

SERVING THE LORD IN

Latin America & the Caribbean: missionaryMAC



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News from Volunteer Coordinator Erin Mackenzie | missionaryMAC.blogspot.com |  [erin.mackenzie5](https://www.facebook.com/erin.mackenzie5)

(If you received a hard copy of this and would like to help me be green and save on postage, please email erin.mackenzie@lcms.org.)

I stayed with friends after flying into SDQ late on a Saturday night in November. The following afternoon, we popped over to what was anecdotally described to me as “the most expensive school in the country” to catch the end of a basketball tournament: [Carol Morgan School](#) (CMS).



CMS, a pre-K—12 private (though not religiously affiliated) international school, sits on 15 beautiful acres. Its 980 “Sharks” enjoy, among other amenities:

- an air-conditioned gymnasium with wood flooring;
- a water filtration system that allows for potable drinking fountains throughout;
- 72 classrooms;
- seven computer labs; and
- accreditation by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools.

How He Built This

I’m an every-now-and-then kind of podcast listener (except when it comes to “[5 Minutes with a Missionary](#),” in which case I’m a diehard fan). One I find interesting from time to time is NPR’s “How I Built This.” Each episode consists of host Guy Raz digging into the backstory behind a mainstream brand, establishment, or website by interviewing its founder. A sampling of some I’ve listened to includes Jeni’s Splendid Ice Creams, Stacy’s Pita Chips, Famous Dave’s, Expedia, and Mailchimp. It’s safe to say most of the guests, whether they set out to or not, have come into the kind of wealth that means they’re set for life, with household name recognition to boot. Guy’s very last question is always something along the lines of “How much of your success can be attributed to hard work and intelligence, and how much is just being lucky?”

Answers vary.

We, too, are set for life—life eternal. All believers can look forward with joyful anticipation to the riches of heavenly mansions (John 14:2), streets paved with gold (Revelation 21:21), and sumptuous banquets (Isaiah 25:6). How much of our spiritual “success” can be attributed to hard work and intelligence and how much is just being sons and daughters of a loving, merciful Father?

The Bible’s answer doesn’t waver:

*For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God.
(Hebrews 3:4)*

Your salvation and mine is 100% God’s doing. I remember my pastor telling my confirmation class that we have about as much to do with getting ourselves to heaven as a fly flapping its wings on the back of an ox pulling a fully laden cart—a contribution too infinitesimal to register, and even that’s an overestimate.

In grateful response to God’s mercy that “depends not on human will or exertion” (Romans 9:16), let’s make the name of the “*founder* and perfecter of our faith” (Hebrews 12:2) a household one, too.

**Making
Disciples
for Life** 



Praises and Petitions

1. Thanksgiving for the introduction of *Himnario Luterano* in the DR congregations.
2. Thanksgiving for a better-than-hoped-for solution to a sticky immigration situation involving a LAC missionary.
3. For LAC missionary wives Agatha (DR) and Melissa (Jamaica), both in their last trimester of pregnancy.
4. For the PR ministry team in the aftermath of a fire next door that severely damaged the Ponce Mercy Center exterior.
5. For our neighbors in Haiti, over 50% of whom are living in hunger.

Partner Spotlight: MOST Ministries



I first got to know [MOST \(Mission Opportunities Short Term\) Ministries](#), an LCMS Recognized Service Organization, in July 2009, [interpreting for an eyeglass clinic](#) as a GEO. Like the LCMS Office of International Mission (OIM), MOST is a mission sending organization, one whose bread and butter is indeed the eyeglass clinics they have down to a science, having given out 149,621 pairs in their 21-year history. In fact, there's an eyeglass team serving in Tanzania as I write this! Contrary to popular belief, though, MOST isn't a one-trick pony; remaining 2023 opportunities include medical, construction, VBS, water filter, and community outreach teams. MOST and OIM aren't in competition but rather hammering out the minutiae of a symbiotic relationship. COVID put the kibosh on two joint teams slated to serve in Peru in 2020, but three years later—with the addition of a new Executive Director in August 2022 and a former LAC missionary in the role of Mission Engager— I'm again looking forward to how OIM can help MOST round out their calendar and MOST can help OIM fill critical, field-driven needs. Now that's making the MOST of it!

Below: DR missionaries celebrated Rev. Dr. Jonathan Naumann's 40th ordination anniversary at Thanksgiving with a surprise slideshow by his wife, Deac. Cheryl.



Above, left: Sunrise from the window seat on the early flight out of STI. Above, right: Ashley (PR) and I wish you were here [ArtBox, the "Belize Arts & Crafts Centre," in Belmopan].

Quote of the Month

"To pray, 'Thy will be done,' I must be willing, if the answer requires it, that my will be undone."

--Elisabeth Elliot

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Gracias