

May 2026 Mission News

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



“Pray the Lord of the Harvest...”

by Rev. Jay Webber
ELS World Outreach Administrator

St. Paul asked a series of rhetorical questions in his Epistle to the Romans, which was his way of reminding us of the necessity of preachers and pastors who are called and sent by God:

For “whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!” ...So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. (10:13-15, 17, NKJV)

The missionaries who previously were sent to foreign fields by our synod, and by the church-related organization Thoughts of Faith, represented a small, partial fulfillment of this divine will and plan. They—we—were sent to preach the gospel of peace in distant places, so that the church could be planted in those places. We are praying that God would open doors of opportunity for our Board for World Outreach, so that missionaries can once again be sent to lands where they are needed.

But believers in established churches, both here and abroad, also need to hear the gospel. God therefore raises up ministers of the gospel within his church, so that his Word can be proclaimed and his sacraments administered among those believers. St. Paul had trained Timothy to carry out such a ministry, and he also commissioned Timothy to do the same with others. In his Second Epistle to Timothy, Paul wrote:

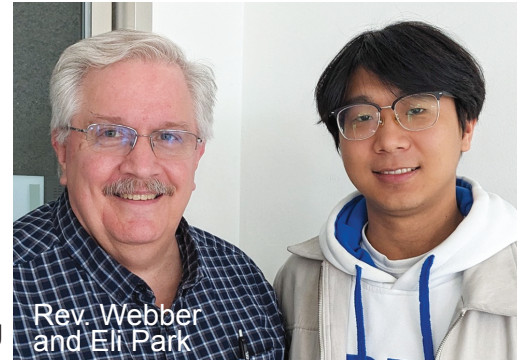
You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. (2:1-2, NKJV)

This process continues, through which the Lord provides pastors and teachers in each generation for as long as this world endures. It is being done in some of the places where the BWO works. There are functioning seminary programs in Peru and India, for the training of national pastors and evangelists. We are also currently considering

how best to provide theological education for men in Korea and other places, who want to study to be pastors. On my recent visit to Korea I met one such young man, Eli Park, who is heeding the Apostle Paul’s

encouragement: “If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task” (1 Timothy 3:1, ESV). As we encourage and support these efforts, we all also heed the exhortation of Jesus:

...when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, “The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.” (Matthew 9:36-38, NKJV) ■





The seminary program in the city of Tarapoto, supervised and conducted by Pastors Segundo Gutierrez and Andres Robles, is a monthly meeting with leaders from the jungle congregations of our church, to study theological courses. The participants in each class take part eagerly, to gain a better understanding of the topic covered. The purpose or objective of this seminary program is to cultivate a better knowledge of the Word of God, and to delve more deeply into Lutheran doctrine.

Each seminary meeting goes for two or three days, and each day involves four hours of instruction. There is also a schedule of other activities for which the participants have usually prepared in advance. Frequently-taught courses are in the areas of dogmatics, Bible history, the Catechism, and the Epistle to the Romans. Occasional topics include stewardship, and the order of creation and the roles of men and women in the church. Class sessions are from 8 a.m. to 12 noon. Within this

Seminary in the Peruvian Jungle

by Rev. Segundo Gutierrez
Evangelical Lutheran Synod
of Peru—President

schedule there are daily devotions, and sometimes there is a workshop in which, after a class or a Bible study, the seminarians respond and discuss what they have learned in the class or from the study.

The participants in the jungle seminary program are primarily those leaders who are in charge of the churches in the communities of Louis Terry, Taiwan, and Nueva Chazuta. Also participating in these classes are some congregants and teachers from Louis Terry, who attend in order to listen and learn the fundamental doctrines of the Christian church, so that they can better assist and support their congregational leaders.

After completing their monthly time of study, the participants return to their communities where they primarily dedicate themselves to farming and hunting for their livelihood. A few of the seminarians are teachers. For some of the students, attendance at the seminary classes in Tarapoto requires two days of travel. ■



▲ classes with Pastors Gutierrez and Robles



▲ seminary students in class



▲ teachers and seminary students

Theological Education in the Lutheran Mission of Salvation—India

by Rev. Kalyan K. Gollapalli
LMSI President

The work of the ELS Board for World Outreach in India includes support for the important duty of preparing faithful pastors for the future, especially through the theological education program of the Lutheran Mission of Salvation—India. In a land of immense religious diversity, great social pressure, and many practical limitations, the Lord is providing men for His harvest and is equipping them for service through an indigenous Lutheran seminary program centered in Rajahmundry.

One of the chief purposes of the LMSI is to carry out our Lord's Great Commission. This is a huge task and requires the diligent and ongoing training of men who can rightly divide the Word of Truth and bring the gospel to the lost. So, the LMSI seminary emerged with the help and support of the ELS. The seminary is not a full-time residential program, but meets for intensive study during one week each month. Its purpose is to prepare men to preach Christ faithfully, to administer the means of grace rightly, and to serve Lutheran congregations with sound doctrine and pastoral care.

The men in this program are guided through structured stages that include monthly Gospel Worker workshops, pre-seminary instruction, and then the seminary proper. Besides seminary training, the monthly workshops are also a crucial part of the program, as they inculcate brotherly fellowship and instill pastoral discipline.

The LMSI does not take unprepared men and place them suddenly into advanced theological study. Men are first identified, instructed, tested, encouraged, and then formed more deeply for public ministry.

Men from within the LMSI's group of Gospel Workers are the first choice. The LMSI executive body carefully observes whether a candidate is faithful in worship, teachable, dependable in conduct, and sincere in his desire to serve.

Since the beginning, the LMSI seminary has been greatly blessed by the teaching of visiting instructors from the ELS each year. Throughout the history of the seminary, BWO administrators and other ELS pastors have taught essential disciplines of theology during their annual visits to India. We are now exploring the possibility of using the internet, to allow additional ELS instructors to participate in the program, without needing to travel to India.

The men preparing for ministry do not face an easy road. A particularly heavy burden is the shortage of Lutheran theological books available in our



▲ Rev. Webber lecturing seminary students



▲ seminary students; Rev. Gollapalli; visiting Americans

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native language, Telugu. Yet the hurdles we face make the seminary's work all the more critical. These men are not preparing for a comfortable lifestyle. They are preparing to confess Christ clearly where confusion, poverty, opposition and animosity often surround the church.

Despite these challenges, the Lord is abundantly blessing this work. The seminary celebrated the ordination of a cohort of eight men in January 2024, and a new cohort of dedicated students

is commencing theological education. The seminary stands as an invaluable resource for local congregations, providing ongoing theological guidance and ensuring the long-term stability of the Lutheran witness in India.

The seminary program is a beautiful reminder to our donors that theological education is one of the most enduring gifts you can give to the church. Your support does not merely fund lessons, books, or travel, but it helps place Christ's saving gospel into the mouths of future

pastors, who will preach, teach, baptize, absolve, commune, and shepherd souls in India for years to come. ■

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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 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.

■ To make an online donation you may go to els.org/bwodonations

■ Scan the QR code which will take you to the donation page.



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