

SOLIDARITY OVER ABDUCTED STUDENTS

This past Thursday, Oct. 23, the Lutheran Seminary and Theological Community of Mexico where I teach suspended classes for the day in conjunction with many other schools and universities throughout Mexico to protest the disappearance of 43 students from a rural teacher's college and the shooting deaths of six other youth, including three students. This took place on Sept. 26, when the mayor of the city of Iguala, Guerrero (about 110 miles south of Mexico City) and his wife ordered the police to arrest the students, who were traveling to Iguala to protest budget cuts against their college, which trains teachers for poorer rural areas. Evidence indicates that the students were handed over to a local gang with ties to the police. While many hope they are still alive, they are feared to be dead.



The disappearance of the students has struck such a nerve throughout Mexico for many reasons, including especially the problem of corruption among so many government officials and their ties with organized crime and drug cartels as well as discontent with recent educational, economic, and energetic reforms that many Mexicans see as continuing to broaden the wide gap between the rich and the poor. People are also extremely frustrated with the government's inability to address the violence that continues to affect so many, especially the poor, in many regions of Mexico such as Guerrero. The level of this violence is evident from the fact that, during the search for the bodies of the missing students, numerous clandestine mass graves have been found in the Iguala area containing unidentified corpses that are not those of the students.

**FOR MORE NEWS AND INFORMATION,
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REFORMATION VISIT

The same Thursday, Oct. 23, I gave a presentation on Lutheran identity in Mexico together with Ari Trejo, one of our Lutheran Seminary students, to a group visiting from Minnesota organized by Bethany Ulrich of the "Seeds of Transformation" program here at the Lutheran Center in Mexico City. The group (see photo) included two Luther Seminary students, Linda Strater and Jim Oden, together with Jim's wife Kristal and her sister Amy.



Ari and I talked about how the history of Lutheranism in Mexico has shaped Lutheran identity here, the challenges of being Lutheran in Mexico, the plans and hopes of Mexican Lutherans for the future and the role of the Lutheran Seminary in those plans. On Saturday, Oct. 25, the group was also able to attend the joint Lutheran Reformation Service in which Lutheran pastors and churches from around Mexico City participated. This year it was held at our home church, the Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd (see photo below).



We continue to invite and encourage you to participate in any of the immersion programs run by Amextra's "Seeds of Transformation" organization. For more information, visit: <http://www.amextra.org/seeds-of-transformation-immersion-program/>. Programs are offered both for individuals and groups throughout the year.