



# MENNONITE *Air* MISSIONS

Guatemala, Central America

"They that sow in tears shall reap in joy" - Psalm 126:5

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## Oratorio Projects

A year ago we described our intention to invest in a school project and a clinic project in Oratorio, a town about a ninety-minute drive southeast of Guatemala City. The goal of these projects would be twofold. First, to provide a needed service to the church and the community, and second, to provide an opportunity for training and discipleship to Christian young people who choose a career in teaching or nursing.

Our supporters responded generously to the invitation to support this project, and funds were gathered to acquire the necessary property for this vision.

The plan is to use the existing church property near town and not far off the main road for the clinic. We were able to purchase two small adjacent lots to add to our parking and improve our entrance. The land is quite steep, so a retaining wall has been built along the perimeter for leveling the ground.

After an extensive search, we agreed with Isaías, the bishop, to purchase his property for the school and church, allowing him to relocate to a larger property a short drive from town. The future church and school property has been cleared, but no construction has begun.

Now we are entering Phase 2: building the infrastructure needed to house these efforts.

Our first focus will be the school, likely an eight-classroom structure suited to the lay of the

property. We are currently in conversation with the town of Oratorio about building permits and expectations for a legal school.

Our second focus would likely be a church facility, to clear the way for repurposing the current church and school property for clinic use.

We appreciate the support we've received that has allowed us to get to this point! It feels like solid progress to have the properties available and plans in place for them. Further funding will be needed for construction, and donations toward this project should be earmarked "Oratorio project, Phase 2."



This bare plot is the proposed future home of the school and church in Oratorio.

## A Day in My Life

I'll allow you to peek over my shoulder today, to give you a feel for what a normal day in the jungle of northern Guatemala can be like. As the saying goes here, "Normal is just a setting on the dryer." And we don't even have a dryer.

It's a chilly 62°F this morning, so we add a warm drink to the menu for breakfast. Breakfast is at 7:00 so that our scholar can be ready for school to begin at 7:30. Cool morning hours are more conducive to study compared to the scorching afternoon heat.

After breakfast, the morning juggle begins. Washing dishes, doing laundry, and helping my eager preschooler study her books fill the next hour and a half. As I'm wrapping up the last load of laundry, my neighbor lady shows up and we marvel at the wonders of my semiautomatic washer. Why, the clothes are almost dry already! Especially compared to the hand-wrung laundry that she is accustomed to handling. I decide that the real reason she came was to  
*(continued on page 3)*



# EDITORIAL

Duane Eby

## But God . . .

We held a Mennonite Air Missions board meeting in Guatemala the first week of February. Being there and working with the staff and churches, I was impressed again with how indispensable God is. (It seems that I hear someone say, “of course!”) But the importance of such an obvious fact can so easily be neglected and left to wither on the vine. To see the church of Jesus Christ growing and maturing, we need God’s presence, wisdom, power, and guidance. We need to seek God for leadership for the church, to pray to God to send forth laborers, and to rely on God’s power to draw men and women to Himself.

While in prayer, some of us were reminded of MAM’s motto: “They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weeping, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.”

We experienced that spiritual burden again on this visit. We shed tears as we thought about the tremendous need for leadership in the churches, as we labored to help those who are striving for spiritual victory and growth, and as we faced the realities of the age and physical health of some of the Guatemalan leaders. We rejoiced to see aged believers who have battled the temptations of life for thirty or forty years and are still seeking God. We were blessed to see young Guatemalan and missionary men and women with a dynamic hearts for God who are seeking to serve Him.

As I considered our present need for God, I did some reflecting on the past. We have done a few things right in the work of MAM. First, we did well to have gone forth preaching the Gospel to every creature, and we made an effort to teach the whole counsel of God. To be sure, we did it imperfectly, but it has been and is our goal. Second, we have trusted God to do as much or more in Guatemalan hearts as He does in North American hearts. Third, we have entrusted Guatemalan brothers with the charge of carrying the Gospel message and passing the responsibility on to others.

Yet there have been serious mistakes along the way as well. First, we have allowed the pride and arrogance of our “efficient” North American culture to strain our brotherhood relations at times. Second, our use of U.S. and Canadian wealth to help the church in Guatemala has been clumsy at best. Third and most seriously, we have not invested enough in

prayer and sacrificial soldiering, and as a result, we have a dearth of mature men to serve in ministry. The lack of plural ministry in each congregation continues to hinder the level of spiritual development we long to see in each congregation.

We have tremendous needs and we have tremendous opportunities. And we have God. How can we make the connection? Our Father is “rich in houses and lands; He holds the wealth of the world in His hands . . .” More importantly, He has promised that if we ask anything in the name of Jesus, He will do it. He commanded us to ask. *Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.* Apostle Paul was inspired to write that it’s not by word and not by man’s wisdom, but by power—God’s power—God’s power and human channels to pour His power into and through.

I heard our field director, Brother Wesley King, say something like this. “We need five young men and five couples for church-planting work right away. That would be the minimum to fill the current needs. But we also discussed starting a new area of work, which would be the first in twenty-five years. You say, ‘why would you do that when you can’t properly staff the church work you are doing?’ That is a fair question, and it has a heart-wrenching answer. It is because there are at least ten souls in that area who have responded to Jesus Christ, and they need shepherding.”

There are several things we can do to make the connection between God and these needs. First, we can live our life fully surrendered to Jesus Christ, thus allowing God to use us as a channel.

Second, we can pray for specific things. Let’s ask God to provide, according to His will, those needed couples and young men in the next year or year and a half. Let’s ask God to raise up godly Guatemalan brothers and their wives to serve in the ministry of their church.

Third, we can be sure we are willing to go if called.

And fourth, we can encourage those who are already serving and encourage those who are called to go, supporting them in any way we can.

And above all, let’s embrace the faith that trusts God to do “exceeding abundantly above all we ask or think.”

## A Day in My Life . . . continued

see the tiller at work in our field out back. Another marvelous wonder! After a bit more chitchat about flowers, she ambles home.

I continue baking and frosting a cake for another neighbor. Once the final touches are put on the cake and the last spatula is licked, I am invited to a tea party with two fine young ladies. One little miss serves me pomegranate-flavored mac and cheese, while the other makes sure my plate is never void of food for too long. After our imaginary stomachs are full, we start making our real lunch. Tostadas, rice, beans, lettuce, and fresh salsa, otherwise called haystacks, are on the menu. Dean had hired the “town beggar” to dig stumps out of the field this morning. Lunch goes along with his pay, so I will dish up a plateful for him when he’s finished.

The day feels strangely quiet without Elmer and Nelson frequently popping their heads in my door wondering what time it is. They must not be at home today.

At 12:30, school ends and lunch begins. The afternoon looks fairly short with dishes to wash, laundry to fold, supper to prepare, and children to get ready for prayer meeting. At the appointed time, the girl who ordered the cake comes. A half hour later, her sister comes by. My poor Spanish has me very confused, but when I finally understand that she wonders if they can have another cake today yet, I quickly tell her that I’m sorry I don’t have time because we have a church service this eve-

ning. Besides, they have my last cake pan. I assure her that when she brings my pan back, I will make another. What will I be selling next? It was food staples yesterday, cakes today, and who knows what they will think is for sale tomorrow. But before tomorrow comes, another neighbor comes to my door and wonders if I sell fabric for curtains. Do we give them reason to believe that we have everything, or is it simply our white skin?

Our humble church building is comfortably filled at 5:00 for prayer meeting. When it’s my turn to pray, I wonder if my brain can formulate a prayer in Spanish. I take a deep breath and begin, slowly fumbling my way through the list of requests. When I’m finished, I know in my heart that God heard and understood my praises and petitions even if my dear prayer partner has no idea what I said. While Dean takes the boat upriver on this pitch-black night to take some of the church sisters home, I quickly put food on the table and get my youngsters started on their supper. After everyone is settled in bed and I think back over the day, the verses that I read for my personal devotions come to mind. Will I hear, “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you”? Or, because of that inward sigh when the tenth or fifteenth person hailed me from my porch or because of that short word I said when I was impatient, will I hear, “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire”? Only one life, ’twill soon be past, only what’s done for Christ will last!

*Jodi Boll*

## Justin and Kayla

The line of waiting guests creeps forward as those at the front sign the guest register and are ushered to a seat. Today, December 21, 2019, Justin Flamenco and Kayla King are to be married. Eventually all the guests are seated, and as the choir sings “Buscad Primero,” the parents, Wesley & Alice King and Rigo & Martha Flamenco are ushered in. Nathan Graybill & Delores Schmidt walk in as “Shine on Us” is sung. They are followed by Aaron Dyck & his fiancée, Cindy Flamenco, and Curtis Dyck & Lidia Munoz. Then comes the couple we’re all waiting for—the bride and groom!

Approximately two hundred guests were in attendance and about twenty of those—Justin’s family and friends—came via Belize. Kayla’s Aunt Regina King came from Belleville, PA. Church members, friends, and missionaries represented various MAM churches. The Spanish teachers from Antigua

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Justin Flamenco and Kayla King  
were married on December 21, 2019.



## Justin & Kayla . . . continued

were also there.

The wedding was held in a tent set up outside the main building at the Farm in Sumpango. Wesley King, the bride's father, performed the marriage ceremony. A civil wedding had previously taken place in Oratorio. After the service, everyone enjoyed a delicious meal of barbecued chicken, rice, beans, cucumber salad, and two kinds of tortillas—corn and flour. For dessert we were served cake and strawberry danish. A special thanks to all who helped with food preparation! *Muchas gracias!*

*To Justin & Kayla—wishing you God's richest blessings as you serve Him together in El Guayabo.*

*Delores Schmidt*



The wedding was held at the Farm in Sumpango.

## Personnel



Joy Zimmerman

Joy Zimmerman arrived in Guatemala on January 14, 2020, to serve with MAM. After a few weeks of Spanish school, she moved to Mixcolajá to help teach at the church school that they are restarting there.

Yvonne Zimmerman arrived in Guatemala on January 16, 2020. She is serving in Santa Rosita and helps with domestic work in the George Zimmerman household.



Yvonne Zimmerman



In December we said goodbye to Amy Zook who was serving in Santa Rosita. Thank you for your service!



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