

# Twin Peaks

From the Padilla-DeBorst

September 2009

## Mission and Power

“You will receive power”, Jesus promised his disciples. But, power for what? Power to lord it over others, to impose and manipulate, to build up personal religious empires and demand offerings from trusting parishioners—a scene sadly not uncommon in Latin America and the rest of the world? By no means! The natural consequence of receiving the power of God’s Spirit is “you will be my witnesses ... till the end of the Earth”. God gives God’s children power to lead lives that make God’s love evident to others, to carry out God’s good purposes on God’s Earth.

As Christians we need to consider how power is being used inside our churches and how churches are exercising power in the public arena. In two recent consultations in Costa Rica we dealt with these issues, seeking to gain clarity and live more faithfully.

From June 22 to 25, a small group of Christian historians from North America and Latin America gathered to consider “Mission and Power in North-South relations”. The new *Institute for the Promotion of Christian Higher Education in Latin America* partnered for this with the *Conference on Faith and History*, from North America. Great papers and fledging collaboration between Christian historians of South and North are fruits of this consultation.

From August 6 to 8, some sixty leaders from ten Latin American countries came together to consider “Church, Power and Mission in Latin America Today.” Exciting to me was the fact that this regional consultation of the *Latin American Theological Fellowship (LATF)* in Mesoamerica and Caribbean brought in young people and women, groups often under-represented in theological conversations. Find out more about the LATF on our website [www.ftl-al.org](http://www.ftl-al.org).



*With participants in LATF Consultation, men and women of different generations and professions seeking to reflect theologically in order to better contribute to the transformation of their societies.*

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## Maturing seeds of new creation

It was 2001 and, with the involvement of six CRCNA missionaries, two with CRWRC, two with CRWRC Relief, one with the Back to God Hour and one with CRWM, *Seeds of New Creation* was born in El Salvador. Along the way, local partners and ministries were drawn into the circle and began shaping a vision together and working to carry it out. In July, eight years after its birth, *Seeds of New Creation* came of age: it obtained legal recognition as a local, non-for-profit association. I got to visit El Salvador last week and we celebrated with a time of fellowship and prayer and –of course– food! So, although today there is not even one full-time missionary in the mix, the team continues to train pastors, lay leaders and university students so they in turn can serve in and through their churches and agencies with an integral, Christ centered worldview that brings transformation to their communities. They equip pastors and lay leaders for expository biblical preaching; they equip churches to reach troubled youth and children; they distribute biblical and reformed literature; they continue to sow seeds of hope in the midst of a troubled country. Please pray for *Seeds of New Creation*, check out their website ([www.casasemillas.org](http://www.casasemillas.org)) and the CRCNA website on El Salvador, write the Ministry Coordinator, Eliberto Juárez ([eliberto@gmail.com](mailto:eliberto@gmail.com)), and continue to support their ministry through CRWM!

## Care of creation as worship of God

The month of July found the Padilla DeBorst family spread out across 5 different countries. While the kids visited family and friends, Jim

taught with Eastern University in South Africa, and I gave the Bible Expositions at the Fourth Triennial Conference of the Micah Network in Limuru, Kenya. The theme was “Stewardship of Creation and Climate Change.” Christians from some 38 countries gathered to consider our role in caring for the whole of God’s beautifully diverse creation. In addition to reflecting, praying and fellowshiping together, through a highly participatory process we honed a declaration that contains our confession of inadequacy, sums up the present condition of our planet and calls for committed action on the part of those of us who confess God as the owner of all that exists.



*Drafting Declaration with Latin American delegation*

I encourage you to download the Declaration (<http://www.micahnetwork.org/en/events/pas-t-events/global/triennial-global-consultation>), study it, and use it in your family, your church or work place. Care of Creation is not simply a faddish issue. It is of utmost concern for the sustainability of our planet and an act of worship to its Creator.

With gratitude,

*Ruth and Jim Padilla-DeBorst  
with Anton, Jonathan  
Maria, Luana and Natalia*

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**ON-GOING MINISTRY SUPPORT!** We are grateful for your donations to CRWM for our ministry!

Here is my gift of \$\_\_\_\_\_ to be used for the ministry of Ruth and Jim Padilla DeBorst in Latin America.

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