



September 2021

# Mission News

& Helping Hands

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

## A Much-Needed Trip to Peru

### From the Editor

Rev. Thomas Heyn  
Board for World Outreach  
Administrator

For the first time in a year and a half, we were able to visit one of our mission fields. Rev. Timothy Bartels and I visited Peru in July to meet with the Peruvian leaders and deal with some important issues.

We have also received additional thanks for Covid relief provided in another area of our work in India.

We appreciate your prayers for the work in our world fields and your financial support that makes this work possible.

“O LORD, hear my prayer, listen to my cry for mercy; in your faithfulness and righteousness come to my relief” (Ps 143:1).

(l to r) Nancy Santullo, founder of Rainforest Flow; Samuel Schwan; and Caleb, chief engineer for Rainforest Flow ►



### Part I: Overcoming Obstacles

What do a visit to Peru and the pandemic have in common? A God who can overcome obstacles. While obstacles stood in the way of a visit to Peru, the visit was necessary for two reasons: (1) the Peruvian leadership requested a visit to help mediate fallout among the clergy over alleged mismanagement; and (2) there was an ongoing need to encourage the work of the Peruvian church.

The pandemic, the first obstacle, delayed our visit for eight months due to Covid restrictions. However, as restrictions lifted, a trip was made possible this July, courtesy of Samuel Schwan, a layman interested in the jungle communities where our Peru synod works. He is partnering with the Rainforest Flow foundation to bring clean water to the jungle communities that we serve. Since he was going to Peru, he wanted to coordinate his trip with our visit.

Upon arriving, Pastor Heyn and I faced the next obstacle—the division in the church over strong evidence of mismanagement by a few pastors charged with administering the work in the Peru synod. We sat down with the parties at odds, one by one. Under the mediation of Pastor Heyn, the parties aired their grievances. After hearing the grievances, we attempted to find a way forward with correcting the situation and reconciliation.

Two pastors, one being the previous synod treasurer and the other being the coordinator of the jungle work, refused to acknowledge any wrongdoing despite the evidence against them, and subsequently refused to reconcile. It was heartbreaking to see an unwillingness to reconcile and a parting of ways. A third pastor acknowledged wrongdoing and expressed a desire to reconcile. It was heartwarming to see reconciled brothers shake hands and embrace.

continued on the next page



These attempts to address problems and seek resolution and reconciliation took place because new leadership was elected in April of 2020. **One of the goals of the new leadership, working with the Board for World Outreach, was to create procedures for complete transparency (openness) of ministry and the accountability required of Christian leaders.** This brought irregularities to light which were addressed during our visit. As they go forward, the new Peruvian leadership has in place processes for full accountability. The Board for World Outreach is confident that projects funded by ELS members and friends will be completed as planned.

In short, these mediations helped bring closure to a painful time in the Peruvian church. Now that there has been closure, the Peruvian church can refocus its energy on the work it has before them with some really bright spots on the horizon.

## Part II: Ongoing Work in Peru

That brings us to the second goal of the field trip—to encourage the ongoing work of the Peruvian church. This goal is illustrated by three stories. The first involves a man named **Carlos**. Carlos is a member of Dios Es Mi Fortaleza (God Is My Strength) Lutheran Church in Chimbote. Chimbote is a coastal city about five hours north of Lima and is served by Pastor Segundo Gutiérrez. Some thirty years ago Carlos met his wife, **Betty**. They had a civil wedding, but not a church wedding. Years later, through the outreach of Pastor Segundo, they became members of Dios Es Mi Fortaleza. Carlos had gotten to know Pastor Heyn quite well from past visits. Since he and Betty had never had a church wedding, it was his fervent desire to have a church wedding and for Pastor Heyn to officiate. So, some thirty years later, during our Peru trip, they celebrated their church wedding with Pastor Heyn officiating.

Carlos is a retired policeman. Dios Es Mi Fortaleza also has other members with professional careers: Lucia, a nurse, Andy, a surgeon and Willy, a dentist student. This is unusual for our Peruvian churches, where there is much poverty. These professional members have the passion and gifts to do outreach in their community. It is their goal to have a clinic next to the church and offer services at a reduced cost. They envision the clinic to be an avenue to connect others to Jesus.

The second story is about a man named **Fidel Convércio**. Fidel, a man of retirement age, is pastor of the mountain churches. The mountain churches are remote and removed from the urban churches of Lima and Chimbote. Earlier this year Pastor Fidel's wife was gravely ill with Covid. She has recovered but is in a weakened state. After she got well, Pastor Fidel became ill with pulmonary fibrosis. He has recovered but is also in a weakened state.

Pastor Fidel willingly serves four remote mountain congregations. Yet, with a tired voice, a tear in his eye and a lump in his throat, he spoke to us regarding the weight of caring for the four congregations that lay on his shoulders. He has that extra weight, in part, because one leader died, and another left the church. A plan of personal visitation and live streaming services was put together to help support Pastor Fidel and give him a little respite.



▲ Peruvian Leadership (l to r): Pastor Segundo Gutiérrez; Pastor Heyn; Vicar Roy Albarrán; Pastor Andrés Robles; Vicar Celso Benites; and Finance Manager Cesar Convércio

**One of the goals of the new leadership, working with the Board for World Outreach, was to create procedures for complete transparency (openness) of ministry and the accountability required of Christian leaders.**



Standing: Pastor Fidel Convércio ▼



▲ Louis Terry Community

Then there is **German** (pronounced "Hare-MON"). German is the leader of his community (called Louis Terry where we have a congregation and church) as well as the effective leader of the jungle communities with which we work. He was brought into the church through the early efforts of Missionary Terry Shultz. German told us that before our missionaries came to the jungle, they knew a little about Jesus. At that time, though, they fought with their neighboring communities. With sadness in his eyes, he related that the fighting included hurting and injuring one another with weapons. When our missionaries came, however, they learned to know more about Jesus. As they learned, they began to lay down their weapons, and as they laid down their weapons they now live more peacefully with their neighbors.

German is pictured on the left ▶

**German has been instrumental in working with the other jungle leaders and communities during this time that has troubled the Peruvian church.** Despite the efforts of one of the pastors who parted ways with the Peruvian church and who tried to coax the jungle pastors to leave the synod with him, German has remained very loyal to the Peruvian synod and the ELS. **Due to his steady leadership, peace has been re-established with many of the jungle leaders and communities and the door remains wide open to continue and expand the jungle work.**

German has been instrumental in working with the other jungle leaders and communities during this time that has troubled the Peruvian church.



**Due to his steady leadership, peace has been re-established with many of the jungle leaders and communities and the door remains wide open to continue and expand the jungle work.**

## Part III: Summary

In summary, we know that Jesus wants peace in his church. It is the peace that our Mediator, Jesus, has made for us by removing the biggest obstacle of all, our sin, and putting us at one with God through the shedding of his blood. This enables us to live at peace by reconciling with one another when we have been put at odds, and it enables the church to reach out with the peace that Jesus made for all.

Finally, it was an honor and pleasure to be able to represent the ELS Board for World Outreach on this field trip. Thank you for your prayers and support.

*Timothy Bartels, Chairman  
South America Committee  
ELS Board for World Outreach*



## Needs for Peru:

### IN THE MOUNTAIN REGION

- 4 smart TVs for the congregations to stay connected to the Peruvian church through online viewing of sermons and services.

### IN THE JUNGLE

- food for undernourished children
- first aid kits for snake bites and other injuries
- three laptops for teachers
- two projectors for teachers
- a printer
- tablets for some 25-30 students
- a loudspeaker
- a chainsaw.

We thank God for His work in Peru as well as in the states. Perhaps your church can embrace one of the above projects with funds. Any help you can give in the enclosed envelope is greatly appreciated.

waiting for food in the country ▶



waiting for food in the city ▶

food distribution by Mr. Vijay Sidney (in blue shirt) ▶



### Covid Update from Jabalpur, India

Greetings to you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,

Thank you so much for Covid relief funds. I have received \$2,000 for Jabalpur which I have used for medical help, providing food, sanitizer, and masks to the poor. I am also sharing some photos with you. Do pray for all the people who are affected by Covid.

In His service,  
Vijay Sidney, Lutheran Mission of  
Salvation - Jabalpur, India



## News from Other Mission Fields



**Latvia** — Work continues with a new evangelism and apologetics center in a historic part of Old Town Riga.

**Czechia** — The leaders are preparing for in-person instruction at Martin Luther School.

**Ukraine** — The counseling centers and medical clinics continue looking for new ways of offering their services. Plans are underway for upgrades and purchase of new equipment for the clinics.

## How Can You 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. May God work all these challenges for the good of his people, as he has promised.

— 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](http://els.org) and click on "Donate" in the top banner on the right-hand side.

— For more information please contact us at the following:

**Board for World Outreach**  
6 Browns Court, Mankato, MN  
56001

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

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

