



Revivals in Mixcolajá and San Cristobal

Seven hours of travel for one church service, including several hours over winding, bumpy roads . . . why would we go to such effort to attend one service? For Larry and me, attending *campaña* (revival meetings) in Mixcolajá meant more than "just one church service." We hadn't been there for about four years, before any of the present missionary team moved there.

Revivals were held from Wednesday to Sunday, September 6-10. We picked up Isaí Rosales and Josiah Mast at mission headquarters, and they accompanied us on our trip. When we arrived at Justin and Lynnae Zimmerman's house in Mixcolajá, they welcomed us with a good supper.

Although power outages have been complicating things, the service started at 7 p.m. with generator-powered lights. Partway through, the power came back on! The church house was well filled with brethren, neighbors, and friends from far and near. Brother Orlando Matute from Belize was the speaker and came to Guatemala with Eduardo Sánchez and Hugo Santizo. The Mixcolajá youth chorus, led by Nick Suarez, sang a few songs

before Brother Orlando shared a message about our thought life.

After the service, fellowship was accompanied by a light snack. For me, there was joy in reconnecting with various people, including Marilí, one of the church sisters whose mother and daughter are now Christians. Her husband Lorenzo was leader of the service that evening.

We spent the night at Justin's and enjoyed breakfast the next morning. After tours of the girls' house and Nick and Vivian's house, we headed out on the long journey toward Oratorio and home, attending a revival service in San Cristobal on the way and arriving home tired but blessed.

Laresa Martin

On Friday, September 8, we returned from the Mixcolajá revivals with plans to go to the mission headquarters to change and get cleaned up for the revival service in San Cristobal at 5 p.m. But traffic jams slowed us down. Knowing how bad the traffic can be near Guatemala City, we decided not to

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Revival services in Mixcolajá



EDITORIAL

Justin Zimmerman

A Snake in the Dark

The slender form of a snake slithered in the grass next to the detached kitchen of the missionary's house. The snake was seeking its supper, and the tantalizing smell and the unmistakable peeping of baby birds wafted from said kitchen. It was dark outside, but the kitchen was brightly lit. A young man and a young lady, enjoying their weekly date night, were deep in conversation at the table. A cardboard box containing about a dozen chicks, just a few days old, rested under a heat lamp in the corner. The snake was in the shadows just outside the door when the young lady stepped out to answer a phone call.

The young man stood up to stretch his limbs and spied the intruder in the corner of the kitchen just inside the door. He called out just loudly enough that the missionary in the living room heard him and came quickly on the alert because of the odd tension in the young man's voice. "Do you have a hoe?"

"No, but I think I have a machete nearby," was the missionary's reply.

A quick search produced a very dull old machete, but it would probably be adequate for the task. The missionary had a general policy of not killing snakes so long as they were not bothering him. But this snake was definitely bothering him! His wife would certainly not approve of sharing her kitchen with a snake, and his newly hatched chicks were clearly in danger.

The snake realized that it was now in danger but did not know how to escape. So, it lay motionless, except for the tongue, which flickered in and out,

again picking up the scent of fluffy little birds. The missionary grimaced, not knowing if this snake was venomous or not, and muttered to himself, "Just get him good with the first blow."

The machete whipped down, striking the concrete floor with a "CRACK"! The first blow was good, striking the serpent about eight inches behind the head, immediately incapacitating it. It writhed a bit, as snakes tend to do when they are dead but do not know it yet. The snake was four feet long.

The young man and his girlfriend were able to finish their visit in peace, and the missionary family went to sleep without worries later that night. Various locals shared conflicting information about the snake, some saying it was poisonous and others disagreeing. A couple weeks later, the missionary saw another one, crushed by the tire of his truck. This one was only about two feet long, but with the same coloration. Eventually, the missionary determined that it was a yellow-red rat snake.

The yellow-red rat snake (*Pseudelaphe flavirufa*) is a species of snake in the family *colubridae*. The species is endemic to Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. This species primarily inhabits the highland forests, but they are also known to thrive in coffee plantations and agricultural areas near their natural habitats, adapting to human-altered landscapes.

The yellow-red rat snake is a nonvenomous constrictor, relying on its constriction skills to subdue its prey. As with most rat snakes, it primarily feeds on small rodents, birds, and occasionally lizards.

The species is known for its excellent climbing ability, which allows it to access tree-dwelling prey and efficiently escape predators. The yellow-red rat snake is predominantly diurnal (active in daylight), aligning it with the habits of its prey and making it more effective in hunting. During the night, it usually finds secure shelter in crevices, burrows, or tree hollows. Little is known about the reproductive behavior of the yellow-red rat snake in the wild. However, it is believed that like most snakes, it is oviparous, laying eggs instead of giving birth to live young.

What can we learn from this creature?



The offending visitor, a yellow-red rat snake.

Perhaps the most obvious is “do not go where you do not belong!” *There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death. A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil: but the fool rageth, and is confident* (Proverbs 14:12, 16). While we generally think of snakes in a negative light, the Lord Jesus on one occasion commanded His followers to be like snakes: *Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves* (Matthew 10:16). In Proverbs 30, Agur declares that “the way of a serpent on a rock” is “too wonderful” and beyond his understanding.

But our minds usually first go to Genesis 3, where we read of a serpent, a woman, and a forbidden tree. This serpent was “more subtil [crafty] than any beast of the field” and was eventually cursed by God to crawl on its belly and eat dust. In Genesis 3:15,

God gives the first of many prophecies regarding the Redeemer of mankind. *And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.* Some 4,000 years later, this was fulfilled when Jesus Christ was crucified, rising the third day and “crushing the head of the serpent.”

The serpent makes a final appearance in Revelation 20, where verse 2 identifies him as “the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan . . .” and verse 10 describes his end “And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.” This is the fate of the “old serpent.” Take heed to not meet the same end! *Be wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.*

Guatemala's Political Situation

I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:1-4).

For those who may have noticed that Guatemala has recently frequented the international news, the following is a brief explanation of the turmoil that is happening.

In August, Bernardo Arévalo won the presidential election by running on an “anti-corruption” platform, shocking the establishment government. Leading up to the election, several other “anti-corruption” candidates, including one who had led in the polls by a wide margin, were disqualified on technicalities. After Arévalo won the election, certain officials in the Guatemala government have engaged in various actions that have been widely viewed as “undermining democracy” and “ignoring the will of the people.” This led to growing discontent among Arévalo’s supporters, who began calling for the resignation of several “anti-democracy” officials.

On October 2, protestors began blocking roads. The first blockages were in the central and western highlands, but they quickly spread throughout



Landing in Santa Rosita during road closures.

the country and Guatemala City. In a few days it became difficult to buy fuel, fruits and vegetables, and other essentials, as delivery trucks were halted. The only option to travel any distance was by air, as the international airport was kept open by a large police presence. But soon even that came to an end, as aviation fuel ran out in Guatemala City.

On October 10, the current president declared that the roadblocks would no longer be tolerated, and police were sent out to open the roads. As of this writing, many roads are *(continued on page 4)*

Staff News

Prayer and Praise Items

- Pray for the peace of Guatemala.
- Pray for wisdom to relate to the ungodly around us.
- Pray for the upcoming General Institute (November 7-9, 2023).
- Praise God for His healing touch, as various missionaries have recovered from dengue fever.

Keri Weaver arrived recently and is now serving in Santa Rosita. He is a member of the Muddy Creek Mennonite Church in Denver, PA.



Keri Weaver

Joshua and Wendy Glick have finished their term of service in El Novillero and Nahuala. They and their daughter are now living in Los Achiotes, close to Wendy's parents. God bless you for the time and effort you put into the work of the church!

Revivals... continued

risk it, and went directly to the church house instead.

We arrived an hour early, which allowed us some time to prepare for the service and visit with other brethren that arrived early. The service started on time, although many people had not arrived yet because of the heavy traffic. Brother David Martin from Belize was the evangelist. The message was on the fact that God has established a line, and when we cross that line, we lose our contact with Him. He used an illustration of an owl that was killing ducks at his house. They made a wire trap to catch it. When the owl got caught, fighting to free itself only made it more tangled. This is a little how sin works. The longer we try to free ourselves by our own power, the more we get stuck. Only when we come to God for help, can we be free from the "wire" that is holding us.

After the service, everyone was invited to stay for a meal and a time of fellowship. The sisters had prepared a meal of plantains, black beans, hard-boiled eggs, coffee, and sweet bread.

Larry Martin

Political Situation... continued

still blocked, and it seems all too likely that there will be confrontations that could lead to violence. Please join us in praying for Guatemalan authorities, citizens, and the many missionaries living in this country. We wish to lead quiet and peaceable lives, not for the sake of comfort and security, but that our testimony of godliness and honesty would cause Guatemalans "to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."

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