



Latin American Lutheran Mission

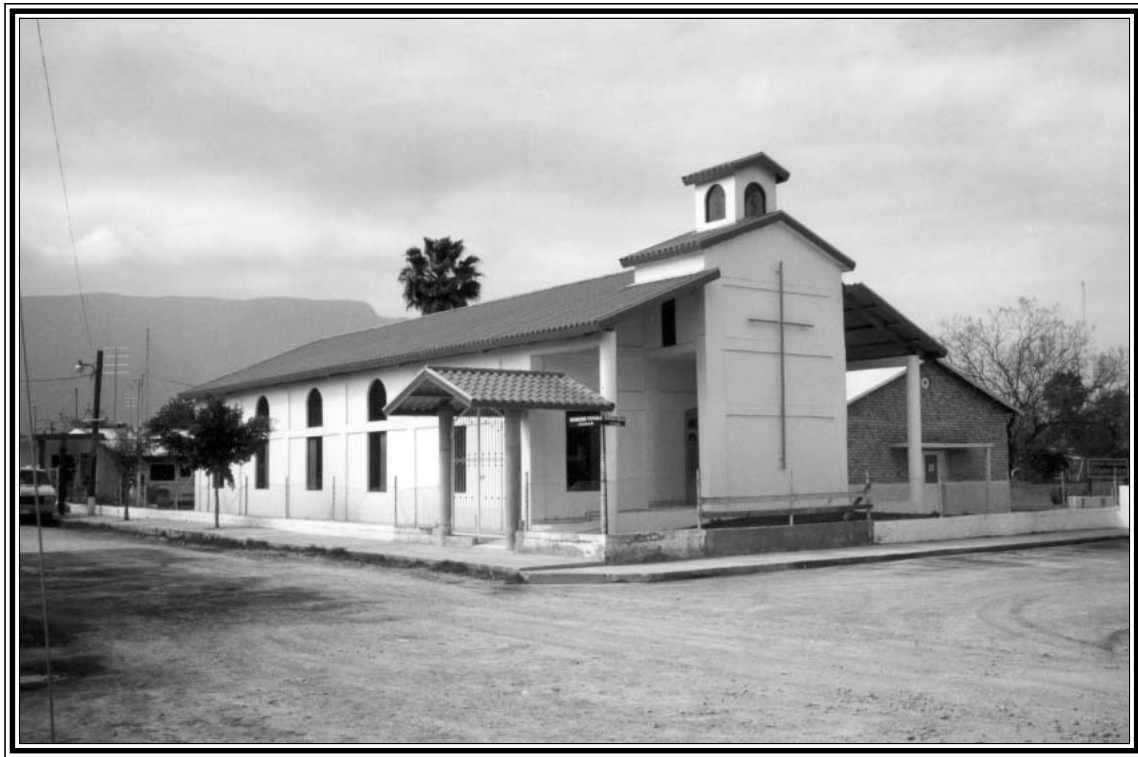
# CLARION

Vol. 69, No. 3

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

June 2004

## Dedication of New Church in Atongo



After four years of hard work by Pastor Glen Estrada, his family, and many groups, the church, Christ the King, in Atongo is finished. The dedication is taking place on July 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>. It will be a special occasion. Along with a picture of the new church on the invitation, is a verse from 1 Corinthians 3:9. It says "For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field. God's building." Please pray for Pastor Glen, his wife, Araceli, and family as they continue together in ministry in this lovely new building.

**Pastor Glen Estrada, his wife, Araceli,  
Glen Jr., Vivi and Jonathan**



# Proyecto Conexion

It was the end of summer, and my family and I were saying goodbye to the last group of volunteers for the year. These same young people had come to help us these last years and were like part of our church family. Their leaders were our friends. We were all sad because they had to leave.

At that moment God spoke to my heart and I began to think about the possibility that maybe the people of my church and friends in Mexico could start a ministry in which we could all have the experience of a mission trip. We began to make plans for December, 2003. We thought about the State of Oaxaca because there is such need in that state. There are many indigenous groups there, and we wanted to help one of them.

On December 14, eleven people left San Rafael at 2 p.m. Each person had paid 2,000 pesos for the trip, which lasted 18 hours. We finally arrived at the city of Oaxaca. The church that received us was a Methodist church, where we did several construction and painting projects. We also visited some pre-Hispanic ruins at Monte Alban.

One day we walked up the mountain for two hours and there we found a group of Mixtecos. It was a really special experience because many of them did not speak Spanish, and their customs and lifestyles were very different from ours in the north part of the country. Their houses are of wood, and many of them live in extreme poverty.

There was a school whose students had to live far away from their parents in order to learn Spanish. Their homes were 2-3 hours away from the school. We gave them gifts which churches in the States had given us. We shared the love of Jesus with them. We learned a few words of their Mixteco language, and when we were ready to leave and return home to San Rafael, we felt the same emotion of sadness in leaving our new friends. Brothers, we want to go back again! Maybe for a longer period of time.

Thank you to the churches and friends who supported this project, for your prayers and good wishes! We would like to make two trips each year to help indigenous groups, and maybe God will give us the opportunity of starting new churches. This year we would like to go to San Luis Potosi and Chihuahua, and then in December, we'd like to go back to Oaxaca again, with God's help.

We are very grateful to the friends and churches that have supported us, and to Gary and Carol Olson for encouraging us in this trip and for praying for us. Also thanks to each one of you that prayed for us that all would go well and that God would guide us. Please keep on praying because this is God's work and He will continue blessing it!

Written by Rev. Juan Cortez  
Translated by Marge Erickson

## 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 July 2, 2004.

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

# MY HEART'S DESIRE

Marge Erickson

For seven consecutive winters it had been my great joy to go with Trinity's Mexico Team to Laredo/Mexico. But now six years had passed and I had a deep HEART'S DESIRE to go one more time. I was encouraged to pray, because of Psalm 20:4, "May the Lord grant you your HEART'S DESIRE and fulfill all your plans." God brought it all together, and fulfilled for me Psalm 21:22, "You have granted him THE DESIRE OF HIS HEART and have not withheld the request of his lips."

God wonderfully arranged the plans for ten of us retired people from Trinity to join other dear friends from New York, South Dakota, Indiana, and southwestern Minnesota for a couple weeks. Special things happen when we work together – there's a closeness that is formed and a deepening of friendships. The humor and laughter, along with accomplishing the work we came to do, makes for a very enjoyable experience.



The men did many different kinds of work projects, including shingling the roof over the porch on Hobart/Pfluger Hall, many painting jobs (both inside and out), constructing four sturdy picnic tables, electrical work, cleaning air filter systems, planting shrubs, picking oranges and grapefruits off the trees, telephone work, office work, installing lights on the porch, etc. Each of them used their God-given talents to glorify Him!

We ladies also "found our niche" and kept busy with jobs like housecleaning at the Guest House, the church, the Sunday School rooms, the annex and the "Upper Room." Also painting



(both inside and out), sorting used clothing for distribution in Mexico, washing windows, and we also took turns cooking for our large family of 17-20 or so.

Sunday, February 15, we attended two very special occasions. First, the installation of Ricardo Dominguez as the new pastor of Bethel Church (across the street from the Guest House) to replace Pastor Howard Haugen,



who had passed away a month before, after serving that congregation faithfully for many years. Pastor Byron Meline, president of the LALM Board, came from Minnesota to



officiate at the installation. It was a sacred and holy moment as men gathered around Ricardo to lay hands on him.

Following the potluck dinner at noon, we gathered again in the church for the dedication service for the new Hobart/Pfluger Hall which had been built in memory of Claire and Norma Hobart and Jim Pfluger.

Pastor Meline led this memorable service also. Members of the Hobart and Pfluger families shared, and all of the singing and special music were songs that Claire Hobart had written. It was so beautiful, especially the solo, "Let the Bells Ring On," which was sung by Mrs. Philip Anderson. We could 'almost' hear the bells of heaven being rung by Claire, Norma and Jim!

After the ribbon-cutting ceremony, a reception for about 100 people was held in the Hall. Friends from other churches joined in the festivities. Lots of LOVE, HARD WORK, MONEY AND PRAYER have gone into this beautiful, useful building, and it is our sincere prayer that young people on mission trips into Mexico will sense the Lord's presence there and desire to respond to God's call in their lives, wherever that may be!



Another highlight for our Trinity Team was the two-day



trip into Mexico to visit pastors and churches. All 15 of us gathered by the van that Wednesday morning at 8, where we joined hands in one big circle and were led in prayer for God's blessing on our trip. It was a long-to-be-remembered joy to visit pastors/locals in eight places, to hear first hand reports of their work, to see several new churches under construction, and to witness the faith, courage and enthusiasm of the pastors (and their wives! What an important role they play too!) We saw the little church at La Boca, from which has come eleven pastors.

By Thursday night we were back at the Border, and crossed without any problem whatsoever with our visas or the van. We were elated and recognized that God surely had blessed us. We sang lustily "Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow"!

Another unforgettable experience was attending the Sunday evening service in Nuevo Laredo. Our hearts were warmed at the enthusiastic singing of various groups, the testimonies, and the challenging message by Pastor Antonio. May God's continued hand of blessing be on all LALM pastors and congregations as they spread the Good News.

As we thank and praise God for the many blessings we experienced those two weeks, we are especially grateful to Gary and Carol for all the ways they showed love to us in many thoughtful ways. Their lives are a daily witness of their love and service to God and to people! We were all richly blessed.

I hold in my heart many precious memories of this 8<sup>th</sup> mission trip when God gave me "the desire of my heart" (Psalm 20:4) and "did not withhold the request of my lips" (Psalm 21:2). I was refreshed in every way by these experiences.

## Praise to God for His Blessings

Praise be to God for the blessings we received during our recent stay at the LALM border station in Laredo. This was our third winter trip to the mission and each experience keeps getting better and better. We had not yet had the opportunity to visit any of the churches in Mexico and we were praying that this might be possible this year. Our prayers were answered abundantly with not one, but two trips, visiting Atongo, San Rafael, La Boca, Saltillo, Philadelphia and Apodaca. The love of God and devotion to His work were evident in the dedication, patience and graciousness of these pastors and their families. They are truly giving their lives to carrying out the work of the Lord with total, unselfish commitment. Coupling

that with their ingenious ability to build something from little or nothing and be happy doing it, is indeed an inspiration for us.

At the border station, our tasks consisted of working on a porch for the Hobart-Pfluger Hall and general painting, cleaning and sprucing up in preparation for the dedication of the hall on February 15. We were privileged to be there for that festive occasion and for the installation of Ricardo Dominguez as pastor of Bethel Lutheran Church.

It was such a joy to reunite and share time with Carol and Gary Olson and friends from our two previous visits. Truly a time of renewal and a return to reality for us.

—Dave & Carol Copenhauer

# Outreach to Torreon, Mexico

February 28—March 8, 2004

Compiled by  
Pastor Dave Jore

## Thanksgiving For Blessings- Answers to Prayer

1. For the encouragement of Psalm 68:1 (Numbers 10:35), "Let God arise and let His enemies be scattered" and for a vision while singing this scripture song of us riding the bus on the way to Torreon and the enemies of the Lord being scattered in front of the bus.
2. For insight given in our commissioning service that we would be facing intense spiritual battle at different times, including demons that were lined up at the border, but also for a scripture that was shared from Numbers 14:9 about the enemies of God's people, "Their protection has been removed from them."
3. For one member of the group who received an unexpected donation for the trip of \$200 more than was needed. This was used to buy an overhead projector, which had been requested by Pastor Jesus Velazquez.
4. For Coua being able to receive a Mexican visa without having the proper documents and to be able go with the group to Mexico.
5. For Sue being able to get to a hospital in Laredo and receive medication that helped her be restored from a severe sore throat.
6. For the Lord's guidance as we cried out to Him when we were refused entrance into Mexico with our bus.
  - a. Three people were given the word at the same time to walk around the bus, which we did, singing, "We Are Marching In The Light of God." Some of us were disappointed after marching because we could not take our bus to Torreon. But others sensed that this was a part of our spiritual warfare for the upcoming trip into Mexico. The important thing was that we obeyed even if we did not understand.
  - b. Direction to secure a Mexican bus as we submitted to the leadership and counsel of LALM Director, Gary Olson, and our translator, Ricardo.
  - c. Confirmation of this decision through God's Word in Acts 27 by the example of the Apostle Paul who was



told by the Lord that he would bear witness for Him in Rome. It took Paul two ships to get to Rome even as it took us two buses to get to Torreon.

7. For the generosity of someone who paid the \$1,800 that was needed to rent the Mexican bus.
8. For a spirit of gratefulness and patience, and a lack of complaining even when there were long delays in waiting for the Mexican busses which included a 3:45 a.m. arrival in Torreon, and loading and unloading the bus many times.
9. For the timely devotional study on the fruit of the Spirit from Galatians 5:22-23, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control."
10. For the miracle of getting the black box, containing all our documents, back after we failed to take it off the bus in Torreon. The fruit of the Spirit we studied the day we discovered this loss was peace, which included the reading of Isaiah 26:3, "The steadfast of mind you keep in perfect peace because he trusts in you."
11. For prayer partners who encouraged us as we met with them each day.
12. For Spirit led ministry by those who did clowning, puppets, worship dance, and participated in songs of praise.
13. For the good work that was done by those who painted the inside of the church, re-surfaced the roof, did electrical work, and various cleaning projects.
14. For the strength the Lord gave to Tanya and those who worked with her in providing us with wonderful meals.
15. For the hospitality and kindness of Pastor Jesus Velazquez and his wife Rosalina, and the privilege of blessing them and their family with different gifts.
16. For the privilege of meeting Juan De Leon, who is the pastor of the Mission. We had the privilege of paying for



two months of past due bills from our outreach fund for water and lights for the Mission.

17. For the opportunity of sharing the Jesus movie in an evangelistic outreach for two nights on the streets outside of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church and to meet new brothers and sisters in Christ from this congregation.



18. For the opportunity of joining the people of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in another evangelistic outreach at the top of the hill beyond their church.



- a. The Lord had given us a word earlier from 1 Chronicles 11:4-5 that seemed to apply to this hill, noted for its drug addiction and prostitution. In this Bible passage we read that, King David and all Israel conquered the Jebusites who controlled Jerusalem, which was located on a high hill. "The inhabitants said to David, 'You shall not enter here.' Nevertheless, David captured the stronghold of Zion..."



- b. In spite of intense spiritual warfare on the hill, which included a very strong wind, we were able to share the gospel, under the leadership of Pastor Jesus, with the needy people of the area.

19. For a "Presidential Suite" for Judith and me in one corner of the church next to a pile of sand and for Judith who was used by the Lord as a "watchtower."

20. For the sense of unity as a group, which included LMTC students, youth and adults from LCM under the leadership of Luther Brown, LMTC alumni, and others.



21. For the faithfulness of the Director, Gary Olson, and his wife Carol in so many ways, including making arrangements for us to go to Torreon.
22. For an excellent translator, Ricardo, from LALM.
23. For good health for the entire trip with the exception of a few mild sore throats.

24. For good weather to and from Mexico and also while we were in Torreon.



25. For safety on the roads as we traveled about 4,000 miles and for two excellent bus drivers in Ken and Doug Swenson.

26. For the Lord touching all of us in different ways while we were on the trip so that we can say in a new way, "Our God is a living God. He is truly awesome and He works wonders!"

27. For a scripture the Lord gave us from the story of the blind man in Mark 8:22-26 who was healed as Jesus touched him twice. He was taken outside the city of



Bethsaida where there was a lot of unbelief and brought to a place where he was surrounded by followers of Jesus where there was faith and love. It was in this setting that Jesus did a new work in his life by enabling him to see. Jesus touched many of us on the trip and allowed us to see Him in new ways—for some, like Briana, it was a "first" touch, for others like Coty L., it was a "second" touch.

28. For the faithful prayer team of Alta, David L., and Kay, who remained at home and many others such as Pastor Fred Thoni and Pastor Mark Hultquist who stood with us in prayer.



29. For the final delay in Nuevo Laredo, Mexico, for about three hours. This indirectly was an answer to prayer for John Mayer who had asked the Lord for another opportunity to buy gifts from Mexico for his wife and three daughters. When he told his daughter Ruth about this, she said, "I like miracles."



30. For the privilege of following Jesus on the outreach to Torreon, MX, seeing Him extend His kingdom by using the 35 of us as His bond-servants, allowing us to proclaim His Word and to witness His miracles. To Him be all the glory and praise and honor!



# Gifts of Love



The following persons and organizations provided gifts, donations, or bequests to the Latin American Lutheran Mission in March through April of 2004. 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.

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 In loving memory of Bessie Westberg

The Banquet and Annual Conference of LALM is Monday, September 20th at Trinity Lutheran Church, Minnehaha Falls 5212 - 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue South Minneapolis, Minnesota 55417

Our theme this year is:

*“Lord of the Past,  
 Lord of the Future”*

We will be installing Pastor Richard Erickson as the new director of LALM. We will also be honoring Gary and Carol Olson for their years of service with the mission.

More details will be coming in the next issue of the Clarion.

### Please Note:

We have a new PO Box address for contributions.  
We also have a new e-mail address.

***New mailing address:***  
**Latin American Lutheran Mission**  
**PO Box 17385**  
**Minneapolis, MN 55417-7385**

***New e-mail address:***  
**lalmelcm@aol.com**

### LALM Prayer Warriors June 2004

*"Give thanks to the Lord for he is good; his love endures forever." Psalm 107:1*

How many times do we pause and thank God? We receive so much each day and I do not take time to say thank you Lord. My prayer is, teach me Lord to be more thankful. Thanks again for your faithfulness. God is working in Mexico and on the border. Thanks again for your support of Carol and me during these 14 years.

**Items of Praise:**

- Good board meeting in April
- Winter volunteers who have helped the ministry in so many ways
- Safe travel into Mexico
- Godly board of LALM
- Faithful prayer warriors
- Ministry of groups going into Mexico
- Outreach ministry at Rio Bravo
- Financial support for the radio ministry of Rev. Carlos De Leon
- Rev. Dick & Barb Erickson
- Safe return of Carol and Gary to the border from Minnesota
- Ricardo Dominguez and his many talents
- Birth of Daniela — Olson's new granddaughter

**Please continue to uphold:**

- Unity in the ELCM
- Prison ministry of Rev. Bulmaro Velasquez
- Healing for wife of Rev. Jesus Velasquez
- Revival in our hearts and into Mexico
- Moves for Gary & Carol and Dick & Barb
- Healing for V. Gary
- New ministry center in Monterrey
- Summer youth teams
- Summer youth volunteers
- Radio ministry of Rev. Carlos De Leon
- ELCM Leadership
- Healing for Rev. Cruz Herrera
- ELCM youth retreat in April
- Ministry of Gospel Bookstore
- Summer VBS
- New work in Nuevo Laredo
- Ricardo Dominguez and his ministry at Bethel and with the mission

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