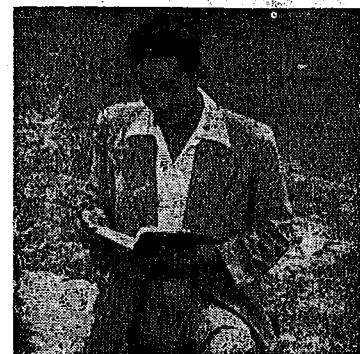


THIS IS A  
CALL TO PRAYER  
FOR  
THE LORD'S WORK  
IN  
COLOMBIA

# COLOMBIAN NEWS



Cachipay, Cund., Colombia, S. A.

## INFORMATION SERVICE OF THE MENNONITE MISSION IN COLOMBIA

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### CLOSING EXERCISES ARE HELD

The sixth annual closing exercises were held in our school for healthy children of leper parents in Cachipay on the 21st of November.

The closing programs that we have are similar to what one might expect in any school in the States. The audience is somewhat different in that one sees many persons in it with the tell-tale marks of leprosy. The parents seem to marvel at the growth their children have made, and express deep gratitude for the care their children have received.

Three of the children "graduated" from the fifth grade--two brothers and a sister. It takes many of the children seven to nine years to pass the five grades of our primary school.

The reasons for this are several. There seems to be some correlation between leprosy, poverty, and mental slowness. The entrance test of many of the children indicates an IQ of 65 to 85. The work that these children later do in the school classroom seems to justify the IQ classification.

Then the school program of studies that the government requires is exceedingly concentrated and difficult even for the children that

are gifted mentally. Civics, history and geography are required in the first grade--besides the three Rs. Fifth graders are expected to know and understand algebra and geometry. The other grades are correspondingly difficult.

The children are obviously most happy when they get "promoted." But--if they fail the year they take it rather philosophically. The next year they will be the "smart" ones in their class.

#### HABAKKUK FOUND IN ANOLAIMA

Fifty years ago C. P. Chapman of the Gospel Missionary Union and Alexander Allen of the Presbyterian Mission, in a tour of Colombia, preached in the market place in the town of Anolaima. They sold Bibles. They aroused interest. Evangelical workers were few, and it was impossible to follow up their work.

Some 15 years later Mr. Allen found it possible to visit Anolaima periodically to preach in the plaza and hold meetings in private homes. Interest was keen, and the attendance was good. But he was unable to continue. There was no one to take his place. The work so well begun faded away, and, it seemed, was forgotten.

When Alice Bachert began working in Anolaima in 1948 no one seemed to know anything about the Gospel. Through much prayer and perseverance a new group was formed. As many as 50 attended the meetings.

While Alice Bachert was on furlough, Arthur and Helen Keiser continued the work there. During this period opposition became intense finding its climax in a barrage of stones. Fear struck the believers and sympathizers. For a time it was impossible to have meetings. Even when it was again possible, few dared to attend.

A few months ago it appeared that things were calm once again. Our national worker held some meetings, and LaVerne Rutschman began to visit the believers. Attendance increased. Aware of what was happening, the priest ordered the police to arrest anyone who distributed tracts. His threats intimidated some of the sympathizers. Fear keeps them away again.

But there is a nucleus of believers that refuses to be intimidated. Among them is Don Habakkuk, a man 76 years old. Thirty five years ago he defended the evangelical missionary and became a believer, the only remaining member of the original group. Only a few weeks ago did he learn of the presence of an evangelical group in Anolaima. "In all of these years," he said, "I have not forsaken my religion." Today he is not concerned about the opposition. He attends the meetings faithfully.

#### THE GOSPEL CHANGES A WOULD-BE MURDERER

Two years ago Anselmo and his father carried a gun as well as a machete. They threatened to kill their neighbor, Wenslerlao, an evangelical sympathizer who had opened his home for gospel meetings.

Not long after this threat Anselmo's young wife, a girl only 15 years old, became seriously ill. She was taken to the hospital by Gerald Stucky in the mission station wagon.

During that time God began working in the lives of all involved. Soon the two families began worshiping and studying the Bible together. On January 1, Anselmo, his wife, Wenslerlao and his wife plan to be baptized together--brothers and sisters in the family of God.

## SOULS CAN BE BOUGHT ONLY WITH THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB

"Sir, I would like to speak with you a few moments," an old lady in Cachipay told missionary Rutschman Rastunk. "I would like," said she, "to accept your religion, but I want you to help me rent a room."

This demonstrates one of our greatest problems. Our hearts go out to the needy--ill-clad, ill-fed, ill-housed and illiterate. But through such aid there is always the danger of being accused of buying souls.

With new refugees the danger is increasing. Pray that God may give us wisdom and discrimination in alleviating the condition of those in want that through such efforts many will find the Savior.

## ALICE BACHERT FORCED OUT OF HOUSE IN SAN JAVIER

For about eight months Miss Bachert has been doing a valient piece of missionary work in the small town of San Javier. In her quiet way she has attracted numerous souls to the gospel.

The opposition from the local priest has been fierce however, and has caused almost every sympathizer and believer to leave town. The priest has tried to drive her out of town, and although he has failed in this, she was forced to leave her apartment.

But the Lord oportunely has sent an evangelical family to the town. This family has gladly opened its doors to Miss Bachert, who continues to witness cheerfully to the saving grace of Christ.

## NURSE SOLDNER BUSY WITH CHICKEN POX PATIENTS

During the months of October and November the school children experienced their first full scale attack of a communicable disease.

Chicken pox attacked Eunice Keiser as she was about to leave with her parents for the United States. At about the same time a number of the children began to have fever and feel ill. Soon thereafter more than 15 children were suffering small pox at the same time. Before the siege was over 24 children came down with the illness.

## NEW TEACHER EXPECTED

The Lord willing, Miss Vernelle Yoder of Berne, Indiana, is expected to arrive within the next few weeks. Pray that nothing may hinder her entrance.

## REQUESTS FOR PRAYER

1. Give thanks for the seven souls that were baptized in Oct.
2. Pray that the Lord will fully prepare the group that is to be baptized on New Year's day.
3. Pray that the many sympathizers may surrender their hearts to the Lord and be saved.
4. Pray that the doors of San Javier may be opened wide to the gospel.
5. Pray that the Keiser family on furlough may be refreshed physically and spiritually and may be used of God in the States.
6. Pray that Miss Soldner's nursing opportunities may bring many souls into His Kingdom.
7. Pray that the Rutschman family may be especially used in the evangelistic program that they are in charge of.
8. Pray that the Stucky family may be used to win the boys and girls to Christ and that these may grow in grace.

KEISERS ON FURLOUGH

On October 24th, Arthur and Helen Keiser with their two small daughters Eunice and Mary Beth boarded a plane in Bogotá for the States. That same evening they arrived safely in Miami.

At the present time they are visiting their families and friends. They are also being kept busy in deputation work. Anyone wishing to contact them can do so by writing to them at P.O. Box 772, Modesto, Calif.

PLEASE DON'T THROW THEM AWAY

If God has blessed you with friends, and if they have sent you Christmas greetings during this Christmas season--be grateful.

If you don't care to save all of the greeting cards, and if you don't know what to do with them, and if you would like for them to bring blessings to others--be generous.

If you send them to us, we will give them to many poor people that will be very pleased to receive such beautiful cards, and you can be assured that they will be grateful--thank you.

IT IS DIFFICULT TO GET MARRIED

The universal desire for young people to get married is strongly felt in Latin young men and women.

This urge is so strong that it is frequently said that 99% of the young men have marital relations before marriage--and it seems to be uncondemned by society. Girls are expected to keep pure--but not to be married by the age of 19 or 20 is a near tragedy. By that age they seem to be willing to take most anybody.

Many families are established by parents who never have a marriage ceremony performed. This is due to the expense of getting married (as well as being inconvenient), and perhaps also to the fact that the Catholic church ceremony is known to be binding with no divorces allowed--and many prefer to be able to dissolve the partnership when they want to.

The Catholic church has a near monopoly on the marriage ceremony. Civil marriages are possible with a great amount of red tape--but are looked down on by society as not being binding. A marriage performed by a protestant pastor has no legal standing at all.

Since the evangelicals (protestants) are a relatively small group here, it is often very difficult for evangelical girls and boys to find suitable partners in their own faith. In fact, it may be next to impossible. The situation brings a very severe trial of faith.

An evangelical couple that wishes to get married has to publicly renounce their allegiance to the Catholic church, go through much red tape and delay to be married civilly. For one of our young couples this has been going on for about three months--and they aren't married yet!

An evangelical couple that is married civilly is then married again in the evangelical church by their pastor. The couple thus being twice-married has the blessing of the State and the church i.e. the protestant church.