



MENNONITE *Air* MISSIONS

Guatemala, Central America

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

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Ministers of the Gospel

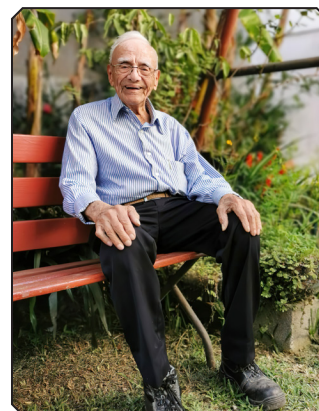
Our brethren and the churches in Guatemala have suffered hard things throughout their history. The years of guerrilla warfare scattered some. Economic pressure caused others to give up. Guatemala's modernization drew some into the education system and weakened their faith. But through the decades of change, a faithful remnant has remained.

From the early days when Harold Kauffman began exploring the Quiché region of Guatemala, ordaining church leaders was central to the church planting vision. He quickly put new believers to work evangelizing, preaching, and visiting. As they grew in Christ, national leaders were ordained early in the new churches' experience. Some of these leaders did not remain faithful. Others took their calling seriously and served for many years, forming the core of leadership that has blessed the churches for decades.

Throughout MAM's fifty-year history, North Americans and Guatemalans have served side by side in the work of the church. Although the vision has always been a growing body of Guatemalan ministry, the churches have chosen practical solutions when needed. When willing North Americans have been available, they have often been ordained to serve.

Today, we are thankful for the willing and passionate brethren who serve the Guatemalan church, whatever their skin color. A recent emphasis on ordinations and commissions has brought younger men into the ministry and greatly eased the pressure on the older. The leadership vacuum we experienced five to ten years ago has changed.

In this edition, we're highlighting those who serve the churches and preach the Word. Please take the opportunity to pray for them, their families, and their work. And pray that many national leaders will yet be added to this group.



Jorge Avila, 98.
Ordained deacon in the
Lirio de los Valles congregation in
Guatemala City, 1993. Retired.



Diego Tziquin, 78.
Commissioned lay deacon in the
Apostento Alto congregation in
Nahualá, 1996.



Victor Ovalle, 74.
Ordained minister in 1974,
ordained bishop in 2010,
now serving in the *Emanuel*
congregation in San Cristobal.



José Benito, 73.
Ordained minister in 1984,
ordained bishop in 1994
in the *Monte de los Olivos*
congregation, San Bartolomé.
Semi-retired.



Daniel Ticas, 69.
Ordained deacon in the
Lirio de los Valles congregation
in Guatemala City, 2003.



Isaías Muñoz, 63.
Ordained minister, 1990,
ordained bishop, 2003, in the
Ríos de Agua Viva in Oratorio.

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Ministers... continued



Byron de la Rosa, 59.
Ordained minister in the
Lirio de los Valles congregation
in Guatemala City, 2005.



Donaldo Alvarez, 45.
Commissioned minister in the
Jesús es El Camino congregation,
San Sur, 2018.



Larry Martin, 42.
Ordained in 2021, currently
serving in the *El Buen Samaritano*
congregation in La Sorpresa.



Andrew Crider, 41.
Ordained in the *Lirio de los*
Valles congregation in
Guatemala City, 2025.



Galen Miller, 40.
Ordained in the *Monte de*
los Olivos congregation in
San Bartolomé, 2023.



Nathan Graybill, 39.
Commissioned minister in the
La Nueva Jerusalén congregation
in Joya Grande, 2026.



Justin Zimmerman, 35.
Ordained in the *Monte Sion*
congregation in Mixcolajá, 2025.



Nicholas Suarez, 34.
Ordained in the *Monte Sion*
congregation in Mixcolajá, 2025.



Jonathan Bear, 32.
Commissioned minister in the
Rios de Aguas Vivas congregation
in Santa Rosita, 2024.



Joshua Martin, 31.
Ordained in the *Galilea*
congregation in Porvenir, 2025.



Daniel Meyer, 31.
Lay leader in the *Aposento Alto*
congregation, Oratorio, since 2019.

Commissioning in Joya Grande

The church of Joya Grande now has a commissioned pastor. After nearly four years of serving in the congregation as missionaries, Nathan Graybill and his wife Delores have been formally commissioned for the work in Joya Grande.

The commissioning service was held in the new chapel building at the Farm in Sumpango, with approximately eighty-five people in attendance. Various family members and friends from Canada and Pennsylvania made the trip to support Nathan's, as did various local Christians and visitors from within Guatemala. Bishops Victor Ovalle and Isaías Muñoz gave the charge, after messages by Brother Larry Martin and Brother Isaías Muñoz.

Please pray for Nathan and Delores and the congregation in Joya Grande as they continue to follow the Lord's direction.



Nathan and Delores Graybill

Reflections, One Year In

A little over a year has passed since I left behind the land of my childhood. I have chosen to join the ranks of those identified as “missionaries” by those who wistfully watch their loved ones depart to far off, seemingly otherworldly places. They depart to worlds that are home to a people who “don’t know about Jesus,” to spread the Gospel. They go, stumble their way through new languages, eat exotic foods, and find creative ways to avoid eating nearly un stomachable “delicacies.” They might not even have nice houses to live in!

As one who has spent most of my life on the side of the wistful watchers, this was what I considered a missionary to be. And there is some truth in it. As one who now falls in the category of “missionary,” I do have friends who don’t truly know Jesus. But the land of my childhood is home to many sad, disillusioned, Jesus-rejecting people as well. I have stumbled my way through a new language, and some days my tongue still struggles to wrap itself around the words. I’m just glad that I don’t need to learn English as a second language! I do eat foods I’ve never eaten before, although I’ve never yet needed to use my creativity to make them disappear. And sure, the house I now live in is very different from the one I grew up in, but I stay dry when it rains, and I have an indoor bathroom.

One of the most comforting factors about relocating to a new place is that the basic needs of humanity are the same worldwide. Every one of us needs oxygen, food, clean clothes, and sleep. And that’s the familiar rhythm of life I dance to. My mornings are spent doing a variety of things: washing laundry, mopping floors, baking, and cleaning, all while being entertained by Joshua and Melody Martin’s three very lovable children.

Some days these projects are interrupted by a power outage, running out of gas, or the neighbor who stops by to chat or to buy chicken or milk. And there are the days I interrupt my own self by forgetting I left water running to fill the *pila* until puddles have formed on the floor. Thank God for concrete floors! They are super easy to clean up and dry fast in the heat. I also find myself teaching an English class to the students in our small church school one morning a week. This has become a highlight and is such a fun way to invest in their lives. I am honored to have won their love and am deeply grateful for the sparkle and energy they add to my life.

Humanity’s deepest cry is for their Creator. So often the cry gets lost and goes unrecognized among the glamor of the world around us. I am surrounded by hurting hearts, and God has given me and each of us the responsibility to reach out to them with hope.

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Reflections... continued

This will look different for all of us. For me, it sometimes looks like swimming with my friends down at the river, occasionally cooking with them, giving hugs when their hearts are broken, or just spending time at their houses building relationships. I long to help them find rest in their Creator, yet so often I feel unworthy of this calling. But I know that He who has called me is able, and I am learning what that means, as My Creator teaches me about the power I have available in the form of prayer.

I am also surrounded by hearts who have found rest and satisfaction in their Creator. Hearts that have allowed their Creator to heal and change them, bringing beauty and life where once was death and barrenness. Praise God with me for His faithfulness, and pray for His church to grow, here in Guatemala, and wherever you call home.

Twila Breneman

Staff News

Welcome to: **Weston Slabaugh**. He comes from New Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, and is a member of the New Bethlehem congregation. Having spent most of his younger years on the mission field with his family in Colombia, he is already fluent in Spanish and will be stationed in San Bartolomé.



Weston Slabaugh

Farewell to: **Don and Betty Heatwole** (until next time!) Thank you for your service at MAM headquarters!

Personnel Needs

- ▶ Two registered nurses to serve in our clinic locations
 - ▶ A young lady to help with domestic work at Headquarters as early as this summer
 - ▶ A young man to help with missionary support work
-

🌀 Prayer and Praise Items 🌀

- * Pray that the brothers and sisters in the Guatemalan churches would be faithful to the end.
- * Pray for the need for more church leaders, especially native brethren, in Guatemala.
- * Praise God for the many years of service that many Guatemalan brethren have rendered!
- * Praise the Creator for once again sending rain, fulfilling His promise in Genesis 8:22.

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