

ORDINATION OF DALIA JUAREZ

One of my former students, Dalia Juárez, was ordained as a pastor on April 12 at the Good Samaritan Baptist Church in Chiapas in southern Mexico. This congregation works among indigenous peoples of the Tzeltal culture. Dalia herself is from an indigenous background. In addition to her pastoral duties, Dalia will continue to teach at the Mayan Intercultural Seminary in Chiapas, an ecumenical school that trains pastors and leaders for churches in Chiapas and elsewhere in Mexico.



Dalia has been a tremendous role model for many in the communities with which she works, especially for indigenous women. It is rare to see women in the pastoral ministry in Chiapas, and even rarer to see women training not only other women but also men in seminary and congregational settings.



In Chiapas alone there are over 10 different indigenous groups native to the region, each with its own language and culture. Most of them are descended from the ancient Mayans. Chiapas is one of the areas of Mexico in which Evangelical churches have especially been growing.

FOR MORE NEWS AND INFORMATION,

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CHILDREN'S DAY IN MEXICO

Throughout Mexico, Children's Day is celebrated every year on April 30. Although it is not a public holiday, schools and families hold special celebrations for children that include parties, outings, festivals, presentations, games, and other activities kids enjoy. Children also receive gifts, including especially toys and candy. Most churches hold special celebrations for the children as well, though they usually do this on the Sunday that falls closest to April 30.



According to government sources and UNICEF, about one-third of Mexico's population of 120 million are under 18 years of age (compared to 23% of the U.S. population). Of the 40 million children in Mexico, about 53% live in poverty (compared to 45% of the adult population), and over 10% live in extreme poverty. In rural areas, families still tend to be larger and children there experience more hardships.

IMMERSION PROGRAMS IN MEXICO

The "Seeds of Transformation" program affiliated with the Mexican Association for Rural and Urban Transformation (AMEXTRA) is offering several immersion, service, and education opportunities this year designed for people from the U.S., including members of ELCA churches.

The following programs are open to any individuals that would like to participate:

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| Sustainable Agriculture | May 17-24, 2015 |
| Urban Gardens | June 7-15, 2015 |
| Creation Care | July 26-Aug 2, 2015 |
| At-Risk Youth | June 21-28, 2015 |

Face-to-Face at the

U.S./Mexico Border August 19-26, 2015

Special programs can also be designed for church groups at your convenience. For more information, write to: semillas@amextra.org.