



# MENNONITE *Air* MISSIONS

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November, December 2017

*Since July of 2014, this newsletter has been featuring each one of the seventeen churches founded under MAM's work. In this edition, we would like to finish this series with a final article tying them all together.*

## The Churches of MAM

Since 1971, when Brother Harold Kauffman began working in Guatemala City under the newly formed Mennonite Air Missions, seventeen churches have been established that continue today, and we trust will continue until the Lord returns.

Let's review some of the quick facts and history of each. Rather than categorize them by the age of each work, we will categorize them by region.

We can easily divide Guatemala into four areas: the central, the western, the northern, and the southern regions.

The **central region** is the area around Guatemala's capital, Guatemala City. The first church established there, Lirio de los Valles, has more ordained national leadership than any other, with two ordained ministers and two ordained deacons. This church began with the start of the mission.

The neighboring church in San Cristobal, whose first chapel was built in 1994, was established as a result of an outreach effort by the city church and later guided by Victor Ovalle and his family. Brother Victor continues as the only ordained leader that this church has had, although his bishop responsibilities take him to other places as well.

The church in Zaragoza, with its beginnings in the late 1970s as an outreach of the conservative fellowship church in Chimaltenango, came under MAM in 2013. This church currently has no local leadership.

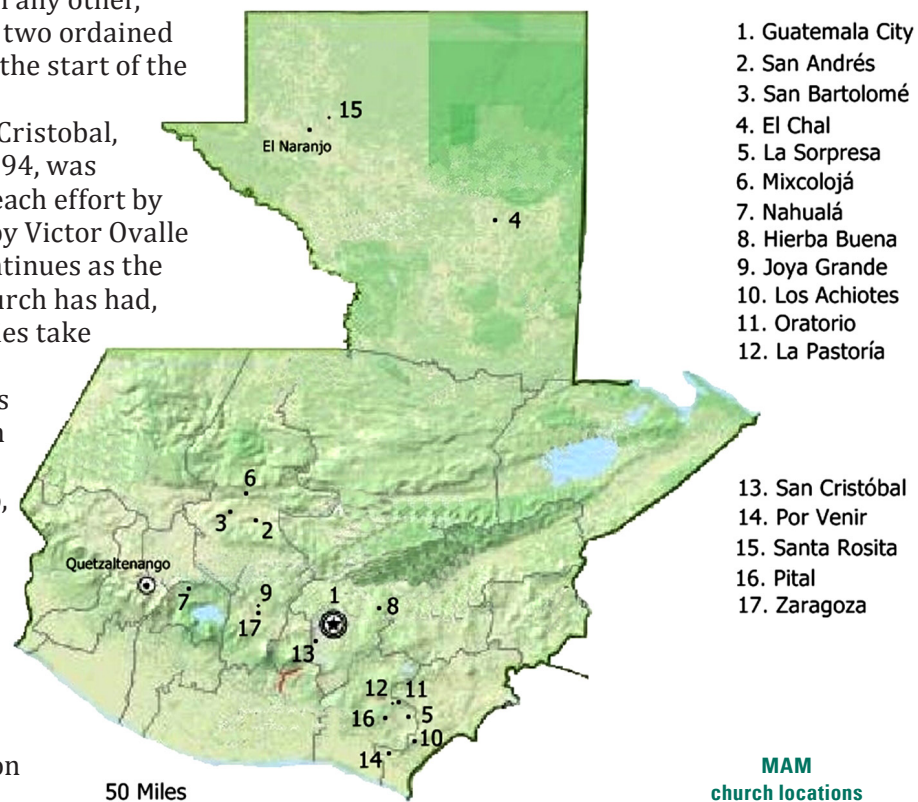
Joya Grande is a small village only a ten-minute drive from Zaragoza. The church in this village, which began in the early 1980s, began as a result of a prison ministry convert. At this time

the church has no local ordained leadership.

The church in La Hierbabuena (or San Sur) lies to the east of Guatemala City but is still considered one of the five churches in the central region. This church began in the late 1980s and is currently under the national leadership of Donaldo Álvarez. This is one of the churches that began from the early converts in El Chal; a man and his wife who had moved to El Chal to find work were converted there and returned to their home village.

We find four churches nestled in the Quiché mountains of the **western region**. In the village of San Andrés, the second church in MAM's

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# EDITORIAL

*Daniel Meyer*

## Good Is Not Enough

Conservative Christians put a lot of emphasis on doing the right thing. We try to make Biblical principles practical for modern daily life. We place importance on following the Sermon on the Mount and the other teachings of Jesus, like caring for the fatherless and widows. We try to live in a way that pleases Jesus.

I once saw a billboard that said, "You don't need a religion to be good." Although such a statement goes against what I've been taught, this is how many people think. To a certain degree, they have a point. Pretty much everything I do now as part of being a Christian could be done by an unbeliever. What, then, is the importance of Christianity?

So let's ask this question: what is good? A Muslim could include the killing of his enemies. A Mormon might talk about polygamy. An atheist might say that unbelief is good. A humanist might condone believing in yourself. I observe that each defines "good" by the entity that they worship.

A Christian can go further and say that it is impossible to find the truth about right and wrong without Jesus, the true God. Jesus says in John 14:6, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." Everyone who looks for standards of good and evil must find that truth in Jesus, and the Bible is very clear about what He requires from us. In Mathew 23, a lawyer asked Jesus which commandment was the most important in the law. Jesus replied, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." Jesus also says in John 14:15, "If ye love me, keep my commandments."

There is a component of doing the right thing in Christianity, but not only must a Christian love God and keep His commandments, he must have faith also. Hebrews 11:6 says, "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." This is the requirement of God.

God has also shown us a way to get right with Him even though we fail. Isaiah 53 reveals that Jesus was sacrificed for the sin of all men. "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him (Jesus) the iniquity of us all."

Humanity has no hope of producing a sinless person. Galatians 5:19-21 shows us that there is no

hope for those who sin to enter heaven. But God in His mercy provides us a way to come to Him. 1 John 5:12 says, "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." John 3:17 says, "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved." There is hope for humanity to be right with God. According to John 1:12, we can even become part of the family of God.

Many people today are not right with God. A few have never heard about God's plan of salvation, and many have heard and rejected God's gift. Many worship their own gods and try to do good. Others reject the reality of God because they realize their inability to meet Him in peace.

God calls us to reach out to the world and show a better way. Even more importantly, many Christians are struggling and falling as the evil that is in the world becomes harder to stay away from. Many churches have no leadership. It is time that we as Christians set our hearts on God and His plan of salvation. Good is not good enough for anyone. Only through the plan of God can a man find peace.

### **The Churches of MAM . . . continued**

leadership of Larry Martin, who travels from mission headquarters every Sunday morning. It began in 1987 when brother Rafael Segura regularly walked the fourteen miles from where he was living in La Sorpresa to hold services there.

Near the southern coast is the small church in El Porvenir. This church had its beginnings in the mid-1990s after another couple returned from El Chal, although years passed between their return and the church being established. Galen Miller is currently serving as commissioned missionary for leadership in this church.

All of these churches had their beginnings from 1971 to the late 1990s. All were started because someone showed interest in the soul of another. All have had their victories and their struggles. Of the churches currently under MAM, six have local national leadership, four have North American missionaries involved in leadership, and six have no local ordained leadership.

Christ left us a promise when He said, "I will

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history, began in 1973. Ismael Quiñonez continues to serve as the local national pastor of this church.

The church in San Bartolomé was begun when the Lord directed Harold Kauffman to this small remote village, inaccessible by car and hostile to the Gospel. But the small spark, kindled by the foreign Christians' first visits, ignited a small flame that is still alive today. José Benito, formerly a Catholic catechist, now serves as ordained bishop of this small congregation.

The first seeds were planted in 1975 for the church in Mixcolajá when several brethren began visiting a sick person there. As is the story of many churches in Guatemala, the number of members swelled at first, but dwindled in later years. Today the church continues, but at the time of this writing, there is no local pastor.

In the early 1980s the church in Nahualá sprang to life when missionaries arrived to visit a friend. While that friend wasn't the one converted, others were. The local ordained deacon, Diego Tziquin, faithfully serves the church.

In the **northern region**, also known as the Petén, the church in El Chal began under MAM in 1976. Two years earlier, missionaries from another country had traveled through this small town and thrown tracts from their car window and continued praying for this area for months afterward.

Also in the northern region, the church in Santa Rosita had its beginnings in 1995 when a man came there from El Chal, seeking work. Out

of concern for his soul, an effort was made to encourage him there where he was living, which finally resulted in the birth of a small congregation. Daniel Eby is serving as missionary there at the current time, aided by several VS fellows.

The remaining six churches are found in the **southern region** of Guatemala.

The church in Oratorio began in the late 1970s when another couple who had found the Lord in El Chal returned to their home area. Isaías Muñoz lives in this small town and serves as bishop of this church as well as various other churches. His son-in-law Wendell Diem was recently commissioned as pastor there, and his father-in-law Francisco Segura is the ordained deacon of this congregation. Responsibilities to serve at other churches' weekly services frequently take these brethren away.

Three of the southern churches have no local leadership. The church in La Sorpresa began in 1976, but after the passing of Rigoberto Portillo, no one has moved in to take his place. Rafael Segura has been traveling in from another location to help out with services.

The church in Los Achiotes began in the late 1980s with yet another couple that was converted in El Chal. There is no local ordained pastor here, nor in La Pastoría, which began some ten years earlier and is located a very short distance up the mountain from Oratorio.

The church in El Pital is currently under

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Guatemala countryside.



# Current Events

## Commissioning in Oratorio

Three national bishops and four North American board members were present on the August 13 when a formal commission was given in the church in Oratorio to Wendell Diem to serve as pastor. Wendell married Isaias's daughter Jenny just over a year ago, and now they have a little girl. Pray for Wendell and his family as they serve the Lord in the church in Oratorio.



Wendell and Jenny Diem



Wendell Diem's parents greet them during the commissioning service in Oratorio

# Craig and Aura's Wedding

September 1, 2017 was the wedding day of Craig Martin and Aura Santos. The wedding service was held outside, and although rain threatened, thankfully it held off and we didn't get wet.

Craig formerly served with MAM in Santa Rosita, Oratorio, and at Headquarters. Aura is from the church in Los Achiotes. They are making their home in Barranca Honda, near Los Achiotes where her family lives.



Craig and Aura on their wedding day

## The Churches of MAM . . . continued

build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." He has done this in the past forty-six years in Guatemala, and He will continue to do so.

When the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth? Will all of these churches continue, and will leadership roles be filled? Will our faithfulness and testimony be an asset that grows the church, not only in Guatemala, but wherever we live? May Christ not come to remove our candlestick, but find it always shining in a dark place.

*Galen Miller*

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