

Dear friends of the Colombian Scholarship Fund & Leadership Initiatives LIZWAN:

Grace and peace to you from our Lord Jesus Christ! It gives us great joy to share this September 2003 Newsletter with you!

My name is Aura Stella Lizarazo. I am the Director of the Colombian Scholarship Fund & Leadership Initiatives LIZWAN since January. I give thanks to God for the opportunities and blessings He has given me and for using me now as a real candle of hope for my people here in war-torn Colombia!

Many positive changes are happening for the Colombian Scholarship Fund & Leadership Initiatives LIZWAN now that there is a full time Director. As Director, my daily work involves mentoring students, offering leadership seminars, taking care of our growing administrative work, translating correspondence, offering spiritual formation to our students and engaging in ongoing planning and evaluation. In relating to our national church, my work involves facilitating communication between sister congregations in the United States & the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Colombia - IELCO.

We started 2003 filled with fresh hopes and envisioning an efficiently organized ministry. A big leap of faith happened on January 15th when I officially begun my work as Director. Currently we are also working towards establishing a National Board of Directors to relieve the Council of San Pablo Lutheran Church from further administration. It is our hope to have this Board of Directors by December or early January.

Pastors Natanael and Barbara, along with their daughter Alicia, continue working tirelessly for this empowering ministry. Thanks to their great love towards Colombia, leadership development, evangelism, service to human needs, educational opportunities and hope continue to be available to poor and hurting people in Colombia.

I take this opportunity to thank those of you who have supported and continue to support our ministry in Colombia. It is thanks to your ongoing generosity that our work is possible. We continue to see faces filled with hope, kids with no hunger, poor families with shelter, people taking up leadership roles and young people getting their formal education thanks to your gifts and prayers.

Yes indeed! Your faithful support makes possible for those whose wings have been cut to fly again! You continue to give light to those whose candles have been extinguished. You are the answer from God to poor Colombian sisters and brothers. We thank you in the name of Christ!

We hope you will continue supporting our shared ministry. Let's offer our prayers so that peace may reign in God's world. May the immeasurable love of our God be with you and guide your steps every day. I invite you to communicate with us. I would be happy to hear from you. Our email address is becaslizwan@ielco.org. You can also write to us via regular mail at this address: Calle 75 # 20-54, Bogotá, Colombia.

BISHOP USGAARD, SOUTHEASTERN MN SYNOD, VISITS COLOMBIA!

On January 10, 2003 Bishop Harold Usgaard arrived at El Dorado Airport here in Bogotá. It was the same day the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Colombia opened its National Assembly. Bishop Harold was present during the 2nd day of the Assembly where he briefly spoke and shared greetings. Bishop Usgaard also honored us with his presence during the Assembly closing worship.

All of us were very pleased to have Bishop Harold with us at St. Paul Lutheran Church. As a Companion Synod to the Lutheran Church of Colombia, a significant level of support for the ministry of the CSFLI comes from faithful individuals and congregations in the Southeastern Minnesota Synod.

About 30 beneficiaries and the members of St. Paul's Council were honored to host Bishop Usgaard & share with him what our ministry is about. The beneficiaries joyfully shared with him the tangible benefits and blessings they have received from the Colombian Scholarship Fund & Leadership Initiatives LIZWAN. They thanked God, the Founders of this ministry and for all of you the people of God who generously support it. It was an emotional time for Bishop Usgaard and for all of us.

Bishop Usgaard was very happy to be able to meet and talk personally with some of the beneficiaries of the Colombian Scholarship Fund & Leadership Initiatives LIZWAN. He encouraged them to commit themselves to work for God's kingdom while getting their education.

Before leaving, Bishop Usgaard visited some of the Lutheran Churches in Bogotá as well as some popular places in Bogotá. When asked what message he would leave for the Lutheran Church of Colombia, he said:

"Dear brothers and sisters in the Gospel: It has been a privilege to visit you even though it was for a very short time. Bishop Nehemías and his family made me feel like at home. I was able to meet many of the members of Lutheran Churches in Bogotá. You all made me feel welcome. Thank you! Your brothers and sisters at the Southeastern Minnesota Synod keep you always in their prayers. They continue praying for Colombia's peace and for your safety. They give thanks to God for giving you such strong faith! Shalom".

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT SEMINARS

Our goal as Colombian Scholarship Fund & Leadership Initiatives LIZWAN is to provide real opportunities of formal education, Christian leadership and holistic development among poor and displaced families in the Lutheran Church of Colombia.

This year two seminars about Lutheran Theology have been offered. The first seminar was offered to beneficiaries of the CSFLI and leaders of St. Paul Lutheran Church. Lutheran Liturgy was the theme of the seminar. 30 beneficiaries attended this important seminar, which gave them biblical and practical leadership skills.

The second seminar was offered to eight evangelists of the Lutheran Church of Colombia, last April. The seminar was held at the Retreat Center of the Lutheran Church of Colombia. This time the theme was Lutheran theology. The Colombian Scholarship Fund & Leadership Initiatives LIZWAN sponsored this leadership development seminar.

Events like this are possible thanks to your support! Not only recipients of scholarships are benefiting from these seminars but also the Evangelical Lutheran Church itself gets great benefits by having well prepared leaders. Leadership development will continue to be one of our highest priorities!

LOANS FOR HOME OWNERSHIP

Three more people have made real the dream of owning their home this year thanks to loans from the Colombian Scholarship Fund & Leadership Initiatives LIZWAN. They are: Ariel Díaz, member of St. Paul Lutheran Church, Dionicio Lizarazo, Evangelist of St. Mathew Lutheran Church in Northwestern Bogotá, and I, Stella Lizarazo. How thankful we are to be blessed with a home of our own!!! All three of us have been beneficiaries of the Colombian Scholarship Fund!

The relentless poor economy makes it impossible for people to own a house. Most people, especially in big cities, pay rent all their lives. So far, we have helped five people to get a house of their own, enabling them to move the scale a little bit more towards the bright side of life as it unfolds in Colombia!

Although we live far away and face different realities, know that through the ministry of

the Colombian Scholarship Fund & Leadership Initiatives LIZWAN we always feel united to you in a common mission.

In this spirit, we give thanks to God for all and each one of you! We also give thanks to God for the tireless work the Founders of the Colombian Scholarship Fund & Leadership Initiatives LIZWAN continue to invest for the sake of God's mission here in Colombia!

More than a ministry with just financial needs, the Colombian Scholarship Fund & Leadership Initiatives LIZWAN is an empowering ministry that is meeting real basic needs in Jesus name! From the bottom of our hearts, thank you for all the light, hope and leadership you continue to bring to our lives, to our families and to our Lutheran churches!

PLANTING IN GOOD SOIL...

As proactive ministry organization, we do evaluate the work we do in order to know if we are achieving our goals. At the end of every calendar year, our university and technical students write an essay that allows them to see what progress and leadership goals they have accomplished.

Since this is my first official communication with you, I take this opportunity to share what I have personally achieved thanks to the Colombian Scholarship Fund & Leadership Initiatives LIZWAN. Other students will do the same in the future!

"In many ways, I owe what I am today to the Colombian Scholarship Fund & Leadership Initiatives LIZWAN! This includes getting my education from elementary school through college, being able to study in the United States, and now having a wonderful job and a better life. Regarding my growth as a person, I am now a Christian professional with bilingual leadership skills.

With blessing also comes responsibility! As I look at the violent reality of Colombia, I feel

it is my privilege and responsibility to work toward improving people's lives in a holistic manner. I am committed to making my contributions to Colombia and to the Lutheran Church of Colombia by putting into practice my professional skills and leadership training. Being the Director of this ministry is allowing me to do so in different ways.

The fruits we are harvesting are real; not only for me but also for many Colombian Lutherans. In God's own time, we will have peace and justice. Having received so much, I commit all my gifts to the work of God's kingdom in Colombia. Many gifted leaders continue to be nurtured in the fertile womb of the Lutheran Church of Colombia. Thank you for giving us wings to fly!"

WE NEED YOUR HELP!!!

To improve communication, from now on we will produce a one page monthly report highlighting aspects of our ministry and of the situation of Colombia. We will include specific prayers concerns. Our goal is to share these updates via email to save paper, postage and time. If you do not have email and are interested to receive them, we will send them via regular mail. At the end of the year you will receive our main newsletter. **Meanwhile, we need your help in these specific ways:**

(1) Let us know if you are interested in receiving these updates. **(2)** If so, provide us with your email address. We will not share it with anyone else. **(3)** You can help us also by referring friends interested in this ministry! Word of mouth is the best advertising! **(4)** Sharing this information with others.

Please respond to nba3@iGlide.net (our home in USA) and/or becaslizwan@ielco.org (our office in Bogotá) If you are using regular mail, please address your correspondence to:

Colombian Scholarship Fund
47237 -257th Street.
Renner, SD 57055 - USA
605-336-3734 (Office)

A MESSAGE FROM THE FOUNDERS

Greetings to all of you our missionary friends from our home here in Renner, South Dakota. We too join Stella, our Director in Colombia, in acknowledging and thanking your faithful, generous and ongoing support!

12 years ago, we would have never imagined that this humble ministry that started with the death of our son, would grow as much as it has grown so far! The glory belongs to God and the credit to all of you who continue to gift it with generous prayers and financial resources. To those of you who have joined this ministry recently, we extend our most warm welcome and heart-felt gratitude.

It's September! We are ready to start a new school year! A brand new year is also starting in our congregations. Sunday schools, women groups, youth groups and individual members will be learning again fresh lessons about God's love for a suffering world and perhaps looking for a mission project that is not only highly personalized but also transforming real lives of poor sisters and brothers in Christ.

Allows us to extend the invitation to consider supporting the Colombian Scholarship Fund & Leadership Initiatives LIZWAN at whatever level possible. Any gifts toward these current pressing needs are welcomed and appreciated:

\$400 provides a scholarship for a university student. **\$200** provides a scholarship for an elementary/secondary student. **\$100** provides a Meal a Day for one child during the school year. **\$1,000** provides a scholarship for our first enrolled medical student or assists the yearly salary of an evangelist. Any other gift assists us also with much needed leadership development seminars and with the Revolving Loan Fund for home ownership.

If you are interested in additional information, we will be very happy to provide it. We can send you pictures, a short video and ongoing stories of our shared ministry work. In that

case, make sure to address your requests to our address here in Renner: To conclude, we leave with you the personal story of one of the beneficiaries of the CSFLI:

BRIGGITTE PAOLA GONZALEZ

“My name is Briggitte Paola González Correa. I was born on January 24, 1992. I am 11 years old. I live with my parents and my brothers. My father's name is José Wilson and my mother's Olga Flor. My sister's name is Stephany and she is 14 years old; she is on 7th grade. My brother Miguel Angel is 9 years old and he is in 4th grade.

When I was 5 years old I had an accident, I burned my face with hot water. Half of my face and back got burned. When I was 6 I started getting plastic surgeries and so far I have got 14 plastic surgeries but thanks to God all of them have been successful and my face and back are getting back to look normal.

I started to go to school when I was 6 years old. I am now on 5th grade and I have got good grades at school. I love sports like basketball, rope jumping, and enjoy watching soccer. **I like to become a medical doctor with a specialization in plastic surgery.**

My family and I started attending St. Paul Lutheran Church three years ago. Through St. Paul Lutheran Church we got to know about the Colombian Scholarship Fund and Leadership Initiatives LIZWAN. My family and I have received help not only financial but spiritual during the time we have been going to St. Paul Church.

Thanks to God and the CSFLI, I am able to study. My father and mother do not have a secure job so many times they can not pay for my school supplies. Thanks to your help and support I can buy my school supplies and attend school. Thank you for caring for us. May God reward you abundantly”.

We agree! Thank you in Jesus name!
Natanael, Barbara, Alicia (Liz)



Housing conditions in rural Colombia where the Colombian Scholarship Fund is present.



These children live in the house shown on the left.



Leadership development for lay evangelists



Dionicio house – a dream made reality!



Natanael with Briggitte Paola Gonzalez



Meal-a-Day among displaced children – Ibagué



A quilt made by First Lutheran quilters now warms the Dionicio home.



A check from West Nidaros Lutheran Church, Crooks, SD, is presented to Stella Lizarazo in Bogotá, Colombia, by Barbara & Liz Lizarazo. Stella is the director of the Colombian Scholarship Fund in Bogotá.



Lina Marcella, a medical student, with Barbara and Stella.