Pablo Landázuri (2013) is an ordained URCNA minister who serves the Iglesia Reformada Luz de Vida (Light of Life Reformed Church) in Quito, Ecuador. Since Rev. Landázuri’s return three years ago, Luz de Vida has started worship services in a second location, expanded outreach and ecclesiastical efforts, and approved a member for seminary education. Services began on June 18, 2017, in Tumbaco, which is about 15 miles from downtown Quito, but still part of the metropolitan area. Its population of 60,000 includes a college with 5,000 students. Rev. Landázuri preaches in the morning, and Rev. Donoso preaches in the evening.

“Ever since I arrived, we have hosted a Bible study in the area,” Rev. Landázuri explained. “We hosted 22 people in our first service. It is a lot for our context and has a lot of potential due to the lack of sound churches in the area.”

Although rental space at Tumbaco’s town center is inexpensive, holding services at another site is a significant undertaking for Luz de Vida, an organized congregation of 42 souls. But since it was established 12 years ago, Luz de Vida has focused on reaching out.

In 2016, the church began a “permanent outreach” initiative that progressively discipiles people. Members of the congregation invite acquaintances to a dinner at which Rev. Landázuri shares a gospel meditation, explains the history of the Reformed church, and invites attendees to sign up for a basic course on the Reformed faith. Those who complete the course, attend worship, and evidence fruit of repentance are then offered a membership class. Then the church begins the process again.

Two rounds have nearly been completed. Two out of 15 people completed the first cycle, and four out of 12 still participate in the second. Rev. Landázuri believes these numbers are normal for a culture permeated with various forms of prosperity gospel. “Faithful churches grow very slowly.”

As it reaches out to individuals, Luz de Vida also builds ecclesiastical fellowship and training. It holds monthly meetings with church leaders interested in strengthening the Reformed church. One independent church, in the process of subscribing to the Three Forms of Unity, partners with Luz de Vida on conferences about the Reformed faith.

Rev. Landázuri periodically travels to poor communities along the coast to assist five mission churches, being planted by a Reformed church in the Netherlands. Because they have no ministers, they have asked for his assistance in administering baptisms and the Lord’s Supper.

“I am pushing the need of forming a federation of confessionally Reformed churches in Ecuador in these meetings. I am also promoting the idea with the Dutch continued on page 4...
If there is one story that many people associate with the Reformation, it is the story of Luther's appearance before the Diet of Worms in 1521. Convinced by Charles V, ruler of the Holy Roman Empire, the Diet (official assembly) took place in order to judge Luther and his teachings. Prior to the meeting of the Diet, Pope Leo X had issued a papal bull or decree that termed those preachers a "heretic". (Article 1). The diet was aware of a greater danger than suffering at the hands of those who called him to recant. And what was the answer? It was not a testimony in the first place to his courage (though it was that, for sure). Luther’s answer was in the first place a testimony to the greatness of the God who speaks in Scripture. He was aware of a greater danger than suffering at the hands of those who called him to recant. And that danger was to suffer God’s displeasure at His disobedience to the Word He had spoken. It is not to be confused with a doctrine of what some have called “solo Scriptura”.

The Reformers of the sixteenth century (as well as Reformed churches today) had a high regard for the authority of Scripture apart from and without any regard for the way the church has historically understood God’s Word. This does not mean that Reformed churches have no respect for, and therefore make little or no use of, “traditional” ways of reading and interpreting the Scriptures. The Reformation view of sola Scriptura is not to be confused with a doctrine of what some have called “sola Scriptura” (the Scriptures apart from other infallible authorities for the church (Gal 1:8-9)). The Reformers of the sixteenth century (as well as Reformed churches today) had a high regard for the traditional interpretation of Scripture, particularly as this came to expression in the confessions. Theologians have a fancy way of expressing this, when they distinguish between the Scriptures as “the norm that norms” (norma normans) and the confessions as the “norm that is normed” (norma normata). The church’s confessions have real authority, though in subordination to the higher authority of Scripture to which they must be conformed.

And fourth, this dogma means little if it is merely a matter of “sloganeering.” You cannot say sola Scriptura as often as you wish, but it means little or nothing if it does not shape the way preachers treat the higher authority of Scripture to which they must be conformed.

Rev. Andrew Compton is writing a review of the book *Theology of Scripture: A Historical and Systematic Survey* by Dr. Cornelis P. Venema in a forthcoming article in the Mid-America Journal of Theology.”

If you have additional content that needs to be included in the document, please provide it. Otherwise, the document is ready to be read naturally as it is.
“Alumnus Focus” continued...

by Glenda Mathes

brothers on the coast,” Rev. Landázuri said. “Additionally, I am working with the MINTS representative here in forming a M.Div. program that is comparable to my experience at Mid-America, and helps to secure the provision of faithful ministers for the future.”

In the meantime, a member of the Luz de Vida congregation is studying at Mid-America. Cristian Garcia and his family arrived in June, and he began Summer Greek in July. Luz de Vida hopes to call him to church planting in Ecuador.

During Pablo’s seminary years, he was a member of Faith URC in Beecher, IL, and worked with its Spanish ministry in Chicago Heights. Faith provided both spiritual oversight and financial support. But Pablo also enjoyed a special bond with Covenant URC in Pella, IA.

“We had a wonderful arrangement between Covenant and Pablo,” Keith LeMahieu, Vice President of Operations says. “They really adopted him in so many ways and developed a good relationship with him.”

About the same time Pablo’s search for a Reformed seminary led him to contact Mid-America, the Missions Committee of Covenant Reformed Church expressed an interest in financially supporting an international student at the Seminary.

Covenant’s consistory invited Pablo to exhort in the church on multiple occasions. Members of the congregation opened their hearts and homes to the Landázuri family. Following Pablo’s graduation, he spent a year’s internship at Covenant.

“When my year-long internship in Pella, we got to know most of Covenant’s members,” said Rev. Landázuri. “Our visits with some of the older folks are still part of our most special memories, because they would usually share their life experiences and testimony of faith. At consistory and council meetings, I came to feel the church’s struggles and blessings as my own.”

On April 25, 2014, Pablo Landázuri was ordained and installed as Covenant’s Associate Pastor to serve as Minister of the Word and Sacraments and church planter in Ecuador. The Landázuri family departed in June of that year, but their relationship with Covenant remains close.

When the opportunity arose for the Luz de Vida congregation to purchase a suitable building, Covenant borrowed about half of the expense from its own building fund. That money has since been paid back by Covenant and donations from other individuals and churches. Covenant’s consistory (with assistance of its Missions Committee) oversees Pablo’s work jointly with the Luz de Vida consistory. Covenant also provides his salary through funding from its congregation and other churches. The Missions Committee keeps supporting churches informed about how God is using the ministry in Quito to proclaim the light of life that is Jesus Christ.