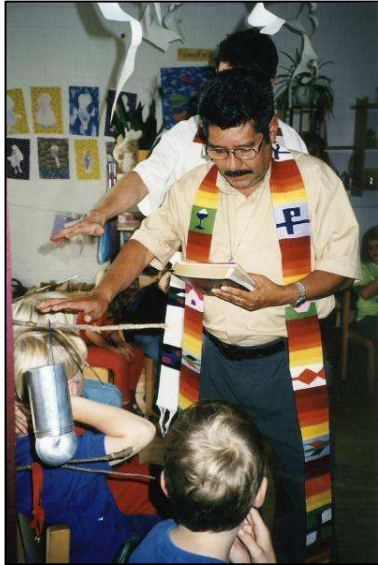


In memory of Pastor Francisco Carrillo



Remembering a
hero of the church

Francisco helped to
write this profile in
May of 2006

Pastor Francisco Carrillo serves Pan de Vida (Bread of Life) in Jayaque, El Salvador, which is located 40 miles north of San Salvador. Here is his story:

It was 1985. The government army entered Jayaque with armored cars and took some young men. They were never heard from again. The abuse of the authorities and of the governing army in Jayaque against the poor continued. It was during this time that a group of 12 people formed to defend the rights of the poor. From the victims of so much injustice grew the idea to get together and denounce the injustice.

These 12 people were members of the Reformed Christian Church. After the government kicked out the missionaries who helped fund the church, the members found themselves with little income to afford a gathering place for worship. "We did not have any more money to rent the house where we had gathered together since the month of January (1986)," said Pastor Carrillo. He explained that he and his wife began to pay rent from their own income, but by July, had run out of money. They were helped by Pastor Eliseo of the Lutheran Church of Saint Tecla. According to Pastor Carrillo, "After that day I began visiting the Church of the Resurrection in San Salvador. I was able to talk to Bishop

Medardo Gómez and I told him the problem I had. He told me, 'Look, I will help you with the payment for your house of prayer, but you should continue with the Reformed Church because in that way we help you but we do not recruit anyone.' "

Later, the group considered becoming Lutherans. Pastor Carrillo felt that being a Lutheran in El Salvador in those days was very dangerous due to their work with the poor and oppressed, "I said, 'It is dangerous to be a Lutheran in this time of war. But, those who have valor raise your hand.' I had a lot of fear because the (Lutheran) Church was being persecuted by the army of the government. The (Lutheran) Church was born in great silence in order not to risk our lives."

Shortly thereafter, the persecution in Jayaque began as there were rumors of a Lutheran presence in the community. Pastor Carrillo continued, "While these men (army) looked for us in the hills, we were in the center of the city using the named Reformed Christian Church. Many times detectives arrived during the worship hour to ask us if we knew where there might be some Lutherans located. We always said that we did not know anything. During this time, I prepared the people to be confirmed and acknowledge their commitment to the Lutheran Church."

In December, Bishop Medardo Gómez visited Jayaque in order to confirm the people. He brought with him the sign of the Lutheran Church. According to Pastor Carrillo: "After the worship, the Reverend Eliseo stood up and said to me in a serious tone, 'Find a ladder because we are going to put up the sign.'" I did not want to, but I did not say anything. I brought the ladder and we hung the sign. Later everyone left, the Bishop, the foreigners, the people of Jayaque. Alone with my wife and my two sons, the Justice of the Peace passed by around 6:00 PM. He stopped and said to me 'What does that Lutheran sign signify? Who is the pastor?' With some hesitation I said 'I am the Pastor. You can decide what to do with me.' God freed me and continues to free me to this day."

Pastor Francisco and his wife, Pastor Jesús, were murdered on November 4, 2006 as they were locking up their church after worship. It appears that they may have been targeted because of their advocacy work, seeking justice for the poor.