



MENNONITE *Air* MISSIONS

Guatemala, Central America

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

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Recent Events

Youth Institute

The annual Youth Institute was held at The Farm in Sumpango Tuesday through Thursday, June 23–25, 2026. The event was well attended. The dorms were filled to capacity, and there was a more equal ratio between boys and girls than in previous years. Topics included "Making Wise Choices" (series of three messages by Byron de la Rosa), "Purity in an Impure World" (divided sessions by Larry and Laresa Martin), and a roundtable

discussion on the final afternoon. The youth also enjoyed the traditional Thursday excursion and the delicious meals they consumed throughout the event!

These events are a lot of work, but the times of fellowship, healthy interaction, and the sound teaching the young people receive during these institutes are well worth the effort. Thank you to all who made this possible!

Baptism in Sumpango

Sunday, July 5, was a busy day for the San Cristobal congregation. Three young people made vows before God and those in attendance and were received into the membership of the San Cristobal. Sharon Elizabeth Guás Méndez, Andrés Jeremías Méndez Moreno, and Silas Josué Méndez Moreno were baptized and welcomed into the church by brother Victor Ovalle, with support from Isaías Muñoz and several other MAM ministers. This baptism service was then followed by a commissioning service for Jeremías Méndez, the father of the two young men who were baptized.



Three young people were baptized and joined the San Cristobal congregation.

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EDITORIAL

Justin Zimmerman

A Bull Named Bear

Oso (“bear” in Spanish) got his name when he was a young calf. He was almost completely black, had a woolly coat, and was round as a barrel. He really did look like a black bear from a distance!

In a few years, Oso grew into a fine specimen of a Holstein bull, with a shiny coat and heavy muscles rippling over his sturdy frame. He was generally a calm and laid-back bull, which was why I was comfortable keeping him around. The only times he got excited were when he spied the feed bucket heading his way or when neighboring cattle came along. He did escape a few times, often when someone carelessly left a gate open, usually finding his way to the neighbor’s herd. But he never wandered far or did much damage except for knocking down a couple fences that got between him and some new cows. He began to gain popularity in the local area as a good bull for milk cows, and I happily rented him out on occasion.

But Oso had a habit. Like many cattle, he spent a disproportionate amount of time at the edge of the field. He paced along the fence so much so that he wore a distinct trail in the grass. The dust was beaten down hard by his large hooves. He didn’t generally “push the fence,” but he would sometimes try to reach through to get the grass that was on the other side (it was greener, after all). This habit of walking along the fence wasn’t so bad, but this particular field is at the edge of a cliff, which created a problem.

A few weeks ago, after a heavy rain, Oso was again lumbering along the back edge of the pasture, right next to the cliff and the ravine that borders our property. Suddenly, the edge crumbled away, and our nearly one-ton Holstein bull experienced the irresistible pull of gravity in a new and terrifying way (not having wings, you see). Poor Oso fell some seventy feet straight down and landed on the loose material sloping away from the cliff. He dragged himself the remaining twenty feet to the bottom of the ravine and soon expired in the shade of a thick cluster of saplings. Thus, Oso did meet an untimely end, at the age of four years and one month, just a few yards from where he was born.

So, what was the cause of his death? Blunt force trauma? Technically, yes. But that is just the terminology for the injuries he sustained. Was it the fall of nearly ninety feet? I could joke that it was actually the landing, not the fall, that hurt. But I’ll spare you...

Did gravity cause his death? Not really. He had lived within the pull of gravity all his life. Was it the lack of a fence at that part of the field? (This farmer plans to change that as soon as he can!) Again, not really. The unstable cliff edge, softened by rain? Perhaps. But I would ascribe his downfall to his habit of circumnavigating whatever field he was in. The two cows he lived

with did not have the same custom, and they are still alive and well. There are some lessons in this for us as humans.

Rather than discontentedly circumnavigating the field we are in, we are to “walk circumspectly.” *See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil* (Ephesians 5:15–16). In modern vernacular, the meaning is “look carefully” or “acting in a way that avoids risks.”

In churches today, there are many who do not necessarily “push the lines,” but they are right where the lines are drawn. If the line were to move, they would as well (and in many instances, I confess I would likely be among them). We should certainly respect the lines drawn by our church brotherhood, regarding what is appropriate for our members to do or not do.

But we can do better, and think about the consequences of our habits, customs, or personal activities that may not be addressed directly or indirectly by “church rules.” Does my driving endanger lives or property, or potentially cause offense? Will my Sunday afternoon activity encourage others to rest from their earthly labor, or live for the next party? Does my use of technology set me up for spiritual failure or success? There are many other areas to consider as well, but I trust you get the point. If we solely rely on church “fences” to keep us safe, while continually pacing the boundaries, we will eventually encounter a cliff and risk a great downfall. Fences are good, but personally practicing wisdom is better.

And there is the concept of contentment. *But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be there-with content* (1 Timothy 6:6–8). Oso had all he needed but wanted more. Many people likewise want more than they already have or need. This certainly does not lead to “redeeming the time!” If you couldn’t make another discretionary purchase for the rest of this decade, would you be content? Perhaps living far from shopping centers helps sharpen my awareness of this, but it is amazing how much you can do without!

And finally, I want to address the idea of purpose. Oso operated on animal instinct and thus fulfilled his intended purpose. But mankind has a much higher purpose. We were created to walk with God. *He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?* (Micah 6:8). Enoch, Noah, and David walked with God. Adam and Eve walked with God in the Garden before their Fall. When we purposefully strive to walk with God and do His will, we will be content, safe, and useful in the Kingdom.

WATER program 2026

This year, three young ladies came to Guatemala to observe the work that MAM does. Laurie Jantzi, Rachelle Stoltzfus, and Lena Wise spent time in Santa Rosita, Mixcolajá, Guatemala City, and Joya Grande throughout the month of July. They were exposed to Guatemalan culture, encountered a variety of situations, and experienced the daily mundane events that missionaries deal with. From boating in the Peten to flying from the mountains of Quiche to the City, from helping butcher a bull that fell over a cliff to practicing their medical skills when someone fainted, from learning to pat out tortillas to sitting through entire church services in Spanish, they witnessed some of what it means to live among the people of Guatemala. May the experiences they accumulated be a blessing and inspiration to them as they follow our Lord's leading for future lives of service.



2026 WATER students

Commissioning service



Jeremias Méndez was commissioned to serve as minister in San Cristobal.

A special service was held at the Farm on Sunday, July 5, 2026, to commission Brother Jeremías Méndez as a minister for the congregation in San Cristobal. The audience was well filled with family, friends, and visitors from other churches.

Brother Byron de la Rosa opened the service. Brother Luis Escobar led two hymns. Brother Isaías Muñoz shared a message on the minister's responsibilities to God and the congregation, and the responsibilities of the congregation to their minister. Brother Luis led the congregation in another hymn, after which Brother Victor Ovalle officiated the commissioning ceremony.

Staff News

Farewell to: **Don and Betty Heatwole** (one more time!). Thank you again for your willing service at MAM headquarters!

Welcome to: **Elvin and Agnes Ebersol.**

They hail from Milton Freewater, Oregon, and are members of the Blue Mountain congregation. They will be serving as the houseparents as MAM headquarters for the next year or two, Lord willing.



Elvin and Agnes Ebersol.

Personnel Needs

- ▶ Two nurses to serve in our clinic locations
 - ▶ A young man to help with missionary support
-

🌀 Prayer and Praise Items 🌀

- * Pray for the church schools of MAM, as they provide a Christian education and impact children for Christ.
- * Pray for the people of Guatemala as they face an upcoming round of elections, that they would seek first the Kingdom of God and not put their hopes in worldly governments.
- * Praise God for the safe arrival of Galen and Wendy Miller's baby girl, born prematurely, but now doing well!
- * Praise the Lord, for He is worthy to be praised, regardless of what is happening on earth!

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