



# 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.*

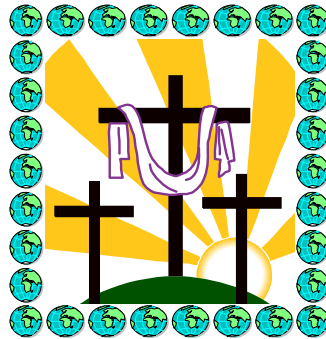
Volume XII: No. 2

Sep.-Nov, 2007

## Dear partners in Christ's mission,

So much has happened since our last Prayer Newsletter! This issue is full of information about *NEW* things!

**NEW ACCREDITATION!** In May we received word that final approvals were given by the Costa Rican government for academic accreditation of our doctoral program—considered a miracle in Costa Rica! (See page 2.)



"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; (the one) who seeks finds; and to (the one) who knocks, the door will be opened."

— Matt. 7:7-8 NIV

**NEW KNEE!** Thank you for your prayers for Chuck's knee-replacement surgery on May 30. It was a complete success! Chuck now has 2 artificial knees! During his recuperation in June and early July he exercised several hours every day! He managed to edit 2 books on his laptop, sitting in the big easy chair in our living room! Jean took off work for a week, and all three of our children and two of their spouses came to visit us and help out in May and June! Praise God for modern medicine and family!

**NEW LEARNING!** The last week of July, we traveled with Rob Johnston, his wife Cathy Barsotti, our daughter Anita and husband John Bateman, to Lima, Peru. We took a plane to Cuzco, then a train and a bus to Machu Picchu. Constructed of rock, it was one of the cities of the Inca Empire dating back 600 years. It perches 8,000 feet above sea-level. We learned about the Inca Empire, one of the most impressive civilizations on the American continent. Machu Picchu rivals the pyramids of Egypt and Tenochtitlan, the

Visiting Machu Picchu.



great city of the Aztecs in Mexico City.

## NEW EARTHQUAKE!

Chuck experienced the 8.1 earthquake in Lima, Peru, on August 15. It was a fear-producing experience! Pray for Peru, for the homeless people, and for the relief agencies involved in assisting!

## Our Schedule

- Sept. 16: Chuck preaches at First Reformed, Grandville, MI.
- Sept. 20-23: Chuck preaches at Immanuel Reformed, London, Ontario, Canada.
- Sept. 24: Fuller Seminary classes begin.
- Sept. 28-30: Jean's sister Doris, husband Bruce, our daughter Amy and husband Mike visit us in Glendora.
- Oct. 4-5: Chuck attends the Hope College Board of Trustees in Michigan.
- Oct. 8-12: Chuck teaches a Fuller intensive class to Korean missionaries.
- Oct. 14: LACM Board of Trustees meets in Monterey, CA.
- Oct. 21: Chuck preaches at the Church of the Nazarene in Glendora, CA.
- Nov. 2-3: Chuck and Jean celebrate the 50th wedding anniversary of Jean's sister, Lois and Peter DeZeeuw in Michigan.
- Nov. 4: Chuck preaches at Rehoboth Reformed, Lucas, MI.
- Nov. 7-8: Fuller Missiology Lectures: Christian conversation with Muslims.
- Nov. 12-14: Academic Council of the LALDP meets in Pasadena.
- Nov. 18: Chuck preaches at First Reformed, Sioux Center and First Reformed, Maurice, IA.
- Nov. 22: THANKSGIVING!

**"(Oh God), You called and cried out loud and shattered my deafness. You were radiant and resplendent, you put to flight my blindness. You were fragrant, and I drew in my breath and now pant after you. I tasted You, and I feel but hunger and thirst for You. You touched me, and I am set on fire to attain the peace which is Yours."**

— St. Augustine, *Confessions*, quoted in Timothy Jones, *Prayer's Apprentice*, Nashville: Word, 2000, 19.



**Dr. Rob Johnston and Cathy Barsotti teaching in the class on Hermeneutics.**

**CRISIS TURNED TO OPPORTUNITY**

On Saturday, August 4, two days before the two week intensive doctoral seminar in Lima, Peru, we learned that Dr. Mariano Avila’s wife, Rosy, had become seriously ill and was hospitalized in Michigan. Mariano would not be coming to teach his Hermeneutics course. After the initial shock, we prayed for Mariano and Rosy and began to brainstorm. Although his role as dean of the program gave him plenty to do, Chuck had no teaching assignment during that first week. His experience in the course material led us to decide that he would lead the class, with others helping.

Invited lecturers included Drs. Tito Paredes, Robert Johnston and Cathy Barsotti (LACM Board members), and Hal and Nancy Thomas. A highlight of the class was a lecture by Mr. Tomás

Gutierrez, a leading Evangelical member of the Congress of Peru. Invited to give an hour lecture on the role of Protestant Christians in Peru, he stayed for 3 hours of lively interaction with our students. On the last day, Mariano was able to give an hour-long lecture live via the internet. We live in amazing times!

The class turned out to be a very positive experience for all involved. Student evaluations for the class were high. We attribute this to God’s grace, the prayers of many, the unexpected presence of a wonderful team of experienced professors, and Dr. Avila’s excellent course planning.

**COSTA RICA OFFICIALLY RECOGNIZES PRODOLA**

On May 23, 2007, the Ministry of Public Education of Costa Rica gave its final approval to the degrees that the LALDP (known in Latin America as PRODOLA—**PRO**grama **DO**ctoral **LA**tinamericano) offers through the Evangelical University of the Americas located in San José, Costa Rica. This means that the PRODOLA program is now academically accredited and legally recognized in Costa Rica. Our Ph.D. program is currently the only multi-site Protestant Ph.D. program in Theology and Missiology recognized by a Latin American government. It is hard to adequately express our appreciation to Dr. Enrique Guang and to his daughter and assistant, Raquel Guang, for the time, energy, and meticulous work they have invested for more than six years to bring this about. Once again we see the grace of God, coupled with the faithfulness of his people, in bringing into being this miracle we call PRODOLA.



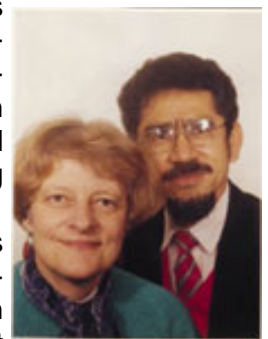
**Dr. Enrique Guang, President of UNELA and Cr. Chuck Van Engen, Dean of PRODOLA: a wonderful partnership.**

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”  
 – Col. 3:16-17 NIV

**INTRODUCING ONE OF OUR FACULTY**

**Dr. Humberto Fernando Bullón**, born in Lima, Peru, was converted while studying industrial engineering. Upon graduation, he was invited to work with Peruvian Intervarsity, an evangelical student organization. During that time, he went to an earthquake-torn area where he established a community-based development program that also served as an in-service training center for Christian students.

After eight years with Intervarsity, Humberto received master’s degrees in agrarian economy and educational administration. For several years he pastored a Nazarene church in Lima and lectured at a local university. After a brief visit to Great Britain, where he began his Ph.D. in Development Studies at Manchester University, the family moved to Cajamarca, an Andean city where Fernando led a regional development project with outreach to thirty rural communities. Currently Dr. Bullón is Professor and Dean in the Evangelical University of the Americas in Costa Rica and teaches Theology of Development in PRODOLA.





**“Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!...Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.” — Philippians 4:4,6**



**ELIZABETH PRIMO BERBEL:  
 AN ANSWER TO PRAYER**

One of the outstanding characteristics of PRODOLA is the caring relationships that have developed among students and faculty. In April we were all shocked by the news that one of our Brazilian students, Elizabeth Primo, had been struck by a car while bicycling home and was in the hospital in a coma. Within hours, all the churches in Beth's hometown of Marilia had mobilized for prayer. All over Latin America, the PRODOLA students, professors and staff and their related churches and organizations joined in the efforts to intercede for Beth's restoration. In the following weeks pneumonia and infection added to the trauma and the doctors had no hope of her recovery. However, the prayers continued and Beth regained full consciousness in May, weeks after the accident.

When she finally began to stabilize, the medical staff openly called it a miracle. Recovery came quickly and Beth was well enough to attend classes in Lima, Peru in August, a miracle in itself. When we saw her in Lima, we all joined in praise to God.

**Pray for our students!**

**A Personal Testimony About PRODOLA**

During the first two years of the doctoral program, students gather with professors in February and August for intensive seminars. After the two-weeks of seminars, the students evaluate the experience.

Jorge Lolín began his studies with PRODOLA this past February. He is pastor of the New Jerusalem Christian and Missionary Alliance Church in Quito, Ecuador. He has served as the Dean and is presently a professor in the Biblical Alliance Seminary.

Concerning his time in Londrina, Brazil, last February, Jorge wrote, *“Concentrating two weeks together as a sort of retreat rather than just a dose of pure academics makes PRODOLA special. The focus on a practical spirituality draws us back to our priorities and encourages us to take advantage of this opportunity to be with God. These two weeks became a kind of spiritual retreat. It's important that the professors are available and focused on us, not only during classes, but in the free times in the hotel, during the snack breaks, and at meals. This increases our confidence in the professors and stimulates us to develop further our own research and study programs.”*



**A VIBRANT CHURCH IN LIMA, PERU**



Roger Vergara Vargas completed his first year of studies in PRODOLA in August. He pastors the Puerto Libre Christian Missionary Alliance (C & MA) Church in Lima, Peru. During the past 7 years as senior pastor, Roger has turned a traditional, declining conflictive church into a cell-based, growing church of over 2500 members with 9 pastors and numerous ministries in Lima. Seeing the need for discipleship literature for new church members, Roger and his wife,

Patricia founded “Ediciones Verbo Vivo” (Living Word Publishers) and have published 16 titles.

In July of 2006 and again in 2007, Roger's church was selected to host an evangelical *nationally-televised* prayer and worship gathering of the President of Peru and his cabinet.

This church also conducts a Sunday free consulting medical clinic staffed by medical doctors and nurses from the church, featuring a different major medical issue each Sunday. Roger and Patricia are professors of the Biblical Alliance Seminary of Lima. On August 12 Chuck had the opportunity to preach in Roger's church, a wonderfully uplifting experience!





**SPOTLIGHT ON LATIN AMERICA:**

**Peru** (2005 est. population: 27,926,000, 496,220 sq mi.) is located in Western South America. It borders on the Pacific Ocean in the west, Ecuador and Colombia in the north, Brazil and Bolivia in the east, and Chile in the south. Lima (est. pop. 9 million) is the capital and largest city. When the Spanish landed in 1531, Peru's territory was the nucleus of the highly developed Inca civilization. Centered at Cuzco, the Incan Empire extended over a vast region from northern Ecuador to central Chile. In search of Inca wealth, the Spanish conqueror Francisco Pizarro... (arrived) after the Incas had fought a debilitating civil war, (and) conquered the weakened people. The Spanish captured the Incan capital at Cuzco by 1533, and consolidated their control by 1542. Gold and silver from the Andes enriched the conquerors, and Peru became the principal source of Spanish wealth and power in South America. Peru, (varies) greatly in climate and topography, (including) three main geographical regions: a narrow strip of desert along the coast, a region of high mountains in the center, and a large area of forested mountains and lowlands in the east...The coastal and mountainous re-

gions...are frequently shaken by severe earthquakes.

— Source: [www.infoplease.com/ce6/world/A0860325.html](http://www.infoplease.com/ce6/world/A0860325.html)



The PRODOLA students and faculty in Lima, Peru, August, 2007.

**Our Financial Principles**

We have intentionally not mentioned finances in our previous Prayer Newsletters. But recently, several people have asked us how we finance the program. Our first answer is, "By the grace of God and your loving and visionary generosity." Let me share with you some of our financial principles.

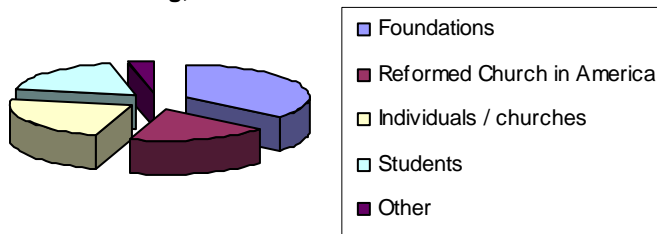
1.) Vision comes first, finances follow. LACM began as a non-profit corporation with few resources. After much prayer, we agreed on this principle, "Cast the vision, follow the Holy Spirit's leading, and trust the Lord for the financial support." We have operated that way and the Lord has provided in wonderful ways!

2.) The financial burden is shared by many. As you can see from the "Income" pie-chart, many constituents are involved in supporting our program, including foundations, the Reformed Church in America, individuals and churches, and the students themselves. In addition to Chuck and Jean, many other people donate their time, including board members, Academic Council members, and our webmasters.

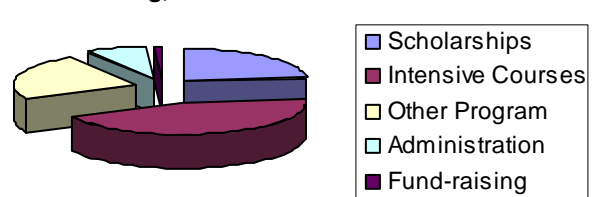
3.) Most financial resources are focused on running the program. Having no buildings to maintain and no resident faculty to support is a great assistance to us. We pay our faculty per course and utilize facilities available to us in each country. As needed, we provide scholarships that cover approximately 45% of the student's total costs..

4.) We look at both short-term and long-term approaches to funding. The LALDP is a continuing, permanent institution. We are responsible to the government of Costa Rica to graduate those who study in the program—and it will take each of them from 4 to 6 years to complete their studies. We have begun an endowment fund to provide long-term funding for the program and would be happy to give you more information about that, if you are interested. We also invite help to provide scholarship assistance. When people donate money for scholarships it helps us to help the students — and together we share the joy of supporting the program.

**Income Jan-Aug, 2007**



**Expenses Jan-Aug, 2007**



**"You touched me, and I am set on fire to attain the peace which is yours. God, I believe, generally brushes up against us lightly. God intersects our lives through events that remind us of his care, through friends who mediate his presence, through a sense of quiet nearness that may steal upon us as we sit on our porch or enter the hush of an old church. I feel great longing for him, sometimes, for the One who subtly draws near. And the barest touch keeps alive and awake the longing."**

— Timothy Jones, *Prayer's Apprentice: A Year with the Great Spiritual Mentors*. Nashville: Word, 2000, 24.