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



# COLOMBIAN NEWS

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## INFORMATION SERVICE OF THE MENNONITE MISSION IN COLOMBIA

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### IT COMES ONCE A YEAR

They say that Christmas comes but once a year. Historically that is true, but here in Colombia Christ has been born in the hearts of many new believers during the year. Each time a new person receives Christ as Savior there is renewed reason for the angels to sing.

Christmas celebrations here among the evangelicals differ but little from the celebrations in the States. There is much singing and many Christmas programs. People send Christmas greetings and give gifts. Non-evangelicals shoot fireworks and make merry after the fashion of the world.

"Felices Pascuas" is the Spanish way to say "Merry Christmas." We desire all that and much more for you. We have appreciated your prayers and support during the year. You have helped some to learn about Christ, and have helped others to grow in grace. You have helped us to remain steadfast. You have given generously. We are most grateful.

### AS U.S. SCHOOLS BEGIN - COLOMBIAN SCHOOLS CLOSE

As the last ringing tone of the school bell faded away in the atmosphere of gaiety and enmity, another school year came to a close. Months of studies and varied activities were ended by a program given November 20 in the new chapel. Desiring to give a message through the children, the plays, The Prodigal Son and The Challenge of the Cross, constituted the main part of the program.

We are grateful to God for the victories won in the lives of the children as we live and work with them daily. In a sense, it is just a beginning for much lies ahead of them. Especially are we concerned that the fourteen students who graduated may continue faithful.

### BRINGING IN THE SHEAVES

The heart of all mission work is evangelism. We may teach school, help the poor, teach the ignorant to read, deliver babies, cut hair - but if we forget that the purpose of missions is to evangelize - we are failing.

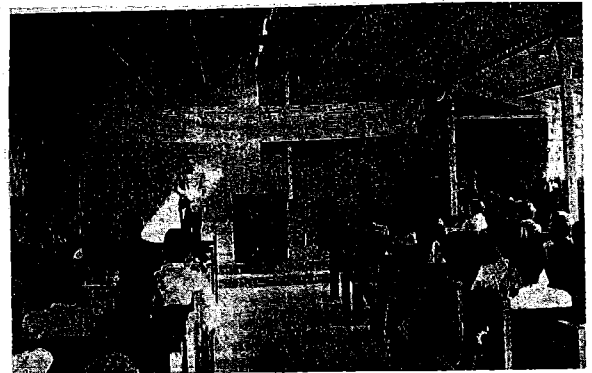
So we try to become all things to all men so that by all means we might win some. Personal evangelism has brought many into the fold. The dynamic of new converts is sometimes wonderful to behold. The selling of literature, and the giving of tracts also helps to illumine the mind.

Evangelistic campaigns are used continuously also. The campaigns are often intensive and if the evangelist speaks from 25 to 30 times in a week he does not complain. Recently a Colombian brother, Guillermo Quiceno, came to bring our churches refreshing messages. But best of all, some precious souls presented themselves at the feet of Jesus for the salvation of their souls.

### SHOWERS OF BLESSINGS



The retreaters were very happy.



The classes were well attended.

July 29 - August 1 were days of spiritual blessings for those who took time to attend the second church retreat of our Mennonite churches in Cachipay. Increased interest and growth in the work were manifested by the attendance which was considerably higher than last year.

Guest speakers were the Rev. Ray Zuercher of Kansas and Rev. and Mrs. Pastor Munoz of the Gospel Missionary Union. A study in the book of Romans, messages on the Christian life, and tithing, classes in hygiene, special classes for children and films were included in the program.

## PROUD PARENTS

When they lived here and we struggled with them through the agonies of learning, we often despaired of their achievements. So it is as proud parents that we view the scholastic advancements of our former students, "our children."

We are especially proud of the scholastic record of our "children" in the secondary school in Bogota - the Colegio Americano. Many of them have taken top honors and are giving a good testimony. In the commercial school in La Mesa, two of our children are at the top also and the director spoke very highly of them. Similar reports come from other schools.

Twelve years has given some of the small ones enough time to grow up and to start work in the business world. They work as office secretaries, telephone operators, mechanics, etc. With parental love we follow them, advising them, and urging them always to walk only with the Lord. The road is long and often very difficult for them - but by the grace of God they will have a God-filled future.

## WHEN TO GET MARRIED

To evangelical young people in Colombia, the problem of marriage is nothing less than a crisis experience. Courtship and marriage presents them with a severe test of their evangelical faith.

Since the evangelical community is probably less than 1 percent of the population, the choice of a Christian mate is difficult. Unfortunately many evangelical young people apparently believing that it is better "to marry than to burn" get married to a non-believer, and then repent at leisure and in sorrow the rest of their lives.

In Colombia, a Protestant wedding ceremony has no legal status. This further complicates the situation for Protestants. The Catholic church can marry Colombians legally, but a Protestant cannot well accept this ceremony because he has to go to confession and communion before the priest will marry him.

The other alternative is a civil marriage in the office of the local judge. This path is full of red-tape and many delays. The one who wants to get married declares himself separated from the official church. The judge notifies the local priest. The local priest then often makes an open scandal of the case and he is permitted to try to persuade the couple to return to the official church. If after about 30 days he has not been able to dissuade the couple, the judge can proceed with the plans for the wedding. He may,



We struggle with them - and hope.



The small ones grew up.



Marriage comes after wedded life.

however, insist that the couple publish their intentions in the local paper or in the paper of the capital of the state. This permits further delays,

Since the official church frowns on civil marriage, it is not considered binding by many. It seems to be considered by some to be only a temporary expedient to be dissolved later if the contracting parties are not satisfied. In that case the thing to do is to get another partner and get "really" married in the church.

Many couples, however, don't bother with any kind of ceremony. They seem to feel that it is too much trouble and besides it creates too many responsibilities. Also when one gets married, the woman is expected to "obey" the husband, and that too is burdensome.

When Christ comes into the lives of these people they then decide to get married. The ceremony, so late in their wedded life, has lost much of the bloom of a wedding, but their friends, the brothers and sisters in Christ, and their children rejoice with them.

#### WHERE DO TEACHERS COME FROM?

It seems to be a bit difficult to become a teacher as soon as one finishes the fifth grade. There are some things that even a fifth grader doesn't know.



But from where shall we get teachers? Our mission doesn't have a secondary school nor a normal training school. Public school education for evangelical young people is out of the question. But our primary schools, like all schools, need teachers.

In Ibague, the Presbyterian Church has a Normal Training School which they have very generously been sharing with us. They have taken in our young people and have given them the same subsidized rates that their own young people receive. They have gone the second mile.

#### Normal School - Ibague

But the school needs teachers too, and besides it needs equipment and supplies. It wants to grow and become the training center for teachers of all groups. As a result, we have been invited to join the Presbyterians on a cooperative basis to help make this school a dynamic training center for Christian young people. It is obviously much cheaper than starting our own school, and also much better.

We will need a missionary couple for the school and also some funds. Help us pray that the Lord will bring to fruition this new step that we desire to take in faith.

#### ITS A LONG ROAD TO CACHIPAY

Many years ago there was a school teacher in the United States who felt called of the Lord to go to Cachipay. She applied to the Mission Board, she applied for a visa, and she prepared herself.

She waited, and waited, and waited. The visa did not come. She prayed. And she waited some more. In the meantime she further prepared herself by working at Grace Bible Institute.

Then the door (an old rusty door, it seemed, for it opens so seldom) slowly began to creak open. The Colegio Americano, the large Presbyterian school in Bogota needed a teacher and thought they would be able to get a visa for her. They said that she could teach with them for two years and then go to Cachipay.

And so, after years of patience and prayer, Huldah Myers will join the staff of our Colombian Mission in Cachipay. The road to Cachipay is literally a rocky, cobblestone road. They are stepping stones however, not stumbling stones. And, he who has faith, arrives.



Huldah Myers

#### REFUGEES FROM EUROPE COME TO CACHIPAY

How much can you say without words? A smile can make friends and music is the universal language, but neither is a very adequate way to say "I want a ham sandwich." Around the first of November a refugee couple from Europe came to stay at the farm for a couple of weeks until further plans could be made for them.



The husband was Bulgarian but had fled to Greece, after spending two years in prison when the Russians took over his country, and there he married an attractive wife from Athens. Although he speaks several languages there was none in common except a few words of English. However, through signs and patience we were able to exchange ideas. Gerald Stucky began the first morning after their arrival to teach them basic phrases and the most necessary words. Learning goes fast when there is a real incentive.

#### Karabatzakofs

Although Makrina and Sava Karabatzakofs stayed at El Recreo less than two weeks, they made them-

selves a part of the life here. After school hours the children enjoyed trying to visit with them or play with them. They have now received employment as caretakers at the English Church in Bogota.

#### VICTOR PULLS THROUGH

Sometimes Victor was such a naughty boy! When mischief was a-brewing, he was often in the middle of it. The black marks chalked up against his name were for just about everything.. ..he didn't do his assigned work, he wasn't conscientious in his studies, he was a very poor example to the smaller boys and he was a thief. Finally it was the last straw, and Victor was expelled. It was not long before he was back with his father, begging to be received again. The promises he made sounded good - from now on he would be the best boy in school - but it was doubtful that he could live up to his promises.

Well, several years have passed, and Victor did live up to his promises. He has been the highest on the merit list for two successive years, and in general has been a good boy. A short time ago he was baptized on profession of his faith in Christ and became a member of the Cachipay church. Now he has finished his schooling here. We don't know where he will be in the future, but hope that Victor will pull through wherever he is even as he has in the past few years.

#### THIS AND THAT

On October 7 the Keiser family was welcomed back to Colombia and on October 30, Janet Soldner left for Berne, Indiana, for nine months of furlough. On the 5th of September John Alden Flickinger was born in Bogota.

The La Mesa school finished its second uninterrupted year of studies after having been closed three successive years previously.

#### PRAYER AND PRAISE

THANK HIM for the victories in the lives of the children in the school  
for the new converts during the evangelistic campaign  
for His abundant blessings during the annual convention

PRAY for your missionaries that they might be Spirit-filled  
for the Christmas programs that they might be used for the salvation of souls  
for Janet Soldner that her furlough may be fruitful  
for the believers in Cachipay, Anolaima, La Mesa, El Recreo, La Estrella,  
Anapoima, Pena Negra, and La Florida  
for new contacts in La Florida.

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