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COLOMBIAN NEWS



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

Cachipay, Cuhd., Colombia, S. A.

INFORMATION SERVICE OF THE MENNONITE MISSION IN COLOMBIA

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AND A MERRY CHRISTMAS TO YOU

Although the leaves are green, the weather is warm, and no Santa Clauses are around--we know that Christmas is here again. During this year Christ has been born anew in the hearts of many Colombians, and it is going to be a wonderful Christmas.

We are so grateful for all of you who have prayed for us and supported us in your thoughts and gifts. You have been so good to us. We, too, pray for you and desire that the Lord may bless you abundantly because you have been faithful to Him, and that this Christmas may be the most blessed of all.

KEISERS LEAVE FOR FURLOUGH

After four years of intensive missionary effort, the Arthur Keiser family leaves for the United States on the fifth of December. This will be their second furlough in nine years and they will be making their home in Quakertown, Pennsylvania.



Arthur has been serving as president and treasurer of the Mission and has been in charge of extension work and evangelism. The churches in La Mesa, Anolaima, and Cachipay, which he has been helping to guide through counselling and preaching, have shown good spiritual growth and are constantly growing in numbers as well.

A program of economic self-aid for poor believers which he developed has received much of his attention and has been a means of helping some in need.

Mrs. Keiser has been an efficient housemother for the girls of the primary school and has given generously of her time in the direction of the work program for the children. She has also been the editor of the Colombian News--which opportunity she now returns to Gerald Stucky.

With Mr. and Mrs. Keiser go their four daughters, Eunice, Mary Beth, Rebecca, and Miriam Ruth. They will all be missed very much during the coming year.

NEW STATION OPENED IN ANAPOIMA

On the 14th of August our veteran and pioneer missionary, Alice Bachert, moved to Anapoima to begin a new center of activity for the Lord. Alice is a very courageous soul who has, in spite of much opposition and difficulty, opened up one new center after another.

About eight years ago she actively opened the work in Anolaima. A few years later she pioneered work in San Javier--a work which later developed into the church at La Mesa. Now she and we are praying that the Lord will richly bless her efforts in Anapoima and will establish a church for His Name.

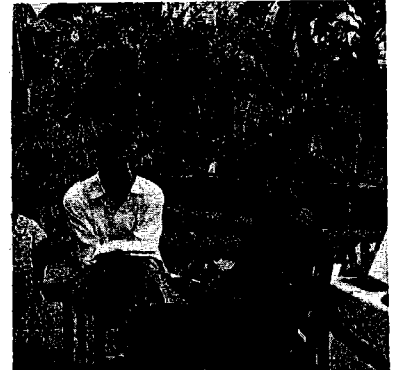
Alice works quietly and like leaven in bread. Already she has won her first convert. With Alice is living Paulina Olarte de Granados, a Colombian woman with a zeal for the Lord. The congregations of La Mesa and of Anolaima are also taking an active interest in the opening of this new work for the Lord.

LAS ESTRELLAS--THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

About a year ago a small man by the name of Juan de Jesus Garzon and his wife appeared at the school and said that they would like to make a decision for Christ. Since they also wanted to put their daughter into the school here, Mr. Stucky wondered just how sincere their desire for the gospel was.

But soon it was not only Juan and his wife, Concepcion, who had accepted the Lord but also their children, Silvia, Julia, Otilia, and Elizabeth. However, Jaime, their son, was holding out. With Jesus in his heart Juan began to evangelize his neighborhood called Las Estrellas (The Stars), a country community about an hour and a half from Cachipay.

Soon he brought a fine young man by the name of Aristobulo. He wanted Mr. Stucky to give some "explanations" about the gospel. Aristobulo also accepted Christ. A little later another young man named Mario came with the



same request and after further instruction made a decision. Mrs. Garzon brought Ana Tulia, a young mother who had been deserted by her husband, and she was added to the fold. Jaime, was now ready to join the family in the gospel, and in his first week as a believer he memorized verse after verse of the Bible. Then Juan brought Luis and Maruja, a young married couple, to whom he had witnessed. They also made immediate decisions for Christ. Luis came later with his brother Reinaldo and three other young men. More "explanations" were given, and they too made professions of faith.



The hand of the Lord has been upon Juan. The Holy Spirit has used his testimony, and he has become bold in spite of those who hate him for the gospel's sake. People call him the "Capatz General" (gospel leader) of the gospel, and they threaten to burn his house.

His home, a humble two room shack, has been opened for meetings which were begun there on the 7th of November. About 30 people attended the first meeting.

CALVIN FLICKINGERS WAITING FOR VISA

A year ago, Mr. and Mrs. Calvin Flickinger went to Costa Rica for the study of the Spanish language. In August application was made to the Foreign Ministry in Bogota for their visas. With the new spirit in the government there is hope that the visas will be granted, but thus far the government has not acted. Prayer and faith will open doors.

CACHIPAY--CENTER FOR SPIRITUAL RETREATS

Although Cachipay is between two and three hours distance from Bogota or any other center of protestant work, yet we frequently have opportunity for fellowship with other groups. Because of our location in the country and the mild climate, the school-farm offers a good place as retreat grounds.

Recently about 60 members of the World Evangelistic Crusade churches spent a Saturday in recreation and spiritual refreshment. Later the leaders and sponsors of the Club Evangelico of the Colegio Americano in Bogota came for a day of Bible study, classes and fun. These forty young people represented the nucleus of the Christian group within the school. After the rush of the closing weeks of school and exams the students of the Lutheran Bible Institute in Bogota wanted to spend two days together in a spiritual retreat. It is encouraging to see young people who have dedicated their lives to the service of Christ in Colombia.

SHE COULDN'T BE MOVED



As it says in Proverbs 27:17, "Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another," so it often seems with evangelical work here in Colombia. Where the evangelicals start a church, if the Catholics don't have one there they soon put one; if the evangelicals open a school, soon there is another across the street; and so it goes. The neglected areas remain neglected.

Across the road from the school here, there is a small private chapel which for years was not used. However the new owners renovated it and held what might be compared to special meetings. At five o'clock in the

morning we were awakened by the sound of hymns--evangelical music at that--which later developed into the Ave Maria and mass, being broadcast over the borrowed amplifier. During the week several priests took part and some sisters from Spain.

One of the chief objects of their efforts was Sra. Veronica de Vargas, who two years ago became an evangelical and who has been a tireless witness to the power of Christ in her life. She lives with her husband and five small children in a small hut beside the road at the edge of the river where many come to bathe and wash. In her new found peace and joy she takes advantage of her many opportunities to tell others of the new life in Christ. Although she can barely read, her knowledge of the Bible is amazing.

One after another of her neighbors, those for whom she worked, and the sisters and priests stopped to invite, cajole or intimidate her into attending the meetings. To all she had a ready answer. To one who suggested that the family might lose their home and work, she replied that she was ready to lose everything rather than to give up her faith in Christ. The sisters, amazed at her knowledge of the Bible in only two years as an evangelical, commented that if she would have known the Bible from childhood that she would be like God! Though at the beginning of the week she was sufficiently frightened that she cried--by the end of the week the power of the Lord had become so manifested in her that she was ready to take on all comers. The Word of God had become a two-edged sword to her and had won for her the respect of her adversaries.

BAPTISMS HELD

Two baptismal services have been held recently. On October 20 three new members were received into the La Mesa church upon the profession of their faith and the receiving of baptism. At the same service the new born babe of one of those baptized was dedicated to God.

On November 10 another baptismal service was held at El Recreo at which time nine young people, the majority from the Cachipay school, were baptized.

FIRST MENNONITE RETREAT HELD

During the last week in July the first Mennonite retreat was held at the Cachipay school grounds. The attendance was good even though many had to return to their homes each evening and come back the next day.

Courses were offered in Bible study, Church history, Personal Evangelism, and Hygiene. Rev. William Easton, missionary of the World Evangelism Crusade in Bogota, participated in these studies as well as the missionaries in Cachipay and national pastors of our church.



It is hoped that in future years this adult retreat can continue and retreats for children can be held as well, as they seem to offer great possibilities for the work of Christ in Colombia.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE HELD

On July 27, Luis Rodriguez, president of the Mennonite Churches in Colombia, opened the annual conferences of the churches. The two main items of business were the committee reports on church discipline and the reformation of the constitution. These committees were directed by the two national pastors.

The new officers elected were: President, Armando Hernandez, ministerial student who has now finished his training; Vice President, Luis Rodriguez, pastor of the La Mesa church; Secretary, Missionary Janet Soldner; and Treasurer, Missionary Alice Bachert.

MARTIN LUTHER FILM SHOWN

The Martin Luther film, with the speaking adapted to Spanish, was shown on three occasions in our churches with large attendances and great interest at each showing. The picture was brought into the country by the Evangelical Lutheran Mission.

FROM MANITOBA TO COLOMBIA

Miss Tina Dueck reports the following in regard to her experience here as a voluntary service worker:

My voluntary service in Colombia began on June fourth. I had left my home with mixed feelings two days before. In one sense I was trembling, but I trusted in the Lord for guidance and journeying mercies.

Much of my time has been spent in sewing. I have had the pleasure of helping the cook in preparing new and different kinds of dishes. Sometimes I could give a helping hand to the missionaries. These children want and need to be loved. May my love have been a blessing to them. I have been in various Colombian homes and have seen the pitiful poverty there. To know the needs of their souls is even more grievous.

The first three months seemed so short that I longed to extend my stay. In order to do this I had to leave the country to renew my permit. I felt led to take a trip to Ecuador. I was glad that Miss Janet Soldner also felt led of the Lord to make the trip. It was an unforgettable trip for both of us. Two places of special interest were the H.C.J.B. Radio Station in Quito and the Gospel Missionary Union Mission Station in Quayaquil.

All too soon I will have to say good-bye to many that have become dear to me.

THIS AND THAT

A wonderful week of fellowship and blessing was had during the month of August when Francisco Lievano--a Colombian Billy Graham-- held special meetings in our churches and school. Numerous people accepted the Lord as Saviour.

The Asiatic Flu hit us with a vengeance. Within about three weeks about 90% of the school and personnel became sick. We were most grateful when the fury of the disease subsided and classes could be resumed.

Our new chapel is nearing completion. In our next issue we hope to have pictures of it and also details of our dedication service. A garage behind the administration building has also been converted into three dormitory rooms. Yes, there will be room for you when you want to come to visit us.

Huldah Myers is finishing her first year's work as teacher in the Colegio Americano in Bogota. Occasionally she has been able to come to Cachipay for a week and so that her body could be where her heart was.

The LaVerne Rutschman family in Uruguay were in an unfortunate auto accident which sent Harriet to the hospital and bruised other members of the family. At the latest report things are again going along well. LaVerne is finishing his second year as instructor in the Memnonite Seminary in Montevideo. The Board of Missions has asked him to continue teaching in the Seminary during 1958.

DOWN THE DRAIN

About six weeks ago Mr. Stucky bought a new toilet fixture for a bathroom that is being built. When the fixture was to be installed, it was no place to be found. A neighbor had probably needed it for his own bathroom. The following week Mr. Stucky went to Bogota to replace the loss. Another toilet was bought and placed in the panel car. About an hour later he parked the car, carefully locked it, and went into a place of business nearby for about 5 to 7 minutes. When he came back to the car, that toilet, too, had disappeared. So sad. Could this be the reason why some trains may simply use holes in the floor?

MINISTERIAL STUDENT FINISHES TRAINING

Graduating from Bible School on November 28th was Armando Hernandez, member of the Cachipay Church and President of the Mennonite Churches of Colombia. He will now become the full-time pastor of one of the churches while Luis Rodriguez continues as pastor of the La Mesa Church.

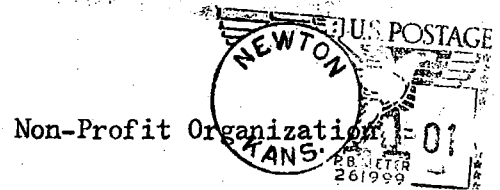
During the summer months Jesus Antonio Sandoval who is just completing his first year of ministerial training will be in charge of another church. Thus, all three organized churches will be under the direction of national workers.

PRAYER AND PRAISE

THANK HIM for calling three Colombian men into full-time service.
for the new group of believers in Las Estrellas and for their leader Juan de Jesus Garzon.
for the success of the retreats held during the year.
for the successful completion of another school year.

PRAY that the Calvin Flickingers may soon be granted the visa for Colombia.
for the reduced missionary staff (4) that they may be greatly strengthened and be equal to the tasks for the rapidly expanding work.
for more voluntary service workers and for the Colombian staff who are carrying more and more of the load of work.
for the continued outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the new work in Las Estrellas.
for God's special blessing upon the new efforts in Anapoima.

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Board of Missions
General Conference Mennonite Church
722 Main Street
Newton, Kansas



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