



## Baptism in Mixcolajá

The preparations for baptism began long before May 17, 2026. First, Sister Veronica Reyes was instructed in basic Christian doctrines and the practices of the Mennonite church over the course of many months. She was very excited about being baptized and joining the church and eagerly invited friends and extended family.



Veronica Reyes and Chano Reyes with Victor Ovalle and the local ministry team.

But more preparations were in order. On Saturday, May 16, Brother Victor Ovalle and his nephew flew from Quiché to the airstrip in Mixcolajá. A few hours later, Brother Victor and the local ministry

team were gathered on the front porch of Sister Veronica's adobe house, visiting with her and her father, Brother Adám. After a satisfactory interview, the group split up and headed in different directions.

Early the next morning, ladies worked to prepare food for the noon meal.

After sharing from God's Word, bishop Victor Ovalle directed the baptism. Sister Veronica was baptized in the presence of the local church, visiting family, and friends. Following her baptism, Veronica's uncle, Feliciano "Chano" Reyes, vowed to be faithful to the church and was restored as an active member of the church. After dismissal, everyone greeted and welcomed these two souls. And after a delicious meal, everyone gradually departed for their homes.

It is always a joy to see individuals turn to the Lord and join the church! Please pray for Sister Veronica. Her husband is not a believer and is not especially supportive, but he did attend the baptism! Veronica's Catholic in-laws have been disparaging. Pray for Brother Chano too; his wife is not a believer but has been attending very faithfully over the past four years or so. Pray for God to work in the hearts of these unbelieving spouses and for the believers to be faithful to their vows.

## Patient in Prayer

"The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much"  
(James 5:16).

On Wednesday evening, May 13, Ezequiel Mux's wife Carmen rededicated her life to the Lord! She expressed a desire to be faithful to the Lord until death. A former missionary who lived in Joya Grande years ago said that he has been praying for her for thirty-one years!

Please pray that Carmen would be faithful to Jesus! It's a good reminder for us to be faithful in praying; we never know what the outcome of our prayers will be! It also reminds me of what the Apostle Paul says in 1 Corinthians 3:6. "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase."



Ezequiel and Carmen Mux.



# EDITORIAL

Justin Zimmerman

## Monkey Lessons

As the boat slowed and Anthony steered it toward the shore, he said, “Look, there are monkeys in the tree there.” Sure enough, there were three large black monkeys in the tree we were about to park our boat under! And there was a little one too!

I first saw a black howler monkey from a great distance while in Belize ten years ago, but here on the Rio San Pedro in northern Guatemala I was a mere twenty feet from at least five of them, and one had a very small baby on her back.

These monkeys are record holders. According to the Guinness World Records website, “The world’s noisiest land animals are the howler monkeys (*Alouatta*) of Central and South America. The males have an enlarged bony structure at the top of the windpipe which enables the sound to reverberate, and their fearsome screams have been described as a cross between the bark of a dog and the bray of an donkey. Once in full voice they can be heard clearly up to 4.8 km (3 miles) away.”

Thankfully, the monkeys we saw were not “in full voice” and were in fact silent for the short time we were there. That said, we did hear plenty of howler monkey vocalization while cruising the river and staying at our friend’s house next to the river. The sound does indeed carry quite well, even in thick jungle!

Howlers are closely related to spider monkeys but are much slower and less ambitious. Of the New World Monkeys, howlers are the only “folivores” (leaf eaters). They do, however, eat fruit at any chance they get, as well as buds, flowers, and nuts. They have very good noses. Reportedly, they can smell food from over two kilometers away.

Howlers rarely leave their leaves to crawl upon the ground, as they obtain most of their water from their diets and only drink during especially dry spells. They are well equipped for their arboreal lifestyle, as they have a long prehensile tail that can feel things just as well as its hands or feet do.

Howler monkeys live in groups, with about three males and as many as a dozen females. Unlike most monkeys, both male and female juveniles leave the group they were born in and spend their adult years in a new group.

This “leaving father and mother” concept is quite Biblical. Perhaps the most familiar application is in the context of marriage. Genesis 2:24 says, “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.” But there are other examples of leaving father and mother. Abraham left his father Terah behind in the land of Haran in obedience to God’s call to “Get thee out of thy country, and . . . from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will shew thee” (Genesis 12:1). Jesus Christ made a shocking statement in Luke 14:26. “If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.” In this context, the word *hate* should not be construed as “to have animosity or wish harm toward another.” Rather, this can be understood as “to love less.” Basically, Jesus is saying, “You must love Me more than anyone else, even your closest family members.”

Howler monkeys cannot be disciples of Jesus, but they can give us some encouragement to join ourselves to a new family, the family of God.



## A Day in the Life. . .

“What are your plans for the day?” I asked my husband at the breakfast table one Friday morning. The haze was already making the sunshine feel stifling, and the shrill song of the cicada this early was a sure sign of another warm, dry day. As we near the end of the dry season in Mixcolajá, Guatemala, our eyes scan the sky multiple times a day for the sight of clouds that would bring the first rain, announcing the beginning of rainy season.

“I need to do some computer work and start on my sermon for Sunday,” was his reply. Sounded like it would be another typical day in the Zimmerman household. But what *is* a typical day around here?

Family devotions were not without the typical sitting-still drama in a family of seven. “This is good practice for sitting still in church,” we told our boys for the fifth time that week. Soon they were able to work out some of their energy by singing lustily for a few minutes before we finished up with prayer. Then each were running off to the various jobs they needed to accomplish before starting school.

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## A Day . . . continued

I took a moment in the silence they left behind to enjoy the last few sips of my coffee and run through my mental to-do list, deciding in which order to tackle the items. Today, I decided to strip the beds and get the sheets going in the washing machine.

After a few reminders to keep at their jobs, the three oldest boys were ready to sit down at the kitchen table and start on their schoolwork. This year I have a third grader, a second grader, and one in kindergarten. Our three-year-old does well at playing by himself, or if everything works out, Daddy has a local errand and he gets to go along! The baby still takes an hour-long morning nap, and we all try to get as much school done before she joins us again! Between helping one son with long division, another with his sums, and reading the directions to the third, I cleaned up the kitchen from breakfast, kept the wash going, and tidied up the house.

I heard my phone ringing and followed the sound to find it on the kitchen counter. Was my husband available? Could they talk to him, please? After handing the phone to him, I could soon tell that someone was asking him to drive them somewhere in the pickup. Since we own one of the few pickups in the community, Justin is often asked to do trips for people. Maybe this is just a little short one to haul some firewood or water or cornstalks in the community. . .

“They are wondering if I could take them to Quiché to get diesel fuel, right now.”

Of course they want it right now. If people around here do plan ahead, they don’t let us know about it until it’s time to leave, and Quiché is two hours away! Quickly my mind did the math, and I predict that my husband will be gone all day long. Somehow these trips to Quiché *always* take hours longer than you might think at first, especially if several people decide to take advantage of a trip into town and go along!

“There isn’t anything else going on today, so if you can spare the time, I’m okay with it,” I answered.

I debated between quickly switching over another load of sheets or getting the baby up. She had just started to fuss. I could also hear noises in the kitchen that had little to do with getting schoolwork done. I got the baby up, and she held her hand in the water running into the washing machine as I waited for it to fill. I said a little thank you prayer for a washing machine (nearly every local homemaker washes their family’s clothes by hand in a pila), shut the lid, and headed to the kitchen to restore order.

After a quick farewell and handing my husband a small list of things to get in town if he had time, he was off, and I sat down with the boys as we got serious about knocking out some schoolwork yet before recess. Our church has a Spanish school right across the field from us, and although our boys don’t attend classes there (we want them to do the first few years of school in English, and we enjoy the freedom to travel that homeschooling gives), they still go over for recess at ten o’clock. This half hour is when I fly around and get caught up or started on projects while the only child in the house is the baby. It’s amazing how much you can get done in thirty minutes. It’s also amazing how quickly they pass, and the boys are back, hot and thirsty and wanting a snack.

We had just gotten back into school when there was a whistle out front. Immediately everyone was off their seat, wanting to see who it was. I sent ONE boy out to see what they wanted. Maybe they just needed the tire pump, a bike, mangos, or. . .

“It’s the neighbor girls, and they want chicken feed.”

I sighed. Weren’t they supposed to be in school at this hour? We sell feed for cows and chickens by the pound from our house, and since my husband wasn’t around, I would have to take care of them this time.

After giving the boys strict instructions to do as much school as they could while I was gone, I went out to take care of the customers. Since I had taken our baby girl along, it took a few minutes longer as the typical comments were made about her curly, light hair and pale skin, and they took turns holding her. Then they were off with the bag of feed on their head in the typical Guatemalan way, and I was back with the boys, who had not managed to get much school done while I was gone! By the time the last page of reading was finished and flash cards done, it was lunchtime.

Normally I send one of the boys down the road for fresh tortillas, and we have rice and beans and tortillas for lunch. But since Daddy wasn’t around, we opted for peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. Then it was naptime. The rule is one book for one hour. Everyone goes to their designated bed or couch with their book, and it’s quiet for one hour. The older boys just read, but the youngest three almost always end up sleeping.

Now it’s decision time for me. Should I take advantage of this quiet time and take a nap or use this hour to knock out some projects? The baby has been sleeping better at night recently, so I choose to stay up—and write this article. Good thing, since I am interrupted by another whistle out front. This time it’s two ladies who want to see the fabric I have for sale.

After the mandatory hour of quiet is up, the boys begin to trickle out one by one. As each sleepy boy stumbles out of their room, I give them a hug and a kiss and send them out to do their afternoon chores of watering the trees and flowers. Afternoons are one of my favorite times of the day, as I get to work on my projects and the boys pretty much entertain themselves.

My husband calls to say he won’t be home in time for supper (no surprise there), so I heat up leftovers for a quick supper. The boys can hear the neighborhood children beginning to play soccer on the runway just down the road and beg to go play too. I smile as I watch them run off, and then it’s just me and my baby girl.

(continued on page 4)

## A Day... continued

I watch the sun set as I wash up the supper dishes (and just maybe some lunch and breakfast dishes as well), tidy up the house, and water the flowers on the back patio. It's almost dark when the boys hear Daddy's pickup coming down the road. They run home to meet him. He roughhouses with them a bit and then sends them inside to get ready for bed. There is that last bit of chaos as everyone finds their pajamas, brushes their teeth, uses the bathroom, and says their prayers before the bedroom door is shut for the last time and all is quiet. . . until the door opens again and a rogue child says he needs a drink of water.

As my husband and I finally get to relax and catch up from the day, I smile. It had been a busy, but good day. "So, what are your plans for tomorrow?" I ask, and smile to myself as he says, "Oh, just the normal things. . ."

*Linnae Zimmerman*

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## Staff News

*Farewell to: **Andy and Betsi Wolfer** and children. They have returned to Oregon after a term as houseparents at MAM Headquarters. Thank you for your service!*

*Welcome to: **Don and Betty Heatwole**. They are once again "standing in the gap" as short-term houseparents at MAM headquarters. We appreciate their availability and willingness to serve!*



Don and Betty Heatwole.

*Welcome to: **Darla Martin**. She comes from Harrisonburg, Virginia, and is a member of the Bethesda congregation. She will be helping with domestics at MAM headquarters and eventually moving to an outpost to serve.*



Darla Martin.

## 🌀 Prayer and Praise Items 🌀

- \* Pray for the salvation of unbelieving spouses of our Guatemalan brethren. There are many such cases.
- \* Pray for the bishops of MAM as they deal with many stresses and personal health difficulties.
- \* Praise God for leading various individuals and families to serve in Guatemala!

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