

GUERRA, BISHOP ELEAZAR

World Parish
November 1970

MEXICAN

BISHOP'S DEATH

Bishop Eleazar Guerra, 72, head of the 33,000-member autonomous Methodist Church of Mexico for 20 years, died September 14 at his home in Mexico City after an extended illness.

First elected to the episcopacy in 1938, Bishop Guerra was re-elected in 1942, 1946, 1950 and 1958. He served as head of the Methodist Church of Mexico longer than any other bishop in the Mexican church since it became independent of U.S. Methodism in 1930. On his retirement at the church's General Conference in 1962, Bishop Guerra was named to the honorary post of "Continental Evangelist" and commissioned to accept evangelistic engagements anywhere in Latin America and among Spanish-speaking people in the U.S. His son-in-law, the Rev. Dr. Alejandro Ruiz, was elected as his successor and continues as head of the church.

Born in Reynosa, Mexico, Bishop Guerra was the son of a Methodist parsonage family. He was educated in three Methodist schools, Laurens Institute in Monterrey, Wesleyan Institute in San Antonio, Texas, and Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas. Before his election to the episcopacy, he had been pastor both of Methodist churches in Mexico (at Torreon and Saltillo) and of Mexican-American congregations in the U.S. (Dallas and San Antonio). When first elected, he was a district superintendent in northern Mexico.

Zambia

The editor of one of the principal United Methodist publications overseas has been named the first African director of the Africa Literature Center, a major unit of the Mindolo Ecumenical Foundation at Kitwe, Zambia.

Ezekiel Makunike is editor of UMBOWO, journal of the Rhodesia Conference of The United Methodist Church. A trained journalist with two degrees, a former Crusade Scholar and an internationally recognized Christian communicator, Mr. Makunike and his UMBOWO colleagues have taken bold editorial stands against racial injustice in Rhodesia and have spoken out against the white-dominated government of Ian Smith. Under his editorship, circulation rose from 1,000 to 7,000.

The Africa Literature Center trains African journalists to write for church and secular publications. Mr. Makunike succeeds as director a United Methodist missionary journalist from Sweden, Bengt Simonsson, who will be working with the new Christian Literature Development program of the World Council of Churches.

Born in Rhodesia, Mr. Makunike attended Methodist schools there and went to Hislop College in India to study journalism. He received a bachelor's degree from Hislop, one of a relatively few Africans to be graduates in journalism. During 1968-69, he was a student at Syracuse University, Syracuse, N.Y., where he studied as a United Methodist Crusade Scholar. He received the master's degree in journalism in 1969.

After a brief teaching career, Mr. Makunike was appointed director of publications for the Rhodesia Conference in 1964. He continued to hold that post as well as the editorship of UMBOWO. He attended an international consultation on communications sponsored

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UNITED METHODIST INFORMATION

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Bishop Guerra is survived by his wife, Mrs. Lucinda Guerra, two daughters, including Mrs. Alejandro Ruiz, and a son. The funeral was September 15 in Mexico City.

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(September 22, 1970)

LD chief

SEPTEMBER 15, 1970

DR. JOHN SCHAEFER
DR. CHARLES GERMANY

ELEAZOR GUERRA D., THE FORMER BISHOP OF MEXICO, DIED SEPTEMBER 14.
THE FUNERAL SERVICE IS SEPTEMBER 15.

WE EXPECT MORE INFORMATION FROM MEXICO BY LETTER.

BISHOP GUERRA IS BISHOP ALEJANDRO RUIZ'S FATHER-IN-LAW.

ROBERT DAVIS

MS
C.C. LEONARD PERRYMAN

C. A. 13, 1937.

NEW BISHOP

Methodist Church of Mexico Elects Guerra as Second Bishop

The Rev. Eleazar Guerra was elected bishop of the Methodist Church of Mexico at the third General Conference of that church held in Puebla the week of September 19. The new bishop is a graduate of the Southern Methodist University of Dallas, Tex., and was for some time pastor of Trinity (Spanish-speaking) Methodist Church of San Antonio. He has a good command of the English language, has visited several General Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and has the reputation of being a good administrator.

Dr. Marshall Steele, of Dallas, Tex., attended the Conference as the personal representative of Bishop Watkins. Dr. William L. Quilhan, secretary of the Board of Education, and Dr. W. W. Wasson, of the Board of Missions, both of the Methodist Church, South, were also present.

New Jersey Conference

Church membership
is twice that

ATLANTIC CITY—The one hundred and second session of New Jersey Annual Conference convened in St. Paul's Church, September 21, Bishop Charles L. Mead, of Kansas City Area, presiding. The afternoon session was devoted to worship and the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, followed by roll-call, organization. E. A. Wells, who joined the secretary's staff in 1907 and served as secretary for twenty-two consecutive years, resigned, and H. J. Belting was elected in his place. A purse of fifty dollars was presented by the Conference to Secretary-emeritus Wells in appreciation of his service. Greetings were sent to Bishop and Mrs. E. G. Richardson.

J. B. Kulp made the memorial address on Wednesday evening. Those who died during

12
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SKETCH OF REV. ELEAZAR GUERRA, GENERAL SUPERINTENDENT,
METHODIST CHURCH OF MEXICO

Rev. Eleazar Guerra, the newly elected General Superintendent of the Methodist Church of Mexico, is in his fortieth year. He was born of Methodist parents, trained in three schools of the church - Laurens Institute in Monterrey, Wesleyan Institute in San Antonio and the School of Theology of Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas. He was called to preach while attending an evangelistic meeting conducted by the sainted Rev. F. S. Onderdonk.

He has served as pastor of Mexican churches in Eagle Pass, Texas; Terreon, Mexico, Dallas and San Antonio. At the time of his election he was serving as pastor of a church in Saltillo and Presiding Elder of the Oriental District of the Border Conference.

On Sept. 23rd he was elected General Superintendent by the General Conference in session in Puebla, Mexico, on the first ballot. He was ordained the following Sunday morning in an impressive ceremony before a large congregation which filled to capacity the church in Puebla which is one of the largest and most beautiful Protestant churches in Mexico. The two men who have preceded him in this office, Rev. Juan Pascoe and Rev. Sixto Avilam, took part in the consecration ceremony. Upon the special request of the General Superintendent elect, Dr. A. W. Vasson, one of his former teachers, addressed the Conference just before the ceremony.

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No. 124

Bishop Eleazar Guerra, the dynamic young leader of the Methodist Church of Mexico, is the son of devout Methodist Mexican parents. He is an alumnus of the School of Theology of Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas. While a student in the U.S.A. he made many friends who still hold him in high esteem. He was, as a young man, prominent in athletics.

After serving with distinction as pastor of Mexican congregations in the U.S.A. and in Mexico, he was elected Bishop of the Methodist Church of Mexico in 1938 for a four year term. He was re-elected in 1942 for another term by an almost unanimous vote.

Under his consecrated and vigorous leadership the Church in Mexico has made great gains. He is an evangelistic preacher of fervor and power. He receives many invitations to preach in the U.S.A. and a few years ago he went on a Preaching Mission to Costa Rica where he was well received.

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ELEAZAR GUERRA, BISHOP OF THE METHODIST

CHURCH OF MEXICO

WHO IS HE? WHAT DOES HE DO?

The Border city of Reynosa, in the State of Tamaulipas, Mexico, is the birthplace of our distinguished friend and unique fellow-worker, the present bishop of the Methodist Church of Mexico, Eleazar Guerra. His parents, who belong as does their son to the Border region, are Prof. Ponciano Guerra and Señora Rafaela O. de Guerra. Both of them are deeply religious, particularly his worthy mother, who never loses an opportunity to take the gospel to those who have not known it. His beloved father, Ponciano Guerra, has for 25 years been a local preacher, and in this period has served as pastor of several charges, first in the Mexico Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church South, and later in the Border Annual Conference of the Methodist Church of Mexico.

Eleazar took his grammar school work under the teaching of his father, who with all solicitude and consecration sought to impart to his son, as also to Elodia, his sainted daughter, their instruction included in the Grammar School. He received his secondary education in Laurens Institute, Monterrey; the Preparatory and Commercial courses were completed in Wesleyan Institute, San Antonio, Texas; from there he went to the University, as we shall mention later in this article.

While still quite young, Eleazar went to the United States to complete his studies, and to look for new horizons for his life. From childhood he felt that his true calling was to the Christian ministry. Assuredly his pious mother had followed the example of the Israelite, Anna - first of all having prayed to God for the gift of a son, who should in turn be given back to God for His service.

Like most of the Border folk, Eleazar is of energetic character. He does not give up the vision of carrying out a noble purpose; he is of irrevocable determination, and to this fact he owes his success in the ministry. When he wished to enter Southern Methodist University, in Dallas, his desire was opposed by those who did not think this the wisest course. This caused Eleazar, who as I have already said, is of tenacious and energetic character, to undertake to open for himself the pathway to the solution of the financial problem, and to obtain by his own work the means needed to carry on his studies. He bears the distinction of never having received a scholarship, either for himself or his children, from the Church which he has served with diligence and consecration.

This effort to provide the solution for his own personal problems brought with it the discovery of ability in business matters; which has enabled him not only to meet his own needs, but also to provide financial help for the Church which he serves. If anyone doubts this statement, a glance at the books of Dr. Hauser, Treasurer of the Church will convince him that Bishop Guerra contributes personally not less than four thousand pesos each year for the several causes represented in the task of the Church. This contribution is made from his own resources. For his fellow-workers he always seeks to provide the best support possible, and in cases of emergency he seeks special contributions from different sources. A good number of pastors and other fellow-workers of both Annual Conferences will support this statement.

There are three facts which may be considered as proofs that Eleazar has entered the ministry as a calling, and not for personal interest. When he was in the University, where he achieved distinction for many reasons, he was asked by an important business concern to accept an enviable position, with a salary that would have opened the opportunity to large financial remuneration. He very energetically rejected this opportunity declaring that he had been called to the ministry. Later on, another Latin American

Company, convinced that Eleazar Guerra was the person needed for its activities, offered him a post, with an attractive salary, plus a commission on all business transactions and travel expense throughout South America. He rejected this offer also, stating that his calling was to the Christian ministry. The third opportunity which Bishop Guerra received to work outside the Church, was in political activities. His numerous relatives in his native State of Tamaulipas tried to persuade him to enter the race for a seat in Congress, with good prospects for success. Again he emphatically refused, because, as he said, he had been called to be a minister of the gospel, of our Lord Jesus Christ. These are proofs that Bishop Guerra is serving the Church because of a genuine call of God.

In his work as pastor, he achieved important successes. First as a pastor of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in San Antonio, Texas, he did a glorious work. His principal work was in the field of evangelism and finances, which still are his burning passion in the episcopal office which he now holds. The same may be said of his pastorates in Torreon and Saltillo, in Mexico, and of his term as District Superintendent in the Border Annual Conference, before his first election to the office of bishop.

And as to the present? God has greatly blessed his episcopal service. New church buildings have been erected in Sonora, Reynosa, Xoxocotla, Cocotitlan, and Nextlalpam. Many church buildings and parsonages have been repaired or improved. A very great impulse has been given to our schools in both Annual Conferences. Due to his efforts the salaries of pastors and other church workers have been increased. Our student body in the Seminary has been reenforced, and of the seventeen young men enrolled, sixteen are Methodists. Also, the Methodist Deaconess School has a good enrolment; altogether there are 31 young men and women in Mexico City studying for Christian service. There are no less than 25 pre-theological students in the preparatory schools. It is the Bishop's hope that next year there will be at least 50 students studying for the ministry.

As if this were not enough, the Bishop has purchased a printing press for our Methodist publications. Due to a special effort on behalf of "El Evangelista Mexicano", official organ of the Church, he has not only succeeded in paying all indebtedness, but at present has a considerable cashbalance on hand. An episcopal residence is being planned, in addition to ten new church buildings which are to be erected in Tampico, Veracruz, Orizaba, Mexico City, Ciudad Victoria, and other places.

The number of souls won is considerable; for the coming year we shall have a total of 20,000 Methodists in Mexico, and the present budget of the Methodist Church of Mexico represents a 300 percent increase over that in effect at the beginning of Bishop Guerra's second episcopal term.

The Laymen's Movement, which has been organized in both Conferences, is due to his initiative.

This is the man whom God has placed at the head of His work in the Methodist Church of Mexico. His efforts are witnessed to by all we have said, though we have left many things unmentioned. But we must not close without a reference to his wife, Señora Lucinda V. de Guerra. In addition to the care of two daughters, Lucille and Ruth and a son, Humberto, she knows how to fill ideally the place which falls to her in view of the responsibility which her husband bears. Ruth, the younger daughter, is studying for service as deaconess.

Eleazar excels as a pulpit orator. His style is predominantly evangelistic, but he cultivates other types of preaching as well. And if we have pulpit orators of distinction, he is inferior to none. He is logical and forceful in style, and in controversy no one can overcome him. In finances, he is the Number One of the Methodist Church of Mexico.

This is Bishop Eleazar Guerra, and this is his work!

W. W. Reid
Board of Missions and Church Extension
of the Methodist Church
150 Fifth Avenue, New York 11, N.Y.

released upon receipt

The leading evangelical churchman of Mexico -- Bishop Eleazar Guerra, of the Methodist Church of Mexico, with residence in Mexico City -- will be the guest-speaker at

on

Bishop Guerra is the third Episcopal leader to be chosen to head this independent Mexican member of the Methodist family of churches, since its separation from the "Mother Churches" in the United States twenty years ago.

Bishop Guerra heads a growing church of two annual conferences, 131 parishes, 20,000 members, 156 pastors, 113 women's societies; together with a theological seminary, a publishing house, social centers, medical centers, and related to private schools operated by Methodist laymen. It is the largest evangelical movement in Mexico.

Born of Methodist parents in Mexico, Dr. Guerra was educated in church schools in Mexico, at Wesleyan Institute, San Antonio, Texas, and in Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas. Ordained a minister of the former Methodist Episcopal Church, South, he served as pastor of churches on both sides of the border: Eagle Pass, Texas; Terreon and Saltillo, Mexico; and Dallas and San Antonio, Texas. He preaches with fluency in both Spanish and English.

In 1938, while serving as pastor in Saltillo, and as presiding elder of the Oriental district of the Boarder Annual Conference, Dr. Guerra was elected the third bishop of his Church.

Leonard M. Perryman
Board of Missions of the Methodist Church
150 Fifth Avenue, New York 11, N.Y.

Dr. Guerra Re-elected Mexico Bishop

The General Conference of the Methodist Church of Mexico has re-elected the Rev. Dr. Eleazar Guerra for his fifth term as bishop of the church.

Bishop Guerra was elected September 25 on the 13th ballot at the quadrennial General Conference in Monterrey. He succeeds the Rev. Dr. Rolando Zapata, who had been bishop the last four years.

The Methodist Church of Mexico has a membership of about 32,000 and a constituency estimated at more than 60,000. The two annual conferences comprise an estimated 200 churches.

Bishop Guerra was first elected to the episcopacy of the Methodist Church of Mexico in 1938 and was re-elected in 1942, 1946 and 1950. Born of Methodist parents in Mexico, he was educated in church schools in Mexico and at Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas.

Ordained a minister of the former Methodist Episcopal Church, South, Bishop Guerra served as pastor of Methodist churches in both Mexico and the United States, including pastorates in Dallas and San Antonio, Texas. It was while he was pastor at Saltillo and presiding elder that he was first elected bishop. From 1951 to 1954, Bishop Guerra was secretary of the Council of the Mexican Church.

In other positions, the General Conference elected the Rev. Dr. Guerra as secretary of evangelism and re-elected the Rev. Alejandro Ruiz as secretary of Christian education and the Rev. Dr. Juan Jacobe as secretary of Christian social relations.

Bishop W. Angie Smith, Okla. City, Okla., and the Rev. Dr. James L. Ellis, secretary for Latin American fields of the Division of World Missions of the Board of Missions, represented the Methodist Church in the United States.

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(C.M. Oct. 13, 1913)

W. W. Reid
Board of Missions and Church Extension
of the Methodist Church
150 Fifth Avenue, New York 11, N.Y.

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Bishop Guerra Re-elected

Bishop Eleazar Guerra, head of the Methodist Church of Mexico, and regarded as the leading evangelical churchman of the Republic, was re-elected bishop for the quadrennium 1950-54 at the recent General Conference of the denomination. He was first elected to the episcopal office in 1938, being the third minister elected bishop of this "offspring" of United States Methodist missions in Mexico. His residence continues in Mexico City.

The General Conference also re-elected the Rev. Manuel V. Flores as Secretary of Christian Education; and chose the Rev. Nelson Velasco, pastor in Monterrey, as Secretary of Evangelism. Mr. Velasco succeeds in this post the Rev. Dr. Juan N. Pascoe, who is also a former bishop of the Church.

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Some Facts About **MEXICO**

Mexico is one-fourth the size of the United States, and has a population of about 21,000,000. Of these, 30% are Indians, 15% are Spanish, and 55% are mixed Indian and Spanish, or *mestizo*.

The country has great natural wealth, largely undeveloped. It has the two largest oil refineries in the world. Mexico has 29 States, one Territory, and a Federal District. Seventy percent of the people are farmers or farm laborers.

Mexico has been going through a social and political revolution, to secure democracy, bring the land into the hands of the people, eliminate foreign capitalistic control, break the power of the Roman Catholic Church, and secure general progress. At one time the Catholic Church owned one-half of all the land. By 1941 over 60,000,000 acres had been distributed to the people. The Church cannot own property or conduct schools. Clerical garb is banned; foreign priests or ministers cannot officiate; church buildings are owned by the state; the number of priests and ministers is regulated. The anti-clerical laws were aimed at the Roman Catholic Church, but they also affected Protestantism. Educationally, Mexico has been backward, but great strides are being made in setting up schools in smaller places. About half the people are illiterate.



MEXICO

SHOWING PRINCIPAL CITIES
OF METHODIST WORK...

THE METHODIST CHURCH OF MEXICO

The Methodist Church of Mexico is an autonomous body affiliated with the Church in the United States. There are two annual conferences, 131 churches, 19,882 members, 72 preachers, 84 local preachers, 113 women's societies. Under the laws, Methodist schools are leased to and operated by Methodist laymen and women as private institutions. There are 13 such schools. These are at Chihuahua, Durango, Torreon, Monterrey, Piedras Negras, Guanajuato, Mexico City (2), Pachuca (2), Puebla (2), and Quere-taro. There are three hostels for students at Chihuahua and Monterrey (2). Methodist social centers are at Chihuahua, Durango, Mon-terrey, and Reynosa; there is a hospital (Sana-torio Palmore) at Chihuahua and a dispensary at Mexico City. The Union Publishing House at Mexico City publishes books for all the Protes-tants of Mexico. The Union Evangelical Cen-ter, or theological seminary, is interdenomina-tional. The president and four teachers are Methodists. It trains both ministers and dea-conesses and has a large rural extension program.

Mexican Methodism has men's societies, called Methodist Men's Fraternities, and women's so-cieties, called the Federation of Methodist Women.

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photo of
Bishop Guerra

West outlook

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W. W. Reid
Board of Missions and Church Extension
of the Methodist Church
150 Fifth Avenue, New York 11, New York

DEPT. OF STATE

Evangelistic Tour Draws Thousands in Cuba

By Clarence K. Vliet
Board of Missions and Church Extension

For five weeks Bishop Eleazar Guerra, of the Methodist Church of Mexico, and the writer have been privileged to make an evangelistic tour of the Island of Cuba. These weeks have helped make Cuba "evangelical Christianity conscious" as never before in her history.

And for the first time Cuba knows something of the magnitude of the work of the Methodist Church on the Island. As we have shown five reels -- 2100 feet -- of film across the Island, over and over again have we heard the remark, "I had no idea that Methodism was so large and was doing so much on the Island."

Another unique thing has been the use we have had of the radio from one end of the Island to the other. Arriving by plane from Mexico City, Bishop Guerra was met by a radio man as he stepped off the plane and asked to speak a few words to the Cuban radio listeners -- which in Cuba means a great per centage of the population. This has proven invaluable, for we have been told from one end of the Island to the other, "I heard you on the radio out at the Airport."

At Cienfuegos, the Bishop was given fifteen minutes on the radio for an evangelistic message, also at Holguin, and again at Cienfuegos. Last night, here at Matanzas, we were given a full hour. It was not only a radio hookup, but it was also connected with the City Loud Speaker System in the parks. I preached for twenty-five minutes; a beautiful number was sung by a choir of eighteen voices from the College and Church; then the Bishop preached for twenty-five minutes; and there was another

number by the choir. Then I gave an invitation to all listeners to join us immediately in the Central Church for another sermon by Bishop Guerra, and also an invitation to the meeting tonight.

After the broadcast, the owner-director of the radio station offered to our Methodist Church the use of the radio for the full hour -- seven to eight every Sunday night, and with the hookup to the City Loud Speaker System. Of course the offer was accepted, and I am now planning with Carl Stewart concerning these broadcasts and am going to attempt to secure some good transcription records. A full hour is really more than he alone can occupy, but we want to keep and use that period.

The meetings have been well publicized across the Island and large crowds have greeted us in each and every city. Brother Soto, at Cienfuegos, did an especially fine piece of advertising. We found the store windows with large posters; we found boys handing out "flyers" in reference to the meetings; and in addition to this he had an attractive card printed and sent as personal invitations through the mail.

In most of the cities we were able to have four nights. Dr. S. A. Neblett, who had accompanied us on the trip, had gone ahead one day and shown the motion pictures one night before our arrival. This has given a further opportunity to announce our meetings as the movies have invariably drawn fine crowds. By sending him a day in advance, it has given us three nights for our evangelistic services in each city, in addition to the Radio messages in the cities mentioned, and the messages brought to the schools in the various cities.

Other denominations have joined most heartily with us. Especially did we have fine cooperation at Cardenas and at Camaguey. At Cardenas on the last night, we had the Baptist minister, the Episcopal minister and the Methodist minister at the altar in a service for general prayer, prayer for the island, and for full cooperation. Truly a great service and a new day for evangelical Christianity in this important field so close to our own border!

Bishop Guerra has brought a most soul-stirring message. He is most versatile. He has been very tactful, somewhat unique, and always effective in his altar calls. Usually three different calls have been made; first, a very direct and definite

call for penitents and those accepting definitely the Christ for the first time. There have been no less than 125 of these. Second, a call for a complete surrender, and there have been 220 of such; and third, those desiring to re-consecrate themselves to the Christ and his work. There have been about 600 of these -- a total to date of 930 by actual count.

There have been some great experiences in these meetings. For instance, one man in Camaguey just three days out of jail, had a wonderful and a clear experience. Another was a young lady who had a year ago come and joined our Church; because of this her mother refused to send her to the States to complete her education, her friends had snubbed her, and she had left our Church. It was our first meeting on Sunday morning in Cienfuegos where I preached on "What to Believe". She had seen the advertisement of the meeting and came to church. When the altar call was made, she literally flung herself at the altar, broken-hearted and weeping; she fully and completely came back; and at the evening service she had her MOTHER with her at the service.

The Mayor of Cienfuegos and the City Council -- all Catholics -- were present for this service. When we called at the invitation of the Mayor on Monday to the City Chambers, we found him and the Council gathered together discussing the service and the message of Sunday morning.

W. W. Reid
Board of Missions and Church Extension
of the Methodist Church
150 Fifth Avenue, New York 11, N.Y.

Reports Persecution of Protestants in Mexico

As recently as April 15, the Methodist Church in the town of Coatilinchan, near Mexico City, was attacked and burned by Roman Catholics, says Bishop Eleazer Guerra, of Mexico, now in the United States for a few weeks. They also attacked church members, and burned the parsonage and several other buildings in the same town.

"Our members are congregated in Mexico City for protection," says the Bishop.

"The Federal Government has sent troops to the place to protect the Protestants.

"This is a continuation of the persecution campaign which began in Mexico three or four years ago, inspired by pastoral letters sent by the archbishops of Mexico to all the Catholic parishes in the country. Up to this time there have been several people killed, some churches burned, and in some cases, like Timilpan, one hundred or more people have not been able to return to their city.

"In spite of this tremendous persecution, the evangelical churches are growing in Mexico more than ever before, and our people, in the midst of sorrow and in the face of death, are happy with the religion that has been able to change their lives. We do pray that as soon as this persecution goes over, we can continue in peace doing our work."

Foreign Missions Conference
156 Fifth Avenue
New York 10, N.Y.

Winfred P. Elson
Chelsea 2-3230

RELEASE Upon Receipt

New York -- "Situated between 130 millions of English speaking people to the north and 130 million Spanish speaking people to the south," declared Bishop Eleazar Guerra of Mexico City before the Committee on Cooperation in Latin America in special session here today (April 23rd), "Mexico must realize its strategic responsibility as the place of fusion of these two great cultural developments, that the foundations for the future may be well laid."

The Bishop credited President Truman on his recent visit to Mexico with having "done more in one minute than all other statesmen in a century" to cement friendship between the two countries when he laid a wreath before the statue commemorating the bravery of Mexico's troops in the war with the United States in 1847.

Bishop Guerra, now serving his third term as elective General Superintendent of the Methodist Church of Mexico, paid tribute to the progress which the Protestant churches in Latin America have made in the past 75 years. He said, "Through education and broad cultural development the Evangelicals are today earning positions of leadership in many lines, and are highly respected for what they have contributed to present day civilization." He added that present Protestant strength in Mexico is about one million members.

Himself a graduate of Laurens Institute in Monterey, Wesleyan Institute in San Antonio, Texas, and the School of Theology at Southern Methodist University, Dallas, he emphasized the need of great schools and great seminaries in Mexico to raise the level of leadership, and graduate study in the United States and elsewhere to bring the best thought of the whole world to the leaders of Mexican life. He pleaded also for a better paid ministry in rural areas, increase in production of suitable religious literature, erection of appropriate and attractive church buildings, and the development of a sense of unity among Protestant communions.

Bishop Guerra, fresh from an evangelistic campaign in Puerto Rico, will, after meeting with the Provisional Committee of the World Council of Churches at Buck Hill Falls, Pa., return to his work in Mexico early next month.

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Rufina's Stewardship

By Bishop Eleazar Guerra
Methodist Church of Mexico

In the little town of Sonora, which lies deep in the mountains of Arizona, lives Mrs. Rufina Viera de Uriarte. I visited her there because of the great interest she has shown in the Mexican people.....

Born in San Lorenzo, a hamlet near Culiacan, in the State of Sinaloa, July 10, 1885, Rufina was twenty years old when the family moved to the mining town of Cananea, in the State of Sonora. Here she heard the gospel presented by Brother Enrique Narra, one of the first Mexican preachers to begin Protestant work in that part of the country. Because of the Revolution, she and her mother emigrated to the State of Arizona in 1913, making their home in this mountain village of Sonora.....

When I asked Mrs. Viera about her conversion she related how her mother, a devout Catholic, at one time became dangerously ill. Although the daughter did not know how to pray directly to God, the crisis of seeing her mother at the point of death sent her into the next room to pray. Crying to God to spare her dear one, she promised that if he did, she would get in touch with the Protestant group. When she finished her prayer and returned to the sick room, she was surprised to find her mother sitting up and quite well. The daughter thanked God for his mercy -- but promptly forgot her promise to look up the Protestants.

A second similar experience, when the mother became ill and was restored once more by the daughter's prayer, reminded the latter of the unkept promise. Whereupon, the two attended a service when Brother Harro was preaching, and received the light of the Gospel. From that time Rufina began to long to build a church for her own people.

With the passing of the years the mother died, and Rufina was left alone; but the promise to build a church was so deeply imbedded in her heart that it caused her sleepless nights. By doing fine needlework she supported herself, carefully saving part of her earnings. Nine years had gone by, during which she had worked steadily toward her church project, but one day as she travelled from the City of San Francisco to the village of Sonora, she seemed to hear a voice which said: "What about your promise to build a church for your people? Go and talk to Dr. Mewborn, and he will tell you what to do." Obedient to the voice, she wrote to Dr. Mewborn of her desire.

We pause in our story to note in what mysterious ways God works.....While travelling about the State of Texas to raise money for new Methodist churches in the Republic of Mexico, I had the privilege of preaching one night in the beautiful Fort Worth church of which the Rev. Warren Johnston is pastor, and there I poured out the intense burden of my heart regarding the need for church buildings in Mexico. A valiant retired Methodist preacher, Dr. Dorsey Mewborn, attended that service, and the seed fell in fertile soil.

Writing at once to Mrs. Viera, he formed the needed link in the chain of providential circumstances, which resulted in a gift of two thousand dollars for the erection of a church in the City of Magdalena, Sonora, the state in which Mrs. Viera first heard the Gospel preached. She sent the savings of nine years to Dr. Mewborn in twenty money orders of one hundred dollars each.

When I had an opportunity to meet Mrs. Viera and question her about this project which had motivated her life for years, her eyes sparkled, and her face expressed deep satisfaction as she said, "Now I can die happy for I have kept the promise I made to God that I would build a church."

Already we have purchased the site and drawn up the plans for this new church in Magdalena, which in the providence of God will be built as a witness to this woman's faith and love for Christ. We trust that this example of sacrifice may be multiplied for the sake of the extension of the Gospel. Wherever hearts are thus touched by the Spirit, the work is sure to go forward.

NEW BISHOP

Methodist Church of Mexico
Elects Guerra as Second Bishop

The Rev. Eleazar Guerra was elected bishop of the Methodist Church of Mexico at the third General Conference of that church held in Puebla the week of September 19. The new bishop is a graduate of the Southern Methodist University of Dallas, Tex., and was for some time pastor of Trinity (Spanish-speaking) Methodist Church of San Antonio. He has a good command of the English language, has visited several General Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and has the reputation of being a good administrator.

Dr. Marshall Steele, of Dallas, Tex., attended the Conference as the personal representative of Bishop Watkins. Dr. William F. Sullivan, secretary of the Board of Education, and Dr. A. W. Nasson, of the Board of Missions, both of the Methodist Church, South, were also present.

(Oct. 13, 1930)

In length of episcopal service, Bishop Eleazar Guerra of Mexico stands next to Bishop Balloch. First elected in 1938 for a term of four years by the General Conference of the Methodist Church of Mexico, he was re-elected in 1942 for another term of four years. Bishop Guerra, like Bishop Balloch, is a tireless traveler. During the quadrennium, he traveled more than 128,000 miles, visiting every church and parsonage and institution of Methodism in Mexico. This energetic General Superintendent has had the joy of seeing a net increase in membership during the last four years of 2,287, bringing the total number of members and probationers to 16,965. During the same period, there has been an increase of 61% in contributions.

will be broken if there is a legal twist in it. These human characteristics are symptoms of a decadent civilization and are sure forerunners of national disaster, unless we begin to build upon firmer and more enduring foundations. Christ is our only hope. "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

**BUT THE OLD OAKEN BUCKET
IS SYMBOLIC OF GODLINESS.**

Following a luncheon with the President of the Argentine Republic, Roger Babson was sitting on the veranda of the President's Residence while they were discussing the difference between North and South America. The President of Argentina said to Mr. Babson, "We have here in South America limitless material resources

Bishop Guerra
Methodist Church of Mexico

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By A.W. Wasson
Ala. Xian Advocate
2/18/43

Photographs from this
file have not been
included but are
available upon request.
For more information
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