



# MENNONITE *Air* MISSIONS

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## Ministerial Ordination in Mixcolajá

*"And he gave some . . . pastors . . . For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ . . ."*

### The need

There is a constant and growing need for ministers and workers in the Lord's work everywhere, and Guatemala is no exception. There are still vacancies to be filled, as there are several mission churches without a pastor, or even lay leader; not to mention that very few of our congregations have a plural ministry. It seems to be increasingly difficult to fill these needs.

### Training program

However, there is a program in place here at MAM, as an effort to supply what is lacking. Over ten years ago, a ministerial apprenticeship training program was begun for some of our promising and faithful men. It is a course of study for those who qualify, to prepare them for future leadership. The fourth such group finished their course of study in 2010. A fifth group is being organized to begin again in the near future.

### A brief history

José Humberto Mux came through the *Obreros* program several years ago. He and his family were asked to go to an outreach in Honduras, where they served for one year, 2006–2007. He was given a commission for that year to pastor the work in Honduras. At the end of their term there, they returned to their home church of Mixcolajá. There he was commissioned again as pastor, and has been serving in that capacity ever since.

In the past year or so, we have been working to ordain more leaders, as the Lord would so lead. Although Humberto had already been commissioned, after seeking counsel from the local congregation and interviewing Humberto and Rosa, we decided to proceed with an ordination.

### Explanation

Perhaps an explanation would be in order here. What is the difference between commissioning a minister, and ordaining him? Why do we commission some and ordain others? It's a fair question, and one



**Humberto Mux is now the ordained pastor of the Mixcolajá congregation.**

we have been asked quite often. The basic difference is that a commission is temporary, whereas an ordination is for life. Both have basically the same responsibilities. Also, you may wonder: why commission . . . wouldn't it be better to just ordain? These are questions that have been weighed for the past thirty years. It was often felt best to commission a brother, especially when fairly new in the faith, in order to give him time to "grow into" his responsibilities and develop his talents. In this way, those in charge would not be acting hastily in ordaining a novice.

### A little background

Now, for a little history: As it was said of Jesus, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" it could also be said "Can any good thing come out of prison?" Years ago, a drunkard and alleged criminal was arrested and put into prison for a seven year term. While in prison, he was converted. Later, he received instruction for baptism, and was baptized, while still incarcerated.

That man was Pablo Mux, Humberto's father, who is still living and faithfully serving the Lord. He is considered the "patriarch" of the Joya Grande congregation, where there is a growing group of believers. There Humberto became a Christian as a youth, and later met Rosa, from Mixcolajá, who became his wife.

*(continued on page 3)*



# EDITORIAL

by Brian Yoder

## To a Fellow Traveler

When you got on my bus in Antigua yesterday, I didn't know if you were American or European. You chose the seat next to me, and we began a conversation that continued all the way back to Guatemala City.

There was a world of difference on that bus seat. You, a college graduate from southern California. I, a Mennonite farm boy from Virginia. You, in Guatemala for eighteen months working with the Peace Corps. I, in Guatemala for fifteen years, serving as a missionary. You didn't know where home was right now. Guatemala, you guessed.

You told me about your work in the Peace Corps; ecotourism and teaching. I told you my vision for an indigenous church. You said that we were the first organization that you've met in Guatemala that really understood sustainability.

We were fast approaching Guatemala City, and I asked you, "Tell me, what's your personal belief about God, and about Jesus?" You said that you believed that Jesus existed, but not God. You grew up a Unitarian Universalist. Your mother would not mention God in prayer, but say, "May the 'Force' give us life."

You said that the "Force" was like the energy of the Big Bang, not intelligent. You said that Jesus was a good teacher, and that you liked His parables. I said that Jesus must have either been crazy for claiming divinity, or else completely trustworthy. You said you didn't understand religion very well, and should take some classes on it. I said that you should read the Bible and let it speak for itself.

And then I had to get off. I wished the ride could have lasted longer, because I was just getting to the good part. There are things I would have loved to tell you, a southern California graduate who may have never heard them before.

First, you're right. There is a Force in the universe, immeasurably greater than anything you can imagine; a living, thinking Force, much stronger than a big bang and much wiser than modern science. Have you, science student, never been amazed by the complexity of a human cell, enthralled by the miracle of continued life, and awed at the vast order of space? It didn't happen, it was planned. So were you.

You said that you try to return good for evil, but where did your sense of fairness and mercy come from? You work to make the world a better place, but where did your concept of a higher possibility come

from? Evolution cannot claim that. Justice and mercy and love are not animal characteristics, and evolution could never produce them. You were made in the image of God, and traces of His person still reside in you.

This explosively powerful God built a universe upon the foundation of his own being. Into it, he built laws of nature upon which science itself depends. These laws are violated only at the expense of failure.

Ever wonder why some things work and some things fail in society? It's because God has built the principles of his own nature into the very code of the universe. Moral law is an extension of God's own nature, and to break it is to violate the very living Force that sustains the world.

Friend, there *is* absolute truth. There *is* sin and consequence, and you see it every day without recognizing it. There *is* divine intelligence, so personal that it knows you, so fair that it holds you accountable, and so loving that it yearns to set you at one with Himself.

In a perfect example of the love and mercy that you strive for, this "Force," as you know Him, pulled aside the curtain of His own creation and stepped inside as a man. This was Jesus. To seek God outside of Jesus is like trying to escape a concrete prison while ignoring the open door.

You chart a spiritual journey of your own making. But as a product of evolution, what spirituality can you claim? You work to change the world, but into what? I would love to share with you the stories of those reconciled with the lawgiver, like the drunk that once terrorized his family, now a gentle father. The extortioner who confessed his wrongdoing and now lives an honest life. These are examples of "inner change" that change the world.

You and I are separated by one ideological difference: God exists, and has chosen to reveal Himself. If there is no God, and no revelation of Himself, a spiritual journey is but a wandering in the dark.

When I got off the bus, I prayed that God would set His mark on you, and would for the rest of your life nudge you toward His truth. That one day your "Force" would be your Father, and Jesus would be your friend.

Nice meeting you,  
Brian

## Ministerial Ordination in Mixcolajá . . . continued

They now have a family of six children.

Truly, there is “beauty for ashes,” as by the miracle of the New Birth these lives have been transformed; having literally come out of ashes, a seemingly hopeless and desperate situation.

### Meeting the challenge

It has been a challenge to find men who are eligible as well as qualified for the ministry. A man can have a wonderful testimony and be qualified personally, but not eligible. A wife who is not submissive or children who are unruly may make a prospective pastor ineligible, according to the qualifications listed in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. Our Guatemalan brethren have strong convictions regarding this, and we dare not take this lightly.

We rejoice that Humberto and Rosa have instituted a Christian home, and that three of their children have received Christ as Savior, and are baptized members. Here is another example of third-generation Christians in the Guatemalan churches.

### The ordination service

Easter weekend was a special time for the brethren in Mixcolajá. A Bible conference had been planned, and services began on Wednesday with an evangelistic and a revival emphasis. The guest speaker was

Bro. Lamar Hursh, a former missionary who served there from 2001 to 2007. The brethren were blessed and encouraged with the presence of their former missionary lay pastor.

There was also a thanksgiving service and dedication for the new chapel building. This special service was held on Sunday morning. Bro. Lamar had the morning message.

The ordination service was held on Sunday afternoon, after a fellowship dinner. Bro. Victor Ovalle moderated the service, and after the ordination message given by Bro. Mark Gingerich, Victor officiated in the ordination, assisted by Mark. This was a first for Victor, who was ordained bishop a little more than a year ago. Yet he is a veteran minister, having pastored for many years, and now ably fills this role in the ministry. The chapel was well filled, as there were many visitors from the neighboring congregation of San Bartolomé. It was a meaningful service, and a blessing to all who attended.

I am certain that Bro. Humberto senses the added weight of his now lifetime commitment and charge. Please remember to pray for him and his family, as they endeavor by God’s grace to serve Him faithfully, that they may set a godly example for many others to follow.

—Mark Gingerich

## Pastor of the Month



**Byron and Karen de la Rosa,  
and daughter Lia**

**Byron de la Rosa** was born on a farm in Southern Guatemala, and almost lost his life before he lived to be an hour

old. His father paced the darkness outside the still house. “Lord!” he cried out. “Save my son, and I will give him to your service!” Byron lived.

Byron was raised in a church-going family that moved away from Catholicism and toward true faith. For a time, during his youth, he resisted his calling and went his own way, but God kept drawing him back. He began a pilgrimage that led him to the Lirio de los Valles congregation almost ten years ago. After accepting the convictions of our church, Byron was taken in as a member.

In 2005, the Lirio congregation went through a process of choosing a second minister. Although single, Byron was chosen as Lirio’s first Guatemala-

lan pastor in twenty years.

In 2008 Byron met Karen Bean, from Ontario. What began as “English study” ended in courtship, and they were married in December, 2008.

Byron is an agricultural scientist, working with a commission from Taiwan to research agriculture and food preservation techniques in Guatemala. He sometimes is required to travel, and in June he spent two weeks in Taiwan, taking classes and presenting research.

Please pray for Byron and Karen de la Rosa, as they serve the Lord in Guatemala, ministering to the church and sharing the gospel in circles that we rarely reach.



# Personnel Notes

There are new faces this month, as MAM seeks to strengthen the southern churches, as well as meet the demands of other aspects of the work. During the next weeks, we plan to send North American workers into two church areas currently under Guatemalan leadership. Steve Steckly and James Allgyer plan to move to Oratorio to support Isaias Muñoz, the busy local pastor and bishop of the southern churches. Ross Goods plan to move from El Chal to Pasaco, to lift the arms of the small congregation in Porvenir. Through these changes, we hope to encourage and support the surrounding congregations as well.

**Mervin and Marian Hoover**, from Meigs, Georgia, filled in as houseparents from mid-April to the end of June. We appreciated their willingness to come, and their cheerful service around the mission. Brian and Janelle's children very much enjoyed having their grandparents nearby.



**Mervin and Marian Hoover, from Meigs, Georgia, served as temporary houseparents in May.**

**Vernon and Jean Helmuth**, from Bonner's Ferry, Idaho, arrived on June 7 for a six-to-nine month term as houseparents. Their oldest daughter Jody has agreed to serve as school teacher for Brian Yoder's and Danny Beachy's children this fall.

**Danny and Linda Beachy**, from Bonner's Ferry, Idaho, came on June 10 for a term of service. Danny will fly the mission plane, help with construction

projects, and serve as "City Missionary," heading up evangelism efforts. For now, they're learning the fine points about living in Guatemala City, and studying Spanish.

**Harold and Darlene Kauffman**, MAM's eighty-six-year-old founder, has returned with his wife Darlene, for a four-to-six month commitment to work alongside José Benito in San Bartolomé. He is, of course, our oldest, most seasoned, mature missionary on the field.



**Harold and Darlene Kauffman returned to Guatemala for a short time of service in San Bartolomé.**

**Steve Steckly**, from Doenegal Mennonite Church in Ontario, arrived in late May for a second term of service with MAM. We plan to send him and James Allgyer to Oratorio to support the local church in evangelism and discipleship. They'll also help with services in small congregations nearby.



**Melody Showalter came in June to serve with Jeff and Crystal Yoder in El Naranjo.**

**Melody Showalter**, from Calvary Mennonite Fellowship in Harrisonburg, Virginia, came to Guatemala in May to serve with Jeff Yoder's in El Naranjo. She'll be helping with domestic work, as well as in evangelistic opportunities in town.

**Nathan Yoder**, after a year and eight months of service in Santa Rosita, returned home to Gladys, Virginia, on June 15. We appreciate his outreach and work effort in our northernmost outpost.

As you remember, please pray for these new troops in their new assignments. Being plunged into a new culture is never easy, and being on the front lines of the Lord's work brings it's own set of challenges.



**Vernon and Jean Helmuth began a 6-9 month term as houseparents in June.**



**Danny and Linda Beachy came in June to serve as pilot and city missionary.**

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