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COLOMBIAN NEWS

THIS IS A
CALL TO PRAYER
FOR
THE LORD'S WORK
IN
COLOMBIA



Cachipay, Cund., Colombia, S. A.

INFORMATION SERVICE OF THE MENNONITE MISSION IN COLOMBIA

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HOLY WEEK

If churches, crosses, statues of Christ, statues of the Virgin, parades with multitudes of people could make a week Holy--then Holy Week in the Latin American countries would indeed be Holy.

The statue of Christ seen in the upper corner of this paper is located near the city of Cali and overlooks the capital city of the Valle on the western coast of Colombia. It looks impressive and symbolically it would seem to mean that Christ is taking special care of the city.

Unfortunately, however, if the statue could see--it would see a city with many churches and multitudes of people who are almost in complete ignorance of the Word of God. Christ as a statue in the church and upon the mountain side they know well, but Christ in the heart--the indwelling Christ, the living Christ, the empowering Christ--not yet.

But there is hope. The people in darkness are seeing a Light. Every year many new people are beginning to understand--and with their understanding comes a new life in which Jesus--the living Christ--becomes a Saviour and Lord.

SCHOOL BEGAN IN FEBRUARY

Vacation time for many Colombian children ends in February. For American children accustomed to door-to-door service and many conveniences, it may not be easy to comprehend just what it means for many Latin Americans to attain an education.

For many it means a sacrifice of the small earnings to pay even the low tuition of 80 cents (U.S.) Others in our schools walk long distances, for an hour or more, some over rugged paths, rain or shine, to be able to attend.

But it's worthwhile to them and to us. So we have three schools operating this year. The school in Cachipay in its 15th year has 109 children, and the schools in La Mesa and Anolaima each have about 35 children.

School here is a transforming experience--much appreciated, much sought after, and desperately needed. It is a wonderful experience to be able to help these little children into a New World.

THE CHRISTIAN TEACHER

I watched her standing at the door of the classroom. Her weary eyes were following each one of the pupils as they disappeared to different parts of the Mission Compound.



Lucia Contreras

Some were running hand in hand, eager to get to the playground. Which one would be the first to get his ride on the bicycle recently donated to the school by the English speaking congregation of Bogota?

Others went to ask Mr. Stucky for a grape-fruit to satisfy their appetites until supper time. Two girls made their way to the clinic to see the nurse, Miss Janet. Teresa had tried to be brave in class all afternoon, but she did have an ear-ache. Wouldn't the nurse please do something to relieve her pain. And Gloria...it was obvious that she was the third one to come down with the chicken pox...

The teacher was soberly watching her

pupils as they were disappearing into all directions. Some quite well dressed and others almost ragged. Some looked strong and healthy, others were the picture of undernourishment. Some looked happy and carefree, others looked a bit sad and even worried.



The teacher went back into the classroom to pick up her books. She seemed to feel a divine presence in the room. The Great Teacher...."Lord," she prayed, "remove from me this burden---help me to forget these little ones and the terrible struggle they have in this world. Am I the keeper of their souls? Must I always carry this responsibility for them? Did I make a mistake when I decided to teach them?"

He who carried the crown of thorns upon His brow replied to her..."I know all about your burden. My eyes have seen your cares and your responsibilities."

"But Lord...many others like me are without responsibilities--it does not matter to them that so many Colombian children are walking the streets, becoming delinquents, perishing in darkness. Must I put forth this effort... Yes, I must, but help me, Lord."

The Master replied: "Cast your burden upon me. My effort was greater than yours. I went the way of the Cross."

"Yes, Lord in my own strength, I cannot teach them. Help me...they are yours."

A supernatural power of love filled the heart of the teacher."Forgive, dear Lord, forgive. Because of my love for Thee, I shall be a servant to these, your little ones."

Happy, the Lord replied, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto Me."

WINTER VOLUNTARY SERVICE WORKERS

We recently said "Good-bye" to two couples of VS'ers---Mr. and Mrs. Joe Deckert and Mr. and Mrs. Alvin Deckert. They came in December and left in February.

The Deckerts came from their respective farms in Montana. Yes - the men were brothers. They left the cold snowy and windy weather of Montana's winter and spent 2½ months in the tropical weather of Colombia. Their farms were left in care of friends and they came to spend in Colombia a "Christian Vacation" of service to the Lord.



Alvin-Anne - Elvina-Joe

They started their work here by budding hundreds of orange trees. They worked hard and did well. When they got tired of budding trees, they started to paint buildings that had not been painted for years and were in desperate need. Then it was discovered that termites had eaten up the roof of the girls dormitory - so they helped to put on a new roof. A couple of horses of the school became sick with "mumps". So the Montana farmers nurtured them back to health.

The wives cooked, sewed, painted, cleaned, re-made furniture and were a marvelous help to their husbands and to the Mission. They were also good company and an inspiration when things were rough.

The VS'ers learned first hand some of the problems and heartaches of mission work. They saw a foreign country and observed how others live. They saw the miserable effects of poverty and lack of education. They saw what it meant to live without Christ.

Now they are back home again. They will tell others in the home church about life on the mission field. They can now pray with understanding. Do you think they spent their time and money well?

ARTHUR KEISER FAMILY RETURNS TO STATES

It was with deep regret and sorrow that the Mission family and friends bade farewell to the Keiser family on March 23. After more than 10 years of service to the Colombian Mission, they have returned to Quakertown, Penn., to await the further guidance of God. Brother Keiser's return to the States was considered advisable for spiritual health reasons and our prayers accompany them.

GLEN KLAASSEN FAMILY IN IBAGUE

Glen and Reitha Klaassen with their two sons, Ronnie and Steven, moved to Ibague, Tolima, shortly after Christmas to begin their new duties there.

Ibague is the home of the Presbyterian Normal Training School with which the Mennonites and other missions have joined to make an inter-dominational school for training teachers.



Glen-Steven-Ronald-Reitha



Myriam-Arthur-Rebecca-Eunice
Mary Beth-Steven-Helen

Glen and Reitha will both be teaching classes in the Institute. We have studying in the Institute this year seven girls who are preparing themselves to be teachers and who plan to serve the Lord in our schools.

Others of our children are studying in the Colegio Americano in Bogota where our former co-worker Mrs. Mary Becker Valencia and her husband, Dr. Hector Valencia are in charge.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S RETREAT

It is said that more can be accomplished in one week of retreat in the lives of young people than a year in Sunday school. Whether that is true or not, it is obvious that a great spiritual impact was made in our second annual young people's retreat.



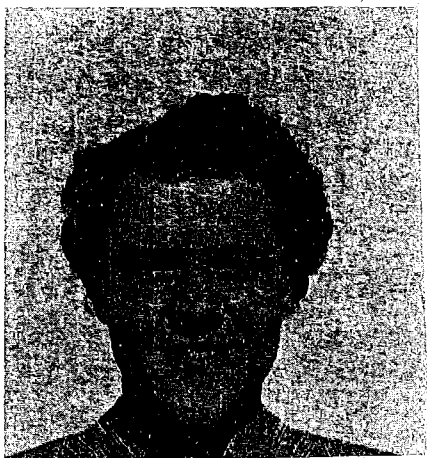
The young people that were here were largely students or ex-students of our schools. To live a Christian life in a culture that is decidedly anti-evangelical and very often anti-Christian is a very difficult test for young people. It was no small joy to hear testimonies of victory and grace.

THIS AND THAT

Janet Soldner continues to have good opportunities to help country women with her maternity cases. Sympathetic understanding and help are much appreciated and have done much to bring the Gospel into many homes. One such home now sends their children to our school, and one of the girls of the home is not only baptized but has gone to the Normal School in Ibaguè to continue her studies and hopes to enter Christian service. Janet also continues to be school nurse. She also teaches classes, is house mother, and helps in the Cachipay Church.



We rejoice with Calvin and Sidonia Flickinger in the birth of Susan Joy, their first daughter and fourth child. She was born in Newton, Kansas. The Flickingers will be returning to Colombia in April to re-assume their duties in school in Cachipay.



Vernelle Yoder continues to teach in our Colegio Meno in La Mesa. Being the only missionary in La Mesa she lives with a Colombian Christian, Amparo Ruiz, who also teaches in the school. Besides working in the school she also helps greatly in the church. Courageously she also faces many lesser problems. Recently she relates, "We no sooner got home than sparks started to fly from the high tension wires in front of our house and along the other street. It set something on fire and it fell in our patio not too far from the tank of gas, well all too close anyway and whatever it was sparkled for a little while. We went

to the door only to find people staring at the sparks and no one seemingly doing anything." Of her little light plant she writes: "Now the motor won't start for a man or for a woman. So tomorrow I'll have to go man-chasing again. These men are so hard to find on the job.

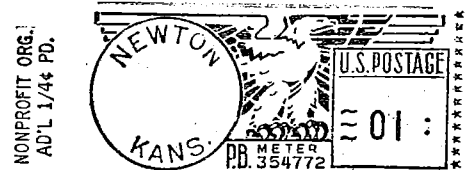
"So you see, life here is most interesting. One never knows what will be next."

PRAYER REQUESTS

THANK HIM for the good health and strength of our missionaries.
for His supplying all of our needs as far as our teaching staff in our schools is concerned.
for the good progress on the new church building in Cachipay
for spiritual blessings during the YP retreat.

PRAY FOR the Klaassen family in their new work in Ibaguè
the Flickinger family's return to the work in Colombia
the Keiser family's adjustments and spiritual guidance in the States.
the Stucky family's work with the children and the churches
Alice Bachert's ministry in Barranquilla
courage and wisdom for Vernelle Yoder in the school in La Mesa
Janet Soldner's healing ministry in the school and community

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