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CHAPTER

# 6

# *Foreign Missions*

*Lima, Peru, Jan. 2, 1968.*

**We arrived here exactly on time this afternoon at 1:45 pm.**

ADOLPH HARSTAD, 1968



Adolph Harstad Sr. and Theodore Kuster, 1968



**Commissioning Service for Missionary Kuster**  
Bethany Lutheran College Chapel, June 27, 1968

In 1968, while the synod observed the 50th anniversary of her reorganization, an exploration trip was made by Adolph Harstad and Theodore Kuster to locate a site for foreign mission work.

The previous year, the Board of Missions recommended that the synod enter a Spanish speaking area of South America. It also was reported that a young pastor, Theodore Kuster, volunteered to be the missionary in such a field and already had begun an intensive study of the Spanish language.

The synod was determined that work would begin in the *barriadas* (shanty towns) circling the city of Lima. The city was growing rapidly in these rocky deserts surrounding Lima with poor people moving out from the center of the city and people moving in from the mountains.







**Latin American Missionary Conference, 1974**

**BACK ROW:** Norman Madson, Loyd Miller, Theodore Kuster, Sue Hawkins, Robert Moldstad

**FRONT ROW:** Vicki Miller, Mary Olsen, Jim Olsen, Mary Moldstad



**Latin American Missionary Conference, 1974**

Theodore Kuster, Norman Madson, Loyd Miller

## THE TELEPHONE CALL AT THE 1970 CONVENTION

During the 1970 convention, arrangements were made to amplify a telephone conversation with Missionary Ted Kuster from Peru.

*Unheard of things began happening—Norwegians poured out unfinished coffee from their cups, Germans stopped their visiting, English forsook their suave aplomb—and like a cloud of smoke being caught by the draft and sucked into the chimney, the entire group was caught up in excitement as the word spread like wildfire, “Our missionaries, Our missionaries.” And there was a rush into the gym. And then the conversation between Pastor Orvick and the missionaries. I don’t remember what was all said, but I will always remember the spirit of it all—“The Lord be with you—We are miles apart but close in heart—one in the Lord—no, we aren’t afraid of riots or earthquakes for we are the Lord’s, we are doing the Lord’s work and He will bless—He will not forsake—God bless you.”*

*Following the conversation the assembly spontaneously arose and sang to the missionaries, still on the phone: “Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow.” I sang the first line and choked; tears filled my eyes, tears inspired by the honest, warm and loving care and concern, the closeness, the oneness in Christ, “our missionaries.”*

Written by a visiting pastor to the synod convention, 1970



Many of the Peruvians who had become members of the church began teaching the message of salvation through Christ to others. People also wanted the missionaries to visit an aunt, grandmother, neighbor.

#### MISSION NEWS



Children and teachers; Año Nuevo Preschool (Mothers' Club), 1985

After the mission was established, the next step was to organize congregations. For this it was necessary that an additional missionary be called to the field. On May 31, 1970, Jim and Mary Olsen arrived in Lima. That afternoon a severe earthquake struck northern Peru.

In 1971 a Mothers' Club was organized in Año Nuevo which was one of the poorest barrios near Lima. The club provided breakfast for pre-school children and their mothers. The first meeting space was made from packing crates.

In the same year people moving to the barrios of Lima invited our missionaries to visit the Andes Mountain village of Pacllón and David Skogen moved 250 miles north of Lima to begin work in the coastal city of Chimbote.



*Faith Mission Society was officially organized in 1972. It was started in 1968 by members of Faith Lutheran Church in Hillman, Michigan who wished to promote ELS foreign mission work.*

*Mission News began publication in 1969. By 2004, the society received and distributed over \$1 million for mission work in the ELS.*

*Marlin and Jean Goebel were instrumental in the operations of Faith Mission Society.*



We lived like animals before we knew the Gospel. Our superstitions and fears controlled us. The truth of the Gospel has given us new hope and real joy!

FIDEL CONVERSIO, 1998



Leaders of the congregation in Pacllón, 1973



James Olsen, Dora & Fidel Conversio; Pacllón, 1974

Pacllón lies at an altitude of about 9,000 feet above sea level. To get to Pacllón, one has to travel over the Andean Plateaus which are 14,200 feet above sea level.

### TO GET TO **PACLLÓN**

... you have to travel first to Chiquián—about 220 miles from Lima. But the drive takes about 10–12 hours; the “highway” is a narrow dirt road. The road makes countless hairpin turns and much of the way clings precariously to the mountainside with a sheer drop on the other side. But as long as you stay on the road, you’ll get to your destination. ...

After arriving in Chiquián, you take a room at the local hotel. The hotel costs \$1.00 a night—with running ice cold water and 15 watts of electric light from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. The temperature falls to about 40 degrees at night and you sleep with all your clothes on under heavy handwoven blankets.

The journey from Chiquián to Pacllón begins early, to travel by mule the 12-mile trip at an altitude of 12,000–13,000 feet—descending, climbing, descending, climbing. Sometimes you think you are suspended in space as you look over the edge. It takes 7 hours on and off the mule. (The Peruvians can walk it in less than 4 hours!) We praise the Lord that He is leading us!

Mary Olsen, 1998

Much of the Pastoral work in Peru is now being done by Peruvians. They are taking care of most of the preaching and conducting of services, teaching of confirmation classes, baptizing of babies, visiting the sick and shut-ins, making evangelism calls, and other tasks that the pastor does ...

TIMOTHY ERICKSON, 1998



**The First Graduates of the Seminary**  
Lima, Peru, 1991

*BACK ROW:* J. Olsen, N. Madson, D. Haeuser, Roberto Berrospid, D. McMiller, R. Soule, M. Teigen, T. Erickson

*FRONT ROW:* Fidel Conversio, Segundo Gutierrez, Braulio Capuillian

The final step envisioned for the Peru mission was to form an indigenous church in which the people themselves are responsible for the teaching and preaching of the Word of God. A major step occurred on November 17, 1991 when three men were ordained and began to serve the church in Peru.

Because it was dangerous for the missionaries to travel outside of Lima at that time, the ordination service was conducted in the mission building in Lima. Representatives of each of the three congregations were present to proclaim the willingness of their congregations to receive their pastor. During the service a choir composed of members from various congregations sang the hymn, “The Church’s One Foundation.” A smaller singing group consisting of young people whose parents lived in the mountain village of Pacllón sang a song of praise.

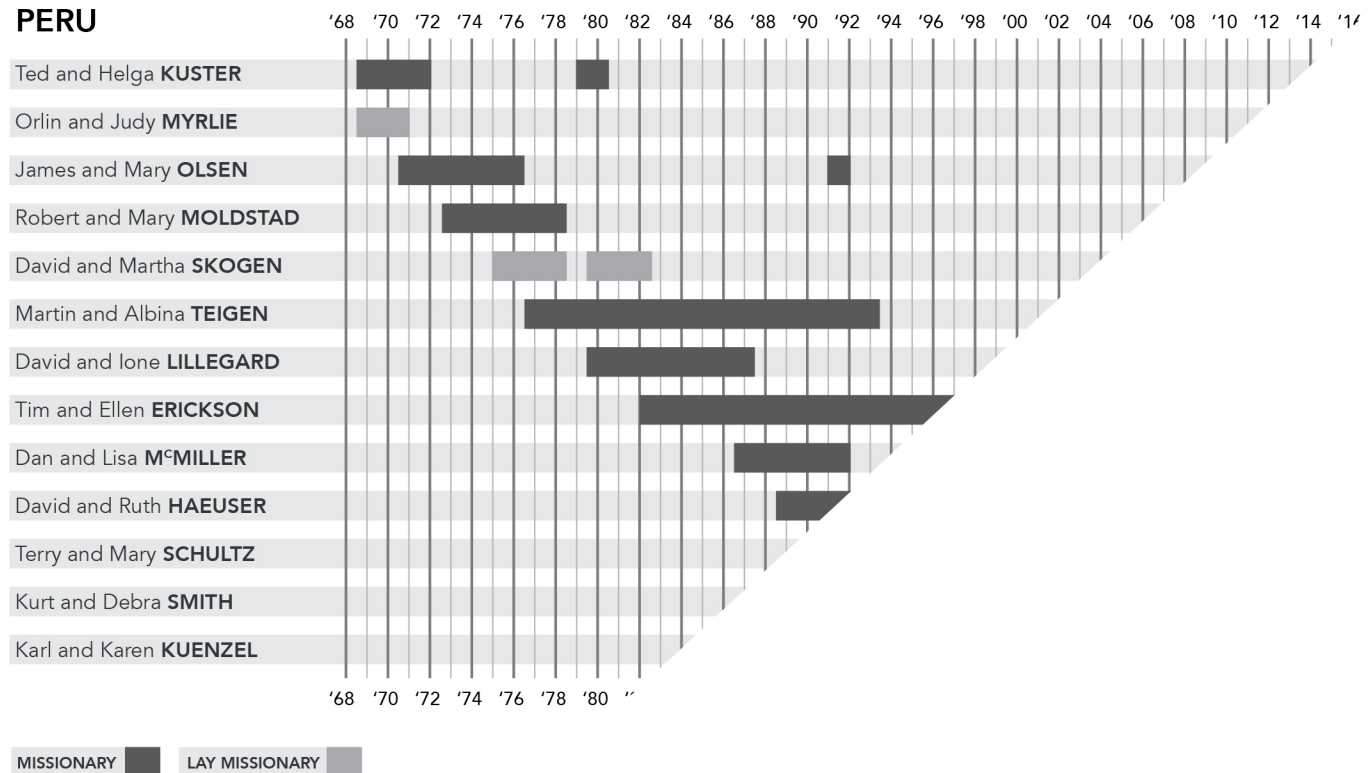
*In November of 1990, the Maoist terrorist leaders approached Oswaldo Fernandez, at Llamac, Peru, to tell him that public services could not longer be held. Oswaldo would be killed if this order was not followed. Oswaldo and the group courageously decided to continue meeting to hear God’s Word, but would meet in homes in small groups. The terrorists heard their hymn singing and came looking for Oswaldo. One gunman entered the home of Oswaldo’s mother with his gun drawn and pushed open the bedroom door. Oswaldo was standing behind the door and through the crack, the terrorist’s eyes met Oswaldo’s. “Yet,” said Oswaldo, “it was as if he didn’t see me and he walked out of the house.” Fellow seminary students said, “Your angels didn’t let him see you” (Psalm 91:11).*

Mission News, 1992

Our missionaries have commendable credentials—love for souls, faith in Christ’s Atonement for all sinners, but most of all, the Lord’s promise to preach the gospel in all the world together with His promise of the Holy Spirit to guide them. Pray for your missionaries to the unsaved.

LUTHERAN SENTINEL, 1968

## PERU



Many individuals also have served early lay volunteers in Peru were r sponsored by Lutheran Collegi WELS and ELS.

Appreciation is expr the various ELS f