



Guatemala, Central America

MENNONITE *Air* MISSIONS

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

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Staff Snapshots

The Guatemalan brothers and sisters who have served in and around MAM's headquarters have been a tremendous help and encouragement over the years. These are the stories of a few who work there.

Elba Morales de Monzón grew up attending an Assembly of God church with her parents and eight siblings. She studied in public school until second grade. At the age of eleven, her father spoke to her of Christ, her need, and her heart. She accepted the Lord and experienced "the peace that passes all understanding." Now a widow, she still clings to that peace. She is a member of the Lily of the Valley congregation in Guatemala City and lives nearby.

As a grandmother figure at headquarters, Elba is usually in the kitchen cooking up something delicious (her food is near legendary). But she also pitches in elsewhere, helping with cleaning and whatever else needs done. And who can forget her jolly laugh!

Elba shares that it is sometimes difficult to adapt to working with missionaries. Different cultures, different languages, and different ways of thinking present challenges. But with patience (on both sides) and good communication, one can adapt. Elba also mentioned that dirty towels should be put in the baskets, not left in the rooms or hung up next to the shower!



Elba Monzón.

Orlando Rosales Varela was born in September 1971 in the tiny village of La Pastoría in southeastern Guatemala. His parents were poor farmers, and when he was very young, they were not Christians. As a young boy, Orlando remembers walking from La Pastoría to church in La Sorpesa because there were no church services in their village.

His mother gave her life to the Lord in 1975, but his father did not make that step until several years later. Those were hard years—Orlando's father spent heavily on drink, cigarettes, and women. Orlando remembers his mother holding him tight while his father beat her. Once he hid under the bed because his drunk father wanted to kill him.

When his father surrendered his life to the Lord, their family life took a drastic turn for the better, although not all was perfect. The family was still poor, but with their money not being wasted in ungodly living, they were able to have more food on the table every day. And his parents' relationship became much better. Both parents eventually became members of the church in La Pastoría.

Orlando's school years were spent in the local public school, where he remembers that the teachers offered opportunity at program times for the local Mennonite children to share the choruses and songs they learned in church. He loved to sing as a child, and even today Orlando is an enthusiastic participant in congregational singing.

Orlando gave his heart to the Lord in the church at La Pastoría at the age of eleven. He worked with his father, farming with hand tools and living a very simple life. At twenty, he moved to the Quiché area to teach school.

After two years of teaching, Orlando began working with Duane Eby in his business of selling nuts. This job continued until 2003. Between 2003 and 2021, he worked in a variety of jobs. Starting in 2021, Orlando has worked for MAM in various capacities, including a three-year period in which he and his wife served as houseparents at MAM headquarters.

Orlando is happily married to Miriam Noemí Rivas

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EDITORIAL

Justin Zimmerman

The Motmot

Allow me to introduce to you the motmot, one of the most dazzling birds around. There are about ten different species of this bird, but the one I have seen locally is the turquoise-browed motmot. This one is quite colorful and showy, and its most distinctive feature is its tail.

The motmot's tail doesn't naturally grow with its unique tuft at the end. When the bird preens or rubs its tail feathers against something, the weakly attached barbs fall off, resulting in a bare feather shaft and "racquet shape."

Even more interesting is the way they use their tail to warn off potential predators. Motmots often move their tails from side to side in a pendulum-like movement. Scientists studying this behavior believe motmots do this when they spot a predator, and by this communicate to the other animal, "I see you and am ready to fly if needed." This benefits both creatures, as neither have to waste energy fleeing or fruitlessly pursuing! This "tail wagging" display has resulted in the bird being called a "*pájaro reloj*" (clock bird) in the Yucatán (the northern part of its range).

The motmot hunts for food from a perch in open areas, scanning for insects and small reptiles. With such beautiful plumage you might think they build elaborate nests high in a tree, like the oriole. But no, they do not nest in trees. Nor bushes. Nor on the

ground. Rather, they use long burrows or tunnels in earth banks (or sometimes wells!), much like their close cousins the kingfishers!

I find it so amazing how God designed such tremendous variety in the many birds around the world. The varied colors, shapes and sizes, songs and calls, and incredible feats of flying,

hunting, hiding, and other fascinating behaviors can all be observed among just the birds. And then there is all the rest of God's creation, from the unfathomable reaches of the heavens to the sub-microscopic realm. And He keeps track of it all, plus all the affairs of mankind! The watchful demeanor of the motmot, with its unique tail like a pendulum, makes me think of Paul's counsel to the church in Ephesus.

See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is (Ephesians 5:15-17).

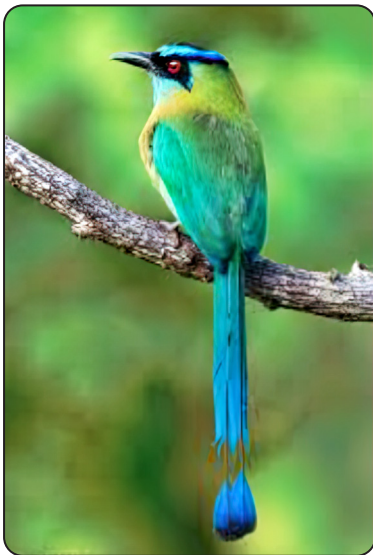
"Walk circumspectly" means to be aware and attentive to your surroundings so that you will not be ambushed by evil. "Redeem the time" means to use the 1,440 minutes given to you each day to serve the Lord (usually by serving other people). Be wise, be understanding, be focused on what is good and right.

A thought that often crosses my mind upon spotting the colorful flash of a motmot is "they live in holes in the dirt!" It seems so incongruous that such a beautiful creature lives in a burrow. Yet that is somewhat like what Jesus did when He left the glories of Heaven to live "in the dirt" here on earth for some thirty years.

Paul explains parenthetically, "*In saying, 'He ascended,' what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower regions, the earth? He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things*" (Ephesians 4:9, 10, ESV).

Our Lord Himself said, "*And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many*" (Matthew 20:27, 28).

If Jesus Christ could leave the glory and comfort of Heaven to live among and serve mankind, with all the squalor and brokenness and "dirt" that comes with that, we as His followers should do so as well. If such a thought "ruffles your feathers," consider what is at stake. The salvation of souls depends on the proclamation (and acceptance) of the Gospel (good news) of Jesus Christ. As disciples called to make more disciples, that is our business, and that is our life. Be watchful and redeem the time!



Turquoise-browed motmot: a beautiful, tunnel-nesting bird.

Staff... continued

Flores, originally from Oratorio. Their civil marriage was performed by the mayor of Oratorio, but they did not celebrate a “church wedding” until 2023.

Orlando and Miriam have had six children, one of whom died at birth. A daughter passed away at the age of sixteen. Their remaining children are Bredly (31), Isai (23), Dania (21), and David (12).

Orlando and his family no longer live at headquarters, but if you are picked up by MAM personnel at the airport, there is a good chance Orlando will be the one giving you a ride. His daughter Dania also helps part-time with cleaning at headquarters, and she is there nearly every day.

Orlando said he has appreciated working with many missionaries over the years. He grew to greatly appreciate Duane Eby during the years they worked together in business, but there have been many other “gringos” who have provided much moral, spiritual, and economic support over the years. Many missionaries have made him feel that he and they belong to the same family in the Lord Jesus.



Orlando is especially helpful as a driver in a city he knows well.

A brother in the United States recently told Orlando that many North Americans think that life is as plentiful in Guatemala as it is for them in the States. Orlando recommends that when you come to Guatemala, be open, evaluate, and don't judge others without knowing their situation.

Orlando mentioned that some have wondered whether the work of MAM is worth the expense, and if the results justify the years of labor. He remembers how God changed the lives of his parents and even his grandparents. Comparing his family's desperate poverty and ungodly state when he was a child with the difference in his own family and opportunities of today, Orlando credits the amazing changes in his life to God's grace and the Gospel's power. If the Gospel had not been brought to him and his family, where would they be today? Orlando is grateful to the Lord and to MAM, and he encourages all of us not to grow weary in well-doing, because the worth of a soul is more than the whole world.



Orlando and Miriam Rosales.

Dania Nohemí Rosales Rivas was born in August of 2003 in Guatemala City to Orlando and Miriam Rosales. Her first year and a half of life was spent in the city, and then her parents moved their family to Oratorio for about eight years.

Dania studied for several years in the public school in Oratorio, about a year and a half at the church school in Guatemala City, and another several years in a correspondence school. Dania and her family have lived in Guatemala City since about 2015.

The death of Dania's older sister impacted her life in many ways. She did not surrender her life to the Lord until the age of 17. She was baptized the following year in the church in Oratorio.

Dania is currently working part-time at MAM headquarters. She is also taking a five-year program to become a licensed nurse with the training to teach and supervise others. The Lord blessed her with an opportunity to receive a scholarship to make this financially possible.

Dania's work at headquarters includes cleaning public areas and guest rooms. She enjoys the work because it gives her many opportunities to get to know more people, to see friends from other places passing through, and to get to know the staff who work around headquarters.

Of course, working closely with others can bring challenges and hiccups in relationships, but overall, working with the mission is an opportunity and blessing.

Dania's advice to visitors is to be kind and friendly with those you meet here. It's always good to make friends with new people.



Dania Rosales.

Staff News

Welcome to: **Linford and Juanita Burkholder** and their two youngest children. They are from Myerstown, Pennsylvania, and attend Rehlersburg Mennonite Church. They will be serving as houseparents at mission headquarters during school vacation.



Linford and Juanita Burkholder and family.

Twila Breneman is from Strickler's Mennonite Church near Middletown, Pennsylvania. She will be serving in Pasaco, helping the Joshua Martin family.



Twila Breneman.



Farewell to: **Don and Betty Heatwole.** We are grateful for their willingness to “stand in the gap” as houseparents at the mission for a short time. They are returning to their home in South Carolina.

Sara Lynne Martin. She has returned to Hagerstown, Maryland, after serving at mission headquarters for six months.

Jolynn Martin. She completed her term of service in Santa Rosita, along with brief stints helping her siblings in San Bartolomé and Pasaco.

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

Prayer and Praise Items

- ◆ Pray that the youth of the Guatemalan congregations would make wise life choices.
- ◆ Pray for strength and wisdom for the bishops of MAM.
- ◆ Praise God for willing hands for the construction project at “the Farm” and for safety throughout the project!
- ◆ Praise God for a successful youth institute!



A large group of young people gathered for several days of Bible study and fellowship.

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