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

COLOMBIAN NEWS

Cachipay, Cund., Colombia, S. A.



INFORMATION SERVICE OF THE MENNONITE MISSION IN COLOMBIA

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A MISSIONARY THINKS ABOUT CHRISTMAS



Howard Habegger

There is no time like Christmas when a foreign missionary's mind turns toward his family and friends in the homeland.

While many Christian Mennonite people are celebrating Christmas in the traditional ways including family reunions, exchanging gifts, decorating the Christmas tree, the foreign missionary hopes that those who profess the Christ of Christmas will not forget that the God who sent Jesus to Bethlehem's cradle is the God of missions.

While our God is the Great Giver of all gifts, the missionary wonders if those in the United States who are receivers of His super abundance are basically "keepers" or "givers" during the Christmas season.

When a missionary receives a report from the Board of Missions stating they are operating with a \$100,000 dollar deficit, then a missionary is deeply perplexed about what has happened with the true "Spirit of Christmas" in the hearts of Christian believers.

Is it unreasonable for a missionary to suggest that your children might be just as happy with four gifts instead of five and the amount of the fifth gift could be given to our Board of Missions?

Is it irrational for a missionary to suggest that at least one-tenth of your "Christmas spending" be given to our world-wide mission program?

For one missionary family Christmas 1963 in Colombia, and without a doubt for all missionaries around the world, will be a time for reflection on God's great gift which we are ready to share with those to whom the Lord has sent us.

However, without the dedicated stewardship of God's people, the Christ of Christmas will remain either in the cradle or on the cross; and He will not enter in transforming power into lives.

SCHOOL, YEAR ENDS



The graduating class



Our teachers

The Colegio Americano of Cachipay finished its seventeenth year on November 20, graduating a class of 24 young people, the largest class in the history of the school. This year was also the first in which four Colombian teachers have been young women who have had their primary education in our own school or have been products of the mission program and have gone on for further training.

The program began at 10:30 a.m. as the teachers and graduates filed into the well-filled chapel and remained standing while everyone sang the national anthem. There were several music numbers by the school choir under the direction of Huldah Myers, a very fine presentation of the 23rd Psalm in English given by the whole graduation class, and two well-organized talks by the two members with the highest grades, Victor Vargas and Luz Vanegas. Mr. Albert Lozano of Bogota delivered a challenging address to the graduates and friends who had gathered for the occasion.

It was an unexpected honor to have in attendance the mayor of Anolaima, the county seat of Cachipay. He very graciously assented to say a few words in which he expressed his appreciation for such a school as the Colegio Americano which has such an outstanding record not only academically but also morally and spiritually.

EVANGELISTIC MEETINGS HELD

During the first week of November the churches in Anolaima and Cachipay held special services with Mr. Albert Lozano in charge. Mr. Lozano is a Colombian by birth but with his family went to the United States after primary school to complete his education.

As he grew older he discovered that the religion of his childhood no longer held any meaning for him and he felt that perhaps in science, social position, or wealth he might find satisfaction.

While he was working as a successful electronics engineer in California, he finally accepted the repeated invitation of a friend to attend church with him. That morning he heard the gospel for the first time and realized that in Christ he could find purpose to live.

His life was completely changed and he felt God would have him in the ministry. Working summers in the field of electronics and studying during the winters, he was able to complete his education.

Six months ago he returned with his wife to Colombia and has been actively engaged in evangelistic campaigns among his own people.

The congregations and pastors of both Anolaima and Cachipay churches visited and invited friends and neighbors to the services. The Lord blessed the messages and worked in the hearts of believers and unbelievers.

ALICE BACHERT RETURNS TO ANOLAIMA

It was indeed a happy day for the church members in Anolaima when Alice Bachert returned to work among them for a few months.

In 1951 Alice had started the work there with a small school and church services in her home.

Then because of her health she had to leave Anolaima and go to a hotter climate, most recently she has been living up on the coast in Barranquilla.



Alice Bachert

Anolaima, a town of 4000 people, is the county seat and has no other protestant work. During the years, the group of believers has encountered much opposition.

However, of late the pastor Juan Garzon has had a number of unusual opportunities with people who were formerly opposed or completely disinterested. Both Alice Bachert and Juan Garzon have been carrying on an active visitation program.

HABEGGERS ARRIVE IN COLOMBIA

Following ten months of language study in San Jose, Costa Rica, the Howard Habegger family arrived in Bogota, Colombia, on November 19. Because of a strike among the pilots of the Colombian National Airlines, the Habeggars arrived one day later than had been scheduled.



The Habegger Family

Rev. Gerald Stucky, director of the Mennonite Mission in Colombia, met the Habeggars at the Bogota International Airport and extended them an official welcome on behalf of all the missionaries.

After a brief overnight stay in Bogota, the Habeggars came directly to Cachipay and enjoyed a fellowship dinner with the staff of missionaries at the Colegio Americano.

Nearly eleven months ago Howard and Marlene were commissioned as missionaries to Colombia in a special service at Grace Mennonite Church in Lansdale, Pennsylvania.

The mission is now extending its work to the capital city of Bogota where a substantial group of Cachipay's Colegio Americano graduates are engaged in various vocational pursuits.

It is hoped that this group of Christian young people will form a nucleus for a new Mennonite church in the capital city. Howard and Marlene will be responsible to direct this new outreach program in Bogota and will begin after a brief period of orientation at Cachipay with Rev. Stucky and other missionary personnel in Colombia.

It is of utmost importance that God direct the new work in Bogota by His mighty spirit and that the Holy Spirit work "miracles of grace" in the lives of many Colombians in Bogota, a great city of one million people.

Thus, the Habeggars urge the many prayer partners that have prayed during the difficult days of language study to increase daily in intercessory prayer for "Mission to Bogota."

During the months when people give and receive gifts, may all Christians remember that the Christ of Christmas was born, suffered, died, and rose again for the whole world including the people of Colombia.

Stand with the Habeggars in deep prayer concern that God's Great Gift will be received in the lives of many in Bogota.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Since 1947, one of the principal contributors to our work in Colombia has been the American Leprosy Mission, Inc. Thanks to their interest and financial help, a large number of boys and girls of parents with leprosy have been helped and educated in our school.

In August, Dr. Oliver Hasselblad, president of the ALM, along with his charming wife, visited Colombia on his way to Brazil for an international conference on leprosy. In Cachipay he made a study of our work and shared some splendid observations.

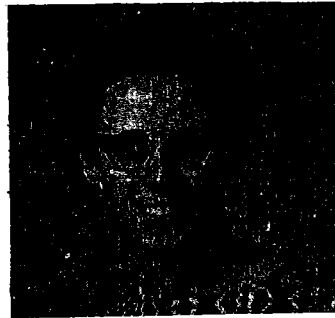


Dr. Hasselblad

Miss Janet Soldner, R.N., left for the United States on her furlough after her fourth term of service in Colombia. Miss Soldner is one of the original four who began the work of our mission. For many years she has served as school and community nurse in Cachipay.



Janet Soldner



Rosemary Wyse



Geraldine Freed

Two splendid young ladies have recently arrived in Cachipay, Colombia, as Voluntary Service workers in our mission. Miss Rosemary Wyse, from Archbold, Ohio, is a teacher of Spanish with five years of experience. Miss Geraldine Freed has arrived to replace Janet Soldner. Miss Freed is a graduate nurse and will be the school health authority.

Another baptismal service was held recently in Anolaima. Of the seven candidates, there were two who do not read but are able to comprehend the Bible studies. Of these also there were two who testified to serious illness which the Lord used to bring them to an experience of salvation. Of the class one is waiting for further study before she will be baptized.

In La Mesa a fine baptismal service was held on November 29, in which a fine group followed Christ in baptism. Jaime Caro the young pastor is planning on being married on December 14.

An accident took the life of Blanca Aurora Vargas, a fifth grade student in our school in Cachipay. The sad accident took place when the children put a board across two swings, then mounted ten abreast. The excessive weight caused the swing to collapse--and the unfortunate death of a child.

PRAYER AND PRAISE

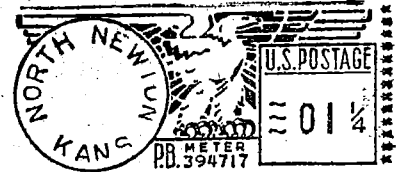
THANK HIM for bringing Habeggers safely to Colombia
for the new converts that were baptized recently
for the Voluntary Service workers

PRAY FOR the Klaassens as they visit churches while on furlough
Janet Soldner that her furlough may be a blessing,
the Habeggers as they begin the new work in Bogotá
the financial needs of our mission and mission board.

COLOMBIAN NEWS
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