

August 2015

# Missions

New South  
American  
Missions Groups

Visiting Missionaries  
Gives a New Perspective

2015 MOP Report

HOPE FOR  
YEZIDI  
REFUGEE  
WOMEN



# Thinking It Through

TOM TURNER

## Lonely but Not Alone!

I was drafted into the United States Army 49 years ago this month. At 25 years old and married three years with a good position in New York City, my world suddenly changed. As I reported to the enlistment office and received my Gideon New Testament from a caring man at the door, *lonely* was a word that became very real to me.

Way back then we did not have the immediacy of email and Facebook that transmits messages in an instant. Rather, we had to wait till we got to a phone booth or we heard our name at mail call meaning we had a “snail mail” letter from a loved one at home. What a thrill it was to open that letter and know that someone cared—about me!

I was invited to join the board of directors at CMML 17 years ago, and after much prayer I felt the Lord would have me move in that direction. Over the years I have been privileged to meet many of the Lord’s servants who labor on the foreign field. One thing is very certain among these dear missionaries—they are far, far away from their home assembly, family and friends. Many times they feel *lonely*, but let me hasten to say they know they are not alone. They know from firsthand experience the promise of our Savior: “For He hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.” (Hebrews 13:5b)

These dear saints no doubt miss the warm greetings and fellowship that we enjoy at the local assembly. But they have left that place of safety and support to travel to a distant land and culture where they preach the Gospel, disciple believers and put their shoulder to the plow to do a myriad of jobs that are needed on the field. There are *lonely* times for sure. Perhaps you also have felt times of loneliness as I did when I was in the military. But one thing I knew from experience was that He was with me and I was not alone.

Dear reader, please imagine for a minute how you would feel if you were a missionary serving thousands of miles away wondering, “Does anyone back home care?” This does happen;

and so I challenge you to think about your personal responsibility to the individual or family commended from your home assembly to serve the Lord overseas. Remember they are an extension of you and your local church. Today, you have all the modern conveniences of email, Facebook, Skype and telephone that can put you immediately in front of your missionary to offer words of encouragement and care. Even if you feel you can’t use those electronic methods, you can still take time to write a letter to one of the Lord’s servants who may be feeling *lonely right now!* Your “snail mail” letter with a stamp from the U.S. or Canada truly will make a missionary’s day because your letter clearly says, “I care about you!”

The Scripture reminds us “Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.” (1 John 4:11) And, “My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever.” (Psalm 73:26) Some of our missionaries

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may feel *lonely*, but they are never alone, and neither are we on the home front. Right now you have the ability (and might I say, the responsibility) to make an important difference in the life of a missionary. Please take time today to contact a missionary and encourage them in their labors by letting them know that you care.

We all have a part to play in worldwide missions work. Some are called to go and others to stay at home to support those who have answered God’s call. But remember support not only includes prayer and financial help with practical needs, but it also means “coming alongside” to bear up our brothers and sisters who are serving the Savior. Satan is hard at work trying to discourage our missionaries. He does not want the Gospel to go out or people to get saved. But *you* can make a difference. “The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.” (James 5:16b) Please keep praying and then take action in this important battle. Won’t you become an encourager to the Lord’s servants today? ■

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# A NEW MISSIONARY MOVEMENT



## South American Service Groups Partnership Retreat



BY JOEL HERNANDEZ

**O**n April 15 some 40 men met in Argentina to encourage the Latin American missionary movement. The men were leaders representing 11 countries in South America and several more from English-speaking countries (Canada, Scotland, U.K. and U.S.). We met for five days at the grounds of a Nazarene conference center in Pilar, Argentina. We called it a “retreat,” but there was no retreating about it. We were there to learn how to move forward.

Each of these men might tell, if asked, the story of how assembly missionaries brought the Gospel to their country more than 100 years ago. They would recount the stories of men and women who, with admirable sacrifice, courage, godliness and creativity, left the comforts of home to plant the Gospel in mostly hostile territory. Though the names, places and dates change from country to country, the elements bear a resemblance: English-speaking missionaries sailed from Europe, leaving behind family and comforts and settled where God led them. They learned the language, faced hostility and persecution, yet in the end saw God plant His Word in good soil, such as would bring much fruit for generations to come. These pioneers were remarkable missionaries.

It is no surprise then that Latin American believers would naturally define a missionary as a foreigner who leaves his or her English-speaking country and comes to labor in “our country.” But the winds are changing. A fresh understanding of the Great Commission is emerging south of the U.S. border. Believers are realizing Jesus calls *all disciples* to make disciples of all nations. The Great Commission is not a command directed only to the English-speaking world, or affluent nations, or

those with an evangelical maturity that spans centuries. No, the Great Commission is the responsibility of every disciple in every nation.

God is leading an increasing number of Latin Americans to the mission field: an Argentinean doctor serves in Angola, a Colombian couple labors in the Far East, and a Mexican serves in Albania. Scores of others have been sent to places where Westerners are unwelcome.

But these missionaries cannot operate in a vacuum. They need the spiritual, moral, and financial support of their local churches. And these churches cannot provide support in a vacuum either. They need to know the missionaries and understand their ministry and their needs. This two-way need provides the rationale for organizations that bridge the gap by facilitating the flow of communication from the missionary to the national assemblies, and the flow of resources from the local assemblies to the missionary. The bridge that connects missionaries and churches at home consists of organizations like CMML and MSC.

There’s good news. Such national organizations in Latin America are emerging. In 1965 Argentina Missionary Evangelical Foundation (FEMA) was born. The Paraguay Missionary Evangelical Foundation (FEMIPA) began in 1998. Peru Missionary Services (SEMIPE) was founded in 2008. A number of other countries are now at different stages of the process of founding their own organization.

This was the reason for the retreat. Latin American organizations came together, with the encouragement from CMML (U.S.), MSC Canada, Echoes of Service (United Kingdom) and Interlink (Scotland), to encourage other Latin American



**From top (L-R):** Round table discussions included a multicultural perspective—Eliseo Zúñiga from Bolivia, Joel Hernandez from the U.S., and Eduardo Carbone from Argentina; Ian Burness shared from Echoes of Service’s wealth of experience; Evening “table talk” included reports of national mission work and prayer; Joel Hernandez, Paco Díaz, and Pepe Barrios considered Mexico’s missionary realities and needs; The event concluded with hymns and choruses set to the delightful cadences of an Argentinean music style.

brethren to begin their own missionary service organization. There were 11 countries represented: Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay.

Tapping into the experience of those who are further ahead in the process, believers sat down to think hard about what makes a missionary service organization, its challenges, opportunities, and best practices. The program consisted of daily sessions, morning through evening, packed with lots of helpful advice about how to develop and maintain a healthy mission organization. Topics included:

- The biblical basis of missions
- The centrality of the local church in the process of missions
- Strengths and weaknesses of missions from the Latin American contexts
- Service groups: their governance, structure, purpose, policies, development and vision
- How a service group relates to the government
- Finance and mission (faith principle, missionary support, communication and accountability)
- The danger of dependency and how to avoid creating it
- The worker and his/her service (personal, logistic, cultural and ministry issues)

There was time for a daily challenge from the Word. We wrestled around the table with the implications of the ideas we heard. We heard reports of what the Lord is doing in each country. We prayed for one another. And during down time, we reconnected with old friends and made new ones.

So what was the value of this conference? First, it was historic. Nothing like this had ever been done before in Latin America. Though a number of these Spanish-speaking countries already have their own service organization, there has never been a time when brethren from Spanish-speaking countries have come together to learn how to set up their own.

A second reason why this event was valuable is it established a precedent of collaboration. The conference was hosted by brothers from FEMA, Argentina. It was good that FEMA took the lead: brethren all over look up to Argentina as the oldest and most mature Latin American missionary enterprise. In this conference, however, Argentinean brethren set an exam-



ple of service to their fellow Latin American brethren.

But there was a further level of cooperation exhibited at the conference: the English-speakers were not in charge. This is significant in Latin America where white, English-speakers have long been regarded as the experts, as superiors especially on spiritual matters. Not so at this conference. The equality and the collaborative spirit between brethren of different nations and languages was evident, and it was a refreshing new precedent that underscored important truths: we need each other; we can learn from one another.

A final value of this event was there was something for everyone. Some countries represented already have a mission organization functioning. Others only dream of having one. Yet all reported gaining helpful information from the sessions. Those just at the initial stages of developing an organization had an opportunity to pray, discuss, envision, and draft the first steps. Those with young organizations heard from those with

older ones and considered issues, challenges and standards that affect a growing mission. Even brethren serving with the oldest missions were able to get a glimpse of how God is at work in Latin America and the unique challenges and opportunities as the Gospel moves forward.

There's a new dawning in missions in Latin America. Yes, the Lord continues to send missionaries there (just check out days 18 to 27 in the *Missionary Prayer Handbook*). Yes, missionaries are still critically needed in Hispanic countries. Yet there is a refreshingly new awareness among our hermanos, our brothers, in Latin America: the Lord of the harvest intends to send Latin American laborers to His harvest. As brethren step up to fill the gap between those sent and the assemblies who support, let's pray that sound, trustworthy, spiritually-minded, service-oriented missionary service organizations emerge. ■

*Joel Hernandez is a CMMML director.*

## May We Introduce

### Ana Caracciolo *Missionary to Uruguay*

I was born and raised in Mercedes, Uruguay. I came to know the Lord through a radio broadcast called "La Voz del Evangelia" (The Voice of the Gospel) in April 1971. From 1973 through 1975 I attended FEBE (Bible college) in Villa Maria, Argentina. Starting at age 19, I served the Lord as a school teacher (Bible, language, music and home economics) for five years at the Escuela Cristiana Camirena in Camiri, Bolivia. During those years, I met Mrs. Evelyn Pelley (*Missionary Prayer Handbook* Day 27) who came as a missionary from the U.S. in 1978. We served the Lord together in child evangelism (Good News Clubs), teacher training, ladies' Bible studies and music ministry. In 1981 I was commended to the Lord's work in Colombia. Evelyn and I were actively involved in church planting, camp work, ladies' retreats, teacher training, organizing Sunday schools, door-to-door visitation and one-on-one evangelism. We both served in the cities of Barranquilla and Cartagena, Colombia. In 1992 we were invited to serve the Lord in Uruguay as volunteer workers with Child Evangelism Fellowship of Uruguay. We received the training and the CEF

credentials as IOTs (Instructors of Teachers). In 1995 I attended the CEF Leadership Institute in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

In 2000 the director of all CEF in Latin America appointed me as the CEF national director for Uruguay. I continued to do volunteer service with CEF until March 2003. From April 2003 through May 2012 I came to the U.S. and was awarded a B.A. and M.A. in Communicative Disorders from California State University, Fullerton. After completing the clinical fellowship year, I was awarded a license and Certification in Clinical Competence as a speech-language pathologist. I sometimes do volunteer service among Spanish-speaking children with speech-language disabilities.

Commended by Buena Park Christian Fellowship in Buena Park, California, I have returned to Uruguay to serve the Lord in child evangelism, teacher training, ladies' ministry, and one-on-one evangelism. ■

