

NEWSLETTER

January 2023



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PICTURE HIGHLIGHTS



José Churata in Ccachona, Peru - Americo, Luz Marina, Ruth, and Josias are the first four believers of the church plant to be baptized.

Carlos Gallego in Bogotá, Colombia (*right*) in discipleship with new convert Jaime Florez, who is growing spiritually and now participates in church evangelism outings.



Cristián Alvarado Quintana's 9-year-old daughter, Emily (*in dark blue*), uses a tract to share Jesus with children at a playground in **Bogotá, Colombia**.

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

Baptist Evangelistic Ministry Endeavors – Latin America

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Sweet Outreach Opportunities

Each year, our Peruvian pastors weave the gospel into a local Christmas tradition called *Chocolatada*. Especially popular with children in limited-resource areas, this event involves neighbors, churches, and other organizations handing out hot chocolate and sweet bread or panetón. The children play games and sometimes receive small Christmas gifts.

Our pastors and church members use this secular celebration to hand out tracts, preach, witness, and extend church invitations.



Joel Choqqe Arce's sons helped set up the *Chocolatada* at Monte Olivar Baptist Church in Pitumarca.

There was similar excitement in **Pitumarca**: children completely packed the church building! [Click here or visit our blog: bemela.org/chocolatada](http://bemela.org/chocolatada) to watch a short video.



Pastor Hetler Ramos (*middle*) poses as an excited group of kids show off their invitations to the *Chocolatada* at Grace Baptist in Villa Toledo.

The dedicated efforts of the missions team in **Villa Toledo** resulted in hundreds of people hearing the true meaning of Christmas. It is not uncommon for Peruvians to travel several miles to take part in *Chocolatada* events.



In **Ccachona**, Pastor José Churata hosted two *Chocolatadas*: one at the church and another at a local primary school.



As the sun goes down on a long day, Pastor Hetler speaks to the crowd with a helper holding his microphone.

Letter from the Director

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

January has BEME in forward advancement, filled with thankfulness and prayerful anticipation of another fruitful year as the Lord carries his eminent return:

Thankfulness, as we look back on 2022 and see all the growth through new births (*both spiritual and physical*), discipleship and baptisms. Many of our Latin American pastors have been working successfully on building projects and evangelistic programs through the school year. The mission has seen remarkable increase in financial support and funding for the mission's transportation needs.

Prayerful, because some of our church starters are working in countries presently experiencing civil/political unrest. This does not stop ministry, but makes it more challenging for summer camps, Bible classes, evangelistic campaigns, and regular church services. One of our advisors in Uruguay recently stated, *"I find myself praying with verbs like "renew," "restore," "refresh," "revive."* I find great comfort in the fact that God's strength is made perfect in our weaknesses (2 Cor. 12.9). Please pray for a calming in these countries and that ministry events are not hindered.

Anticipation, despite setbacks from the Adversary, our church starters continue to successfully labor and see results in church growth. They continue to energetically push forward into the summer or winter months (*depending on the hemisphere*). Also, Jo and I have another full schedule and are back on the road presenting BEME. This month we start our year with three conferences, followed by multiple church presentations. Pray that more churches will schedule meetings, take on BEME for regular support, our good health, and travel mercies.

Forward advancement, because it's 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 counterman.andrew@gmail.com.

Sunday School Update

Recently, Pastor **Ernesto Vera** sent us pictures of the full Bible story flannelgraph set he was able to purchase with the funds collected by the 2-year-old to 3rd grade Sunday School classes at First Baptist in New Lisbon, WI.

Pastor Ernesto said, *“They are very good materials to help the children understand the stories of the Bible, and we are already putting them to use. We are very grateful for your support.”*



Please continue to pray for this Sunday School. Rumors of child abductions for the purpose of organ collection have resurfaced in **Curahuasi, Peru** over the past few months. Concern among parents has, unfortunately, led to a sharp decline in attendance in childrens programs. Bible club was averaging 50 children each week, and now fewer than 20 attend regularly.

Ernesto hopes that 2023 will bring fresh opportunities for the Lord to work in this city and that the children will return to church.

On a positive note, on the way home from a pastors conference in Lima last month, Ernesto had the chance to witness to his wife’s relatives in Arequipa. Praise the Lord, one of them accepted the Lord as Savior!

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



Also, be sure to [follow us on Facebook](#) for more frequent updates!



Ernesto, along with his family and church members, visited a nearby sister church as a guest speaker for a Bible convention. They provided special music and participated in the church’s anniversary celebration while they were there.



The youth group is growing and continues to meet frequently. This month, they had a bonfire activity with games, food, and fellowship.

Activities and Additions

December and January have been busy months for **Pastor Ignacio Salazar in Zacapoaxtla, Mexico**. His church has been running a Bible club for a few weeks, with 30-40 children attending. He is praying that the children continue to come to church once Bible club is over.



The church also held evangelistic campaigns in 2 different neighborhoods. Between them, over 200 people heard the gospel!



In the midst of the activities, the men of the church constructed an addition of 5 meters (almost 16.5 feet!) onto the building, increasing the capacity to 100 people.



Stone pavers were installed in the sanctuary, which provide the added benefit of more warmth in winter. Ignacio is not only grateful to God for providing the pavers, but also for giving the men strength to move 850 of the 22-pound stones so far. *Only 500 to go!*



New Year, New Opportunity to Join *Coffee for the Cause*

Whether you are new to BEME-LA or a long-term supporter...
January is a great time to make a commitment to missions!

Since 2021, funds brought in 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 **safety and good health in 2023** as Andy and Jo Ellen are back on the road presenting BEME
- For **wisdom, direction, and provision** as we work toward our **goal of starting 20 new churches** in 2023 and **expanding into Bolivia and Chile**
- For **provision of a reliable vehicle** for BEME
- For **the upcoming camps and conferences**
 - * **Continued provision for camp funds** for our church starters
 - * **Safety** for those in **Peru amidst the protesting and conflict**, and **traveling mercies for all**
- For the many **current building projects and future land purchases** in Mexico, Uruguay, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and the Dominican Republic
 - * **Praise**: a gift was sent for roof repair at **Cristian Alvarado's church** - **Pray**: the work to be done!
 - * **José Churata's church** urgently needs a **bigger space to buy/rent** to hold services
 - * Completion of the **paver floor** in Zacapoaxtla, Mexico (**Ignacio Salazar**)
- For **good health and safety for our men and their families**:
 - * **Continued recovery - Rebeca** (Gabriel Macancela's wife) **from c-section**
 - * **Protection for those serving in Peru**, with the current **political instability and unrest**
- For the **salvation of Cristian and Marlene in Rocha, Uruguay** - Since we mentioned the couple last October, **Gustavo Huamani** continues to visit with them. He believes Marlene, especially, is closer to making a decision for Christ.



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"/> “Summer” Camps | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Building Projects | |
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