

MARCH 1964

NUMBER THIRTY-EIGHT

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

COLOMBIAN NEWS

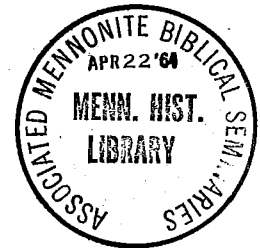


"HE LIVES"

Cachipay, Cund., Colombia, S. A.

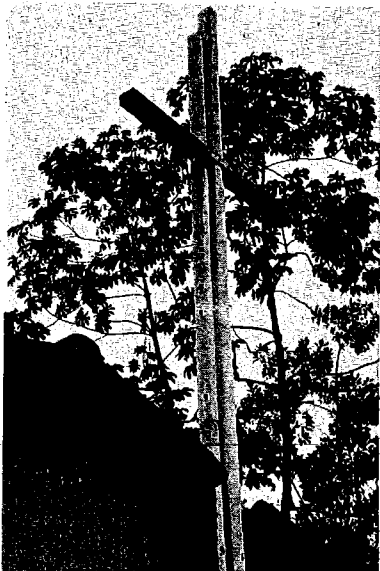
INFORMATION SERVICE OF THE MENNONITE MISSION IN COLOMBIA

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Reflections and Reactions of a Colombian Missionary

EASTER PREOCCUPATIONS



Symbol of Victory

Dr. Eugene Nida, president of the American Bible Society and expert on Latin American culture, stated in a series of lectures: "The Latin almost seems to have a preoccupation with death." This statement certainly was verified during Holy Week in Colombia when in the parades thousands of the "faithful" followed a glass-encased coffin in which the image of Jesus Christ was lying in the grip of death. From the glass coffin the image of Christ on Easter morning is again seen back on the cross--a Christ either dead in a coffin or almost dead on the cross. Easter in Colombia is a time to be "preoccupied with death."

The missionary remembers that among Protestants in the United States, Holy Week is a time in which the passion of the Lord although emphasized, nevertheless, gives way to the glory, joy, and hope of Easter morning. "He Lives" is the shout and acclamation of the Christian during the Easter season.

If it is true that the Latin is preoccupied with death during Easter, can it not be said that for the vast majority of American Christians, Easter is a time to be "preoccupied" with materialism?

The Easter parade is not only an event that takes place along New York City's Fifth Avenue, but also in every Mennonite Church in America from Pennsylvania to California. The Easter "finery," "bonnets," and "spring outfits" betray the Christian at Easter in America just as much as the emphasis on death betrays the average Latin American. While the shouts and songs of praise on Resurrection morn give clear testimony that Jesus Christ is risen, the witness is muffled because of the Christian's preoccupation with an over-emphasis on materialism.

If Colombia and all the other nations of the world in which our General Conference has sent missionaries and workers are to know and experience "resurrection power" in their lives, the churches back home will again have to reconsider, in a most serious way, the mission task to which the risen Lord has called His church. Easter 1964 has passed, but the risen Lord continues to call His followers to the urgency of proclaiming the message that transforms, "for He is not here, for He is risen as he said."

NATIONAL PASTOR TAKES BRIDE



Cutting the Cake

In Colombia those who are not married in the Catholic church must be married by the judge in order for it to be legal. The Christians also have a church ceremony.

On December 18, Rev. Jaime Caro, pastor of the La Mesa Church, was united in marriage to Miss Disney Rojas from Armenia, Caldas. The wedding took place in the Christian Missionary Alliance Church. Vernelle Yoder was one of the attendants.

May God bless this new couple and give them a fruitful ministry in La Mesa.

A WITNESSING COFFEE FARMER

"You'll go crazy talking so much about the gospel," a relative told Pablo Bernal when he was witnessing on the street one day.

Pablo, a coffee farmer, has been a Christian for several years. God has given a gift of witnessing to others. He has done effective work in the La Mesa area.

Recently "door-to-door" Bible and Bible-portions selling campaigns were held in three neighboring towns. Pablo was among those who took part. A big difference was noted in these areas for they were at one time strongly opposed to the gospel. Now there is an interest and desire to receive the Word. While some still refuse to read the Bible many have received the Word of God with joy. God gave wonderful opportunities to sew the seed of eternal life.

DR. CAMERON TOWNSEND'S VISIT



Townsend's, Stuckys, Habeggars

Dr. Cameron Townsend, leader of the Wycliffe Bible Translators, and his wife visited with the missionaries in Cachipay during the Young People's Retreat.

Dr. Townsend is internationally known for his pioneer work and dedicated leadership of the Wycliffe Translators. At present he heads Wycliffe operations in Latin America and presently maintains an office in Bogota.

The Colegio Americano is honored to have Dr. Townsend's son, Billy attending as a resident student this year.

MISSION TO BOGOTA BEGINS

After an eight-week period of orientation in Cachipay, "Mission to Bogota" has begun. On Sunday, February 2, in the basement auditorium of the Presbyterian Church of Bogota, the initial worship service was conducted with forty adults and twelve children present. Howard Habegger challenged the new congregation with the message and mission of the church of Jesus Christ. Each Sunday afternoon at 3:30 p.m. the congregation gathers for worship services. In the first two months of services there was an average attendance of approximately thirty-five adults and ten children.

A "church-in-the-house" program has also been initiated in seven homes in the city of Bogota. Each Tuesday and Thursday evening Bible study groups and prayer cells are held in the homes of various members of the church. The Book of Acts is being read and discussed with an emphasis on personal relationship to Jesus Christ and New Testament principles of church life and action. This new program has given our Christians a wonderful opportunity to invite friends and neighbors to join in the informal meetings.

Thus far in this newly developed program many new contacts have been made among non-Christians. It is hoped that at least one additional home will soon be secured in order to facilitate eight groups each month. Howard and Marlene Habegger direct each study group thus providing opportunities to communicate the message of the gospel apart from the regular Sunday worship services.

The home of the Habeggars has also been opened to individuals in the immediate neighborhood. Four Roman Catholic young people have visited in the home numerous times and friendships are being built, in the hope that these contacts will bear fruit for the Kingdom.

On Good Friday the first Holy Communion service was conducted with a fine attendance. Holy Communion is considered by Colombian evangelicals as a service of highest importance. During the month of March the small groups in the homes discussed Holy Communion in preparation for the special Good Friday service.

The church in Bogota has just begun. The church is only in an infant stage and cannot be expected to perform adult tasks. However, the Holy Spirit breathes into the souls of God's people, new life and new visions, and thus new beginnings will be forthcoming. "Mission to Bogota" has begun--just a beginning, but the church is living by the energizing and transforming power of Jesus Christ.

YOUNG PEOPLE GO FORWARD

January in Colombia is a time for retreats. School is out--summer is in. Of course a "retreat" should be a time of re-evaluation, a time for planning, a time for new dedication, and a time for new advances spiritually.

Under the leadership of Idida Pava and Mary Hope Stucky, forty-five young people gathered for four days of intensive spiritual exercises. Rev. Howard Habegger and Rev. Gerald Stucky gave special studies in Bible and in Christian experience. Four outstanding ministers gave the evening messages.

David Fischer, a student of Yale and Princeton visiting in Colombia and present at our retreat, wrote later stating, "Thank you ever so



Singing



Discussing

much for the privilege I had of being with you all for the youth convention. It was a real blessing to me personally. I must say that of all the youth groups I have met in Colombia, this seemed to me to be the finest in terms of preparation and dedication."

One young man who in former years graduated from our school in Cachipay, returned to attend the retreat. Since he had strayed away from the victorious life, God spoke to him. He wrote following the retreat, "I feel deep shame to think that I was a member of the church and had accepted Christ as a child and was baptized but was unable to participate in the Lord's Supper. I saw many faces, friends, and fellow students--smiling happily in the glorious activities--and I, for having followed this dirty world, find myself full of vain vanities."

Shortly thereafter, this young man returned to rededicate his life to the Lord. With him he brought another student who did the same. PRAISE THE LORD for a good "retreat."

SCHOOLS OPEN FOR 1964

New school terms began in February in La Mesa and in Cachipay. The school in La Mesa is directed by Vernelle Yoder and has over fifty children. She is assisted by Beatriz Tarquino, a national teacher. In Cachipay the enrollment is one hundred and thirty-five, of which one-half are boarding students. Many of the boarding students come from Agua de Dios (Water of God), the town of patients with leprosy, near Girardot. It is desperately difficult for many Colombian parents to educate their children simply because there are not enough schools and because many parents are too poor to send their children to the schools that exist in the country. Huldah Myers is principal of the school in Cachipay and Gerald Stucky is the director.

BARGENS TERMINATE SERVICE IN COLOMBIA



Eldon Fixing Jeep

After serving a year and a half as Voluntary Service workers in Cachipay, Colombia, Eldon and Helen Bargaen with their children Jan and Dale will return to the States in April.

The Bargaens have successfully done what many young couples in the States fear to do--give up a job, security, a good salary--to give of themselves unselfishly in the service of others and to God.

Eldon has been serving as head of maintenance at the Colegio Americano, and as such has made a very valuable contribution to the welfare of the mission school.

As they return to the States, the staff in Colombia wants to express to them their hearty thanks for their contribution and wish for them the blessing of God in their future service.

The Board of Christian Service has accepted the Daniel Souder family of Lansdale, Pennsylvania, to replace the Bargaens as volunteers in Colombia. The Souders are members of Grace Mennonite Church.

NEWS IN BRIEF

On furlough are the Glendon Klaassens and Janet Soldner. The Klaassens are scheduled to return to Colombia around the first of April and are to replace the Gerald Stucky family as director of the Colegio Americano. The Gerald Stuckys are scheduled to leave for the States in June. Janet Soldner is at present in Berne, Indiana, and will return to Colombia to resume her duties the first of June. The new term of service established by the mission board for missionaries in Latin America is three years of service with three months for furlough.

Luis Correa, graduate of our school in Cachipay, has been studying in Montevideo, Uruguay, during the last two years in preparation

for Christian service. On March 12 he returned to Colombia to become co-pastor with Gerald Stucky in the church in Cachipay.

Fourteen of our young people are studying this year in the Normal School in Ibague in preparation for Christian service. All but two are graduates of our school in Cachipay. Of the six members of the student council in Ibague, three are from Cachipay. Egda Chuquin was chosen as the president of the student body. Eleven of the young people are planning to teach and three are ministerial students.

Wedding Bells rang in Lansdale, Pennsylvania, for two Colombians--graduates of the mission school in Cachipay. Enrique Garnica finished his studies in the school after he had become "of age"--so great was his desire for an education. He also was the constructor of our beautiful chapel on the mission grounds. He married Miriam Aranda who had been one of Bogota's international telephone operators. She left for the States some months ago and received employment in Pennsylvania. Enrique and Miriam are the first pair of our graduates to join in marriage. CONGRATULATIONS!

Alice Bachert returned to her work in Barranquilla after having made a much needed contribution to the church in Anolaima. Alice's ministry of personal evangelism and prayer continues to bring fruit into the kingdom of God.

PRAISE AND PRAYER

- Praise Him - for ever increasing freedom to preach Christ in Colombia.
- for the Spirit's moving in the new church in Bogota.
- Pray For - Luis Correa as he begins his ministry in the Cachipay Church.
- the safe return of Bargens and safe arrival of Souders.

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