

# Latin American Lutheran Mission

# CLARION

Vol. 69, No. 1

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

February 2004

## **Praise God for Answered Prayer!**

### **New Director Called to LALM;**

### **New Building to be Dedicated**

**By Pastor Byron Meline, LALM President**

Through the pages of the *Clarion*, the friends of LALM are called and invited to pray for the work of the Mission as we work together with our brothers and sisters in Mexico. What a joy it is as we see God's faithfulness in answering those prayers and meeting all the needs of this ministry. I am very pleased to be able to report to you two very exciting happenings.

First, God has answered our prayers for a new Director of the Mission. Pastor Dick Erickson and his wife Barbara have accepted the Call to serve in this position beginning in the summer of 2004. Dick and Barb are no strangers to LALM and the Mexican pastors as Dick has been a speaker at several Pastors' Conferences in Mexico. They served as missionaries with the World Mission Prayer League in Ecuador and have a variety of gifts that God will use in wonderful ways to further the ministry of LALM with the Mexican churches as well as with the groups that go into Mexico from the United States. In the next *Clarion* you will learn more about Pastor Dick and Barb Erickson.

Second, God has answered our prayers for the new building, Hobart/Pfluger Hall, at the border station in Laredo, and **the building will be dedicated on Sunday, February 15 at 3:30 p.m.** During the 1990's growing numbers of outreach teams had stretched the limits of our housing capacity at the border station. Praying for God to provide the workers and the

finances for a new dormitory-type structure, work was begun on the new two-story building in March of 2000. Now, almost four years later, with God's leading, the work of countless volunteers, financial gifts from supporters along with a generous gift from the estate of Norma Hobart, we are ready to have a service of praise to God in dedication of Hobart/Pfluger Hall.

The building is named in memory of three people very much instrumental in the work of Latin American Lutheran Mission. Claire and Norma Hobart served for half a century with the Mission, reaching out to many in the United States and Mexico through Claire's ministry of music and Norma's work with the School for the Blind in Nuevo Laredo where her love for the Mexican people was so evident. Claire died in 1993 and Norma in 2000. James Douglas Pfluger became acquainted with the Mission in 1994. He made several work trips into Mexico, designing the bunk house in San Rafael as well as two buildings at the border, including the new dormitory that bears his name. Jim died in a plane crash on May 12, 2000, less than two months after work on the new building was begun.

I would like to welcome you to the dedication service of Hobart/Pfluger Hall on February 15. If you need overnight housing accommodations, please call Gary and Carol at 956-722-4047 and they will assist you.

# Radio message from Minnesota to Mexico

Every Monday Pastor Carlos De Len has a radio program produced in McAllan, Texas but aired over a large area of northeast Mexico. Ana, his wife, and other members of his congregation help out when Pastor Carlos is traveling. In September, when he was in Minnesota, he asked Marge Erickson, former missionary to Bolivia, if she would share via phone connection on his radio program. She had shared a couple of times with the delegation from Mexico and it had been a very meaningful time for everyone. So she accepted the invitation and shared in Spanish by phone into Mexico. It was a joy for her and for all!



## Attention:

We have a new e-mail address of:  
**lalmelcm@aol.com**  
 Please update your e-mail address  
 books accordingly.  
 Thank you.

## Clarion News Flash!

Pastor Haugen of Bethel Lutheran Church in Laredo, Texas passed away on Wednesday, January 14th. There will be details in the next issue.

## 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.

### Board of Directors

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### Border Missionaries

V. Gary Olson, Director 3519 Salinas Ave., Laredo, TX 78041 e-mail: vgolalm@aol.com	956-727-4015 H 956-722-4047 O
Ricardo Dominguez LALM Guest House 3517 Salinas Ave., Laredo, TX 78041	956-722-2427 H
H. Sanford Haugen, Director Emeritus, Retired 3519 Salmas Ave. Laredo, TX 78041	

Our *NEW* web site: [www.lalm-elm.org](http://www.lalm-elm.org)

### Mission Staff

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Faith & Fellowship Press, Clarion Editor Contact: Milo Scott 1020 Alcott Ave. W., Fergus Falls, MN 56537	800-332-9232 O

### Latin American Lutheran Mission Clarion

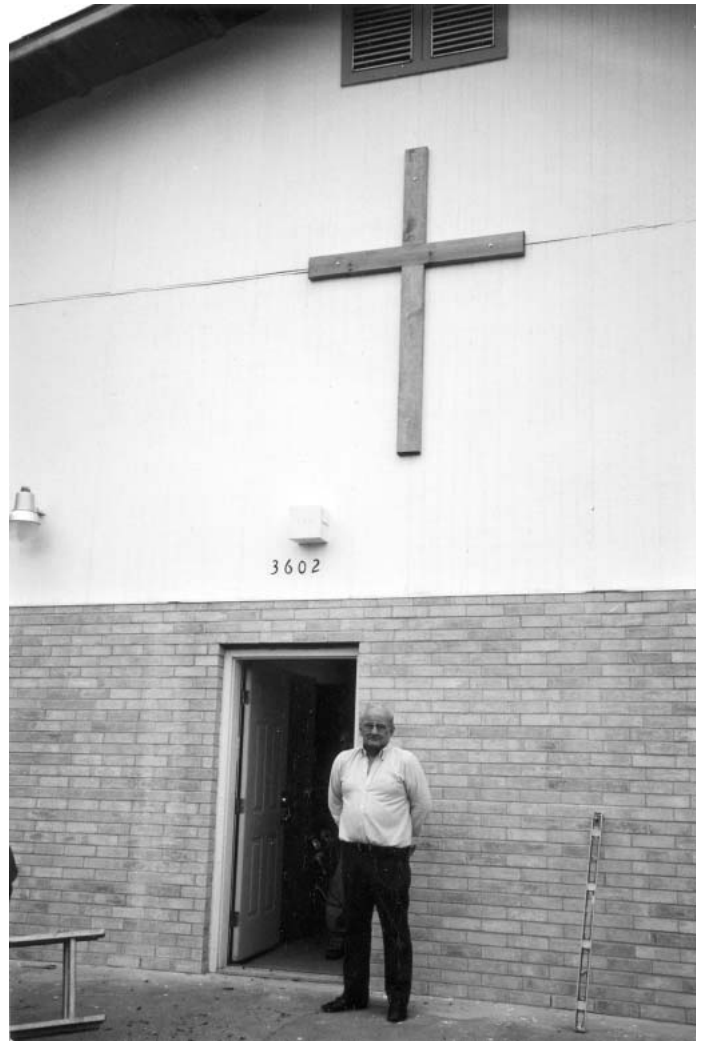
The Clarion is published bimonthly by LALM for friends of the Mission and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Mexico. If you wish to be a prayer helper in this Mission for Mexico and would like to receive the Clarion, please contact the Editor at the address listed under "Mission Staff." There is no specific 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 March 5, 2004.

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

# A Cross of Distinction

A friend of the mission in Laredo, Bob Bower, constructed a beautiful cross for the outside of the new multipurpose building, Hobart-Pfugger Hall. It was very heavy and took several men to get it in place. It looks very nice and everyone can see it from a distance.



# Praise the Lord for gifts

Brian Smith with Servant Unique Family Ministries sent down to Laredo on October 26, 2003 a trailer loaded with the following: bikes, kitchen items, layettes, quilts, health kits, clothes, toys, school kits, doors, tools, a gas stove and fans.

Gary Webrand and John Merrill from Waterloo, Iowa drove straight through and arrived at the border at 10:30 p.m. They unloaded the trailer the next day. Praise the Lord for these many donations for the ministry in Mexico.



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## FAITH STATEMENTS

Greetings from Roseni Lutheran at Beresford, South Dakota. I wanted to drop you a line to thank you once again for all your help with our mission trip this summer. You folks at LALM really helped us have a tremendously successful trip.

This last Sunday I was reminded several times of the life changing power of our trip. Twice during adult Sunday school people referred to our trip. Again during the reading of the lesson, I was forcibly reminded of something that happened in Atongo. At the same time I was remembering, I was absolutely certain that the twelve others who were on our trip were remembering the same incident. What a closeness that was formed. Bonds of Christian love were formed in Atongo that still draw us close today.

This last Sunday was also confirmation Sunday. Two of the young men who accompanied us to Mexico were confirmed. I enclosed a copy of their faith statements. Again we were reminded of how important our trip was to all of us.

I'm not the greatest with words, but I just want you to know what a tremendous difference you have made in our lives.

God bless!

Cindy Wilson

*Philippians 1:9 – 10 “And this is my prayer that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ.*

I chose this verse because of my own experiences at thinking that I know everything there is to know about Christ. Now days, a lot of people think that they don't need to go to church because they have gone a certain amount of time, but we need to keep going because we learn new things every day and we need to keep our faith renewed.

This summer my eyes opened up for me when we went on the mission trip to Mexico. The people there were really encouraging in how their faith was. They were really willing to go to church and bringing their kids there. The kids really respected the church and were involved in the services, instead of messing around and not listening or singing. So I want to encourage people to go to church and keep learning about Christ.

Paul Hoffman

*Continued on page 6*

## Volunteer Trip Leader — Latin American Lutheran Mission

This is an article describing the Volunteer Trip Leader position in the Latin American Lutheran Mission (LALM) The LALM is a mission that supports the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Mexico (ELCM) in its ministry. The ELCM is made up of over twenty different churches and preaching points in north central Mexico. The LALM has a border station, which is located in Laredo, Texas. It is from this location that the LALM sends support to the ELCM. Throughout the year much of that support is made up of ministry teams. These teams take trips to the different Mexican congregations to meet, worship, minister, and work with our fellow Christians in Mexico. It is these teams that the Volunteer Trip Leader would lead.

The Volunteer Trip Leader (VTL) needs to be someone who is committed to the work of Jesus Christ and the furtherance of the gospel. The VTL is a short-term missionary, a missionary who is working with and as a liaison between two different cultures. The VTL helps two different groups of Christian brothers and sisters to learn about and to understand a little of each other. Thus the VTL needs not only to be fluent or near fluent in Spanish but needs to be able to depend on God for the love and strength to work with a humble attitude in this position. Prior experience as a group leader is helpful as well.

Here is a brief description of a ministry team trip and therein the work of the Volunteer Trip Leader.

The ministry team arrives in Laredo at the border station after a long drive from possibly Minnesota or Iowa, or maybe a shorter trip from somewhere in Texas. The team is met by the friendly VTL and directed to their quarters, shown where the showers are and set up a briefing time. The briefing time is when the group comes together with the VTL for a run down of the trip expectations, of rules, and to have questions answered. The VTL and the team leaders at some point on arrival get together and discuss the team, the project, any questions and concerns, and get to know one another as a leadership group.

When departure time comes and the baggage as well as the group is loaded the team comes together in a circle and shares in prayer. It is especially important to pray for ease in dealing with officials at the border. The team then loads and is off. That day the VTL is busy helping the team exchange money, cross the border, apply and receive visas, and direct them to the city or town where they will be working. From this day forward the VTL's Spanish is very important. Often times the VTL is the only bi-lingual speaker in either the team or the congregation.

Once the team arrives at the congregation with which they will be living the VTL talks with the pastor of the church and after introductions arranges sleeping places for everyone. These could be anything from the floor of the church to beds in private homes. A schedule for that night and the following days is then talked over between the pastor and the team leader through the VTL. Flexibility and understanding is very important on the part of the VTL to try and accommodate the needs and as much as possible the wants of the church and the team.

While in Mexico the team participates with the congregation in their worship services and when possible their ministries. The team usually also has a work project that they are doing for the church while there. This could be anything from constructing a new building to painting to putting up a fence. The VTL assists in buying materials, being or helping the foreman, and helping to keep things running smoothly. Other than the work project the team will usually share songs, testimonies, and at times preaching with the congregation. LALM has the Jesus movie and this is often shown as well one or two nights. During these services the VTL needs to translate for the team as well as the congregation.

The time in Mexico is very rewarding. As VTL one is able to see much growth take place in the team, in the church, and between the two. It is also a time of individual growth and learning as well as growth with God.

At the end of the team's time in Mexico there are tearful farewells and knowledge of brothers and sisters in the U.S. and Mexico who are united through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The teams usually spend another night in Laredo when the team and the VTL go through a debriefing session together to talk and pray of their trip. It is then that everyone realizes how much growth and bonding has taken place inside the group that the VTL is now a part of. When the team departs it can be hard for they often feel that they are leaving, a member of their own at the border. The VTL!

Hopefully this brief description has given an idea of what the position of Volunteer Trip Leader is like. It is a very needed and rewarding way to serve God and to also get a small idea of what mission work is like.

### Requirements for Volunteer Trip Leader:

- Acceptance of God's call to serve Him!
- An attitude of love, humility, and flexibility!
- Volunteer; through faith in God raise own support for duration of time spent with the mission.
- Fluency (or near fluency) in the Spanish language.
- Leadership experience.

The Volunteer Trip Leader position is most needed during June, July, and August. If able in the spring it is possible to arrange a stay of a few weeks at one of the churches in Mexico to familiarize oneself with the ELCM and the Mexican culture. Dates for position are flexible and arrangements can be made by communicating with LALM director V. Gary Olson.

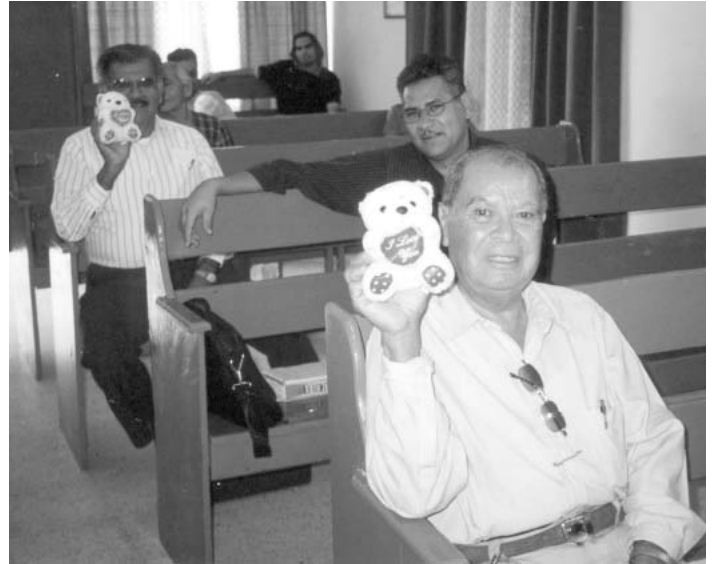
If there are questions concerning the Volunteer Trip Leader position or Latin American Lutheran Mission please call or write:

Latin American Lutheran Mission  
V. Gary Olson, Director  
3519 Salinas Avenue  
Laredo, TX 78041  
USA

To call: (Office) 956-722-4047  
(Home) 956-727-4015

# ELCM Pastor's Conference – October 2003

On October 22-24, all of the ELCM pastors were in attendance at this conference which was held at Bethany Lutheran in Apodaca where Rev. Samuel Diaz is the pastor. This conference was dedicated to business of the church.



*Continued from page 6*

*John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him may not perish but may have eternal life."*

I like this verse because to me it says God really loved us. He didn't want us to die when we sinned so He sacrificed His Son so we would not. That whoever believes Him and asks Him into their heart they will not die but live with Him forever (eternally).

I trust God to help me with my problems and help me in school so I do good on tests, and help me in football so I don't get hurt. I pray before and after a football game, and I ask Him

to help me get through hard times like a death in the family. I serve the Lord any way I can. I want to be in a group called Peer Helpers. Peer Helpers help their peers with stuff like a death in the family or need help in school. They pretty much help the community.

I went on the mission trip so I could get closer to God and also to worship Him. Also to experience a different culture. I had a great time worshipping the Lord in Mexico and to see how the people down there live, it is just awesome how they live.

Michael Akland



# Gifts of Love



The following persons and organizations provided gifts, donations, or bequests to the Latin American Lutheran Mission in November through December of 2003. 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:

Abkes, Robert and Elizabeth ~ Austinville, IA  
 Akland, Verda ~ Beresford, SD  
 Akland, Wayne and Sharon ~ Beresford, SD  
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 Baker, Charles and Barbara ~ Frost, MN  
 Baron, Elaine ~ Fargo, ND  
 Barsness, Esther ~ Lakeville, MN  
 Berg, Donald and Barbara ~ Decorah, IA  
 Berg, Mrs Arnold ~ Thief River Falls, MN  
 Birkelo, Gerhard and Genevieve ~ Viroqua, WI  
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 Tostenson, Harry and Myrna ~ Pine River, WI  
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Wagner, George and Dorothy ~ Sun City, AZ  
 Wallin, Susie ~ Glenville, MN  
 Walters, Rev Orville and Naomi ~ Forest City, IA  
 Wawrzynaik, Wayne and Vanessa ~ North Mankato, MN  
 Winther, Lois ~ Park River, ND  
 Wise, Patricia ~ Austin, TX

## Organizations and Churches:

The Gospel Bookstore ~ Laredo, TX  
 Fertile Church ~ Fertile, IA  
 Grace Lutheran Church ~ Lake Lillian, MN  
 Lake Madison Lutheran Church ~ Madison, SD  
 Trinity Lutheran Church of M'haha Falls ~ Minneapolis, MN  
 Peace Lutheran Church ~ Ruthton, MN  
 Platteville Lutheran Church ~ Minooka, IL  
 Pontoppidan Lutheran Church ~ Fargo, ND  
 St Pauls Ev Lutheran Church ~ Williams, IA  
 United Lutheran Church ~ Zahl, ND  
 Zion Lutheran Church WMF ~ Dexter, MN  
 Good Will Circle ~ Platte, SD  
 Holmes Home Circle ~ Clarion, IA  
 Ruth Circle ~ Viroqua, WI  
 Salem Women of ELCA ~ Hitterdal, MN  
 Fertile Lutheran ELCA Women ~ Fertile, IA  
 Women of the ELCA ~ Dalton, MN  
 Rolf Brombacher Majesty! Church ~ Crystal, MN  
 Bethlehem Lutheran Missions ~ Morris, IL  
 Christ Lutheran Sunday School ~ Chetek, WI  
 Plattville Lutheran Church Sunday School ~ Minooka, IL  
 Christ Lutheran WELCA ~ Hendricks, MN  
 First Lutheran WELCA ~ Lake Lillian, MN  
 Franklin WELCA ~ Viroqua, WI  
 Little Bethany WELCA ~ Hawley, MN  
 Singaas WELCA ~ Astoria, SD  
 South Zumbro WELCA ~ Kasson, MN  
 Trinity WELCA of Kiester ~ Kiester, MN  
 West Prairie WELCA ~ West Fargo, ND  
 First Lutheran Women of Life ~ Parshall, ND  
 Old Westbrook Women of the ELCA ~ Lambertson, MN

## Honorariums and Memorials:

In Honor of Verda Akland  
 In memory of Fred Barsness  
 In Loving Memory of Bob Gardner  
 In memory of John Lowry  
 In Memory of Claire and Norma Hobart  
 In memory of Severin Severson  
 In memory of Evelyn Coyier

**Please Note:**

We have a new PO Box address for contributions. It is located at the bottom of page 2 as usual and following. Change your address book contact information as applicable.

*New Address:*

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

**LALM  
Prayer Warriors  
January 2004**

*“Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” —Matthew 18:19-20.*

Just think of the power that we have as we pray together. Thank you again for your faithfulness in upholding the ministry of LALM and ELCM in Mexico, God does work through your prayers. Keep praying.

**Items of Praise:**

- Ministry of Orphan Grain Train
- New Director Rev. Dick Erickson
- Thanks for winter volunteers
- Good year for the Gospel bookstore
- Expansion of ELCM ministries
- January Pastor’s conference in Monterrey – Rev. Dick Erickson shared
- Radio Ministry of Rev. Carlos de Leon

**Please continue to uphold**

- Bulmaro’s wife fell & broke some bones is home mending
- Ministry of LMTC in Matehuela
- Winter volunteers - Trinity Seniors
- Good health and safety for the Olsons
- Rev. Bulmaro Velasquez as he leads ELCM
- Unity within ELCM
- Wisdom for Gary as he works with ELCM
- Strength for Gary as he deals with Parkinsons
- Funding for Ministry needs— Health costs for ELCM Pastor
- Funds for Glen Jr Estrada as he studies in the University
- Churches willing to support a worker in ELCM
- Volunteers summer - can do ministry
- Short Term Youth teams this summer
- May meeting of ELCM
- Ricardo Dominquez
- Ministry of Bethel Lutheran in Rio Bravo
- Ministry of St Andrew Mission Society ND
- Rev. Dick & Barb Erickson as they assume Leadership of LALM
- Moving for Olsons & Ericksons

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