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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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### MISSION TO CELEBRATE TENTH ANNIVERSARY

Although it is eleven and a half years since the first missionaries, Miss Janet Soldner, Mrs. Mary Becker Valencia, and Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Stucky, came to Colombia, it is now ten years since actual mission work was begun in the Cachipay area.

This rural region was chosen after an extensive survey and has proved to be a fruitful territory. The first project was a home and school for children of parents suffering with leprosy. When Miss Alice Bachert, Rev. and Mrs. LaVerne Rutschman, Rev. and Mrs. Arthur Keiser, and Miss Vernelle Yoder were added to the staff, the

work was expanded and now includes churches in the towns of Cachipay, Anolaima, La Mesa, and preaching places in Pena Negra and San Joaquin.

On Ascension Day in 1947, the Mission celebrated the formal opening of the work, at which time a large group of evangelical friends and well-wishers came from Bogota and elsewhere. On Ascension Day, May 30, of this year, the tenth anniversary will be celebrated. Invitations have been extended to friends and church groups to join with us on this day. A bronze plaque will be erected at the entrance to the grounds, the cornerstone of a new chapel is to be laid, the swimming pool to be dedicated, and special services will be held during the morning and afternoon.

### CHAPEL TO BE CONSTRUCTED

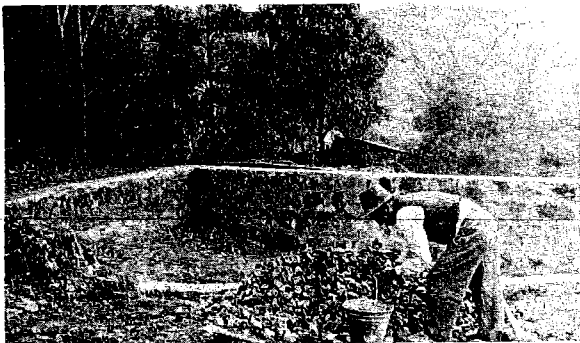
In a picturesque site at the edge of the small river which borders the mission farm, a lot is being prepared for the construction of a chapel. Since the beginning of the work, Sunday school and church services have been held in a room which is inadequate in size, and used for many other purposes as well. On Sunday mornings the benches are crowded to capacity, and when there are special services, there is not room for everyone.

Some months ago the children of the school began giving their tithes toward the construction of a new chapel. Although they have little money, their pennies given month by month have been gathered together into a goodly sum. Former students who are now working have also sent contributions, and sizable gifts have been received from other sources. Now the goal is in sight, and actual construction is soon to begin. Ground-breaking was recently held in the presence of the mission families. As a part of the program commemorating ten years of service in Cachipay, the cornerstone will be laid, with the prayer that this building will be a blessing to the children of the school, a witness to the people of the community, and of service to the Kingdom of God.



### DREAM TO COME TRUE

The seventy-five children who live at the school wanted to have a place to go swimming.....someplace, that is, other than the little brook that vanishes to almost nothing during the dry season, but with the rains becomes rapid, high, treacherous, and dirty.



There was only one way to have such a place... that was to make it themselves. So they started to dig a swimming pool. As their enthusiasm ran high, progress was made, but as the enthusiasm waned, the work slowed down. But they were making progress, even though it would take a long, long time.

Then a generous gift was received from the Union Church (English speaking) of Bogota to be

applied to the completion of the pool. So, with the help of more adequate laborers, the stones which the children had been gathering were piled and cemented into thick walls, and the floor was leveled out. Soon it will be finished, and then the children will have their swimming pool.....a dream come true.

### NEW WORKERS FOR COLOMBIA

Arriving in Bogota early in January to begin work in that capital city was Huldah Myers. Miss Myers has spent the past two summers in Voluntary Service work in Cachipay where she has won a real place in the hearts of the children of the school, and the love of the members of the churches. At the present time she is teaching English in the large Colegio Americano in Bogota and studying Spanish. At the end of a year and a half period she will be coming to the mission station in Cachipay. Huldah is a member of the West Swamp Mennonite Church in Quakertown, Pennsylvania, and more recently has been the librarian and professor of Christian Education at Grace Bible Institute in Omaha, Nebraska.

In San Jose, Costa Rica, enrolled in the School of Linguistics, are the Calvin Flickingers who expect to enter Colombia later this year. For several years they have been desirous of becoming a part of the missionary work here, but due to the great difficulties in securing a visa, they have been unable to come. Now, however, the prospects seem brighter, and we join them in their hopes and prayers for entrance to this country.

### FORMER STUDENTS RETURN AS TEACHERS

Flag raising, February 4, 1957, marked the opening of the eleventh year in the mission school in Cachipay, and in charge were two former students and a former worker, who, after advanced studies, have returned to their spiritual home to assist



in the work of the Lord as teachers. Miss Edilma Gutierrez, having graduated from secondary school, (see Colombian News, Dec., 1956) serves as teachers of the fourth and fifth grades. She was a member of the first graduating class in the Cachipay school, and has previously taught for two years with us. Co-workers with her are Miriam Aranda, also a Cachipay graduate with advanced secondary study, and Virginia Terreros, a

former worker at the mission who has been attending Normal School.

We give thanks to God for these dedicated young women who are willing to give up higher paying positions to come as teachers in a Christian school. In addition to these three, we are also happy to have Ruth Martinez, a Christian girl from Barranquilla, who comes to complete our staff of teachers for 1957. Pictured above are Virginia, Miriam, and Edilma.

### LA MESA SCHOOL RE-OPENS

After a turbulent history of being closed three times by local authorities, the La

Mesa school has again been opened, this time with slightly brighter prospects for the future. In 1955 the school was organized for the children of the Christians in this small town who have no opportunity of studying in any other school because of their Christian beliefs, but it was soon closed for lack of an official license to operate. Although an application for this license was presented to the Ministry of Education almost two years ago, it has still not been granted.

At the end of the 1956 school year, however, an official statement was given that the application had been made and was being acted upon. With this in hand, the school was opened for the fourth time. It is being taught by our student pastor, Armando Hernandez, and by Beatriz Tarquino of the La Mesa church, who has completed two years of Normal School training in Ibague. At the present time there is an enrollment of 17.

### THE DIARY OF A PREMATURE

Since I couldn't wait any longer to see what this world was like, I made my debut on the 25th of February. Dear me! What a surprise! I landed in one of the darkest rooms you ever saw. The four walls surrounding me were of bamboo covered in some places with mud or paper to keep the rain from coming in through the cracks. What a dreary place! My great-grandmother was the one to bless my first breath. I was expecting to see a nurse there to receive me, but she didn't make it in time; I guess I was in too big a hurry. It's too bad that I was, as I now realize I am too tiny to be in this world; after all, I weigh just a little less than four pounds. Was I ever delighted when finally the nurse came to my rescue! I was a bit chilly lying there on the hard boards which were only covered with a straw mat. The nurse said that they would have to wrap me up better and put cotton next to my body. Grandmother found a few more pieces of material; so little by little they wrapped me up in swaddling clothes. They didn't have things ready for me as they weren't expecting me to bounce in on them so soon. My mommy, who is twenty years old, had whooping cough not so long ago, she says. I hope she doesn't cough any more; that would be fatal for me.

My great-grandparents and other relatives came to this area for refuge, as the bandits made them leave their farms and flee for their lives. They cannot go back to their farms because they might lose their lives if they would attempt to do so. Once they were land-owners; now they have to work as peons.

The nurse has visited me frequently, and one day she paid us an extra long visit because it started to rain and she had to stay awhile longer. She again tried to impress upon mamacita the importance of giving me good care if I were to stay in this world. Sometimes I think that her instructions aren't always followed, as very often I find myself feeling chilly.



They are thinking about taking me to Cachipay (over a half an hour's walk from here) to be baptized. The nurse told them it would be very dangerous for them to take me out.

I do not know what they have decided about that. My mother said that since I was so little and my life was only hanging on a string as it were, that I might die, and therefore it would be well to have me baptized. The nurse told mommy that Jesus loves tiny babies and that little ones go to be with Him if they die. Mother rather seemed to agree that little ones are safe in the arms of Jesus. I ask myself why my mother always wears that scapulary around her neck, and why does she call on the virgin so often. Can it be that she does not trust Jesus? My mother is now reading some tracts that the nurse gave her. Please pray for her and for the little ones in Colombia like myself who are born into homes where Christ is not known as the Saviour of Mankind.

### WORK OPENED IN SAN JOAQUIN

Several months ago, Luis, one of our young evangelists, began to visit the small town of San Joaquin, where several evangelical families are living. In the beginning his visits were informal ones in their homes, but after a time they expressed the desire to have regular church services. As a result of this interest, a room was rented, and the first meeting was held in February.

About fifteen of the members of other churches went along to be present at this first service. It had no sooner begun than two armed policemen appeared in the doorway. At first it was not apparent whether this was good or bad, but presently they began to control the mob that was gathering outside. Some of those present sat on borrowed chairs, for there were no benches as yet. The rest stood towards the back of the room. Close by a blacksmith began to pound on some iron to try to drown out the meeting. The hate he expressed by each blow could be felt, but eventually he tired and stopped. The two policemen continued to control the increasing mob. It was certainly not the most conducive setting for a worshipful attitude.

As the visiting group boarded the train for their return trip to Cachipay, they were threatened with attack by the mob which by that time had moved to the train station. After boarding the train, the conductor attempted to prohibit their riding. In spite of the opposition, meetings have continued, although there are constant interruptions and attempts to stop them.

### ULAJE MEETS IN BARRANQUILLA

The fourth congress of the Union of Latin American Evangelical Young People was held in Barranquilla from December 10 to 20, 1956. From all over Latin America and the United States came serious youth to confront the problems of the Evangelical cause in these troubled countries. The theme of the conference was "Good News to the Poor, and Liberty to the Captives." The present situation, religious liberty, and social justice, were discussed, but at the heart of the whole conference was the theme of evangelism. Efforts were made to reanimate the youth of Latin America toward a more comprehensive and deeper program of reaching our fellow men.

For the deepening of the spiritual lives of the members of the conference, special Bible studies in Amos, Romans, and Jude were directed by invited leaders, among whom was Gerald Stucky of our mission.

### THE THIEF IN THE NIGHT

It seemed strange that there was no water early that Sunday morning, and then we thought we had found the cause, for the water pipes had been slashed in several places. But alas! That was not all. Further investigation revealed that the clorinator had been stolen. Since the only source of water is the small river which is used as laundry, and as a bath by both people and animals of the surrounding territory, the seriousness of the theft can be understood.

Several years ago the purchase of a clorinator was made possible by gifts given in memory of Mrs. Frank Wood, mother of Mary Hope Stucky. This made unnecessary the boiling of water for such a large group of people. As a partial measure to provide pure water for the children of the school, storage tanks for rain water have been installed in each house.....but we shall miss that clorinator!

### HERE AND THERE

Returning to Colombia in December was Alice Bachert. Her first few days in the country were spent in the Baptist Clinic in Barranquilla where she underwent surgery, and at the present time she is living in that coast city where her address is: Carrera 45, #61-59, Barranquilla

Joining the Cachipay mission family was Miriam Ruth Keiser, born in Bogota on January 21, and completing a quartet of girls in the Keiser home.

Vernelle Yoder, who completed her first term of service and returned home for furlough early in December, is now traveling in Canada presenting the message of Christ's work in Colombia. Those wishing to correspond with her may mail letters to her home, Route 1, Geneva, Indiana.

### THANKSGIVING AND PRAYER

THANK HIM for the opening of the school in La Mesa  
for the arrival of Huldah Myers in Colombia  
for Christian teachers for the new school year  
for dedicated pastors, teachers, Sunday school  
teachers, and members who are faithful in  
their Christian testimony



PRAY FOR the six former students now attending secondary school in the Colegio Americano in Bogota  
for the three former students in the Presbyterian Normal School in teacher-training  
for the newly begun work in San Joaquin  
for Huldah Myers in her work and language study  
for the Calvin Flickingers in their language study in Costa Rica  
for Vernelle Yoder on her furlough and in her itineration work.