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Equipping Leaders in North and Central America...

A major focus for CALMS is equipping leaders. We do this by sending staff, individual volunteers and short-term teams to build the capacity of Central American leaders. We focus on the leadership needs that the Central American leaders themselves identify and try to match their needs with North American volunteers who are able to provide the needed training.

Examples of CALMS volunteers equipping leaders include the following:

A CALMS staff member recently teamed up with a top expert on the topic of Islam to help equip Central American leaders understand and respond to the growing Muslim populations in their countries.



Dr. Roland Miller (right), an author of numerous books on Islam and leading Lutheran expert on the subject, shares insights about how to build relationships with Muslims with leaders of the Iglesia Luterana de Panama (IELPA) during a recent seminar organized by CALMS. IELPA president, Milton Castillo (left) participated in the two-day seminar along with dozens of other Panamanian leaders.

A small team of volunteers made up of CALMS board members and others recently shared several seminars for 35 key church leaders in Panama on the topics Christian stewardship and how to grow the church through missional small groups. These were topics specifically requested by the leaders.



Grace Hughey, Director of Relational Ministries at St John Lutheran Church, Ellisville, Missouri (standing) leads one of several workshops about how to develop and grow missional small groups for national and congregational leaders in Panama in April 2009.

A small team of volunteers especially recruited by CALMS helped a pastor and his members develop a mission statement and business plan for a new school he hopes to start next year. The team was made up of four experienced Christian educators with over 100 years of experience in all aspects of education including administration, early

childhood education, teacher preparation, and school guidance. The Central American pastor/educator stated after the week-long consultation: “This experience has been invaluable. I believe this team has helped me identify what I need to do and avoid many mistakes. We have a lot better opportunity of being successful with our new school thanks to this special CALMS’ team.”



Pastor Luis Jasinto (far left) interacts with members of a four person team from Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, Houston, Texas, who helped him and his key leaders during a weeklong consultation in August 2008 to develop a vision and business plan for a new school that he and his congregation hope to begin in 2010.

A short-term team recently equipped a group of Sunday school teachers in a church in Guatemala to teach more creatively by using drama, puppets, video, and other effective means. They not only shared the concepts, but helped their partners practice their new skills and gave helpful feedback. They also gave their partners helpful resources related to their assignment such as puppets, a design for a puppet stage, examples of dramas in Spanish, books and videos.



A CALMS' team from Concordia Seminary helped Guatemalan young people put on a puppet show at "Santa Cruz" Clinic near Amatitlan, Guatemala during a May 2009 outreach to children living near the clinic.

As CALMS has discovered, one of the most effective ways to make a difference in Central America is to equip leaders who in turn are able to train others for effective mission and ministry.

If you or someone you know is interested in helping equip leaders or would yourself like to grow in your cross-cultural understanding and skills, contact CALMS about opportunities to serve and learn.

Pray for Us...

Ask God to bless Miles and Elma Richmond, new CALMS' missionaries to Guatemala, as they move to Guatemala to serve as counselors for CALMS' housing ministry in Guatemala. Pray for their protection and strong relationships with their Guatemalan partners.

Thank God for the many volunteers in the United States who are preparing for missionary service through CALMS' short-term teams in the fall of 2009 and spring and summer of 2010! Pray that God will help prepare them with servant hearts, zeal for sharing their faith with others and a willingness to learn.

Ask the Lord to be with the Lutheran Church of Panama (IELPA) and its leaders. Especially pray for a new pastor Jose Angel Fernandez who was installed on August 15 as pastor of "Jesus Divino Salvador" in Rio Rita, Panama. Ask God to guide the ministry of Pastor Jose Angel as he serves his members in Rio Rita and as he helps his congregation share the Gospel with people in nearby communities.



Pastor Ruben Avila from “Gloria Dei” Lutheran Church in Panama City (left) gives a stole made by the Lutheran ladies from “Dios Es Grande” congregation in Loma Cova, Panama to Pastor Jose Angel Fernandez (right) at his installation as pastor in Rio Rita, Panama on August 15, 2009.