

**Warm greetings from Bogotá, Colombia to all of you our dear mission friends! This is our January 2011 Leadership & Development LIZWAN/Emmaus Road Foundation update.**

As we move deeper into this New Year 2011, we do so fully aware that the gift of Christmas is to be lived every day! Christmas is not just a one day's celebration but the daily life-giving presence of God, through our Savior Jesus, for all the days of our lives. God's name in the child Jesus, says it all: Immanuel! "God with Us"! Always! In thankful response to God's gift of Jesus, As LIZWAN/Emmaus Road Foundation we joyfully recommit to fresh new chapters of servant and empowering ministry throughout this year 2011!

In this update we share a remarkable story of empowerment, leadership and hope, a story which brings



to life our ongoing work as LIZWAN/Emmaus Road Foundation. It is the personal story of Ariel and his family. Additionally, we share with you the ongoing developments for the House of Hospitality which we are pursuing in direct cooperation with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Colombia – IELCO.

*In the photo Ariel's family in the terrace of his house (left to right): Ariel's sister in law, Ariel (gray t-shirt), Ariel's brother Jorge, Ariel's daughter Derly (red shirt), Ariel's daughter Lizbeth and Ariel's wife (black and white shirt).*

Ariel is the oldest of three children in the family of Alvaro and Hilda. This family is from El Cocuy in the State of Boyacá, the place where the Lutheran Church of Colombia was born. Ariel's family is a poor family that has been integral part of the Lutheran Church of Colombia. Ariel attended the rural



elementary school of The Savior's Lutheran Church where Pastor Natanael taught and worked before going to Seminary. This school had to close its doors when the violence of the Colombian conflict intensified and forced many families to move to other places in order to protect their lives and to avoid the forced recruitment by guerrillas of their children.

*In the photo, Ariel working in his cheese business*

Ariel's family moved to Bogotá, the Capital city of Colombia in the late eighties. When they moved, they had not much at all to bring along to the big city. No money, no connections and no place where to live. And yet God provided. Néilda, a member of St. Paul Lutheran Church who is also from El Cocuy, opened her home to them and was extremely generous and patient when the family could not afford the rent money.

***In the photo, Ariel's Christian leadership is also evident in the life of the Church.***



Once Ariel's family got more used to the many life challenges in the big city, education was a main concern for the family. Ariel had only completed his elementary school. His two brothers, Jorge and Andrés also needed to be enrolled in school. And the family had no money to do so. Yet God provided. By then LIZWAN was already in place and scholarships were granted so that poor students could see their dream of education realized. Ariel obviously was granted such scholarship and he truly was self-motivated to attend high school. Despite many challenges, Ariel persisted! Amazingly, he did all six years of high school in three years and attending a nightly school. Though Ariel did not go beyond high school, Ariel is today a very successful entrepreneur, committed Christian leader and a founding and previous board member of the Emmaus Road Foundation. By the grace of God, those scholarships Ariel received became the passport to a better and dignified life for him and his family.

By the time Ariel graduated from High school, Pastors Barbara and Natanael had purchased a house in Bogotá and Ariel's family was blessed to move in 1992. The house had a small place where a previous store had existed. There was also a small garage in the house. Trusting in the provision of God, the family opened a vegetable store and Ariel used the garage to start a very small pizza business. Though there were many challenges at the beginning, both businesses not only survived but also thrived. Ariel's family still owns the store, though it is not a vegetable store anymore.

***In the photo, Ariel's pizza business (right) and Ariel's family small store (left).***



Ariel has done remarkably well with the pizza business and has opened a new business of cheese distribution in the city. Thanks God, Ariel's family has been able to purchase the house from Pastors Natanael and Barbara. As for Ariel, he continues with the pizza business, has purchased his very own home and has a truck-distributing cheese business as well. Many of you who have visited us here in Colombia very likely have met Ariel and his family as it is a place we go to eat pizza after visiting the Good Samaritan Elderly Community Center in Soacha. Through the pizza business, Ariel has been able to provide employment to other family members of his wife. Ariel is married to Aura Helena, also from El Cocuy. They have two beautiful daughters Derly and Lizbeth who are currently in high school.

As for Ariel brothers Jorge and Andrés, they two received scholarships and have completed university and technical schools. Jorge continues to serve in the Department of Communications of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Colombia and Andrés is a committed Christian leader in his congregation as well. As of September 2010, Andrés and Jorge have started a café Internet business near Ariel's business which is doing well so far! To God alone the glory!

Ariel's story and that of his family is a living testimony of transformation and empowerment thanks to the amazing generosity of you our mission supporters in the United States. It is also a real fulfillment of the motto of the LIZWAN Ministry which states "**Investing in holistic alternatives to empower Colombia's poor**". We thank you indeed dear mission friends for your investments in the lives of the poor here in Colombia! Like Ariel, many other families have been – and continue to be - blessed, equipped and empowered to live a dignified life, to break away from the cycle of poverty, to become committed Christian leaders, and to become productive and responsible citizens! To God be the glory and to you our heart-felt gratitude! Your prayers, encouragement and gifts matter immensely! They continue to make a significant good difference here in Colombia!

**\*NOTE: Last names have been omitted in this update for security reasons.**

**Ongoing developments for the House of Hospitality:** In cooperation with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Colombia, we as LIZWAN/Emmaus Road Foundation Ministry continue to work diligently in fully establishing our House of Hospitality in Bogota. The two story house where this Project will take place is now empty-it was rented until December 2010- and an architect has been hired to estimate the costs and improvements this house requires to make it fully operational. Furthermore, the Boards of Directors of both organizations are working together on a marketing study as well as on a business plan for this house. We will continue to keep you updated about the developments of this exciting and self-sustainable mission Project. Please click here to see a view of the inside and outside of the house. Link to see video: <http://www.emmausroadfoundation.org/media.html>

**This month we are praying for:**

- Ongoing planning and implementation of the House of Hospitality Mission Project.
- Ecclesial Council Meeting and extraordinary Assembly of the Lutheran Church of Colombia- IELCO which will take place from February 17 – 19, 2011.

- Upcoming visit to Colombia of the Evangelical Lutheran Good Samaritan Society.

Feel free to communicate with us! We like to hear from you! Our e-mail addresses are the following: [ldlizwan@ielco.org](mailto:ldlizwan@ielco.org) (Colombia) [lizwan@alliancecom.net](mailto:lizwan@alliancecom.net) and [4290@flcsf.org](mailto:4290@flcsf.org) (USA). If for any reason you change your e-mail address, we greatly appreciate letting us know so that we can keep you in our e-mailing list. If you know of anyone interested in our ministry, feel free to share this information! Our English and Spanish Webpage is now in place. We invite you to communicate with us that way too. You can find us at <http://www.emmausroadfoundation.org>. Follow us on [Facebook](#) by searching for Leadership & Development LIZWAN.

In Christ's love,

**Stella Lizarazo**

Executive Director Emmaus Road Foundation – Colombia