

## Hallelujah Moment from Colombia

*"Today all the people laughed!"*

By Eluzinete Pereira Garcia  
and Jodi L. Cataldo

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With tears in his eyes, Bishop Juan Cardona said to me, "Lu, I don't know what you did with the people of the town, but for three years we have been having recreational activities with the children, bringing psychologists, clowns, etc., and we were never able to make them smile. When I arrived, I saw the people's happiness and I couldn't understand what was happening when today all the people laughed!"

Brisas del Mar (Breezes of the Sea), a mixed community of Sinu Indians and African-American-Colombian people on the Atlantic coast of Colombia, is home to 120 families. Between 1999 and 2005, a control point of a paramilitary camp was located at the entrance of this small community. The paramilitary soldiers terrorized the town.

Many young men, accused of violating the "laws" of the paramilitary, were forced to join their ranks. Girls and women were kidnapped, forced to be sexual slaves or raped repeatedly, and then murdered. Three mass graves have been found in the vicinity and, today, children are still afraid to leave the town alone for fear of finding a corpse.

At the request of the Colombia Methodist Church, UMCOR, and the General Board of Global Ministries, I, Eluzinete (Lu) Pereira Garcia, went with a group to Brisas del Mar to

facilitate health-promotion workshops for the residents of the town—workshops that have made a difference.

When Bishop Cardona asked, "What did you do, Lu, to make them laugh?" I responded, "I put into practice what I ask of God every day, and that is to teach me to love, respect, value, affirm, and give loving care to all persons."

*Eluzinete Pereira Garcia and her husband, Dr. Eduardo Campaña, are United Methodist missionaries working with Community Based Primary Health Care programs in Latin America in cooperation with the Council of Evangelical Methodist Churches of Latin America and the Caribbean.*

### Ways to Support this Ministry

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**# 14208Z — Eluzinete Pereira Garcia**, Global Ministries missionary

**# 15171Z — Dr. Eduardo Campaña**, Global Ministries missionary

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To learn more about Lu and Eduardo, and other United Methodist missionaries, visit: <http://new.gbgm-umc.org/work/missionaries/biographies/>.



### Hallelujah Moments

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