

August, 1972

**This is a
CALL TO PRAYER
for
THE LORD'S WORK
in COLOMBIA**



COLOMBIAN NEWS

Colombia, South America

Number Sixty-two



INFORMATION SERVICE OF THE MENNONITE MISSION IN COLOMBIA

THE HAPPY CHRISTIAN HOME

Training lay leadership has been given top priority for church growth. Two important questions face us. How can potential leaders be best prepared to become effective, Christ-like workers in the church? What materials can be used in their training in the light of the dearth of Christian literature in the third world countries?

Answers to both these questions are being sought in Colombia. Lay leaders are being trained through various church centers of seminary extension and certain persons have been commissioned to prepare programized texts suitable for use in seminary extension programs. An advisory committee named CATA (Comite Asesor de Textos Autodidacticos) has been organized to supervise the writing and productions of these self-teaching texts.

Margaret Ediger has been preparing a course entitled The Happy Christian Home. At present, it is composed of seven chapters dealing with the basis of the happy Christian home, the choice of the marriage partner, sex, family planning, the relationship between husband and wife, budgeting, childrearing and discipline, the spiritual development of children, adolescents, and the relation of the Christian home to the church and to the world.

The course is more than merely a textbook for reading and study. To be truly self-teaching, it seeks to follow the basic principles of programmed instruction. This involves the presentation of material to be learned in ordered, logical sequences, guiding the students to think step by step. Active interaction of the student with the material is sought by utilizing questions to which he must respond as well as providing immediate confirmation of the answers. In order to guide the student to think independently and to apply the information to concrete, real-life situations, the course also includes open questions not answered in the manual to be discussed in class, utilizing practical illustrations from the student's background.



Much work remains to be done before the course will be ready for publication and use throughout Latin America, according to the plan. In the meantime, four other centers besides the one in Bogota have ordered copies to use next semester in

seminary extension. It is our prayer that God will use this text to help to form many homes in Latin America that are truly happy and truly Christian.

TWENTIETH ANNUAL CONFERENCE



Pastor Alfonso Castro from Cachipay stands to discuss an issue.

The twentieth annual Colombian Mennonite Church Conference was held on June 19 and 20 in Cachipay. The deliberating body included the elected officers of the field council (Mesa Directiva) plus the pastors and representatives from each church and other institutions. In all, there were 29 voting delegates plus several observers. After hearing the yearly reports from each mission project, the conference discussed ways of extending and consolidating the various aspects of the work. Committees were named to more effectively plan for work and extension by evangelism, by radio, and by social work. It was recommended that an effort be made to open new churches in Northwest Bogota and in Giradot. There was a good spirit of unity and concern for the ongoing witness of the Mennonite Church in Colombia. Let us pray together that the workers especially may unite and with new enthusiasm serve the Lord.

NEW EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: JAIME CARO,
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY: VIRGINIA TERREROS,
SECRETARY: VERNELLE YODER, TREASURER:
ARMANDO HERNANDEZ, PRESIDENT. (LUIS
LUGO, VICE-PRESIDENT, MISSING.)



"ENLARGE. . .LENGTHEN. . .STRENGTHEN"

Reflecting on Isaiah 54:2, Christians from the various churches gathered for three-and-a-half days of spiritual retreats immediately following the annual Mennonite Church business sessions. The speakers challenged retreaters to evangelize, to extend the influence of the gospel, and to consolidate their efforts so that believers may become firm in their convictions and active participants in mission.

The special speakers were the Rev. Alfredo Torres, pastor from Bogota with the Worldwide Evangelization Crusade, and the Rev. Pedro Gutierrez, a Bogota pastor with the Inter-America Missionary Society. Their emphases may be summed up in these points: 1) The Gospel is for everyone. 2) Every Christian must be helped to become strong in his faith.



REV. PEDRO GUTIERREZ



REV. ALFREDO TORRES

3) Every Christian must be an active witness for Christ. Thus, churches cannot be pastor-centered in the sense of ministry, but each believer has some spiritual gift which should be exercised for the total ministry of the church. We must not be only "temple Christians", but Christians of the community and world in which we live. Worldly pursuits often require much of our time and talents, but we must also offer ourselves wholeheartedly as "living sacrifices to God" so that others may enter into the joy of the Lord. Each one of us sensed a personal challenge to rededicate ourselves to Christ and His will. Won't you, dear reader, join us?

Pastors Alfonso Castro, Armando Hernandez and Luis Lugo did an excellent job in planning and directing the activities. Rev. Jaime Caro, pastor of the Ibague Mennonite Church, led the daily morning devotional exercises.

CLAASSENS BEGIN WORK IN CACHIPAY



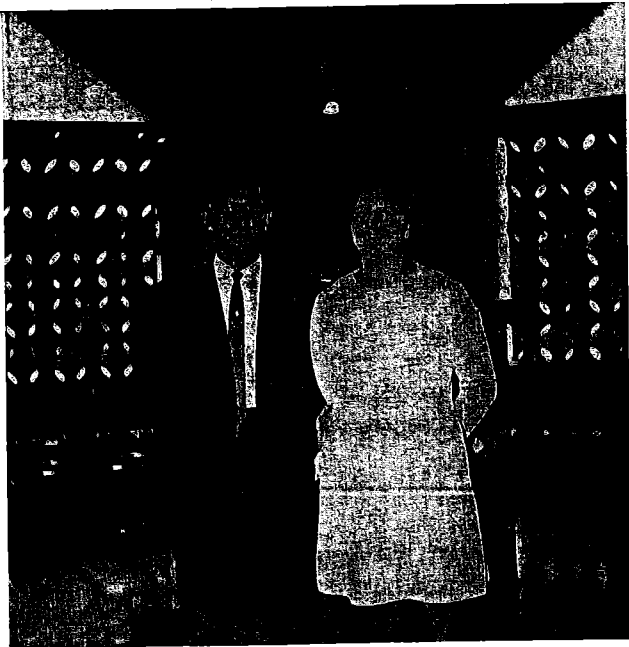
Behold the orange tree.... just one of the plants agronomist Mark Claassen is beginning to study in an effort to find ways of improving the income and diet of farmers in the Andes Mountains of central Colombia. He is finding that a great deal of study is necessary to become familiar with bananas, coffee, oranges, moras (raspberries), and other crops as well as with mountain farming in general, which contrasts sharply with his previous experience with agriculture in Nebraska and Iowa.

Mark and his wife, Lillian, moved into their home in Cachipay in mid-June after spending the previous six weeks with the Glen Klaassens

in Bogota becoming oriented to mission work in Colombia. During that time, Mark established contacts with the National University, ICA (national agricultural research institute), and located various sources of information on tropical crops. Unfortunately, he found little research data to be available on the soils in the Anolaima-Cachipay-La Mesa area or on crop management practices specifically for this region.

The Claassen's home is located just one block from main street in Cachipay. By living in the village rather than at Colegio Americano, they hope to be able to get acquainted with more people in the community. Lillian is concerned about the best use of her time in working with the women of the church and community. A recent project for her was the preparation of a series of classes as part of a spiritual-emphasis week for the children in the La Mesa grade school.

While intensifying studies in the coming months, Mark hopes to visit the farmer members of the three Mennonite churches in the area to become acquainted with their individual needs and to begin to offer suggestions for improving production. An integral part of the program will be experimentation on the private farms of those interested in cooperating. Mark anticipates that agricultural assistance can be extended to other farmers in the communities and that this will provide new opportunities for communicating the good news of Christ.



BOGOTA CHURCH INSTALLS NEW PASTOR

On Sunday, June 4, Rev. Antonio Arevalo and his wife, Elsa, were accepted as members of the Bogota Mennonite Church. Immediately following, Rev. Arevalo was installed as pastor of the congregation in a simple ceremony led by Glendon Klaassen. The Arevalos have two children, Marcella age 3, and Raul age 1.

Although Rev. Arevalo comes from a non-Mennonite background, he has had contact with the Cachipay and Bogota Mennonite churches for several years. Age 40, he has been active in the ministry for 15 years, especially in evangelism. God has used him to bring many people to respond to the gospel and to begin new congregations, many of which are organized churches today of several different mission groups. Also, for several years Rev. Arevalo has worked in radio. At

present, he is in charge of two separate all-night, live programs on the Christian station, Nuevo Continente, in Bogota. These programs consist of music, spiritual counseling, prayer for requests from listeners, and Bible meditations. The Bogota church has begun recently to broadcast the Sunday morning worship service on the same station. Pastor Arevalo is already making plans along with the members to begin a second church in northwest Bogota. We welcome the Arevalos into our church family and wish them joy in their ministry and pray that through them the church of Jesus Christ may be strengthened.

VOLUNTEERS IN MEDICAL SERVICE



Lewis Sprunger is working as a physician in the Emmanuel Clinic, a 50-bed hospital located in the southern part of Bogota. The clinic, which is self-supporting but administered by the Worldwide Evangelistic Crusade, offers both in- and out-patient services to people of the lower middle class. Although the hospital offers a wide variety of medical and surgical services, nearly 50% of its in-patient activity involves obstetrics and pediatrics. Shortly after beginning work, Lewis landed himself a job in the delivery room since the nurse-midwife who normally takes care of that area submitted to surgery herself. Judy Sprunger has begun work at a family planning organization, PROFAMILIA. She works at two of their centers. At one center her work involves filling of prescriptions, recording

of laboratory results, etc. At the other center, which is located in a poorer area of the city, she works with a social worker doing home visitations.

WELCOME WIEBE FAMILY

John and Elma Wiebe, with their three girls, Sheila, Debra and Cynthia, have returned from a year's furlough in Canada. During their furlough they traveled extensively reporting in the churches in Canada and in the States. John also helped out in the Fellowship Book Center in Winnipeg getting some pointers for his literature ministry in Colombia. The Wiebes are optimistic about the interest shown in the churches and are looking forward to continued support of the work by the many friends back home.

Several other interesting and helpful experiences for John were a two-week course on Film Evangelism at Moody Bible Institute in Chicago and a Literature Seminar in Banff, Alberta, sponsored by the Christian Bookseller's Association.

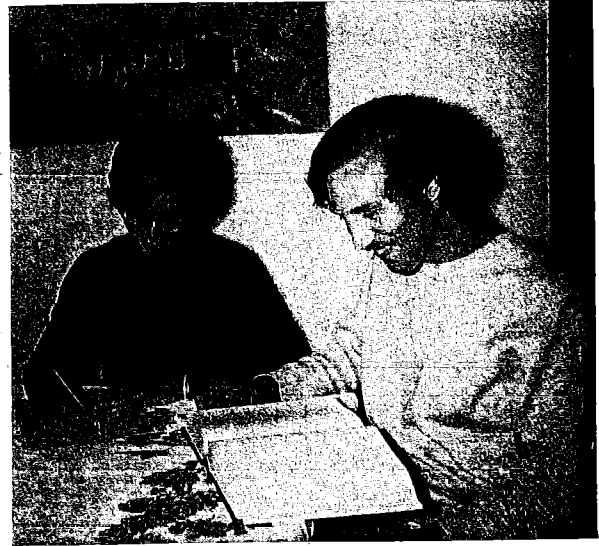
During this new term of service the Wiebes will again be involved in the literature work. Until a suitable person has been trained for the job, John will again be in charge of the bookstore in La Mesa. He also plans to travel extensively with the bookmobile offering Christian literature to many along with the audio-visual ministry.



MUCHAS GRACIAS, DAVE AND NEDRA

After two years of serving as teachers at the Colegio Nueva Granada in Bogota, David and Nedra Steury are finishing their voluntary service with the Commission on Overseas Mission. They have enjoyed their experiences and are looking forward to continue as teachers in the same school.

Dave and Nedra have taken an active part in the life and work of the church and mission, especially as associate members of the Bogota Mennonite Church. We wish them much joy and God's blessings. "Muchas gracias", Dave and Nedra, for your service.



MENNONITE TOUR GROUPS IN COLOMBIA

The Mennonite World Conference in Curitiba, Brazil, provided the opportunity for a number of those attending from the United States and Canada to visit Colombia. Several tour groups as well as individual travelers have visited the Bogota Mennonite Church and also seen some of the work in the rural area of Cachipay.

The tour led by Gerald Stucky, founder of the Mennonite Mission in Colombia, spent a week seeing the work of both the General Conference and of the Mennonite Brethren mission. The Reverends Heinz Janzen, Olin Krehbiel, and Gerald Stucky participated in the Sunday morning service of the Bogota church on July 30. That same afternoon the 16 members of the tour left Bogota by train to join the Cachipay congregation for the evening service. They spent the night at the mission school and farm and the next afternoon returned to Bogota by way of La Mesa.



We hope that those who have visited us have been stimulated by the beauty of this country, by the warmth of the Colombian Christians and by the many opportunities for the Gospel.

A two-day overland trip through the Andes Mountains by Pullman bus, with a stopover at night in Ibague, took the group to Cali where the Rev. Vernon Reimer showed them some of the Mennonite Brethren work.

KLAASSENS GO ON FURLOUGH



Numerous farewell parties have marked the approaching departure of Glendon and Reitha Klaassen and their children, James and Marcella. Mark and Steven already left at the beginning of summer to work on the farms of some of their relatives in Kansas. During this coming year Glen and Reitha plan to continue studies at the Associated Mennonite Seminaries in Elkhart, Indiana. We hope the change will be stimulating and refreshing and that they will soon be back in Colombia. We shall miss their understanding and willingness to help.

VISITORS FROM INDIA

Mr. N. Sona, instructor at the Mennonite Mission School in Jagdeeshpur, and Rev. M. Nand, pastor of the Mennonite Church of Korba, spent a week in Colombia on their way to Brazil. Their visits to each of the churches were very much appreciated, as they told of their work and the customs of India. Many Colombians accepted the challenge to pray for their brothers and sisters in Christ in India.



SUMMER WORKERS AND VISITORS

Several young people have helped out at the school and farm near Cachipay this summer. Tim Stucky, son of the Gerald Stuckys, has helped a lot with many of the responsibilities. We wish Tim the best as he returns to studies in auto-mechanics at Vincennes University in Indiana. The Stucky family had somewhat of a reunion here this summer. Peter and Paul visited en route to the World Conference. Mary Hope and Gerald led a tour group here, and Judy is on the mission staff.

Here for a one-month visit were David Shelly, son of former COM secretary, Andrew Shelly, and Joel Koehn, both from Newton, Kansas. Their efforts concentrated on making wooden benches for the campgrounds and helping pick and bag thousands of oranges and moras (raspberries) for sale in Bogota.

Cynthia Habegger, daughter of Howard Habegggers, recently returned to Colombia for a couple of weeks. She has been teaching Bible School and swimming to any candidates.

Serving under a Bluffton College program were Cris Marquart and Nancy Myers. Between sewing and cooking and various other projects, they were finding that life here can be busy, too. Miss Linda Falk accompanied the Bluffton group.



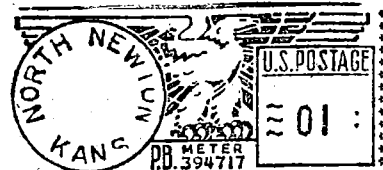
JOEL AND DAVID

A welcome guest for the Tschetters was Larry's mother from So. Dakota. To each of our guests, "Thank you for your friendship and help."

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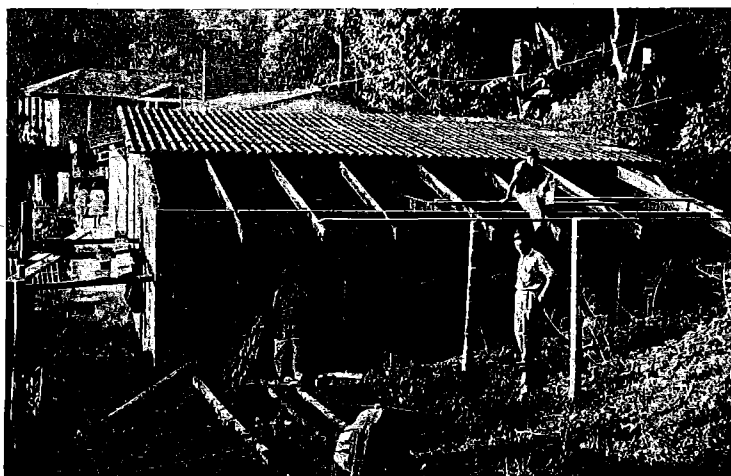


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SUNDAY SCHOOL ROOMS: CACHIPAY CHURCH

July 9 marked the dedication of two additional rooms at the Cachipay church. Construction of the rooms was made possible by special donations from the members and from the home church of the Larry Tschetters. Much of the labor was done by volunteers.



OTHER VISITORS WELCOMED

Other special visitors to Colombia besides many with the tour groups were: Dr. Anna Rieger, instructor at Grace Bible Institute of Omaha; Mrs. Agnes DaCosta from Markham, Ill.; the Edgar Harder family from Whitewater, Ks.; the Calvin Flickinger family who were former missionaries to Colombia and now living in Phoenix, Ariz.; and the Reverends Reuben Short and James Bertsche from the Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission and Paul Landis from the Eastern Mennonite Board of Salunga, Pa.

PRAISE AND PRAYER

PRAISE GOD for a full-time pastor for the Bogota Mennonite Church, the Antonio Arevalo family.

PRAISE GOD for the John Wiebe family's safe return to Colombia.

PRAISE GOD for Larry Tschetter's recovery from hepatitis after being bedridden for two months.

PRAISE GOD for those who have given of their time and talents to help out during this summer.

PRAISE GOD for complete freedom to share the Good News in Colombia.

PRAY FOR wisdom for Margaret Ediger in evaluating and further editing the HAPPY CHRISTIAN HOME study course.

PRAY FOR Antonio and Elsa Arevalo as they pastor the Bogota church.

PRAY FOR Mark and Lillian Claassen as they seek to use their talents in the most effective way in their witness in Cachipay.

PRAY for John and Elma Wiebe as they continue their literature ministry and seek to be more effective.

PRAY FOR Glendon and Reitha Klaassen on furlough.