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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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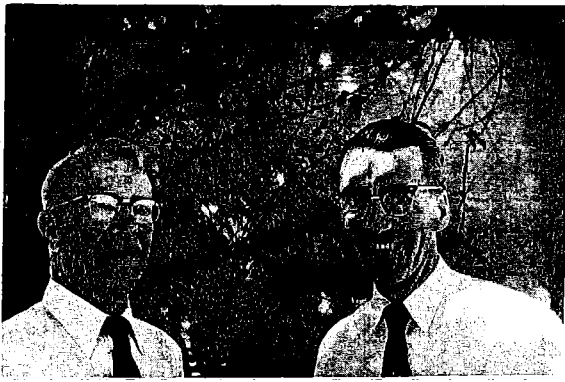


## A MUCH APPRECIATED VISIT

Several months ago our missionary staff was happy to learn that the Board of Missions was planning to send two representatives to visit us, namely Rev. P. K. Regier and Rev. Orlando Waltner. It seemed so good that someone representing the Board was actually coming to share with us what the Lord has wrought in this part of Colombia. Also they were coming to see our needs and problems, to give advice, and to share with us their ideas as to what ought to be done in order to reach more people for Christ and to help the present believers-as well as the children at the boarding school-to come to an understanding of what it means to live a deeper life with the Lord.

Their cheerful and positive attitude was very contagious. The hours of fellowship around the table and the sharing of ideas at our staff meetings will not soon be forgotten. The Colombian children were also happy to learn to know these two Board representatives. They were delighted with the tricks Mr. Regier taught them.

Mr. Regier and Mr. Waltner had the opportunity to observe the preaching of our three pastors, and although they were unable to understand the language, they could understand their expressions. Our believers were happy for the words of greeting and consolation and cheer which the two brethren brought to them. The brethren learned to know the type of people that attend our services. Also they became acquainted with Colombian home life. They could see that when we visit our believers in the rural areas of La Estrella and Pena Negra we do not walk one block to get into our cars to drive three blocks to our destination. Rather we walk for hours over stony and muddy paths, over hills and dale to find our believers in humble homes hidden away in the mountains.



Rev. P.K. Regier & Rev. Orlando Waltner

The two men also visited the leper colony which was the former home of about half of our children. They saw the normal school of the Presbyterian Mission where some of our teachers have received their training as well as the Bible School of the World Evangelization Crusade Mission where one of our pastors graduated, and where another one is studying now.

Mr. Waltner's and Mr. Regier's visit was appreciated by us more than words can express. We were very thankful for their sympathetic and objective approach, and we are sure that their visit was of the Lord.

#### WHAT THE CHURCH IS LIKE IN COLOMBIA

Orlando Waltner brought with him in his visit to Colombia, a fine background of years of experience in India. Studying and

analyzing the evangelical church in Colombia he felt that in the "tightly knit fabric of Roman Catholicism, it is a surprise that the Evangelical Church does exist. . . . Existing in a hostile environment, the evangelical church has known a life far different from the life evangelical churches know in most other countries. This church may be described as:

"A Minority church--the cutting edge of the evangelical church in Colombia is pathetically small. Out of a population of 13 million only 20 thousand at the most are evangelical Protestants. This is .0015% (less than .2 of 1%) of the total population.

"A poor church--within the membership of the church are large numbers of refugees who in the days of violence lost much or all of material possessions. Many of these are now slowly establishing themselves economically but for a long time they were dependent upon financial help given by the church.

"A non-rural church--The days of violence succeeded in up-rooting Christian communities established in the mountains. Christians in fleeing for their lives left farms and possessions. These farms were confiscated and churches were destroyed. Towns and cities offered shelter and a measure of protection. Whereas today Christian families are scattered in several rural areas, the church must be described as an urban church.



Everything was thoroughly looked into.

"A hesitant church--The sense to communicate the Gospel is undoubtedly within the responsibility of the church. But possible consequences coming upon such who witness, is keeping many from personal evangelism. In sustained and severe persecution, believers eventually come to place emphasis on self-preservation, with the result that there is hesitancy to witness to the faith that lies within the heart.

"A worshipping church--The church sustains its life in common worship of its Lord Jesus Christ and in the study and memorization of much of God's Word. This church, in spite of the hardships thrust upon it in the past, opens its doors to non-evangelicals who wish to attend the services. In some areas the number attending the services is up to four times the actual membership of the church. Every worship service seems to be an opportunity for the pastor to bring spiritual nurture to his people and the message of repentance to the non-Christians.

Colombia is a country in great need of the liberating life of the resurrected Christ. The country's people are in bondage as deep and binding as are the people of Moslem, Buddhist, Hindu and Taoist religions.

### TWO OUT OF TEN

For the second time in ten years there is no voluntary service worker in Cachipay this summer. The program started in 1949 when two young women spent almost three months helping in a number of ways with the work at the children's home. Sometimes young men have come to plant trees, do painting, fix drains, or teach English. From one year to the next the needs change, but as yet there has never been a lack of work.

Besides the help that these young people provide at the institution, both the missionaries and the Colombian children enjoy their companionship. It is an excellent way for the visitors to get a first hand knowledge of life on the mission field, and the experience and interest gained is usually carried back to the churches at home.

We regret that no one was able to come this year, and we hope that some will plan ahead during this coming year for next summer. It is an experience not soon forgotten.

### CARE



We are happy that someone cares.

Recently the school was very happy to receive a number of kits from CARE which will be of great help in the manual training program. The needle trade kits for the girls include scissors, pinking shears, needles, thread, tape measure, snips, knitting needles, and pins. The woodworkers kits have quite a complete set of tools needed by a carpenter. Besides these two kinds which have already arrived there are recreation, resettler, and agricultural hand tool kits on the way.

We appreciate the generosity of people in the United States who make such gifts possible.

### A NICE TIME WAS HAD BY ALL

A special day arrived for the school group in LaMesa. It was Alvaro's birthday, and everyone knew it must be celebrated, but the "how" and "where" was a surprise. Since there was no loop-hole in the schedule, it had to be during the English class, and in as far as possible in English style. A special cake was solicited without success, so it was decided to have individual ones with all the decorations and colors on the nicest biggest one.

Several friends of the school came to look in and finally to take part at least in the games which followed the English choruses. They were impressed and delighted to hear the two languages to the same music, and then at the sound of "happy birthday" to see the little cake come in through the door, a banquet of nice flowers from classmates to Alvaro, and more and more cakes for the whole group of twenty or more. Later they all formed a semicircle to play "telephone" and other games such as "hide the button" and several chosen by the children. As they left saying "Until tomorrow" they also said, "Cuando vamos a tener otro cumpleaños?" (When can we have another birthday party?)

## IT IS NOT SO IN KANSAS

It was a delight to have the brothers P. K. Regier and Orlando Waltner share in the outreach of the mission work here in Colombia. Rev. Regier has for many years been the Executive Secretary of the General Conference and as such has seen many Mennonite Churches. Of his observations here he reported:

"On Monday, June 2, Gerald, Orlando, and myself started out on a long hike to a place called LaEstrella. We met on the patio just outside of a home. We sang a number of songs, two nationals played the guitar and sang with it, and five little girls who had also made the hike from the Mission sang with the accompaniment of the guitar.

"Gerald called for memory verses from the Scriptures, and it was surprising how many responded. This had also been done in other services with the same fine results. Rev. Stucky preached a dynamic sermon on lukewarm Christians. In all there were about 30 present. It was a good worship service.

"On Wednesday, June 4th, Gerald, Orlando, Armando, and myself started out early on a much longer hike. After two solid hours of walking up and down the rugged hills of Colombia, we came to the first home, a very poor home typical of the rural folks of the country. Armando led in a brief devotional service.

"After another hike of 30 minutes we stopped in a second home and again brief devotions with the family. Another walk of 30 minutes brought us to a place called Pena Negra. Soon people from the neighborhood started dropping in so that about a dozen believers met for a worship service led by Armando Hernandez.

"Since the hour of twelve had come we were served scrambled eggs, a native fruit called papaya, and a drink. Just to see the "kitchen" where this food was prepared is quite an experience in itself, let alone the eating of it. After the meal we hiked another 45 minutes to La Mesa (Las Margaritas, Ed.) to catch the train back to Cachipay. It may be of interest to you to note that it took the train an hour and 15 minutes to cover the distance we had walked in four hours. Since this happened also to be my birthday, it is a day I shall never forget. It was a wonderful experience."



Armando led in a brief devotional



We came to the first home



The kitchen (at the far end) was an experience in itself.

## DOES TO SCHOOL?

Unlike the United States, Canada, Great Britain, or Japan, almost one half of the school age population of Colombia receives no formal schooling.

Statistics reveal that of 372,000 children that enrolled in primary schools in 1952, only 63,000 later entered the 5th grade. Of these, only 30,000 enrolled in secondary education, and of these according to experience, only 6,000 will finish high school. Of these about 5,100 will enter the university, and only 1,300 will graduate.

At the present time, of the one million Colombians of university age (18-22), only 14,000 are in the university, or 1.5%. This means that of every 1,000 Colombians of university age, only 15 enroll in the university--in comparison to 80 French, 140 Russians, and 250 North Americans. (El Tiempo, June 13, 1958)

For evangelical children the problem of receiving an education is often even more severe than for the average Colombian. Many Colombians cannot go to school because there is either no school to go to, or, they are too poor to attend even the public school. Although public schools are tax supported, the parents of the children must yet supply uniforms, pencils, etc. Besides that, children are often required to contribute for all kinds of special programs. The parents conclude that they cannot afford to send their children to school.



The evangelical children are in a large majority of cases from poor families. Besides the above mentioned difficulties, the evangelical child is often severely discriminated against in the public schools and forced to participate in the study of the Catholic religion and attend Catholic services. For the conscientious evangelical parent, the problem becomes either not educating his child or submitting him to a disastrous persecution.

Loved by all--all to be loved

To meet this problem, many evangelical missions and churches have opened schools to educate the children of their church members. However, these schools have met with a multitude of obstacles. During the past years of violence and difficulties in Colombia, it was decreed that no Protestant schools could operate in the so-called mission territories, which constitutes 2/3 of the area of Colombia. Besides this, statistics show that since 1948, at least 110 Protestant schools have been closed, leaving more than 3,000 children without schools.

But in spite of these and many other difficulties, scores of Protestant schools are functioning and are making a marvelous contribution, not only to the Protestant church, but to Colombia as a whole. Protestant schools help to supply the need for more schools in Colombia. They teach democratic principles and use modern pedagogical methods. They help to train civic leaders with high moral and spiritual character. They promote international understanding. Above all, they seek to provide the children with a good sound knowledge of the Word of God and direct them in the paths of Righteousness.

THIS AND THAT

Congratulations and best wishes to the Arthur Keiser family on the birth of their first son, Stephen Arthur. Stephen along with his sisters Eunice, Mary Beth, Rebecca and Miriam, travelled with his parents to California during the month of July. The Keiser family will probably be returning to Colombia in September.

During Holy Week, Gerald Stucky was the special speaker for the Holy Week services in the Christian Missionary Alliance church in Cali. That week is one of the finest for evangelical services, since perhaps more people attend church then than during any other time of the year. He reports that the Lord abundantly blessed the meetings.

PRAYER AND PRAISE

THANK HIM for the victories that have been seen in the lives of the believers  
for His continuous care over the children and staff  
for the ending of a corrupt governmental regime  
for new interest in the gospel in the country regions.

PRAY for the children that leave Cachipay that they may be used to win others  
for Him  
for the Board of Missions in their complex and important task of guiding  
missionary endeavors around the world  
for our young pastors that they may have stability and maturity and may  
be filled with the Holy Spirit  
for the Keisers on furlough and their return trip to the field.  
for each missionary here--Calvin Flickingers, Alice Bachert, Vernelle  
Yoder, Janet Soldner, Huldah Myers, and the Gerald Stuckys.  
for the salvation of many more Colombians  
for the new government that it indeed will be benign  
for the difficult situation in our La Mesa school.

Colombian News  
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Non-Profit Organization