


YOU STRENGTHENED THE CHURCH IN LATIN AMERICA


Every missionary has their “why” for serving. For Chuck and Jean Van Engen, that “why” dates back 23 years when they learned about the need for pastors and seminary professors in Latin America. Since then, the support of individuals and churches like you have made it possible for the Van Engens to find a solution to the leadership shortage and transform the way Latin American scholars receive doctorate degrees.

Since the 1980s, the Protestant church in Latin America has experienced immense growth of new believers. This growth created a major shortage of pastors to disciple all of the new believers and highlighted an even greater need for professors to help equip pastors.

In 2000, the Van Engens counted around 80 Protestant scholars in Latin America with doctorates in theology. Many of them were over 70 years old. At that time, the only way to earn a PhD in theology in Latin America was to travel to Europe, the U.S., or Canada, and spend six or seven years studying. Many scholars, and their families, would acculturate in that time and desire to stay in their place of study, or, if they

did return home, they would often find another leader had taken their place as a pastor or teacher.

The Van Engens, and other leaders in Latin America, knew there was a better way and formed the Latin American Doctoral Program in Theology (LADPT). Through this program, leaders could remain where they were in Latin America—in their churches and seminaries—and do their doctoral studies while still serving in ministry. This new model of training exploded with interest, and technological advances, like Zoom, have made it easier to train new scholars.

“We praise God that this program has worked far beyond anything we could have imagined,” said Chuck, in a recent letter to supporters. In a few months, the LADPT will have 40 graduates. This number may seem small, but, as Chuck shared, “Think of 40 scholars ministering for the next 15 years, teaching at least 50 pastors each year who, in turn, disciple at least 200 members each year. That’s 6,000,000 lives impacted by this program.”

Your generosity is continuing to grow leadership training in Latin America. Thank you!



YOUR PRAYER SUSTAINS MISSIONARIES

We've recently launched a prayer series focusing on the mission work of 13 RCA missionaries and partners serving in sensitive mission areas. Your prayers are an amazing way to sustain them and their work. Thank you for praying regularly. Here is a glimpse at a devotional from this series:

Awe-inspiring Salvation

Written by RCA Mission Partner Bruce DeJong serving in India

For the missionary's safety, please do not post any of this story online

For those of us in the helping professions, there is something deeply comforting about Philippians 2:12-14. We often interact with people during the lowest points in their lives. When we are hurting and exhausted, it can be really tough to put up with their rude, frustrated, unkempt, and smelly behavior.

Paul basically tells us to keep on serving without grumbling or snapping, to work out our salvation with fear and trembling. It is wise spiritual counsel. Cleaning bedpans, draining abscesses, and listening to the litany of complaints are exactly where we experience our ongoing salvation. This salvation is worked out each minute of each day, with God doing his work in and through us. By fear and trembling, I believe Paul means cultivating that deep sense of awe and reverence for the chance to be a part of these magnificent acts of God.

Two weeks ago, a teen-aged boy carried his burnt-out alcoholic father into the clinic. The man was



I gazed at him. "So, Muthu, here we are. I'm not going to scold you. I'm just going to ask you to make the most important choice of your life. Do you choose alcohol, or do you choose life?"

— RCA Mission Partner Bruce DeJong

suffering from a full-blown case of TB, alcoholic hepatitis, debilitating malnutrition, and an 8-inch open injection abscess. His wife was raving about how he was still having his cronies bring him a bottle

➤ Sign up to receive a
daily prayer prompt and
devotional in your email inbox
for 13 days by visiting
www.rca.org/13-days-of-prayer.

of hard stuff every day.

I examined him, looked at the sky-high liver enzymes, the gaping abscess cavity, the chest-rattling with advanced TB, the wispy shadow of a body. What a waste, this squandered life.

I gazed at him. "So, Muthu, here we are. I'm not going to scold you. I'm just going to ask you to make the most important choice of your life. Do you choose alcohol, or do you choose life?"

He looked deeply, deeply sad. There it was, that spark that we all share. His remorse, shame, and loss went way beyond anything I could ever imagine.

"I'm going to give you some [medication]. I want you to go home and think about things. If you choose life, come back next week and we will do all that we can to help you."

Muthu came back.

His wife said he had completely stopped drinking. We contacted the District TB Officer to get the latest TB regimen for somebody with hepatitis, and carefully designed his treatment plan.

Now, three weeks later, Muthu is eating, walking, and beginning the long road back to life. I told him I'm very proud of him.

It is an honor to partner with you all as we work out this awe-inspiring salvation together.

Please pray for our sisters and brothers on the margins in India.



YOU SHELTERED PEOPLE FLEEING UKRAINE

Since March, you have helped provide more than \$305,000 in aid to people forcefully displaced from their homes in Ukraine. In partnership with the Hungarian Reformed Church and Dorcas International, you've helped provide shelter to families who fled for safety. The camp is currently home to 110 people, 54 of whom are children. In addition to a roof over their heads, the camp also offers several services, including job search counseling, legal advice, art therapy, medical care, childcare, and psychological counseling. Thank you for your generous outpouring of love for the people of Ukraine.

RCA Global Mission does not receive denominational assessments or covenant shares. We depend on the faithful generosity of churches and individuals.



SHORT-TERM MISSION SPOTLIGHT: EUROPEAN CHURCH PLANTING WEEK

What do you get when you bring together church planters from across Europe and their partners from North America and put them in a castle in Northern Ireland for a few days? A wonderful gathering of gospel-centered storytelling, energizing community, and mobilizing churches and individuals in Europe and North America to be part of growing the church in Europe.

After three days together, the group of 50 participants left the Emerald Isle and flew to the Netherlands, Portugal, and Hungary. There, each group lived within the stories they had heard at the castle. Here is one first-hand account from attendees Tim and Susan deForest of Holland, Michigan:

In our polarized world that often focuses on what divides us, the church planting retreat in Ireland was a breath of fresh air. We gathered with others, representing seven countries and nine languages, and focused on what unites us. We shared stories of the many ways God is at work in new and creative ways all over Europe. It was so inspiring to learn of the many ways our partner churches are reaching out to others; through new community coffee shops, climbing walls, outdoor worship nights in the city square, youth adventure camps, "Ask me anything pub nights," Zoom friendships between Muslim Europeans and Hope College students, thriving international churches, and so much more. These new church plants and RCA partners are loving others well, serving them in so many ways, and then sharing the story and love of Jesus with them. It looks different in each and every country and that is a beautiful thing. What a joy it was to see the many ways that God is at work in our world.

Are you or your church interested in connecting with your missionaries in their countries of service? Connect with our Short-Term Mission office to see what opportunities are available and how we can help you organize a trip that works for you. **Contact us today: shortterm@rca.org or 616-541-0899.**



I'd like to provide additional care for missionaries.

Please use my gift of \$_____ to provide support to missionaries for unforeseen expenses while on the mission field. My donation will provide care and support for instances that fall outside of a missionary's planned annual budget and will provide financial relief that won't disrupt other mission needs.

Make checks payable to the **Reformed Church in America** and designated **Missionary Care Fund**. Please send in the enclosed return envelope.

GIVE ONLINE TODAY: WWW.RCA.ORG/MISSIONARY-CARE

