

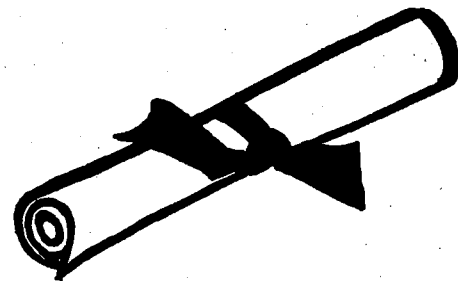
DECEMBER 1967

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



COLOMBIAN NEWS

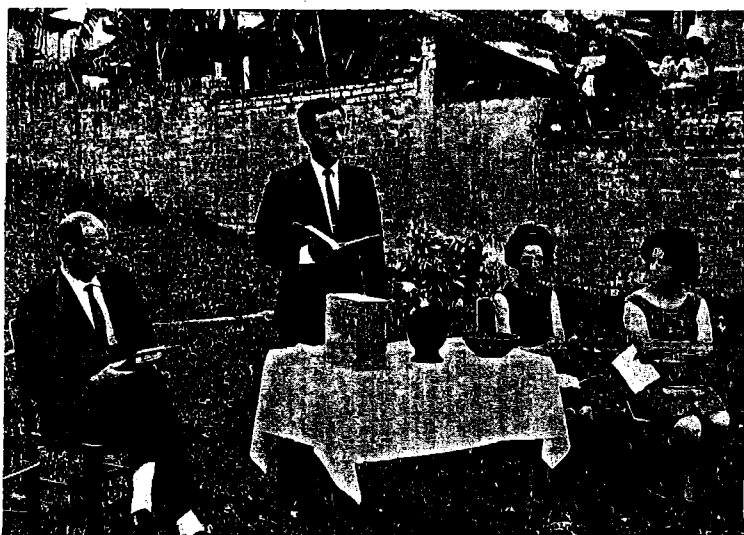
NUMBER FORTY-NINE



Cachipay, Cund., Colombia, S. A.

GRADUATION TIME

INFORMATION SERVICE OF THE MENNONITE MISSION IN COLOMBIA



Anolaima ground-breaking ceremony

ANOLAIMA BUILDS CHURCH

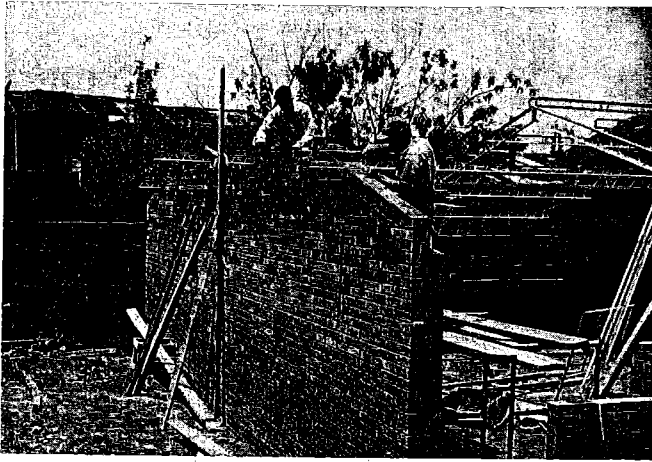
Those readers who have received Colombian News through the years will connect the name "Anolaima" with conservatism, fanaticism, and persecution. Work in this town of about 4000 inhabitants was initiated by missionary Alice Bachert almost twenty years ago during a difficult period in Colombian history which was marked by a bloody struggle between liberals and conservatives. Missionaries and Christians alike felt the consequences of the fear and prejudice engendered in such times. The home of missionaries Arthur and Helen Keiser was stoned by an angry priest-incited mob; believers were forced to flee to Cachipay for

refuge, their lives threatened; and blind Tulio Pedraza lost his business twice. For a year and a half the small church was driven underground, but even after open meetings were resumed with the help of LaVerne Rutschman in 1952, the believers continued to suffer ostracism. Fear kept away all but the most faithful.

These dramatic beginnings were followed by years of struggle as the little church sought to remain true to the Lord and to grow numerically and spiritually. Under the direction of various national workers, some more capable than others, the work underwent many vicissitudes.

In 1954 a house was bought and remodeled to serve as church and Sunday school and occasionally as day school. With an eye to the future a good-sized lot was purchased about six years later.

It is on this lot that the present activity is taking place. Two years ago George and Margaret Ediger took up residence in Anolaima to help the struggling group get on its feet. The smoldering fires of zeal were fanned in the older believers as new souls began to be added to the church. It soon became apparent that the present quarters were inadequate to carry on a full church program, being overcrowded during special services, and lacking facilities to expand the Sunday school.

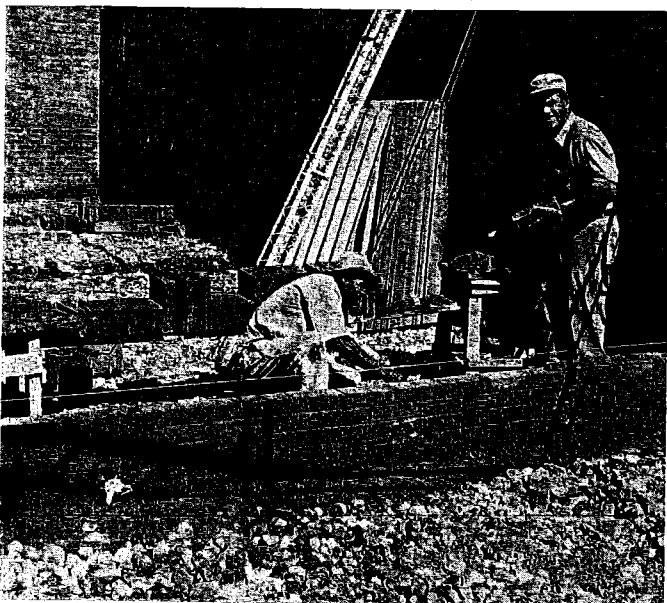


View of back of church

Construction of the church was begun immediately afterward. Styled after the churches in Cachipay and La Mesa, it is a brick structure supported by prefabricated steel columns and rafters with asbestos roofing. The work is being carried on in part by hired help, the majority of them evangelicals, and in part by the voluntary assistance of church members.



Christian volunteers at work



Ediger working on Sunday school

On August 27, 1967, the old dream of a larger church home began to become a reality as the ground-breaking ceremony was held to initiate the construction. Almost all Mennonite pastors and missionaries participated in the ceremony, as well as the mayoress of Anolaima, pictured seated to the right of main speaker for the event, Armando Hernandez, of Ibague. The mayor-ess' promise to support the work was a sign that the age of fanaticism and active persecution has passed and a new era of freedom to worship and to witness has dawned for Anolaima.

On October 17 Solomon Ediger of Buhler, Kansas, his trip paid by the members of the Bethel Mennonite Church of Inman, Kansas, arrived to put in one month of voluntary service as a bricklayer. His help has been invaluable in almost completing all the brick work of the Sunday school and parsonage, in helping to increase the efficiency of the other workers, and in animating the believers as they witnessed the rapid progress of the construction. His one month of work has probably put the construction ahead by two months. It is hoped that by mid-February the total project will be completed.

EVANGELISM-IN-DEPTH

In 1968, with the help of God, Colombia will launch into an Evangelism-in-Depth program. This will be a joint effort of many of the missions working in Colombia.

The Mennonite mission has promised substantial financial support as well as Janet Soldner as a full-time worker. Her work will begin as of January 1968. She will likely be helping with the organization of the program, and, as a nurse, she has volunteered to take part in any of the "Good-Will" caravans which are an integral part of Evangelism-in-Depth.



Already prayer cells have been organized in the churches. Can you imagine what four thousand prayer cells will do, involving thousands of believers praying for the evangelization of Colombia? There is no doubt that God will do great things, as these prayers shall be as incense rising to the throne of God.

All friends of the Colombian mission can have a part in this effort for the growth of God's kingdom. You who are reading this can help by praying and giving to the Board of Missions, so that they can meet the responsibility which is ours. Your men's brotherhood, your missionary societies, your midweek prayer groups can share in this ministry. We have the words of the prophet Joel, "Fear not, O land, be glad and rejoice: for the Lord will do great things."



IOWA COUPLE JOINS VS UNIT IN BOGOTA

Sam and Mary Augspurger are the fourth couple to join the rapidly growing voluntary service group in Bogota. They both graduated from Bluffton College in 1966. At present they are teaching conversational English in the Centro Colombo-Americano School. Their term of service is two years.

JULIA SCHUTZ TAKES STUDY FURLOUGH

Miss Julia Schutz left Colombia on November 24, for her home in Pandora, Ohio, after almost two years of teaching in the mission schools. She has been director of the Colegio Menno in La Mesa during 1967. Her plans are to study at the Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Indiana, for one year, after which she will return to the teaching ministry in Colombia.





Mary Valencia counseling children

SPIRITUAL EMPHASIS

The students of the Colegio Americano in Cachipay were privileged to have as their guest speaker, Mrs. Hector Valencia for three days of spiritual refreshment and counseling. Mary Valencia, formerly Becker, was among the first Mennonite missionaries to arrive in Colombia, and is now the wife of the director of the normal school in Ibague.

SPORTS

A first for the Cachipay School this year has been the participation in a tournament between schools of the area. There were girls' and boys' divisions in track, basketball, volleyball, and soccer.

Not only did the school win two trophies and three medals, but also it developed a closer school spirit, greater sportsmanship, and a better relationship with the Catholic schools of the area.



Sports parade in Cachipay



GRADUATION - 1967

Final exams - sorting books - cleaning classrooms - practices and more practices - wiping of tears as the fifth graders realize that they will not be returning next year. On November 19 the closing program of the Cachipay school was held. There were fifteen graduates who received their diplomas. The speaker for this important event was Dr. Robert Lazear, director of the Presbyterian school in Bogota.

LA MESA SCHOOL CLOSING

At La Mesa the school year closed on November 17 with a musical program by the first and second graders. This little children's chorus, directed by Miss Julia Schutz, presented the songs they had learned during their televised music classes.

The school at La Mesa was directed by Miss Julia Schutz this year, who taught first and second grades, while Miss Egda Chuquin taught third and fourth. The pastor's wife, Mrs. Jaime Caro, and Miss Janet Soldner assisted in the teaching program.

The school has contributed to the growth of the church during the last few years.



La Mesa student

WEDDING BELLS

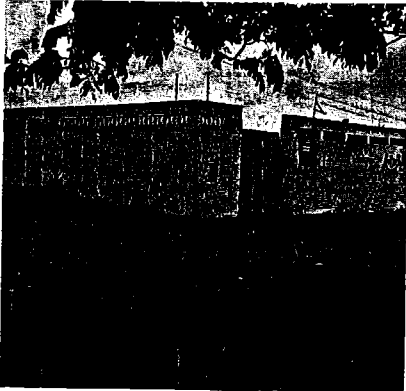
August 19-- a special day for the chapel at the Colegio Americano-- why? It was going to be the scene of a lovely wedding - the first one ever to be held in this chapel.

The couple who were united in marriage were Mery Rodriquez and Luis Rodriquez. Both Mery and Luis have been active workers. Mery taught school for two and a half years and Luis has pastored both the La Mesa and the Cachipay churches.



LOT PURCHASED IN IBAGUE

On November 23 the building committee of the Ibague church completed the purchase of an excellent building site. The acquisition of the property was made possible by a loan granted by Church Extension Services, Inc. Plans are to conduct services in one part of the site which is already under roof. The present occupants will be allowed to continue renting the remaining two sections of the lot, thus helping to repay the loan.



RADIO MINISTRY IN IBAGUE

The radio ministry is proving to be an effective arm of the church in Ibague. Every Sunday at 1:00 p.m. Armando Hernandez, pastor of the church, conducts a half-hour radio program, in response to which he has received numerous letters as well as visits in the home. He centers his message around some problem, often suggested in the letters he receives, giving the Christian answer to the situation, and ending with an invitation to receive Christ.



PRAISE AND PRAYER

PRAISE God for the response of Christians in Anolaima and North America toward the building program.

PRAISE God for those Christians in North America interested in voluntary service in Colombia.

PRAISE God for the successful launching of a Sunday school program in the Bogota church.

PRAY for Bertha Mae Reiff as she assumes the directorship of the Cachipay school.

PRAY for Vernelle Yoder as she returns to take charge of the La Mesa school.

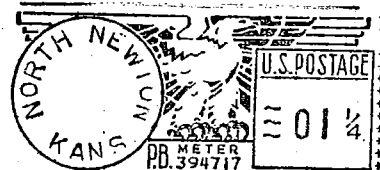
PRAY for Peter Harder as he faces the difficult problems involved in community development.

PRAY for national workers and missionaries as they seek to labor together for Christ.

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CANADIAN WORKERS ARRIVE

John and Elma Wiebe and their three girls, Sheila, Debbie, and Cindy arrived in Colombia on August 7 after completing a year of language study in Costa Rica.

The Wiebes come from Manitoba, Canada. They are members of the Carrot River Mennonite Church in Saskatchewan, where John was pastor for three years.

John and Elma will be serving the church in La Mesa where John will be the pastor starting January 1968. Since their arrival they have started an adult educational program and John has also helped in literature distribution.

CHRISTMAS MEDITATION

"What's in a name?" asked Shakespeare. To him, nothing. But the name Emmanuel, given to Jesus, means "God with us." Isaiah spoke of Emmanuel's coming, Isaiah 7:14, signifying that God would be with Israel as its protector, and the birth of Jesus was a sign or pledge of it. The angel in Matthew 1 promised not only that He would be with us, but that He would also "save His people from their sins." Jesus himself promised, "I am with you always," and "him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." His promise remains true. The question is whether we are personally always thus experiencing Emmanuel!

Changes of Address for 1968

Miss Janet Soldner - Cachipay, Cund., Colombia
Miss Vernelle Yoder - Colegio Menno, Calle 6#21-69, La Mesa, Cund., Colombia
Miss Julia Schutz - Mennonite Biblical Seminary, 3003 Benham Avenue, Elkhart, Indiana 46514



Wiebes to La Mesa