



MENNONITE *Air* MISSIONS

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Church in Zaragoza

In the mid 1970s, the Conservative Fellowship church in Chimaltenango began holding Sunday evening services in Puerta Baja, a little village on the outskirts of the town of Chimaltenango. Some members of the Chimaltenango church lived in Puerta Baja, and these Sunday afternoon services allowed them to walk to Chimaltenango for the morning service and attend the afternoon service closer to home.

During this time, Tuesday evening services were also held in Zaragoza, a town about ten kilometers directly west of Chimaltenango, in the homes of two ladies who were also members in Chimaltenango. Rogelio Pichiyá, an ordained minister in the Chimaltenango church, was directly involved in this work.

In 1978 the churches in Puerta Baja and Zaragoza merged to form a single congregation led by Rogelio Pichiyá. A church building was later built in Zaragoza.

For the next twenty years, the church in Zaragoza fellowshiped with MAM. In 2001 they came under the leadership of William Bear, a bishop from the Bethel Fellowship who had served in

Guatemala from 1968 to 1978. The Zaragoza church stayed with Bethel Fellowship until 2013, when they again became part of MAM. Financially self-supported from the beginning, their vision as a church is to continue to reach out to the surrounding areas.

There are currently fourteen members attending in Zaragoza. Rogelio's wife passed away this year, and another sister went on to her reward less than a month ago. Please pray that God will raise up the younger generation.

Carlos Lemus has been serving as commissioned pastor for the past four years, driving nearly an hour every Sunday morning to preach. His second two-year term of service ended in July 2017. He will now be attending his home congregation in Guatemala City.

Please pray for the future of this church, that God would raise up a leader. Sadly, the lack of pastors is all too common in our churches here in Guatemala. Pray too that Christians everywhere will truly want to see God's kingdom come, a vision that will motivate us to do His will.



The church building in Zaragoza.



EDITORIAL

Wendell Diem

Seeking First the Kingdom

One of the challenging things in life is getting our priorities in the proper order—and then keeping them there. So many things are begging for our attention! There is a vast assortment of activities in which we can invest our time and energy. Some are definitely necessary, but most are optional. Even if they are not wrong in themselves, they can quickly become distractions from what is most important. Since sorting out our priorities requires discipline and diligence, it's easy to simply not bother. But failing to have the right priorities could result in the tragedy of a wasted life.

Getting our priorities straight would not need to be difficult, because the words of Jesus in Matthew 6:33 are easy to understand: “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.” The problem is that taking Him seriously requires a lot of faith and crucifying of the flesh. How faithful are we in obeying this simple commandment?

If we are honest, we know in our hearts that any genuinely committed effort to obey these words will lead to a fundamentally different lifestyle from that which the world considers normal. But sadly, the Christian who takes this verse literally may even be considered radical or strange by many of his peers at church!

The world's priorities focus on things like making more money, having a better house and a nicer car, being popular, and having lots of free time for entertainment and pleasure-seeking. Of course, some people care more about being popular than about being rich; others focus on seeking adventure and a thrill and are willing to forfeit many comforts and luxuries in order to have the time and resources to pursue their passion. But in any case, the highest priorities are basically selfish.

But among the followers of Jesus, self cannot have first place. Only God and His kingdom deserve that spot on our list of priorities. Every time we wake up to a new day, our number one goal should be to bring glory to God by pursuing and promoting His kingdom. This means more than simply focusing the first minutes or hour of our day on spiritual things, although that is certainly appropriate. Seeking first God's kingdom is an activity for the entire day. It means that in whatever we do, God's glory is our greatest interest. “Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10:31).

Another way of saying it is that we should worship God and seek to build His kingdom every day and all day. Worship is more than just what we do on a Sunday morning service or during our personal devotions. It is a lifestyle. And seeking God's kingdom can be done as we go about our various tasks and activities throughout the week. Is God honored by our formal times of worship if, for the rest of the day or the week, we are more diligent in seeking our personal agendas, rather than His kingdom?

How should earning an income fit in with our priorities? In 1 Thessalonians 4:11, 12 we are told to work with our own hands in order to provide for ourselves and also to leave a good testimony to society. In Ephesians 4:28 another reason is given: that we “may have to give to him that needeth.” In 1 Timothy 5:8 it says that “if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.” Obviously, working to provide for our material needs is a worthy priority. But what is our goal? Provide for the necessities of life in a way that glorifies God and is conducive to building His kingdom? Or is the real priority putting more money in the bank, expanding the business, or buying another farm?

Sometimes it is necessary to include rest in our priorities. Mark 6:31 says: “And he [Jesus] said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat.” It sounds like Jesus' disciples were very busy! Without a doubt they were doing good things, but the Lord knew that they needed a break. As humans we have our limits. But what is our motivation for pursuing recreational activities? Is it to be refreshed and recharged, ready to go out and serve God and others with renewed strength? Or are we primarily seeking pleasure and fun?

May God help us to be honest in evaluating our priorities and courageous enough to make any changes to our lifestyle that may be necessary. If our affections are set on God and His kingdom, certainly our priorities will reflect that. And ultimately, when we put first things first, the rest has a way of finding its proper place. Maybe it's time to take Jesus at His word and give Him a chance to show us what He can do when we truly seek first God's kingdom.

WATER Team

We three WATER girls—Sonya Stoltzfus, Kayla Yoder, and Jodie Good—had a very good experience in Guatemala this summer. We learned many good—but hard—lessons and had many new experiences. We had the opportunity to visit many of the churches throughout Guatemala. We enjoyed meeting members from each of the churches and seeing their way of life.

The first place we visited was Mixcolajá. The scenery was very spectacular as we wove our way up into the highland, and we enjoyed seeing some of the Indian people. Our time there was short, but we were shown much hospitality. We learned that these people gave us their very best even if it was not a lot.

We were also able to visit Santa Rosita. We enjoyed being near the jungle and close to the river. Some of our highlights were the children's classes, youth activities, time spent in Mexico and Belize, and the Tikal Ruins. During our stay, we spent a lot of time doing regular housework and helping the missionary family. We had many encounters with the rats, bats, and tarantulas that keep jungle life exciting. One highlight was spending a day with a Guatemalan lady. Helping her draw water, making tortillas over an open fire, and hand washing the clothing was just a small peek into a normal day for a native lady in Guatemala. We learned that mission work is

about doing normal, everyday things in another country, and that you need to be flexible and willing to change your plans often.

Our next place to visit was Oratorio. We were privileged to stay with the bishop's family, who did not know a lot of English. This proved to be a fun challenge, and it was good to see their way of life. We enjoyed the many youth activities, time spent at the ocean, and a small peek into clinic life. We learned that we can live with less and be happy.

Between all of these trips, we were able to spend some time at the mission base in Guatemala City. During our time there we handed out hygiene kits at the hospital and had three days of Spanish classes. We also helped out with classes in the park and did a craft project at school one day. Time spent at the market and in Antigua were also a highlight. We learned firsthand that flexibility and normal housework is a part of mission life, and that giving is better than receiving.

Our time spent in Guatemala flew past, and soon we had to say good-bye. We thoroughly enjoyed our time there and we want to say thank you to all those who made our stay enjoyable. We are glad that God gave us the opportunity to learn more about Him, ourselves, and Guatemala.

Jodie Good, Sonya Stoltzfus, Kayla Yoder



Sonya Stoltzfus, Kayla Yoder, and Jodie Good were WATER students in Guatemala this summer.

Clinic Project in Oratorio

Priscila Muñoz worked in the El Chal clinic for several years while she trained to be a professional nurse. After leaving El Chal, she returned to Oratorio with a vision to use her training and experience to benefit the churches and church communities in the South.

From that vision began a small but growing clinic effort in the Southern region. Priscila and a few helpers have begun holding half-days of clinics in Porvenir, La Sorpresa, La Pastoria, and Oratorio.

Priscila sent me an outline of the vision and the actions of this effort, which is translated below. In future editions, we will further detail the effort and the impact it is having, as well as our goals for going forward.

– Editor

Mission:

To maintain a health-support ministry as an extension of God's church. To use the clinic as a tool to show the love of Jesus and to win souls by offering warm, quality health services to needy people. To improve their level of health through education and treatment at a cost within their reach, giving priority to families with little resources.

Vision:

- ✓ Work within church communities and be a tool of support for both the brotherhood and the community by providing medical attention.
- ✓ Use trained personnel that share our convictions and spiritual direction and give evidence of a spirit of service.
- ✓ Provide an opportunity for young girls in our churches to serve and to be trained in nursing.

- ✓ Promote God's work through our health services.

Goals:

- ✓ Extend medical attention into needy areas.
- ✓ Offer health, spiritual, and emotional counseling.
- ✓ Identify health needs in which we can be of assistance and help people find follow-up care in a hospital if necessary

Actions:

- ✓ Sell medicines at a low cost.
- ✓ Give direct attention to patients through consultations.
- ✓ Offer monthly follow-up checkups.
- ✓ Offer health clinics every two weeks in the villages of Porvenir, La Pastoria, and El Guayabo.
- ✓ Monitor chronic and degenerative diseases such as diabetes and high blood pressure.
- ✓ Offer mental, emotional, and spiritual support by Scripture reading and prayer with patients.
- ✓ Offer spiritual advice to patients in times of health crises, the loss of a loved one, family problems, etc.
- ✓ Offer general information and teaching that promotes health, good habits, and disease prevention.
- ✓ Offer assistance in minor medical emergencies.
- ✓ Refer patients to specialists or trusted institutions for follow-up care.
- ✓ Offer basic laboratory services.
- ✓ Offer home visits.
- ✓ Donate medicines or money for medical services in special cases.
- ✓ Offer Christian literature.

– Priscila Muñoz

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