



MENNONITE *Air* MISSIONS

Guatemala, Central America

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

Vol. LIX | No. 1 | January, February 2024

Messengers of Mercy CHORUS TOUR

After many months of practicing and memorizing songs, the Messengers of Mercy chorus went on their second annual tour in Guatemala, sharing seven programs throughout the country. Their itinerary was as follows:

Tuesday, Nov. 28 The first program was given at the church in Zaragoza.

Wednesday, Nov. 29 A program was given in the afternoon at Lirio de los Valles. A second was presented in San Cristobal that evening.

Thursday, Nov. 30 In the morning they traveled to Los Achiotes where they enjoyed lunch with the local youth, then helped clean the outdoor area where the program was held that evening.

Friday, Dec. 1 The day was spent traveling to Coban. The program was presented at a local evangelical church.

Saturday, Dec. 2 Once again, the entire day was spent traveling. After the eight-hour trip, they arrived in Santa Rosita in time for supper.

Sunday, Dec. 3 They attended the morning church service, and Brother Belisario Natareno shared the message. In the afternoon most of the group hiked to some nearby Mayan ruins. The program was presented that evening.

Monday, Dec. 4 The men of the group did some work for a neighbor in the morning while the girls prepared lunch for the group and missionary staff. After lunch they traveled to El Chal where they ate supper and played volleyball with the local youth.

Tuesday, Dec. 5 They spent the day at a nearby park, then gave the last program at the Mennonite church that evening.

Wednesday, Dec. 6 They were served breakfast at Cesar and Eva Vasquez' home and then traveled the twelve hours home to Mixcolajá.

Joy Zimmerman



The Messengers of Mercy chorus is from the Mixcolajá congregation.



EDITORIAL

Josiah Mast

The Life of Moses

Imagine one hundred and twenty years, broken into three forty-year increments. For comparison, the first airplane flew by its own power one hundred and twenty years ago, on December 3, 1903. Forty years later puts us in World War II. In forty more years, man had gone supersonic and been to the moon. Fast-forward a final forty years, and today your phone has more computing power than the rocket that carried men to the moon!

That's how long a baby born to Amram and Jochebed would live. His name was Moses.

Pharaoh had ordered all the Hebrew baby boys thrown into the river, but Moses' parents placed him in the river in a basket instead. The king's daughter, unknowingly playing a role in God's plan for His people, was drawn to the child. Unable to care for him herself, she hired a nurse. While the Egyptians were doing their best to kill all Hebrew boys at birth, Moses' parents were paid to keep him. We can only guess how long, but we can be sure they took the opportunity to teach him the way of truth. In all the glamour of Egypt, something caused him to identify with his fellow men.

"And the child grew, and she brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son" (Exodus 2:10). Between this verse and the next is a span of probably thirty years, during which time the Bible says nothing of what took place in Moses' life. However, the Jewish historian Josephus tells us that young Moses was good-looking and intelligent.

In the palace Moses was educated with great care, and it wasn't long before his talent became apparent. According to Josephus, the Ethiopians attacked Egypt, thinking to conquer the whole land. At their wits' end, the Egyptians made Moses their general. Some hoped he could conquer Ethiopia; others that he would die in the battle. Moses' genius, however, was about to surface.

To defeat the Ethiopians, the Egyptians needed to attack by land rather than by water. However, this presented a serious problem. The land was filled with some of the fiercest snakes in the world. To solve the problem, Moses took baskets and filled them with ibis, a bird capable of killing these snakes. When the army reached the snake-infested ground, Moses released the birds and the army proceeded. Due to the snakes, the Ethiopians were only prepared for a water attack. When Moses' army attacked by land, they were caught completely by surprise, and the Egyptians were able to defeat them.

While we do well to take this account with a grain of salt, it does provide a glimpse into Moses' life in Egypt. As a respected official in a prosperous nation, what kept Moses' eyes on God's people? The Book of Hebrews says it was faith.

Moses' ability appears again when he saw an Egyptian smiting one of his fellow Hebrews. "And he looked this way and that way, and when he saw that there was no man, he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand" (Exodus 2:12). Moses soon fled to the wilderness, where he lived for forty years.

What went through Moses' mind during those forty years? I imagine him thinking, "Oh, God, I tried to help, and now this! I will never be anything more than a shepherd!"

But God was using those years to mature Moses; he was a different man when God appeared to him in the burning bush. "Come now therefore," God said, "and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt" (Exodus 3:10). Now Moses didn't say, "Finally! This is what I've been waiting for!" No; for the better part of Exodus 4 and 5, Moses tries to wiggle out of his calling. Finally, however, he obeyed, and during the ten plagues his faith was evident.

The next great test to Moses' faith came several days after Israel left Egypt. With the Red Sea ahead and the Egyptian army behind, Israel was trapped and terrified. What was Moses to do? "And the LORD said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward: but lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it: and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea" (Exodus 14:15, 16). How ridiculous this idea might have seemed! With the whole crowd watching, what if it wouldn't work? But Moses' faith carried him through, and all Israel passed safely over to the other side.

Moses cared deeply for the people. During their sojourn, God would have destroyed them many times had it not been for Moses' intercession. But an even greater test awaited Moses. Faithless Israel would not be allowed into the promised land after all! What must Moses have thought now? Must he lead this crowd of grouches for another forty years? But Moses always kept his patience—almost. One time he lost his temper and suffered dearly for it.

"And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Take the rod . . . and speak ye unto the rock . . . and it shall give forth his water . . . And Moses took the rod . . . and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock? And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly. And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them" (Numbers 20:7-12).

This event has caused many questions in my mind. Having patiently put up with this grumpy crowd, Moses failed only one time and was banned from Canaan. But this we must leave with God; we know that God gave him a much better inheritance than an earthly Canaan. Moses was so special to God that God Himself buried him.

Hebrews 3:2 says that Moses was faithful in all his house, and he is mentioned in Hebrews 11:23-29 as one of the heroes of faith. Ultimately, Moses' faithfulness played a role in bringing salvation through Christ. What an example for us! If we are faithful, we, along with Moses, will spend eternity in the ultimate promised land.

General Institute, 2023

The General Institute, held at the farm in Sumpango, Guatemala, was well attended. There were no beds to spare, and many families slept off-site. Topics included "Lift the Fallen Hands," "The Unequal Yoke," "Personal Limits Regarding Technology," "Marriage Relationships," "The Christian Veil," "Relationships Between Parents and Children," and "Lay up Treasures in Heaven," as well as evangelistic messages each night. In addition to the feast of spiritual teaching, the cooks did an excellent job of serving three meals and two snacks every day.

Events such as this are an exercise in teamwork, and many individuals contributed time, thought, labor, money, and prayer before and during the institute. The tent has been taken down, the dorms are locked, and the kitchen is clean and silent, but the anticipated results are just beginning to be seen.

Baptism in Los Achiotos

On November 19, 2023, the congregation in Los Achiotos added two members to their number. Brother Donaldo Alvarez from San Sur delivered the message, while Brother Victor Ovalle administered baptism. Please pray for Aura Santos and Amparo de Arenas, that they would be faithful to the end.



Front row, L to R: Angélica de Álvarez, Aura de Martin, Aura Jamilth Santos, Amparo Calderón de Arenas, Elida de Méndez
Back row: Donaldo Álvarez, Craig Martin, Víctor Ovalle, Jeremías Méndez

In Isaiah 55:11, God compares His Word to the rain and snow watering the earth: "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." May the individuals and families who attended remember and apply the Biblical teachings to their lives, so that all can be reunited for eternity!

Funeral in Chiquimulilla

On November 18, 2023, sister Emelda Castillo (member at El Guayabo and faithful Christian for more than forty years) passed on to her eternal reward. Brother Victor Ovalle had the opportunity to speak to a large crowd at the burial service on Sunday afternoon, the 19th, in Chiquimulilla, Santa Rosa. May this sister's testimony and the preaching of the Word bring forth much fruit!



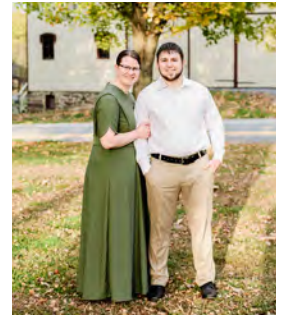
Victor Ovalle preaches to a crowd at the funeral.

Staff News

Prayer and Praise Items

- Pray for the peace of Guatemala.
- Pray for more Guatemalans to develop a vision for the church.
- Praise God for many safely traveled miles, by missionaries and native brothers alike.
- Praise God for His faithful provision in 2023!

Tristan and Bethany Martin arrived in Guatemala in early December 2023. They are from the Mount Olive congregation in Hagerstown, Maryland, and will be helping with the work in Oratorio. Welcome to Guatemala!



Tristan & Bethany Martin

Darrell and Lisa Dyck have concluded their term in Guatemala. The new school building in Oratorio stands as a visible testimony of the many, many hours of work that Darrell and family invested in Guatemala during the past three years. God bless you as you transition back into life and ministry in Canada!

Financial Statement, 2023

In Jesus' name and on behalf of the workers and believers who have benefited from your generosity, we again thank each of MAM's partnering churches and individuals for your prayers and contributions over the last year. We were able to finish the school project in Oratorio this year and support things like the General Institute (see article) and other outreach and ministry.

We are also blessed with an expected staff increase as we begin 2024, which will help our administration needs and expand our support for local churches. Your continued prayer and support will be felt and appreciated. May the God who grants "seed to the sower" continue to "both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown" in 2024.

January 1, 2023 to December 31, 2023

Beginning Balance	\$45,133.05	Transfer to Field	\$788,117.00
Income	\$744,796.88	Supplies	\$400.80
Actual Operating Income	\$789,929.93	U.S. Checks for Guatemala Funds	\$13,738.24
Total Income	\$789,929.93	Actual Operating Disbursements	\$862,758.81
Disbursements		Ending Checkbook Balance	\$37,171.12
Literature	\$0.00	Beginning Savings Balance	\$222,085.42
Newsletter	\$4,267.60	Transfer to Savings Account	\$0.00
Travel	\$25,602.67	AF Interest Income	\$5,821.14
Retirement and Medical	\$0.00	Ending Savings Balance	\$117,906.56
Worker Allowance	\$40,542.50	Anabaptist Financial Savings	
Bank & Miscellaneous Charges	\$90.00	Account Balance	\$117,906.56

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