

March 2022

Mission News & Helping Hands

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

India



From the Editor

Rev. Thomas Heyn
Board for World Outreach
Administrator

"Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for
He is good! For His mercy endures
forever" Ps 118:29.

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

Our feature story in this issue
focuses on a different challenge
of ministry in India—traffic and
travel. Although some parts of
the challenge will sound similar to
stateside challenges, others will
be unique to India, like cattle along
busy urban streets, unbelievably
overloaded trucks and auto-
rickshaws (motorcycle taxis). Despite
these challenges, the pastors in India
continue their important ministry of
sharing God's Word and overseeing
the work of His church. We hope you
enjoy the story and learn about some
of the unique challenges to ministry
in this world field.

Challenging Travel in Ministry!

The late Rev. Ananda, previous President of LMSI, Rajahmundry, used to say that **traffic in India is like fish moving in the aquarium—fish do not have any rules or paths to follow.** He would also say that in India drivers on the road act like the people during the time of Judges in the Old Testament—"Everyone did what was right in his own eyes."

Rev. Solomon Mamidi, President of LMSI, Hyderabad, says, "If a person can drive a vehicle on Indian roads during business hours, then he can be a certified driver and can drive the vehicle anywhere else in the world."

These two men were speaking from experience. They were overseeing the pastors, workers and congregations in a church body larger than our entire ELS.

Travel by road in India is challenging because it is clumsy and chaotic. A variety of unexpected and risky things happen on our roads. For example, more than twenty people travel in a four-seater auto-rickshaw (because that is the only transport available at that time); a truck loaded with hay/straw almost three

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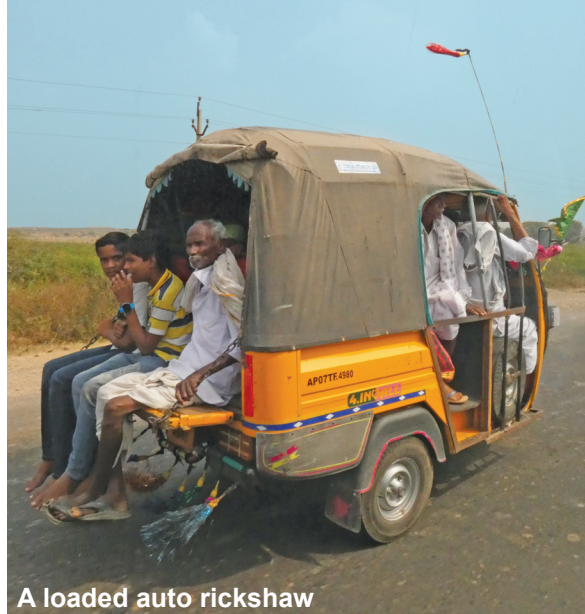
Continue reading on the next page

Vehicles
everywhere





Overloaded tractor wagons



A loaded auto rickshaw



Overloaded truck



Busy rural road

...pedestrians suddenly come into busy urban traffic, as do cattle, street dogs, pigs, sheep, hens, etc.

side of the road. In addition, our roads are full of potholes, gravel, and dirt. During the monsoons, overflowing drains and sewers create lots of problems for the traffic. Besides that, in India, most people do not follow traffic rules. Because of the chaotic traffic and pathetic road conditions in India we often face traffic jams, transport delays, and unexpected accidents.

Yet, almost 85% of India's passenger traffic and more than 60% of its freight depend on the roadways. So, we have no other option but to use the roadways to visit the rural and village regions in particular, since all our rural churches have no access to other transport such as flights and trains. Although passenger buses are the most common means of public transport in India, the system is unreliable, unsafe, and never on time. So, to visit the village and rural regions regularly we must have our own transportation.

A President's Typical Day While Visiting

Visitations ► Most of our churches are located far away from the headquarters. So, a president will plan to visit three or four villages on each visit. Usually, on each visit, we will be gone for eighteen to twenty hours and the visits are made for a variety of purposes. Sometimes we attend special ceremonies and celebrations. Sometimes we go for mission rallies and sometimes for inspection. Typically, our day ends at 11:00 pm and by midnight we head back home.

times more than its capacity penetrates through the busy traffic; beggars beg the drivers and passengers of the vehicles waiting at stop signs; **pedestrians suddenly come into busy urban traffic, as do cattle, street dogs, pigs, sheep, hens, etc.**; a vehicle comes head-on on the wrong

On one occasion, when the Hyderabad LMSI president was heading home from a church anniversary service at 11:30 pm, the car battery suddenly burst when his vehicle hit an unexpected pothole in the middle of the night. After many hours of trying and struggling, some church people borrowed an agricultural tractor's battery from the village and fixed it in the car. On that day he didn't sleep the whole night and eventually reached home at 10:00 am instead of 5:00 pm.

Workshops ► For our monthly workshops, we leave early at 4:30 am and reach the destination by 10:00 am. From 10:30 am to 5:30 pm we hold the classes. And by 6:30 pm we head back and reach home at around 11:30 pm. After the workshops, although it is not safe to travel in the night, we still head back home no matter how late it gets since staying overnight at a village hotel is not at all safe. On one occasion in 2006, when the president of LMSI Hyderabad stayed at a hotel in a nearby village, he got severely sick from a mosquito bite which was later diagnosed as Chikun Guinea. At that time his whole family contracted Chikun Guinea from

To make these journeys, it is vital to have our own transportation. Under the current circumstances, there is a great need to replace our old cars with new ones as they are not fit for continued travel.

they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent?" Rom 10:14, 15. You can help send us to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ in the spiritual darkness through your help and support. In our mission, we were able to reach the unreached including several areas where they didn't even have electricity in those days. And now, having planted churches with a motto that the people in darkness should see the Light (Jesus), they see Christ shining not only from the church building's cross but through the Gospel also. Please help us continue this work.

We are very thankful for your continued prayers and support. You are in our daily prayers.

In Christ, our Lord and Savior,

Rev. Solomon Mamidi, President of LMSI Hyderabad
Rev. Kalyan K. Gollapalli, President of LMSI Rajahmundry

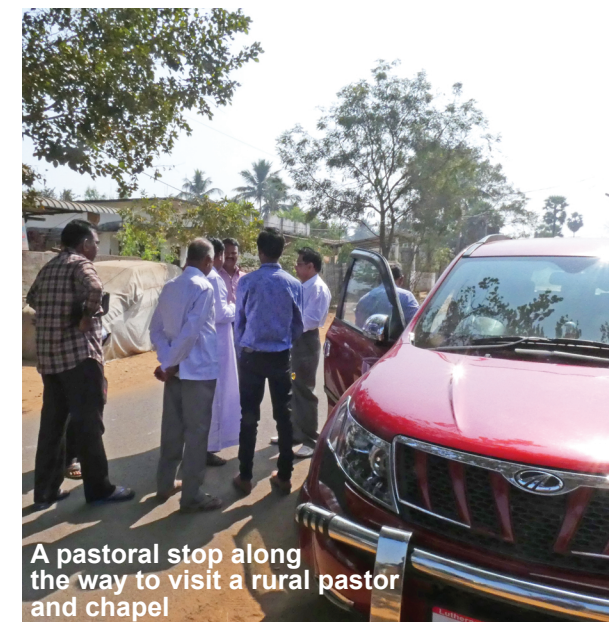
him and everyone had to be admitted to the hospital.

To make these journeys, it is vital to have our own transportation. Under the current circumstances, there is a great need to replace our old cars with new ones as they are not fit for continued travel. They have around 250,000 kilometers on them (almost 160,000 miles of driving on rough roads).

"And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are



Cattle congestion



A pastoral stop along the way to visit a rural pastor and chapel

Note From Pastor Heyn

Each new car costs around \$45,000. The plan is to purchase one car for one region this year and one car for the other region next year. If you can help provide funds for these purchases, please direct your offering to the Board for World Outreach as directed on the next page with a note or check memo line that indicates "For vehicle purchase - LMSI India".



News From Other Mission Fields

KOREA—Pastor David Choi is working with Pastors Samuel Choi and J.W. Kim in reaching out in various places in the greater Seoul area.

PERU—Seminary classes in the Amazon are being taught by a new teaching team, Pastors Segundo Gutiérrez and Andres Robles. The schools in Lima anticipate increased enrolment this spring (their fall).

CHILE—Pastor Mario Gálvez serves the congregation in Linares twice monthly in addition to serving his congregation in Santiago. Two Chilean men have begun seminary training.

LATVIA—Work continues with a new evangelism and apologetics center in a historic part of Old Town Riga. Three men have begun learning the ancient biblical languages together with seminary classes.

CZECHIA—Instruction at Martin Luther School is underway. Pastor Petr Krakora continues to uncover new and interesting ways to reach out with the Gospel.

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. The U.S. administration team (Nick and Kerry Laper) are making plans to return to the U.S. as this issue is going to press. Please pray for their safe return and the Lord's blessing and safekeeping of the Ukrainian workers who remain and continue the work of Gift of Life.

What Can You Do To Help?

Perhaps you can help provide for one of the needs described in this issue's articles. Please prayerfully consider a gift or regular donation for the work in the various fields. 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.

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 as they hear and share the Gospel of Jesus Christ. May the Lord continue to care for them and strengthen their faith as he works all things for the good of his people, as he has promised.

For more information please contact us in the following ways:

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

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We regret that, due to supply chain issues and the availability of paper, we are unable to provide remittance envelopes for your use. If you wish to make a gift for the work of world missions, we ask that you provide your own envelope or use the online option. We hope to solve this problem by the next issue.

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, 2022 to direct them. Don't miss this opportunity to recommend that Thrivent Financial provide grant funding to ELS Board for World Outreach. Go to Thrivent.com/thriventchoice to learn more and find program terms and conditions. Or call 800-847-4836 and say "Thrivent Choice" after the prompt.