



## MISSION NEWS & HELPING HANDS

Evangelical Lutheran Synod  
*Sharing the Gospel in South America and Asia*

# CHILE

## Mission Update

NOVEMBER 2018

### From the Editor—

Rev. Thomas Heyn, Board for  
World Outreach Administrator

Pastor Timothy Bartels, member of the BWO and South America field committee, joined me in September 2018 on a visit to the mission field in Chile where we work together with the national Lutheran church in Chile. In this edition of *Mission News & Helping Hands*, he writes about two parts of that visit that caught his attention. We hope you enjoy his articles and share his enthusiasm and concern for the important work being done in Chile.

### A Special Challenge in the Chilean Mission—*Pastor Timothy Bartels*

As I write this we are entering into the part of the church year called “The Church Militant”. This season begins with the festival of St. Michael and All Angels, September 29, and lasts until Reformation Day, October 31. During this time we are reminded that the unholy three—the devil, the world and our flesh—battle against us. Yet, God comes to our defense through the preaching of the gospel. The victory over the devil, the world and our flesh is God’s victory, in Christ Jesus; and that victory is ours through faith. It is ... even though it may not look that way.

That is a good summary of our mission in Chile. Ever since our synod, the ELS, sent its first missionaries to Chile, the devil has done all he can to hinder the preaching of the gospel. For example, consider this: There have been six missionaries sent to Chile. In the case of the first five, each of them had to return to the United States prematurely for one reason or another. You can imagine how that impacted the health of a very young mission. Just when the Chileans began to trust a missionary, he was gone. Each time they felt a sense of abandonment. The Chilean mission struggled.

Given those circumstances, our Board for World Outreach had to make a difficult decision. Should it continue to put money into Chile or should it change its approach? The board subsequently decided that over a five year period most of the funding would stop. Presently, we send few mission funds to support the work in Chile on a regular basis.

However, during those five years, the sixth missionary, Pastor Tim Erickson, was in Chile. His ministry provided the stability that Chile needed. He also taught seminary classes to three students, Mario, Guillermo and Victor. They were informed by Pastor Erickson that if they became pastors or served as vicars they would receive no salary support from the mission.

These three men then did something very important for the future of the church in Chile. With one voice, they made the decision to fully support themselves and donate their spare time to be vicars and, hopefully, pastors one day.

Guillermo supports himself as a plumber working in residential homes. Victor has his own HVAC business installing heating and air-conditioning units in commercial businesses. Mario runs a Kenpo karate school. (He has won two international competitions and has opened 18 of his own Kenpo schools in Santiago, the capital.) And he is now the first ordained Chilean pastor in the mission.

Why did these men make the decision to work full time in their first vocation and donate their spare time in their second vocation working in the church? Why? Because they love the faith that has been handed down to them from our missionaries. They earnestly desire to teach it to others and reach others by it.

To be sure, the church they serve has had its struggles. There is limited time Pastor Mario and Vicars Guillermo and Victor can donate to the church. The missionary turnover has not been easy. In addition to this, Chile presently has no missionary presence. Pastor Tim Ericson has retired and returned home from Chile.

Yet the church is there. How does it survive? It survives, as one pastor commented, “only by the

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*From left: Vicar Victor, Pastor Mario, Vicar Guillermo, BWO Administrator Thomas Heyn and Linares congregation laymember, Ariel*

grace of God.” It is only by the grace of God that Chileans gather around Word and Sacrament, that the gospel is being preached, that Chilean Christians are given the victory over the devil.

It is only by the grace of God that we, the ELS, had the opportunity to send six missionaries to Chile, that God bore fruit through their preaching of the gospel in spite of the struggles encountered, that the ELS is the mother church and the Chilean churches are daughter churches.

Just as a mother will nurture and defend her children, so we, the mother church, have a calling to nurture and defend our daughter churches until they reach maturity. Therefore, please remember our Chilean daughter churches in your prayers.



## A New Church in La Cisterna—Pastor Timothy Bartels

Imagine not having a public place to worship. You would have to meet in the home of a member where seating may be cramped and somewhat uncomfortable. To be sure, as long as Christians gather around Word and Sacrament, there is the Church. Yet, meeting in a home presents difficulties for outreach and growing the church. That was the situation of our church in La Cisterna. How did this happen?



*The old house church in La Cisterna*



In the early 1990s, the ELS sent its first two missionaries, Jim Olsen and Dan McMiller, to Santiago, Chile. In a short time God blessed the sowing of the gospel and Chileans gathered around word and sacrament.

As the mission work grew, there was a need to have a place for worship. Our missionaries purchased a piece of property from the Catholic Church in a community of Santiago called La Cisterna. It was situated on a two-acre plot, had a chapel with offices, two stand-alone classrooms, a home for a caretaker and a paved soccer court.

Over time, it became clear that a change was needed. First, the property wasn't visible, being tucked away behind a gate. Secondly, it was somewhat removed from high traffic areas, and it required a fair amount of maintenance.

So, the property was sold with the goal of using the proceeds to purchase a more functional piece of land. Since then the church has been meeting in the home of Pastor Mario Galvez. Earlier this year, a piece of property was found and purchased. It is located just a block or two from a high traffic area with good public transit connections throughout the city. Its visibility is great, being located on a corner. It will require very little maintenance.

The property formerly was a pool hall. It had fallen into disrepair. The pictures below show what the pool hall looked like when it was purchased. As you can see, the interior hall is long, narrow and low.



*Property purchased earlier this year*



*The property formerly was a pool hall that had fallen into disrepair*

The architect's drawings below give you a good idea of how the church will look when renovation is complete. The view of the interior is from the altar to the worship area and further back to the multipurpose area.



*Architect's drawing of exterior of new church*



*Architect's drawing of proposed interior*

The renovated interior would have two areas—one designated as the worship area, the other designated as multipurpose. When necessary, the multipurpose area could be used as overflow for worship. As part of the renovation, the congregation would like to raise the roof in the area designated for worship. This would allow



for natural lighting and look more like a church. Without raising the roof, worshippers would have a boxed in feeling.

As Pastor Mario Galvez explains, there are good plans in place for the new La Cisterna church to do outreach.

“In addition to Sunday morning services and Bible classes as well as classes for new members, baptisms and marriages, the congregation is planning to offer the following weekly outreach activities: English as a foreign language, self-defense classes for all ages, activities for seniors in an effort to build bridges with the community and have the opportunity to sow the Word.”

In order to remodel the property La Cisterna congregation has raised funds of \$15,000, and the remodel is currently underway. However, they need help with raising the roof. The raising of the roof and the remaining renovations will cost another \$18,000.

If you have a desire to help our daughter congregation in La Cisterna by contributing to this worthy project, you can help by sending your contributions to Helping Hands, 6 Browns Court, Mankato, MN 56001. Helping Hands will then forward funds received to the La Cisterna congregation. The Board for World Outreach thanks you on behalf of the La Cisterna congregation for your prayerful consideration of this request.



## What can you do to help?

- Pray that God keeps giving the Chileans the victory over the devil by the preaching of the gospel.
- Pray that the Lord may bless our Latin American missions with a program to train future pastors.
- Ask that God guide and direct our Board for World Outreach as it works with our Chilean mission as well as all our mission fields.
- Prayerfully consider a special gift or regular donation to support the work of ELS world missions.
- If you have questions, please contact us in the following ways:

Board for World Outreach  
6 Browns Ct.  
Mankato, MN 56001  
website: [els.org](http://els.org)

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## News from Other Mission Fields

**SOUTH KOREA**—The new exploratory mission has begun in the Incheon area of Korea. Eight to ten people have attended services. Pastor Kim has begun teaching the adult instruction class: Communicating Christ.

**INDIA**—Simeon Mamidi will walk at the graduation exercises at Asia Lutheran Seminary and has begun classes for his Master of Divinity degree at the same institution. Our Indian brothers and sisters continue to provide much needed services for the orphans under their care.

**PERU**—Leadership training continues among the Shawi Indians in the jungle regions of Peru. A recent visit uncovered the need for clean water in this area through wells or filtration systems. Worship services are being “live-streamed” via internet from the church in Chimbote to regions of Peru and elsewhere in South America.

**LATVIA**—Pastor Ugis Sildegis continues his work on a Latvian hymnal with a strong emphasis on Lutheran doctrine.

**CZECHIA**—Martin Luther School in Plzen is back in session. Pray for outreach opportunities in this field.

**UKRAINE**—The teams are back in service and preparing for offering winter clinic services in the bus garage. The counselors continue their important work in the pregnancy crisis centers.

**KENYA**—Four ELS pastors are teaching a number of Kenyan Lutheran pastors via internet to help them develop their understanding of biblical, confessional Lutheranism.