



**News Release**  
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## **MEA celebrates historic Hispanic Ministries graduation**

ELKHART, Indiana (Mennonite Education Agency) – [Mennonite Education Agency](#) (MEA) graduated eleven students from its two [Hispanic Ministries](#) programs this fall. The ceremonies were held at [Hesston \(Kansas\) College](#) on September 3, 2022, with Hesston College President Dr. Joseph Manickam bringing the keynote speech. Rev. Dr. David Boshart, president of [Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary](#) (AMBS), Elkhart, Indiana, was also in attendance and gave the invocation. The service marked the first formal graduation ceremony for MEA's Hispanic seminary since its inception.

"This was a historic moment for Hispanic Ministries of Mennonite Education Agency and the Hispanic Mennonite Church of the United States," exclaimed Marco Güete, director of MEA's Hispanic Ministries programs, who also served as master of ceremonies. "These graduates will bring their knowledge and skills to strengthen their congregations and build new disciples of Jesus, who may also become leaders in their churches. It is a beautiful cycle that ripples out beyond this moment."

MEA operates a Hispanic seminary and a Bible institute: [Seminario Bíblico Anabautista Hispano](#) (Hispanic Anabaptist Biblical Seminary), known as SeBAH, and [Instituto Bíblico Anabautista](#) (Anabaptist Biblical Institute – IBA).

SeBAH was formed in 2010 while IBA has been in operation since 1988. Both offer theological and Biblical teaching from a unique Hispanic Anabaptist perspective. SeBAH is online while IBA operates out of study centers in partnership with local congregations. IBA is also piloting a virtual study center. Thousands of students have studied through these programs, and most are serving Hispanic churches today as leaders and pastors. Volunteer professors and tutors serve as teachers and mentors.

Receiving a Degree in Pastoral Ministry from SeBAH were José Rubén Bravo, Leticia Cortes, José Guerra, Yanira López, Paul Maldonado, Haroldo Nunes, Hildalejandra Pellecer, and Juan Rivera.

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Three students earned a Diploma and Certificate in Biblical and Theological Studies from IBA: Fernando Ramos, María Luisa Ramos, and José Suastegui.

The commencement weekend included teaching sessions led by Rev. Michele Hershberger, department chair and professor of Bible and Ministry at Hesston College. "In just a short time, I sensed the passion these students have for Jesus and the church," she said.

Rev. Hershberger also anointed and blessed each student during the graduation ceremony, which included commissioning the graduates for ministry, and bestowing stoles, certificates, and diplomas. Reflecting on the magnitude of the experience, Hershberger said, "Sometimes we were both teary-eyed, as the Spirit spoke the words they needed to hear. This wasn't just any graduation, but a commissioning for service in the church."

Hesston College President Joseph Manickam agreed. "Hesston College and [MEA's] Hispanic Ministries share a common pathway in preparing and equipping today's church for a strong future. It is my hope and prayer that the graduates from IBA and SeBAH will continue to grow with strength, wisdom, and courage to lead their congregations as the church seeks new ways to translate God's Love to its community."

President Boshart of AMBS echoed these convictions. "It was a great honor to participate in the weekend teaching sessions with Michelle Hershberger and the IBA/SeBAH graduation ceremony. This celebration marked significant hard work and commitment on the part of these lifelong learners who are providing essential leadership in their congregations. I am grateful to Hesston College for hosting this important and historic event."

Historic, added Marco Güete, because it was also the first time two sitting college presidents participated in a Hispanic Ministries graduation service. "For [Presidents Boshart and Manickam] to attend and participate affirms the programs and the graduates. Their presence acknowledges the importance of Hispanic Anabaptist leaders and the Hispanic Mennonite Church in the United States."

Mennonite Education Agency is headquartered in Elkhart, Indiana, and partners with Anabaptist Mennonite educational institutions and programs to provide resources, networking, and support to school administrators, faculty, and staff. As the education agency of [Mennonite Church USA](#), MEA ties church and school together in a complementary and cooperative way to ensure students receive a high-quality education from a distinctive Anabaptist Mennonite perspective.

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