

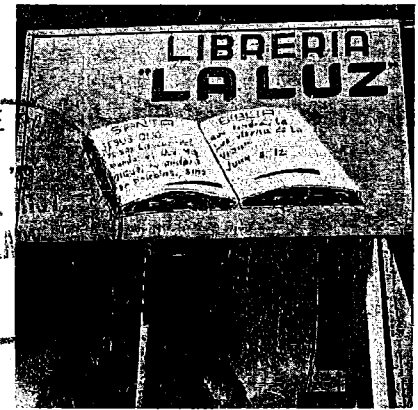
DECEMBER 1968

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

# COLOMBIAN NEWS



NUMBER FIFTY-TWO



Cacnipay, Cund., Colombia, S. A.

## INFORMATION SERVICE OF THE MENNONITE MISSION IN COLOMBIA

### VOLUNTEERS IN ACTION

Voluntary service is a most unusual outfit. The pay is ridiculously low; the chance for promotion is less than dazzling. It is no place for the self-centered and the weak. Only those with the love of Christ in their hearts and a compassionate spirit can make it. You work in a union shop, the organization of which you are a member is the Christian church. The fringe benefit received is the rich education derived from the experience. Most voluntary service workers feel that they have received more than they have given.

Voluntary service might be described as Christian young people with various talents and experiences, traveling to take part in an experience of living together sacrificially with other Christians and of extending Christ's compassion in word and deed, in ways both large and small, under the guiding hand of the church. The desired ends are that those served may respond in loyalty to Christ and His church and that those who serve may return home better prepared to participate in the total mission of the church.

Voluntary service is both a personnel resource to the "mission enterprise" of the church and a training opportunity for those who participate as volunteers. Because of its short-term character, there is a flexibility which can be used for experiments and special projects. Voluntary service often provides the environment for personality development. Being thrust into a strange culture, with its language, people, and way of life, the volunteer has to make difficult adjustments. One's reactions to the new culture often manifest themselves in strange ways, serving to draw out certain facets of the personality and to push back others. Voluntary service is, for many, a chance to see

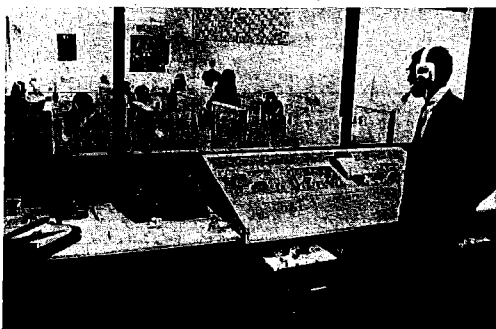
and experience what is happening on the cutting edge of Christianity. It gives young people a firsthand view of missions and missionaries. The voluntary service worker does not merely walk away at the end of his term of service; he has a debt. He has a mandate to share, throughout his life, the insights gained through this experience with the fellow Christians whom his life may touch.



Since its inception in 1966, the Colombian Voluntary Service Unit has been steadily growing until its membership now numbers eleven. It is unique in that it was conceived to be a self-supporting entity in a foreign country.

Perhaps because of this concept, more than any other reason, the unit has assumed an urban and institutional orientation, though this has changed somewhat in the course of time. Four couples are currently in the capital city of Bogota.

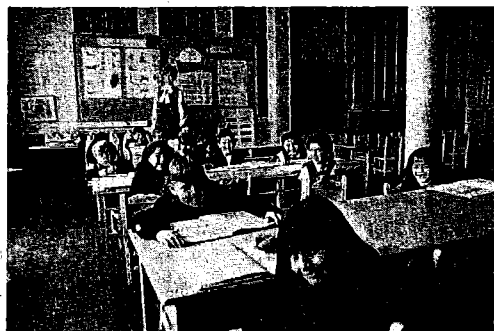
Barton and Judy Sprunger are teachers at Colegio Nueva Granada where Barton teaches three classes of high school physics, one class of algebra and one of junior high math. Judy has a second grade class of twenty-eight students. Colegio Nueva Granada is a bicultural school which caters to the needs of North Americans and upper-class Colombians. The school offers primarily a college preparatory course in English. The unit looks to Barton and Judy to provide a large percentage of their financial support.



Sam

Sam and Mary Augsburgers are serving as English teachers in the Centro Colombo Americano. Jointly sponsored by the Colombian and United States governments, the Colombo is often described as a bicultural center. Primarily it provides English instruction and bilingual secretarial studies to 4000 students. The nine preliminary courses and three conversation courses enjoy such wide popularity because of the economic implications that the English language has today. The Colombo also provides for cultural exchanges such as concerts and art exhibits, and houses one of the largest English libraries in Colombia. Through their work there Sam and Mary meet a wide range of young people from every corner of the social spectrum.

Acting directress of Colegio United States is Judy Kagele. Judy added a measure of stability to the school when she began her work in January 1968. Judy taught music and reading in addition to some administrative duties but soon had to leave the classroom in order to devote full time to the administration of the school upon the departure of the former directress. Colegio United States offers a college prep course of study in English. The school with an enrollment of about 225 students serves middle-and upper-middle class students, most of whom some day hope to study abroad. Jerry Kagele has been associated throughout



Judy

1968 with Evangelism-in-Depth, serving primarily as photographer and office manager. His duties have taken him to almost every part of Colombia and he has participated in every major thrust of this year's campaign on the national, zonal, and regional levels.



John

Sandra Zerger teaches English in Colegio Americano, a Presbyterian school of about 1000 students which offers elementary and high school. All courses are in Spanish and lead to the bachillerato degree, the equivalent of high school graduation. Colegio Americano, founded 100 years ago, is said to be the oldest Protestant school in South America. John Zerger serves the voluntary service unit as director and administrator, as well as being treasurer of the Colombian Mennonite Mission. Glen Klaassen, director of the mission is grateful to John for the invaluable assistance he gives in the time-consuming legal matters and countless errands to be run in Bogota.

With the arrival of Steve and Elizabeth Pankratz in December of 1967, a rural thrust was begun. Living at the mission school at Cachipay, both have the responsibility of teaching in the school there. Steve also teaches English three days a week in the parochial school at Cachipay. Steve and Elizabeth came to Cachipay for the specific purpose of aiding community development work being carried on by the Mennonite Mission. The tasks in this phase of Steve's work are, of course, many and varied. The Pankratzes were joined in August of 1968 by Lynn Groff. Lynn lives with two Colombian fellows who are participating in the self-styled "trainee" program innovated as part of the general community development program. Community development has come to include a broad spectrum of avenues for the church to express its social concern. In cooperation with mission personnel these people envision a fully-integrated program of mutual guidance, help, and growth, and are working hard to implement their ideas within the bounds of their limited time structure.



Steve

To be certain, we must be realistic in assessing the things that we can hope to accomplish through this arm of the church which we call voluntary service. We must constantly make ourselves aware of changing structures, circumstances, and situations and react accordingly.

Voluntary service is truly an unusual outfit; those who come in the name of service are those who have the courage to take advantage of the opportunity.



Lynn

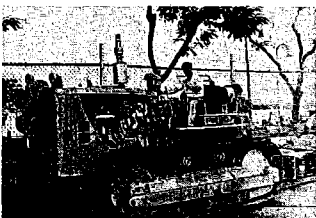
#### INTRODUCING NEW WORKERS

Lynn Groff is the first unmarried person to join the voluntary service unit in Colombia. He will work in community development along with Steve Pankratz and Pete Harder at Cachipay. He is a recent graduate of Bethel College in Newton, Kansas, having majored in sociology. Lynn's vital interest in people and athletics is a real asset to the work being carried on in the rural area of Cachipay.

Barton and Judy Sprunger arrived August 15, 1968. Their home church is First Church in Berne, Indiana. Judy graduated from Taylor this year and Bart from Purdue, following which they were married on June 15. Both are teaching in Nueva Granada.



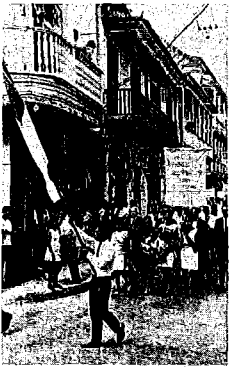
Sprungers



#### FLASH! BULLDOZER ARRIVES

After almost a year of waiting, the Cachipay area is happy for the arrival of a D7 Caterpillar, donated by the U. S. Agency for International Development. Present roads will be improved and new ones built.

## THE FINAL THRUST OF EVANGELISM-IN-DEPTH



During the fall months, Evangelism-in-Depth has focused upon the national campaign scheduled for December 1-15. This was a wonderful opportunity for Bogota, the Athens of South America. Various regional campaigns were also carried on throughout the country. A highlight of every campaign was the grand united parade through the streets of the city. Janet Soldner, assistant national coordinator of children's work, reports that over 6000 children have made decisions through clubs, camps, and rallies.



Evangelism-in-Depth not only proclaims the good news of God's love, but also demonstrates it. Each month since July a medical caravan, consisting of doctors, nurses, a dentist, an agriculturalist, a children's worker, a literacy worker, evangelists, and lay helpers, has gone out to needy areas where medical services are not available. The varied services makes a great impact on the total community. These caravans are held where there is some Christian witness so the local pastor can do follow-up work. Both Janet Soldner and Jerry Kagele have served on caravans.

Throughout the latter part of the year, an intensive literacy program has also been carried on. ALFALIT, a Christian organization which provides literature for the illiterate and semi-illiterate, and trains lay people to teach how to read, has an advisor in Colombia. Since 32 percent of Colombians are totally illiterate, this work is very important. Christ was concerned about the whole man. Should we be any less concerned?



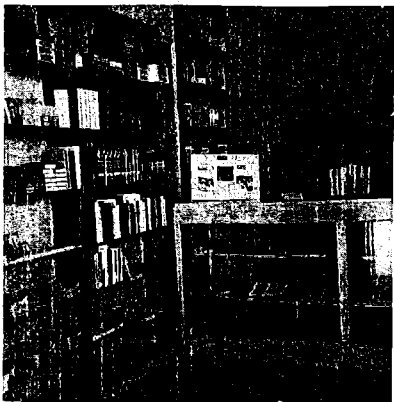
TV program

## ACTIVITIES ON THE LOCAL LEVEL

In the Anolaima-Cachipay-LaMesa area various important activities have been held in conjunction with Evangelism-in-Depth. The women held two concentrations at which attendance from various churches was good. Besides an evangelistic message, the subject "Sexual Education of Children" was ably treated by Mrs. Eleanor Lazear of the Presbyterian Church.

A highlight was the final united meeting of the churches held in Anolaima on October 12. Jack Voelkel, from Evangelism-in-Depth's advisory team, spoke on the theme "Always Triumphant," in which he emphasized the privileges, possibilities, and responsibilities of a Christian. Very impressive was the film, The Gallows of Mordecai which clearly showed the responsibility of each believer to surrender his life to God's service. Many attended the service, and we hope that the Word sown will reap much fruit.

## THE HOUR OF OPPORTUNITY



In Acts 16 we have the account of Paul's vision in the night, of a man of Macedonia who prayed, "Come over into Macedonia, and help us." Paul obeyed and the result was much fruit.

Some would argue that the days of visions are past, but at one of the staff meetings about three months ago, John Wiebe related some visions and dreams that he had. He visualized a great opportunity and demand for the use of Christian literature in Colombia in this year of Evangelism-in-Depth, when every home is to be visited and emphasis is laid on teaching adults to read and write.

He received the approval of the entire staff to start a Christian bookstore in La Mesa. Within a month a central location was rented for \$12 a month, publishers written, and books ordered. August 21 marked the opening date of Libreria "La Luz" (The Light). Many people were pessimistic. With faith in the vision, courage and prayer, the business has grown even beyond the Wiebe's anticipation. Thousands of pesos worth of books stock the shelves, and thousands of pesos worth of literature have been sold. Only to evangelicals? No. Despite the Roman Catholic Church discouraging their people to enter, which few did for a few weeks, the clean, attractive store with its emphasis on the Bible, books for children, youth and the home, is proving irresistible. While the priests remain adamant, various nuns and swarms of children and youth are entering and buying.

But John's vision does not end here. He is urging the procurement of a literature van equipped with projector, screen and tape recorder, so as to make the literature available to hundreds of people at any market square in any village, as well as to visit ours and other churches. The Anolaima, Cachipay, and Tocaima Churches have already been visited with great success.

Another aspect of the vision is the establishment of perhaps one or several more bookstores in strategic places. People are hungry for literature. Christian bookstores are few and far between. We must make centers available to which they can come, but we must also go to the people. If not, they will still read, but what?

"After HE had seen the vision, immediately WE endeavored to go..." Paul was not alone in carrying out the vision which he had received from the Lord. The WE for us means our North American brethren to accompany us here in carrying out this vision.

## SCHOOL CLOSING

November 29 marked the closing of another school year at the Colegio Americano and Colegio Menno. This year there were ten young people who received diplomas for completing five years of study in Cachipay and six in La Mesa. We, as a staff, are happy because almost all of these young people are planning to continue their education.



Cachipay grads

Remember these young people in prayer as they enter different schools, that they will be positive witnesses for the Lord and that they will have the desire to prepare well for their future lives of service.

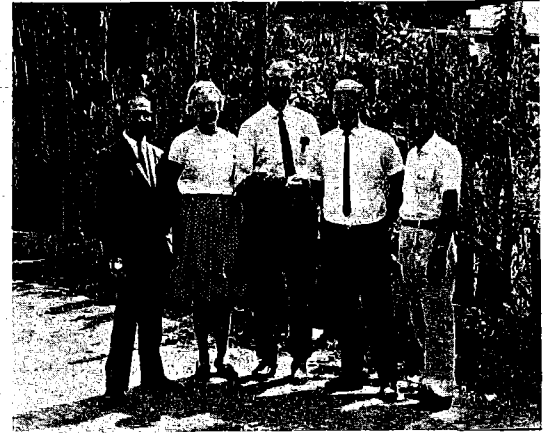


La Mesa grads

## TOWARDS A NATIONAL-FOREIGNER MERGER

Growing up to maturity for a relatively new work in which national and foreign personnel participate is often painful and slow. It is a process that takes time and in which both groups of workers participate. It involves numerous steps towards organizational unity and, above all, steps of mutual understanding. Many of these steps have been taken in past years in the Mennonite work in Colombia. A recent further step towards this material and spiritual unity was the presentation and approval of a new constitution at the August annual assembly.

Besides being a guide for church government and outreach, the new constitution accepts responsibility for the schools and property formerly held by the mission. The integrated executive committee presently is composed of: president, Armando Hernandez; vice-president, Jakob Dyck; executive secretary, Glendon Klaassen; secretary, Janet Soldner; and treasurer, Juan de Jesus Diaz. This further step simply means that the whole church is taking over full responsibility for the vision and work held formerly by foreigners. We are glad for this development and solicit your prayers for wisdom and understanding.



### FAMILY RETREAT - 1968

After months of planning, considerably more than one hundred persons--children, youth, and adults--converged upon the Cachipay grounds during the days July 29 to August 1 for the annual retreat. A well-rounded program for all ages began on Monday night with Billy Graham's film, The Restless Ones.

Each morning and afternoon an enormous group of children was directed in special classes and recreation by Janet Soldner and Reitha Klaassen, aided by Mennonite college students. During the morning the youth and adults studied evangelism as engaged in by the early church as recorded in Acts, under the direction of Rev. Avelino Gonzalez from Bolivia, a member of the Evangelism-in-Depth advisory team. Each lecture was later discussed in groups of ten to twelve people.

The early part of each afternoon was devoted to organized recreation--swimming, volleyball, basketball and football. During the latter part of the afternoon, Glen Klaassen and Jakob Dyck sought to make retreaters more appreciative of our Mennonite heritage through a study of our history, including the immigration of the Mennonites to Paraguay, the personal experience of Jakob Dyck, pastor of the Cachipay Mennonite Church.



Avelino Gonzalez

Special classes on marital preparation were offered to the young people, in which the physical, spiritual, and psychological aspects were treated.

Each evening Rev. Gonzalez gave an evangelistic message, as many people from the surrounding community joined the retreaters. The final night was appropriately culminated with the observance of the Lord's Supper. While some openly testified to new and greater encounters with Christ, He alone, to whose glory this retreat was dedicated, knows how many others silently praised Him and rededicated their lives to Him.

## WORKERS RETREAT



For quite some time a need has been felt by both national and foreign workers to get together to share experiences of praise, inspiration, recreation, and concern. October 18 was set aside for this one-day retreat. Together we met at the YMCA camp located just an hour's drive west of Bogota.

Oswaldo Mottes, Evangelism-in-Depth advisor from Argentina, shared two stimulating devotional messages. The first, taken from Acts 8, emphasized the leading and blessing of God in

unforeseen situations as illustrated by the account of Philip and the Ethiopian. The second, taken from Judges 7, emphasized the power and blessing of God working through a few persons dedicated to the Lord's purposes, as illustrated by Gideon's defeat of the Midianites.

The group sang together, prayed together, ate together, and played together. For all of us it was a time of spiritual and physical refreshment, and an experience that we want to repeat soon.



## MEET JANET SOLDNER

Janet Soldner claims Berne, Indiana, as "home" in the states. People who have had a great influence upon her life were her Sunday school teachers, her pastors, and her instructors at Bethel Deaconess Hospital from which she graduated as a nurse.



Janet was among the first missionaries sent to Colombia to help begin the work at Cachipay. During the 19 years that the boarding school was in operation there, she served as school nurse always on hand when the children came with their cuts, bruises, and fractures. During the occasional epidemics, Janet not only administered medicines but also served as mother to the children.

Her ministry extended beyond the limits of the school into the surrounding community. There are memories of those years when she would visit the neighbors often going on horseback over the winding mountain paths. It was not unusual for Janet to be called out at night and she has spent entire nights with expectant mothers awaiting the first cry of a newborn baby. "Senorita Juanita," as she is affectionately called by these people, was always ready to share their joys and sorrows.

Since the closing of the boarding school, Janet has found other avenues of service, such as helping in the La Mesa school and church last year. This year has found her as a full-time worker for Evangelism-in-Depth. She is coordinating the children's work on a national level, and is also one of the national promoters of literacy work. She has appreciated learning to know many of the faithful national workers and feels that the Colombians are putting forth a noteworthy effort to carry out Christ's Commission.

## NEW ARRIVAL

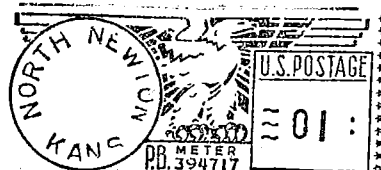
Monday, September 2, saw the arrival of a new voluntary service worker in Bogota. Since Labor Day is not a Colombian holiday, Sam and Mary Augspurger decided to make it a day to be remembered by adding a son, Matthew David, to their family. He has already gained fame as the only VS Beagle.



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#### ANOTHER STEP FORWARD



Bertha Mae



Fanny

The next academic year for the Cachipay school marks a very significant step in the training of Colombian leaders. The present directress, Bertha Mae Reiff is vacating the position after two years' service. The Colombian Church and mission staff feel that Fanny Gomez qualifies to fill this position beginning with the 1969 academic year. Fanny is a graduate of our school, received her teacher training at the normal school in Ibague and continues to serve the Colombians in many capacities.

#### PRAISE AND PRAYER

PRAISE GOD for the arrival of the Barton Sprungers and Lynn Groff.  
PRAISE GOD for the bulldozer.  
PRAISE GOD for the many blessings realized this year through Evangelism-in-Depth.  
PRAISE GOD for the large class of about eighteen preparing for baptism in Anolaima.  
PRAY for the start of the new school year in January.  
PRAY for Leona Schrag as she completes her Spanish studies in Costa Rica.  
PRAY for the Howard Habeggers on furlough as he enters graduate studies in California.  
PRAY for Julia Schutz as she completes her year at seminary and prepares to return to Colombia in February.  
PRAY for the continuing effort of Evangelism-in-Depth in 1969 emphasizing the consolidation of new believers in the faith.

A WORD FROM THE OFFICE: Colombian News is edited in Colombia. We are glad to present this final issue for 1968. We kept on paying missionary allowances and field budgets for Colombia as well as other areas during the low income periods of the year. Many congregations receive special offerings for missions during the Christmas season. Individuals give special gifts during the Christmas and year-end seasons. In order to meet needs in Colombia and other countries (including North America) the 1968 Board of Missions budget needs a giving increase of 20 percent compared to last year. As we ponder anew the glory of the coming of the Savior, let us present a special gift! Give through your local church or send direct to Newton or to Winnipeg.