

## Will you join us in prayer?

Pray for our brothers and sisters in India that they may not lose heart in the face of disapproval and persecution but continue in the joyful footsteps of all the faithful who have come before them.

Pray that more pastors may be trained in LMSI pre-seminary and seminary classes to bring the Gospel to many more souls in India.



*Indira, the Nursing student blessed by the Indian Orphan College Scholarship Fund, and her new husband*

## Would you like to help?

Seminary classes are scheduled to begin soon. We need \$10,000 to train 16 men for ministry. A wonderful opportunity is presented by Cross-stitch, the network of ELS Women's Mission Societies: \$5,000 is pledged as matching funds for donations made for the Seminary in India! Your gift to help train Lutheran ministers in India will be doubled! Donations may be made to Board for World Outreach, 6 Browns Ct, Mankato, MN 56001 or online at [elsworldoutreach.org](http://elsworldoutreach.org).

*To donate please use the attached envelope or visit [els.org/donate](http://els.org/donate).*



✠ Evangelical Lutheran Synod  
Board for World Outreach

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## MISSION NEWS & HELPING HANDS



Sharing the Gospel in South America and Asia

MAY 2017

## A Foreign Religion in a Foreign Land



*Faculty at St John's Lutheran School, Jabalpur, MP, India*

*Hindutva*, a word which means “Hinduness,” is the predominant form of Hindu nationalism. In 1989 it was adopted as the official ideology of one of the two major political parties of India, the party now in power. Christianity is, according to this ideology, a “foreign religion” and therefore unacceptable for Indians.

This distinction is understandable. The religions of Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism all have their roots in India. Christianity does not. It is deemed foreign. This means that our Christian brothers and sisters in India will face difficulties.

International Christian organizations report that getting monetary support into India for churches, schools, and orphanages has become very difficult recently, as our own Board for World Outreach can attest. But the Lutheran Mission of Salvation, India (LMSI), still

a young church body, needs such outside help to support the work of its pastors, teachers, gospel workers, and caregivers for orphans and widows.

Sadly also, Christians are being persecuted in India, especially in the last couple of years. There are frequent media reports of violent assaults and in at least one case, even deadly ones. The people of our LMSI have not yet experienced such violence. But in one village the pastor reports that during Sunday morning worship neighbors regularly play very loud, disruptive music, something that never happened before. In another village women of one of our congregations are prevented from drawing water from the village well, and can only do so very late at night. In another district property owners are reluctant to rent space for Christian worship, especially when they find out that the Lord's Supper will be celebrated there regularly.

Yet LMSI continues to grow. Presidents of each of the three districts, Hyderabad, Rajahmundry, and Jabalpur together oversee more than 300 congregations, some small and some quite large, three Lutheran schools, and 16 orphanages. Christianity has found a home in the hearts of many, the young, the old, and ages in between, even as Jesus said, *"Indeed, the kingdom of God is within you (Luke 17:21)."*



*The Gospel is shared in India with young and old alike*



*Typical Sunday morning worship*

While it is true that Christianity is a foreign religion in India, the greater truth is that it has always been a foreign religion in whatever country it is found. The apostles themselves discovered how true this was in all the parts of the Roman Empire and beyond, including even in their own native Judea and Galilee. Christianity is in truth a foreign religion even here in America, and always has been. But as foreign as Christianity is in contrast to all the world's homegrown religions, it does have a home and it does unite all whose hearts it touches, *"Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone (Ephesians 2:19-20)."* Faithful LMSI pastors continue to preach the Gospel in India – and God continues to bless their ministries!



*Some congregations worship in small, modest churches*