

God At Work In La Belleza Today

Wilkon Rohrer

Freedom is coming and it has a Name....JESUS CHRIST. My heart is moved with what God is doing here in La Belleza. Our prayers for the church and especially the youth, are being answered, far beyond our expectations.

The past year and a half have been a journey filled with highs and lows. The closing of the clinic and the journey afterwards has not always been easy. Apparently, when something closes, there are many questions and opinions that arise. AMA's future here felt uncertain.

Currently we are supporting the Belleza school by paying for one teacher and hopefully soon we will be able to teach music again. We're supporting the school on a phasing out plan to give the school time to find alternate support in the future.

Last November we had two CAM SALT representatives (Delbert Kline and Phil Mast) come and present what they feel would be a good approach using their teaching materials. In January 2023, I helped start a Savings group using the SALT handbook. Today we are still meeting monthly and have plans to start a business venture at the beginning of next year. This teaching has been a blessing and we are hopeful of starting more groups using the SALT materials as an outreach mission.

The Church work here at Belleza continues. Last year it was decided that a new Church building was needed. A committee was formed and a small monthly donation from each of the brothers set in place. We are hopeful, depending on sufficient funds, to possibly begin construction in the next year.

Lord willing, Belleza will have a deacon ordination around the end of this year. There has not been

an ordained deacon here for years, so we're looking forward to that.

I feel blessed to be part of the great revival that God has done in the church here. This month of May 2025 has been a life-changing month here at Belleza. After attending a Men's Conference here in Paraguay, hearts have been set free from bondage. I see free men on fire for God like they never were before. I see love and unity coming from the brotherhood that binds us together into one. Freedom and openness puts God's power into action among us.

Our prayer is that this fire will just get stronger instead of die out. We plan to meet weekly for a sharing and prayer time to let God continue to cleanse and build us up in Him. Pray for us. Freedom is coming and it has a Name. It's JESUS CHRIST.



Wilkon & Kristina Rohrer and family

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requested pastoral assistance and oversight from the church at Light and Hope Colony. Although it entailed four hours of bumping over sometimes inhospitable roads, the colony church began to nurture the La Belleza community in a variety of ways. And as before, the request was given to begin a small clinic in this remote area.

Roman Miller, then AMA worker and pastor, helped to shepherd this flock and provided oversight of a clinic constructed by a local board, loosely supported by the community and subsidized by AMA. This clinic, alongside the Belleza congregation, performed urgent care and maternity services, counseling, and general inpatient medical care as well as emergency transport for the outback community. The Belleza clinic was able to employ a national workforce in addition to American staff and the Word of the Lord went forth from this care facility.

Due to staffing shortages, the Belleza Clinic closed its doors in 2023 after more than 20 years of service. Today, a church and school in La Belleza flourish. The former clinic structures will function as a first aid health outpost, operated under local leadership.

AMA presence in Paraguay has now decreased to just one family serving part-time. We give credit to God for the countless lives impacted for His glory over the years. Nearly sixty years ago, the first pioneering colonists and nurses brought Light and Hope to the rural peasant communities of Paraguay, leaving a lasting legacy of faith and service.

In this newsletter we include three articles from former midwives of both clinics, rehearsing ways in which God showed up, and gospel seeds were planted. A current report of God's continued work brings the storyline to today.

Worker Needs

KENYA

- 2 Missionary couples

EL SALVADOR

- 1 Missionary pastor

BELIZE

- A missionary pastor/couple for Haynes Street. This position has a lot of variety, but includes helping with the deaf ministry that continues to grow at Haynes Street.



Financial Report:

Checking Account Balance March 28, 2025:
\$333,268.44

April - May Receipts: \$323,734.56

General Fund total: \$657,003.00

April - May Distributions: \$457,988.51

Checking Account Balance May 31, 2025:
\$199,014.49

Savings Account Balance May 31, 2025:
\$154,173.53

AMA Board Contacts

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If you would like to recommend a name for possible recruitment, please contact the appropriate board member from the list above. If your recommendation is not country specific, contact the coordinator. We covet your interest in filling the various important needs on the field. We believe that where God leads, He provides the resources to do His work. That includes people.

Your generous contributions to the Workers Love Offering for the time served in 2024 was again remarkable and much appreciated. The per-share amount came to \$197.39. Thank you for your generosity to these faithful laborers.

These past months included Love Offering disbursements as well as the purchase of an additional house in Kisumu, for approximately \$180,000 USD. This has the potential of freeing up one of the rental properties we're currently occupying, but leaves our cash reserves in a situation that reminds us that this is the Lord's work and we do rely on him. Summertime tends to be a time when contributions to the work of AMA tends to droop a bit. If there are those of you who would wish to share towards the purchase of this property by replacing some of the funds that this required, we would bless the Lord for laying this on your heart and thank you for your consideration. The board earnestly desires that the stewardship of the funds entrusted to AMA honors God in every way.

Amish Mennonite Aid

May - June 2025



The Beginnings of AMA in Paraguay

Delbert & Susan Schlabach

In the mid 1960's a movement stirred among the Beachy churches in North America, exploring evangelization by colonization in a foreign country. At a meeting in Ohio, on this popular topic, 24 families indicated interest in moving to Paraguay.

A plot of 5,000 acres was purchased by investors, from the Sommerfeld Mennonite Colony (a group of Russian Mennonites who moved to Paraguay in 1948 from Canada) and was named Colonia Luz y Esperanza (Light and Hope Colony).

In December, 1967, the Paul Eichorn and Neil Beachy families settled on this land to pioneer and to tame the virgin jungle. They soon recognized the need for a medical facility closer than the nearest government hospital 50 miles away. They invited AMA to open and operate a clinic in this underdeveloped region. Board member, Lester Hershberger, and AMA missionary in El Salvador, John Mast, visited Paraguay on an investigation basis in December, 1969. After God miraculously moved, Lester and John procured permission and signatures from the Minister of Health of Paraguay on that visit to build and operate a clinic in the rural Department of Caaguazú.

From the beginning, the clinic was a joint venture between the non-AMA Light and Hope Colony and AMA. Land was purchased by a board member and donated to AMA for a small farm and clinic. Colony men and neighbors donated labor.

Interestingly, none of the 24 families who had attended the colonization meeting mentioned above, ever moved to Paraguay. As AMA workers, the John Mast family moved there in April, 1970, and later that year, nurse Fannie Mae Yoder moved in and set up a clinic, assisted by colony families.

Throughout the years, various levels of medical care ebbed and

waned through Clinica Luz y Esperanza. There were periods of having an onsite doctor when minor and major surgeries were performed, laboratory, pharmacy, neonatal care, general and intensive medical care, vaccinations, and always babies being born. Not infrequently, over the years, aspiring midwifery students worked there for short periods of time, training under the direction of the licensed AMA midwife on staff. The clinic also provided emergency transport for critically ill patients.

The spiritual outreach of the clinic's efforts grew to be vibrant and effective. They included Bible studies on the clinic porch, a neighbor man forsaking Catholicism for the faith of these newcomers, Bible reading with patients, sewing classes, tract distribution, visitation, prison ministry, and more. Nearby Colony Light and Hope established a congregation, as well as a small church alongside Primera Linea, within site of the AMA clinic. Summer Bible schools inundated the neighborhood with Bible stories and children's songs. Over all, the faithful, one-on-one patient care provided at the clinic remained a powerful testimony of godliness in this community.

After 43 years, 13 administrators, 176 workers, and over 13 thousand births, the Light and Hope Clinic closed its doors in 2013. Some legalization struggles and primarily the influx of more modern and multiple health facilities in the surrounding area, underscored the fact that this clinic had served its purpose and that in the medical sense it was being well replaced. The property was purchased by the Mennonites of Sommerfeld who have expanded it to serve as a rehabilitation and counseling facility.

In 2000, a small nucleus of former Old Order Amish settlers, with national Paraguayans, who lived in the area of La Belleza, Sidepar, continued on page 5

Christmas Baby
Sara Viola (Miller) Gingerich

Bird life abounds in Paraguay but there are no storks, either in real life or in mythology. Babies came by modern transportation, by airplane, or so the little folk were told. Some said they came by boat. We do know how the expectant mothers came to the Clinic, some by foot, ox cart, bus, motorcycle, and a few by bicycle. And others came by motorized vehicles. But come, they did.

Baby Miguel's mother arrived by taxi one rainy Christmas night. I was on call when the on-duty nurse, Monica, rushed into my room, "Sara, come quick!" I sprang to my feet. Three-thirty AM. I knew in a moment the electricity was off again. Why at this most inopportune time? In a moment, I dressed, grabbed my shoes, and raced the few steps to the clinic entrance and out onto the porch where a kerosene lamp blinked feebly. Just then the taxi, that had been trying to navigate the slippery mud in the drive, pulled up to the door.

I saw there was no time to lose as I reached for the lady's arm to help her out of the car. "Pronto!" I urged. But, it was not pronto enough! We had taken

only a few steps when the baby went sailing through the air, landing with a thud in the



wet red dirt. I gasped. What a tiny baby and what a terrible fall.

The peace of the night was further shattered as an accompanying friend began to wail hysterically, sure that the baby was dead. At that moment the bewildered taxi driver leaped out of the car, and disappeared into the soggy night. I swooped the baby out of the dirt bare-handed. My first stricken inspection revealed some very unusual features. Surely, he didn't have a chance! But, in the next instant the dead infant began to howl lustily. He was indeed alive! Relief, like the torrents of rain pounding on the roof, flooded me while the young mother laughed aloud with joy and gratitude.

Monica, and the friend, who had by now composed herself, helped the patient inside the clinic while I came on behind, barefooted and ungloved, the baby in tow. For once, I was glad the lights were out. Up to now I had not recognized the lady. Ah, she was a high-risk patient with high blood pressure, scheduled to deliver elsewhere. Her bus-driver husband was at work since all had been well and the due date was three weeks out yet.

While I cared for the new mother, nurse Monica began the clean-up job. Three basins of water later Baby Piglet, as we lovingly dubbed him, emerged healthy and fit. We reflected how this graphic birth on the night of December 25, reminded us of the One who came to lift all mankind out of the miry clay.



Miracle Babies

Lois Yoder

Jan 20, 1998, was a very happy day for us, and for Marcelina, who was allowed to take her tiny twin babies home that day, at just over a month of age. Since they were born on December 18, close to Christmas, their parents named them Maria and Jose (Mary and Joseph). They were born almost eleven weeks early, weighing 2 pounds and 2 ounces and 2 pounds and 7 ounces. When they left, they were both 4 ounces above birth weight and doing fine. We took them home with our vehicle and had the opportunity to see where they lived. Plus, it protected the babies from exposure on public bus. We hadn't planned to care for such premature babies at the clinic, but had we not allowed her to stay, she likely would have returned home due to their poverty.

Marcelina became an expert at feeding her babies with feeding. It was an important step forward the day I could pull the tubes out because they were sucking well enough. It was a pleasure to see her lovingly care for her tiny infants. While we did what we could, we recognize that God worked a miracle for them to survive, especially in our low-tech clinic. Due to donations, she had very little left to pay on the bill when she left. We hope Marcelina saw God's love in our lives as she watched us day after day. She enjoyed attending church with us one evening. After a month's absence, Marcelina's husband and her five other children were very happy to have her at home again.

It was a special privilege to maintain ongoing contact with them. We attended their first birthday party and saw them periodically over the years. I have pictures of times we visited them later. At almost 5, Maria's baby doll was wearing the Christmas dress she herself had worn. When we visited them at 10 years of age, they held up those tiny clothes for us to take pictures. Now they are 27 years old and only God knows what is happening to them. But I am thankful for this special family with whom we got to interact.



Maria and Jose

An Unfolding Ministry

Martha Summy

I reflect on my time spent in Paraguay and see it as the most fulfilling time of my life. My first years working in "Clínica Belleza" as a nurse, were centered around delivering babies. Despite the many hours of hard work with sleepless and stressful nights, there was nothing more satisfying than helping a baby safely enter this world.

A larger percent of the clinic work was doing deliveries, and the rest was taking care of anything from simple colds or viruses to suturing wounds and other emergencies. Patients come to us with spiritual needs as well. As time allowed, we would try to get out into their homes to follow up on their quest for spiritual nurturing. However, we were often left feeling like we did not reach around nor did we have the energy to meet the needs.

Little did we know the changes God was planning for us. In May of 2018, we assisted our last birth. I felt like something inside of me died. However, my mind did go to all those spiritual needs that lay heavy on our hearts. Maybe now we would have time to focus on those needs.

I was surprised to find how quickly the Lord started filling the empty spots where deliveries had been.

Soon after the deliveries stopped, instead of laboring with labor patients at night, I found myself sleeping on my bedroom floor with a young girl who had come in under a spiritual attack and had found deliverance in Jesus' saving power. As I lay beside her and considered being a part of the spiritual new birth of this precious soul, I found my heart becoming alive again. A few weeks after this incident we had a similar case with another girl. The peace and joy that was on her face after she gave her heart to the Lord, made getting up in the middle of the night worth it. This young girl wanted to spend her school break days with us and we were able to grant her request. If we would have been doing deliveries yet, we would not have been able to minister to these girls. Today both of these girls are living for the Lord.



Former Clínica Luz y Esperanza now Centro Vital
Centro Vital is now a counseling/rehabilitation center owned by the evangelical Mennonites of Paraguay.