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HEARTBEAT

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Free Methodist World Missions makes disciples by mobilizing the global church and empowering international leaders to establish transformational churches.



HEARTBEAT

MAY 2023

Small Steps to Big Transformation
Next Generation of Leaders

I Choose Jesus



Small Steps to *Big* Transformation

By Martha Vargas and Yaneth Aguirre

In August 2022, the Nicaragua Mission District participated in the 12-week pilot discipleship program *Innovate*. The Transformational Churches team in Latin America partnered with The Chalmers Center to train discipleship facilitators. The partnership with The Chalmers Center provided Houses of Peace leaders with simple and creative tools to love their communities - helping them solve local problems by eliminating the root causes. The groups then carried out small initiatives within their communities to restore the fallen relationships individuals and communities have with God, themselves, others and creation.

The facilitators challenged participants to believe the initiatives needed to solve the root causes of local problems do not require large financial resources. With the help of the Lord and much prayer, they implemented the lessons and tools from this program, resulting in ideas for small transformative initiatives.

Here are a few of the initiatives in process:

- cleaning and burning garbage in empty spaces to encourage the community to take care of God's natural resources
- a plan for keeping a green area in the community clean
- a sewing course to give an employable skill to homeless individuals
- afterschool reading support for children
- a plan for using a new water well to provide a sustainable source of drinking water for those in need

It was a great surprise to see community members get involved in the planning and implementation of these initiatives. We celebrate the significant ripple effects happening because of them. The cleanup in a green area caused so much interest in what the house of peace was doing that people in the community began to help with the cleanup, and a new house of peace was

started in the green area. The idea of giving a course in sewing led to an alliance with a businessman who has promised employment to people who complete this course. People from the communities have given their lives to Christ and now attend local churches!

The houses of peace have completed the *Innovate* training and are excited to continue participating in the restoration of their communities through their God-given resources. They continue to think of new ideas to interact with their communities and work toward restoring relationships. The transformation needed in Nicaragua has begun through these initiatives and seems unstoppable. Small steps are leading to big transformation in local communities and relationships!

Martha Vargas is a Transformational Church advocate in Nicaragua, and Yaneth Aguirre is a Transformational Church coach for Nicaragua.

Developing the *Next* Generation of Leaders



By Pastor Miguel Antonio Castro González

For a long time, we have emphasized family discipleship within the church. Through much prayer and intentional discipleship, we are witnessing the fruit of young lives changed.

The "Jehovah is My Pastor" church is participating with God in the restoration of Latin America by developing healthy leaders through head, heart and hands. We started in leadership training with adults and youth who came desiring to be trained for fruitful service in the work of God. We noticed a special move of God among the youth and young adults. They asked when the training would be offered again, so we met again to train them. Sometimes the group met in houses, other times in the park, and other times in the church.

As a result of the discipleship and training, youth and young adults are discipling others in community churches, and the number of actively participating children and adolescents is multiplying. These young people were already serving as part of the church's worship ministry, and recently they have taken the lead to preach in the prayer service on Wednesdays.

We have learned to care for their hearts and mentor their hands, giving them the opportunity to develop their gifts and affirm their talents through leading in the Houses of Peace, the worship team and other areas of service. The young people's service has encouraged our community; some are being challenged in their commitment to God by seeing what He is doing through these young, committed disciples. Adults are also seeing the investment in the Lord's work is worthwhile.

Some of our young leaders started as the only believers in their homes; now, their families are part of the church. We believe God is, right now, preparing the next generation of leaders and pastors for the Free Methodist Church of Latin America.

Pastor Miguel Antonio Castro González felt God's call to the ministry in 2004 and was ordained in 2012. He has served in the church-planting ministry and is pastoring the "Jehovah is My Pastor" church in Creative Access Country-X.

I CHOOSE *Jesus*



By Natalia M. Gutiérrez Pérez

Four years ago, Olga Beatriz Gómez Alzate arrived in Medellín, Colombia, from Venezuela. She moved into the Alfonso López neighborhood with her husband, Jefferson, and sons. Her life was not easy because her marriage was not going well. Her husband frequently drank and neglected his home. Her children, almost teenagers, were quite rebellious.

Olga met Soledad Gil, a Camino de Vida church leader, who invited her to attend one of the Houses of Peace in her new neighborhood. She accepted the invitation. During one of the meetings, Olga, distressed by the difficult situation at home, asked for prayer for her husband and children. She requested prayer for her family members' lives to be transformed and their situation to improve.

After a few weeks, Olga's work schedule changed, and she could not attend the meetings. However, she wanted to continue knowing and studying the Word of God. She also wanted her family to experience real change and to follow Jesus together; Olga decided to open her home for a new House of Peace.

As time passed, her family began participating in the weekly meetings, and she noticed positive changes in the behavior of her husband and children. Along with the other church members, Olga and her family

continued studying and learning from God's Word. In July 2022, Olga and her husband, Jefferson, were baptized.

Olga chose Jesus and was able to experience transformation in her life and see the lives of her children and her husband transformed. Her husband is now more attentive to the needs of the home. Also, as a family, they have impacted Olga's sister Dariana, who recently arrived from Venezuela. She also participates actively in the weekly meetings in their home.

This House of Peace is open every week, and Olga and her family serve faithfully in the local church to help prepare for the Sunday services. They also study at the local Ministerial Training Center and participate in Bible study times.

God cares about our decisions and longs for us to choose Him every day. Olga has already made her decision. What about you? Who do you choose?

Natalia M. Gutiérrez Pérez lives in Medellín, Colombia, and serves on the praise team of the Camino de Vida church. She is an editor for the Community Church Planting team within the Colombian Free Methodist Church.

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MAY PRAYER GUIDE

01 > Monday | Burundi

Pray for the Burundi General Conference as they minister to the whole person through various medical ministries – public health education, maternity and nutritional centers, and Hope Hospital of Kibuye.

02 > Tuesday | FMWM

Ask God to give Deb Miller strength and wisdom as she balances ministry responsibilities and the needs of her aging parents. **Birthday: Deb Miller (Director of Operations and Innovative Initiatives)**

03 > Wednesday | Creative Access Asia-MY

Pray for Mark as he teaches and works with leaders in several countries across Southeast Asia. Also, pray for deepening relationships and divine appointments within his country of residence. **Birthday: Mark**

04 > Thursday | Dominican Republic

Pray this general conference will experience a renewed passion for seeing the lost come to know Jesus. Ask the Father to give wisdom to Bishop Cecilio Osoria as he leads the church.

05 > Friday | West Africa

In February, 17 leaders from 12 African countries gathered in Lomé, Togo, for meetings. Praise the Lord for how he is working in and through these leaders. Pray for a movement of God's Spirit in West Africa.

06 > Saturday | Belgium

Pray for the identification of new leaders, particularly those who can minister to the French- and Dutch-speaking populations.

07 > Sunday | Middle East

Pray refugees who have found Christ as their Savior will carry the life-changing gospel with them as they return to their homelands or resettle elsewhere.

08 > Monday | Latin America

Pray Beth Gómez will have wisdom to administer God's resources in ways that participate in the restoration of Latin America and bring glory to Him, even amid periods of significant change.

Birthday: Beth Gómez

09 > Tuesday | International Child Care Ministries

Two ICCM schools in Rwanda serve children with special needs. Pray these children will know they are loved and valued by Jesus and those who teach them.

10 > Wednesday | Latin America

Praise the Lord for providing ICCM Regional Coordinator Kay with an assistant for Latin America. Please pray for Kay and Sara Moreno as they work with national coordinators and local teams of ICCM ministries in nine countries.

Birthday: Kay Stotts Godoy

11 > Thursday | Zambia

Pray for the FMC in Zambia to have God's wisdom in developing ministries to serve the whole person.

12 > Friday | North Macedonia

Pray for continued expansion of work in North Macedonia as churches find ways to demonstrate God's love in their communities, particularly among the underserved populations.

13 > Saturday | Cambodia

Praise the Lord! In early February, 187 people were baptized in Cambodia. Pray their knowledge and love for Christ Jesus will grow deeper as they are discipled.

14 > Sunday | Middle East

Praise the Lord for the young couple God identified and called to serve as directors of the Noor Center. Pray for this couple as they relocate and begin their ministry.

15 > Monday | Argentina

Pray for the intentional and strategic ministry of The Harbor in Buenos Aires and the emerging young leaders who are living there while studying at universities.

16 > Tuesday | Mozambique

Cyclone Freddy, the longest-lived tropical cyclone on record, struck Mozambique earlier this year. Pray God will provide resources to rebuild and restore 15 churches; 10 completely collapsed and five lost roofs.

17 > **Wednesday** | **Fiji**

Pray for the growing work in Fiji and for Pastor Lex, the mission district leader. Pray for healthy connections with FMWM-Asia and the Free Methodist churches throughout Asia.

18 > **Thursday** | **Romania**

Philip More is an affiliate missionary and ministerial candidate through the FMC in Hungary. Pray for him as he works to help establish the FMC in Romania.

19 > **Friday** | **Chile**

Pray for the difficult political situation and increasing crime in Chile. Ask the Father to give wisdom to the president and his advisors, allowing them to implement policies to bring stability and peace.

20 > **Saturday** | **Middle East**

Trauma healing ministry is a crucial way Impact Middle East serves people in this region. Pray God's grace and love will work through those ministering in this capacity.

21 > **Sunday** | **Guinea Conakry**

Pray for Pastor Gabriel Lamah as he makes periodic trips to the interior forest region for ministry and church planting.

22 > **Monday** | **Sweden**

Pray the FMC in Sweden will fulfill its vision to plant three more churches in 2023, expanding its work into Denmark and Norway.

23 > **Tuesday** | **Philippines**

Praise the Lord! More than 600 Ayta Abellen and Ayta Mag-Indi families now have solar mp3 Scripture players giving them access to the Word of God in their language. Pray more players will become available this month.

Birthday: Roger Stone (Affiliate Missionary)

24 > **Wednesday** | **Botswana**

The FMC in Botswana was started by Zimbabwean leaders. Pray for the growth and development of this church-in-formation.

25 > **Thursday** | **Asia / Spain**

Asia: Ask the Father to give Roger wisdom in his ministry role, insight into the cultures he serves, and eyes to see people as Jesus sees them.

Birthday: Roger

Spain: Pray Cathy Alford will experience Christ in new and refreshed ways as she seeks to align herself with God's purposes. Ask the Father to make her a source of encouragement to others, making them more aware of Christ's love for them. **Birthday: Cathy Alford**

26 > **Friday** | **Latin America**

Susana Castro coordinates pastoral care groups throughout Latin America. Pray for God's anointing and presence in these groups giving leaders encouragement and renewal.

Birthday: Susana Castro (International Missionary)

27 > **Saturday** | **Set Free Movement**

The Set Free Movement is completing its 13th year. Praise the Lord for 150 Set Free leaders in 15 countries. Pray for the expanding work in Africa, Southeast Asia, Latin America and the U.S

Birthday: Kevin Austin (Set Free Movement Director)

28 > **Sunday** | **Malawi**

Students at the Great Commission Bible School are engaged in church planting as part of their study. Pray for those students currently engaged in this modular study program.

29 > **Monday** | **Creative Access Asia-NP**

In 2022, more than 800 people in this country decided to follow Jesus. Several new churches were planted, bringing the total number to 350. Pray for the continued discipleship of new believers and the planting of new churches.

30 > **Tuesday** | **Missionary Kids**

Pray for Alena, Caleb, Elias, Jacob, Jessie, Libby and Marissa. These children of our missionary team have recently graduated. Pray the Lord will guide them as they transition to new places and opportunities.

31 > **Wednesday** | **Mexico**

Pray the leaders at all levels will be holy people. Pray God will bless them with people who will hold them accountable and encourage them in their ministry.

"When we rely upon organization, we get what organization can do; when we rely upon education, we get what education can do; when we rely upon eloquence, we get what eloquence can do. But when we rely upon prayer, we get what God can do."

– A.C. Dixon