



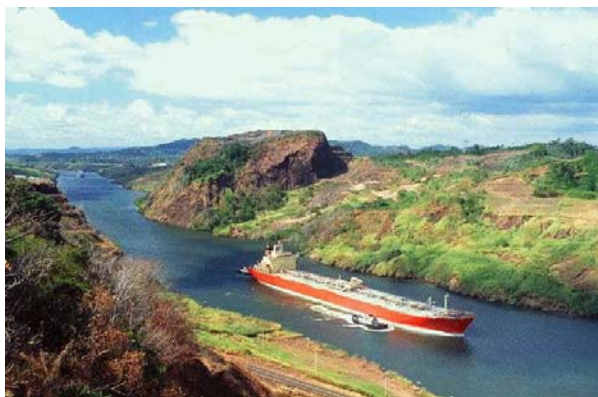
CBMA / CBMC Newsletter

Go out into all the world...

Please forward this newsletter to the members of your ecclesia, as well as anyone else you think would be interested. We'd like to get the word out about this exciting work!

Missionary Experiences

This Newsletter features articles from Missionaries to give you a flavor of Mission Life.



Panama - "The Dwelling the Lord has Lent Me"

When we were fairly newly married, a brother involved with the CBMA asked us if we would be interested in joining a small group of various ecclesial members on a trip to Panama, to visit the ecclesias there. Though both of us had been on Truth Corps, we had not even thought of the idea of visiting ecclesias in the mission field.

The week-long pastoral trip was a new experience for us, and showed us how "normal" life in another country could be. Afterwards, we both realized that we could relocate to such a place, and that we were wrong in imagining that it would be like moving to another planet!

Within a year we were in El Salvador learning Spanish, en route to Panama. The experience was extremely valuable for us, as a couple and as a brother and sister in the life of an ecclesia. We were able to learn from experience the different facets of ecclesial life which as younger members in a thriving ecclesia we would not likely experience. We learned quickly that what one "thinks" they can (or in our case, can't) deal with, and what one is actually able to handle are very different - we were faced with challenges we never would have imagined, and found that with prayer and guidance, they were successfully accomplished.

We met many, many brothers and sisters that enriched our lives and taught us so much about what it means to live "in Christ". Our idea of the "correct" or "ideal" ecclesia from our limited experience was changed, and our minds were expanded.

One brother in particular stands out in our memories, though we only were blessed with his presence for a short time. The late Bro. Fernando Gordon of the Colon ecclesia in Panama was a great example to us. At 70 years of age, he was in extremely good health. Bro. Fernando had retired early from work, taking a huge pay-cut, in order to devote his time to helping out the tiny ecclesia. His life revolved

around God's Word. He spoke to us about how more often than not, he would awaken in the middle of the night pondering a scriptural passage, and before long he would be engrossed in study until the sun came up. He introduced his comfortable home as "the dwelling that the Lord has lent me until he sees fit". Bro. Fernando's consistent, strong and humble manner with all members of the ecclesia was a wonderful example. He loved the Truth, and lived for God.

About a year into our work in Panama, Bro. Fernando had a fairly routine surgery on his eye. Within a couple of days, complications developed, and we pondered what the ecclesia would do if Bro. Fernando was left blind. Within the week, our dear brother and example of faithfulness had passed away. We were left reeling and shocked, with a sinking feeling that the ecclesia in Colon would not recover from such a blow. However, the "body of Christ" had lost a member, but not its head. Since that time almost 10 years ago, the ecclesia has grown and remains strong and faithful. To this day, we quote our Bro. Fernando frequently, and his example still encourages us.

As a young married couple, the thought of 2 years in the mission field seemed so long, and frightening. But those years (almost 3) were a huge part of our growth in the service of our Heavenly Father. It seems hard to fathom that we've been home for 8 years since then!!! We would not trade the experience for anything, and would very much encourage anyone to explore the idea of such an experience. Some words of one of our favorite Spanish hymns translate to say:

*"The Lord wants messengers, that will proclaim his truth.
Who will say 'Lord, I am ready, I will perform your will'?
Oh Lord, there is much labor, and there are still laborers needed.
Grant us light, strong faith and courage, and laborers You will always have."*

- Brother Dan and Sister Ashley Robinson
Brantford, Ontario



Guyana - "A New Set of Eyes"

Ted and I were married in 1970 about a year and a half after I was baptized. It was his dream inspired by Bro. Harry Whittaker to devote a few years to missionary work in Guyana. So in 1971 we set off on a journey that would forever change our lives. Ted was 23 and I was 22; he had just finished his Conscientious Objector alternate military service and I had just finished earning my teaching credentials at the university. We were young, naive, and inexperienced but earnest. Ted had signed a 4-year contract with the Guyana government to teach math in a secondary school in Berbice, the "country" part of Guyana.

As we flew over miles of uninterrupted, dense, tropical forest, our first glimpse of Guyana, our new home for the next 4 years, a part of us inwardly gasped, thinking

"what have we gotten into?" We reminded ourselves that this had been a matter of earnest prayer for many months and now the reality was upon us; there was no turning back from the plow. We clasped hands and offered silent prayers to our heavenly Father to overshadow us with His love and His wisdom. I barely had Jacob & Esau straight in my mind and now we were "the missionary couple", looked up to by many of our Guyanese brethren, that is, after they recovered from the initial shock of our youth.

We grew up in Guyana both spiritually and emotionally. Our lives became entwined with the lives of our brothers and sisters. When the storms raged we looked in the boat and in the eyes of our Brethren we saw our Lord there in the boat with us. Many times we were challenged to achieve things we deemed impossible and yet the angelic host was always encamped around us. When we were discouraged or frightened or lonely (there were no cell phones or computers to keep in touch, just Air Mail that took more than 2 weeks to travel to "America"), we learned a dependence on God that we would never have learned had we remained home. We learned what brotherly love was all about; we witnessed it and were challenged to live it.

We came thinking we would be teachers, but instead through our Brethren we were taught. We came to give of ourselves, but, as with the Lord's disciples, we came back with our own baskets overflowing. We came young and naive, but returned having experienced things that many do not experience in a lifetime. We were changed; we were different. We saw the world with a new set of eyes. When the 4 years were finished it was hard to return. This had become our home and our family, our place of belonging.

Now almost 40 years later our hearts are still tied to Guyana, to the many brothers and sisters who changed our lives. We long for the day when those many who we knew and loved, who now sleep in the Lord, will awake and we shall again be joined to them.

- **Brother Ted and Sister Delores Sleeper**
San Francisco Peninsula, California

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GIVE TO UNITED WAY - FOR CBMA!

During the latter part of the year, if you are working, your company may have a big campaign for donating through United Way, which represents many, many charitable organizations. You can specify which organization you want your donation to go to or just let United Way make the decision. For many corporations this is a time when they really encourage participation in United Way. In some cases the company may even match donations to your charity of choice, and the donations are taken directly from your paycheck. We have verified that the **Christadelphian Bible Mission of the Americas (Tax ID #23-7075338)** is identified as a registered donation option on their list. United Way tells us that is may not be allowable in all places nationwide, but where it is allowed, CBMA is available as an option. Please consider donating in this manner if your company participates in United Way. A dollar or two a week is hardly noticeable if given this way but translates to an important amount on an annual basis, especially if your company matches the donation. Please contact me at jberneau@earthlink.net for additional information.



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How Can I Help?

If each Christadelphian family in North America gave \$20 a month, we could easily meet our budget, supporting these and many more projects.

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Donation**



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