



LATIN AMERICAN CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES
Latin American Leadership Development Program
June 2008 Update

Dear intercessors and partners with us in Christ's mission:

We continually give thanks to God for you, for your love, your faithful support for this ministry, and your prayers for the pastoral leaders, churches, global mission agencies and compassion ministries in Latin America. As we travel together, we are blessed to meet brothers and sisters in Christ involved in wonderful and amazing Christian ministries throughout Latin America, from Canada to Chile.

Last February, we were in Costa Rica, accompanied by two members of our Board of Directors for the session of intensive courses. We welcomed a group of 16 new doctoral candidates — a really impressive group! With over 70 doctoral students, a core faculty of 16 Latin American professors, and over 30 other adjunct professors, the LALDP is now the largest doctoral program in theology and missiology of its kind in Latin America. Praise God! Your partnership with us has been crucial.



As many of you know, Jean works full-time as the Finance Director of the Department of Information Sciences at City of Hope, a cancer-research institution in Duarte, California. Chuck works full-time as a professor at Fuller Seminary in Pasadena. In addition to our day jobs, together we donate around 50 hours per week to the LALDP. By doing this, we can ensure that 100% of your financial support is used to directly enable this ministry.

Your prayers and personal interest and support sustain us. Thank you for your generous and loving gifts for this ministry! **Please Keep praying!**

Chuck & Jean Van Engen

The unprecedented growth of Protestant churches in Latin America has created an urgent need for pastors to disciple all the new believers who have little Bible knowledge and less background in Christian living. This situation has created an even more urgent need for Bible school and seminary teachers who can help form the next generation of pastors to disciple the new believers, be involved in transforming society, and train the leaders of mission sending organizations.

In years past, missionaries from Europe and North America served as the Bible school and seminary professors. With fewer of them being sent, there is a shortage of those who will shape the next generation of pastoral leaders in Latin America. Today, over 400 Latin American mission agencies send more than 6000 cross-cultural missionaries for world evangelization. Yet many are sent into difficult cross-cultural mission situations with little or no training because there are too few leaders capable of training others.

To meet this need, the **Latin American Leadership Development Program (LALDP)** was created as a multi-national and multi-denominational community of Latin American scholars, churches, and educational institutions that can provide upper-level theological education in Spanish and Portuguese. The LALDP is directed by Latin Americans, taught by Latin Americans, and offered to Latin American churches, missions, seminaries and Bible schools. It is a 4-year program leading to an accredited Ph.D. degree in theological and missiological studies.

CONTACT:

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Facts about Latin America:

Population:

About 550 million

Countries:

Latin America is divided into 33 independent countries and 13 other political units.

Languages Spoken:

French, Spanish, Portuguese, English, Creole, and hundreds of ancient native-American languages

Ministry:

Theological Education and Leadership Formation

Location:

The entire continent

Partners:

The Evangelical University of the Americas, San José, Costa Rica; and Latin American Christian Ministries, Inc.

February 2008 in San José, Costa Rica



February is when the new doctoral candidates begin their studies and meet each other for the first time. This year's group of 16 included students from 13 different countries and 13 denominations or Christian organizations! All are seminary professors, and five are Presidents or Deans of seminaries! What a delight for us to gather with them and the second-year students in San José, Costa Rica, for the intensive face-to-face courses that they take during the first two years of their 4-year program. We enjoyed wonderful sunshine in a really beautiful country, meeting on the gorgeous campus of the Nazarene Evangelical Seminary.

LATIN AMERICA CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES TRAINS LEADERS



During our intensive courses in San José, Costa Rica, the camera caught two seminary presidents and two seminary professors together — all are students in the LALDP. (Left to right) Ruben Fernandez is the President of the Nazarene Seminary in San José, Costa Rica. Érico Xavier teaches in several Seventh Day Adventist seminaries in Brazil; Roberto Aldana teaches in the Church of God seminary in Guatemala, and Luis Silverio is the President of the South American Theological Seminary in Londrina, Brazil, the largest multi-denominational seminary in South America.

INTRODUCING AN LALDP STUDENT



Like most of our students, Roberto Aldana, from Guatemala, combines an active ministry with his studies in the Latin American Leadership Development Program (LALDP.) He serves as superintendent of the Central American region of the Church of God, a position he has held for the past eight years. In addition, he teaches in two seminaries and pastors a local congregation.

Roberto's health challenges make him unique. In 2007 he was diagnosed with an aggressive form of stomach cancer. At one point, during one of his several surgeries, he was pronounced dead and had an out-of-body experience. The Lord brought him back to life; and after chemotherapy and several surgeries, he is in remission, something Roberto sees as a healing touch from God. His wife and four adult children support his intent to begin his doctoral studies.

In a recent letter, Roberto wrote, "I am working hard to keep up with my administrative and leadership duties in the Church of God in Central America. The job demands much, but even so, I'm dedicating time every day to my studies. Please pray for me, as my health is still a challenge. But I'm determined to give my best efforts to both my ministry and my studies."

INTRODUCING A MEMBER OF OUR FACULTY

Originally from Michigan, **Dr. Paul and Barbara Bergsma** (pictured below) have been missionaries of the Christian Reformed World Missions for over thirty years, serving in Mexico and Costa Rica. In Costa Rica, Paul founded the Missiological Institute of the Americas (Instituto Misionológico de Las Américas: IMDELA) that later became part of the Evangelical University of the Americas (UNELA), with which we are associated today. Paul teaches Bible, theology and missions. He holds a Ph.D.

in Philosophy from Southwestern Baptist Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas. Paul currently is Academic Vice-President and Vice-President for University Development of UNELA, in San Jose, Costa Rica. Paul teaches our advanced course in "Mission in and from Latin America." Paul and Barbara live in San Jose, Costa Rica.

