

AUG 3 1956

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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REPORT FROM COLOMBIA

According to reports sent out by the Confederation of Evangelical Churches of Colombia, the closing of Protestant churches is continuing. In May the largest church in the country, located in Barranca Bermeja, was ordered to discontinue all services. This church has a membership of 400, but attendance ranges from 1100 to 2000. During recent months other churches have been closed, some have been attacked, and pastors and lay Christians jailed. According to the latest statistics published by CEDEC, during the past eight and one half years 45 church buildings have been destroyed by fire or dynamite, 75 Evangelical Christians killed because of their faith, and more than 200 schools closed by the government.

While the territory in which our mission works has been unmolested and we have continued in peace, Christians in other parts of the country are suffering great hardships. We ask that your prayers be given unceasingly in behalf of the Lord's work here.

In spite of tightening restrictions in many parts of the country, large rallies have been held in three principal cities celebrating the centennial of Evangelical work

in Colombia, and individual churches throughout the country have been having special meetings. In April Rev. Guillermo Quiceno served the Mennonite churches as an evangelistic speaker, and for a few days in July we were privileged to have with us Rev. Regino Loyola, radio minister from HCJB, the Voice of the Andes, in Quito, Ecuador. We also had a one day meeting with John Mosiman, a Christian artist from Quito who illustrated his message with his own drawings.

VOLUNTARY SERVICE WORKERS ARRIVE

Arriving in Bogota on Saturday, June 2, were the seventh group of summer Voluntary Service workers to serve the Colombian mission since this program was started. Returning for her second summer in South America was Miss Huldah Myers, teacher at Grace Bible Institute in Omaha, who was accompanied by Russell Hildebrande and Noel Gardner, students at Grace Bible Institute, and by Miss Lena Waltner, professor of art at Bethel College, Newton, Kansas.

Miss Waltner is devoting most of her time to assisting in the establishment of a program of arts and crafts in the school and of teacher training in these fields. Miss Myers is working on the classification of the school library and is giving part of her time to teaching English classes in the school and to teaching the missionary children. A heavy work schedule confronts Noel and Russell who have already planted over 500 trees, and whose work involves everything from machinery repair to landscaping. The arrival of these four brings the total number of Voluntary Workers to Colombia to 19.



FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Visiting Colombia for the first time, Miss Lena Waltner has recorded for us some of her first impressions. She states: "I had read about the work of our Colombian Missionaries and have had first-hand information through some who have been there; so I had a mental picture of what was going on. Now to be going there myself to participate in a small way....what was it going to be like?"

"The trip from Bogota to Cachipay was a treat for magnificent scenery, but the closer we came to our destination, the more bumpy became the road, and it was hard to keep one's balance in the seat. Yet as we came near the farm, the lights of the place seemed to send out a friendly welcome.

"Now that I have been here awhile, what are some of the impressions about the mission work? I find that missionaries have many duties and need to be versatile, for it is not possible to have specialists for the various phases of work. There are many demands made upon a missionary's time and energy, so that his time is not his own when approximately 80 children need to be looked after, many of whom come from poor backgrounds and are starved for love. Children respond to love and kindness which in itself is rewarding. Mission work is not as glamorous as many may think, for immediate results of efforts put forth to win souls into the Kingdom cannot always be seen and there are often experiences that are discouraging. Yet missionaries are people of faith, and one cannot but be impressed with the worthwhileness of the work. To live here for a few weeks is to have one's horizon and interest widened in regard to mission work, and to realize anew that missionaries need our prayerful support in their work."



VENTURE FOR VICTORY TEAM VISITS

The Venture for Victory basketball team that has during the past four years traveled over 100,000 miles to six countries in the Orient came to visit Colombia in Juneand also visited Cachipay. The squads that have composed the team over the four years have had a cumulative record of 348 wins and 4 losses. The team is composed of college all-stars and is 100% dedicated to the cause of Christ. Their aim is to win men to Christ by means of basketball. Wherever possible they sing, testify, and preach during the half time at ball games, and also hold as many other meetings in schools, churches, etc., as possible. This summer they are travelling through Latin America.

Since two of the members of the group come from the First Mennonite Church in Berne, Indiana, they asked Gerald Stucky of our mission to be their contact man in Colombia. As a result games were scheduled in Bogota and Neiva with a very fine public response. However, due to the very tight religious situation in Colombia, they were not permitted to give their regular half-time program. They were only permitted a minimum amount of musical numbers. But in spite of the fact that they were thus handicapped they were given ample opportunity to speak and sing in churches in Bogota, Neiva, and Cachipay. The missionaries and evangelical Christians in Colombia and especially in Bogota were greatly blessed by the fine ministry of these dedicated young men.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE TO BE HELD

When this publication reaches you, the annual conference of the Mennonite Churches of Colombia will have been held at the Cachipay school. The meeting will convene one week after the climaxing meetings celebrating the centennial of mission work in Colombia are held in Bogota.

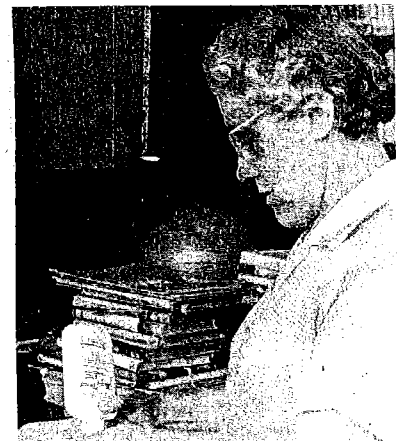
During the morning a program of sacred music is to be presented, and the devotional messages will be brought by Armando Hernandez and Luis Rodriguez. Following this service these two young men will be licensed to the ministry. After a picnic lunch at noon, there will be an afternoon business meeting.

"FOLLOW ME"

Since leaving Colombia at the end of her first Voluntary Service term, Miss Huldah Myers has been as busy as a missionary on furlough, for she has spoken of the Lord's work here before 37 different church groups during the past nine months, and given His challenge to many young people. Returning now for a second term of work, she brings this message:

"Follow me", said Christ to His disciples. How deep was my longing some years ago to serve my Lord in the land of Colombia, but Christ said, "Follow me" in the states. Gracious has He been to me, for He brought me to Colombia for the summer months of 1955. I had not been here very long until I realized that one can hardly have an understanding of a particular mission station by merely hearing or reading about it. I realized that I personally have known nothing of what it means to stand for Christ under persecution. Many times did I ask myself the question as to whether I or others in the States could remain true if threatened with machete fights or required to pay fines or even to be required to witness the burning of one's home.

"After three months in this land there was naught else I could do but go home and by God's grace attempt to lay upon



Christians a burden of intercession for this country and those whom God has called to follow Him here. How can I praise Him enough for permitting me to return for the second summer. This time I came not alone, but in company with three others. What a joy it is to be with the missionaries again, and oh the thrill of embracing these little ones once more. When I left them last year it was with a heavy heart, for I knew not whether I should see them again. I somehow still feel that the biggest contribution we can make while here is to love these little ones for there are those who are unloved and unwanted by anyone outside the finca. Did not Christ say, "Feed my lambs"? When one hears of the family background from which many of them come, we can understand why it is love for which they hunger.

"Again I say....it has been such a joy to follow the Lord into this vineyard."

GERALD STUCKY SPEAKS IN IBAGUE

As in many other places in the world, it is customary in Colombian Evangelical churches to have special meetings during Holy Week. In Ibague the Presbyterians have a large church and Bible Institute with national Christians in charge. Gerald Stucky served as their guest minister during the Holy Week services and he reports that there was a fine response to the meetings.

AS THE LORD HAS PROSPERED.

One room in Otoniel's house out along the isolated mountain path was filled with bottles of liquor which he sold to the passers-by who traveled on foot or on horseback to their lonely destinations. But somehow his attention was drawn to the evangelical services held in a home some distance away, and he began to attend. One day the missionary in charge of the service spoke on the evils of intoxicating drinks and the sin of those who sell them.

Thoughtfully Otoniel returned home. "He meant us!" he said to his wife. "Oh, no!" she answered. "Without the income from these sales we would have nothing with which to feed and clothe ourselves and our children!" But Otoniel continued to feel the direction of God, and knowing that since he was very poor he would have nothing to lose, he discontinued his tiny business. Then, with what little he had, he bought a small lot closer to the home where the services were held so that he and his family could more easily attend.



That was several years ago. The family has since moved again. This time Otoniel owns a larger farm from which he harvests fine crops of coffee, oranges, and avocados. Within two years he expects to have his property debt-free. Recognizing that only God is the source of his blessings and prosperity, he gratefully returns His tithe to Him each month. But his outlook now goes beyond a fine farm with good producing crops, and he is planning what he can do to contribute to the growth of God's Kingdom. It is His desire that in addition to his tithe he will be able to give an amount adequate to support young men who wish to study to be ministers of God, and he himself would like to be able to study more so that he can be a more effective witness to God's love and to the manner in which He has prospered him.

MUSICAL NOTES

Traveling to the leper colony, Agua de Dios, and to the river port city of Girardot on May 13 were the members of the girls' chorus accompanied by their director, Helen

Keiser. In an afternoon service in the Presbyterian Church of Agua de Dios the girls presented a program of music and testimonies to a large congregation which included many of their parents who are not Christians. Their messages were enthusiastically received. The same evening the program was presented to a standing-room-only crowd in the Presbyterian church of Girardot. The women of the church provided meals and lodging for the night, and the next day the chorus was chauffeured back to Cachipay in the mission truck by Gerald Stucky. This group was organized of girls from the mission school to assist in the church services in Cachipay.



A more recently organized choral group is a boys' chorus directed by Mary Hope Stucky. They have already presented some numbers in the services at the school and in the Cachipay church. The two groups are now working towards a program of sacred music to be presented at the annual convention.

THIS AND THAT

Since publication of the last issue, the clinic has been erected and lacks but a few finishing touches. It has already been used as a guest house.

The school in La Mesa remains closed. In spite of efforts to comply with government requirements, it has been impossible to secure the official license as yet.

The children of the Cachipay school are contributing their tithes to a very important cause this year. During the existence of the school there has been no adequate chapel space, and meetings are held in a large room used for other purposes as well. The students and ex-students are now contributing to a chapel fund in hopes that next year in celebration of the tenth anniversary of the founding of the school the cornerstone may be laid. There is to date about \$500.00 in the fund.

Back at Cachipay in time for his fifth birthday in June was Timothy Stucky who underwent major surgery in Bogota.

COMINGS AND GOINGS

During the past few months those at the Cachipay mission have happily been hosts to a great number of visitors. Among those passing through were:

Mrs. James Little of Bakerstown, Pennsylvania, and Dr. Ruben Wood of Washington, D.C., visiting their sister, Mrs. Gerald Stucky, during the month of July.

Dr. and Mrs. Hector Valencia of Bogota (formerly Mary Becker of this mission) vacationing at the mission farm for a short time in June.

Two groups of young people from a Bogota church who had five day retreats at Cachipay during the June mid-term vacation.

The primary teachers of the large Presbyterian school in Bogota who came for a week-end workshop in arts and crafts directed by Miss Waltner.

Five other groups from Bogota churches who came for one day picnics and outings, and several other friends who spent a few hours with us.

PRAYER AND THANKSGIVING

THANK HIM for the growth in the Christian life witnessed among our believers.
 for our dedicated Voluntary Service Workers and their contribution to
 the mission work.
 for our two newly licensed ministers.

PRAY for our new ministers in their work and study.
 for those who have expressed a desire to serve Christ, but who have not
 the strength to continue.
 for the members and the pastors of the churches that have been closed,
 that they might be spiritually strengthened even while denied Chris-
 tian fellowship with others.

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