



LAIM

"A Better Tomorrow!"

*Our commitment to the
Indians of Latin America*

Founders

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Dr. Dale Kietzman

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TOTONAC INDIAN MINISTRIES

Brief history and program description:

LAIM was founded in 1973 under the name Totonac Cultural Center, Inc. in Pasadena, CA. Dr. Dale Kietzman's vision was to support the work of Manuel Arenas in building a School for young Totonac Indians to gain biblical training and return to their villages to become leaders and pastors. The ministry identified a great need among this indigenous people: that is to hear the Truth of who God is in their own language and learn how to assemble as a congregation to worship Him through faith in His Son Jesus Christ. This work was so successful hundreds of students graduated from the school and perhaps 100,000 Totonac Indian lives were changed through relationship with God's Son Jesus Christ. This miracle happened primarily in the lowlands where a more common Totonac dialect is spoken. Now the ministry continues in the Highlands under the direction of Manuel's co-translator Felipe Ramos. Felipe reaches all 250,000 Totonacs living in Northern Puebla and Veracruz states with a weekly Totonac Radio Hour. He distributes Bibles and evangelistic materials mostly free of charge and responds to many requests to visit the newly formed groups and help them mature in faith and form churches. Because of the deep poverty in this region LAIM seeks U.S churches or groups interested in supporting their efforts to support a pastor and grow their churches. Please review these pages to learn about LAIM's church-to-church program designed to advance the Totonac Indian Ministries of Central Mexico.

Dr. MANUEL ARENAS

Dr. Manuel Arenas, a native Totonac Indian, was born in a primitive hut in Zapotitlan, Mexico. He exhibited a fiery curiosity about life beyond the green canyons that hemmed his village. The course of his life changed radically when he met an American Bible translator, Herman Aschmann, who introduced him to Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior. Manuel then embarked on a lifelong career of Bible translation, pastoral training and church planting which qualifies him as one of the more remarkable Christian leaders of our time. Wycliffe Bible Translator's founder Cameron Townsend often used Manuel's work as a showcase of the indigenous principle whereby a native Indian reaches his own people through training and discipleship. Manuel built a Bible school/cultural center and then a network of 50 churches that reached half of the 250,000 Totonac Indian population with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. At his cultural center Manuel also operated an experimental farm and a medical/dental clinic that served his people who were too poor to afford professional care.

FELIPE RAMOS

Herman Aschmann knew Felipe Ramos as a boy in Nanacatlan. After Felipe had gotten Bible school training, he was heavily involved in Bible translation with Herman and in church planting with Manuel. He became the academic director of the Bible school in La Union, Mexico.





Here he trained countless young Totonac students in biblical principles and sent them back to their villages to become pastors and leaders.

Upon Manuel's passing in 1992, Felipe stepped up as the spiritual leader of the Totonac people. He returned to his hometown of Nanacatlan to be the pastor of the faltering congregation there. He immediately began to use this as a base to evangelize, train leaders and plant churches. In 1997, with the help of a retired Herman Aschmann, Felipe completed the revision of the

translation of the New Testament in his own highland dialect. Other accomplishments include completion of the Jesus video in the Totonac language and hundreds of cassettes of the radio broadcast he does weekly in the Totonac language.

In recent years, Felipe has worked closely with Latin American Indian Ministries founder Dr. Dale Kietzman and Board Chair Peter Petry. They both recognize the urgent need to rebuild the network of support enjoyed by Manuel at the Totonac Cultural Center. Felipe has trained scores of pastors who are eager to minister the Gospel of Jesus Christ to their own people, but as was the case with Manuel, the congregations are too poor to support a full-time minister.

One very effective tool in reaching the Totonac people with the Gospel has been the use of the weekly radio program broadcast from the town of Poza Rica, Mexico. The signal is strong enough to reach the entire Totonac speaking population located in the Mexican states of Puebla and Veracruz, covering all five Totonac dialect areas. Numerous requests come from young listeners to come and teach them how to win their villages for Christ. Older believers ask for help in organizing their congregations into churches. Felipe has developed three strategic locations from which they distribute Bibles, evangelism materials, and pastoral training.