



# MENNONITE *Air* MISSIONS

Guatemala, Central America

"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. Last month we highlighted the stories of a few who work there. These are the stories of two more.*

**Priscila Alpírez** was raised in a Christian home and attended the La Sorpresa church where her father was ordained pastor in 1976. At five years old, she began attending the church school. From eleven to fourteen, she studied at the Institute where her father is the director. Between fourteen and sixteen, she studied at a Methodist school in Santa Cruz del Quiché, where she surrendered her life to the Lord during a mission conference. At the time, they were looking for a young lady to serve in Iran, but at the age of fifteen she was too young to go!

Priscila then studied at the University of San Carlos de Guatemala for two years. During the second year of university, she moved to Chimaltenango to live with her brother and his family. During this period, she attended the Puerta de las Aguas Mennonite Church in Zaragoza.

At nineteen, Priscila felt she was not called to work in a secular career and decided to work for MAM. For about six years, she helped in the schools and in domestic duties of the MAM headquarters.

Since 2007, Priscila has served as the secretary in the Mission and coordinates the importing of Christian

literature and Sunday school materials for the MAM congregations. She also still helps with cooking on a regular basis.

Priscila enjoys living at Mission headquarters, as it feels like a shelter from much of the evil influence in this world. And it has given her the opportunity to help many people in various ways. She treasures the many special friends she has made because

of the encounters she has had with those passing through.

She has also observed that although many missionaries and visitors who come to Guatemala were raised in Christian homes, they are just as much in need of Jesus' transforming power. She says, "We may have different cultures, but we all have a soul to take care of and souls to save." We are all human!

She also has advice for anyone staying at the Mission. "Say hello and smile! Who knows what a difference that may make in someone else's life. Greeting others is important; even the Apostle Paul included greetings in each of his epistles. It is not just a matter of culture; it is a matter of 'holding others in high esteem.'" She also advises giving at least three hours' notice if you want food or lodging at the mission, and to put dirty towels in the laundry basket! But be assured that everyone is welcome!

**Marta Osorio** was born in August of 1989 in the village of San Bartolomé, in the department of Quiché. She is one of seven siblings, with five brothers and one sister.

In her childhood, her father Juan alternated between working in San Bartolomé and Guatemala City, depending on where he could find work. The family lived wherever Juan was working, until around the year 2000 when the family moved permanently to Guatemala City.

Marta is a capable young lady, but in her childhood years she had very little formal education. Her father was not a big believer in schools and tended to think they were a waste of time, so she studied in school less than one year in total. She is now taking classes to get something roughly equivalent to a GED, which will allow her access to university if she chooses to continue her education, or access to other jobs that require proof of education.

Despite her lack of formal schooling, Marta learned to read as a child. Her father did not learn to read until becoming an adult, but he taught his oldest son his

*(Staff continued on page 3)*



Priscila Alpírez.



# EDITORIAL

Linford Burkholder

## The Peace of “Yes”

Imagine with me the Garden of Eden before the Fall: the perfect climate, no weeds, no turmoil, and no death. Then came the first temptation, a choice between saying “yes” to God or saying “yes” to self. Sadly, the first couple chose to say “yes” to self, and man has been chasing that lost paradise ever since. We long for the inner peace and external tranquility that vanished on that day. Is it possible to regain that peace today? Yes, it is! Let me tell you three personal experiences that illustrate the truth of this answer.

When I was about thirteen, we read a story in family devotions about a Quaker who visited a slave auction. There he witnessed a slave on the auction block who kept shouting, “I won’t work!” The Quaker decided to purchase him. On the way home, the slave kept repeating, “I won’t work.” Finally, the Quaker calmly replied, “I didn’t buy you to make you work. I bought you to set you free.” The story then made a parallel to Christ’s work on our behalf. It spoke deeply to me of my need for freedom from sin’s slavery.

Many weeks later, I finally said, “Yes” to God. I distinctly remember heading back to my bedroom after praying with my parents. What joy! What peace! The peace of “yes.” There are still weeds, turmoil, and death; but oh, the inner peace that nothing can destroy! Do you know the peace that comes from that initial “yes” to God? I pray you do.

Years later, I was asked to teach school. I had been out of school for twenty years and soon realized that there was much I had forgotten and perhaps more that I had never really learned. One morning early in that first term, I was at my desk trying unsuccessfully to understand that day’s grammar lesson. I panicked because the students would arrive shortly. I stepped across the hall and, quickly explaining the situation, asked my fellow teacher to pray for me.

As I walked around the playground that morning, I cried. Yes, I cried! And I pled with God, “Why did You call me to teach? I can’t do this.”

God’s tender reply came to me. “Not in your own strength, My son, but in Mine.” Before I knew it, the school day was over, and I had survived English class.

Several weeks later, I read the story of the feeding of the five thousand. I noticed that it was the disciples who saw the people’s need and brought it to Jesus’ attention. Jesus first responded by telling

them to fill the need. They quickly replied that the little they had was not nearly enough. Jesus then asked them to give the little they had to Him. He blessed it; they distributed it, and then gathered twelve baskets of extra food, one for each disciple.

Are you saying “no” to God’s call to service because you feel you don’t have enough to meet the need? I challenge you to give the little you have and watch God make it more than enough. It’s an exciting adventure! And you will experience peace in knowing that you did what God asked you to do—the peace of “yes.”

In Luke 5, we are told that Jesus borrowed Peter’s boat to use as a teaching platform. After He ended His teaching, Jesus told Peter to launch out into the deep and let down his *nets*. Peter was familiar with fishing, but he had just spent all night fishing and had caught nothing. Reluctantly, Peter let down *one net* and caught so many fish that his net broke. If only he had said “yes” completely! It is true that Peter now had the fish he was seeking, but he also had a broken net. And I wonder how many times we miss the big blessing God intends to send our way because we are only willing to partially answer His call.

We were recently asked to serve as houseparents at MAM headquarters. This was not something we had even remotely considered. It was certainly outside our comfort zone. Perhaps our answer to the call to serve in Guatemala was a little too reluctant, for we feel our net of blessing stretching to the point of breaking. Even though this experience has been unlike anything else God has asked us to do, He has been faithful all the way. We can wholeheartedly endorse complete surrender to God’s leading. It’s the peace of “yes.”

The first step to recovering the peace lost in Eden is to answer God’s call to surrender your will to His lordship. Without this surrender, there is no true peace. Remember also that He redeemed us to free us, not to enslave us. In addition, to experience God’s deeper peace, we will offer Him the meager things we have for His kingdom’s glory. And lastly, for the deepest experience of peace, we must yield without reserve even when it seems to us to be without reason.

How deep is your peace? Are you longing for deeper peace? I invite you to join me on this road back to Eden.

### Staff... continued

letters, and from there the rest of the family learned the alphabet, how to form words, and eventually to read.

Marta gave her life to the Lord at the age of twelve at a weekend conference in San Bartolomé, under Victor Ovalle's preaching. Marta's parents had both been members of MAM's church in San Bartolomé and later in Guatemala City. Recently, her father left the Mennonite church and is attending a Pentecostal church. Her mother Michaela is a member at Lirio de los Valles in Guatemala City, where Marta and her sister Rosario are also members.

In 2005, Marta began working as a maid at MAM headquarters and has been doing roughly the same job for the last twenty years. She knows all the ins and outs of what needs to be done and when and how. If you stay overnight at headquarters, there is a good chance Marta is the one who got your room and bed cleaned and ready after the last visitor's stay.

Marta enjoys her job but says each set of houseparents change the dynamic and can make her job more or less enjoyable. If you are ever called to serve as houseparents at MAM headquarters, a focus on good communication and relationships will serve you well and bless the folks who are already here!

Marta's advice for those passing through headquarters on a visit to Guatemala: Smile and greet those you meet! Even if you can't speak Spanish, a smile brightens everyone's day.



Marta Osorio



## Learning About Ministry

If you look up the word *ministry* in your dictionary, its definition can be simply summed up as serving others. Acts of service can be fleshed out in many ways. But my experience in Guatemala made me conclude that it is important to view each day as a chance to serve others; thus, the term “everyday ministry.”

As a WATER student, I had a unique opportunity to live with some of the families serving here in Guatemala and watch how they practice everyday ministry toward those around them as they raise their families. It meant caring for common household responsibilities, keeping the family fed, providing clean clothes and a tidy home. This included hundreds of flies, other insects, and crying babies. I am glad I was able to give a weary mom a break by rocking her baby to sleep. I enjoyed entertaining little boys and interacting with the adults around me. My “everyday ministry” in Guatemala included helping the families I lived with as they went about their day.

For them, ministry is fleshed out in many ways. I learned that missionaries walk a fine line between fitting in with local people and choosing their own familiar ways of living. Everyday ministry means graciously accepting interruptions. It means leaving the table at mealtimes to serve buyers or neighbors. (Interestingly, they seemed to mostly come at that time of day.) It meant setting aside personal plans and work to lend an ear to a troubled soul or accepting a last-minute invitation.

One day I went to the market in town and saw how some church families support themselves and connect with the communities around them. In this way they can spread the Gospel to their customers. I was unable to see all the ways they connect with the community, but through daily encounters with customers and neighbors I know that people can see the heart of the Gospel in the family's kind interactions.

Each day I tried to challenge myself to view the mundane and stressful moments, as well as the exciting times, as an opportunity to show care and keep serving. I grew from this experience and learned many things. One thing I learned and hope to never forget is that I can practice ministry every day, no matter where I am. I can show God's love to those around me as I find ways to serve them like Christ. Because ultimately, all people, whether Guatemalan or American, desire love and respect. But more than that, they need God.

I have learned that to show Christ to others I need to “walk the talk.” As Matthew 5:16 says, *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven.* I have seen this acted out in missionaries' lives and have been challenged to continue to grow in that area.

Thank you to all that hosted me and for the valuable lessons I learned.

Rochelle Horning



## Staff News

Welcome to: **Don and Betty Heatwole** from Denmark, South Carolina. They are members of the Barnwell Congregation (South Atlantic Mennonite Conference). They will again be “bridging the gap” as houseparents at Headquarters in Guatemala City for a few months.



Don and Betty Heatwole.



Lillian Yoder.

**Lillian Yoder**, who is from Fredericksburg, Ohio, and a member of Faith Haven Mennonite Church. She will be serving at Headquarters, helping with domestic duties.



Farewell to: **Linford and Juanita Burkholder**. They have returned to Pennsylvania after serving as houseparents at headquarters the last months.

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

## Personnel Needs

We are praying for a couple or family to serve in Santa Rosita with Johnny and Cheryl Bear. To learn more about the work there or to volunteer, please contact your local board member or Brian Yoder ([yoder4@gmail.com](mailto:yoder4@gmail.com)).

We also have openings for single men who want to serve the Lord in Guatemala.

## Prayer and Praise Items

- ◆ Pray for the new Christians in El Guayabo, as they face opposition from family and friends.
- ◆ Pray for wisdom for the leaders working with the Zaragoza and Joya Grande church difficulties.
- ◆ Praise God for those who are in instruction class in the Lirio de los Valles congregation (Guatemala City).
- ◆ Praise God for His promise of future, eternal rest!



Young people from Ohio and Virginia helped break ground on this project this spring. Thanks to many hands, this chapel at the Farm is nearing completion!

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