



MENNONITE *Air* MISSIONS

Guatemala, Central America

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

Vol. LVI | No. 2 | March, April 2021

Commissioning Service in Mixcolajá

On March 5, 2021, the congregation at Mixcolajá had a special service to commission Nicholas Suarez as minister for two years and Belisario "Chalo" Natareno as deacon for two years. We were blessed with well over a hundred people in attendance, with visitors from as far away as the Oratorio congregation and as near as San Bartolomé. Brother Wesley King officiated the service, and Brother Victor Ovalle delivered the message.

Brother Victor was very involved in the start of the church in Mixcolajá forty-five years ago, so it was special to have him here. Stable leadership is essential for a healthy church, and it is exciting to see a team of three commissioned leaders in this growing congregation. Because of Brother Wesley's imminent return to the United States, the Mixcolajá congregation observed the Communion and feet-washing services the following morning,

Saturday, March 6. What a blessing it is to serve our King, who died for us so that we could live forever in fellowship with Him!



Chalo Natareno (pictured with his wife Alicia) and Nick Suarez were commissioned for leadership in Mixcolajá.

Baptism in Zaragoza

On Sunday, March 7, 2021, the membership in the "Puerta de Las Agua" church in Zaragoza increased by four. Brother Walter Gonzales received Christ about eight months ago. After about seven months of instruction class, he was baptized on this day. Walter, about twenty years old, lives in Tecpan. His family members are not Christians, but



Walter Gonzales

his parents were present for his baptism. Pray for Walter that he would be faithful in his walk with the Lord and that he could be an influence to bring his family to Christ.

Deliz Marili Tucubal is a young lady in her twenties. She was a member of the church a few years ago, but left home and moved in with a married man. This brought great heartache to the family and the congregation, and she was excommunicated. After living with this man for three or four months, he began to mistreat her and she left him and moved back with her parents. My wife Alice and I went to visit her. Deliz humbly confessed her sin to God, her parents, and

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EDITORIAL

Justin Zimmerman

The Volcano's Reminder

Would you like to climb a volcano? I find volcanoes fascinating. Guatemala's rugged landscape is dominated by over thirty-five of them, three of which are currently considered active. I have often witnessed one of these, Volcán de Fuego, puff out ash while traveling to or from Guatemala City. Once, while traveling at night, I even witnessed a flash of fire leap from the peak of Fuego and saw a bright orange river of lava streaming down the side of the nearby Volcán de Pacaya.

Volcanoes are dangerous. In June of 2018, Fuego caused hundreds of deaths and injuries and millions of dollars in property damage. In recent days, observers have noted increased activity at some of Guatemala's volcanoes, which could mean big trouble for those living nearby. Volcanic eruptions can be extremely violent and powerful, causing widespread destruction and even changing weather patterns on the other side of the globe!

Volcanoes are instructive. I believe they give us a small glimpse of the glorious might and incomprehensible holiness of God. Imagine standing at the base of a mountain that is rumbling ominously. The ground shakes under your feet. Dark gray clouds obscure the peak as frequent thunderclaps punctuated with flashes of lightning shake the air. And then a voice, bigger than the deep growl of the volcano and the sharp cracks of thunder, says, "Come up!" Personally, I'm pretty sure the last thing I would want to do in such a situation would be to climb to the top of that mountain!

And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled. And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. And the LORD came down upon mount Sinai, on the top of the mount: and the LORD called Moses up to the top of the mount; and Moses went up (Exodus 19:16, 18, 20).

Moses climbed to the top of the mountain to meet with Someone much more powerful than 2,000-degree lava or steam or deadly gases. The Lord Almighty came to Mount Sinai in a (very small!) display of His power. The result of this encounter was the giving of the Law and the beginning of the tabernacle worship. The Holy One of Israel was to

be approached with the utmost respect and care. Hebrews 12 offers some interesting commentary about this experience on Mount Sinai.

For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more. And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake (Hebrews 12:18, 19, 21).

Moses was right to fear, just as we would fear climbing an active volcano. This is powerful imagery! But it is also incomplete. The writer of Hebrews continues. *But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling (Hebrews 12:22-24).*

Rather than climbing a fiery mountain, we are privileged with access to a glorious city. This city affords eternal fellowship with angels, the church and perfected saints (just men), and the living God. We can boldly approach God the Judge of all because of Jesus and His work in fulfilling the Old Covenant and initiating the New Covenant. How then should we respond?

Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: for our God is a consuming fire (Hebrews 12:28, 29).

Verse 29 is a jarring message for those who view God as a benevolent celestial grandfather. As members of the kingdom of Christ empowered with God's grace, we **can** please God with our reverent service. That service may be praying for the sick, visiting the discouraged, preaching to the lost, listening to a lonely shut-in, or giving food to the hungry. Serving the "least of these our brethren" is serving Christ, our Lord and Saviour. Where you serve, whether in a dingy adobe hut in Guatemala or a spacious American home, is not as important as how you serve.

Have you experienced the enabling grace of our mighty Lord? I trust you have and are gladly serving wherever God has called you. God, with

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Baptism in Zaragoza . . . continued

eventually the church, admitting her rebellion and unwillingness to receive counsel. About a year ago she gave birth to a little girl. She has shown fruits of repentance and was received back into fellowship on March 7.

Angel and Lidia Sen used to live in Guatemala City and were members of the Lirio de Los Valles congregation. Last year when the pandemic began, they moved back to Tecpan where Lidia is from, there Angel found work and they have been

attending with the congregation in Zaragoza. They asked for a letter of transfer from Lirio de Los Valles to Puerta de Las Aguas, and were received as members at Zaragoza on March 7 as well. This couple has two children: a girl of about three and a baby boy.

Keep this congregation and these new members in your prayers. There were many tears shed at this service—tears of joy, sorrow, repentance, and victory. Pray that God would continue to build His church in the Zaragoza area.

Wesley King

My Trip to Guatemala

I was given the opportunity to serve in Guatemala for the month of February with a work crew from Maryland. We spent most of our time in Oratorio. We helped with some work at the church in Oratorio and helped rebuild the church building in La Pastoria. What stood out to me the most was the beauty of speaking two different languages and serving the same God. I hardly speak Spanish at all, but to worship with them was an amazing experience. It was so encouraging for me to hear some people's stories and to see God working in their lives. One person I remember in the La Pastoria church was a man whose wife had left

him after he became a Christian. Seeing him smile and work joyfully was incredible and challenging to me.

One weekend we went out to San Bartolomé and Mixcolajá. In Mixcolajá, I was blessed to see a church of 50 to 60 people in an area that isn't greatly populated. I was impressed to hear of an older couple who walks two hours every Sunday to come to church, and it challenged me to consider whether I would do the same. All around, I was very thankful to have been given the opportunity to go to Guatemala and would encourage others to go also.

Jared Miller



A work crew from churches in Maryland helped with church-building projects during February.

New Staff

We have been greatly blessed by the arrival of several new staff members in recent months. Lester and Martha Burkholder are now serving as house parents at Headquarters in Guatemala City. Lester is also serving as bookkeeper and assisting with services at the San Cristobal congregation. Lester and Martha have visited Guatemala fourteen times to serve in various short-term capacities, but this time they plan to stay for a longer period! They come from Allentown Mennonite Church (Hope Fellowship) where Lester recently retired as minister.



Lester and Martha Burkholder

Juanita Hursh returned to Guatemala in December 2020 to help with domestics at Headquarters. She previously lived here for much of her life as her parents served with MAM. She comes from Cocolamus Mennonite Church (Hope Fellowship).



Juanita Hursh



Anthony Wadel

Anthony Wadel joined the team at Headquarters in January 2021. He assists with maintenance, the woodshop, airport runs, and whatever else needs to be done. He grew up on a dairy farm near Waynesboro, Georgia, and comes from Burkland Mennonite Church (South-Atlantic Conference).



Joshua Glick

Joshua Glick moved into Headquarters from El Salvador in February 2021. He is helping with maintenance and various building projects here. He grew up with eight brothers and two sisters and comes from the El Resbaladero congregation (Amish Mennonite Aid).

The Volcano's Reminder . . . continued

more power than we can imagine, has chosen to use frail, volcano-fearing men and women to reach this lost world. Let us not take this responsibility lightly. The majestic peaks of soaring volcanoes should do more than just make us reach for a camera; they should direct our thoughts upward to our Creator and merciful Redeemer.

LORD, what is man, that thou takest knowledge of him! or the son of man, that thou makest account of him! Man is like to vanity: his days are as a shadow that passeth away. Bow thy heavens, O LORD, and come down: touch the mountains, and they shall smoke (Psalm 144:3-5).

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Mennonite Air Missions (USPS 383-570)

Mennonite Air Missions newsletter is published bimonthly by Mennonite Air Missions, Inc. Editor and vice-chairman: Brian Yoder, 590 Dusty Rock Rd., Riner, VA 24149; Mennonite Air Missions Board: Chairman: Duane Eby, 12731 Greencastle Pike, Hagerstown, MD 21740; Field Representative: Wesley King, Guatemala City; Treasurer: Amos Hurst Jr., 116 Rothsville Station Rd., Lititz, PA. 17543; Secretary: Lee Lehman, 2065 Sollenburger Rd., Chambersburg, PA 17202; Urie Sharp, Leon Yoder, Pete Shirk, Stanley Neuenschwander, Jeff Weaver, Keith Crider. The newsletter is sent free of charge. Send all newsletter correspondence to MAM Newsletter, 590 Dusty Rock Road, Riner, VA 24149. MENNONITE AIR MISSIONS is published on the fifteenth of January, March, May, July, September, and November.
ATTN. POSTMASTER: Send address subscription changes or change of address materials to MENNONITE AIR MISSIONS, PO Box 1212, Harrisonburg, VA 22803.