

Missionary greetings from Bogota, Colombia! This is our Leadership & Development LIZWAN and Emmaus Road Foundation ministry update for October and November 2009. This is our last update for the year 2009. Instead of the regular update, next month you will receive our Annual Report.

This time we share the inspiring mission story of Community Lutheran Church in Geneva, MN and the testimony of one of our supporters who continues to faithfully bless our ministry in Colombia.

Celebrating significant mission relationships! In a true spirit of joy and thanksgiving, we celebrate particular mission relationships which have been -and continue to be - very instrumental in building our capacity to serve holistic human needs in Colombia. On this occasion, we celebrate the significant mission relationship Community Lutheran Church, in Geneva MN, has represented for the growth of the LIZWAN Ministry and its sister organization in Colombia, the Emmaus Road Foundation.



From left to right, Pastor James Arends (now Bishop La Crosse Area Synod), Pastor Barbara Wangsness, Pastor Natanael Lizarazo, Pastor Joel Xavier, and current Pastor Carrie H. Hoth.

It all started when Community Lutheran Church called Pastors Barbara Wangsness and Natanael Lizarazo to serve as their pastors toward the end of 1992. At that time, what is today The LIZWAN Ministry was just starting to germinate as the tiny seed that had been planted two years before at Trinity Lutheran Church in Edgemont, South Dakota.

From the very beginning, Community Lutheran Church joyfully embraced the opportunity for mission outreach with Colombia represented in what was then called the Colombian Scholarship Fund. Different WELCA groups, individual members, the children of the Sunday school and the Church Council became prayerfully and financially involved. The number of scholarships granted to poor students in Colombia grew significantly.

Celebratory worship at Community Lutheran!



Then in 1995, one of the members of Community Lutheran church, Joni Groth joined a Travel Seminar to Colombia led by Pastor Natanael Lizarazo. Seen with her own eyes and feeling with her own heart the real situation of poor people in Colombia, Joni returned energized to further share the story and the promise of God's mission in Colombia.



In the photo, Joni Groth and Pastor Barbara deep mission connection with Colombia.

Besides supporting scholarships, Community Lutheran Church also became a sister congregation with a mission congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Colombia, Cristo Vive (Christ Lives) in the

extremely poor southern part of Bogotá known as Ciudad Bolívar. Significant prayer and financial support was offered to this mission congregation for many years. Prayers, letters and photos were mutually exchanged. Another significant contribution Community Lutheran Church made to the Colombian Scholarship Fund was the fact that it facilitated a Bank Account to be opened in the local Geneva Bank thus making sure that proper accountability for funds received for mission in Colombia was always in place.



In the photo, Pastor Barbara and Alicia with Sheryl Lonning

In the providence and serendipity of God and though Community Lutheran Church may not always remember it, their calling of Pastors Barbara Wangsness and Natanael Lizarazo also became the instrumental factor for the whole Southeastern MN Synod to enter into an official Companion Synod Relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Colombia. With the same spirit of Joy and thanksgiving we celebrate the many and tangible mission blessings this Companion Synod Relationship has meant for God's mission in Colombia.

With profound gratitude we do acknowledge the valuable missionary leadership of Bishop Glenn Nycklemoe, who so joyfully embraced and made possible this Companion Synod Relationship. The mission leadership, joy and commitment of current Bishop Harold Usgaard and of the Global Mission/Companion Synod Committee, has been and continues to be, a truly significant factor for the ongoing growth of what is today Leadership & Development LIZWAN Inc (USA) and the Emmaus Road Foundation in Colombia! Thank you in the name of Christ!

Just recently, September 11-13, 2009, Community Lutheran Church joyfully observed its 100th Anniversary with truly festive celebrations and a vibrant worship service. Pastors Barbara Wangsness and Natanael Lizarazo were honored to be invited and with great joy attended the weekend celebrations. It was a precious time for the Founders of Leadership & Development LIZWAN Inc. to



gratefully recall and celebrate a flood of joint ministry and mission memories so joyfully accomplished by the people of God at Community Lutheran Church. Though Geneva, where Community Lutheran church is planted, is indeed a small Minnesota town, its mission outreach will always remain a truly large and significant contribution to God's ongoing mission in Colombia. The photos we are sharing in this update are all from the 100th Anniversary celebration!

In the photo, Both Pastors Barbara and Natanael address Community Lutheran congregation

A second related story we are sharing with you in this update is the testimony of Julie Vanden Heuvel, daughter of Elmer and Joan Vanden Heuvel, faithful members and leaders of Community Lutheran Church and generous supporters themselves of the LIZWAN Ministry and of missions in Colombia in general. Julie is a faithful supporter of educational opportunities here in Colombia. She writes:

“At every baptism at my church, the pastor extols the virtues of Godly adults in the lives of children. Children need to look up to adults — in addition to their parents — who share the same values and live out their faith. (And I sit in the pew silently cheering, “Yay for aunties!”) As an auntie to 14 nieces and nephews, that’s my mission in life. To give the kids an additional someone to look up to! With no kids of my own, I “adopt” other kids. Some of them happen to be related to me. One is not a blood relative, but she’s my “child in the faith.”

In the photo, Julie Vanden Heuvel and Pastors Natanael and Barbara



Brigitte Gonzalez is my sponsor child in Bogota, Columbia. She's graduating high school this fall and plans to attend college, and I'm very proud of her. Supporting Brigitte's education for many years has been a source of joy and blessing. But I know it's not about me – and I write this with the goal of thanking God for the privilege of being able to provide for another – both financially and in prayer.



I am grateful to the LIZWAN organization for their generosity and energy — for being the conduit through which I can give. Whether here in my neighborhood or around the world, the children are all looking for the same thing — someone to love them. Through LIZWAN, we can continue to tell them that Jesus is the one true source of love and life.”

In the photo, Pastor Barbara and Alicia standing with Elmer Vanden Heuvel

We take this opportunity to again thank all our supporters. Without your prayers, your financial gifts, your letters and, occasionally your visits, we could not accomplish what continues to be accomplished for the sake of leadership development, educational opportunities, people-to-people relationships, and servant mission with and among the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Colombia. Central to our ongoing commitment as mission-driven organizations is the joy of personalized ministry relationships. For us the statement of “mission with a true human face” is not just a slogan. It is what we are all about! We thank you for being integral part of our shared mission!

In the photo, Liz enjoys reconnecting with Grandma Norma Long, one of her many spiritual mentors.



We invite your ongoing prayers for:

- The acquisition of a house in Bogotá to further nurture and celebrate our shared mission relationships and also to gradually accomplish greater sustainability. You will hear more about this mission-drive project in our Annual Report.
- The implementation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Colombia's strategic planning for the years 2010 – 2020. Also for the celebration of its Annual Assembly which will take place in the month of February 2010 and includes the appointment of a new Bishop President.

Feel free to communicate with us! We like to hear from you! Our e-mail addresses are the following: ldlizwan@ielco.org (Colombia) lizwan@alliancecom.net and 4290@flcsf.org (USA). If for any reason you change your email address, we greatly appreciate letting us know so that we can keep you in our e-mailing list.

In Christ's love,

Stella Lizarazo

Executive Director Emmaus Road Foundation - Colombia