



MENNONITE *Air* MISSIONS

Guatemala, Central America

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

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General Institute 2024 Report

Mennonite Air Mission's annual General Institute was scheduled for November 12 to 14 this year. As always, this event was held at "The Farm" in Sumpango, about a thirty-minute drive west of Guatemala City. This two-and-a-half-day event brings together folks from all over Guatemala and sometimes even neighboring countries. While most attendees are members of MAM congregations, anybody is welcome to attend. Frequently some attend from other churches as well. Attendance was a little lower than last year, but the Petén region (Northern Guatemala) was very well represented. There were a few empty bunks in the single's dorms, but all the family rooms were full, and various couples and families had to make other lodging arrangements.

Much work by many people is expended in hosting events like this. This raises the question, "Why do we do this?" Why should we spend thousands of dollars on food, transportation, and electricity, and spend an entire week away from responsibilities in our home congregations to host such events? Why do we task brothers with preaching on subjects such as "The Spotless Church," "Prayer and Fasting," "The Benefits of the Fear of God," "Personal Devotions," "Respecting Church Leadership," plus an evangelical message each evening? Good questions!

First, here are some things that are *not* reasons for investing in institutes. We do not do them to catch up on sleep (definitely not!), to avoid cooking meals, to enjoy a "vacation" in warm weather, to view a sunset over an active volcano, or to have adrenaline-fueled "fun." We do not do institutes to advertise the work of Mennonite Air Mission, to mingle with wealthy donors, or to promote

the importance of MAM staff and missionaries. We do not do institutes so we can speak with other English speakers or live by a rigid schedule for a change! While there certainly may be other motivations for coming to the institute, the driving reason for MAM to host the event is two-fold.

First, to hear from God's Word. The program committee chooses relevant topics and assigns faithful brothers to study and divide the "Word of Truth" so that those who hear will be built up, encouraged, convicted, corrected, and sanctified. Much thought and prayer are put into the messages by the presenting brothers, but they are also aided in prayer by many church members both before and during the meetings. While the meals served by the kitchen crew nourish the body, the spiritual food delivered twice each morning, again in the afternoon, and yet once more in the evening, are welcome spiritual nourishment for those who attend. Especially by those who don't get to hear others preach very often!

Second, to hear from God's people. Most MAM churches are quite small and isolated. Thus, fellowship over meals, during prayer and sharing times, and in the dorms can be very refreshing. Many acquaintances are made and friendships renewed at these events. The "questions and comments" period after each topic is also an opportunity to hear from others about their concerns and experiences. The church is many members, and each has something to give to and something to gain from godly fellowship.

In short, the goal of the General Institute is to build the church in Guatemala through sound doctrinal teaching and fellowship with those "of like faith."



The dining hall at the Institute.



Preaching was held in the tent.



EDITORIAL

Jason Stoltzfus

Actions and Outcomes

I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live: that thou mayest love the LORD thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him: for he is thy life, and the length of thy days: that thou mayest dwell in the land which the LORD swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them (Deuteronomy 30:19, 20).

The couple searched for ideas as the annoying little rodent avoided everything from the traditional traps to the newest traps available. It even denied itself the delicious privileges of fresh cheese and tasty peanut butter. Each day it became less fearful, boldly showing its furry presence and noticeably enjoying the delicious smells of freshly prepared meals.

The intelligent rodent even disturbed the excitement of an anticipated steak dinner, presenting himself as a disgusting and uninvited guest! Something needed to be done soon, but what? Should some of the prized dish be shared? Surely not with that culprit! But what could be lost by sharing? Finally, a bit of steak was placed enticingly on the trap, and everybody left the dining room.

Upon entering the kitchen twenty minutes later, the housewife called for help to finish eradicating the rodent. Finally, the goal was accomplished!

How shortsighted the rodent was! It didn't even taste the delicious meat. Could it not have lived a longer life and enjoyed greater freedom by just staying in the great outdoors?

God has given us His words in the Holy Bible. In it we find a parameter of the acceptable and the forbidden.

We have a carnal nature that makes the forbidden look appealing—a nature that Ephesians 4:22 instructs us to . . . *put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts.* Ephesians 4:25-31

mentions things that are forbidden: lying, anger, stealing, corrupt communication, bitterness, and malice (ill-will).

Verse 24 instructs us to put on the “new man,” which is filled with God's righteousness and holiness. That is accomplished through the Holy Spirit permeating our heart. This experience reveals to us the vast difference in the two natures.

Lying, anger, stealing, and corrupt communication begin in small ways. We think, *No one will find out about it, I will be careful, I won't tell anyone.* But these things create barriers that grow in our heart. The barriers become areas that we don't want others to see or God to enter. Inside these walls grow bitterness and ill-will. Our character and demeanor become reproachable and disgusting. God does not dwell in a divided heart, and in the end, we will be alone with our problems. Satan has accomplished his intent: our hopelessness and despair. He taunts our helpless state.

When we put on the new man and accept God's standard of living, we experience sanctification in our heart that produces righteousness and holiness. This opens the door to wholesome relationships, encourages communication, helps us properly evaluate criticism, and produces a holy lifestyle. Also, this gives us a clearer view of our surroundings, our direction, and our destination.

Dear friend, if you find yourself in Satan's trap, you are not like the mouse who had no option of restoration! God is merciful and wants to deliver you from Satan's trap of eternal death. He wants to cleanse you and fill your heart and life with freedom. Ask Him for help and forgiveness. He is ready to help now! *Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not (Jeremiah 33:3).*

By accepting God's perimeters, we can call on God and hear His answer. We can see and experience mighty things in our lives as we *live* in His “great outdoors!”

Messengers of Mercy 2024

The youth of Mixcolajá again formed a chorus and went on the road to present their songs in early December. They gave eleven programs in just over a week and a half in various churches throughout Guatemala. They covered many miles in a very full van and battled colds and minor illnesses along the way. But the Lord blessed them with safety and strengthened their voices! Lord willing, these young people will keep on singing together for years to come.



The Messengers of Mercy chorus from Mixcolajá.

San Bartolomé Conference

San Bartolomé was the first outpost established by the work of MAM, and today is one of its largest and most well-established congregations in Guatemala. One of the things a large, established congregation can do is host large events that draw community folks as well as believers from other churches farther away. Such is the case with the annual conference that San Bartolomé hosts each December.

This year featured a guest speaker from Coban (Caleb Miller from the Guatemalan Light and Truth church) for three messages, and the beloved Victor Ovalle for two evangelistic messages. Brother Victor and his wife spearheaded the work in San Bartolomé



Many delicious meals were served from the kitchen.



Caleb Miller preached at the conference in San Bartolomé.

nearly fifty years ago, and though he now lives in the city, he comes back to preach about as often as his health allows.

Aside from feeding the crowds spiritually, the congregation works very hard to feed them physically too, serving meals and snacks before and after the services. This year saw folks from far and near in attendance, with families from Nahuala, Chimaltenango, and Joya Grande making the effort to come. While attendance seemed to be down slightly compared to the previous couple years, it was still a good crowd, and a time of encouragement for all present.

Staff News

Welcome to: **Sara Lynne Martin** of the Mount Olive congregation in Hagerstown, Maryland. She will be helping with domestic duties at mission headquarters in Guatemala City.

Farewell to: **Justin and Kayla Flamenco** as they departed El Guayabo to live in British Columbia, Canada.

Conrad and Kathi Miller as they completed their term of service in San Bartolomé and returned to Holmes County, Ohio.

Carolina Strite, who served six months in Santa Rosita and returned to South Carolina.

Blessings to each of you as you settle into new routines and places of ministry!

Prayer and Praise Items

- ◇ Pray for more workers for the needs in Guatemala.
- ◇ Pray for the board of directors as they support and advise the work.
- ◇ Praise God for His faithfulness in the ups and downs of missionary life.
- ◇ Praise God for giving us salvation through Jesus Christ!

2024 Financial Report

We thank all of MAM's supporters for partnering with the work through another year. More workers, high inflation, and specific projects all required higher funding, but praise the Lord, He provided! We appreciate your continued support and prayers.

January 1, 2024 to December 21, 2024

Beginning Balance	\$47,171.12	Transfer to Field	\$848,858.00
Income	\$858,013.37	Supplies	\$2,383.97
Transfer from Savings	\$60,000.00	U.S. Checks for Guatemala Funds	\$2,073.00
Actual Operating Income	\$965,184.49	Actual Operating Disbursements	\$909,419.33
Total Income	\$965,184.49	Ending Checkbook Balance	\$55,765.16
Disbursements		Beginning Savings Balance	\$117,906.56
Literature	\$0.00	Transfer to Savings Account	\$0.00
Newsletter	\$23,544.84	Transfer from Savings	\$60,000.00
Travel	\$26,606.06	AF Interest Income	\$5,114.45
Retirement and Medical	\$1,000.00	Ending Savings Balance	\$63,021.01
Worker Allowance	\$4,500.00	Anabaptist Financial Savings	
Bank & Miscellaneous Charges	\$453.46	Account Balance	\$63,021.01

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