



LATIN AMERICAN CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES (LACM)

Latin American Leadership Development Program (LALDP)

Chuck and Jean Van Engen

948 S. Bradish Ave., Glendora, CA 91740
e-mail: "cvanengen@lacmin.org"

Phone: 626-963-9399
Fax: 626-914-3038



*A higher standard.
A higher purpose.*

Volume XIII: No. 1

May-August, 2008

Dear partners in Christ's mission,

The past five months have been so eventful! We have seen the Lord's guiding hand and loving provision in answer to your prayers.

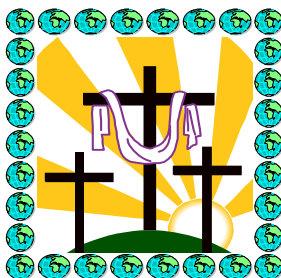
In December, Chuck went to Costa Rica to offer four evening lectures during the celebration of the 15th anniversary of the founding of the Evangelical University of the Americas (UNELA). He spoke on "Missiological Reflections on the Role of the Christian University in Latin America Today." We had a wonderful time praising God together for his grace in using Dr. Enrique Guang and others to raise up UNELA. It was great fun to present Dr. Guang with an honorary doctorate from the university.

January was filled with preparations for the February session of intensive courses of the Latin American Leadership Development Program (LALDP).

In February, Jean and Chuck 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!

During March, Chuck taught "Issues in Mission Theology" at the Overseas Ministries Study Center in New Haven, Connecticut, and also led a celebration of thanksgiving for our colleague at Fuller, Dr. Charles Kraft.

Your prayers and personal interest and support sustain us. Thank you for your generous and loving year-end gifts for our ministry! We were able to cover all expenses of the program!



"Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I call to you all day long. Bring joy to your servant, for to you, O Lord, I lift up my soul. You are forgiving and good, O Lord, abounding in love to all who call to you. Hear my prayer, O Lord, listen to my cry for mercy."

— Psalm 85:3-6 NIV

Our Schedule

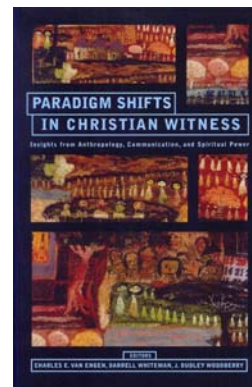
- May 1-2 — Chuck attends the Hope College Board meeting, Holland, MI.
- May 10-14 — Chuck and Jean in Miami for the Academic Council meeting.
- May 16-17 — Chuck & Jean with Home Builders, Crystal Cathedral Church.
- May 19-23 — Chuck teaches at Western Seminary, Holland, MI.
- May 26 — Memorial Day
- June 5-10 — Chuck attends RCA General Synod.
- June 10-12 — Chuck & Jean in Holland, MI for the RCA Furloughing Missionaries Conference.
- June 19-22 — Chuck at American Society of Missiology in Chicago.
- June 23-27 — Chuck teaches Biblical Foundations course at Fuller.
- July 16-21 — Chuck, Jean with all three children and spouses gather in Seattle.
- Aug. 1-16 — Session of LALDP courses in Paraguay: Jean goes July 31–August 9, Chuck for the entire time.
- Aug 18-22 — Chuck teaches Church Revitalization and Growth at the South American Theological Seminary in Londrina, Brazil.
- August 25-28 — Chuck speaks at the SEPAL national missionary conference in Florianopolis, Brazil.



Chuck and Jean Van Engen in San José, Costa Rica

PRAISE GOD FOR PUBLICATIONS.

Chuck served as chief editor for *Paradigm Shifts in Christian Witness: Insights from Anthropology, Communication and Spiritual Power*, in honor of his Fuller Seminary colleague, Charles Kraft (Orbis, 2008). What a joy it was to celebrate a dinner in Dr. Kraft's honor this past March and present him with a copy of the book of 15 chapters written by leading experts in the field. The next day we held a well-attended consultation on "The Role of the Social Sciences in Mission Studies Today."



"Lord, you have always given bread for the coming day; and though I am poor, today I believe. Lord, you have always given strength for the coming day; and though I am weak, today I believe. Lord, you have always given peace for the coming day; and though of anxious heart, today I believe....Lord, you have always marked the road for the coming day; and though it may be hidden, today I believe....Lord, you have always spoken when time is ripe; and though you be silent now, today I believe."

— Celtic Daily Prayer



INTRODUCING THOSE WHO HELP ADMINISTRATE AND TEACH IN THE DOCTORAL PROGRAM

For the past six years, **Raquel Guang** has helped us in Costa Rica as our half-time administrative assistant. A physical therapist by training, Raquel early-on caught the vision of the LALDP and enthusiastically offered herself to help in the process of creating the program. She has devoted hundreds of hours to prepare thousands of pages of material that was presented to a host of government offices in order to successfully achieve our accreditation with the government of Costa Rica (in May, 2007). During that time, she gave birth to her lovely daughter, Ariana. Raquel's husband, Gustavo, is an elementary school teacher. Over the years, he has been heavily involved in the national youth ministries of the Church of the Nazarene in Costa Rica. During the past three years, he has donated his time as Director of a preschool — now with over 80 children and several staff persons — an evangelistically-oriented community-service ministry of Raquel and Gustavo's small Nazarene congregation in San Jose.

Raquel processes all new applications for the doctoral program, keeps the Costa Rica-based records of the academic progress of the doctoral students, and helps coordinate between our doctoral program and the university. She is a wonderful, caring, efficient, and fun-loving sister, loved by all the faculty and doctoral students of the LALDP. Please keep Raquel and her family in your prayers.



Raquel and her daughter, Ariana



Raquel and her husband, Gustavo



The Academic Council

(Left to right), back row: Antonio Carlos Barro (Brazil), Norberto Saracco (Argentina), Rubén Tito Paredes(Peru), Pablo Deiros (Argentina); Middle row: Jorge Maldonado(Spain), Peter Larson (Mexico and USA), Hal Thomas (Bolivia), Enrique Guang (Costa Rica), Mariano Ávila (Mexico and USA); Front row: Nancy Thomas (Bolivia and USA), Sonia Abarca (Costa Rica), Georgia Grimes-Shaw (USA), Priscila Barro (Brazil), Jean Van Engen (USA), Raquel Guang (Costa Rica), Chuck Van Engen (Mexico and USA)

Pray for the Academic Council. The Latin American scholars pictured above have helped us design, create, and now administer the LALDP. Together, they represent over 350 years of experience in Theological Education. Seven of them have been or are presently serving as presidents of seminaries. Two are founders of universities. Jean and I are so blessed to have them as our partners, advisors, colleagues, and friends. Their commitment to the LALDP has been truly remarkable. And their wisdom and vision has been the key to creating the LALDP. Although we live in different parts of the continent, we meet every May in Miami and every November in Pasadena. We have been meeting twice a year for the past 7 years! Please pray for each of these servants of God as we gather again in Miami in May.

Originally from Michigan, **Dr. Paul and Barbara Bergsma** 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.



"The Israelites...celebrated...for seven days with great rejoicing, while the Levites and priests sang to the Lord every day, accompanied by the Lord's instruments of praise. Hezekiah spoke encouragingly to all the Levites...For seven days they...offered fellowship offerings and praised the Lord, the God of their fathers.... The entire assembly of Judah rejoiced,...including the aliens who had come from Israel....There was great joy in Jerusalem....The priests and the Levites stood to bless the people, and God heard them, for their prayer reached heaven, his holy dwelling place."
— II Chron. 30: 21-27 NIV



INTRODUCING THOSE WHO STUDY IN THE DOCTORAL PROGRAM

Amós Cahuich



Amos Cahuich grew up in southern Mexico speaking the Mayan language of his parents. As a child he witnessed the persecution and suffering of evangelical leaders and decided

never to become a pastor. But God had other plans for Amos. He is now pastoring his third church, one that he helped plant. He also serves as president of the San Pablo Presbyterian Seminary in Merida, Yucatan, Mexico. He chose to study in PRODOLA because of a strong burden he feels to adequately train Mexican pastors.

Amos' wife Miriam is a social worker in health care. The couple have three children. Amos and Miriam request prayer for their 17 year old daughter Hasadi Hael ("Mercy of God") who is deaf. Hasadi finishes high school in two years and desires to go to college to study art. Pray for the Cahuich family, and for Amos to be motivated in his studies and effective in his ministry.

Roberto Aldana

Like most of our students, Roberto Aldana, from Guatemala, combines an active ministry with his studies in PRODOLA. 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."

February, 2008 Classes 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 sixteen includes 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 and 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 four-year program. We enjoyed wonderful sunshine in a really beautiful country, meeting on the gorgeous campus of the Evangelical Nazarene Seminary.

The PRODOLA students and faculty in San José, Costa Rica, Feb., 2008.

As we wrote this Prayer Newsletter we received the following prayer request from Jorge Lolín, pastor of a large Christian and Missionary Alliance (C&MA) church in Quito, Ecuador, and a professor in the C&MA seminary there. This communication will give you, our prayer partners, a feeling for the kinds of responsibilities, opportunities, and pressures that our doctoral students experience every day in Latin America.

"During these days in Ecuador a new Constitution is being prepared...As Protestant Evangelicals, we have come together to present our proposals to the nation and to (the)...congress... Among our proposals are: 1.That the name of God should remain in the Constitution; 2.That the state assure and guarantee the value of human life from conception to death; 3. That the state recognize and protect the family and marriage,... and promote healthy, viable families; 4.That the state recognize interculturality and the multi-ethnicity of our peoples...

God is moving among the Protestant Evangelicals in Ecuador....God placed it in my heart to write several newspaper articles concerning these themes to present a Protestant Evangelical perspective and to support our Christian national leaders at the forefront of this challenge...The President of Ecuador, has invited leaders of the Protestant Evangelical churches to a breakfast (to talk about these issues).... So I ask for your prayers: we are living a crucial moment in the life of Ecuador." (trans. by cve)





SPOTLIGHT ON LATIN AMERICA:

Costa Rica (kos'tu rē'ku) [key], officially Republic of Costa Rica, (2005 est. pop. 4,016,000), 19,575 sq mi (50,700 sq km) (is part of) Central America. It is bounded on the north by Nicaragua, on the east by the Caribbean Sea, on the southeast by Panama, and on the south and west by the Pacific Ocean. The capital and largest city is **San José**. Costa Rica became independent from Spain in 1821. The coastal plains are low, hot, and heavily forested. Bananas, cocoa, and sugarcane are cultivated there. In the northwest is the Nicoya peninsula, a semiarid plain where cattle and grain are raised. A massive (mountain range), with peaks over 12,000 ft (3,658 m) high, cuts the country from northwest to southeast. Within it, under the shadow of volcanoes such as

Irazú, lies the Central Valley, with a perennially spring-like climate. This valley is the heart of the country, where coffee is cultivated and most of the population and market facilities are located. One of the most stable countries in Latin America, Costa Rica has a long democratic tradition and no regular military forces. The population is largely of Spanish and mestizo descent. The official language is Spanish; English is also spoken. About 75% of the people are Roman Catholics; there is a large Protestant minority. — Source:www.infoplease.com/ce6/world/A0860325.html

Praise God for encouraging recommendations!

During the past several months we have been in the process of applying for associate membership in the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) in the U.S. For a number of reasons, we see this as an important step in the academic development and recognition of our doctoral program, known in Latin America as PRODOLA (Programa Doctoral Latinoamericano). In order to apply for membership in ATS, we needed recommendations from the Presidents of other ATS-accredited schools. We praise God for the encouraging words from the following seminaries.

"I have been able to follow the remarkable progress of the program...PRODOLA has developed a unique but viable doctoral training program. Dr. Van Engen and his colleagues have delivered on their promise to develop an authentic graduate program which is both accessible and viable." (Western Theological Seminary, Holland, Michigan)

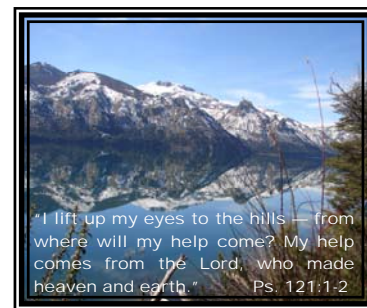
"I am pleased to recommend the Latin American Doctoral Program...for Associate membership with ATS. This recommendation is based on the acquaintance of our institutional leadership with the program and its faculty, as well as with its ethos. Their participation in the (ATS) will not only reflect well upon their program, but should strengthen us as an association." (Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Chicaco)

I have been able to follow closely the development of this important program....This innovative program grew out of (a) deep desire to provide solid academically-trained leadership for the churches in Latin America, and (the leaders have) developed creative strategies for mobilizing key educational leaders in Latin America for doctoral-level education in the theological disciplines. The result has been a network of widespread support for the cause among Latin American churches and Christian organizations....Not only will this affiliation be beneficial for (PRODOLA), it has the real potential of bringing much-needed new sensitivities and insights into our own efforts in the ATS to serve more effectively in the increasingly pluralistic cultural contexts of our member schools in North America." (Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, CA)



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 Jose, 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.

"Facing adversity, oppression, and challenges of all kinds, the church avails itself of the unending power that prayer provides. (For example), under the tyranny of Herod Agrippa I...the Christians found themselves under great pressure....(One) prominent victim of this persecution was Peter. But God had other plans for the apostle. While (Peter) calmly awaited his sentence, 'the church was earnestly praying to God for him' (Acts 12:5). Those Christians did not know what was happening with Peter, but they did believe that, as one of them would later say, 'the prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective' (James 5:16). On the other hand, while they prayed during what according to Herod's intentions would be Peter's last night, without their knowing, their prayers were being answered." — Pablo Deiros, *La oración de poder*; Buenos Aires: Certeza, 2007, 48-49; trans. by cve.



"I lift up my eyes to the hills — from where will my help come? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth." Ps. 121:1-2

Photo by C. Van Engen, Patagonia, Argentina