

## Fidelity to a mission

Thomas C. Fox | May. 14, 2009 NCR Today

I wouldn't say the name Raymund Plankey is a household name. But for North American Christians who have worked in Latin American in recent decades he is more than familiar.



A native of Vermont, he helped found the [Cuernavaca Center for](#)

[Intercultural Dialogue on Development](#) [1] in 1977 and has been a constant presence at the center since. Plankey was a lay missionary in Chile when Salvador Allende was overthrown and assassinated by a military coup in 1972. Plankey had married Chilean Gabriela Videla while in Chile.

The famous Bishop of Cuernavaca, Don Sergio Mendez Arceo, had been in Chile on various occasions in the 1970's and was engaged in dialogues with the church in Santiago, Chile. After the coup, when General Pinoche was put in power as military dictator, Bishop Méndez Arceo invited many social activists to come to Cuernavaca. Raymund and Gabriela moved to Cuernavaca, Mexico to begin a new chapter in their lives.

Within a few years the center was born with the idea to inform Christians in North America about the reality of Christian struggle within Latin America. Plankey and his wife and other friends talked about how to inform the populations north of Mexico about the reality of people's suffering in Latin America, how to offer a social analysis of this reality.

An idea emerged: reverse mission. It involved learning from the reality of those who are poor by being immersed in the Latin American reality while reflecting upon this experience. The idea of praxis: informed reflection - the see, judge and act model of education was initiated and the center had its beginning.

[This month the center celebrates its 32 anniversary](#) [2] and Christians all over the hemisphere owe gratitude to the Plankeys. Plankey can be reached at: [raymond@cableonline.com.mx](mailto:raymond@cableonline.com.mx)

**Links:**

[1] <http://www.ccidd.org/>

[2] <http://ncronline.org/news/global/intercultural-center-celebrates-anniversary>