

Staff Changes

We recently welcomed **Quentin Burkholder** to Guatemala for a term of service. He is currently studying Spanish and will begin serving at Headquarters before later moving to Santa Rosita. He comes to us from the Lane's Run congregation in Maryland.



Quentin Burkholder

We also bid farewell to **Audrey Layman** and **Keith Martin**, who are returning home after a few months of service here. May the time you invested here, though short, bring eternal rewards!

Praise and Prayer Items

Praise the Lord for restoring the health of Lester and Martha Burkholder!

Praise the Lord for His protection over various mission staff in recent weeks.

Praise the Lord for His faithful provision for our needs in 2021.

Please pray for revival among the churches in Guatemala in 2022.

Please pray for the students and teachers in MAM's schools as they start a new year of studies.

Newsletter subscriptions and address changes can be requested at mam@christianlight.org. Visit our website at mennoniteairmissions.org to sign up for digital newsletters, or e-mail your request to mennoniteairmissions.eey@gmail.com.

Financial Statement for Mennonite Air Missions

January 1, 2021 to December 31, 2021

Beginning balance	\$ 71,547.22
Income	792,823.20
Actual Operating Income	<u>\$864,370.42</u>
Transfer from Savings Account	0.00
Total income	<u>\$864,370.42</u>
Disbursements	
Literature	0.00
Newsletter	11,388.74
Travel	46,364.97
Retirement and medical	5,252.84
Worker allowance	163,235.59
Bank & miscellaneous charges	268.66
Transfer to field	386,050.18
Supplies	856.82
U.S. checks for Guatemalan funds	6,734.54
Actual Operating Disbursements	<u>\$620,152.34</u>
Transfer to Savings Account	<u>165,397.96</u>
Total Transfer Expense	<u>165,397.96</u>
Ending Checkbook Balance	\$ 78,820.12
Anabaptist Financial Savings Account Balance	<u>\$165,397.96</u>

To all who labor with us in generosity and prayer,

Thank you for another year of generous support for the work in Guatemala. 2021 began with serious personnel needs, and God has answered our prayer with several couples and families and has blessed MAM with the funds to support them. We continue to trust Him for our needs in the year to come.

The school construction project is underway in Oratorio, having cleared the planning and permitting stages. A backhoe has been procured to aid in earthmoving, and construction is planned to commence shortly. The funds in the Anabaptist Financial Savings Account represent an accumulation of gifts toward this project and will go a long way toward this year's construction aims.

May the Lord bless His work and those who partner with it.

Amos Hurst, Board Treasurer



The Vision and the Struggle for Christian Schools

Did you ever wonder what it would be like if you could not read? The fact that you are reading this article means that someone invested time in you, perhaps many years ago, and taught you how to read. Reading opens a vast door that allows an individual to learn and gather information on his own without having to depend on another person.

But school is much more than just reading. What would you do if you were told to go to the fourth house on the right after the third street if you didn't know how to count? What if you had eight pieces of candy and wanted to divide them between two people but didn't know how to divide? What if you were measuring a piece of lumber to find the square footage but didn't know how to use a tape measure, much less multiply?

We often use knowledge we acquired as children in school without even thinking about it. We take reading for granted. We take for granted the simplest math problem or the biology lesson that, had we not learned in school, would leave us at a significant disadvantage.

How many of you desire that your children or grandchildren grow up to love and serve the Lord? That is why most of our churches have made the investment to establish and maintain a way for our children to get a Christian education. And that investment represents a lot of work, a lot of effort, a lot of time, and a lot of money.

The same work, effort, time, and money for Christian education is also required here in Guatemala. But couple that with a lack of Anabaptist curriculum that gives a complete education in a local context. Couple that with parents who may not be able to read, with an income barely sufficient to put tortillas on the table, or with the fact

that a legally recognized school requires that the teachers have a university degree.

But should we send our dear children to the public school system to learn life values from an evolution-promoting, humanistic perspective? Should we allow these tender children to make friends with community children whose parents aren't concerned about discipline or teaching godly values? Public education is "free," but is it worth the cost of losing our young people to the world's currents?

The school year in Guatemala operates on the calendar year. Going into the 2022 school term, we have five schools, each under the administration of one of our local churches, ranging in size from five students to over thirty. Most teach first through sixth grade, but there is a growing vision to expand to give children from church families the opportunity to study in higher grades as well. Only a few of our schools currently work with a program that allows them to teach students up to five years beyond sixth grade.

Teachers are also part of the Christian education equation that we need to consider. All our teachers are members of our churches, and most are nationals. But finding someone with sufficient education, of sufficient age, and willing to teach is often quite a challenge. If you're jotting down prayer requests here, please add the need for teachers in Guatemala.

We are currently looking for youth with potential and with a willingness to teach, and we are planning ways to prepare them for the classroom in coming years.

Covid has made the last two years difficult for our schools. Guatemala uses a "traffic light"

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Please make donations payable to "Mennonite Air Missions" and send to Mennonite Air Missions, c/o Amos Hurst, 116 Rothsville Station Rd., Lititz, PA 17543. Inquiries about service opportunities may be directed to Brian Yoder at yoder4@gmail.com or 590 Dusty Rock Rd., Riner, VA 24149

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EDITORIAL

Justin Zimmerman

A Lesson From a Woodpecker

Have you ever tried beating your head on a tree twenty times in a minute? How about twenty times per second? That is precisely what I see a certain bird doing in the trees behind our house. And this bird pounds away on trees many times throughout the day without ever suffering from a concussion! As you doubtlessly already guessed, I am referring to the woodpecker.

The woodpecker is an excellent example of “irreducible complexity.” Without all of its amazing safety features fully in place, the brain of this feathered wonder would quickly be irreparably damaged! While I could elaborate on its unique tongue, skull, and “brain cushion,” I will instead focus more on the behavior of the woodpeckers I often see from our back porch.

The Acorn Woodpecker is an easily recognized and often sighted bird here in the Quiché department. Like many other woodpeckers, it is black and white with a red cap on its head. Since it inhabits open woodlands and is rather noisy, it is readily spotted from a distance.

Acorns are a significant part of this woodpecker’s diet, but it also eats insects, sap, and flowers. But acorns are the mainstay. These woodpeckers store their stash of acorns in a “granary” consisting of dozens to thousands of acorn-sized holes in the sides of a tree. When it finds an acorn, the woodpecker takes it to the granary and finds a hole just the right size—a process that can take a considerable amount of time! It then inserts the acorn and taps it in with its beak until it is snug. This makes it more difficult for squirrels and other birds to steal it. However, when acorns dry,

they shrink; thus, the woodpeckers must periodically check each acorn to see if it is still tight in its cavity. If the acorn is loose, the woodpecker will take it out and find another hole that is a bit smaller and tap it in tightly again. Obviously, this is a lot of work!

But this species is unique in another way—its social structure. Most woodpecker families consist of nesting pairs, a male and a female. But Acorn Woodpecker families may have as many as three co-nesting females, with perhaps five males, all sharing a single nest and parenting duties. Often, offspring from an earlier brood will stay around and help raise their younger siblings, something very unusual among birds. This provides plenty of help with gathering acorns, drilling holes, maintaining the granary, and guarding against robbers. When an alarm is raised, all the members of the clan come help drive away whatever is trying to steal the acorns. These birds know they must be vigilant—and diligent—to survive. We, too, must be vigilant to survive as Christians. *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour* (1 Peter 5:8).

The Bible has something to say about diligence as well. Solomon observed in Proverbs 13:4, *The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing; but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat*. There are many other verses that speak of being diligent, but I will close with these words from the Apostle Peter in 2 Peter 3:14: *Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless*.

The Vision and the Struggle for Christian Schools . . . continued

system that changes based on current Covid cases in each area. When the “light” turns red, in-person classes are restricted. Each school learned to adapt to the changing local requirements, and in some cases even adjusted their teaching method every two weeks as the “traffic light” changed. Teachers had to be creative in their methods to help students not fall too far behind in their studies while complying with local requirements.

Paul told Timothy: *The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same com-*

mit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. This is how a local church continues from generation to generation, and I believe that we could apply this principle to our schools. Today, many of our teachers grew up studying in one of our church schools. Our goal is that students who come out of our schools today would become teachers in our schools tomorrow.

But our bigger goal is that the students who go through our schools today would become part of the kingdom of Christ and be message bearers to spread the light of the Gospel in our schools, in our churches, and in our communities here in Guatemala.

—Galen Miller

I Have Decided to Follow Jesus

The music rings in the church house and floats out into the cool morning air. *“I have decided to follow Jesus, I have decided to follow Jesus . . .”*

The words come alive as I watch the longest-continuing member sing from the front bench. She was a big reason the Mixcolajá church was founded, and she has been faithful through the good years and the hard years of church life, often coming to church alone.

“ . . . no turning back, no turning back. The King of Glory has transformed me; the King of Glory has transformed me . . .”

My eyes move to the other side of the church where a young girl sits beside her parents, singing the song from memory. Once controlled by Satan and his demons, she now has the Holy Spirit shining through her. When we first met her, she would avoid looking into our faces. Now she can’t keep back a smile as she talks about what God has done for her. Not long ago, she was so frail from malnutrition she could hardly walk, yet at unexpected moments she was so unearthly strong that she could escape her room by overpowering her big brother or by climbing out through the roof of their house. Now she can walk on her own, and she faithfully attends church and reads songs from the *librito de coros*, one of her favorite things to do between Sunday services.

“ . . . no turning back, no turning back. I have left the old life behind, I have left the old life behind . . .”

On my far right a middle-aged man sits on a

bench with his entire family, all of whom are singing their hearts out. But it didn’t always look like that. He once was a slave to alcohol, and his family lived in fear of him. He was known as a neighborhood drunk, and many of his hard-earned and desperately needed *quetzales* went down the road to the *tienda*, where he spent them in an evening with his drinking buddies. When one night he drank so much that he spent several days in a coma, hanging between life and death, he finally gave his heart and life to the Lord and became a new man. Now, with a shining face and enthusiastic voice, he sings his testimony to the world.

“I have left the old life behind, no turning back, no turning back. Though I go alone, I will follow Christ. Though I go alone, I will follow Christ . . .”

In my mind’s eye I can see another young girl sitting a few benches behind me. She recently recommitted her life to the Lord and was the first one to join the new instruction class. She is the only one in her family who comes to church regularly. Her old friends tell her she looks ugly in a Mennonite dress and veil, and her mother shamed her for taking off her jewelry. Her father and brother left them to go to the States some years ago. She easily stands out in her circle of acquaintances as the only one to dress and act the way the Bible teaches.

The final strains of the song echo once more: *“ . . . no turning back, no turning back.”*

—Lynnae Zimmerman