



**Missionary greetings from our home and work in Sioux Falls, South Dakota!** With great joy we share our 2007 LIZWAN Newsletter!

On behalf of all our program participants, the Board of Directors of the Emmaus Road Foundation and its Director, Stella Lizarazo, and the LIZWAN Board of Directors here in the USA, we take this opportunity to thank each of you for your ongoing support and confidence in our ministry! Thanks to your faithful generosity, together we celebrate the healing mission work that took place in 2007.

2007 was an extremely busy year in terms of developing clear governance policies as well as further organizing the necessary legal aspects of our newly established, The Emmaus Road Foundation in Colombia. Integral to this working process was the visioning & planning of our ongoing work. Additionally, we worked very intentionally to further strengthen our mission relationships with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Colombia & with the Lutheran organizations, churches and individuals in the United States which continue to support the LIZWAN Ministry with their prayers & gifts.

Since each year we have new supporting friends, we consider it important to explain the existing relationship between Leadership & Development LIZWAN & the Emmaus Road Foundation. Here is a brief explanation.

**Leadership & Development LIZWAN is our organization here in the United States.** Its

humble beginnings go back to 1991, at Trinity Lutheran Church in Edgemont, South Dakota. Throughout these 16 years, it has been known as Penny Project for Colombia, Colombian Scholarship Fund, Colombian Scholarship Fund & Leadership Initiatives and finally, as Leadership & Development LIZWAN. It is indeed God's amazing miracle! What started with humble pennies continues to grow as a tree of many branches. Leadership & Development LIZWAN is incorporated under South Dakota law.

**The Emmaus Road Foundation is our sister organization in Colombia.** It is fully regulated by Colombian law. It was established in order to provide a clear accountability to those we serve - to the Lutheran Church of Colombia, the Colombian government itself & to all who, by virtue of their gifts, are part of our shared mission relationships between the USA & Colombia.

The Emmaus Road Foundation will carry out the ministry goals in Colombia & serve as the legal entity before the Colombian government. This way we comply with the legal requirements of Colombia while providing the highest level of efficiency and accountability. In turn, Leadership & Development LIZWAN supports the Emmaus Road Foundation with prayers, financial & leadership resources!

We are confident God will continue to guide our mission in this war-torn country of Colombia through the work of The Emmaus Road Foundation & through our growing mission relationships here in the USA. To God be the glory & to you our faithful supporters, our most sincere & heart-felt gratitude!

**With missionary gratitude, we wish you a Joyful Christmas 2007 & a Blessed New Year 2008!** Natanael, Barbara & Alicia, LIZWAN Founders!

### Services provided in 2007

Thanks to your financial gifts, the following vital LIZWAN services were provided in 2007:

**Formal Education:** A total of 84 scholarships were granted in 2007. The distribution of these scholarships was as follows: 16 elementary school scholarships, 37 secondary school scholarships and 31 university scholarships! A total of 12 Lutheran congregations and missions were blessed through this particular service.

**Meal A Day Program:** A total of 217 children and youth participated in this particular service from the congregations of St. John's Lutheran in Piedecuesta, Las Delicias Lutheran Mission in Ibagué, and Only by Faith Lutheran Church in southern Bogotá. For most of the participants, this meal is the only balanced meal they receive during the day. This program covers the ten months of the school year.

**Evangelism Support:** A great challenge faced by some Lutheran congregations and missions is the lack of financial resources to pay a full time pastor or evangelist. This is particularly true in places where the concentration of internally displaced people is highly visible. In 2007, we completed a three year financial support project toward the salary of Pastor Gustavo Torres of St. Matthew Lutheran Church in Bogotá, a congregation made up primarily of poor and displaced people. St. Matthew is growing thanks to having a full time pastor.

Financial resources were also given in 2007 toward a national training seminar for 26 Sunday school teachers of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Colombia.

**Home Ownership Loans:** Since we started this service, 14 different families have been blessed with a home of their own. Our goal in providing these loans is to improve the quality of life for Lutheran families, foster responsibility,

encourage self-sustainability, and provide needed incentives for those who are working to advance the Gospel in Colombia.

**Leadership Development Seminars:** This year we offered two leadership development seminars to our scholarship participants in Bogotá. Themes included Christian values, Lutheran identity, self-esteem, conflict resolution and responsible relationships.

**25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Department for Mission & Development- IELCO:** LIZWAN provided financial resources for the celebration of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Department for Mission & Development of the Lutheran Church of Colombia. This collaboration further strengthens our ongoing relationship with IELCO and its Departments. Resources were also shared with the Lutheran Church of Colombia for a united worship service on Reformation Sunday.

**Other Services.** Again in 2007 we provided bilingual communication and facilitation services to the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Colombia. This included communication, facilitation, and translation for two different mission trips to Colombia by the Evangelical Lutheran Good Samaritan Society and by the Southeastern Minnesota Synod – ELCA.

Furthermore, LIZWAN provided hospitality, facilitation and translation for the November 2007 visit of Martha Wilches to the Evangelical Lutheran Good Samaritan Society & other Lutheran organizations here in the USA. Martha is the Director of the Mission & Development Department of the Lutheran Church of Colombia – IELCO.

As you see, your gifts were truly blessed and multiplied in many ways! **Thanks be to God! Thanks be to you! What we can do together always far exceeds what we can do alone!**

### *Thanks from LIZWAN participants!*

We wish we could share every word of gratitude we receive, but space is limited. Here we share two samples which portrait the leadership we expect of those supported through our LIZWAN ministry. These personal stories illustrate the kind of leaders which are urgently needed both in church and society!

(1) “My name is Iris Jazmín Camargo Franco. I was born in Vichada, in Meta State. I was born in a Christian family, therefore my spiritual development started at a very early age. My education has blessed me with opportunities to serve God and serve God’s people.

In 1998, I requested financial support from Leadership & Development LIZWAN to get my college degree as a nurse. In 2002, with God’s and LIZWAN’s support, I was able to graduate as a nurse. The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Colombia gave me the opportunity to start exercising my profession at La Nohora in Villavicencio, where the Lutheran Church of Colombia is now present. After 8 months the Lutheran Church of Colombia gave me the opportunity to work as a social worker in Villa Hermosa, a displaced community also in Villavicencio. Here I grew immensely not only spiritually but professionally as well.

Right now I am working at Playa Rica, another vulnerable community in Villavicencio. I have gained great knowledge in conflict resolution, prevention of social conflicts, psycho-social attention, sports & culture. Through training seminars and participative activities we are making children and youth aware and encouraging to work together, seeking the common well-being of the community.

As a participant of the LIZWAN Scholarship Program, I testify their support has been one of the greatest incentives in my life. Getting my

education has contributed to my aim to serve others.

Today, I give thanks to God and to LIZWAN for giving me this opportunity. My studies provide the financial resources I need to live and at the same time allow me to serve and love my neighbor as God has instructed us. May God continue to bless you! I pray you continue to provide support for the education of those who need it so they can have a better future & life, as I have”.

(2) From St. Matthew Lutheran Church in Bogotá, Pastor Gustavo Torres, a LIZWAN scholarship recipient who recently graduated with a Theology Degree from Universidad Javeriana, writes about what the LIZWAN financial support to St. Matthew has meant:

“Dear brothers and sister in Christ: Our Lord Jesus Christ has come to rescue & call people to work in His ministry and for the sake of His redeeming work. We believe you are part of the called ones and therefore receive God’s richest blessings for serving God’s Kingdom.

On behalf of St. Mathew Lutheran Church, I want to express our most sincere gratitude for the support you have given to our Church. Your support made possible the evangelistic work of this Church for three years in a row.

The financial resources you provided were used to help pay my salary as a full time pastor. Thanks to your support many individuals & families heard God’s word, changed their lives and now rejoice in their new Christian life in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ. Together we continue building a new Colombia based on love, forgiveness, solidarity, tolerance and a sense of shared life. Our gratitude is also extended to our brothers and sisters in the United States, whose contributions make possible the spreading of the Gospel in the world”

### ***Our ongoing challenges & opportunities!***

2007 has been a fruitful year! Significant energy & leadership were invested in The Emmaus Road Foundation in Colombia. We have made great efforts to strengthen communication with our supporters in Colombia & here in the USA. Furthermore, we continue to be very intentional in building mutual mission relationships with our supporting individuals & organizations such as the Southeastern Minnesota Synod–ELCA, The Evangelical Lutheran Good Samaritan Society, The Lutheran Church of Colombia, First Lutheran Church in Sioux Falls & other supporting congregations.

Although Leadership & Development LIZWAN literally started with pennies, by no means is our vision a small vision. Without forgetting our humble beginnings our compelling vision now is one that involves constant new growth, new partnerships & mission-driven relationships! We know that by God's amazing power, even small mustard seeds grow & become trees of many branches. The last 16 years of ministry prove this Gospel truth so powerfully to the glory of God and to the service of holistic human needs!

To further strengthen mutual mission possibilities in Colombia & here in the USA, we have launched our office of written translation for English-Spanish in Bogotá. In 2008, we will seriously explore the feasibility of establishing a Spanish-English language school in Bogotá. Our special thanks to The Evangelical Lutheran Good Samaritan Society and to the Southeastern Minnesota Synod for using our translation services for some of their materials.

**Should you know of anyone needing translation services, please encourage them to contact us. We will be very glad to serve!**

We will continue to work with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Colombia, as together we seek to also formalize an ongoing program of

hospitality, mutual mission immersions, and people to people exchanges between the USA and Colombia. In such a context, we will learn from each other, befriend each other & support each other in the common task of carrying out God's mission in our turbulent yet hopeful times. These programs will be shared with churches, colleges, seminaries, universities, and any interested organizations.

These new tools will significantly strengthen our joint institutional capacity for servant mission as Leadership & Development LIZWAN, as Emmaus Road Foundation & as Evangelical Lutheran Church of Colombia.

In light of this mission-driven spirit, we are firmly convinced that unless there is a sense of mutuality in our relationships, the results of such relationships will not be as wholesome, healing, transforming & enriching as God intends them to be. Though we Colombians cannot offer financial gifts to you here in the USA, nevertheless we have gifts to share with you, dear brothers and sisters – such as our joy for the Gospel, our tested faith, our holistic understanding of mission & our evangelistic fervor, to name a few.

We wholeheartedly invite all of you to be part of these mission opportunities! The ongoing challenge we face is to keep inviting other mission-minded people to be part of these mutually transforming possibilities. Please help us build a movement of mutuality & transformation! Please help us to further connect supporting individuals, congregations & organizations in this movement of empowering relationships and Christian community! Please help us to tell the story!

As we move forward, we ask that besides your letters and financial gifts you will also bless these unfolding possibilities with the precious gift of your prayers! **We always welcome your suggestions and ideas as well!**

### *Emerging possibilities to address mutuality!*

As we write this Annual Newsletter, plans are unfolding for three mission trips to Colombia in 2008. These trips will provide exciting opportunities to know first hand the context and the impact of the mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Colombia in general, and of the LIZWAN Ministry in particular!

These mission trips are being planned by Custer Lutheran Fellowship, Custer SD, the Evangelical Lutheran Good Samaritan Society and First Lutheran Church in Sioux Falls. These trips will provide personal people-to-people interaction and will follow in the footsteps of the previous 2007 mission trips by the Evangelical Lutheran Good Samaritan Society and by the Southeastern Minnesota Synod – ELCA. We ask your prayers for these fresh mission opportunities!

Pr. Larry Peterson, Director of Native American Ministries of our ELCA South Dakota Synod and Founding/Board Member of Leadership & Development LIZWAN, will be participating in the mission trip organized by Custer Lutheran Fellowship. This will be the second time Pastor Larry visits Colombia. We are grateful for his passionate leadership for missions in Colombia. Pr. Larry will be retiring in 2008. We welcome his amazing joy and commitment to cross-cultural & global missions!

We also take this opportunity to recognize the significant contribution Larry's beloved mother, **Ms. Virginia Peterson**, continues to make to the LIZWAN Ministry. Virginia has supported the university education of one professional nurse, one medical doctor and the ongoing Meal a Day for Displaced children. The generosity of this family continues to significantly impact for good the LIZWAN Ministry! Thanks Pr. Larry and Virginia!

As Pr. Larry retires from Native American Ministry in the South Dakota Synod, we are prayerfully discerning possibilities to deepen the mission connections between Lutherans in the USA and Lutherans in Colombia.

To this effect, we are exploring concrete ways to mutually engage in an intentional process of ongoing reflection and implementation of mission relationships that take seriously the realities of people living in poverty, cross-cultural and global mission, justice and peace, holistic evangelism, empowering mission encounters, and addressing the sinful scandal of racism.

As ELCA pastors who are blessed with real experiences and relationships in the above mentioned realities, we have precious gifts we are willing to offer to the church. We are convinced that the real world of the twenty-first century and third millennium requires the church to creatively engage in these realities with a fresh sense of imagination, evangelical faithfulness and urgency. If we fail to do so, we run the serious risk of becoming highly irrelevant, disconnected from the real world and lose our God-given missional ferment!

With humble evangelical conviction, we believe that without mutuality of relationships, even with the best of all intentions, we continually perpetuate false assumptions and unhealthy dependencies robbing us of mutual transformation. As we move forward, we will intentionally provide opportunities for people-to-people transformational relationships!

We will keep you updated about our developments. Besides our current supporting network, we pray others will learn about these mission possibilities and consider joining us. Feel free to help us spread the word! We treasure your prayers and ongoing support!

### **Specific ways you can support LIZWAN!**

We kindly invite your gifts! Whether they are small or large, they always go long ways!

- First, the gift of your prayers!
- Sharing our story with your family, friends and congregation!
- \$200 provides one meal a day for one displaced child for a year!
- \$200 provides a scholarship for one elementary or secondary student!
- \$500 provides a scholarship for a university student!
- \$1,000 provides help for a pastor or evangelist in an economically challenged Lutheran mission or congregation!
- \$1,000 provides seed money toward home ownership loans!
- Smaller or larger gifts are welcome!

### **Unfolding sustainability dreams!**

To sustain & improve the services we offer and to expand our capacity the Board of Directors of the Emmaus Road Foundation in Colombia are already envisioning having adequate ministry facilities in Bogota. Such facilities will house our offices, additional office space for renting, housing visiting groups, a computer training center, a library, training classrooms, the school of languages, two apartments, parking space and a business store, among other possibilities.

Once built and furnished, these facilities will be self-sustainable. **To accomplish this mission-driven project, \$300,000 is needed.** These envisioned facilities are critically essential to improving our services and facilitating an intentional experience of Christian community, missiological reflection and action, mutual transformation & empowerment, and people-to-people relationships. Friends, this is a truly possible dream! We invite you to join us as we ourselves pledge our wholeheartedly support!

Paraphrasing a statement from 'Power Surge' by Pastor Michael Foss, we agree: **"if your mission is not big enough that it will take God to accomplish it, then it is too small."**

Firmly convinced we are following God's lead to serve holistic human needs, we are inviting individuals, congregations and organizations in Colombia and in the USA to be part of this possible dream! If you have interest in becoming a founding member as individual, congregation, or organization, please let us know. To build these facilities will take:

- 100 individuals giving \$1,000
- 50 individuals giving \$2,000
- 5 congregations giving \$10,000
- 10 congregations giving \$5,000
- Other smaller or larger gifts

### **Where to send your gifts**

Our thanks to all of you who already have sent your 2008 gifts! For those of you who still are planning to do so, please do so now. For tax purposes, we recommend all checks be written to either the Southeastern Minnesota Synod or to First Lutheran Church. On the memo line please state which LIZWAN program you are supporting.

Within the Southeastern Minnesota Synod, please send gifts to the Synod offices in Rochester: 1001 - 14<sup>th</sup> Street NW, Suite 300 Rochester, MN 55901. **Outside Minnesota, send your gifts to Leadership & Development LIZWAN, 47237 - 257<sup>th</sup> Street, Renner SD, 57055.**

We send monthly updates via email about the LIZWAN Ministry. If you want to receive them please send us your email. Feel free to contact us at [lizwan@alliancecom.net](mailto:lizwan@alliancecom.net) or at [4290@flcsf.org](mailto:4290@flcsf.org) (USA). Stella can be reached at [ldlizwan@ielco.org](mailto:ldlizwan@ielco.org) (Colombia). **From our home to yours, Blessed New Year 2008!**