



RCA Missionary Update

Latin American Doctoral Program in Theology (LADPT)
Chuck and 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 Doctoral Program in Theology (LADPT) 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 LADPT 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.

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.



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

May, 2010

Every day Jean and I praise God for you — for your loving interest, continuing faithfulness, constant prayers and generous support! Your gifts during the past five months have sustained this ministry and deeply encouraged us.

The LADPT exists to broaden, deepen, and strengthen the personal, spiritual, pastoral, missionary and academic formation of key leaders in Latin America. They are the reason we exist. These leaders want you to know how grateful they are for your prayers and for your support that makes it possible for them to study in the LADPT

Your prayers were answered! The intensive class session in early February in Costa Rica was really wonderful! On page 2 of this letter we will introduce you to the truly outstanding leaders who began their studies in February. You partner with us so that together we can invest in their lives. Please pray for each of them by name.

Thank you once again for your wonderful and loving support. The Lord bless you for your faithfulness. **Please keep praying!**



Chuck & Jean at the door to the apartment where they stay when in Costa Rica

Meet the LADPT Students who began in February, 2010

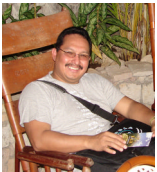


Maximo Alvares, director of Evangelism in Depth for all of Spain, administers programs of evangelism and church planting, working with local congregations to develop missionary strategies. He planted and pastors a Baptist church in Seville. Maximo and his wife Joana have two children.



Juan Castillo, a Peruvian, serves with his wife **Eva Morales de Castillo**, also a LADPT student from Bolivia, in a Christian organization called "Paz y Esperanza" (Peace and Hope) in Bolivia. Juan and Eva met through their involvement in the Latin American university movement related to Intervarsity Christian Fellowship. Paz y Esperanza focuses on integral mission and community development in contexts of violence, and seeks to help local churches face problems in their own barrios, through education and projects. Juan wants to research the models of mission that formed the evangelical church in Latin America, with projection for the future mission of the church. Eva wants to explore

how contemporary biblical interpretations of gender affect the identities of men and women in the evangelical church. She will consider how gender roles are passed on and their effects on leadership, power and violence.



Rubén Esponda, from Chiapas, Mexico, currently lives in California where he pastors a Methodist congregation in Santa Ana and teaches theology in a seminary in Claremont. His research project is to write the history of the Presbyterian Church in Chiapas, the church of his own Christian formation. Rubén and his wife Aremi have three sons between age 6 and 16.



Felipe Esteban teaches theology at the Peruvian Union University in Lima, an institution of the Peruvian Seventh-Day Adventist Church. He is married to Lidia, and the couple has two children. Felipe wants to focus his research on the growth of the church among Lima's youth.



Oscar Franco pastors the Church of the Nazarene in the town of San Bartola, El Salvador. He has taught sociology in the University of El Salvador for many years. Currently he is an adjunct professor of theology in the Nazarene seminaries of Guatemala and Costa Rica. Oscar and his wife Rosalba have two teenage children.



Oscar Jo pastors a Presbyterian church in Lima, Peru, and teaches theology in the Evangelical Seminary of the Andes in Ayacucho. He and his wife Majelis have two teenage children. For his doctoral research Oscar wants to study the integration of Bible, mission and ecology, exploring the history of the Peruvian church in its response to environmental problems.



José Bernardo Luacute serves as pastor of an evangelical church in Lubango, Angola, Africa. He also teaches theology in the Higher Institute of Evangelical Theology in the same city. He has been active in ministry among university students, serving as national director for several years. He wants to research urban mission, exploring models of healthy church growth in a context where growth appears superficial. José and his wife Adelaide have two daughters.

Please pray with us for the following:

- Pray for the LADPT students. Many of them are now in their 3rd and 4th years of research and dissertation-writing. Almost all of them pastor a church, teach in one or more Bible schools or seminaries, head up a compassion ministry, and devote 20 hours per week to their studies.
- Pray for the 1st and 2nd year students who are completing their course work this May and will begin to read for the next courses they will take in August.
- Pray for the professors as we prepare the courses we will teach this coming August.
- Pray with us that our loving God will continue to provide for the needs of all those involved in this program!

The Church has not yet touched the fringe of the possibilities of intercessory prayer. Her largest victories will be witnessed when individual Christians everywhere come to recognize their priesthood unto God and day by day give themselves unto prayer. -- John R. Mott (taken from <http://www.tentmaker.org/Quotes/prayerquotes.htm>)