

Guatemala, Central America



"They that sow in tears shall reap in joy" Psalm 126:5

MENNONITE *Air* MISSIONS

Vol. XLVI | No. 5

September, October 2011

WATER Reports

Every summer, MAM hosts several WATER students from SMBI. After a month of serving and observing in different mission stations in Guatemala, this is what the three 2011 WATER students had to say.

As the flat-nosed, crammed-full Mitsubishi van tore along the highway, I enjoyed my window seat. Warm, tropical rain pelted against the window, filled the gullies, and ran down to the muddy river below. I watched the silent, wood-slat houses; children, chickens, and dogs had all run for cover . . .

In a lot of ways, I feel like this illustrates my month in Guatemala. I have seen so much, enjoyed the immense beauty of the land, experienced a different culture, and been challenged by another way of life. And yet that window (the incredible language barrier) has kept me at "arm's length." I enjoyed watching the workers interact with the people here, laughing over a funny happening, in a serious discussion, or crying over an issue. But there I was, not totally sure why we were laughing or crying.

We handed out tracts in the inner-city and I thought, *This is so frustrating not being able to talk to anybody!* And then it hit me. The power of the Holy Spirit is not limited to my ability to speak. That thought was reiterated that night as I knelt beside a Spanish lady in prayer. I scrambled to catch when her prayer was over and it was my turn to talk to the Father. Hallelujah! We serve a God who understands, no matter what language we speak!

—Kendra Horst

I was often close to death during my four weeks in Guatemala—but not my own. In El Chal, I was with Kristina when she visited a family whose mother had just died. Neighbor women were caring for her body and cleaning out her tiny thatch-roofed hut. The seventeen-year-old son who provided for her (and his wife, baby, and younger brother) was crying as he directed two Catholic men who were helping prepare for the *vela* (all-night watch).

Also in El Chal a couple days later, a well-liked *tuk-tuk* (small taxi) driver was killed by a motorcycle driving without lights at night. We noticed all the *tuk-tuks* had black bows the next day, but it was only for one day, and at the *vela* the night before, many



This year's WATER team, from left to right: Bethany Hollinger (PA), Grace Thompson (OH), and Kendra Horst (VA).

people were just drinking and having a party (at the family's expense).

So much grief, and the world rushes on. When I think of the recent passing of a church family's grandmother at Lirio, another sick woman in El Chal who will die soon because her relatives can't hospitalize her, and the long, high walls of vaults where the deceased poor lie undisturbed only if their family pays the rent, I am challenged to give God everything today because sometime, tomorrow won't come.

—Grace Thompson

I am really thankful with how God has blessed me as a WATER student in Guatemala! It was my first time out of the country, and God has opened my eyes in many wonderful ways.

One of my many highlights was spending time in Santa Rosita with Steve and Valerie Diefenbacher's family, and with Dorcas and Yolanda. They live at a beautiful place along the riverside among many poor and hurting people. I was very privileged to help a native woman do her work one morning. We went down to the river together and washed her clothes by

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EDITORIAL

by Brian Yoder

All About the “God Stuff”

Everyone needs a good seven-year-old around to help keep life in perspective. Mine followed me to the goat shed the other day and watched as I measured feed. “Dad, are you rich?” he asked.

I looked at the tiny goat shed I had built. “Well, not really,” I said. “But sort of, because we have a lot more than most people.” I crouched to milk the little creature perched on the platform.

“Dad,” my son insisted, “are you richer than Don Arturo?” I glanced down toward Don Arturo’s place. A retired air force colonel, our neighbor had a beautiful house, spacious lawn, and frequent parties. “No,” I said, “we’re not as rich as Don Arturo.”

“Yes-huh!” my son contradicted earnestly. “‘Cause it’s not the money stuff that makes you rich, it’s the God stuff. So see, we’re richer than Don Arturo!”

I glanced up from the goat. Well, true fact. He’s only seven, and someday he might express it with more finesse, but he has the idea. Wealth is not measured by bank statements or stock holdings, business deals or acreage. True wealth is all about the “God stuff.”

So expanding on Isaac’s homespun philosophical statement, what is the “God stuff” that makes one rich? Scripture has something to say about it.

Faith makes a poor man wealthy, according to James 2:5. Wealth gazes on beautiful pastures filled with fat cattle. Faith focuses on the face of the Father who owns the cattle on a thousand hills. Wealth can stockpile gold. Faith lays hold of a place where the purest gold is used for asphalt.

Working together with Christ makes one truly rich, as Paul points out in 2 Cor. 6. He begins his list of personal hardships with this statement: “*We then, as workers together with him . . .*” He ends the passage with another: “*. . . as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.*”

What does that mean to you? Partner with a banker, and you get a banker’s reward. Partner with Bill Gates, and you get a Microsoft payback. But partner with Jesus, and expect a God-sized, endless inheritance. Co-laborers are coheirs.

It wasn’t easy, Paul said. He didn’t have much, and

his was sometimes a wet and painful business. But his work wasn’t to make himself rich. He sought to enrich the lives of others, by bringing them into the joy of knowing Jesus and pointing them to the riches of Heaven. He didn’t have much, yet the “all things” were his.

Scripture says that Moses knew about true wealth when he chose the reproach of Christ over the treasure of Egypt. Imagine that! The scorn and rejection one would face for Jesus’ name has a higher value sticker than the treasure of the pyramids. No wonder the Hebrew writer congratulated his readers: “*[you] joyfully accepted the plundering of your goods, knowing that you have a better and an enduring possession for yourselves in heaven.*” Their loss was a good investment, so why complain about it?

Jesus taught His disciples to invest in heavenly treasure. It takes faith to lose what is tangible to gain the invisible, but the only way to add to your heavenly account is to let go of it here. When the Pharisees so “spiritually” promised their wealth to the temple to avoid helping their parents, there was no heavenly treasure. But when the two cents slipped from the widow’s fingers, there was. When we do favors to receive favors, nothing happens in Heaven. But when we invest in those who can never repay us, God notices. And it’s not just about money, but about time, prayer, compassion, and service.

I am privileged to live among those whom the world would call “underprivileged.” It’s a special privilege to wash feet with illiterate farmers, share meals in smoky kitchens, and sleep on dirt floors among those who know Jesus. Enrique has gone hungry, but he is rich in faith. Irma has suffered much for her faithfulness, but she is a daughter of the King. José has been threatened and reviled, but he is partnering with the Creator.

These are those over whom Jesus rejoiced in spirit, to whom He has revealed the secrets of the Kingdom. These are the truly wealthy, because it’s not about the “money stuff.” It’s about the “God stuff.”

WATER Reports . . . continued

hand with several other women who were also doing laundry. Then she wanted me to carry the five-gallon bucket of laundry back to her house on my head! I did my best, which wasn't very good, but she was happy that I tried, so that was great! We also made tortillas for lunch and ate them together.

That day was a very good experience for me, especially since I knew only English and she knew only Spanish. We were still able to communicate, and I really enjoyed my time with her and her sweet children. I love the people in Guatemala and miss them already.
—Bethany Hollinger

From the Treasurer

What a blessing to see God working through His people to proclaim His Good News in Guatemala. Finances play a vital role in our ministry, and it has been faith-building to see our needs met. Recently, however, MAM has been operating in a deficit.

We have seen necessary to recently increase the number of missionaries in Guatemala, which has increased our budget expenses. We are also working to complete the Guatemala City church building as funds allow.

The missionaries and churches in Guatemala

are important, but just as important are you who support by praying and giving. It is because of you that we have been continually able to operate MAM. Thank you for your prayers and financial support. If the Lord leads you to help reduce our deficit in the coming months, we thank you in advance.

Make donations payable to Mennonite Air Missions and send to Amos Hurst Jr., 140 Rothsville Station Rd., Lititz, PA 17543.

—Amos Hurst Jr., MAM Treasurer

Pastor of the Month



**Ismael and Selma Quiñonez
and daughter Kim.**

Ismael Quiñonez is one of the only early pastors in MAM who was not moved from place to place to pastor fledgling churches. Since he was ordained in 1982, he has lived and served in San Andrés, MAM's first outreach church.

Ismael grew up in San Andrés. He

was an official in the local township when he began to attend the new Mennonite church in 1973. A year later, he accepted the Lord, and was one of the two first baptized members in San Andrés. When Selma Santizo came from Tecpan to help José Luis del Valle, the local pastor, Ismael was immediately interested. He and Selma were married in 1975.

As a young Christian in San Andrés, Ismael was one of the pioneers who trekked over the mountains to enter the hostile village of San Bartolomé. During the years of violence, Ismael hiked alone the three hours to Mixcolajá weekly to hold services. The village of Las Casas, six miles from San Andrés, has never had a local Mennonite church, but for years, Ismael has visited the brethren and held services there.

Twice during the years of civil war, Ismael narrowly missed harm or death. One afternoon, as he was working in a carpenter shop just outside of town, he had a heavy feeling that something was not right. He kept

working for another twenty minutes, but the feeling grew. He finally left, ten minutes before quitting time, to see what was happening at home. The guerrillas entered the shop five minutes after he left. When they found no men there, they hiked to the mission outpost in Mixcolajá, where they ransacked the buildings, burned the clinic, and torched a vehicle.

During those years, cargo trucks were the only means of transportation out of San Andrés. One morning that Ismael planned to leave for Quiché, he overslept, and the truck on which he was to ride left without him. On the way to Quiché, the guerrillas ambushed the truck, and killed all twelve men aboard.

Today, the Mennonite congregation is one of eight churches in town. The chapel is a small building adjacent to Ismael's house, and only a handful of people meet there. Pray for courage and vision for Ismael and the members that remain, that God could bring fruit from the work that was begun almost forty years ago.

Personnel Notes

Janet Meyers, an RN from Hummelstown, Pennsylvania, arrived in Guatemala in July to begin a two-year term of service. After three weeks of Spanish study and two weeks of living with Isaias Muñoz's family in Oratorio, she will head to El Chal for a time of training in the clinic. With future expansion in the clinic in Santa Rosita, she may eventually move to El Naranjo to help with clinic work there.



Janet Meyers

Roy and Miriam Biehn returned to Guatemala on August 17. They aren't new to Guatemala, since they had served for about two years as houseparents in El Chal. Roy was asked to return to serve as the mission's business administrator, a job that involves banking, financial decisions, and dealing with a wide variety of questions. For now, Roy and Miriam are living in a rented house around the corner from mission headquarters.



Roy and Miriam Biehn arrived on August 17.

Mark Andrew Gingerich, Mark and Norma's youngest son, was married to **Abigail Harlow** on August 19, in Mylo, North Dakota. Since she's a nurse and he's graduating as a medical doctor this fall, they plan to return to Guatemala in September to serve for a time.

Missionary Workers' Meeting

With missionaries scattered across Guatemala, it's rare to get them all together.



Table games drew unusual combinations of people.

In July, we planned a two-day workers' meeting, and almost everyone managed to come,



A sleepy missionary child.

except the valiant few who stayed at their posts in the clinics and El Chal school. It was a joyful time for singing, sharing, games, and encouragement. Eldwin Campbell, from Harrisonburg, VA, shared three topics with the group.



Men's singing was a highlight.



Danny Beachy, our new pilot, conversing with Harold Kauffman, the original MAM pilot.



Story time with Jody Helmuth.

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Mennonite Air Missions (USPS 383-570)

Mennonite Air Missions newsletter is published bimonthly by Mennonite Air Missions, Inc. Editor / Mission representative: Brian Yoder, Apartado 2569, Guatemala City, Guatemala, CA 019-01; Mennonite Air Missions Board: Chairman: Duane Eby, 14438 Daley Rd., Hagerstown, MD 21740; Assistant Chairman: Wesley King, 30 Juliasam Dr., Belleville, PA 17004; Treasurer: Amos Hurst Jr., 140 Rothsville Station Rd., Lititz, Pa. 17543; Secretary: Lee Lehman, 2065 Sollenburger Rd., Chambersburg, PA 17202; Urie Sharp, Leon Yoder, Wesley King, Mervin Kuepfer, Pete Shirk, Stanley Neuenschwander, Jeff Weaver. The newsletter is sent free of charge. Send all newsletter correspondence to MAM Newsletter, 7995 Saint Peter's Ch. Rd., Bolivar, OH 44612. MENNONITE AIR MISSIONS is published on the fifteenth of January, March, May, July, September, and November. Application for Periodical Permit is pending at Harrisonburg, VA 22801.

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