



January 2021  
**Mission News &  
Helping Hands**  
Evangelical Lutheran Synod  
Sharing the Gospel in  
South America and Asia



# Hope going forward

Recaps of our world mission fields in 2020

**Peru** ■ This past year, the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Peru has gone through difficult times. Due to the pandemic, we suspended services in all our congregations and carried out preaching virtually. Our synod leaders also discovered some problems in the financial management of our synod as carried out by the previous board of directors as well as the promoter of the schools.

In the year 2021, our goal is to visit our fellow congregants in their homes to study the Word of God and encourage our brothers to remain faithful to our Savior in the midst of these adversities. May God allow this pandemic to pass soon so we can resume meeting together in our congregations. We also aim to unify and reorganize the church and work with the vicars to spread the gospel in Peru.

The new board of directors plans to improve the financial management and record-keeping of the synod as well as the administration of the schools. With this new direction for the schools, we hope to use the economic funds generated by the schools for evangelization and helping members of our churches who need assistance.

May God enlighten us and give us wisdom and the strength to move forward and fulfill this great mission that he has entrusted to us.

*Pastor Segundo Gutiérrez, Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Peru*

## From the Editor —

*Rev. Thomas Heyn, Board for World Outreach Administrator*

If life is viewed as a journey, many of us are glad that 2020 is behind us. If we were driving down the road, we would take a quick glance in the rearview mirror, then turn back to where we are going (while not forgetting where we have been). Our writers are doing that, looking back on the year past while focusing on the year to come. We hope you enjoy this review of what is happening in the various ELS mission fields.

As always, we appreciate your prayers for the work in our world fields and your financial support that makes this work possible. May the Lord grant us a blessed 2021.

**Chile** ■ As Jesus points out in Matthew 6:27-33, God the Father always wants and provides the best for all of us, as he demonstrated in his grace in Christ Jesus. In 2020, despite setbacks and troubles, Jesus provided for the growth of his church in membership and leaders who share a common interest: to carry out their work in Christian love, studying the Word of God, leaving the harvest to the Lord.

continued on next page



Familia de Dios congregation, Chile

Sharing the Gospel in South America, Asia, and the World



In 2021, our national synod needs to organize and be strengthened, especially through its leaders who work and serve their brothers. So, with our eyes fixed on Jesus and with fear and trembling, our great project for 2021 is to strengthen the foundations of our national synod, to continue preaching the Word of God in person and virtually, so that it reaches many more souls. What I ask you, brothers around the world, is to pray for our church in Chile, pray for being able to establish a national seminary, pray for being able to bring together faithful members, servant leaders and workers and pastors. May they preach sound doctrine and care for, gather and straighten the paths of their flock, the Good Shepherd's flock, the Family of God in Chile.

*Pastor Mario Gálvez, Christian Lutheran Confessional Synod of Chile*

**India** ■ For the Lutheran Mission of Salvation of India, Rajahmundry, 2020 has definitely been a very **difficult, discouraging** and a **different** year for the most part. Yet the Lord has done some amazing things this year which otherwise we never would have done in the near future.

**Difficult and discouraging:** Because of the restrictions imposed by the global pandemic, we were not able to hold our monthly workshops. Congregations were not allowed to gather together for church services. Hundreds of our members lost their jobs and some even lost their lives. Yet, the biggest upset for the entire LMSI this year was the death of our beloved president Rev. G.J. Ananda Raju in the month of August. Before his death, with the help of the generous special grant provided by the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, LMSI was able to reach out to thousands of poor and needy with Christ's love and care. It was a great opportunity to share the Christ-centered gospel.

**Different:** Because of the necessity to explore new methods to worship the Lord. Sure enough, the Lord opened the door of online worship for us. The most amazing thing for us was the publishing of our YouTube channel in the month of March. We never would have done it in the near future had the necessity not arisen. The LMSI Rajahmundry central church, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, has been live-streaming its worship services since then, giving us a great opportunity to reach more people on the internet.

As we are about to enter another year of God's undeserving grace as a Christ-centered Lutheran Church body, the LMSI hopes to expand and explore new ways to reach out to the needy. Besides the new circumstances, perhaps the big challenge for us in these new circumstances will be learning new skills and keeping up with the evolving technology and social media platforms. We especially hope to not only live-stream all our services but also to produce new edifying videos on a regular basis and upload them on our YouTube channel.

*Pastor Kalyan Gollapalli,  
Rajahmundry district of LMSI*



Flooding in Vijayawada, India



Flooding in Hyderabad, India

**India** ■ The Lord, the one who leads us until He returns or calls us home, has guided the Lutheran Mission of Salvation - Hyderabad through 2020, a year that definitely has been challenging, and at the same time, a year of blessing coming from the challenges.

2020 was discouraging because of the pandemic although God has blessed us with many opportunities to be able to proclaim the Gospel and share the love of our God with people. We have reached out to our people who have lost their jobs and who have been fighting the pandemic with great difficulties. We were able to tell them how, in great ways, the Lord is our help and our refuge. But as much as we used this opportunity to reach out to our people, Satan has been working very hard to suppress the mission work. At this juncture, we do not even think this is the right time to publish anything online on mission news in India. Please continue to pray for us.

This past year, we lost our Rajahmundry President, Rev. G.J. Ananda Raju, one gospel worker from the Hyderabad district was called to glory due to COVID-19, and about twelve families lost beloved members from their earthly home. Everybody has the hope of seeing their beloved family members again one day.

In 2021, we look forward to proclaiming the good news in a smarter and more careful way without giving the government a chance to stop us from spreading the gospel light into the world's darkness in which so many live.

The online sharing of the gospel has been a great blessing for the church. If not for the pandemic, we never would have thought of online sharing. Previously, our services were limited only to our church, but now we are happy that outsiders also listen to our church services. We believe this was God's plan for His church. We look forward to continuing the services online as we pray and hope to reap more fruit for His kingdom.

Our Lord is a great God. The work that He starts, He shall never leave it incomplete. Through faith, we see that God is working for good in everything that He has done, that He is doing and that He shall do for His church. **(Please see NOTE next page.)**

*Pastor Solomon Mamidi  
Hyderabad district of LMSI*

**NOTE: Because of pressure and possible harassment by the government of India, we request that none of this news about the mission in India be published online. Please do not mention names or places in these articles on social media, webpages or other public forums. Thank you. TAH**

## South Korea

One of the notable events of 2020 was the 15th anniversary of Seoul Lutheran Church. As you can imagine, the commemorative event was not possible due to COVID-19. We gave thanks for having an "un-tact" (it means "online") thanksgiving ceremony with one elder participating with many members of our congregation. Through this event, we found the hidden talents of our members. And we had a great socializing time and commemorative event online. It was a very meaningful time.

COVID-19 is expected to stabilize next summer with the availability of a vaccine. I had the opportunity to rethink the meaning of a worship service while leading online worship with COVID-19. So, in 2021, I look forward to thinking over the essence of faith and believing whole-heartedly in God. The motto for next year has been decided: Return to Jehovah (God).

*Rev. Samuel Choi, pastor of Seoul Lutheran Church*

**Czechia** ■ As we look back at 2020, we can see how the pandemic has helped many people in our country realize that they were living in a bubble of self-security, taking for granted their outwardly peaceful lives, profiting businesses, and limitless possibilities to travel without harm. Many began to realize that we, as human beings, are not the lords of nature or even of our lives. We are not "invincible conquerors". Rather, we are frail and vulnerable, not only in the physical and psychological realms, but also in the spiritual domain.

I see our church's opportunity to offer and present the hope of the Gospel of Jesus to the people around us. In times of distress and confusion as we are now facing, the words about

redemption and restoration available in Christ may sound more meaningful than they do in times of fleeting prosperity and seeming safety.

The quarantine also forced many to spend more time at home and on the internet. That presented another opportunity and challenge for our church's work: to be able to aim at those souls searching the online world, looking for the truth, the comfort, the guidance, and the hope, often without knowing it. We need to be there for them, using modern media, and doing our best to "speak their language", while presenting to them the timeless message of God's Word. The "scenery and the stage" do change, but the "play and its Author" don't. The One and Only Savior of the World is and will be with us even in 2021.

*Pastor Petr Krakora, the Czech Evangelical Lutheran Church*



Uldis preaching with a mask, Latvia

**Latvia** ■ "Like those who dreamed..." The Lord commanded His prophet Jeremiah to buy a parcel of property in one of the darkest periods of Judah's history, just before the destruction of Jerusalem. To the surprised prophet, the Lord asks: "I am the Lord, the God of all mankind. Is anything too hard for me?" I think this should be a motto of Christian mission efforts, and certainly it's the motto of confessional Lutherans in Latvia. In the midst of tumultuous times, we think about establishing a new congregation, working on our hymnal and liturgy, conducting extra Bible studies, teaching and preaching, writing books, and providing lectures on church history. The work of the Lord has to go on as there is nothing too hard for Him, and His covenant with Noah is still in force: "As long as the earth endures ... day and night will never cease." Genesis 8:22

As I write these lines, our government considers imposing a total lockdown in Latvia. In spite of that, our pastors and parishioners look forward

while trusting the promises of the Lord. We are on the way to the new heaven and earth and wish to take with us as many as the Lord will join to our group of pilgrims. Thanks to the Lord's grace, we all are in good health, humbly accepting whatever He gives and not losing confidence in Him. We pray for our brothers and sisters around the world, praise our blessed fellowship and look forward to the time when we can meet face-to-face and sing together: "When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dreamed. Our mouths were filled with laughter, our tongues with songs of joy." Psalm 126

*Pastor Ilars Plume  
Confessional Lutheran Church in Latvia*

*The LORD's loving kindnesses indeed never cease, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness. Lamentations 3:22, 23*



## Ukraine ■ 2020 Hindsight and a Focus on the Future

Your sideview mirror likely has these words on it: "Objects in mirror are closer than they appear." Last year at this time, the pandemic was just around the corner. Later in the year, riots threatened to turn into anarchy, and you or someone you know would suffer an unexpected loss. In hindsight, these events were closer than they appeared.

By the grace of God, Gift of Life (GoL) in Ukraine was able to continue operating the medical/dental clinics and prolife centers without much interruption despite the turmoil. For that blessing we are grateful. Looking forward, we hope for things to return to a normal state of controlled chaos! But don't "bet the farm" on a better 2021 for it's impossible to predict what will happen. Looking into the future, there are troubles, problems, weaknesses, and old age—and death may come at any time.

In view of that, at GoL the challenge is to become more Christlike, to let the light of Jesus shine clearly through the work we do, using Him as our inspiration, model, and source of strength. As followers of the Glory of Israel, we thank the Lord for His guidance into the future. Unquestionably, Jesus' "second coming" is closer than it was yesterday. Are we prepared for that? The end is closer than it appears, but this brings us no terror. Rather, we look forward to a far better future because of Jesus Christ's birth, life, teachings, suffering, death, and resurrection. All those things have been placed onto our account by God, and the lump of coal and willow switch that we deserved were taken away by Him. This is the end we look forward to, and we want others to know about it too. That is why we do what we do, and we hope you'll want to take part. May God bless us everyone and grant us a better new year!

*Nicholas and Kerry Laper, Gift of Life, Ternopil, Ukraine*

## Special Appeal

I have been somewhat surprised by how long **this COVID crisis has continued**. In some of our world fields, we received reports of severe health decline, or even the death of loved ones. Often, the cost of medical care, including hospitalization, has been a severe hardship on the families. Congregation members have lost their means of supporting their families. Recently, a further disaster has occurred—**devastating floods** have damaged or destroyed homes, crops, and churches.

The Board for World Outreach has already come to our readers with a request for prayers and offerings to help in some of our fields. And you responded generously. Now **we come to you again, because so many in our world fields need more help as these disasters have come one on top of the other.**

**The Board for World Outreach together with the Board for Christian Service hope to gather a large offering, perhaps as much as \$25,000, \$35,000 or more to help with medical bills, housing, damaged crop relief, other flood relief and Covid relief for our various world fields.** All offerings received will be administered jointly by the BWO and the Board for Christian Service.

Our Savior has blessed you, so that you in turn may become a blessing to others. Thank you for kindly considering this request for help. Your many brothers and sisters in Christ thank you as well. Gifts may be sent and made payable to **Board for World Outreach, 6 Browns Court, Mankato, MN 56001** or go to **els.org/donate**. Please designate your gift as **"Special Covid and Flood Relief"**.

## Other Mission Work Kenya ■

The first class of seminary students graduated in November. The Board for World Outreach, together with several ELS pastors, continues to work with this new church body. We look forward to visiting this field and continuing to develop our relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Diocese of Kenya.

## Australia ■

A Lutheran congregation in Brisbane, Queensland, Australia has contacted the Board for World Outreach to provide counsel and non-financial assistance. The board will work with this congregation in the new year.

## What Can You Do To Help?

■ Pray for each of the mission fields in this newsletter. Pray for the national pastors of these churches as well as for the members of their congregations, that they might remain faithful in their homelands that often do not welcome the Gospel of Jesus Christ. And thank the Lord for their faithful service.

■ Please—prayerfully consider a gift or regular donation to 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 [www.els.org](http://www.els.org) and click on "Donate" in the top banner on the right-hand side.

■ If you have questions, please contact us in the following ways:

Board for World Outreach  
6 Browns Ct.  
Mankato, MN 56001

website: [els.org/our-work-together/world-outreach/](http://els.org/our-work-together/world-outreach/)

Rev. Thomas Heyn  
BWO Administrator  
(608) 335-4612  
[theyn@blc.edu](mailto:theyn@blc.edu)

