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Like many CIASP volunteers, Anne Cecile Leonard of Abbeville, La., turns her vacation time into shared time with the wonderful people of Mexico.

A THOUSAND HOMES

"With a thousand places I call home I know I'm not alone" is sung every summer by more than 830 students south of the border. Coming from 150 U.S. and Canadian colleges, they live and work with families in 14 States of Mexico. This is the story of their organization, CIASP, the Conference on Inter-American Student Projects.

by DARRYL L. HUNT, M.M.



A Mexican government doctor from the INPI agency instructs CIASPers. Right, students from Toronto visit a community leader in Tianguistengo.

EIGHT HUNDRED toothbrushes are only a footnote in the history pages of a student organization called CIASP, but they could be a new chapter in the lives of 1500 families in a remote Mexican village.

This past summer a group of fifteen students from Midwestern colleges and a diocesan seminary returned to the village of Tlaxco in the state of Puebla. Tlaxco is six hours by mule from the nearest road. Among the gear brought in was a carton of 800 toothbrushes which had been donated by a drug firm.

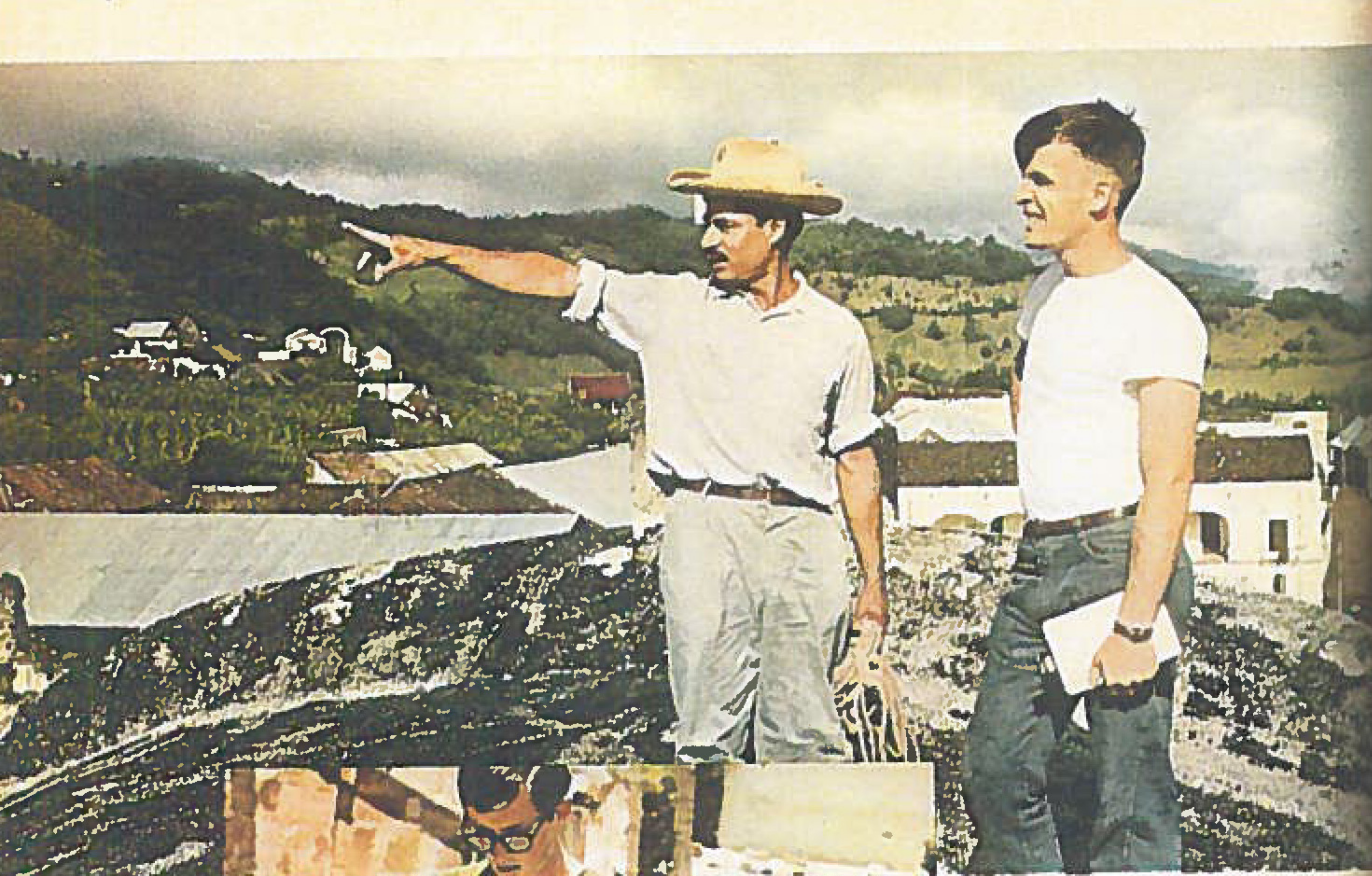
In these students' minds the plan was simple. The toothbrushes would be given to Tlaxco's schoolteacher. He in turn would sell them to his

primary students for 25 centavos each, 2¢ U. S., and use the money to buy rabbits. Through filmstrips and personal instruction, secondary students in the village would be able to raise enough rabbits in a year's time to provide meat for every family.

In the meantime, the CIASP students managed to pay for the Archbishop of Puebla's private plane fare to Tlaxco. The Archbishop had never visited there. They also arranged to accompany the mayor to Mexico City to investigate the possibilities of a \$100,000 road.

When someone asks the Tlaxco group about their project and its success, they just smile and comment on the lack of electricity in their





Santiago shows Georges L'Abbé where Canadian students can start a new project. Below, a CIASP group from Amherst College at work in Jiquipilco.



Dancing in the zócalo is one of the ways Monique Lauzon, a CIASP member from the University of Ottawa, reaches the hearts of her Mexican students.

town and what the people might be able to accomplish next year.

The Tlaxco group, however, was only one of 83 groups working in 14 states of Mexico this past summer. The students in these groups are members of the Conference on Inter-American Student Projects, a vigorous movement begun in the summer of 1963 to coordinate the rising interest of college students in working abroad during their vacations.

CIASP work is a year-round involvement. From February to June, the student is required to participate in an on-campus training program that includes lectures, Spanish classes and participation in local social action programs. CIASP is also student-

directed and student-supported from campus to project site. For example, in Tlaxco, Tlaxcala, the director of the local schools asked students from Spring Hill College in Mobile, Alabama, to conduct a special summer program to teach English to his students. In Jiquipilco, Toluca, community leaders requested that some students from Amherst College spend the summer building public showers.

CIASP members are not causing a revolution; they are merely joining the revolution that is Mexico today. They work together with Mexican students when possible. A major point in the CIASP program is to alert participating communities to the many social services already

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Los Angeles Amigos learn about crops and customs in Tangancicuaro, Morelia. Right, two Seattle volunteers prepare their students for a fiesta in Oaxaca.

provided by agencies of the Mexican government. Before leaving Mexico City for their various projects, the students are introduced to groups like Instituto Nacional de Proteccion a la Infancia, INPI. INPI, while providing medical services for mothers and children, has a broad program of education aimed at strengthening family life. By passing on this infor-

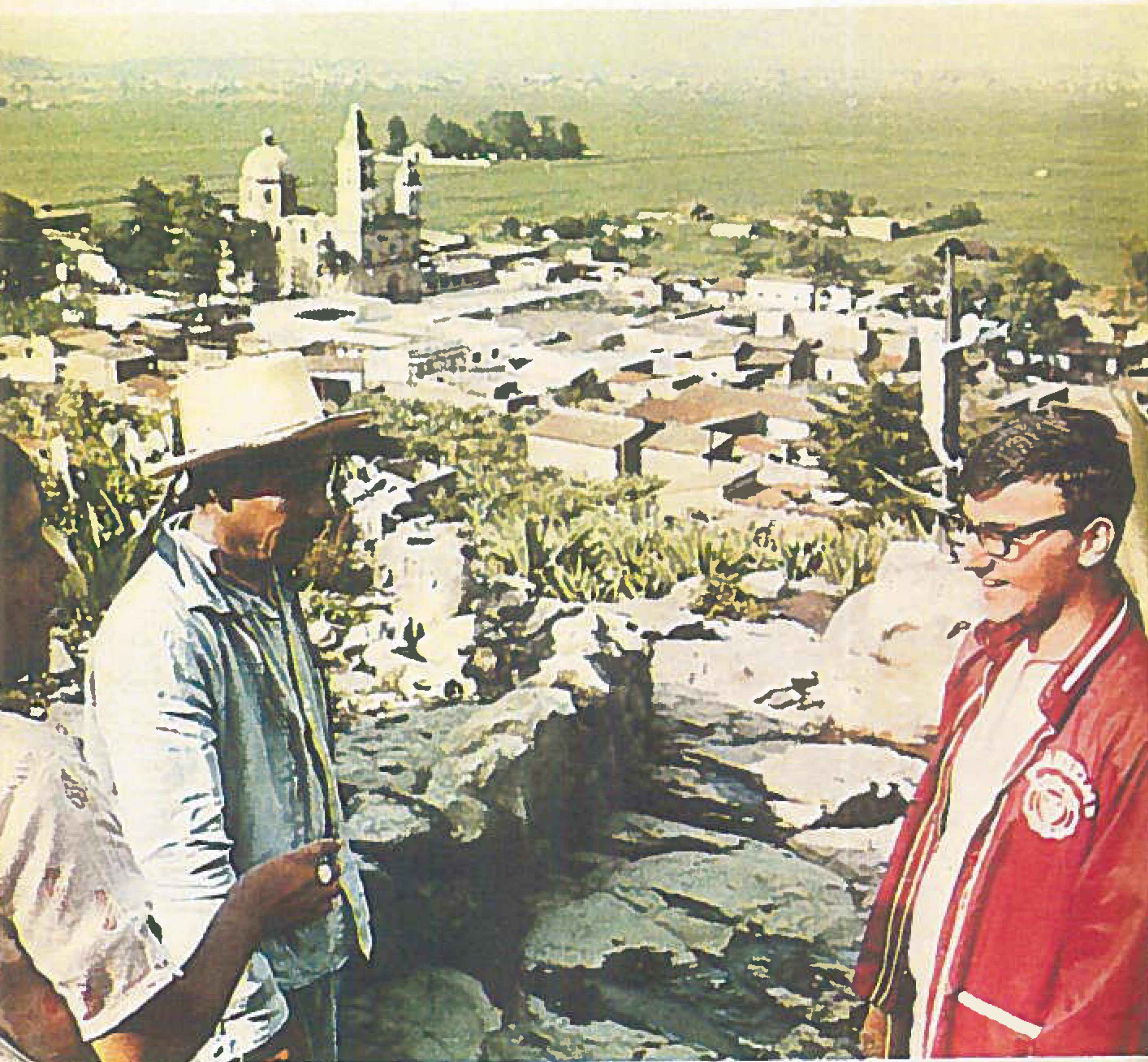
mation CIASP members help more people to benefit from their programs.

Also, CIASP groups coordinate work through the Mexican Church. The man appointed by the Mexican bishops to direct the work is Father Placido Reitmeier, O.S.B., executive secretary of the Federation of Private Schools in the four-centuries-old Archdiocese of Mexico.

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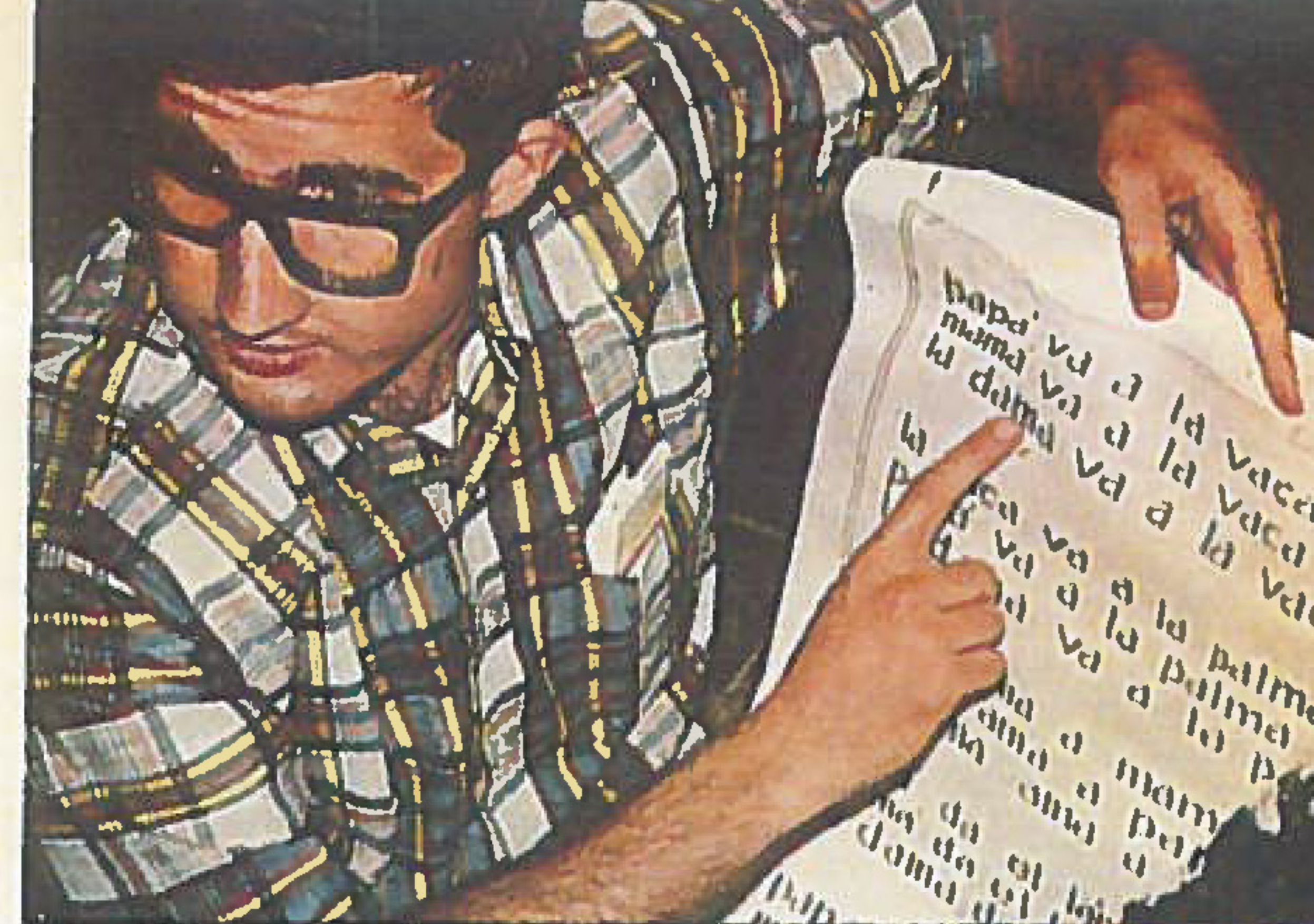




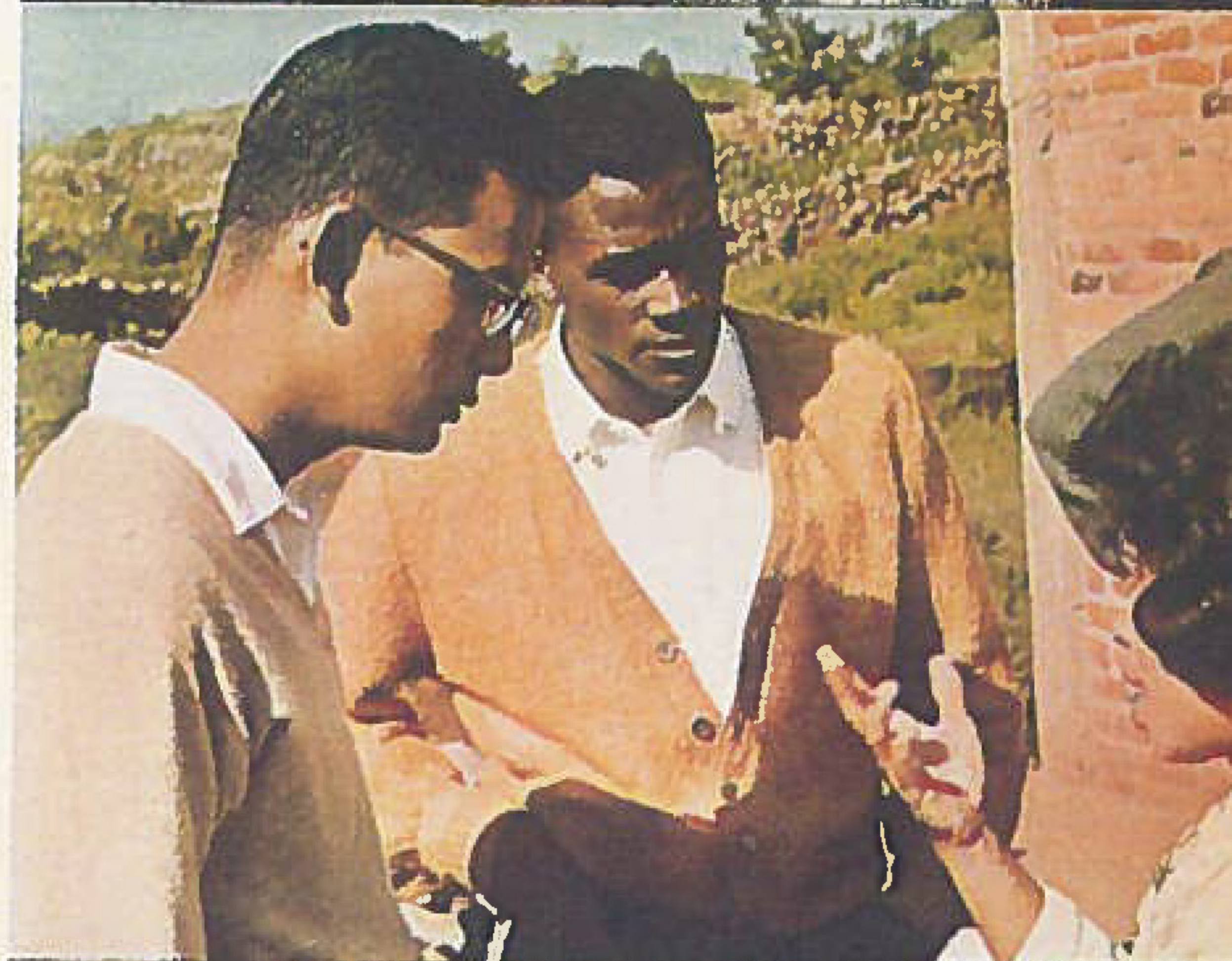
Warm, friendly smiles, the hallmark of Mexican hospitality, welcome Michael Pescatello of St. Anselm's College, New Hampshire, to Calixtlahuaco, Mexico.

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Many CIASP volunteers teach classes in reading, English, alphabetization.



George Cruz and Les Casher of Los Angeles ask about a TB test for the Zamorra citizens.



The CIASP group in Tanhuato, Morelia, has set up classes for teaching art and home economics.





The Mexican Director, Rev. Placido Reitmeier, O.S.B. (center), coordinates CIASP activities for the students, communities and the Mexican hierarchy.

Father Placido and his office are an oasis for students who need everything from insurance policies to emergency loans. "I'm completely convinced CIASP is making a positive contribution to Mexico," Father Placido said in an interview.

The students, however, feel they are receiving the major benefits. A Marquette University student, Patricia Cesario, remarked: "I have worked with the Mexican people, and I have developed a love for them, because of their gracious and loving manner of receiving and giving. I realize now that God's plan

for man is not just to live for himself, but to be a social being."

Most are able to raise money during the year through their college and friends; but on the whole, they operate on a typically limited student budget. It means sacrificing the extra dollars that a summer job would have meant.

For the United States and Canada, the editors of WORLD CAMPUS, Maryknoll, N. Y., work closely with student leaders and the Mexican office, provide for screening candidates, and publish "CIASP Newsletter" and training materials. ■■

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