



# **LATIN AMERICAN CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES (LACM)**

***Latin American Doctoral Program in Theology (LADPT)***

**Forming gifted leaders for  
greater service — Eph. 4:12**

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## **Dear co-laborers in Christ's mission,**

It is always a joy for me to write to you and report on what the Holy Spirit is doing through your generous personal, prayer and financial support of this ministry. You have partnered with us in ministry for many years!

It may be good to remember why we do what we do. In 1999 Jean and I were talking with some church and mission leaders in Latin America. They were sharing their concern about the future of Protestant churches there. Since the 1980s Protestant churches had been growing very fast, inundated with many new believers who have little or no knowledge about Jesus, the Bible, prayer, or basic spiritual life. That growth in new members produced a major shortage of pastors to disciple all the new believers. The shortage of pastors highlighted an even more severe shortage of professors, writers, and thinkers who can help form the new generation of pastors to disciple the new believers. In 2000 we counted around 80 Protestant scholars in Latin America with Ph.D.'s in theology. Many of them were over 70 years old at that time. There are around 7000 Protestant Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking Bible schools and seminaries in Latin America.

The previous way to form scholars was for a leader from Latin America to go to Europe, the USA, or Canada, and spend 6 or 7 years there doing doctoral studies in theology. After that time, the family would have acculturated to the new context and not be interested in returning to their original country. If they did return, the scholar would find that someone else had taken that leader's place in pastoring the church and teaching in the seminary.

So, Jean and I, along with a number of Latin American leaders, formed the Latin American Doctoral Program in Theology. The idea was that leaders could remain where they were in Latin America, in their churches and seminaries and do their doctoral studies while in ministry. We take the professors and study program to them. Recent advances in computer software like ZOOM are a wonderful blessing!

We praise God that this program has worked far beyond anything we could have imagined. In a few months we will have 40 graduates who will replace half of the scholars we counted in 2000. Forty new scholars may not seem like much, but this is the top of the leadership pyramid. Think of 40 scholars ministering for the next 15 years, teaching at least 50 pastors each year who in turn disciple at least 200 members each year.  $40 \times 15 \times 50 \times 200 = 6,000,000$  lives impacted by this program!

We praise God for the dedication of our supporters, faculty, students, local churches, and seminaries throughout Latin America that have participated in this program. Please accept our deep gratitude for your partnership with us. We are humbled by your love.

## **THANK YOU FOR YOUR PRAYERS.**

April 1 — Send Spanish translation of *Called to Serve: Essays on RCA Global Mission* to the RCA Historical Series.

April 12 — Dissertation defense of Samuel Bastos.

April 29-May 3 — LACM Board of Directors meet in Holland, MI.

April 30 — Chuck will send a small book, *Set Them Apart: Forming Missional Church Leaders in Ministry*, to the publisher.

May 16-18 — Chuck tapes lectures on global mission for the National Presbyterian Church of Mexico (NPCoFM).

June 16-18 — Broadcasting of Chuck's lectures for NPCoFM.

July 18-21 — Meeting of the General Assembly of the NPCoFM in Villahermosa, Tabasco.



*"Hezekiah...spread (the letter) before the Lord. And Hezekiah prayed, 'O Lord...you alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth, you have made heaven and earth. Incline your ear, O Lord, and hear....O Lord our God, save us, I pray...so that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you, O Lord, are God alone.'"* — II Kings 19:14-19 NRSV



Our son, Andrew, Andrea, and five children who keep growing! What fun to be grandparents!

In the 1980s, when Jean and I were in Chiapas, Pedro Robledo (shown at right) was a student in our Bible School in Chiapas. He then went to the Presbyterian Seminary in Mexico City for additional theological studies. He served as the President of the John Kempers Theological Seminary in Chiapas. A few years later, he did a Master's in Theology in Costa Rica. He has now graduated with a Ph.D. in Theology in our program. What a delight for Chuck to work with



him and another Presbyterian pastor from Chiapas to offer a series of lectures on global mission outreach and church planting, via ZOOM for the National Presbyterian Church of Mexico (NPCoFM) as they celebrate 150 years of Presbyterianism in Mexico and 75 years since their General Assembly was established. The NPCoFM now numbers over 2 million members and the church in Chiapas numbers around 300,000 members in 17 presbyteries. We are coming full-circle. We will need their help to re-evangelize North America.

**"Prayer lays hold of God's plan and becomes the link between his will and its accomplishment on earth. Amazing things happen, and we are given the privilege of being the channels of the Holy Spirit's prayer." — Elisabeth Elliot (<https://thelife.com/great-quotes-on-prayer>)**



*"O sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things....The Lord...has revealed his vindication in the sight of the nations. He has remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness to the house of Israel. All the ends of the earth have seen the victory of our God. Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth; break forth into joyous song and sing praises. Sing praises to the Lord....With trumpets and the sound of the horn make a joyful noise before the King, the Lord....He will judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with equity."*  
— Ps. 98:1,3-6,9 NRSV



**Please pray for Roger Marquez.** Roger (left in the photo) is a pastor, healer, and spiritual leader in the Shipibo-Conibo community, an ancient pre-Columbian (before Columbus) people group living in Peru at the headwaters of the Amazon. The Shipibo people resisted both the Inca and the Spanish armies. Their Shipibo language is one of the official languages of Peru. For years, Roger has practiced traditional medicine (the use of healing herbs and natural substances) among the Shipibo. But no leader among them has ever had the chance to think biblically and theologically about their traditional medicine. Covid 19 has caused tremendous suffering among the Shipibo-Conibo. Roger and his wife both contracted COVID. Here Roger works with our Dean, Dr. Tito Paredes, going over his research design. He is researching a biblical and theological approach to traditional medicine among his people. Dr. Tito Paredes founded and leads a missional leadership formation program in Lima, Peru. He has a Ph.D. in Cultural Anthropology from UCLA and a Master's in Missiology from Fuller Seminary. Pray that soon Roger will be able to complete the writing and defense of his dissertation.

*During this time of social distancing, we are all making more internet purchases. Jean and I use **AmazonSmile** because it donates a percentage of each purchase to registered nonprofit organizations. Latin American Christian Ministries receives donations from purchases in AmazonSmile when it is the designated nonprofit. Please consider using this as a way of supporting us. Go to [AmazonSmile.org](https://www.amazon.com/amazonsmile) to designate "Latin American Christian Ministries, Inc." for donations. Purchase options are the same as in Amazon.*

**PRAY FOR Dr. Jorge Lolín:** Jean and I are celebrating because on February 18, we had another dissertation defense, marking the final steps in the doctoral studies process. Rev. Jorge Lolín (bottom left in photo below) is a Christian & Missionary Alliance pastor, seminary professor and denominational leader in Quito, Ecuador. He researched what a contemporary, effective pastoral leadership training program should look like in the present situation in Ecuador. He defended his thesis before the committee pictured. I served as his mentor

(top middle). Dr. Tito Paredes, our Dean (top right), presided over the defense. Dr. Enrique Brenes (top left) is one of our graduates, a pastor and seminary professor in Costa Rica. Dr. Dario Lopez (bottom right) is an Assemblies of God pastor and seminary professor in Lima, Peru. Our 2-hour ZOOM conversation was a wonderful time. Praise God with us! We have a number of women scholars on our faculty and studying in our doctoral program but this time it was not possible for any one of them to join us for Jorge's defense.



**Please praise God with us!** A couple days ago I saw the photo on the right and I broke out in a song of praise. One way to check the effectiveness of an educational program is to look at the completion rate. Generally, in the US, in Ph.D. programs in the Humanities a completion rate of around 14% (1 out of 9) is considered high. In this 2015 photo, 11 of the 14 students from 5 countries have either graduated or are about to defend their dissertations. (78% completion). Only 3 of this cohort (22%) were forced to discontinue their studies. Over the 18 years of the program, the 38 graduates (at present) make up about 34% of those who began. Ninety students (72%) completed the first 2 years of the program. **Roger Marquez** (standing far left) donned his traditional Shipibo dress for the photo.



**"Nothing tends more to cement the hearts of Christians than praying together. Never do they love one another so well as when they witness the outpouring of each other's hearts in prayer."** — Charles Finney (<https://thelife.com/great-quotes-on-prayer>)

**Note: Your gifts and contributions go entirely to fund the doctoral program itself.**

**E-MAIL NEWSLETTER AVAILABLE:** If you wish to receive the newsletter via email, write us at [cvanengen@lacmin.org](mailto:cvanengen@lacmin.org).