

NEWSLETTER

February 2023



Latin America

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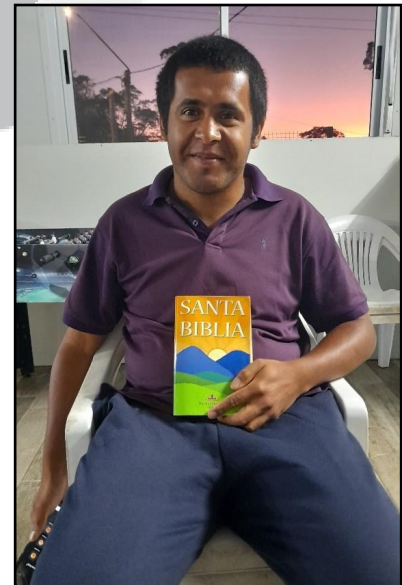
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PICTURE HIGHLIGHTS



Offerings to our Camp Fund made it possible for 16 teens and 6 adult sponsors from **Gustavo Gonzalez's** church in **Uruguay** to go to camp at the end of January.



This young man named José began discipleship this month with **Gustavo Huamani** in **Uruguay**.



Several people made decisions for Christ during 3 days of evangelistic meetings at **Ariel Alfonso's** church in the **Dominican Republic**.

“Join the journey . . . not just where we’ve been, but where we’re going.”

Baptist Evangelistic Ministry Endeavors – Latin America

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Meet our New Church Starters

We are excited to introduce **Manuel Macancela**, one of two pastors in Ecuador whom BEME has recently taken on for support.

Two years ago, Pastor Manuel and his wife Marycruz settled on the outskirts of the Ecuadorian Amazon to evangelize the Kichwa people in the diverse jungle community of Morete Cocha.



Manuel and Marycruz on an evangelistic jungle excursion

Since the only vehicle that can access Morete is an airplane, the Macancelas decided to settle in a nearby city named Shell, also called Shell-Mera.

This name might be familiar, not only because of the Shell Oil Company which came to the area in the 1930s, but also because it was the main base for the work of five North American missionaries (one of which was Jim Elliot) who lost their lives at the hands of the (at the time, uncontacted) indigenous Huaorani people in 1956.



The airstrip in Morete is clearly visible in this aerial view

Pastor Manuel visits the jungle for 10 days each month to help the needy and establish a solid church that can share the gospel with the neighboring communities, including the Achuar, Shuar, Zapara, and Huaorani.



A packed house in the church in Morete Cocha

When they moved to Shell, Manuel and Marycruz noticed churches in the area, but soon realized that none were of sound doctrine. The couple was already starting Bible studies, counseling, and visitation with relatives of the Morete Cocha believers who had left the jungle to live in Shell. The Lord placed a burden on their hearts to start a new work. Without the financial resources to do so, it became a matter of prayer.

In his first report, Pastor Manuel wrote: *“You, my beloved brothers and sisters of BEME-LA, are the answer to our prayers and, together, we will start the work in Shell. With your help, we rented land with a small structure on it. We are fixing it up and will soon begin building the supports for a tent for our meetings. We are still praying to be able to purchase land. Thank you for the offering that was designated toward our land fund. We trust in the Lord that we will achieve this soon.”* (continued on pg. 3)



Meet our New Church Starters (continued)

With the construction of the tent underway and a group of about 15 believers, Pastor Manuel planned the first Sunday service for February 26. A 4-week children's program will launch the Saturday before with a giveaway of shoeboxes from Samaritan's Purse. The group will soon be canvassing to hand out tracts and invitations to the big weekend of events.





The core group of believers in Shell

Enrique Cadena Baez was also added to our list of Ecuadorian church starters.

Pastor Enrique and his wife, Cila, are working in the city of **San Antonio de Pichincha**. His church plant held its first Sunday service in November with 11 people, including 2 first-time visitors. Since then, 200 church information fliers were distributed and a small sign was installed. Unfortunately, the old computer that they were using for the church stopped working entirely, so they are praying to replace it soon.



Visit our website at bemela.org to find information about our mission, our church starters, involvement opportunities, and more.



You can also [follow us on Facebook!](#)



Enrique, Cila, and one of their 3 daughters

March 18th will mark the start of a 3-month children's program. A parallel program designed to evangelize parents will run at the same time. Parents who attend weekly will receive a bag of non-perishable food items once a month. Pray for Enrique, Cila, the church workers, and the provision for this special project. *This city is ripe for harvest!*



In December, a Christmas activity brought in 29 adults and 45 children. Numerous children and one adult were saved.

Letter from the Director

Dear friends, prayer warriors, and supporters of BEME-LA,

This evening as I type our report to you, the sun is setting and the majestic glory of God can be seen in the sky. This reminds me of Psalm 8:1, 3-4.

*“O LORD our Lord, How excellent is thy name in all the earth! Who hast set thy glory above the heavens.
3 When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, The moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;
4 What is man, that thou art mindful of him? And the son of man, that thou visitest him?”*



To think that God lovingly “*overlooks our lowly status and acts on behalf of humanity in two significant ways: he takes **thought** of him and takes **care** of him*” (Swindoll). We praise the Lord that we see these two compassionate acts shown to our men abroad, as well as toward us personally.

This past month, the three conferences we attended (Florida, Virginia, and Iowa) as well as church presentations, provided more scheduled meetings, a new school contact in Brazil, and regular monthly support from two new churches! Also, another church starter was added to our BEME team. We are presently underwriting 24 church starts. Despite it being winter, our travel has been safe and our health, good. We can't thank God enough for taking **thought** of us and **caring** for the mission!

In closing, let me encourage you to take a few moments to praise the Lord for how He has lovingly taken **thought** and **care** of you. Let's all take an opportunity to share His love with someone this week.

“Join the journey . . . not just where we've been, but where we're going.”

Andrew Counterman

If you are interested in scheduling an in-person presentation of BEME-LA at your church, please call (410) 804-3767 or email counerman.andrew@gmail.com.

Updates from Bogotá, Colombia

In January, Marvelous Grace Baptist Church held a 3-day Vacation Bible School. The efforts of **Cristian Alvarado Quintana**, his wife, and many helpers led to an incredible turnout of 61 people on the first day (48 of which were children), 91 on the second day (78 children), and 111 on the last day (98 children).



This month, the church will have its first youth group meeting, an anniversary celebration, and a meeting to plan out the year's activities.



February church outing - "Family Day"



In northern Bogotá, **Miguel Saboyá** reported that 7 new believers were baptized after finishing their discipleship courses, and a few of them are taking on new roles within the church ministries.

Between the children's ministry, the music ministry, and a neighborhood soccer ministry, many children and teenagers are hearing the Word of God and coming to church. In addition, Miguel and his wife have had the opportunity to lead two Venezuelan refugee families to Christ and minister to them as they build new lives in Bogotá.

Next month, the ladies of the church are planning to go on a 3-day camp retreat. Pastor Miguel shared that there are 5 young mothers who are struggling to pay the \$100 for registration and travel. Pray for this need to be met through our Camp Fund!

Have you made your commitment to *Coffee for the Cause* yet?

It's not too late to get involved! Since 2021, funds from the *Coffee for the Cause* program have met many needs in the mission office and have even provided full support for a new church plant.

It is a wonderful example of how God can take our "little" and use it for "much!"

To join in, set aside the cost of a weekly cup of coffee for a determined amount of time. For example, $\$1.50$ per week \times 52 weeks = $\$78.00$ for a year. You decide the amount and length of your commitment.

Please send checks payable to CMC to: **Coffee for the Cause**

**2601 South 14th Street
Burlington, IA 52601**

Include your name and address, and we'll send you a mug!



Prayer Requests

- For a full presentation schedule, good health and safety in travel
- For our goal of starting 20 new churches and expanding into Bolivia, Brazil, and Chile this year
- For the upcoming camps and conferences - continued provision of funds
- For the many current building projects and future land purchases
 - * Completion of the paver floor in Zacapoaxtla, Mexico (Ignacio Salazar)
 - * Provision for the completion of a third-floor addition (Rodrigo Valdespino, Mexico)
 - * Saving to purchase land: José Churata, Javier Peña, Joel Choque Arce, Manuel Macancela
- **Gustavo Mis (Mexico):** Due to multiple robberies, attempted robberies (Gustavo was recently held up by an armed robber), and extortion calls, he is looking for a new place to rent/purchase for church meetings
- **For protection for those serving in Peru,** with the current political instability and unrest
 - * In particular, **José Churata and Ernesto Vera** have asked for prayer for the effects the constant threat of protests are having on their ministries and the rise in costs and scarcity of necessities - this effect is being felt by all our church starters and North American missionary partners.
- For the **visitation and discipleship efforts** of each one of our national pastors.
 - * We just received word from **Gustavo Huamani in Rocha, Uruguay** that **Cristian and Marlene** have both accepted Christ and they are planning to be married in March - **Praise the Lord!** (Left to right: Marlene, Cristian, Danitza, and Gustavo)



PRAY FOR PERU



Thank you once again for your investment of time, prayer, and financial support of BEME-LA and the national pastors in Latin America. We are thrilled to partner with you for the cause of Christ!

For online giving, please visit www.myclickandgive.com. First-time donors must set up a secure account. Select **Central Missionary Clearinghouse** as the merchant for the account of **Andrew Counterman**.

The following coupon is provided to designate mail-in offerings. **Please make checks payable to Central Missionary Clearinghouse**, the agency which oversees BEME funding and financial transactions.



I would like to have a part in Latin American ministries with a tax-deductible gift of \$ _____ for:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vehicle Fund | <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Coffee for the Cause</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Camps and Conferences | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Building Projects | |

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