



March 2021

Mission News & Helping Hands

Evangelical Lutheran Synod
Board for World Outreach
Sharing the Gospel in
South America and Asia

A Letter from **INDIA**— Many Thanks!

From the Editor —

Rev. Thomas Heyn
Board for World Outreach
Administrator

A while back, the Board for World Outreach together with the Board for Christian Service put out an appeal to the members of the ELS requesting special offerings to help with COVID, medical, and flood relief in our world mission fields. Your response has been overwhelming. Even now, the need for help continues.

In this issue, we have a heart-warming letter of thanks from Rajahmundry in India. We have been told that in Rajahmundry, several Bible Women and Gospel Workers, three seminary students and five out of seven board members became COVID victims. District President Ananda Raju died from the virus. Two seminary students survived bad road accidents. Two photos show President Raju, while he was still alive, administering relief even while he was aware of the danger he was facing. **You may see some of these people in the photos in this issue.**

We also have updates from other fields where the coronavirus has caused more hardship.

As always, we appreciate your prayers for the work in our world fields and your financial support that makes this work possible. The Bible passage below was quoted last summer as the COVID effects became known. It still applies today.

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. Romans 8:28

Note: Because of pressure and possible harassment by the government, we request that specific names of individuals, congregations, and cities or villages mentioned in this article NOT be published online, on social media, webpages or other public forums. Thank you. TAH

A Big Thank You

Dear Rev. Thomas A. Heyn,

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who granted to show a glimpse of His true identity and glory on the Mount of Transfiguration.

In 2020, if there is one thing that the whole world paid attention to and worried about, without doubt it was COVID-19. COVID-19 had caused great havoc in many families throughout the world as well as disrupting the world economy. And it's no different in India. Even in our small cities, towns and villages located in South India we have experienced great losses, although we thought this virus would never reach our small villages. Several members of the Lutheran Mission of Salvation of India (LMSI) had become COVID-19 victims. Surely it was a time of crisis throughout the world. Yet, it was a tremendous God-given opportunity to show Jesus and to reflect His love to the needy.

continued on next page





We are very grateful and give thanks to the Lord for the Evangelical Lutheran Synod as it has used this God-given opportunity to reflect His love by extending its helping hand to help cover the medical needs of the COVID-19 victims of the Lutheran Mission of Salvation of India. From the bottom of our hearts, we give thanks to everyone in the ELS who has given to help support this cause. Thanks to the help you extended, many lives were spared, many lives were sustained and most importantly many lives have tasted the love of Christ during this crisis.

We used some of the funds you sent us to provide essential commodities to hundreds of families in April 2020 during the peak lockdown days. Some of the funds we used to cover the medical bills of many COVID victims. We have nearly sixty COVID-related deaths recorded throughout the LMSI. Some of the funds we used to cover the medical bills of many general medical needs. And some of the funds we used to help the flood victims.

Once again, I would like to express our appreciation and give thanks to you. We are indeed grateful to you all for extending Christian care and love in such difficult and needy situations by helping us financially with your gifts and especially with your prayers and support.

With grateful hearts and love, in Christ's service,

*Rev. Kalyan K. Gollapalli
President, Society of the Lutheran Mission of Salvation of India (Rajahmundry)*



News From Other Mission Fields

- *Peru*—COVID-19 has surged once again. In-person worship is not allowed but online video services are being presented.
- *Chile*—The churches are restricted from in-person worship once again, but online worship is available and watched, not only by church members, but by others not currently members of the congregations. The training of future church workers continues.
- *South Korea*—There are still travel restrictions and quarantine requirements. The BWO is planning for a seminary graduate to serve at Seoul Lutheran Church. Pray that the visa process goes smoothly.
- *Latvia*—The churches are again under quarantine after a new surge in the coronavirus. Plans are underway to start a new evangelism center in a historic part of the capital, Old Town Riga.
- *Czech Republic*—A recent offering for relief was gathered and sent to a congregation in Peru. The story appeared in the latest issue of the "Thoughts of Faith" newsletter.
- *Ukraine*—Administrators Nick and Kerry Laper have returned to Ukraine after several months of being back in the United States. The counseling centers and medical clinics look forward to being open and offering services. Plans are underway for upgrades and purchase of new equipment for the clinics.

In Other News

- *Kenya*—A new class of seminary students will begin classes in March. This new church body continues to develop its organization.

What Can You Do to 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.
- 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:

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website: els.org/our-work-together/world-outreach/

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Note to Our Readers Act Soon, Before Thrivent Choice Dollars® Expire!

Eligible Thrivent Financial members who have Choice Dollars to designate have until March 31, 2021 to direct them. Don't miss this opportunity to recommend that Thrivent Financial provide grant funding to *Evangelical Lutheran Synod—Board for World Outreach*. Go to Thrivent.com/thriventchoice and find program terms and conditions. Or call 800-847-4836 and say "Thrivent Choice" after the prompt.

