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Mission News & Helping Hands
 Evangelical Lutheran Synod
 Board for World Outreach
Sharing the Gospel in South America and Asia

South Korea

Looking Forward to a New Normal

by Rev. Thomas Heyn

Board for World Outreach, Administrator

From the Editor

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It is time for an update on the work taking place and being planned in South Korea. I visited Seoul in December while the 10-day quarantine was still in place. In May, Pastor Samuel Choi was in the United States for his daughter's graduation, and members of our BWO Asia Committee met with him and discussed goals and planning for the future. We hope you share our excitement about the possibilities and opportunities the Lord has laid before us. We appreciate your prayers for the work in our world fields and your financial support that makes this work possible.

"O LORD, hear my prayer, listen to my cry for mercy; in your faithfulness and righteousness come to my relief" (Ps 143:1).

After more than two years, in-person worship has resumed. It's wonderful to be able to see people face-to-face again, to be able to sing hymns together, pray, and listen together to God's Word in worship services. Attendance is back to approximately 70% of pre-Covid numbers. Some are still hesitant to return, but they hope to return soon.

The Canaan Academy program is starting to gear up again. This program prepares young people (eighth grade students) to study English and to study other courses in English so that they can attend a U.S. Lutheran high school for a year or more. Some of these students have continued their studies past high school and attended Lutheran colleges. There are currently no students enrolled, but plans are being made to prepare for early 2023. Promotional displays will be presented at an annual exposition that focuses on such programs.

Pastor David Choi is now conducting the English service at Seoul Lutheran Church and preaching sermons for those gathered for English worship. At some point in the future, Seoul Lutheran Church may start worship services

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in Mandarin for Chinese Koreans as the congregation reaches out to that population in Seoul. Pastor David Choi continues working with Pastor Sam Choi in visiting members, especially those who still have not returned to in-person worship. In addition, after the funerals of members who have died during the Covid pandemic, they have been meeting with families of those members, giving them the opportunity to share the Gospel with these family members who have not been part of the church and may have never heard the Gospel previously. This new opportunity is especially important because funerals in Korea are considered even more important than other major events like weddings and birthdays.

As mentioned above, Pastor David Choi sees the possibility of starting a new outreach program to Mandarin-speaking Koreans. Such opportunities may be possible at a nearby university, but this has been difficult to arrange while students are hesitant to meet in groups while still coming out from under Covid restrictions.

Another opportunity could be reaching out to Chinatown in Seoul. However, this could be somewhat difficult due to the society's honoring of age and experience, since David is a younger man whose ministry older Koreans may hesitate to receive.

There are three pastors in Korea, Rev. Samuel Choi, Rev. David Choi, and Rev. JW Kim. The three pastors, in January, began meeting monthly to study together, support one another and discuss ministry.



(l to r) Pastors Sam Choi, JW Kim, and David Choi ▲

Two men in Seoul are prospective future pastors. Both have attended WELS training schools. One could study in Korea while the second could study at Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary. Pastor Sam Choi will help us to evaluate and monitor the situation. More pastors are critical for the future as the Jesus Lutheran Synod and Seoul Lutheran church have long-range plans to plant congregations in every province in South Korea. It is an ambitious goal that will require careful planning, the recruitment of workers, and the financial support of the mother church in Seoul. The BWO, with the Lord's blessing, will work with Seoul Lutheran Church to help move forward toward accomplishing this goal.

Finally, the church body in South Korea is scheduled to host the 2023 meeting of

New doors are opening in South Korea ▼



Chinatown in Seoul ▲

the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference, with attendees from church bodies in fellowship with the ELS from around the world. So, these are exciting and busy times for the work in South Korea. Please keep them in your prayers and support them as you are able. And may the Lord richly bless the Gospel outreach taking place there.



News From Other Mission Fields

INDIA—The pastors are continuing their work in reaching out to the villages. A number of building projects are ready to be completed that will provide homes for worship and will help in the training of future workers.

PERU—The Peru synod leadership continues to visit congregations and works with pastors to encourage them in their work together. As the country emerges from the Covid epidemic, work continues in the Amazon region and in other parts of the country away from the major cities.

CHILE—The country is coming out of its restrictions for Covid. In-person worship and visits to homes has resumed. The training of two men for ministry continues through online instruction.

LATVIA—Three men continue their seminary studies. Work continues with a new evangelism and apologetics center in a historic part of Old Town Riga. A possibility exists for outreach to displaced persons from Ukraine who have settled in the area.

CZECHIA—Summer activities are underway for Martin Luther School. A Vacation Bible Study will take place in July. Other outreach opportunities are being explored.

UKRAINE—Administrators Nick and Kerry Laper returned to Ukraine in May. At least two of the counseling centers are open and providing services and relief to displaced persons. The medical and dental mobile clinics continue looking for ways of offering their services. **The Ukraine Crisis Fund continues to provide humanitarian aid and continues to receive your gifts and offerings.**

How Can You Help?

Pray for each of the mission fields, for the national pastors of these churches as well as for the members of their congregations to remain faithful in their homelands that often do not welcome the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Pray for these Christian brothers and sisters who often do not have the kind of medical care and government help that is available to most of us in the United States. May the Lord continue to care for them and strengthen their faith. May God work all these challenges for the good of his people, as he has promised.

Please—prayerfully consider a gift or regular donation for the work in the various fields. Every field, and some more than others, have many needs where God's people can provide much needed assistance. You may designate a gift to a particular field or project on the memo line of a check. You may also go to els.org and click on "Donate" in the top banner on the right-hand side.

For more information, please contact us at the following:

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