

Teacher's Institute

Instituto de Maestros (Teacher's Institute) on May 13, 14 was an anticipated event for those of us instructing young minds. It was a beautiful opportunity for fellowship and learning in a large group setting.

Listening to inspiring messages, personal experiences, and practical workshops was food for the spirit. Creating art projects and playing volleyball with new and old friends was excellent practice for teamwork skills and a chance to burn

up energy.

Teachers came from various schools, including Oratorio, Pasáco, Mixcolajá, San Bartolomé, El Chal, La Anchura, and Santa Rosita. The El Guayabo church graciously served us with an abundance of scrumptious food and warm hospitality in general. God bless you for your unselfishness!

Thanks to all the folks who worked in the forefront and behind the scenes to make this an uplifting time.

Elsie Miller



Mealtime at the Teacher's Institute.



The meals did not disappoint.



The group of teachers in attendance.

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Guatemala, Central America

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

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Baptism in Mixcolajá

The fourth of July, 2021, was a very special day in Mixcolajá, Guatemala. Seven souls were joined to the body of Christ in baptism. No number of fireworks, parades, marching bands, and frivolity could give such joy to a small congregation in the mountains of Quiche. While the celebration may have been quite dull from a worldly perspective, the radiant faces of the seven people in the baptism class testified of an inner peace and happiness this world simply can't offer.

We were privileged to have Brother Victor Ovalle direct the baptism. Victor was instrumental in beginning the work in Mixcolajá over forty-five years ago, walking five hours from San Bartolomé to hold services. We were also joined by the congregations from San Bartolomé and Nahualá and had many local visitors as well.

Many stories could be told about those baptized and how they came to Christ. About a year and a half ago, the church had a special prayer meeting in the home of a young lady suffering greatly from physical and spiritual afflictions. The church prayed, God worked, and the powers of darkness were broken. Through that dramatic deliverance, the young lady and her parents became Christians. God continued to work in that family, delivering her brother from alcohol addiction sometime later. We expect him to be in

the next baptism class! The young lady, Silveria Reyes, still suffers from some physical health problems, but her spirit is whole! The father, Adán Reyes, is nearly deaf and cannot read, but he enthusiastically testifies of the power and presence of God in his heart. The mother, Patrona Reyes, likewise glows with an inner peace.

Joining this family in baptism was Selvin Natareno and his youngest sister, Leidy Natareno. They are a great blessing to their parents, Brother Chalo and Sister Alicia. Santos Domingo de Leon was also baptized. Most of his older brothers are ungodly men, which makes the change in Domingo even more evident.

Finally, Nevin Mux joined the class in Mixcolajá, after nearly completing instruction class in Nahualá where his parents are assisting in the work. Due to the COVID lockdown of Guatemala last year, they were unable to complete that class. Thus, Nevin was thankful for the opportunity to join his cousins Selvin and Leidy in the class in Mixcolajá, where he and his family live.

Those who declared their independence from the tyranny of Satan and pledged their allegiance to the King of kings are now in a deadly war. Please pray for these dear brothers and sisters as they continue to grow in the faith.

Youth Retreat in Mixcolajá

On Wednesday, June 23, a whole multitude of youth descended on the little town of Mixcolajá in anticipation of spending the next two days with many others from northern and western Guatemala. COVID had effectively shut down most large gatherings for the past year. Guatemala is slowly reopening, but the institute facility in Sumpango, near the city, was not used for this event because of COVID concerns.

Youth came from Nahualá, San Bartolomé, Mixcolajá, Santa Rosita, Guatemala City, El Chal, El Mango, and Cobán, about eighty young people

in all. Registration began Wednesday evening, followed by a message titled, "How I Relate to the Church," by Caleb Miller of Cobán.

Thursday morning, after a devotional, Nicolas Suarez of Mixcolajá gave a music class. Nick went over the basics of music, after which we divided into small groups to practice the scale, the octaves, etc. Then each group practiced a song to sing to the whole group. Pepsi was the reward for the group that got the most votes of approval.

After music class there were some group games
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EDITORIAL

Anthony Wadel

In the Hands of a Knowing Shepherd

Are we walking into uncharted territory? In some ways, yes. Each of us is living life for the first time. We continually fight to make progress despite each intention of Satan or self to come between us and God. Every day come opportunities for victory or failure. Not only do we face new personal challenges, but the world itself continues to present our generation with challenges that we have never faced before. We wonder what could be coming next.

We recently watched the Canadian government force people out of their church and lock the doors behind them. All around us, people seem to be closing their eyes to the truth. Obvious double standards are prevalent, and many people call wrong right and right wrong. We seem to be living in times when many, knowing that the things they do are worthy of death, *not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them* (Romans 1:32). Truly each one who walks through this life without the Lord travels on a journey uncharted by man, and one that is bound to end in lost confusion. But he who follows Jesus Christ, the light of the world, *shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life* (John 8:12). Our eternal Father is the only One who knows the future; why would we not trust and follow Him?

Our God is a true leader. He knows the way on which He takes us. Since the beginning of time, He has gone before His people, showing them the way. He does not simply tell His people what to do and then stand back to watch. No, He walks the road with us. Being our Creator, He knows that by ourselves, we would get lost in the wilderness of this world or be consumed by the roaring lion who walks about, seeking whom he may devour.

Not only does He walk with us, He takes us by the hand and goes before us. He says, *Dread not, neither be afraid of them. The LORD your God which goeth before you, he shall fight for you, according to all that he did for you in Egypt before your eyes; and in the wilderness, where thou hast seen how that the LORD thy God bare thee, as a man doth bare his son, in all the way that ye went, until ye came into this place. Yet in this thing ye did not believe the LORD your God, who went in the way before you, to search you out a place to pitch your tents in, in fire by night, to shew you by what way ye should go, and in a cloud by day* (Deuteronomy 1:29-33).

We learn from the Israelites' story that God was

always faithful and made a way for them as long as they looked to Him in faith, placed their lives in His hands, and trusted His guidance. The cloud of fire never led them through places impossible to pass or beyond God's ability to clear. God did not cross the sea and wait for them. He did not tell them to capture a city, then sit back and watch. God dried the sea, drove away the enemy with hornets, and by His will brought down the walls of Jericho. As Israel followed His directions, the Lord worked wonders before them.

When Jesus came, He brought the same concept to the New Testament. He is God come to earth, and He leads His people the same on earth as He did from Heaven. When He saw the multitude searching for Him, He had compassion on them and took time to show them the way. He said they were as sheep having no shepherd (Mathew 9:36). Jesus came as a shepherd to guide all those who will be His sheep.

What a picture Jesus paints of the many around us today! Like sheep without a shepherd, they wander in every direction but cannot find security. They are following the wrong shepherd. No sheep truly likes to be lost, but they have never met the Shepherd. Until men are pointed to the Good Shepherd, they continue to encounter situations alone, without the wisdom and courage to do right.

We are safe when following the Good Shepherd. He does not allow anything in our paths without giving us the aid we need to overcome it and keep following Him. *When he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice* (John 10:4). We are His own sheep. But we are not just sheep that He owns for no reason. He has bought us with a price, and He knows each one of us by name. *I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine* (John 10:14).

Jesus said, *I lay down my life for the sheep* (John 10:15). We have not been bought with corruptible things as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Jesus Christ. That is how much our Shepherd cares about us. Through His Word we get a clear picture of God as a faithful Shepherd who leads His purchased flock to the fold. He always goes ahead of His sheep, leading them through each stretch of a journey that is completely new to the sheep, but perfectly known by the Shepherd who inhabits eternity.

Youth Retreat in Mixcolajá . . . continued

before lunch. After lunch, a small group of youth went to help a sister from the church plant some crops (by hand) while the others at church took turns playing volleyball and shelling peanuts. The peanuts were raised in Mixcolajá. In the evening was a message by Jerlin Lopez titled "How I Relate to my Family."

Friday morning a lengthy discussion on godly courtships was held. I appreciated the burden shared for the need of godly youth in the church who are willing to wait on God's timing for courtship. Our churches here are hurt by the problem of ungodly courtships as much as by anything else. The evening message shared by Duane Eby was "How I Relate to the Opposite Gender."

A hearty thank-you to the folks from Mixcolajá for hosting the event and for the delicious food served three times a day. The youth were inspired, encouraged, and challenged. Some of the difficult topics discussed were eye-openers for some of the youth in attendance. I heard one young man testify that he was hearing some of



Young people helped plant a sister's crops.

this teaching for the first time. It was encouraging to see so many Christian youth in attendance. Many of our youth feel very lonely and forgotten, and the institute was a breath of fresh air. May we continue to pray for the youth and the future of our churches in Guatemala. *Aaron King*



A large tent was erected for the event.



Group activities.



Singing was a favorite activity.