

November 2025 Mission News

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

Chile

The Church in Chile Receiving and Providing Fellowship



From the Editor

Rev. Thomas Heyn
Board for World Outreach
Administrator

As summer months approach in South America, world mission outreach continues. We hope you enjoy the article by BWO member Pastor Daniel Ruiz, as he shares his experiences on a recent visit to the Chilean congregation, La Familia de Dios (The Family of God) Lutheran Church in Santiago. We thank you for your interest in our ELS world mission outreach and your prayers and support that make it possible.

"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations ..." (Matt 28:19).

*Pastor Daniel Ruiz
BWO South America Committee*

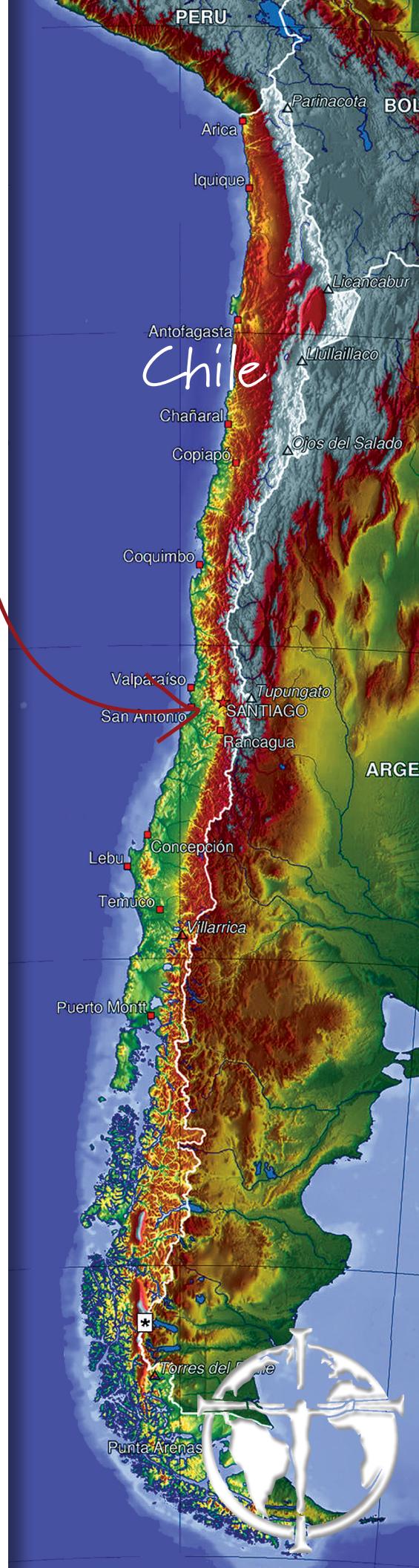
Flying into Chile from Peru, we landed in a country similar in language, climate to a degree, even some of the foods. Yet we were now in Chile, a country proud of its heritage and history.

The week we flew into Chile also happened to be their version of our Fourth of July. While we might celebrate one day, however, their celebrations last almost 11 days. "Fiestas Patrias" is its name.

However, Pastor Thomas Heyn and I were able to celebrate an even greater independence with La Familia de Dios Church during the divine service—the freedom won for us by Jesus Christ upon the cross.

On this trip we were able to see how our divine and merciful ruler had blessed the work in Chile. Sunday September 14th, Pastor Heyn and I were blessed to witness and be a part of the laying of hands on the new vicar of the congregation, **Pedro Soto Nuñez**. Pedro was a former Kenpo karate student of Pastor Mario Gálvez and in recent years had begun attending services, involving himself increasingly in the work of the church and Gospel studies. He has dedicated most of his time to his studies while also making visits with Pastor Mario to members, leading devotions, prayers, and participating in bible studies. As a guest Pastor, I was honored with preaching the sermon in Spanish for Pedro's installation.

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This was a wonderful opportunity to speak in Spanish and attempt to recall my sermon as much as possible in Spanish.

Pedro's heavy involvement in the church also opened the door to his daughter **Daniella**. He was able to help her learn about the Christian faith through the Lutheran teachings. The same day that her father was installed, she was received into communicant membership. It was a joyous day for the congregation. The congregation is now at a healthy 35 members and continues to draw more attention from the community. There are a few more prospects as well with whom Pastor Mario and Vicar Pedro keep in communication.

Pastor Mario is hard at work in teaching and helping people learn the Word of God. Milly, his wife, is also hard at work assisting him in all that he does in preparation for classes, recording the services, and whatever he might need for the church. Pastor Mario has initiated an evangelism course to help guide the people through doctrine questions people may have and also to train the men and women in discussions with everyday people and their neighbors' spiritual life.



▲ Emmanuel with Pedro



▲ panel discussion



◀ Pedro's installation

During this time Pastor Heyn and I were able to spend much time with the Gálvez family as they hosted us in their home withholding no hospitality. But what we were especially able to offer them was joyous fellowship. When you live far from brothers and sisters in Christ with whom you are in fellowship, the ministry may feel like a lonely vocation. However, the time we spent with them was cheerful and peaceful. From theological discussions at the table to sharing traditional Chilean meals, our time in Chile was well spent to strengthen the bond of fellowship we share.

What family is more important than the family of God, we who are united by the Spirit in the crucified and risen Savior, Jesus Christ!

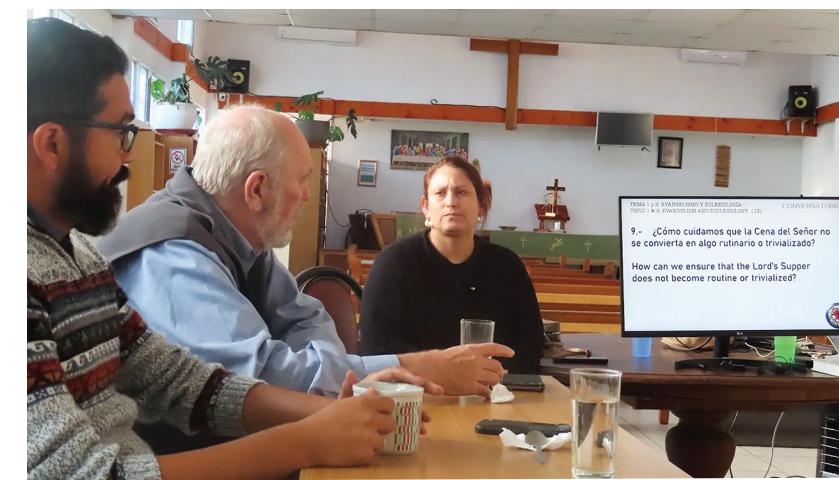
As we Latinos may overemphasize, family is very important. **What family is more important than the family of God, we who are united by the Spirit in the crucified and risen Savior, Jesus Christ!** What a joy and honor it is to share in this wonderful gift. We have been freed from the powers of darkness and are being brought into God's kingdom of light as one united family by the blood of Jesus Christ. May the Lord richly bless this fellowship with our Chilean brethren.

We ask for your continual prayers for La Familia de Dios Lutheran Church and your continual offerings in order that Pastor Mario's congregation may continue to be blessed in spreading the Gospel. ■

One such example of this was a **panel discussion** put together for us visiting pastors. Questions were prepared for us so that we could respond from scripture and experiences. It was a pleasant experience with questions ranging from practical questions to questions of how we are to continue applying the Scriptures and Lutheran confessions in our everyday lives.

Pastor Mario has consistent Bible studies furthering the education of his members as well. It is possible there are two future Chilean vicars in the congregation. One has already begun to take his studies into the Lutheran confessions, church fathers, and reading the Bible closely, considering the Greek and Hebrew to help with his understanding.

This young man's name is **Emmanuel**. He has a great zeal and passion for the Lutheran teachings, especially in how closely they cling to Scripture. He found La Familia de Dios Lutheran Church after passing it multiple times, in fact, looking for a Lutheran church. When he saw the new sign Pastor Mario had put on the building, he was surprised and decided to walk in that very morning after Sunday worship. And from then on he and his wife were instructed and became members of the congregation.



▲ panel discussion



▲ Pastor Mario, Vicar Pedro holding his call, Pastor Ruiz, Pastor Heyn



▲ Pedro with his daughter Daniella



▲ the congregation

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 who live where the Gospel of Jesus Christ is not always welcome. 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, has 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 scan the QR code to be taken to the donations page.
- For more information, please contact us in the following ways:

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What's New?

- Intriguing images and inspirational stories from World Outreach ministries in Peru, Chile, India and Korea among other world mission fields.
- Available now as Bible study lessons - perfect for personal use, family devotions, small-groups and/or congregational classes.
- Download World Mission Souvenirs (original format) and "Let's talk about ... World Mission Souvenirs" (study material): www.worldmissionsouvenirs.com

News From Other Mission Fields

- **Peru**—Our brothers and sisters in Peru are facing some very difficult challenges. Attempts (unsuccessful) have been made to undermine and supplant the Peru leadership. Gangs continue to threaten the work at Martin Luther School with mafia-like "protection" schemes. Pray for the Lord's guidance, protection and mercy.
- **Korea**—Seoul Lutheran Church is strategizing to reach new members and reverse a loss in membership as the congregation ages. Pastor David Choi at Great Light Lutheran Church is gaining new members. He is also working with some non-Lutheran pastors who want to learn more about Lutheran doctrine and may be interested in further advanced studies. He has plans to gather about 14 of such pastors for a workshop to study Luther's Small Catechism.
- **India**—Seminary training continues. The many pastors continue to reach out with the Gospel.
- **Australia**—Our Redeemer Lutheran Church in Brisbane, Australia, will be welcoming their new pastor, Skyler Hepler, in November.
- **Latvia**—Seminary teaching continues with two men enrolled in seminary studies. New outreach opportunities are being explored. A 100-year-old building continues being renovated as the church home of a mission congregation in Jelgava.
- **Czech Republic**—The BWO continues to evaluate the status of St. Paul's congregation and Martin Luther School in Pilsen. Pastor Martin Vrsecky serves the congregation part-time while he manages and teaches religion at Martin Luther School.
- **Ukraine**—Administrator Dmytro Maksymenko continues developing and promoting new ways of Gospel outreach through the pregnancy counseling centers and mobile clinics. 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 for peace in Ukraine. The destruction of war has been much worse recently.

