

## Time for missionary to move on

**GRANADA, Nicaragua** - Lutheran Church-Canada called Missionary Rufino Laines and his deaconess wife, Mariana to Granada in November 2005. After visiting with the couple in late February, they agreed with LCC's interim mission executive, Rev. Dr. Ralph Mayan that their time in this community was over. Together they realized the church needed to prayerfully consider where the pastor and his wife should now go to give witness to the Gospel. "We're ready to go wherever the Lord calls," was Mariana's concluding comment.

When first called to serve in Granada, their assignment was to use every means possible to reach out with the Gospel of Jesus Christ and when the Holy Spirit gathers a community of believers, to teach them and, with the community, identify those who might be prepared to serve as a pastor and deaconess. By God's grace, this has been accomplished and on March 28, a son of the congregation, Guillermo Zuniga, will graduate from LCC's theological education program and be ordained into the ministry.

One of Pastor Rufino's first contacts in Granada was a police officer who was struggling with his vocation as a policeman. He wondered if Christians could serve in the police force? In responding to the man's concerns Pastor Rufino reflected on how God rules through government. He also spoke of sin and its consequences and of God's eternal answer in the person of Jesus Christ. His clear witness to the Gospel touched the man's heart and he became a wonderful witness to Jesus.

Though he has moved from Granada, other contacts led to the formation of a small community of

believers. They first gathered in homes, then in a community centre. LCC had first planned to rent a facility for worship, but soon discovered it would be more cost effective to purchase land in this increasingly costly tourist city. With the assistance

of Concordia Lutheran Mission Society that became possible.

Since then, several mission teams have erected the first stage of a church (no windows or doors yet). The

congregation now gathers there each Sunday for worship.

From a membership of about 60, more than forty gather for worship and praise God, that is increasing. In early March the pastor baptized and confirmed more members.



Pastor Rufino and deaconess Mariana Laines



Soon this chapter in the ministry of Missionary and Mariana Lainez will end. What will become of them? Where will they go? While the Iglesia Luterana Sínodo de Nicaragua will make that decision, there is potential about 70 km to the south—the city of Rivas.

Pastor Rufino met one family from this community when they visited a clinic at the Granada church. They invited Pastor Rufino to visit Rivas. One contact led to another and to

another. Soon Pastor Rufino found himself travelling there every two weeks to visit, make new contacts and teach.

When Dr. Mayan visited Rivas with the pastor and his wife, 17 people greeted them, and apologized that not everyone could come because some were working. Those present shared a little of who they are, how they became aware of Pastor Rufino and his message. They also spoke of their hope—of one day having a missionary in their midst. They also told Dr. Mayan they didn't have enough chairs for everybody to sit on and wondered if LCC could do something about that. And there are babies to be baptized too!

Pastor Rufino reports he has 16 contact families in Rivas. They gather whenever he travels down and he leads them in devotion and study. He believes God is opening this new door for the Gospel and you can tell

by his smile that he is excited! We all should be!

Until this year, the ministry of Pastor Rufino and his wife has been supported by a family from in an LCC congregation. This year, Zion, Cloverdale, B. C. will underwrite a portion of those costs. The offering from the ABC District Convention's opening worship this May will fund the start-up costs for the Rivas mission.

*Rev. Dr. Ralph Mayan*