

Latin American Lutheran Mission

CLARION

Vol. 70, No. 6

“You shall be my witnesses...to the ends of the earth.” Acts 1:8

December 2005

Christmas Greetings Great Joy...for All People!

Pastor Terrance L. Stratton, LALM Board of Directors

“In those days a decree went out...Joseph went from the town of Nazareth...to Judea...descended from the house of David. He went...registered with Mary, who was expecting a child. She gave birth...wrapped him in bands of cloth...laid him in a manger...no place in the Inn. In that region...shepherds...keeping watch...by night. An angel stood before them...glory shone around them...Do not be afraid...GOOD NEWS AND GREAT JOY...To you is born...SAVIOR.”

What a wonderful story. What an awesome gift it proclaims. Even when one looks only at bits and pieces of the story, as I have done above, the beauty and the wonder of God's gift comes through.

Of course, it is our God given, Spirit inspired faith that allows us to see the truth of the wonder of the Christmas Story. God comes to us as a vulnerable helpless infant and immediately we are drawn to the human drama of a pregnant mother, a confused father and the miracle of human birth. We fall in love with that baby. Our urge to care for the little ones takes over and we fall in love with him again.

But there is so much more to the story, isn't there? There is so much more to His life. So much more to his work. So much more as the Spirit calls us to faith in the Son of God. No one loves the Christmas story more than I do but what would it be without the cross and Resurrection? There is so much more to it than the simple story it appears to be.

The God who comes as this infant is also the God who defeats all the forces of evil in creation. The God who by his death and Resurrection promises us an eternal forgiven and reconciled relationship with him. God has a way of taking the simple, the ordinary, what the world, the devil and our cynical sinful self would call unimportant, and using it to change lives, to change societies and even to change the course of history from one of judgment to one of salvation. Wow, what a gift! What a promise! What an act of total love!



On behalf of the Latin American Lutheran Mission and the Evangelical Church of Mexico I want to thank you for your commitment to this ministry. As we share this wonderful story once again this Christmas I wish God's abundant blessings upon you for health and happiness but especially for a strengthening of your faith in the one who is the author of giver of all. Such a God we have! Who gives us grace, who gives us the gift of salvation, and who at the same time gives us opportunities to share love, fellowship and support with our brothers and sisters in Mexico.

Blessed Christmas,
Terrance L. Stratton

LALM Year End Financial Update

We, on the Board of LALM, are becoming increasingly aware that many of our long time faithful supporters are now no longer with us as God has called them home. Many others have been faithful supporters of LALM for a lifetime; probably going back to the days when Claire and Norma Hobart were traveling extensively in the Midwest for the Mission and telling the story of how people in Mexico were coming to Jesus through the efforts and encouragement of LALM. We have been reaping the results of their ministry of



evangelism now for many years with so many faithful people giving of themselves in prayer and financial support to the Mission.

In looking at our monthly income and expenses over the past several years we see trends that concern us. While income varies widely from month to

month the average trend is definitely downward. Expenses, however, remain roughly the same, maybe somewhat higher on the average, as we try to keep our same level of support to our Mexican brothers and sisters. On average, our normal monthly receipts now cover less than half of our monthly needs. An occasional estate comes in that temporarily makes up the difference but over time the estates are becoming fewer and fewer. Some months now we have had difficulty meeting our financial needs. We all know that LALM is a Mission of Faith and that God supplies every need as he has done so faithfully during the past half century. We therefore ask all of our supporters to be in prayer for the Mission seeking God's blessing and provision for LALM.

Along with their regular work at the Mission and with the ELCM, Pastor Dick and Barb are traveling more now calling on churches and individuals who are open to hearing the message of LALM and hopefully joining our support team. Pray for them and that many new churches and individuals will catch the vision and mission of LALM.

Thank you for your prayers and support of LALM.

—Robert J. Myller, LALM Treasurer

Latin American Lutheran Mission ELC-M Partners Who Help Proclaim the Gospel

Incorporated in 1936, LALM is a faith mission depending entirely upon God for the supplying of its needs through the prayer and freewill offerings of His people as the Holy Spirit moves them. LALM is an independent Lutheran organization, having members on its Board of Directors from various Lutheran bodies. To learn more about LALM, please feel free to contact the board member nearest you.

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Latin American Lutheran Mission Clarion

The Clarion is published bimonthly by LALM for friends of the Mission and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Mexico. If you wish to be a prayer helper in this Mission for Mexico and would like to receive the Clarion, please contact the Editor at the address listed under "Mission Staff." There is no specific subscription price for the Clarion, but for those who wish to and have the means to help LALM with its cost, it is about \$3.00 per year for each mailing address. Please send contributions to our Treasurer at the address listed under "Mission Staff."

Publication deadline for the next Clarion issue is January 9, 2006.

Our web site: www.lalm-elcm.org

Donations for LALM should be mailed to:
PO Box 17385, Minneapolis, MN 55417-7385

“From Sowing to Reaping”

Latin American Lutheran Mission Fall Conference, September 19, 2005

“From Sowing to Reaping” was the theme for the annual LALM conference held on Monday, September 19, 2005, hosted by Trinity Lutheran Church, Minnehaha Falls, Minneapolis, MN. Our gratitude goes out to their Pastor, staff, and congregation for the gracious way in which the conference was accommodated.

The conference began with a noon luncheon followed by friends of the mission gathering together singing and sharing experiences of mission trips during the past year. The LALM delegation included Director Rev. Dick and Barb Erickson, Pastor Juan and Gabriela Cortez, Pastor Ulises and Rocio Lopez and son Abram, Pastor Ricardo Dominguez, and Alfredo & Wanda Garcia who will begin their work as assistants to the border staff on October 1, 2005.

Prior to the evening meeting, the LALM Board met for 8:30-5:00 p.m. The evening service began with a banquet at 6:00 p.m. After the opening prayer and warm welcome given by host Pastor Mike Hanson to all the guests, President Byron Meline introduced the Mexican Pastors and LALM Board. Bruce Underhill, who was our special music for the evening, then led in group singing.

A motion was made and approved to accept the Secretary’s report as presented. A motion was made and approved to accept the treasurer’s report as presented. The following three names were presented for nomination to the board for a three year term: Rose Marie Anderson, Phil Spaulding and Pastor Alan Vik. A motion was passed that the secretary cast a unanimous ballot in favor of these nominees. Rev. Byron Meline has completed his two terms and will leave the board.

Carol Olson gave a greeting from her husband and former director, Gary, who was unable to attend. They live in Lockhart, TX.

Director Dick Erickson had a visual presentation of “Presenting the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Mexico”. He shared about the work being done in the various churches by the pastors and congregations and by the short term summer teams that stay overnight at the border prior to entering into Mexico to share the gospel and do project work. Approximately 500 persons came throughout the summer for the short term work. In addition, there are many church groups that arrive during the winter months to work at the border. Rev. Dick and Barb Erickson have now completed one year at the border and were given affirmations of their wonderful work. A motion was made and approved to accept the Director’s report as presented.

A Spanish Praise Group led by Pastor Juan Cortez led the group in singing. Greetings and challenges of spreading the gospel in Mexico and keeping the congregations alive were shared by Pastors Ulises Lopez and Juan Cortez. Vacation Bible School has a great impact on the children, lives are being reached and touched by the gospel.

A prayer of consecration was held for Fred and Wanda Garcia as they begin their venture in being staff assistants at the border. They come from Amarillo, TX, with great talent and skill in the areas of maintenance management, public relations in various areas, and a strong desire to share the gospel. LALM welcomes them!

In closing, the congregation sang the hymn, “So Send I You”. The evening attendance was 160 and the offering was \$4928. The board met for reorganization with the following officers for the year 2005-06: President Rev. Terry Stratton, 1st Vice President-Dr. Herb Nygren, 2nd Vice President-Carol Olson, Secretary-Rose Marie Anderson, Treasurer-Bob Myller.

Respectfully Submitted,
Rose Marie Anderson, Secretary



El Potosi Catholic Mission—
Picture taken during the October pastors’ conference.

Special Note:

Our e-mail address is:
lalmelcm@sbcglobal.net

The PO Box address
for contributions is:

**Latin American
Lutheran Mission
PO Box 17385
Minneapolis, MN 55417-7385**

LALM Board Meeting Trinity Lutheran Church

Minneapolis, Minnesota • September 19, 2005

Attending Board Members: Rev. Byron Meline, Rose Marie Anderson, Marjorie Erickson, Marjorie Erickson, Dr. Herb Nygren, Carol Olson, Bob Myller, John Jirjord, Rev. Dan Sollie, Phil Spaulding, Rev. Terry Stratton, and Director Rev. Dick & Barb Erickson. Absent was Doris Toddie.

Opening devotions were led by Rev. Byron Meline followed by a time of sharing amongst the board members.

There was also a time of sharing from the Mexican Pastors of the activities in their congregations: Pastor Ricardo Dominguez, Pastor Ulises Rocio Lopez, and Pastor Juan and Gabriela Cortez, (President of ELCE). ELCM president Carlos de Leon proposes to visit each pastor this winter. Construction continues on Filadelfia and Good Samaritan Lutheran Churches in Saltillo. Currently, there are no students registered at the Bible School for the Fall session. Last summer's graduates complete their six month internship January 1, 2006. Extension classes will continue in Nuevo Laredo; extension classes may be the choice of the future for pastoral education/training. There are four interns in active service.

We were introduced to new border staff Alfredo and Wanda Garcia who will begin their work October 1, 2005. (See more info in this report that follows.)

MSC To approve the agenda as presented.

MSC To accept the secretary's minutes with the addition of "ALMA" in the conference report by Phil Spaulding.

MSC To accept the treasurer's report as presented.

Director Dick Erickson's Report:

1. Summer Teams – Summer was busy with 20+ teams but national news of violence at the border had impacted the number of mission teams visiting the Neuvo Laredo churches. Mexican border officials have refused to give permission to two buses this summer.
2. Groups made up of 12 or less will be staying in the Guest House rather than Hobart Hall.
3. The cost per short term team member coming to the border will increase for this coming year; the current charge per team member is \$45 and will increase to \$50 or as Dick Erickson sees appropriate.
4. Report on repairs and upgraded linens and towel needed for the Guest House will be taken care of by the Erickson. The Ericksons provided personal funds to complete a back yard patio.
5. Orphan Grain Train (a receiving agent that distributes items to missions) has helped to upgrade beds and mattresses, and has provided suitcases.
6. Ruben and Lydia Gonzales are Laredoans who have been volunteering at the mission.
7. Bookstore- One new employee has replaced two previous parttime employees at the bookstore. The 40th anniversary of the Gospel Bookstore will be celebrated in year 2007. Future projects for the bookstore include remodeling the inside, new signage, and upgrading the landscaping.

8. Bethel Church congregation would like some upgrading; Herb Nygren has agreed to gather info for possible remodeling plans and approximate costs for this project.
9. Barb Erickson shared ideas that she has gathered for training the Mexican congregations how to be more effective in teaching Sunday School. Most churches lack basic tools and equipment to teach. She reported a positive response to an article in the *Clarion* asking congregations to be a sponsor for SS which would provide these tools.
10. Pastor Carlos DeLeon has initiated a continuing education program called the Kerygma Seminary of Pastoral Preparation for ELCM pastors. This is a program to help the pastors to be brought up to higher teaching-preaching standards.
11. Currently, there are no students enrolled in the Bible School, though there are two groups of students who receive extension classes once or twice a month.

Fred and Wanda Garcia – New Employees

MSC To receive Fred and Wanda Garcia at the mission border as employees beginning 10/1/05 to be reviewed on 4/24/06. LALM provides the following: housing; utilities (no phone); amount of insurance coverage to be decided by the executive board; travel expenses including lodging and gas costs for LALM related visits; and \$1,000 stipend per month. Exact duties will be decided by the Ericksons

Personal and phone interviews with the Garcias were conducted in July and August, 2005, by President Dick and Barb Erickson along with executive board members prior to the 9/19/05 board meeting. Board members were acquainted with their resumes prior to this meeting. We welcome them as a great addition to the border staff; they come with many gifts and a dedication to the LALM goals and philosophy.

New Board Member

Name of Rev. Alan Vik from Decorah, IA, will be presented at the conference meeting as new board member, (he will replace Rev. Byron Meline who has completed two terms), Phil Spaulding and Rose Marie Anderson have accepted a second term on the board.

On behalf of the board, Rev. Byron Meline acknowledged Rev. Dick and Barb Erickson for their faithfulness and leadership they have provided to LALM during their first year.

A statement of thanks was returned to Bryon Meline by Rev. Dick Erickson for his attention and giving so much of his time as President to LALM the past three years and for previous years on the board.

MSC To adjourn the meeting at 5:10 PM.

Next meeting will be April 24, 2006, at World Mission Prayer League, 232 Clifton Ave, Mpls, 612-871-6843.

Respectfully Submitted,
Rose Marie Anderson, Secretary

Remembering Myrtle Nordin Huerta (1900-1980)

It all began with prayer. On the day of Epiphany, January 6, 1936, Myrtle Nordin and Alma Bratberg, two young women who were fervently mission-minded Lutherans, met together to pray about the need for the gospel to be preached in Latin America. Their concern was specifically for the country of Colombia, where Myrtle had already spent some time studying Spanish and becoming acquainted with the people and their culture. Myrtle and Alma were not praying alone; they were actually part of a wider movement of spiritual renewal, with a passion for mission, that was spreading among Midwestern Lutherans. This movement had already assumed an organizational form in the South American Mission Prayer League, of which the two young women were members. Many prayers had been offered for Latin America before, but on this Epiphany afternoon, those who prayed were also inspired to go. As Myrtle later reported, “doors opened”, and before the end of that year she and a companion, Marie Thompson, were on a ship headed for Colombia. Thus began what would become known as the Colombia Evangelical Lutheran Mission of South America (CELMOSA), and later on, the Latin American Lutheran Mission.

The key figure in the history of this mission to Latin America was Myrtle Nordin Huerta. For close to forty years, Myrtle was the mission’s leader – a tireless traveler, intrepid evangelist, respected teacher, and a mighty woman of prayer. She crossed boundaries and met challenges that few would

have thought possible, especially for a woman. Her work resulted in the founding of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Mexico and brought faith and hope into the lives of countless people, both in cities and in very isolated rural regions. She was indeed an apostle to the people of Mexico. And yet she never took any credit for herself but always pointed to Jesus as the Lord who was the center of her life and who gave her the power to persevere. One of the last letters she ever wrote, shortly before her death in 1980, ended with the closing “In Jesus, Myrtle Huerta.” For her, all of life was a matter of existing in faith in Jesus.

The year 2006 will mark the 70th anniversary of the formation of CELMOSA and the 60th anniversary of the beginnings of LALM. What began with prayer continues with prayer. The future, as always, is unknown, but in prayer it can be met with faith and fervor, as Myrtle’s example shows so well. During the coming year the *Clarion* will feature a series of articles focusing on Myrtle Nordin Huerta’s life and ministry. This anniversary year will be a time for remembering and giving thanks for all that has been accomplished in the past with the help of God, as well as being empowered by the Spirit to continue this mission of prayer and evangelism into the future. In the words of Myrtle herself, “May we attempt great things for souls for Jesus – for our God is the God of the impossible when we are *totally* sold out to Him.” (from *CELMOSA Clarion*, April-September, 1940)



The Pastors of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Mexico

Row 4 Aureliano Ortega, Efrain Contreras, Jesus Velasquez, Jorge Guerrero, Rogelio Balvantin, Mucio Reyes Marco, A. & Bersa Rodriguez Maria & David Aguillon

Row 3 (begins in middle of photo) Jesica Martinez, Maria Elena & Antonio Tirado, Bulmaro Velasquez, Saul Uriostegui

Row 2 Gaby & Juan Cortez, Luz Elena T. de Ortega, Eduardo Aguillon, Hilario & Mary Castro, Julia de Cortez, Rocio & Ulises Lopez, Dora Elia & Geronimo Salazar

Row 1 Pr. H. Salazar (Guest), Jose De la Rosa, Samuel & Agueda Diaz, Brigido Villarreal, Homero Cortez, Juan de Leon, Carlos de Leon

Not pictured: Ricardo Dominguez, Cazildo Arizmendi U.

Teacher Education Workshop

—“Children Are Like Fresh Cement”

This was the thought impressed on the 28 church and Sunday School leaders who attended a special Christian Education Workshop in Saltillo, Mexico November 19, 2005, the first one held since we began our ministry with the LALM.

This workshop came out of our visits to the Sunday Schools of the ELCM to see how they were using the curriculum obtained through the sponsorships of adoptive churches in the “States”. We saw a lot of good leadership but, in other situations, help was needed to better utilize the teaching material and better understand the ministry of teaching.

“Children are impressionable, like fresh cement, the impression made on their lives as children will remain with them throughout their lives. Let’s impress them with Jesus.”

Pr. Mucio and Esperanza Reyes started off the day with a time of worship combining their musical gifts with those of Febe Barrios, a music teacher in the public schools. With many rhythm instruments in the hands of all participants, an exciting hands-on learning experience was created.

Miss Nubia Salazar, a high school teacher in Saltillo with evangelical roots has been used of God in wonderful ways in her non-evangelical school situation. It was a joy to work with Nubia during the days prior to the workshop as we prepared the teaching tools and hand-outs for presentations on “Ideas and methods for an effective lesson plan”. “How to maximize learning through good discipline.” Nubia, who had felt



apprehensive about teaching adults, as she completed her sessions received a ovation of encouragement as the group broke for lunch.

In the afternoon, all the teaching supplies brought from the mission were given out, some of them as door prizes. Many had asked for visual aids and equipment so the workshop ended with 12 of the teachers creating their own flannelgraphs.

In February, as the new curriculum comes out, we will be doing a follow-up workshop. We invite your Stateside Lutheran church to be a part of these teacher training workshops. How? First of all through prayer. Secondly, we still have a few Sunday Schools to be “adopted”. Thirdly, through gifts made to “Christian Education Workshops,” and fourthly, through the gift of donated equipment like the following.

- Puppets • Bean bags • Easles • Overhead projectors
- White boards • Rolling pins • Cookie cutters • Felt
- Craft supplies • Foam trays • Good cassette players
- A tape duplicating machine • inflatable globes
- Treasure boxes • Yarn or String

—Barb Erickson

Concordia Academy—Working, Praying and Playing, Becoming Close

What a treat it was to work with the team of youth and adults from Concordia Academy of Austin, Texas who helped us at the border station October 12-19, 2005. A more cooperative, hard-working and focused group would be hard to find. Though their projects were on the Texas side of the Rio Grande, we were able to visit El Calvario (Calvary Lutheran), and the two mission congregations, Sola Gracia (Grace Alone) and Sola Fe (Faith Alone), in Nuevo Laredo, Mexico and participate in Spanish worship, as well.

One of our needs at the border station has been more storage area, so this group with the help of our border associates, Fred Garcia and Ruben Gonzales, was able to address that need by enclosing a carport on our garage, thus creating a much needed storage area protected from the elements.

Bethel Lutheran, across from the Gospel Bookstore in Laredo, which recently repaired damages from a leaky roof, also received

a much needed face lift as the kids from Concordia painted its exterior. It’s amazing how many hands make light work for big projects like this.

Under the able leadership of Pr. Ron Schersch, director of the Can-Do Missions organization which had organized the trip, the team had rich devotional times each day before continuing with their work projects.

One of the most amazing aspects of the teams’ experience on the border was how they bonded with the members at Calvary Lutheran through playing volleyball. After evening worship it was teams of Mexicans vs Americans and then later mixed teams playing and laughing and sweating under the starry sky in the parking lot of Calvary. It’s beautiful how close you can feel to others when you play and pray with them, though neither speaks the others’ language. Thank you, Lord for Concordia Academy.



Gifts of Love



The following persons and organizations provided gifts, donations, or bequests to the Latin American Lutheran Mission in May through June of 2005. The LALM Board of Directors and staff are grateful for all these gifts as well as those gifts of time and talents. (If you do not want to be recognized by the Clarion for your gift, please send a note along with your contribution to the Treasurer/Financial Secretary stating your desire for anonymity.) We apologize for any errors or omissions.

Individuals:

Aarsvold, Donald and Lillian ~ Kasson, MN
Akland, Wayne and Sharon ~ Beresford, SD
Anderson, Don and Lois ~ Eagan, MN
Anderson, Esther Gladys ~ Aurora, MN
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Heights, MN
Winnes, Martha ~ Minneapolis, MN
Winther, Lois ~ Park River, ND
Wise, Patricia ~ Manor, TX
Witt, William and Beverly ~ Hudson, WI

Honorariums:

In Honor of Verda Akland's 85th Birthday
In Honor of Holman children and grandchil-
dren
In Honor of Howard Gowin and Myrtle
Duerhing
In Honor of Sanford Haugen

Memorials:

In memory of Bennie & Sylvia Boyum
In memory of Helen Freshnock
In memory of Rolland Hamre
In memory of Howard Haugen
In memory of Elsie Nelson
In memory of Dalene Pelky
In memory of Dell Temte

Estates

Ruth Estelle Megard

Organizations:

The Gospel Bookstore ~ Laredo, TX
Faith Lutheran Church ~ Williston, ND
Fertile Lutheran Church ~ Fertile, IA
Highwater Lutheran Church ~ Lamberton,
MN
Lake Madison Lutheran Church ~ Madison,
SD
Trinity Lutheran Church of Mhaha Falls ~
Minneapolis, MN
Platteville Lutheran Church ~ Minooka, IL
South Zumbro Luth Church ~ Kasson, MN
Brooklyn Park Lutheran Church ~ Brooklyn
Park, MN
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MN
West Prairie WMF ~ West Fargo, ND
Zion Women of Life ~ Frederic, WI

Apostolically Speaking:

“And He gave **the apostles**, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ...” Ephesians 4:11-12 ESV

As near as we can deduce from the Book of Acts the Apostles’ job was to start churches and to establish leaders in each of them before moving on to continue doing the same in new locations. From the letters of Paul we learn that he saw his apostolic function to be that of a parent with children. His letters reveal his desire to stay in loving connection with them as well as his intention to correct

them when he learned they were believing or behaving wrongly. As a good parent, he was not about to abandon his children but to exhort them in love, to heal what was broken, and to remind them of their true identity and calling. One can only imagine how complicated this became as Paul in his journeys formed more and more churches, mentoring the leaders in each one, whose names are listed with personal comments at the closing of each of his letters. Those who form new churches, and equip and mentor new leaders continue the ministry of apostle in our time. This leads to the “building up of the body of Christ”.

LALM – Prayer Warriors

December 2005

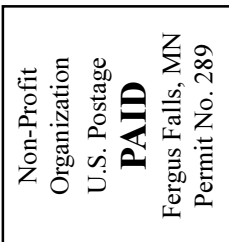
“...in everything by **prayer** and **supplication**, with **thanksgiving**, let your **requests** be made known to God...” Philipians 4: 6

Prayers of Thanksgiving

1. For 3,000 miles of safe travel from Laredo to Minnesota and back.
2. For the inspiration and fellowship experienced at the Sept. 19 board and association meetings at Trinity.
3. For the open doors in colleges and churches to share the opportunities in the Lutheran Churches of Mexico.
4. For the faithful prayers and giving of those who hold this ministry dear.
5. For the testimony of the Hobarts and Haugens which still resonates in the hearts of LALM supporters across the country.
6. For the excitement that Fred and Wanda Garcia bring as they join our staff in October.
7. For the successful cleft palate surgery of Tiana, Erickson’s granddaughter, in November.
8. For the openness encountered in Dick’s “Inspiration and Information” tour in Indiana in November.
9. For the happy outcome of the October Pastors’ conference and the first classes of the Kerygma Ministerial Training Program.

Supplication & Requests

1. For the Spirit to speak to and through the couples, individuals and groups who will spend time in the churches of Mexico this winter and spring.
2. For the Spirit to mature and confirm the connections made in colleges and churches during our September trip.
3. For the Lord to guide and mature our Bible Institute graduates as they complete their six month internship.
4. For the Spirit’s guidance and protection over the LALM staff as they build a sense of team and develop the strategic vision of the LALM.
5. For a Spirit of Evangelism and Apostolship among the pastors and leaders of the ELCM.
6. For the financial provisions to pursue the Mission of the LALM.



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