

Peru

India

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Mission News

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

“As we have opportunity,
let us do good to all...”

by Rev. Jay Webber, ELS World Outreach Administrator

Our Lord's earthly ministry was characterized most fundamentally by his preaching. St. Mark reports that

“after John [the Baptist] was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel’” (1:14-15, ESV).

The proclamation of law and gospel was also a key defining feature of the mission that Jesus later entrusted to his disciples, when he told them in St. Luke's Gospel “that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem” (24:47, NKJV). Proclaiming the gospel of Christ crucified for sinners must always be the central focus of the church, since this gospel “is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes” (Romans 1:16, NKJV).

Yet Jesus did not limit himself to preaching and teaching. On one occasion, when Jesus was describing the things that were happening in his ministry, he recounted “that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have the gospel preached to them” (Luke 7:22, NKJV). His miraculous feedings of thousands of people, on at least two occasions, are also well-known events from his ministry.

And Christ expects his people likewise to show compassion for the needy and to help alleviate the suffering of the hurting, as God gives them means and opportunity. Jesus tells us that on judgment day he will commend Christians for the ways in which they, during their earthly lives, showed love for their neighbors in need—which at a deeper level was actually showing love for him. And so we read in St. Matthew that on that day

“the King will say to those on His right hand, ‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me’” (25:34-36, NKJV).

Christians everywhere are encouraged by their Savior to show kindness to the needy around them, and this is certainly the case also in the various places in the world where the ELS BWO works. But in some of those places, in partnership with those with whom we work, we do this in more organized ways. The work of Gift of Life, a *Thoughts of Faith* mission outreach in Ukraine, involves a large amount of humanitarian work—especially through the mobile medical clinics and counseling centers that it operates—by which opportunities to share God's Word with those who are being helped are also sought. You can read about this work in the periodic *Thoughts of Faith* newsletters that are published several times per year by the ELS BWO.

But in other fields such assistance is also offered. In this issue of *Mission News*, we will highlight two such projects: **a program for feeding children from disadvantaged families in PERU, in conjunction with their attendance at the Lutheran school where they learn about Jesus and his saving grace toward them; and the orphans' scholarship program in INDIA, which is a corollary to the orphanages that are operated by several congregations.** The orphans and half-orphans in these facilities would otherwise not be able to have their basic needs met. But due to the special, loving efforts of the church—with the material support of the Christians who contribute toward this effort through the BWO—many children who otherwise would be in a very difficult situation now have a safe place to live, are well-fed, are able to receive instruction in the Christian faith, and—when they “age out” of the orphanage, and as resources permit—are offered the financial help they need in order to receive training for an adult livelihood by which they can support themselves. Young people from intact families in India can generally count on support and help from their parents as they make such transitions in life. These orphans and half-orphans count on us.

And so, as St. Paul writes to the Galatians,

“Let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith” (6:9-10, NKJV). ■



“How wonderful are God’s plans and His saving deeds”:

The Story of an Orphan Girl

by Rev. Kalyan K. Gollapalli, President of the Lutheran Mission of Salvation—India

She was born in 2002 into a poor family in South India. From her earliest years her life was difficult—as is the case with many children of humble means. She lost her father when she was still very young. She grew up as a semi-orphan, with many needs and very limited resources. Yet even in those difficult circumstances the Lord was already preparing a path for her.

She and her mother were among the first members of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church. I first came into contact with this family in 2014 while I was doing a home visit with one of our church community members. As I gradually came to understand their circumstances, I saw their need for care and support. Soon afterward, I invited her to join our children’s home. That became a great turning point in her life. There she was cared for, encouraged, and nurtured not only in daily needs, but also in the saving knowledge of Christ.

Her path, however, was not easy. In 2018 she became seriously ill, and after a medical examination she was diagnosed with hyperthyroidism. Because of this health struggle she lost one full year of school. It was a very discouraging time for her. But the Lord did not abandon her. Through the support of the ELS scholarship program, she was able to return to school and continue her education.

By God’s grace she completed her studies and earned a degree in Food and Nutrition in 2023. She was very thankful for this blessing and is deeply grateful for the help that made it possible. Yet even then, life did not unfold exactly as she had hoped. She was unable to find employment in the field for which she had trained. Eventually she took a job as a sales executive in a local textile store. It may not have been the profession she dreamed of, but the Lord was still leading her life according to His own wisdom.

Then in 2025 a new and exciting chapter unfolded in her life as she found the man she wanted to marry, and together they sought my counsel and guidance for their journey ahead. Yet a deep concern lingered as her fiancé was a Hindu. However, with prayerful instruction and counseling, the young man, moved by the Spirit and with his parents’ consent, was baptized, and became a Christian.

It was a great joy and privilege for me not only to baptize the young man but also to perform their wedding. What a beautiful testimony this is to the Lord’s providence. The support that helped a poor, fatherless girl to continue her education also became part of a much greater story: a story of salvation reaching into another pagan family.

Now, the onetime orphan girl is a homemaker and more than that a child of God and a Christian witness to the undeserved love and grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. She is a living witness to her pagan in-laws and their families. Just as the little servant girl in the Second Book of 2 Kings witnessed to Naaman’s household and became an instrument through whom God brought healing and peace, so also the Lord has placed her in a new home, where she will bear witness to the saving Gospel of Christ all through her life.

This girl’s journey is a beautiful reminder that the support that is provided through the ELS orphan scholarship program does far more than just meet educational needs. By God’s grace, every contribution can open doors for the saving Gospel to enter the homes and hearts of many. Your prayers and support allow us to reach students like her, offering them not only a chance at an education but also a lifelong foundation in Christ. Your gifts are truly a blessing, and we extend our deepest gratitude for your continued prayers and support. ■



The Bread of Life for the Soul: Bread From the Earth for the Body

Rev. Timothy Bartels, BWO South America Committee Chairman

In July of 2021 I had the honor of representing the ELS on a field trip to the Peruvian jungle community of Louis Terry. I had been there once before, but this time was different. This time a team of humanitarians accompanied us on our visit.

The leader of the humanitarian team was Nancy. She and her team were going to investigate the possibility of doing a clean water project for Louis Terry. The last jungle city on the way to Louis Terry is the river city Yurimaguas. At Yurimaguas Nancy bought empanadas and watermelon for the smaller jungle community. Empanadas are like a baked pizza dough folded into a closed pocket and filled with meat and vegetables. Then we left for Louis Terry, taking riverboats and then pickups over a rough dirt road. When we arrived, the jungle community—men, women and many children—gathered under a large open-aired roofed shelter. Greetings were exchanged after which Nancy began handing out the empanadas and watermelon to all. Everyone eagerly partook. The joy in their faces was evident.

Nancy had learned from her work in other jungle communities that nutrition is often lacking in these places. The men of the communities get up before dawn, leave their thatched open-air huts, and go out into the dense forest. There they gather plantain, yucca and other jungle eatables, and hunt for meat like wild pig, called javelina. Gathering and hunting does not always provide proper nutrition, though. The community often goes undernourished. For that reason, Nancy learned to bring nutrition as an expression of good will when she visited these locations.

Our Peruvian brothers have now incorporated into their ministries this humanitarian kindness of providing proper nutrition to the jungle community. Thanks to the gifts of ELS donors, they can regularly provide proper nutrition, especially for the children of our Louis Terry school. The nutrition provides protein and carbohydrates for the children’s diet. With better nutrition they are better able to focus on their studies in the school. At school, not only do the

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children learn how to read and write, but most importantly they learn the Word of God. The Word of God feeds them with what they need for their eternal wellbeing—Jesus, the Bread of Life.

Our Peruvian brothers express great appreciation for this humanitarian support that supports their work in feeding the children the Word of God:

On behalf of the student community, teachers and parents of the Secondary Level of the Public Educational Institution Cristo Rey, in the Shanvi indigenous community of Lovis Terry, we extend our deepest gratitude for the help you have been providing us with secondary education and especially with the food for our student community, which greatly influences personal, institutional, social, and community development.

With the creation of the secondary level in 2010 the children of the community were given access to education, with all the benefits that come from this. But during the institution's operation, a shocking reality was encountered: malnutrition, due to the lack of food available to the student population. Therefore, we once again appealed to your generosity to request support in providing lunch to our students. This request was granted and continues to this day. This significant support has greatly reduced the level of malnutrition and improved the academic performance of our students.

This generosity and empathy for the poorest is of vital importance for the right to education and food to become a reality in our community. We reiterate our gratitude and at the same time we place ourselves at your disposal whenever you need our help or collaboration, always in service to those who have the least.

Sincerely,

Julio Lopez Arevalo, Director
P.E.I. Cristo Rey ■



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.



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

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