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**Mission
News &
Helping Hands**
Evangelical Lutheran Synod
Board for World Outreach
Sharing the Gospel in
South America and Asia

Peru

The Passing of Pastor Fidel Convercio

by Rev. Timothy Erickson
Former ELS missionary to Chile and Peru



From the Editor

Rev. Thomas Heyn
Board for World Outreach
Administrator

There are many things happening in the ELS mission fields—blessings, challenges, retirements, new personnel, and ... a death among the Peruvian pastors. Former missionary Timothy Erickson remembers Pastor Fidel Convercio. You will notice many things happening in the updates for other fields. We appreciate your many prayers for the workers in our world mission fields. Your financial support makes this work possible. We are grateful for both your prayers and your gifts.

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

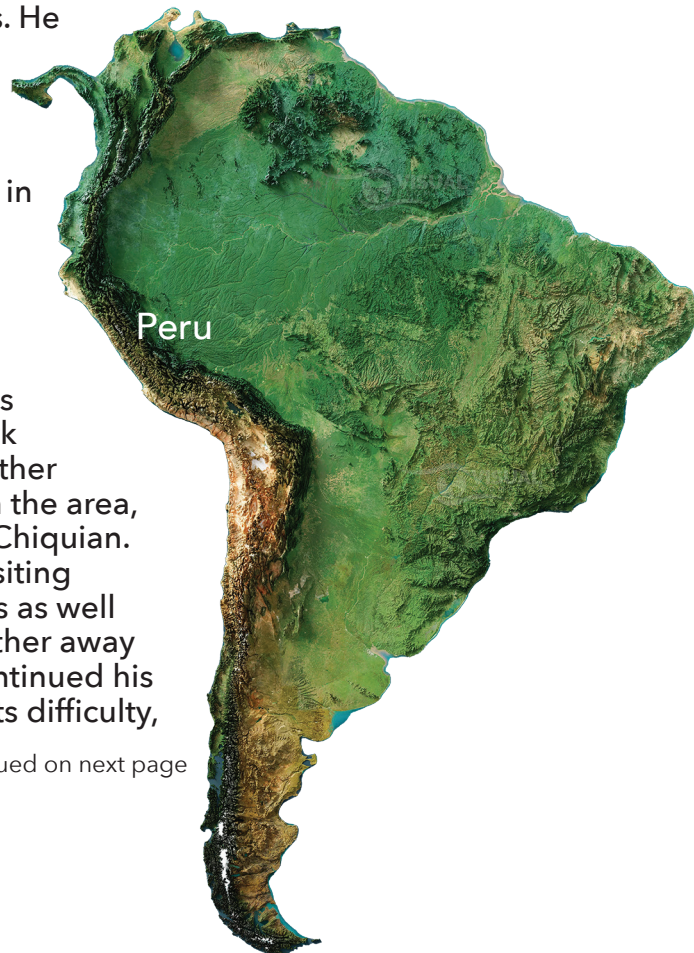
Early in September we received word of the death of Pastor Fidel Convercio in Peru. Pastor Convercio had served as the pastor of our churches in the Andes Mountains of Peru for over 50 years, first as a volunteer and later as an ordained pastor. He had come into contact with our mission through the work of missionary James Olsen. He worked for almost 20 years as a volunteer to shepherd the mountain congregations. While serving, he studied with the missionaries. Eventually he was chosen to study full-time and receive a scholarship in order to finish his seminary studies. He was ordained in 1992 and then became one of the paid workers in the synod of the church in Peru.

Pastor Fidel began by serving the congregation that formed in Pacllon his home town. His work then expanded to other mountain villages in the area, Llamac, Pocpa and Chiquian. He was faithful in visiting these congregations as well as other villages farther away from Pacllon. He continued his ministry in spite of its difficulty,

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Rev. Fidel Convercio



Peru continued

often having to travel a full day by horseback or on foot, and even in the face of terrorist attacks and threats to his life.

There were also members who did not live in a village, but were isolated. I remember accompanying him on a couple of these visits to isolated members, notably at a beautiful lake called Jahuacocha beneath the mountain range called Cordillera Huayhuash where we visited a young man, a member of the church, who lived there as a shepherd. We also had some recreational time, went fishing together, caught some mountain trout, and ate them after it was pitch dark.

Fidel was a very faithful pastor who taught his people the Gospel in a clear manner. He could do this in two languages, Spanish and Quechua (pron: Kéh-shwah). For many of his members Quechua was their first language, their language of the heart.

Fidel was married to Dora. They had two children Edison and Areli (Areli is a biblical name, one of the sons of Gad, so a grandson of Jacob, great-great grandson of Abraham, Numbers 26:17). Pastor Fidel had several grandchildren that he loved very much. In the mountain congregations, Fidel and Dora were known for their faithfulness to each other. They almost always went together on their missionary journeys to the mountain villages.

Fidel was a very faithful pastor who taught his people the Gospel in a clear manner. He could do this in two languages, Spanish and Quechua (pron: Kéh-shwah). For many of his members Quechua was their first language, their language of the heart. When missionaries visited and preached in Spanish, Fidel would sometimes explain the message of the sermon in Quechua. The elderly people, especially, would nod their heads with understanding.

Fidel was also a faithful seminary student, learning well the doctrine, culture and history of the Bible. One time, ELS President George Orvick visited Peru and had an interview with each of the students in the seminary. President Orvick was impressed when

Fidel explained to him the doctrinal difference between the magisterial and the ministerial (or instrumental) use of reason in theology.

In 1998, Dora and Fidel accompanied me on a trip to the United States. We visited several congregations and attended the 1998 Synod Convention. It was quite an adventure for them. They were impressed with the riches they saw in the United States. But they were also impressed and encouraged with the faithfulness of the people they met from the church that they visited. While in the United States, they communicated through interpreters, but also used their musical talents, singing and playing Andean mountain-flutes.

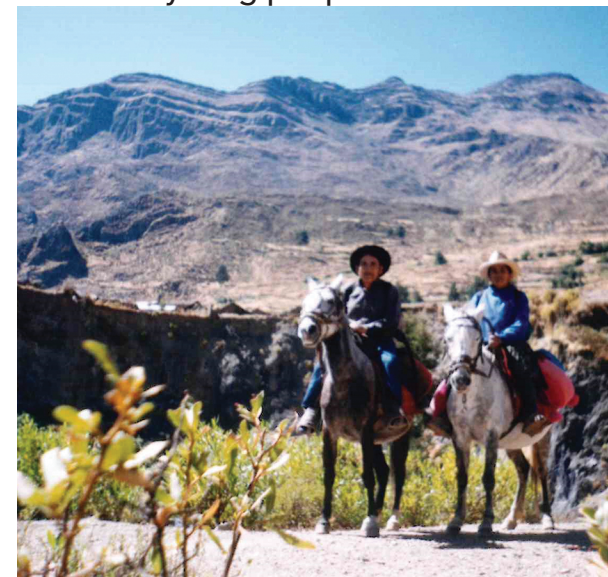
Pastor Fidel will be greatly missed in the work of the church in the Andes Mountains of Peru. We ask our readers to pray that God would comfort Dora and the whole family. Also pray for the work in the Andes Mountains—that the Lord would raise up new leaders so that the preaching and teaching of the Gospel will continue among the dear people of God in that region. ■



Fidel with young people



Fidel with his faithful steed



Fidel and Dora on a mission journey



Dora and Fidel in 2015

News From Other Mission Fields

Chile—Although the Linares mission work will likely be suspended within the next year, Pastor Mario Gálvez continues serving the few communicants with visits one or two times a month and connecting with them through online worship and Bible study. He continues the training of one man for ministry who helps him in the Santiago congregation.

India—The pastors are continuing their work in reaching out to the villages. The leaders have begun teaching the first year of studies for a new class of 20 seminary students who will graduate in approximately five years. Recently, Pastor Nirmal Babu and Pastor/Professor Simeon Mamidi became infected with the Chikungunya virus which can cause debilitating joint pain. We pray the Lord grants quick and complete healing. A youth rally is planned for the Hyderabad district at the end of October.

Korea—Pastor David Choi, his wife, Ashley, and Friends Network mission worker, Doug Tabor, are reaching out to the community through English language Bible studies and English conversation classes. Pastor David Choi has confirmed a young man who is beginning online studies at the WELS Asia Lutheran Seminary. Pastor J.W. Kim has retired from the active ministry at the Anyang congregation. The congregation voted to discontinue its work. The members are relocating to the other two ELS supported congregations.

Australia—Our Redeemer Lutheran Church in Brisbane, Australia, continues the calling process for an ELS pastor to serve them. Pray that the Lord would grant them a pastor to serve them and help them reach out to the rest of Australia.

Latvia—Work and family responsibilities are proving to be challenging for a couple seminary students. The others remain dedicated and look forward to continuing their studies.

Czech Republic—The board continues to work in this field as it faces various challenges in sharing the Gospel.

Ukraine—Administrators Nick and Kerry Laper plan to retire and return to the U.S. in November. A new administrator has already begun working with Gift of Life. Dmytro Maksymenko has years of experience working with humanitarian programs. He is especially interested in the Gospel outreach aspect of the GoL program. All counseling centers are open and providing services. The medical and dental mobile clinics offer their services in safe locations in western Ukraine. Although the war with Russia is a challenge for the work of Gift of Life, the Lord continues to bless this work for his glory and the blessing of many. Pray that the Lord blesses the work in Ukraine and provides a smooth transition for the new administrator.

How You Can 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. 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 and click on "Donate" in the top banner on the right-hand side or simply scan the QR code below which will take you to the donation page.



For more information, please contact us in the following ways:

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