

Robert A. Danielson and Kelly J. Godoy de Danielson
Listening to Other Voices: Moving Beyond Traditional Mission Histories- A Case Study from El Salvador

Abstract:

For the most part, mission history has focused on the work and effort of missionaries and not as much on the missionized, those people and communities they assisted. This is a flaw in the field which needs to be corrected, but how do we accomplish this? This article proposes a two-step process. First, by closely reading the traditional histories and the primary documents, we can emphasize and highlight the roles and voices of the missionized. Second, by using oral history interviews we can capture essential thoughts and attitudes of missionized people and communities about their mission experience. This dual approach helps balance out the perspectives to give a deeper, more complex reading of mission history. A case study approach is used in this article, focused on the mission of the Colegio Bautista (a mission of the American Baptists) in Santa Ana, El Salvador.

Keywords: El Salvador, Colegio Bautista, Santa Ana, mission history, oral history

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Introduction¹

As the authors of this article, we have a unique set of experiences to bring to evaluating how mission history is accomplished. One of us (Robert) is a professional missiologist and mission historian who is descended from a number of generations of pastors and missionaries in the United States, and who also has research experience as a professional librarian. The other (Kelly) is a biblical scholar whose family has been involved in the Baptist Church of Santa Ana, El Salvador for three generations as lay people from the nation of El Salvador. In addition, her family was involved with one of the key mission efforts of the American Baptists in El Salvador, a mission school in Santa Ana. Each of us brings a unique perspective to the understanding of the mission of the American Baptist Church to the people of Santa Ana, El Salvador, with both the outside (the etic view) and the inside perspective (the emic view) helping to enrich the overall perspective and understand the mission effort in a deeper more multilayered way.

Too often mission history has been written by the missionary and the voices of the missionized have been ignored, surpassed, or simply just absent from the conversation. In this article, we are going to attempt to bring together both perspectives to gain a fuller understanding of the history of American Baptist missions in Santa Ana. Through both research of the missionary records and sources in English, and through an oral history approach, we will examine the history of the Baptist mission in a more multifaceted manner. For the purposes of this article, we are going to focus on the American Baptist mission to the city of Santa Ana, El Salvador as a case study to illustrate this methodology. This includes both the church itself as well as one of its major mission outreaches, a school known at the Colegio Bautista. The church in Santa Ana is one of the oldest and most well-established Baptist churches in El Salvador, and the Colegio Bautista in Santa Ana has just recently celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2019, which included recognition by the government of El Salvador with an official postage stamp and visits by government officials.²

In this article, we will approach the mission history of this work in a three-step process. First, there will be a more detailed exploration of the early history of Protestant missions in Santa Ana, El Salvador to demonstrate how the current context came into being and to place the American Baptists in their earliest setting. (The American or Northern Baptists are just one of many Baptist denominations in the United States, and should not be confused with others Baptist groups frequently involved

in mission work.) Santa Ana is the second largest city in El Salvador (and the capital city of the department that goes by the same name) and is located in the mountains and coffee-growing area of northwest El Salvador, bordering both Guatemala and Honduras. It is the location of some of the earliest Protestant mission work in the country. Second, there will be a more in-depth analysis of the history of the Colegio Bautista, which is not well-known, but is well-documented. In both of these stages, there is a conscious choice and decision to highlight the names and involvement of local Salvadorans in the history, who often get overlooked in traditional mission history. Finally, the oral history of one Salvadoran family will be included, which includes three generations of stories to help frame the mission history of the Colegio Bautista in terms of how this mission work was perceived by the missionized.

The Missionaries of Santa Ana in Traditional Historical Research

For much of its history, Latin American mission history has been dominated by Roman Catholic control of the region, especially due to the control of the area by the Spanish Empire. This control was gradually breaking apart, from independence movements such as the 1821 movement where Central America separated from Spain, and then other political movements such as 1839 when El Salvador became an independent republic. Bible societies began sending colporteurs into Latin America in the late 1800s. Colporteurs were local itinerant evangelists, who would sell Bibles and distribute other religious literature as a form of early Protestant evangelism. Rev. Francisco G. Penzotti (1851-1925) was an Italian-Swiss immigrant to Uruguay when he was 13 years old. He was converted under a Methodist missionary and became a worker for the American Bible Society from the Methodist Church. He gained international prominence after the Penzotti Affair when he was imprisoned by the Peruvian government for preaching Protestantism (1890-1891). In 1894, the American Bible Society sent him to explore the possibility of opening work in Central America. He worked there about fifteen years, and it was noted that except for a small Presbyterian mission he encountered in Guatemala³, he met no other Protestants in Central America. By the time he left, he had opened offices of the American Bible Society in every nation of Central America and had organized groups of colporteurs working in the region.⁴ The Spanish-American War of 1898 led to a complete collapse of Spanish dominance in the region, with Cuba and Puerto Rico becoming colonies of the United States. American

Baptists moved into Cuba and Puerto Rico almost immediately in 1899, and by 1910 reported 44 churches with 2,218 members in Cuba and 38 churches with 1,923 members in Puerto Rico. The first Protestant group to enter El Salvador was the Central American Mission (CAM), founded in 1890, which entered El Salvador in 1896. Rev. Samuel A. Purdie was the first missionary (although he was helped by Penzotti of the American Bible Society, who had taken several missionaries associated with the Central American Mission on his initial tour of Central America in 1894).⁵ Purdie was shortly followed in 1897 by Rev. Robert H. Bender, sometimes referred to as the “Beloved Apostle of El Salvador.”

The Central American Mission work was focused in San Salvador, the capital of El Salvador, but even as early as 1905 they were expanding their work to Santa Ana. Samuel Purdie, who came in 1896 died of tetanus from a cut finger while working on his printing press in 1897, leaving charge of the CAM work in El Salvador under the guidance of the newcomer, Robert Bender. Robert Bender writes in the *Central American Bulletin* for January 15, 1906 that a Brother Rufino was doing the work in Santa Ana, but that a resident missionary was needed for that work.⁶ By 1908, there were 25 congregations in El Salvador with around 600 believers. At this time, Bender wrote, “The Lord has been pleased to raise up six national helpers to assist us. One of these having charge of the large and growing work in Santa Ana is supported partly by that church and partly by friends in the States, while the other five are self-supporting and at the same time have oversight of from one to seven congregations. In addition, seven of our men are employed by the American and British Bible Societies and give all of their time to the sale of the Word of God.”⁷ In 1909 Percy T. Chapman arrived in Santa Ana to help with the work of the Central American Mission there, and his work focused on the work in and around Santa Ana and Metapán, freeing up Bender to deal with San Salvador and the work around the capital city.⁸

The Spanish-American War of 1898, which led the United States into becoming a colonial power, also led to the opening up of larger parts of Latin America to Protestant Christianity including other groups along with the American Baptists entering El Salvador. Perhaps most interesting in El Salvador is the presence of a very early group of Pentecostals, which was planted by a Canadian, Frederick Ernest Mebius (1869-1945). The information about his work is not clearly documented, but he appears to

have arrived in El Salvador around 1904-1907 after being a missionary to Bolivia for the Christian and Missionary Alliance, a holiness denomination.⁹ After converting a few members away from the Central American Mission in Santa Ana, Mebius was centered in Cerro Verde in the department of Santa Ana and did most of his preaching in that area.¹⁰ One account, translated from Spanish notes,

When three believers from the Central American Mission that was already operating in El Salvador, found out about this brave foreigner, who boldly presented a living and distinctive gospel, they visited him. One of them, surnamed Leiva, spoke with him in more detail, and all were inspired by Mebius's enthusiastic manner. Mebius later testified that, although he did not know Spanish, he could understand everything that the evangelical brothers spoke to him, and in the same way the latter understood Mebius.¹¹

A separate account with no clear reference notes, "Entrusted with a congregation of the Central American Mission in El Salvador during the absence of the resident missionary, Mebius preached the doctrine of Spirit baptism and gathered a group of believers who received the experience. Although these converts were not expelled from their congregation, they followed Mebius within a few months to live among the coffee workers in the village of Las Lomas de San Marcelino."¹² Sadly, this account must be read cautiously since the author also identifies Mebius as arriving in 1915 and being associated with the Salvation Army in Bolivia, and both of those facts are clearly incorrect. It is possible oral sources might be combining bits of the story of Mebius with accounts of Chapman's later taking the church in Santa Ana to the American Baptists in 1911.

Whatever the truth of the origin, Mebius founded a group of clearly Pentecostal churches, some of which would later become part of the Assemblies of God¹³ and some part of the Church of God (Cleveland).¹⁴ Other individual congregations would maintain independence of outside denominational control. Often these groups are categorized as the Free Apostolic Churches and typically carry the name "Apostolic Church", such as The Apostolic Church of the Apostles and Prophets, The Apostolic Church of the Upper Room, The Apostolic Church of God in Christ, and The Apostolic Church of the New Jerusalem.¹⁵

Meanwhile, under a constant burden of work, and with his wife in need of surgery, the overworked Robert Bender chose to take a furlough back to the United States on January 6, 1910. He left the growing work of the Central American Mission in the hands of Chapman in Santa Ana and Rev. William Keech, a worker for the British and Foreign Bible Society who had been working with CAM in San Salvador, as well as a number of native pastors, whose names are only occasionally mentioned in the literature: Rufino Sandoval¹⁶, Salvador Portillo¹⁷, Claudio Anaya¹⁸, Abel Tobar¹⁹, Adán Corea²⁰, José María Pérez²¹, and Pedro Rodríguez are a few of the names mentioned, but little is told about them or their view on evangelistic work.

While Bender was out of the country, the American Baptists made a decision to move into El Salvador in 1911. In an article published in 1911, Field Secretary L. C. Barnes wrote an article laying out their strategic reasons for choosing El Salvador.²² First, it was seen as being central to a large area with no systematic denominational mission. Second, the political situation in El Salvador seemed fairly open and was relatively stable. Third, there was a solid leader for the work in Rev. William Keech, who was willing to join the Baptist mission. Barnes also notes a concern for the growing Pentecostal movement when he wrote, "A reason for immediate action is that sheep without a shepherd are easily scattered and devoured. For example, representatives of the new cult of speaking-with-tongues have wandered from the United States into El Salvador and are ravaging some of the babes in Christ."²³

At the end of his article, Barnes includes the full text of a letter from Emilio Morales, a local leader of a small group of Evangelical Christians in Sonsonate, El Salvador which was written on November 30, 1910. He records the following information,

From the year 1889 the work has been under the direction of the Central American Mission, which Society nevertheless has almost abandoned it. The Republic of El Salvador, having more or less one and a half millions of inhabitants, has had only one active missionary, Mr. Robert Bender, of the said Society; it is about eighteen months ago that another missionary came, Mr. Percy T. Chapman, upon which Mr. Bender went to the United States, leaving again only one missionary. Mr. Chapman is located in Santa Ana, and the work of that place is even more than he can properly attend to, leaving the departments of Sonsonate and Ahuachapán, where there exist five centers of importance and activity, each having other smaller congregations of 15, 20,

30, 40 and 50 members, a considerable number of whom are communicants. All this work is cared for by native residents (not paid pastors), the writer, who is a shoemaker, having charge in the character of pastor, under the direction of the missionary in Santa Ana.²⁴

In addition to Keech, Percy T. Chapman shifted his allegiance to the American Baptists from the Central American Mission and brought with him the existing CAM church in Santa Ana to help boost the initial work of the American Baptists.

This shift from the Central American Mission to the American Baptists while Robert Bender was still on furlough came as an unwelcome surprise for the Central American Mission. In a sharply worded article in April of 1911, they wrote,

The Northern Baptists have decided to begin work in Salvador. The step was taken without consultation with this mission and because of their failure to advise us, some very serious mistakes have already been made and great injury done to the work... They will begin work in the capital, where we have maintained a testimony for about 15 years. Rev. Mr. Keech of the B. and F. Bible Society, and wife, who was for several years prior to her marriage connected with our mission in Salvador, will have charge of the work... Had we been consulted we might have suggested a field where they could have labored without building on another's foundation, and without the apparently unavoidable confusion which follows the intrusion of denominational differences. The reason given for failure to observe the principles of comity²⁵ in consulting us before entering the field was that the mission had violated the principles of comity by soliciting funds in the States. But they had seen our Bulletin setting forth our principles and making it clear that we have never solicited men or means. While this excuse may satisfy them, it does not minimize the disasters on the field arising from the failure to recognize other mission societies. From the correspondence we find that independent societies are the objects of quite determined attack.²⁶

Robert Bender rushed back to El Salvador, leaving his wife who was recovering from several surgeries in California. A newly married George Peters was also sent with his bride to replace Percy Chapman and his wife. The animosity though, was far from ended. At the end of 1911, Robert

Bender had returned to El Salvador and *The Central American Bulletin* noted,

Bro. R. H. Bender has reached Salvador, where he spent fourteen years of arduous service for the Master. The churches so far visited have given him a warm welcome, and the Lord is abundantly blessing his ministry. The Northern Baptists, who have recently entered Salvador through their Home Missionary Society, have re-baptized and taken charge of the churches organized by our Bro. Bender at Santa Ana and Sonsonate, although some of the members of these places have not yet joined the Baptists. We desire to commend the Christian spirit manifested by Bro. Bender under great trial on his old field, and urge all our friends to continue in prayer for him.²⁷

While Bender seems to have struggled on the field to find a new building, raise money for putting together the CAM mission work a second time, and finding more native preachers, he does appear to have worked things out on the field with the Baptists. By April of 1912, Bender is reporting on a conference in San Salvador where Keech and the Baptists joined CAM for worship.²⁸

In 1916, Rev. J. B. Todd replaced the Peters at the Santa Ana church. He arrived December 28th and it was considered significant that he could speak Spanish and address the people in their own language. The report notes that when Chapman arrived “all he could do was shake his head” since he knew no Spanish.²⁹ Importantly, this report does reveal some insight into the local workings of the church as well, noting that three native preachers were examined: Adán Corea (becoming the pastor of the San Salvador church later in the report), David Cardona, and Pedro Mariano Rodríguez (all three names having previously been found in the reports of the *Central American Mission Bulletin*). The report notes that all three had been active preachers for a number of years and their Christian experience, their view of the doctrines, and their call to ministry was approved by a group of 25 appointed delegates from various churches. The religious situation in Santa Ana (and much of El Salvador in general) was now fairly set. Even today, you will find the Protestant churches in the city are most often tied to CAM (now known as Iglesia Evangélica Misión Centroamericana³⁰), the Baptists (Asociación Bautista de El Salvador³¹), or the various Pentecostal groups.

The Colegio Bautista and Educational Ministry

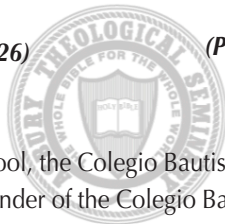
By 1918, there were three American Baptist missionaries overseeing work in El Salvador: Rev. William Keech in San Salvador, Rev. J. B. Todd in Santa Ana, and Rev. E. L. Humphrey in San Miguel. In an article expressing the needs of the mission field, Dr. Brink notes the reasons for establishing schools in the area include both the low pay, and therefore low quality of education as well as the persecution of Protestant children in the current education system. Brink writes, "These schools are necessary because of the utter inadequacy of the local public schools. For example, in Santa Ana, a city of 50,000 people in El Salvador, only \$3,000 was expended last year for the salaries of public school teachers. Another reason is the constant persecution to which the children from Protestant homes are subjected in the public schools."³²



Louise B. Carter
(Principal 1919-1926)



Ruth M. Carr
(Principal 1927-1961)



The mission school, the Colegio Bautista was established in 1919. The first principal and founder of the Colegio Bautista was Louise B. Carter, who was a missionary for the American Baptists from December of 1917 to 1926. She began work as the principal in 1919 along with Martha Howell, who had come from work with African-American children at the National Training School for Women and Girls in Washington, D.C. in 1918. Louise Carter, wrote about the first day of classes,

At eight twenty-five we rang the little hand bell and formed the children in two lines. In one line we put all those we knew were able to read; in the other, all those we felt confident would form our "beginners." The first line passed into Miss Howell's room and the second into my room. They were a most happy little group of children, ranging in age from six years to fifteen years.

After opening exercises of hymns, prayer and Bible reading, we enrolled all and sent our tiniest children home, keeping the older ones for an examination in order that we might know how to organize them into classes. Miss Howell had prepared arithmetic, and I was ready with the reading.

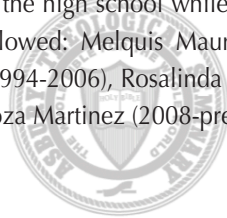
Such a mixture of results was obtained! Many could read the printed page very fluently, but could not read a written sentence. Some know the combinations in arithmetic but could not recognize a number when written on the board, nor write one. Some could spell most swiftly and with words perfectly syllabicated, but could not write the word. You can imagine the situation in which we found ourselves. This condition came about through haphazard teaching of the children in their homes. We have been examining and classifying all week, and the Chinese puzzle is gradually straightening itself out.³³

In the article, Carter goes on to relate that the first year had fifty-nine students between the ages of six and sixteen, which met in two small rooms in a rented house. The school charged what people could afford, which was reported at one peso per month. Others wanted to be in the school, but due to lack of furniture and space they had to put off the others until a new school building was constructed. The article includes the plans for what the first school would look like, and this school opened in October of 1920. It was somewhat small with three classrooms, an assembly hall, dining hall, kitchen, and two bedrooms, with a smaller second floor with five bedrooms which helped accommodate the missionaries' living quarters. Martha Howell, an American Baptist missionary at the time notes the glowing vision of the missionaries as the first year of the school finished,

On November 6, the first scholastic year of the Santa Ana Baptist College came to a close. The presence of a large group of mothers and fathers manifested their interest. To the children the school has become a great living reality, and they watch with enthusiasm the completion of the great building in which they will begin work again in February. Each child holds in his possession a card of record which will easily place him

at the reopening, but along with those children will come many who for months have begged for admission—unlettered, untrained children—in themselves a big task for teachers. Prejudice will break away more and more as Salvadoreans learn that the Santa Ana Baptist College is an established institution and that its great aim is that of lifting human life by bringing it in contact with the Saviour of the world.³⁴

The work of Carter and Howell was followed by Ruth M. Carr (1863-1974) who came as a missionary in 1923 and led the school from 1927 to 1961, when she retired. Carr was also given El Salvador's highest honor, the Order of José Matías Delgado. Significant accounts of life in the Colegio Bautista during the mission period come from two sources. Ruth Carr wrote an unpublished manuscript in 1963, entitled *A Short History of Colegio Bautista, Santa Ana, El Salvador*³⁵ and Grace Hatler (1904-1970, who started in 1954 as the director of the boarding students) published a book in 1966 entitled *Land of the Lighthouse*.³⁶ These two records provide most of the information for the school from the missionary perspective. Ruth Carr was followed by Jason Eugene Cedarholm (Don Eugenio) (1916-1998)³⁷ who led the school from 1961 to 1980, when the missionaries left El Salvador due to the growing problems of the Salvadoran civil war (1979-1992). His wife, Helen (1909-1997) served with him, while their two sons attended school in the United States. After 1980 the school moved out of the hands of missionary leadership and into local control with Esteban Rodríguez Jiménez³⁸ becoming the first Salvadoran principal of the school and leading it from 1980-1984. Then Gilberto Mendoza Olivares became principal from 1984 to 1991. Both Jiménez and Olivares had administration experience under Cedarholm, with one overseeing the primary school and the other overseeing the high school while Cedarholm was principal. Additional principals followed: Melquis Mauricio Gómez (1991-1994), Samuel Alberto Godoy (1994-2006), Rosalinda Rendón de Valiente (2006-2008), and Ismael Mendoza Martínez (2008-present).





Jason Eugene Cedarholm
(Principal 1961-1980)



Esteban Rodríguez Jiménez
(Principal 1980-1984)

Returning to the history of the Colegio Bautista, Ruth Carr noted that the first school was too small and had several problems. It was next door to a Catholic girl's school which made life difficult for students "to avoid such encounters as buckets of hot water aimed adroitly from her door, or harangues of insulting threats."³⁹ There were challenges from Catholic authorities in the political spectrum as well. Despite this, the American Baptists opened a clinic in the school in 1923 with local help including a nurse (referred to only as Victoria, whose sister Francisca was a teacher in the school) who had trained at a Baptist hospital in Mexico.⁴⁰ The second floor of the original building ultimately had to be removed as it became unstable in earthquakes. The Baptist church met in the old school building when it sold its first chapel and the original lower floor of the first school building became part of the new Baptist church which was built on that spot.

Around 1930, the American Baptists decided to purchase property for a new school building. About eight acres on a hilltop, just outside the city on a main road was chosen, and for \$15,000 it was purchased as one lot. The land contained a number of old mango trees, but local neighbors seemed to be unhappy with losing access to the property. Fences posts were removed, wires cut, and walls dug underneath. Carr reports that things became difficult as the building was being planned. A revolution

occurred (when President Arturo Araujo Fajardo was overthrown by the military in 1931, to be replaced by General Maximiliano Hernández Martínez), followed by what she refers to as a “communist” uprising (the 1932 Salvadorean peasant uprising led by Farabundo Martí). General Martínez’s response, commonly called La Matanza (“the slaughter”) led to between 10,000 and 40,000 deaths, mostly indigenous people and political opponents. This kept the missionaries on edge fearing attacks on Santa Ana. This situation was complicated by a heavy fall of volcanic ash from a volcano in Guatemala (most likely the 1932 eruption of Volcán de Fuego near Antigua, which had a heavier than usual amount of ash in the eruption that occurred that year).

The first building on the property was a small clinic, which was organized by Maude McCarter, a nurse from the United States who served from 1929 to 1933. The large new two-story building that was constructed near the clinic was opened in February of 1932. Construction was still underway when the high school opened. According to Ruth Carr, the building “contained living quarters for the missionary teachers, a section for some thirty boarding girls and class rooms for high school.”⁴¹ Carr notes that it was difficult to find teachers, whose salary was \$16 a month for primary school and \$32 a month for high school. One local Salvadoran woman, Inés de Guzmán, taught from 1930 to 1943 for \$10 a month while raising her six children and while her husband completed high school (when he also became a teacher). In 1936 the work at the clinic closed and it became a missionary residence.

A pamphlet from 1935 covers the work of the Colegio Bautista in each of their three areas (San Salvador and Santa Ana, El Salvador, and Managua, Nicaragua).⁴² In this year, there were 223 students enrolled in Santa Ana with 23 high school students in the new building, which leaves 200 primary students still studying in the old school building. This compares with 127 primary students enrolled in San Salvador, with no high school and 432 students with 36 high school students in Managua. Unlike most literature about the Colegio Bautista, students are mentioned a bit more here. It refers to two daughters of a member of the National Assembly of El Salvador who attend, but also a girl of 17 in the second grade because it is her first chance to go to school in her life. So, both students from the elite and poorer families mixed within the school. The pamphlet also highlights Miguel, who swept classrooms to pay for his tuition, alongside of Noé Arrazate, who because of the excellence of his work had been given a

scholarship from the French government for being one of the best students in El Salvador. Another student, Ramón Villalta is highlighted as an excellent student who had to finish his high school work at a Catholic school because the Colegio Bautista hadn't been approved for their fourth-year course of study at that time due to needed funds. However, the pamphlet points out to potential donors that Ramón's name was removed from the list of those students who were required to attend Mass.

About 1940 it was time to abandon the old school in the heart of the city, which had continued to serve as the primary school. The hope had been to build another building close to the high school, but the cost was too much, so the high school building was renovated and expanded so both groups could fit in the same building. At this time, Carr notes there was another active attempt by Roman Catholics in Santa Ana to prevent the work at the Colegio by threatening excommunication to parents of students sent to "such a heretical institution."⁴³ However, the school continued to grow until it reached its height in 1953 with 543 students. Carr credits this to the high moral standards, quality education, lower tuition and uniform fees, and the fact the religion was not compulsory.



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Entrance of the Primary School Building, Colegio Bautista in Santa Ana, El Salvador.

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The founding date of 1932 still shows underneath the name of the school.

The Colegio Bautista had provided boarding for girls from the beginning. When Louise Carter left in 1925 there were 15 boarding students. The numbers always remained low, even though fees were about \$7.50 a month. The school began to subsidize students because many came from families of pastors or lower income levels. As a result, the numbers rose to a high of 108 under Estoy Turner Reddin (1941-1955) who reorganized the work, but after Grace Hatler arrived to oversee this area of the school, the decision was made to keep the number at 80 because of space issues. In this period of time the school flourished. The girls had a special pew in the front of the church and Carr also notes an expanded agricultural effort so that, "100 banana trees planted on the school property provide one third of the bananas that the girls need, and a fine chicken ranch more than supplies the eggs for the big family."⁴⁴ Grace Hatler was also instrumental in helping girls from the school find further education in the United States.

Grace Hatler's book is helpful to portray some of the ideas of the missionaries of this time. She focuses on her work with the boarding school, but especially in projects aimed at health and nutrition. She points out a few specific people she worked with, but they are often students who were working to overcome difficulties like polio or deafness. In some of her work focused on the health of the boarding school students, she refers to Dr. Mauricio Cader Ramos (she also mentions a Dr. Carlos Peñate and a Nurse Chacón who helped with this type of work) who came to check the girls at the boarding school to find that roughly half of them were experiencing some form of malnutrition.⁴⁵ So, she worked with the families of the students to send extra fresh fruit to the Colegio to supplement their diet. In line with this, she also discusses the formation of the chicken ranch in some detail, as well as the formation of 4-H Clubs and efforts with the Heifer Project to build up agricultural work. Hatler also discusses a little of her effort to provide scholarships for girls to study both in the Colegio and further on in the United States. She also details the sense of loss of the community at the death of the pastor of the Baptist Church, José Antonio Corea, who braved all kinds of environments to minister using only the public buses and walking on a limited salary. He was temporarily replaced by a young doctor, who was studying at the seminary, Ovidio Amaya de León, but when he went to the United States to further his education at California Baptist Theological Seminary, he was replaced by Rev. Augusto Coto. Rev. Coto along with his wife, Isabel Castenada de Coto helped continue some limited work for a clinic from the Baptist Church. Beyond these few mentions of local

leaders, Hatler only adds a few additional names near the end of her book as examples of what the Colegio Bautista had accomplished. She highlights Esteban Rodríguez Jiménez, who we have mentioned previously, but she adds that he was also president of the El Salvador Baptist Convention. In addition, she refers to Samuel Rodríguez who represented El Salvador at an important Christian Education conference in Brazil, and Hugo Sánchez, the first Protestant medical graduate in El Salvador. She sums up a rather colonial attitude as she comments that without the work of the Colegio Bautista,

Many of the pastors, doctors, nurses, teachers, social workers, club leaders, directors of Christian education, government workers, students who are now studying in the United States, and countless other leaders would still be numbered among the many deprived peons in an overcrowded meson or primitive village. There would never have been a mission with its ministries to body, mind, and spirit; and there would never have been a witness to the fact that God cares about the total individual man.⁴⁶

This is of course a major exaggeration on her part, given the detailed history of mission work presented so far, however it does exemplify how missionaries sought to portray themselves. It also shows how they portrayed the local people with their leaders as dependent on the “civilizing” influence of Christian missions. Such an effort is clearly designed to encourage more financial support from readers in the United States, but it tends to portray a false narrative about the importance of local Christians to the success of the mission.

An attempt was made to create a boarding program for boys similar to that used for girl students, and a dormitory was even constructed, but the program never really succeeded, although some male students did room with Jason and Helen Cedarholm while attending the Colegio. Several other projects were attempted at various times including a seminary and a teacher’s training department with limited success. Ruth Carr lists some 33 foreign mission workers who spent time at the Colegio for limited amounts of time, but she only notes eight important local Salvadorans. In her list she includes: Esteban Rodríguez Jiménez and Ismael Guzmán and Inés de Guzmán (who were mentioned earlier), Florinda González de Chávez (1932-1936, an early house mother in the boarding school, primary school teacher, poetess, and a mother of one of the nurses), Rutilia Peñate de Torres

(she began working at the school in 1938 as a teacher who did her primary school and high school at the Colegio on a scholarship)⁴⁷, Rosa Navarrete de Alas Palacios (who also started in 1938 as a teacher who studied at the Colegio on scholarship), Juan Rodríguez Núñez (who began work in 1955, was one of the first primary students and studied for high school at night, and who later served as a preacher and a teacher), and Dionely Alicia Lima (who came in 1949, studied on scholarship in the boarding school, was the current secretary for the school in 1963, and did a four-month leave to study in a Bible School in 1957 in the United States).

Oral History and Local Views of Mission History

In the oral history we are going to examine in this article, we must begin with Pedro Segundo García (1907 – May 20, 1969), who was a deacon in the Baptist Church in Santa Ana and was originally a mason from Metapán in the department of Santa Ana. We don't know much of his work in the church, but he set the family stories we do know into the context of the American Baptist mission. He was the son of David Rivera and Refugio García, but we know nothing of them beyond their names. As far as we know, Pedro Segundo García was the first convert to Protestantism through the American Baptists in the family.

His second wife⁴⁸, María Julia Avilés de García (Feb. 25, 1922 – July 5, 1992) was a deaconess in the Baptist church in Santa Ana, but also worked in the Colegio Bautista with the missionaries. She was in charge of the five to six cooks at the school and would go to the market twice a week with a worker from the mission pulling a large cart to hold all of the food purchased. She would have three children: Marta del Refugio, Samuel Eliseo, and Cora Noemi.⁴⁹ She would ultimately leave for the United States about 1974, together with Santos, a maid for one of the missionaries (Helen Cedarholm- known as Doña Elena), where she would work as a private nurse to elderly people in Southern California. Samuel Eliseo and Cora Noemi also would relocate to the United States, but Marta remained in El Salvador.

During her time working at the Colegio Bautista, María Julia Avilés de García was able to send her children to the mission school. Her daughter Marta was primarily a local student and did not reside as a boarder at the school, but in 1962, after much beseeching, her parents allowed her to live as a boarder at the Colegio Bautista, even though it was close to their house. Much of the oral history of this period comes from an

interview conducted by the authors with Marta, and the notes taken from that interview.⁵⁰



María Julia Avilés de García (Feb. 25, 1922 – July 5, 1992) at the Baptist Church in Santa Ana.

She was in charge of the cooks at the Colegio Bautista during the period of the missionaries in Santa Ana, El Salvador.

The only photographic image of the missionaries preserved by Marta del Refugio García de Godoy (Oct. 9, 1949 – Feb. 16, 2017) presents an interesting image. One of the missionaries (Grace Hatler) is seated in the only chair in the center of the photograph, surrounded by Salvadoran church members in indigenous dress. The photo is from about 1965 and is believed to be after a traditional dance or performance for May Day held at the church in Santa Ana. Contrary to their appearance, many of the people surrounding the missionary are not indigenous workers, but rather important people in the life of the church and the mission school. Gloria

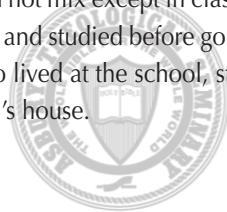
Judith Guevara, one of the women from the church also ran the library at the Colegio Bautista. Noemi Medina de Aguilar, another woman in the photo, was also active in the church and ran the school store. We have already noted Maria Julia Avilés de Garcia, who was in charge of the cooks at the Colegio Bautista. The image in the photo is one of pure colonialism, but the knowledge of the true identities of the people in the image speak to the truth that the work of the missionaries would have been impossible without the support networks of the local leaders in the church, and especially the role of the women in the church. As Marta del Refugio García de Godoy noted in her interview, “Gringos didn’t teach, they just had the power and gave the orders.”



Having coffee after a May Day Dance in the church at Santa Ana, El Salvador. Standing (left to right): Gloria Judith Guevara, María Julia Avilés de Garcia, Margot Pleitez. Sitting (left to right): Alberto Ramirez, Isabel ?, Senora de Chacon, Grace Hatler, Rosa de Fuentes, and Noemi Medina de Aguilar. Photo taken about 1965.

Marta del Refugio García de Godoy was happy to talk about the year she spent as a boarder at the school (1962). She only lived four blocks from the school, but wanted to live in the dormitory and so her mother gave her permission. She recalled that there were women who washed and ironed the clothes, but on Saturday the girls had to wash out their underwear. On Sunday they all went to church in the morning and in the afternoon wearing identical white dresses, which was set apart from their regular uniform of blue and white. They would sit on the front row of the church and walked together in pairs. There were about eight bedrooms in the dormitory with each room containing enough bunkbeds to sleep about 20 students to a room. Each room had an older girl who was responsible for the room, and she remembered the girl in charge of her room was Angela Valladares⁵¹, who was from the other side of the country. Marta only spent a year at the school because she said she enjoyed herself too much, and also there was a school store where things could be bought on credit, but she thought the items were free and her mother apparently ended up with a larger bill than expected.⁵²

During the morning, the girls would get up at 5:00am for breakfast and showers, then they went to devotions and from there changed into their school uniforms. There was no television, radio, or music permitted. From 11:00am to 2:00pm they had lunch and then a siesta. Then they changed back into their uniforms and went to classes until 4:00pm. Supper was at 6:00pm and meals usually consisted of beans, cream, bread (and milk for breakfast) or beans and rice. The girls sat together in the same groups that shared a bedroom. Once a week each girl took a turn to wash dishes and they washed in groups of three, one with hot water, one with water and soap, and a third with cold water to rinse. As a general rule, local students and boarding students did not mix except in classes. From 7:00-9:00pm the girls went to a large room and studied before going to bed. There were only about five older boys who lived at the school, studying to be teachers, and they lived in the principal's house.





A second-grade class taught by Doña Graciela de Corea at the Colegio Bautista, Santa Ana, El Salvador. Taken in 1960.

Marta del Refugio García de Godoy also remembered that the missionaries had a separate house which they shared. Grace Hatler was in charge of the boarders, while Ruth Carr was in charge of the local students. Marta's memories of Grace Hatler centered around a single incident where Hatler became angry and grabbed Marta by the throat, which definitely colored her perceptions of the American missionaries. Marta described Ruth Carr as very old with white hair, tall and thin, but very pretty with glasses and a very serious look. She was single and wore long dresses and heels with her hair held back in a bun with a comb. A "Miss Nellie" was a nurse who was at the school for a short time.⁵³ She was well-liked, but when she left the infirmary was closed. Of particular importance was Jason Cedarholm, known as "Don Eugenio" who was the principal after Ruth Carr. He, and his wife Helen (Elena) had two sons, Billy and Jacky, who went to school back in the United States, but would come at vacation times and attend classes with the students there. Marta also recalled an African-American worker who lived at the school and did odd jobs around the campus. He had a daughter who was a friend of hers and a fellow student, and she and her father lived in a small room behind the school and close to the water tank. Local people also worked at the school. Previously we

mentioned some who worked in the library and the school store. Marta also remembered a guard who would climb the mango trees and pick mangos for the students. In addition, Marta remembered with special joy taking piano lessons from Helen Cedarholm.



Marta del Refugio García-Avilés (later García de Godoy) playing the piano in the auditorium

of the Colegio Bautista in Santa Ana, El Salvador. She was a student of Helen Cedarholm.

The family continued to interact with the Colegio Bautista as Marta del Refugio García went on to marry and have four children, all of whom went to the school for their education. Marta had a special love for the school and her experiences there and so she insisted on her children attending as well. This included one of the authors of this paper (Kelly) who was the eldest child in the family. When Kelly started attending the Colegio Bautista it was still under the leadership of the American Baptist missionaries, with Jason Cedarholm (Don Eugenio) as the principal. Kelly remembers particularly that Cedarholm would play volleyball with the older boys and helped her mother with scholarship support for her younger brother. During this time period, El Salvador was in the midst of a tense political crisis. On October 15, 1979 a revolutionary junta deposed President General Carlos Humberto Romero, and the junta quickly became

a military right-wing government, which declared martial law and instituted the formation of secret “death squads” for purposes of political repression. In 1980 the political forces on the left formed a guerilla force called the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) which began an insurrection leading to a lengthy and violent civil war. The assassination of Archbishop Oscar Romero on March 24, 1980 was a shocking event which led to more killings and increased violence to be followed on December 2, 1980 with the rape and murder of four American Catholic church women. This violence would last about thirteen years until January 16, 1992 with the signing of the Chapultepec Peace Accords.

In the beginning stages of the violence, in 1979 or 1980, while Kelly was a fourth-grade student at the Colegio Bautista, the school was taken over by a group of the FMLN while classes were in session. After some initial shots or explosions, the teacher ordered the entire class to get down on the floor away from the windows. For several hours a standoff existed. In an amazing act of courage, Jason Cedarholm went out and met with leaders of the occupying force. According to oral remembrances, he told them, “What can we do to help you? We only have children here.” Whatever details occurred in the meeting, the FMLN left without harming anyone and a secretary told the students they could resume their seats. Jason Cedarholm had refused to leave the school as the situation worsened, but in 1980 the American Baptists forced him to leave, which he announced in the Baptist Church as he told them he did not want to leave, because “this was his home.” Esteban Rodríguez Jiménez (Don Esteban) took over the reins of the school for the next four years as the first Salvadoran to run the institution. The trauma of the war continued in the lives of the students and teachers. Kelly recalls a time when an over-inflated basketball in a classroom closet exploded, and the students dropped to the floor fearing a bomb of some type. It became an incident to laugh over later, but reflects the seriousness of the times. However, the story of Don Eugenio facing the guerillas and putting his life on the line for the students and teachers remains one of the defining stories of American Baptist missionaries in the minds of the Baptists in Santa Ana who lived through this period. His heroism is still remembered, while much of the work of the past missionaries is long forgotten.

The Colegio Bautista has continued over the years, and in recent periods a Baptist church has formed which uses the school auditorium on Sundays as a place of worship, the Iglesia Bautista En Familia. For a number

of years Marta del Refugio García de Godoy and her family worshipped there, in the same auditorium they remembered so fondly from their school days.

Lessons for a Balanced Approach to Mission History

How do we avoid writing a biased mission history? What are some the lessons we have learned by working to combine traditional historical research with oral history and personal memory? It is a common aphorism that “history is written by the victors,” but this is oversimplistic. The documented side of history is clearly controlled by the narrative of those with more political, economic, or social power—those who control the resources to write, publish, and preserve their stories while often excluding those without access to such power. This is especially true in the field of mission history, where the motivations and actions of the missionaries predominate the narrative and often the missionized are portrayed as lacking or in need of the missionary’s culture, education, and organization and not simply an open invitation to hear the untarnished message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This creates an environment ripe for hagiography, where the missionaries are portrayed (or rather portray themselves) as saintly figures who are suffering for the sake of the missionized. Occasionally, the documentation will show indications of how the missionaries really relied on the missionized for food, transportation, lodging, translation, and language training, but more often than not these stories are buried or conveniently overlooked in the reports written for popular religious consumption back in the United States or Great Britain. How can mission historians more effectively work to balance this story?

First, it is essential to find the voice of the missionized. While a traditional resource-based approach is a good starting place, there are inherent biases within the historical record. Missionaries were not necessarily interested in promoting local leaders or workers in the local church. Such reporting might lower the perceived importance of the missionaries themselves, and this could influence fund raising. Many of the articles and letters are designed to raise more funds for the field, and as such colonial and paternalistic images of the “heathen” in foreign lands tends to dominate the conversation. Therefore, it becomes the task of the mission historian to specifically seek out and elevate the story of the missionized whenever possible. While foreign missionaries do play a key role in the

success of a mission, they are not the only, or even the most important reason for mission success.

This is clear to see from the case study of the Santa Ana Baptist Church in El Salvador and the Colegio Bautista. Local colporteurs initially planted the Gospel message in El Salvador. While Francisco Penzotti did bring access to translated Bibles and literature in Spanish, and Samuel Purdie of CAM brought a printing press, the distribution of these materials was really through the hard work of local workers, who were also the first evangelists. Their stories do appear occasionally (although they are often unnamed) to detail the danger of the task and the animosity they often faced from Roman Catholic clergy. They were frequently beaten, robbed, and imprisoned for the Gospel, but their stories serve a function to relate to supporters back home the need for more funds and more people in the field. The accounts from CAM, especially Robert Bender are actually better than most. Local Salvadoran leaders are mentioned by name (sometimes even with additional information and photographs), and they are given credit for preaching and establishing churches in more remote areas. Often, they did this for little or no pay and had to hold secular jobs to perform their duties. They even led the larger churches when the foreign missionaries were on some extended tour or on furlough. We can see from some of the names that these leaders had to make key decisions about supporting either CAM or the American Baptists during the 1911 takeover of the church in Santa Ana, and then some were ordained. In the work of the Colegio Bautista, we see that Salvadorean women as well as men played key operational roles in overseeing the cooking, the upkeep of the buildings, and even the teaching itself. Ultimately, as the Salvadoran civil war began, Salvadoran leadership was essential to fill in the gap as the American Baptists called back their foreign missionaries for safety, while leaving local leaders to continue to work in an increasingly violent and unstable situation. We can also see how local pastors played key roles in inviting foreign missions into El Salvador, both with Emilio Morales inviting the American Baptists and in Francisco Ramírez Arbizú's difficult trek to the United States to convince the Assemblies of God to enter the country in 1927 (see footnote thirteen). All of this information can be found in a careful reading of the historical documents, but it needs to be specifically highlighted to stand in contrast to the heavily biased views of the missionary narrative.

Second, it is important to locate the women of the church. Given the time in which most mission reports were written, male leaders tend

to dominate the written accounts. Women leaders, even those from the missions themselves, such as the women who founded the Colegio Bautista are often missing or marginalized in mission literature. The local Salvadoran women are even more marginalized. The photo of Grace Hatler seated among the church people dressed in indigenous clothing is a great reminder of the truth behind a mission's success. Superficially, the missionary is the center of attention- the modern and "civilizing" influence, but she would have been unable to be successful without those around her who organized the cooks, ran the school store, and administered the school library. They are "hidden" beneath indigenous clothing and without the information of Salvadoran women such as Marta del Refugio García de Godoy their names and roles would most likely be unknown and unrecognized. As mission historians read the written accounts, it is important to note when women do appear (named or unnamed) in the accounts and be sure and bring them out in subsequent research.



The women's group of the Iglesia Bautista En Familia that meets in the Colegio Bautista. Photo taken about 2015.

Marta del Refugio García de Godoy sits third from the left on the back bench.

Third, spend time with the people of the local church and ask them to share their stories. Take these interviews seriously and record good notes allowing the conversations to cover the stories which have meaning to the people of that community. Do not expect them to know the historical record, but they will be experts on the local response to the mission work. They will know what stories were passed down and which missionaries were considered true people of faith and which were not. Just because something is written down does not make it any more or less reliable than any other historical source, including oral history. Paul Thompson supports this concept when he writes,

Social Statistics, in short, no more represent absolute facts than newspaper reports, private letters, or published biographies. Like recorded interview material, they all represent, either from individual standpoints or aggregated, the social perception of facts; and are all in addition subject to social pressures from context in which they are obtained. With these forms of evidence, what we receive is social meaning, and it is this which must be evaluated.⁵⁴

Therefore, we must think about oral history in a different way, as a type of social memory. In the same way that a modern historian must interpret the historical record in the light of everything that happened after the recorded event, so an individual or social group reevaluates and interprets events recorded in oral history. As Kirby notes,

Nevertheless, with the passage of time or with reflection, a person's view of his or her experience will change. Phenomenology, then, actually predicts that oral history informants should change their story with successive retellings; the very telling of the story could cause a reevaluation, so that a retelling the very next day could be different. Phenomenology also tells the historian to look for different perspectives in the view of the informant; in one sentence the informant could be trying to reconstruct his or her perspective at the time of the historical event, and the next sentence could be a present-day evaluation.⁵⁵

It is important that historians not use oral history in the same way they might use traditional historical records. The human memory is simply not designed to retain statistical facts in the same way as the written record. As Kirby again notes, "When the informant's memory seems vague or unreliable, the

interviewer keeps in mind that all of the ‘real facts’ cannot be known under even the best circumstances and looks rather for truths of understanding, of spirit, of cultural values, that tell the real story of the historical event or era...”⁵⁶ It seems most logical to bring traditional historiography alongside of oral history to help present a multilayered understanding of an event. This is especially true in mission history, which records the interaction of two very different cultural groups. Both sides help reveal the truth of a situation, both the factual events and the cultural understanding of those same events.

We should never assume that the oral history is somehow inferior to the written history. It is different because it has been reevaluated and reinterpreted through the lens of the local community and the individual who has reflected on their own experience. There are some areas in which it might be less reliable than traditional history (such as in the matters of distant dates and facts), but there are areas where it provides much needed correction. The view that Marta del Refugio García de Godoy had of the missionaries at the Colegio Bautista was much different than the way they viewed themselves in their historical narratives. This does not make one right and one wrong, rather it provides different lenses and interpretations on the same events. Missionary Grace Hatler becomes defined very differently by hearing the stories of Marta del Refugio García de Godoy than she does in her own account in her book *Land of the Lighthouse*. Mission history must make more of an effort to balance out the hagiography of popular material for home audiences and fund-raising, and the culturally biased field reports, with the oral history of the missionized if we really hope to record and understand the truth of the mission experience.

Conclusion

We are entering a period of mission studies where we need to be able to effectively understand and evaluate mission practices of the past. This needs to be done at the local level instead of through large scale overviews of mission in broad geographic strokes. But we cannot rely on balanced history emerging from narratives designed to raise funds or promote new projects. Such histories are unreliable because they ignore one of the most crucial parties in the mission enterprise- the missionized local people. To deal with this problem, we must develop new methodology which seeks to uncover and reveal the role of missionized leaders and their interactions

with foreign missionaries. If we hope to gather concrete information about the success and failures of various missions, we need to understand more than the social and religious forces involved, we need to have the added information and perspectives of the local people themselves. Since, they were not traditionally given access to the same resources as the missionaries for writing, publishing, and preserving their histories, we need to look to oral history to develop a more balanced view of mission history. Mission history is not just a statistical game of how many missionaries, how many converts, how many churches, and how many baptisms. It is a serious interaction between at least two cultural groups in an effort to communicate spiritual and religious truths that can transform people and communities. It is imperative for the task of mission history that we understand what local Christians thought and felt about foreign mission work and how they interpreted it in the light of their own narratives. We are likely to find that what we thought was important was not, and what we completely ignored was fundamental in local people's understanding of what it meant to be a Christian in their context. Yet, for the sake of future mission work, this information is important to adequately reflect on our common missionary past.

The Colegio Bautista in Santa Ana, El Salvador is a case study of a much larger issue. While education was an important need and many have prospered in life from access to this work, it was the life and service of the missionary which made the biggest impact. Robert Bender, Frederick Mebius, Ruth Carr, and Jason Cederholm all left positive aspects because of how they identified with and lived among the people of El Salvador. The mission work itself was secondary in the minds of the missionized. Others who were more focused on the work itself, have left barely an imprint on the people. Institutions, such as the Baptist Church in Santa Ana and the Colegio Bautista have long since passed into the hands of local Salvadorean leaders. These local leaders need to find their place in the history of the church in El Salvador, but to do that well they need to see the work and hear the voices of those who went before them, but were often hidden by the cultural, economic, and political power of the foreign missionaries. Mission history is needed to reclaim these voices and reestablish the forgotten men and women who did the real work to establish the Church in El Salvador. Only then will the work of mission history be done right.



The Authors with Ismael Mendoza Martinez (Colegio Bautista Principal, 2008-present) in 2013.

End Notes

¹ This article is lovingly dedicated to the memory of Marta del Refugio García de Godoy (Oct. 9, 1949 – Feb. 16, 2017), who lived out her Christian faith in her care and compassion for others in her everyday life. She, along with millions of other similar Christians are often passed over by history, but they are really the heart of the Christian movement and what continues to give it life and meaning.

² Cf. “Diputados de Santa Ana reconocen los 100 años del colegio Bautista” in *El País*. Published on June 28, 2019. Retrieved on July 21, 2021 from <http://elpais.com.sv/diputados-de-santa-ana-reconocen-los-100-anos-del-colegio-bautista/>

³ Presbyterian, John Clark Hill established a mission in Guatemala City in 1882 at the request of Guatemalan President General Justo Rufino Barrios during a liberal anti-clerical movement in the country, although it primarily worked with North American and British foreigners in the country and with some of the local business elite. A second small mission was opened by his successor, Edward M. Haymaker in Quetzaltenango in 1895. Cf. James W. Dow and Alan R. Sandstrom, eds. *Holy Saints and Fiery Preachers: The Anthropology of Protestantism in Mexico and Central America*. Westport, CT: Praeger (2001):180, and Gennet Maxon Emery. *Protestantism in Guatemala*. SONDESO no. 65. Cuernavaca, Mexico: Centro Intercultural de Documentación (1970).

⁴ Rev. Penzotti is one of the few missionaries from this period whose work is well documented. Cf.: Francisco Penzotti, “The Bible in Latin America.” *Missionary Review of the World* 37 (1914): 839-842;

Anonymous, "Life in the Spirit." *The Western Christian Advocate* 76 (July 13, 1910): 14; Henry Otis Dwight, *The Centennial History of the American Bible Society*. Vol 2. New York, NY: Macmillan Company (1916); Martin I. Klauber, et al, eds. *The Great Commission: Evangelicals and the History of World Missions*. Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing (2008), among others.

⁵ Penzotti went with Mr. Clarence Wilbur and Mr. and Mrs. H. C. Dillon of the Central American Mission, first through Nicaragua and then into El Salvador. Wilbur and his wife had come as missionaries to Costa Rica in 1893. Wilbur died of yellow fever in 1894 on the trip with Penzotti at Granada, Nicaragua at 26 years of age. The Dillon's were planning on establishing work in El Salvador, but Mrs. Dillon became ill with yellow fever contracted while caring for Wilbur and died in Acajutla, El Salvador, forcing H. C. Dillon to return to the U. S. He appears to have remarried and returned with a new Mrs. Dillon and started work in Guatemala and then went to help establish work in Honduras, where Mr. Dillon died of fever in 1897 at the age of 33. The second Mrs. Dillon continued work in El Paraiso, Honduras until her own death from illness in 1913. Penzotti also worked with Samuel Purdie in holding evangelistic meetings in December of 1896 in Santa Ana, El Salvador to establish the work there. Cf.: Mildred W. Spain, "And In Samaria": *The Story of More Than Sixty Years' Missionary Witness in Central America 1890-1954*. Dallas, TX: The Central American Mission (1954), Wilkins B. Winn. *Pioneer Protestant Missionaries in Honduras*. SONDESO no. 88. Cuernavaca, Mexico: Centro Intercultural de Documentación (1973), and Dorothy Martin, *100...And Counting: The Story of CAM's First Century*. Dallas, TX: CAM International (1990).

⁶ Robert Bender, "Letter from R. H. Bender." *Central American Bulletin* 12(1) (Jan. 15, 1906): 10.

⁷ R. H. Bender, "The Wonderful Growth of the Lord's Work in Salvador." *Central American Bulletin* 14(4) (October 15, 1906): 7-8. Here Bender introduces some of the native workers in one of the few cases where they are discussed in some detail. Roman Hernandez is a colporteur in Santa Ana, David Cardona is a colporteur from San Vicente, Juan Gonzalez who is a farmer but oversees three small congregations, Emilio Morales in Sonsonate who runs a shoe store and oversees seven small congregations, Santiago Ramirez who has a palm plantation but oversees six congregations, Claudio Anaya who is self-supporting and oversees two growing churches, and Salvador Portillo who is a shoe maker but oversees the church in San Salvador in Bender's absence. Bender also notes that there is a book and tract store in San Salvador and one in Santa Ana as well.

⁸ Much of the early history of the Evangelicals of El Salvador can be found in *Cien Años de Presencia Evangélica en El Salvador*, by the Comisión Nacional del Centenario of the Confraternidad Evangélica Salvadoreña (CONESAL). San Salvador, El Salvador (1996).

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⁹ One of the enduring mysteries of the life of Frederick Mebius is when he actually arrived in El Salvador. From official records, Mebius married Mary Faris in King County, Washington State on January 19, 1901. He is next listed in Los Angeles for the birth of his oldest son on February

11, 1902, and his is listed in the Los Angeles City Directory for 1902 as a student. He then disappears from the records until 1909 when he appears as "Mebbius" in the Worley's Directory of El Paso Texas, where he is listed as a missionary. The same record appears in the 1910 issue of the same directory. He next appears in a reference from a letter from Pentecostal missionary Amos Bradley written July 22, 1910 from Guatemala and published in *The Bridegroom's Messenger* 3(68) (August 15, 1910): 4, which notes, "A brother from Mexico has just arrived who received his Pentecost about one year ago. We are trusting the Lord will bless through his coming. His name is Mebius. He has been to South America as missionary under the Alliance work." This establishes a Pentecostal experience about 1909 when he was in El Paso. However, he had a working knowledge of Spanish from his time in Bolivia and it is possible he was doing mission work in Mexico from 1903-1909, and perhaps during that time he had gone down to El Salvador, and was returning to El Salvador in Bradley's letter. Some argue he came as early as 1904 and others as late as 1915. The major problem is a U.S. Census record which shows Mebius living in El Paso, Texas with his wife and children in 1910. According to this record and various other reports Mebius' second son, James Wilson Mebius was born in 1906, so Clifton L. Holland (<https://www.scribd.com/document/491144119/Frederick-Ernest-Mebius-1869-1945-Protestant-Missionary-to-Bolivia-1898-1900-and-El-Salvador-1910-1945>) argues Mebius might possibly have come in 1904-1905, but not 1906 in order to father the child. This problem is complicated by the fact that Mary Mebius, in the same record, is listed as having a daughter from before her marriage to Mebius and the couple separated very quickly after the 1910 census record. Mebius went on to have a second family in El Salvador. While it is impossible to tell, one could question if Mebius was really the father of the child, and if this was the cause of the split. The 1910 census record is problematic for many reasons (for example, it lists Mebius as being born in 1870 in Texas instead of 1869 in Canada, and all of the rest of the family is listed as being born in Texas, when in reality none of them appear to have been born there. Some kind of Pentecostals were clearly established in El Salvador by 1911 and they associated Mebius as their founder in oral history. It seems unlikely that a newly arrived missionary in late 1910 would have had enough time to establish mission work that came to the notice of the American Baptists in 1911. I believe (although there is no strong documentation to back this idea) that Mebius explored El Salvador for a possible mission around 1905-1907, returned to the United States where he experienced a Baptism in the Holy Spirit, was associated with a mission in El Paso, Texas, separated from his wife and returned to El Salvador in 1910. Holland argues that perhaps Mebius' encounter with Pentecostalism might be connected with Rev. M.T. Dye and a Pentecostal revival in San Marcial, New Mexico (a revival does appear to have begun there mentioned in *The Apostolic Faith* from Azusa 1(8) (May 1907): 2 and in *The Bridegroom's Messenger* 2(36) (April 15, 1909): 3 and M.T. Dye is announcing that they will purchase some property in El Paso and move the work from San Marcial to El Paso as a way to reach into Mexico. But M.T. Dye is not listed in the El Paso City Directory for 1909 or 1910, and so it is uncertain if this was accomplished. Given Mebius' connections with the Alliance work and the fact that their work in Los Angeles overlapped that of the Church of the Nazarene (they used the same space of the Peniel Mission for meetings and worship at this

time), and the fact that Mebius was listed as a missionary in the El Paso City Directory, it is also possible he was aligned with Santos Elizondo and her Mexican Mission. She is listed in the Directory and her work also dealt with crossing the border from El Paso into Mexico.

¹⁰ It is difficult to pin this down exactly from historical records. Bender notes in October of 1906 that “Recently fifteen have withdrawn at Santa Ana and organized an independent congregation, but still the church is in a prosperous condition... The faction is beginning to have some internal quarrels.” *The Central American Bulletin* 12 (4) (October 15, 1906): 16. It is unclear if this event is tied to the growing Pentecostal work of Mebius, but the timing is correct and in the right place. By January of 1907, Bender is reporting that the faction had broken up and some were seeking to return, but there is no information about the reason for the split or the reason others were not returning. He only comments that the faction “at Santa Ana is teaching terrible error.” *The Central American Bulletin* 13(1) (January 15, 1907): 16.

¹¹ Roberto Domínguez, *Pioneros de Pentecostes: Mexico y Centroamérica*. Vol. 2. Second edition. Barcelona, Spain: Editorial Clie (1990): 220. This account needs to be carefully considered. It does fit with the date, since it has Mebius arriving in 1906 in the region around Santa Ana. However, the author clearly gets some other information questionably wrong, such as Mebius coming from Bolivia through Panama, and coming with Robert Bender. It is possible he gathered this information from oral sources and some of it might be incorrect, however the timing also fits the faction Bender refers to as splitting from the Santa Ana church.

¹² Everett A. Wilson, “Sanguine Saints: Pentecostalism in El Salvador.” *Church History: Studies in Christianity and Culture* 52(2) (June 1983): 189.

¹³ The Assemblies of God entered El Salvador about 1927, when accounts initially appear of George E. Blaisell being sent by the Latin American Convention of the Assemblies of God to El Salvador (“Many Saved in El Salvador.” George Blaisdell, *The Pentecostal Evangel* (April 9, 1927): 11). The Assemblies of God entered at the request of Francisco Ramírez Arbizú, who became a major leader in the early work there. It notes that “For fifteen years or so this work has been going on, but owing to their lack of teaching and proper leadership it is natural that much has crept in that was not according to God’s Word.” It notes some 400 people gathered to organize into a district and five native preachers were licensed, and as of 1927 it was estimated at 1,000 members in 8 assemblies. By 1931 a letter from Ralph D. Williams is reporting a congregation in Santa Ana which is working on raising money to build a church (*The Latter Rain* 23 (10) (July 1931): 22). In an account of Williams’ work in El Salvador, he recognizes the work of Mebius, but seems to have only a little to do with him, since Mebius seems to have spent time working with the independent Free Apostolic churches (Lois Williams, *Hands That Dug the Well: Memoirs of Ralph Darby Williams*. Springfield, MO: RDM (1997): 72-73. In an interview conducted with Francisco Ramírez Arbizú while he was living, he confirms that Mebius (in this interview Arbizú dates Mebius’ arrival to about

1906-1907, (eleven years before he became a believer) encouraged him to travel to the U.S. to speak with Henry Ball who oversaw the Latin American work of the Assemblies of God. Arbizú notes he sold a shoe shop for the money to travel and left in 1926, travelled by banana boat from Guatemala to New Orleans and then to Texas by 1927. Blaisdell was appointed by Ball to explore the work in El Salvador. (Cf. Roberto Domínguez, *Pioneros de Pentecostes: Mexico y Centroamérica*. Vol. 2. Second edition. Barcelona, Spain: Editorial Clie (1990): 224-230, and also Enrique Barillas, *Frederico Ernesto Mebius... Su Historia*. No publishing data given (circa 1992).

¹⁴The Church of God (Cleveland) entered El Salvador in 1942 with J.H. Ingram who worked with Mebius, and was then followed by H. S. Syverson. Cf. J. H. Ingram, "Good News from El Salvador." *The Church of God Evangel* 32(48) (Feb. 7, 1942): 7; J. H. Ingram, "A Latin American Mission Retrospective." *The Church of God Evangel* 33(8) (Sept. 19, 1942): 8. They report a convention held Nov. 22-24 in El Congo, El Salvador with over 350 people in attendance. Ingram reports staying at the Missionary Home and School in Cojutepeque, which was being run by Rev. and Mrs. E. L. Humphrey who he notes are "ex Baptist missionaries."

¹⁵ Clifton L. Holland (*A Classification System of Religious Groups in the Americas by Major Traditions and Family Types*. Latin American Socio-Religious Studies Program (PROLADES):1993 (last modified 2021):142-145. Retrieved July 21, 2021 from https://www.academia.edu/11053182/A_Classification_System_of_Religious_Groups_in_the_Americas_by_Major_Traditions_and_Denominational_Families_revised_edition_January_2021) categorizes these Salvadoran Pentecostal Movements under the banner of Charles F. Parham's Apostolic Faith Movement. He suggests (mostly by reason of proximity) that Mebius might have been influenced by either Parham's school in Houston, Texas (which later led to the Azusa revival), or by way of a Rev. M. T. Dye who seemed to be leading a Pentecostal revival in San Marcial, New Mexico with plans to move to El Paso. In either case, Mebius became the leader of the Free Apostolic Movement (Movimiento Apostólico Libre) in El Salvador. The Apostles and Prophets Evangelical Church (Iglesia Evangélica Apóstoles y Profetas) formed in 1936 in El Congo, Santa Ana, El Salvador in 1936 under Pilar Calderón, while the Upper Room Apostolic Church (Iglesia Apostólica "El Aposento Alto") formed in 1938 in Cerro Verde, Santa Ana, El Salvador in 1938, led by Hilario Navarro Portillo, a son-in-law of Mebius married to his daughter, Juana. Other groups followed, leading to some 67 independent "Apostles and Prophets" groups and 10 "Apostles and Prophets Ephesians 2:20" groups by 2019.

¹⁶ Bender does note Rufino's passing on July 24, 1912 and the funeral. *The Central American Bulletin* 18(4) (October 15, 1912): 15.

¹⁷ Bender does note that Portillo was a shoe merchant and took charge at Cojutepeque. *The Central American Bulletin* 18(4) (October 15, 1912): 15.

¹⁸ Bender calls Anaya the "first fruit of our labor in Ilopango in 1898" and notes he was a drunkard and wasted \$5,000 he inherited from

his father before becoming a Christian. He records that now he is a good preacher and well respected and worked as a colporteur for many years. *The Central American Bulletin* 18(4) (October 15, 1912): 15. There is also a photo of Anaya on page three of this issue.

¹⁹ Bender does note Tobar is located at St Thomas and visits churches in Ilopango, El Paraiso, and La Esperanza. *The Central American Bulletin* 18(4) (October 15, 1912): 15. There is also a photo of Tobar on page three of this issue.

²⁰ Bender notes Corea is “very spiritual” and works in San Julian, Armenia, Azacualpa, and with other “scattered believers.” *The Central American Bulletin* 18(4) (October 15, 1912): 15-16. There is also a photo of Corea on page three of this issue.

²¹ Bender notes that Perez is a professor who does the preaching when Bender is away. He also plays the organ, teaches Sunday school and helps Bender with Spanish correspondence and correcting his translations. *The Central American Bulletin* 18(4) (October 15, 1912): 16. There is also a photo of Perez on page three of this issue.

²² L. C. Barnes, “A Neglected Neighbor.” *Missions: American Baptist International Magazine* 2 (1911): 228-235.

²³ Barnes, “A Neglected Neighbor,” 234.

²⁴ Barnes, “A Neglected Neighbor,” 235.

²⁵ The idea of comity was an informal and sometimes formal division of political territory among various religious organizations. The principle was to reduce the costs of Christian mission and to spread out resources without duplicating work. This idea seldom worked. Central America was formally divided by comity agreements at the Panama Congress of 1916, one of the first major ecumenical mission conferences held as an offshoot of the Edinburgh 1910 conference. CAM did not attend the Panama Congress because it was seen as being too friendly to Roman Catholicism. As a result, in the formal division, the American Baptists were assigned El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua as their territory. The Presbyterians were assigned Guatemala and The Methodists were assigned Costa Rica and Panama. CAM and Pentecostal groups ignored these divisions, but in this quote, which predates the Panama Congress, CAM seems to be laying claim to the territory of El Salvador by virtue of being the first major group in the country. Cf. Anne Motley Hallum, *Beyond Missionaries: Toward an Understanding of the Protestant Movement in Central America*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc. (1996): 29-30.

²⁶ *The Central American Bulletin* 17(2) (April 15, 1911): 4.

²⁷ *The Central American Bulletin* 17(4) (October 15, 1911): 4.

²⁸ *The Central American Bulletin* 18(3) (July 15, 1912): 17.

²⁹ “Rejoicing at San Salvador: Letter to Field Secretary Barnes from Dr. George H. Brewer,” George H. Brewer. *Missions: A Baptist Monthly Magazine* 8(3) (March 1917): 194.

³⁰ <https://www.mca.org.sv/>

³¹ <https://www.bautistaselsalvador.com/>

³² “Our Baptist Work in Central America: Continuing the Interview with Dr. Brink: The Conditions and Prospects: A Program of Promise.” *Missions: A Baptist Monthly Magazine* 9(6) (June 1918): 479.

³³ Louise Carter, “The New School.” *Missions: A Baptist Monthly Magazine* 10(9) (October 1919): 730.

³⁴ Martha Howell, “Missions Under the Palms: Extracts from Letters of Miss Martha Howell, Santa Ana, Salvador.” *Missions: A Baptist Monthly Magazine* 11(11) (December 1920): 667-668.

³⁵ A copy of this manuscript is in Box 3 of the *Ruth M. Carr Papers* at the American Baptist Historical Society in Atlanta, Georgia.

³⁶ Grace Hatler’s own memories are recorded in this book, which often can be read from a very colonial lens: *Land of the Lighthouse*, by Grace Hatler as told to Dorothy Molan. Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press (1966).

³⁷ Jason Cedarholm and his wife Helen came to Colegio Bautista in 1950, originally to run a boy’s boarding program, which did not ultimately work out. Helen taught piano to the girls in the boarding school.

³⁸ Esteban Rodríguez Jiménez is rather important in the transition from missionary leadership. He graduated from the Colegio Bautista primary school in 1923 as one of their first students. He went on to do high school work in the Colegio Bautista in Managua, Nicaragua and then returned to Santa Ana as a teacher in 1934. In 1940 he was made the assistant principal. So, Don Esteban was both a product of the school and had training in leadership by the missionaries as well.

³⁹ Ruth M. Carr, “A Short History of Colegio Bautista, Santa Ana, El Salvador.” Unpublished manuscript. Box 3, *Ruth M. Carr Papers*, American Baptist Historical Society (Atlanta, GA): 2.

⁴⁰ It is possible she could be the daughter of Florinda González de Chávez who is mentioned much later in the manuscript on page 25 as the “mother of one of our nurses trained in Puebla, Mexico,” but this is not known for certain.

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⁴¹ Carr, “A Short History,” 8.

⁴² Harriet W. Palmer, *Colegio Bautista*. New York, NY: Woman’s American Baptist Home mission Society and the Council of Finance and Promotion of the Northern Baptist Convention, 1935.

⁴³ Carr, "A Short History," 13.

⁴⁴ Carr, "A Short History," 18.

⁴⁵ Hatler, *Land of the Lighthouse*, 44-45.

⁴⁶ Hatler, *Land of the Lighthouse*, 106.

⁴⁷ Doña Rutie taught at least through the early 1980s and was teacher to both Marta del Refugio García de Godoy and Kelly J. Godoy de Danielson.

⁴⁸ His first wife was María Otilia Hernández (1910-2006) and they had at least five children: Pablo Hernán (1928-1998), Pedro Guillermo (1932-1968), Mario David (1933-1985), and Hector Raul (1937-2017). Marta del Refugio García de Godoy recalled meeting Mario and Hector, but also recalled a daughter, Narcisa, who she knew as well.

⁴⁹ María Julia Avilés de Garcia was the daughter of Visitación Aguilar and Victoria Avilés. She also had a child previous to her marriage, Julio Antonio Interiano Avilés. Maria Julia also had a sister, Maria Esther Avilés, and their names seem to indicate that their parents were most likely Roman Catholic.

⁵⁰ The interview was conducted July 23, 2003 in Santa Ana, El Salvador with Marta del Refugio García de Godoy (Oct. 9, 1949 – Feb. 16, 2017).

⁵¹ A number of girls would go on to study in the United States, mostly due to the work of Grace Hatler. Ruth Carr notes several in her manuscript, but by first name only (Berta, Hilda, Dionely, Elvira at the Baptist Institute in Byn Mawr, Eglantina at B.M.T.S., Angela for nurses training, and Judy). Carr, "A Short History," 18. We believe the Angela referred to here is Angela Valladares, due to a post card in our possession from Grace Hatler to a Rev. R. N. Dutton in Washington, D.C. She is giving him Angela's address to connect them, and the address is for St. Elizabeth's Hospital, Clara Barton Hall, in Washington, D.C.

⁵² Marta noted this fact with considerable laughter and noted that she even bought feminine hygiene products without knowing what they were used for, which she used for curling her hair.

⁵³ This would be Nellie C. Tanner, who came in 1960 from Managua to work in the boarding school and try to reestablish the clinic work for the American Baptists, but this was unsuccessful.

⁵⁴ Paul Thompson, *The Voice of the Past: Oral History*. London: Oxford University Press (1978): 96.

⁵⁵ R. Kenneth Kirby, "Phenomenology and the Problems of Oral History." *The Oral History Review* 35(1) (2008): 22-38. This quote is from page 30.

⁵⁶ Kirby, "Phenomenology and the Problems of Oral History," 30.

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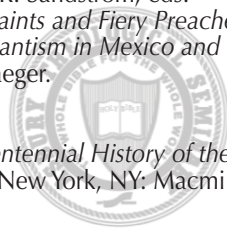
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