Prayer does not equip us for greater works—prayer is the greater work."

This month's newsletter features four baptisms, and the last edition featured another. Ten people were baptized in about a three-and-a-half month period in five different churches. If baptism is indeed an outward sign of a previous inward cleansing, then ten people were converted and accepted Christ as Lord and Saviour.

I believe this happened because of prayer. Was one of those prayers yours? I hope so.

God's Spirit moves when God's people pray.

When Peter and John prayed, the place was shaken and the people were filled with the Holy Ghost. When Hezekiah prayed, the Lord added fifteen years to his life. When Elijah prayed, fire fell from heaven and burned the altar, the wood, and the water in the trench around it. When Elisha prayed, God smote men with blindness but gave his servant sight to see horses and chariots of fire. When Peter was in jail, the believers had a prayer meeting and he showed up at the door.

Now let's slow down and evaluate. If prayer works (which it does), why is it so hard to do? Why is it so hard to set apart an hour to spend time in prayer? Why do we find it so difficult to continue all night in prayer?

Spiritual victory is found on bended knee. Spiritual growth in the church is found by crying out to God.

If we could condense our prayer list and put into a very small sentence the most important things to pray for, what would they be?

Would it not be something of eternal value, something that will not end? How about an eternal soul? I'd like to mention two requests:

- For souls who are lost, that God's Spirit would bring them to repentance and salvation.
- For souls who are saved, that they would continue faithfully to the end.

Let's put those two at the top of our list and make it a priority to pray that God would touch them in the same way He touched the sick sister and healed her. Is that not the very first step in going into all the world and making disciples?

You are reading this newsletter; it mentions some names of people who need your prayers to remain faithful. You have family members who need salvation. There

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## Four Baptisms . . . continued

to those who attended. Meanwhile, there was a down-pour of rain!

Gonzalo is the husband of Alicia, who has been a church member for years. Brother Gonzalo can't read, so he has to depend on others to read the Bible to him. One of the things that helped draw him to the Lord was the loss of vision in his one eye. While working in the sugarcane field, a sugarcane leaf scraped his eye. Infection set in, which resulted in the loss of vision.

Ervin and Ricardo are brothers (and also brothers-in-law to Gonzalo). Their mother has been a church member for around twenty years. Their father was a member when he died over five years ago.

Ervin has a wife and children, but his wife is not a Christian. Ricardo is in his twenties and lives with his mother.

Another baptism was held in the San Cristobal church on Sunday, May 28. Ceci, a teenage girl, was baptized that morning. Some visitors attended the service. There was a fellowship meal afterwards. Another sister was taken in



**Ceci Benito (left) was baptized, and Matilde Mendez was received into fellowship in San Cristobal.**

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## Editorial . . . continued

are many souls in Guatemala and in all parts of the world that need Christ. There's no lack of people to pray for.

Are you willing to pray so that God can do His work in the hearts He would draw to Himself? Or will you be a hindrance to God's work by not allowing yourself to be used in fasting and prayer for souls?

as a member that day as well. Some of Ceci's family have been part of the Mennonite church, but are not now.

Will you join us in prayer for these new brothers and sisters in the faith? Pray that they would faithfully keep their commitments to the Lord. Pray that God would give them strength to walk in victory. Pray especially for those whose wives are not Christians, that God would give them grace to be faithful in spite of that. Pray that the witness of their changed lives would encourage their wives to serve the Lord themselves.

Thank you for your prayers for God's work in Guatemala! May we all continue to keep the commitments we have made to God and be faithful!

– Twila Miller

## El Pital

In 1987, El Pital was a small village nestled in the mountains of southern Guatemala without Christian witness or contact. In another town fourteen miles away was a man named Rafael Segura. Rafael had a friend in the small village of El Pital, so he would travel there on foot to visit his friend and share the Gospel. Rafael would leave his house in El Guayabo around 5:00 a.m. rain or shine, and walk the fourteen miles to El Pital, spending the night before returning.

Alfonso Lima was one of the first to accept Christ, so as others became Christians, they met in his house to worship. Alfonso was the leader of this small congregation for ten years, and the membership grew to fifteen. A section was added to Alfonso's house where they could meet for worship.

Most of the people in the village were devout Catholics, and they did not appreciate this new religion. At least once Alfonso was in the pulpit preaching, and men with machetes chased him out. He was told that he was not allowed to preach what he was preaching.

In time a death threat was made, and the church family urged him to leave. But he decided to finish his corn harvest before leaving for a safer place. He was

within two days of finishing his corn harvest when men came and shot him.

After the shooting, the Pital church was left without consistent leadership for two years, in part because of the uncertainty and violence. Even the police were afraid to go near this town, so Pital was a lawless place. Some of the believers scattered to other places, but those who remained either met in each others' homes or traveled to El Guayabo for services. Gregory Henriques and Marvin Lorensana accepted the Lord while visiting El Guayabo for services. After two years, with a calmer situation and new converts in Pital, pastoral visits from outside the community returned to a more normal schedule.

Juan Francisco Solíz became the first native leader after Alfonso was killed, and he served for twelve years until his death. Missionary pastors such as Delvin Yoder and Duane Eby also helped give oversight during the early years of the church in Pital, although they didn't live there.

Steve Steckley came from Canada in 2011 and served as pastor there for five years until March 2016. Craig

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## El Pital . . . continued

Martin filled this role till the end of June 2016, after which the church in Guatemala City took responsibility to give leadership till the end of the year. At the beginning of 2017, Larry Martin was asked to give leadership.

Juan's children, Maria and Juan Pablo, are still faithful members, but his grandchildren do not seem to be interested in the Gospel.

Gregory comes to services every Sunday, but his wife never comes. His son has vision problems.

Pray especially for Marvin and his wife. They have two

small children, and the youngest, Alexia Janel, is a special needs child.

Maria requests prayer for her spiritual life, that she would not fall into temptations and that her children would feel the need to give their lives to the Lord.

Juan Pablo's job keeps him from attending services regularly, and his wife seems to hold back from going all the way with the Lord. She attends every Sunday, but Juan says that she does not want to wear the veiling. Pray that Juan would be able to attend all the services.

– Larry Martin



Larry Martin and the small group of believers in Pital stand in front of the chapel.

## Notes and Announcements

Our long-time Canadian board member **Mervin Kuepfer** passed away on November 5, 2016. He had represented Mennonite Air Missions among our supporting Canadian churches for many years and brought vision and experience to our team. We'll miss his steady presence and input in the ongoing work of MAM.

Our dear brother **Harold Kauffman** turned 92 on June 24. Harold not only helped to found MAM, but continues to serve there for short periods. He is currently at his

home in Wisconsin, but plans to return to Guatemala again later this summer.

We continue to urgently need **houseparents** in Guatemala City. We recently moved a missionary/church planting couple from their place of service to temporarily fill-in as house parents, but we would love to see them replaced and returned to their original responsibility. Please contact Wesley King to volunteer or recommend a qualified couple.

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