



Ordination in La Hierbabuena

Nestled in the highland fields of *guisquil* and other produce, close to the better-known town of San Sur, the church in La Hierbabuena recently had the privilege of witnessing the ordination of a minister from their own midst.

Donaldo Álvarez grew up in this area and knows its people well. He accepted Christ when he was fifteen and has been a faithful member in the church. Donaldo married his wife Angélica in 2004, and their first son was born before he was commissioned to serve in leadership in this congregation. Over the years he has been growing in his walk with the Lord and has been a real blessing to the work of the Lord in the church.

From the time Donaldo accepted Christ until he began serving in leadership, the church went from its peak of nearly forty members to one of its most difficult times, when only four members stayed in the church. That was very hard for both him and the church. Since that time the church has gradually began to grow again under his faithful leadership.

The church had grown to fifteen members, but recently three of them went to their final reward. What a blessing when church members reach the end of their journey faithful to the Lord instead of leaving it to return to the world!

Since entering church leadership, Donaldo had



Duane Eby and Isaías Muñoz officiated at the ordination of Donaldo Álvarez (center).

served as a commissioned pastor, but had never been ordained. On October 5, a special service was held for his ordination. Many people attended. Isaías Muñoz officiated the service, and Duane Eby brought the message.

The traditional Guatemalan tamales were served afterward.

Pray for Donaldo, his wife, their family, and the church as they go forward in the work of the Lord, that they might be faithful.

Boys' House in Santa Rosita

Set back from the San Pedro River in a tall thatch-roofed house lived a family with three children. Two young men also lived there, and a girl who helped with the housework. The north-west corner of the property had been cleared for a building site; the two young men were moving out.

Groundbreaking day was May 7. Strings were stretched between pegs in the ground. Puppies

enjoyed chewing these strings, which caused moments of frustration, but eventually the pattern of the strings was stamped into the ground. A few stumps needed to be cut through to dig the footers, but eventually concrete was poured. Kendal, a local mason, began to lay block. The block was laid up to floor level and the ground prepared for pouring concrete floors.

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EDITORIAL

Dean Boll

Foundations

Snowed under. Under a crunch. Chasing my tail. In over my head. Putting out fires. Do you recognize these phrases? Have they become part of your daily life? Have you ever felt that your efforts are producing much action but few results? We enjoy looking back at our day's accomplishments and seeing things of substance and usefulness that bless and improve others' lives. When we don't see this, we wonder if our efforts are worthwhile.

This also is true in the Lord's work. Each of us who has cast our lot with the redeemed and chosen Jesus as Lord has received a commission (Matthew 28:19, 20). We have been appointed to a special assignment. This appointment takes on many shapes in many lives as God works to "fitly join together" the different individuals, congregations, and tasks that make up His kingdom here on earth.

There is a work for each of us, no matter where God has placed us. And we are thankful to be able to serve Jesus, who has done so much for us. But there are many questions. How do we go about it? Are our efforts producing anything? Where is the fruit? How do we know if we're doing God's will?

I was blessed by the opening to a directive sent by the MAM board to its missionaries: *"For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble . . . The fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. 1 Corinthians 3:9, 11-14.* We believe that those who choose to serve with MAM do so with a desire to co-labor with God. They want to build on the foundation of Jesus Christ . . ."

I was challenged as I read and thought about this opening. The foundation is already in place, and no man can lay another. The work is begun. The chief cornerstone is laid. The work lies before us, ready for the workers. Our Master is with us through His Spirit to show us how to proceed (John 14:26). The work is His. The design is His. The building is His. The plans are His. As we see in the verses above, we are not only laborers for God, we are laborers together with God!

When my family and I arrived in Santa Rosita, the house project featured in this newsletter was just getting underway. The house design was common for this area, but we missionaries were not very familiar with local building methods. We were thankful to work with a knowledgeable builder from right here in Santa Rosita to make the foundation and lay the block. With a good foundation in place, the path forward became much clearer, and we could build with confidence. Left to ourselves, no doubt, we would have had a slower, more difficult, more expensive job. We would have lacked resources.

If we have felt frustrated and doubtful in the Lord's work, where do we go to find firm ground on which to move forward? Is it time to accept the fact that the foundation has already been laid, and no man can lay another? Are we building on it, or are we struggling to lay our own? The foundation is none other than Jesus Christ Himself.

We are not called to labor alone, but to co-labor with God. The chief cornerstone is already in place. What might happen if we try to lay another foundation?

First, we might try to make our program the foundation. We will try to do God's work while putting our trust in our outreach program, glorying in it and allowing it to become the focus of our ministry. We may begin to believe that for a person to be a good worker, they must align themselves with our program.

Second, we might try to make our image our foundation. We might try to make Christianity look exciting and attractive to those who think it looks difficult. We might push our culture and tradition to the forefront.

Many examples of wrong foundations could be given. Many different things can be part of the Christian's work, but the foundation needs to be Jesus Christ. His design and His will must drive our work, or it will be frustrating, ineffective, and will not glorify Christ.

Now, think of the true foundation, Jesus Christ. He lived as a servant, preached the Word of God, loved and forgave His enemies, and gave His life

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Boys' House in Santa Rosita . . . continued

Dean Boll, Jonny Bear, and Aaron King were very involved with the construction the whole way through. Daniel Eby and family returned from furlough around the time floors were ready to be poured. Dean and his family moved into a house across town, but he remained very involved in the work. Things moved quickly from there.

Kendal, the head mason, was there daily. Beto came every day to help him. Others also helped; Yovani, from across town, Brother Juan, from church, and another man passing through on his way from Honduras. Some days up to thirteen men worked at the house.

The block walls, with spaces for windows and doors, reached the ten-foot mark. There were four rooms—a main room, two bedrooms, and a bathroom.

Building materials were brought from towns across the river. Since our side of the river is a protected area, we needed special permission to bring materials across. Permission slips needed to be dropped off, cleared, and picked up again from Santa Elena, three and a half hours away,

Editorial – Foundations . . . continued

for the salvation of the world. How far we fall short with this one inadequate sentence to describe our perfect example! Yet, what more needs to be said? In His example we find our pattern. In His sacrifice we find the message so sorely needed in our world. In Him, our commission finds purpose and power.

Jesus is the chief cornerstone. In Him alone we find our strength. Jesus Christ is the standard by which to measure truth and decipher right from wrong. No matter if man-made programs or social platforms collapse, the chief cornerstone will remain. Many pages could be filled with what God's Word says about the firm foundation of Jesus Christ.

Take courage, fellow-laborer. In this great work, we have not been left to our own devices. We have not been called to an obscure and undefined field of service where we can only wander in circles taking feeble stabs at the work. We have been called to labor with God on the foundation of Jesus Christ. We may not understand all of His will, but we have been called to commit our way to Him, pray without ceasing, open our hearts to His prompting, and above all to walk in obedience to Him. If we serve Jesus willingly and gladly wherever He leads us, we will co-labor with God in the greatest and most profitable work in the universe.

before materials could be brought across the river by truck.

Sometimes, materials were brought six miles up the river by boat. Once, as they were unloading block, Jonny threw one into the river to prove that it could float. Amazingly, it floated for about a minute.

The work was long and hard, starting early in the morning before the sun got too hot and ending in time for supper. Sometimes the men would pause during their work to drink Gatorade and eat cookies under the grapefruit tree. One day when the sun was hot, they took turns dragging each other down to the river and being thrown in. After much splashing and laughter, they went back to work in the hot sun.

As the project wore on, it was Jonny's job to hook up the wiring and plumbing. Aaron did a good job of managing the workers on the ground and helping where needed.

When Kendal finished the block work, he tiled the bathroom walls and the floors. A drop ceiling went in after the metal roof was put on, the outside and inside of the walls were plastered, and the kitchen cabinets were installed.

There was a pause in the work near the end of August for a farewell party for Daniel's family. Everyone left for the city for a few days after that.

On August 23, about four months after the work had begun, Jonny and Aaron left the big house after supper and, barring the open doorway, slept in the unfinished new house.

There was still a front door to build and window shutters to install, but the plumbing was finished and the solar panel on the roof charged the battery that ran the lights. A propane fridge and a small stove were moved in as well as a table and couch.

Sometimes Denver, the little boy from the big house, comes to swing in the hammock on the front porch. Or sometimes Kendal drops by to drink a Coke from the fridge and chat. Motorcycles park on one end of the porch while a hammock on the other side gives it more of a homey look. It is also a perfect place for coffee and an open Bible in the early mornings while the birds sing in the trees overhead.

Jonny finished his term of service the last day of August. Aaron still occupies the house and will soon be joined by Dale Lee from the city.

It was a lot of hard work, but the end result was worth the cost.

Amy Zook

New Staff

Wesley and Wendy Hursh, along with their daughter Anisha, moved to Guatemala from McAlisterville, Pennsylvania, to serve with MAM. They began their time with four weeks of Spanish school. It was a refresher course for Wesley, who had learned Spanish as a boy when his family lived in Mixcolajá. For Wendy,



Wesley and Wendy Hursh plan to serve in Porvenir, Pasaco.

it meant starting from scratch. They plan to serve as pastor in the church in El Porvenir. Wesley's parents, Lamar and Beulah, are serving for a time in Mixcolajá, and although Porvenir is a long way from there, it is nice that they will be able to see each other once in a while.

Nathan Graybill is the newest VS fellow at MAM headquarters. He started with three weeks of Spanish school and is really putting himself into learning the language. Nathan comes from Thompsontown, Pennsylvania, where he worked in the woods, logging. He has committed to a two-and-a-half year term of service.



Nathan Graybill, from Thompsontown, Pennsylvania.

School in La Sorpresa

The school in La Sorpresa is not a very big one, with only one teacher and seven students. Classes are held in one room of the house beside the La Sorpresa chapel.

Hortencia has been teaching school for more than twenty-nine years and is very experienced. This year she taught all seven students in five grades between kindergarten and sixth grade. It's a challenge for one teacher to teach that many different grades, especially without a workbook for each child. In Guatemala, the teacher usually writes the lesson on the board and the students copy it in their notebooks.

The school is just finishing classes for the year. In Guatemala, the school year ends in October and begins in January. Pray for Hortencia and her school as they make plans for next year.



Hortencia López, a twenty-nine year veteran of the classroom, with her students.

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