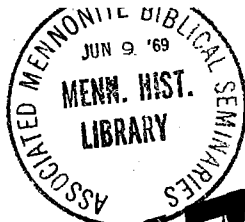


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NUMBER FIFTY-ONE

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



### NEW WORK INITIATED

Community development work is not new on the mission field. The work has always been there--done by the missionaries--it is just the name that has changed. What is "community development" and what does it have to do with the Mennonite mission in Colombia? The name "community development" is used by various groups and agencies. The U.S. Peace Corps is mainly interested in promoting this kind of progress. In short, community development work is just what it says -- moving into a community considered to be underdeveloped and working through various collective programs to develop the untapped potential in the area.

In many ways the program of development with the Mennonite mission goes beyond common concepts. For those working directly with the program, community development means something more. It is a dream, not only of what the area could be economically, but also a dream of a better way of life for its people socially, economically, and spiritually. People who know the program of the Mennonite mission know the his-

torical significance of a small town named Cachipay. Here the mission program was begun. Property was purchased with the intention of aiding children of leprous parents who could not obtain an education in the area from which they came. At the present, these children have educational opportunities in their own village. This has changed the strategy of the mission program somewhat.

In December 1966, Pete and Claire Harder and their two children came to Cachipay to serve as vocational missionaries. Claire is a registered nurse and Pete is by trade an auto mechanic. The job assignment was described as "having responsibility for the maintenance of mission property and community development."

The climate and land qualities in the area surrounding Cachipay are such that anything grows and produces in abundance. In many ways, however, tradition and economic restrictions have kept this rural community in a static condition. In terms of the development program, one needs to go back centuries in social customs, business and marketing procedures, and farming practices.



Marketing practices are very simple. Farmers take their produce to village open markets on appointed market days. In these markets some of the merchandise is bought by local people. The majority, however, is bought by fast-thinking fruit and vegetable traders who buy cheap and sell high in the large markets of Bogota.

Much of the thrust of the development program has been toward establishing a marketing cooperative. Prices in the local markets vary drastically according to the laws of supply and demand. Oranges, for example,

are sold in units of 220 pounds called a "carga," which is what one donkey or mule can carry in two burlap sacks. Prices for this unit vary in the local market from a U.S. equivalent of \$1.20 during peak harvest season, to \$6.50 for the same quantity in periods of fruit scarcity.

Cooperation is a quality quite strange to the Latin American mind. In the establishment of the Cachipay Marketing Co-op the most problematic factor has been to prove the advantages of working together for the common good of the community. Once the farmers were persuaded of this, Pete Harder took steps to organize them. The Mennonite mission donated a lot on which was built a packing shed. Here the oranges brought on animals of burden are sorted to the specifications of the buyers and then loaded on a truck to be shipped to Bogota two hours away. All fruit is consigned to the cooperative and prices are paid according to those paid in Bogota, discounting only the shipping expenses and a 5 percent capitalization fee to enlarge the organization. It has received the legal status required in Colombia to operate and is recognized as a legitimate business enterprise.

After working in Cachipay for six months, the Harders and the Mennonite mission realized the opportunity to expand this program. Steve and Elizabeth Pankratz arrived in Cachipay in December 1967, to serve as voluntary service workers. Their training in agriculture, business administration, music, and education respectively, was put to work in the community development program. This endeavor has utilized the services and funds of a number of governmental and philanthropic organizations. Save the Children's Federation is one such organization that has aided significantly.

Funds received from North American donors are distributed in the form of scholarships to children from needy families who wish to receive an education. Certain restrictions are put on the money. The money is divided between the child himself, his family, and 40 percent is used by a community action group to better the entire community. The money received to date has been used to build an addition to a rural school, which has two rooms, for two teachers, and one hundred students in five different grades.



Steve with  
community leaders



Scholarship Receipientes



New school addition

The funds going to the family must be put to use in a project which will benefit the welfare of the family. Steve and Pete have begun rabbit- and duck-raising projects patterned after the 4-H program. The hope is to raise the nutritional level of the people and thus their health standards.

Community development programs are not successful if they do not develop local leadership. Three young people have been selected to work closely in the co-op. Beatriz Lopez is serving as treasurer; she is being trained in systems of accounting and general office practices. Misael Prieto also works with the co-op and hopes are to have him work directly in the management of the business. German Lopez works with Steve in the agricultural program. The need arose to find funds to pay the salaries of these workers. Since the mission budget did not include such funds, help was sought from World Neighbors, Inc. They have agreed to underwrite these expenses in an effort to develop local trained leadership.



Rabbit project

Pete Harder's experience in road construction has led to a development program of regional proportions. The lot on which the cooperative is being built is situated at a very strategic point. By building one large road and some small penetration roads, the entire area could be opened up to modern transportation methods. This program was presented to the special projects department of U.S. Agency for International Development (A.I.D.). After reviewing the project and organizing local community action committees, they consented to give a bulldozer to the area to be used in the construction of roads for one year. Cachipay and the surrounding area is now awaiting the arrival of this piece of equipment.

This is the community development project of the Mennonite mission at Cachipay. It does not include the struggles and frustrations of working in an eighteenth century culture. Nor does it indicate adequately the need for development nor the hidden potential. It is, rather, a factual presentation of a program which is understaffed, overworked, and lacking in funds. Perhaps the motivation behind a program such as this can be best described by a quote from an excellent development manual. "If a brother is ill-clad, and in lack of daily food, and one of you says to him, 'go in peace and be filled' without giving them the things needed for the body, what does it profit?"



Beatriz



Misael



German

## PROGRESS REPORT OF EVANGELISM-IN-DEPTH

Evangelism-in-Depth is not only the effort of missionaries and national pastors; it is every Christian preparing himself diligently to bear witness, and take seriously his Lord's command, "Go ye...make disciples." The Colombian church is living Acts 5:42. "And every day in the temple and at home they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ."



An unseen revolution is taking place all over Colombia. God is giving believers concern for those without Christ. This was manifested on the second of June when those of the 25,000 who had enrolled in the training course went out to do house-to-house visitation. They labored in the large cities, in villages, in the mountains and valleys, in hospitals and jails. Each church is responsible for a certain area, so that no home will be missed. This work is to go on until the churches have covered the entire area assigned to them. On the first day of the visitation program one church visited 1,400 homes with one hundred decisions for Christ. Yes, God hears the pleas of those praying in the 5,500 prayer cells. Many churches had an all-night prayer meeting two days before visitation began. One Evangelism-in-Depth adviser reported that sixteen people came to know the Lord in one prayer cell!

The members of the Mennonite churches are learning what joy can be theirs in going out and taking the good news of salvation to others. In Bogota after the first day of visitation all returned radiant to share their experiences with joy and enthusiasm. Two of the ladies had the joy of seeing a soul come to Christ. That evening the man was in church with his family to hear an Argentinian evangelist preach about the marvelous love of God.

On the fifth of May, the National Park in Bogota was the scene of a children's meeting in the forenoon. It was one of those beautiful spring days when the city people love to go to the park. A children's choir furnished music. An object lesson was given by a Colombian pastor, and the story of the prodigal son by another children's worker.



Janet Soldner has taken active part in teaching courses to prepare teachers for the evangelization of children. In Bogota four simultaneous classes were offered. Later another enthusiastic group of fifty-two including youth of twelve to fourteen years of age took the course in one of the suburbs. They took the work seriously. Children are evangelizing other children. Classes were also given in many rural areas. In all parts of Colombia many classes have now been organized in Christian homes reaching neighborhood children with the gospel. Efforts are made to lead the children into the Sunday school and the church, and also to reach the parents.

In the July evangelistic campaigns held throughout the country in every church, thousands responded to the altar call. The revolution has begun! Expectantly we await even greater things in the coming months.





#### MEET VERNELLE YODER

"What will it be today, Nell, coke or coffee?"  
"Why, coffee, of course. I never refuse a cup of good Colombian coffee!"

Besides being a faithful supporter of Colombia's coffee industry, Vernelle has for a number of years been a valuable member of the Colombian Mennonite mission. Her sense of humor and her hearty laugh have eased many a tense situation. Because of her excellent grasp of Spanish and her obvious love for the Colombians, she has won her way into the hearts of many of them.

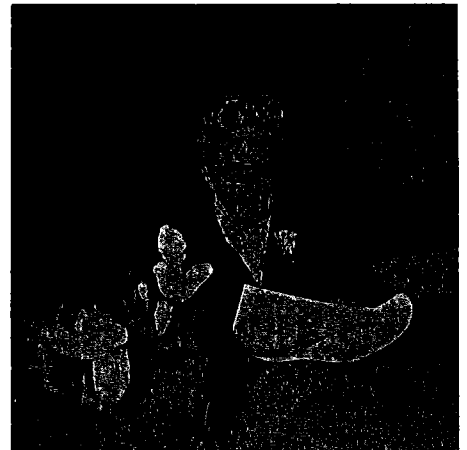
Vernelle is a member of the First Mennonite Church in Berne, Indiana. As a young girl of about twelve she felt the call of God upon her life to enter Christian service. With this call in mind, following high school she studied at Fort Wayne Bible College and later at Goshen and Bethel colleges. The late Rev. John Thiessen, then secretary of the Board of Missions, suggested to her the possibility of serving as a teacher in Colombia. After a considerable wait for her visa (it was during the time of severe persecution), she finally arrived in Colombia in 1953. Following a year of teaching in Bogota, she has served in our mission schools at Cachipay and La Mesa. Since 1959 she has directed the school at La Mesa, apart from last year when she directed the Cachipay school. Besides teaching full time, Vernelle's work involves hiring teachers, meeting parents, and looking after the innumerable things that fall to a director of a five-grade school.

As if being directress of a school of about eighty pupils isn't enough for one person, Vernelle is also active in the La Mesa church. In fact, she is almost indispensable, as you would quickly realize if you heard the singing on a Sunday when she happens to be away! She is the only church organist. She also teaches the adult Sunday school class, helps in the youth work, as well as in many other ways.

Those of us who have had the privilege of working closely with Vernelle realize and appreciate her dedication to the Lord and to her work--and we always look forward to a cup of coffee and a chat in her cozy kitchen.

#### ALICE BACHERT VISITS BOGOTA

In May, Miss Alice Bachert, stationed in Barranquilla, visited Bogota for several days. For six years she has lived on the coast having gone there for health reasons after serving in the central area of Colombia. Along with a nucleus of Mennonites originally from the interior, Miss Bachert is busy in prayer and visitation evangelism ministering in the name of Christ. For more than thirty years she has served in Latin America. Her insight and counsel are an inspiration and help to all of us and to the Colombian church.



### COLOMBIAN PASTOR TAKES FURTHER TRAINING

Former pastor of the church in La Mesa, Jaime Caro, is presently studying at the United Biblical Seminary of Colombia to prepare further for the Lord's service. In view of his four years of faithful and commendable ministry in La Mesa, he received a scholarship for his seminary studies from the Mennonite mission. The seminary situated in Medellin, a northern city of Colombia, is modeled after the constitution of the Biblical Seminary of Yeotmal, India, in which institution the Mennonites also cooperate.



Jaime, born March 4, 1938, comes from a strict Roman Catholic family, and says that he followed the religion of his parents with much devotion but never found true peace. At twenty years of age he accepted the Lord into his life. In retrospect he writes that although he had to fight spiritual battles, "the Lord gave me the victory, and above all, peace."

Within a few months he sensed the Lord's call to enter the ministry, and despite many obstacles, the Lord opened the way for him to attend a Christian and Missionary Alliance Bible School in Armenia, Colombia, from which he graduated in 1963. While there he met his wife, Disney, who had earlier studied in the same Bible School and later entered high school. Disney, born on May 14, 1946 of Christian parents, received the Lord at fourteen years of age in the Alliance church. Several months after Jaime completed Bible School, he and Disney were united in marriage and entered the ministry in the church at La Mesa. Looking back now over their four years spent in La Mesa, Jaime says that they were years of many experiences and blessings.

Their marriage has been blessed by two children: one son, Joshua, three years of age, and a daughter born this June named Martha Cecilia. Speaking of their plans, Jaime says, "Our purpose for the future is to be able to serve the Lord with a fuller ministry intellectually and spiritually. We are very grateful to the Lord for the way He has helped us, and also to the Mennonite mission for the support and encouragement it has given us in our plans. May God use us for His glory and for the welfare of souls."

### NEW THRUST IN LEADERSHIP TRAINING

The Theological Community functioning in Bogota offered two courses, homiletics and Christian education, for laymen during the months of May and June. The classes were enthusiastically received by the Bogota churches and a large group from many different church affiliations were enrolled. The Mennonite church of Colombia also cooperated in the program. The Christian education course was taught by Reitha Klaassen and several members of the Bogota Church were enrolled. More courses such as these are being planned for the near future.



### YOUNG PEOPLE MEET



June 21 greeted us in Cachipay with a beautiful morning and also the first early arrivals of young people for the all-important Sports Day. Over one hundred youth came to enjoy this day of recreation and to become better acquainted with the youth of other evangelical churches of the area. Each team had its cheering section--what noise and what fun!

Later in the afternoon the young people hiked to the church in Cachipay for a special service to end the day's activities. It was a joy to see the church

almost filled with young people, many of whom had never before entered an evangelical church nor heard the message of Jesus Christ and the meaning and purpose He brings to life. Through the witness of Christian young people attending public schools, their classmates are being drawn into the youth fellowships and from there into church activities. Pray for the Colombian youth so that in their search for truth they will decide to follow Christ and serve Him.

### EUCCHARISTIC CONGRESS

The XXXIX International Eucharistic Congress meets in Bogota from August 18 to 25. About 500,000 "pilgrims" are expected to participate. Pope Paul VI from Rome will be the main participant. The theme "Bond of Love," from St. Augustine's writings, is to dominate the liturgy and congress proceedings. Its aim is "to deepen true Christlike love in the spirit of the Second Vatican Council penetrating the life of all Latin American Catholicism."

As part of the preparations for this historic event, a large area of land is being developed and adapted to accommodate the visitors and dignitaries for the program of the congress. This includes a "temple" from which the Pope will preside during the main sessions. Pope Paul personally consecrated a special stone taken from St. Peter's Basilica that was sent to Colombia and used in the foundation of this shrine. For several months neighborhood assemblies have been meeting in private homes studying and discussing the implications of the congress and Catholicism for today.

With the excitement mounting in Colombia and especially in Bogota for this great demonstration, the Pope declared, "We hope that the congress will stimulate a new religious dynamism and a truer practice of social virtues." For those days, at least, Bogota will become the center of the Catholic world.

### STUDENTS SERVE AT CACHIPAY

Four of the Mennonite college students who studied in Bogota this summer came to Cachipay for several weeks: Ann Peachey, Hesston College; Rick Yoder, Eastern Mennonite

College; Tom Fretz, Bethel College; and Ellyne Ramseyer, Bluffton College. They willingly and enthusiastically participated in the work wherever they could. Their contributions ranged from helping with children's classes during the retreat, relieving in the pressure of work at the co-op, spraying weeds, and painting the teacher's house. Our heartfelt thanks go out to them for their help during the busy summer schedule at Cachipay.



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PRAISE AND PRAYER

PRAISE GOD for the new workers preparing to come to Colombia: Leona Schrag, Lynn Groff, and the Barton Sprungers.

PRAISE GOD for the dedicated Christian teachers in our schools.

PRAISE GOD for the many souls won to Him in all our churches during the week-long evangelistic campaigns during July.

PRAISE GOD for the three child evangelism classes begun in Anolaima, and for the growth it has brought to the Sunday school, bringing the attendance by mid-July from forty children to seventy-five.

PRAISE GOD for the open doors to minister in the local jail of La Mesa.

PRAISE GOD for the leadership potential being tapped and trained in our local churches through the extensive program of Evangelism-in-Depth.

PRAY for the great nationwide evangelistic crusade scheduled for Bogota in December.

PRAY for the thousands of new converts won to the Lord through the prayer cells, home visitation, and local campaigns.

PRAY for the three young persons being trained for community leadership.

PRAY for missionaries on furlough: the Howard Habegggers, Julia Schutz, and Vernelle Yoder.

AND PRAY FOR US, your fellow laborers in the Lord's work, as we strive to bridge the cultural gap in communicating the Christian message.

PRAISE....PRAY....AND WRITE!