

AT WORK IN THE WORLD

LCC'S MISSIONS AND SOCIAL MINISTRY SERVICES

MISSION NEWSLETTER 2014



***“Praying for us, too, that God may open a door
for our message, so that we may proclaim the
mystery of Christ.”***

– Colossians 4:3 –

Mission and Social Ministry Services

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LUTHERAN CHURCH-CANADA
ÉGLISE LUTHÉRIENNE du CANADA



Come to Him
who answers prayer

Psalm 65:2

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Cambodian students take part in a class through the Lutheran Institute Southeast Asia.

INTRODUCTION FROM REV. DR. LEONARDO NEITZEL

Our Lord God puts this in a simple way: “As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it” (Isaiah 55:10-11).



The seed is God’s word. The Holy Spirit works through this word, to make it sprout and grow. It is God’s desire that all peoples hear this word and believe in Jesus Christ as their Saviour. This word has been sown in many and different countries and soils. Sadly, some reject this word and don’t enjoy the great blessings it bestows—forgiveness of sins, faith in the Son of God, salvation and eternal life through the merits of Jesus Christ. But many hold on to the blessings of the word —sown in their ears and hearts by the Holy Spirit—and cannot but thank the Lord who granted them these blessings.

Through the centuries, many have sown the seed of God’s word with boldness and joy—sometimes while facing suffering, persecution, and martyrdom. As a result, new Christians and churches have sprouted and grown, both at home and abroad. Those who receive the word and believe in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for them are blessed through it, both here and in eternity. They become a beacon of blessings to others, and the chain of sowers continues.

The focus of this year’s Mission Newsletter is to provide a brief snapshot of Lutheran Church–Canada’s (LCC) partners in mission around the world. For each church, you’ll find a short history, current membership statistics, and information on recent projects LCC has supported in their countries.



Concordia Seminary in Odessa, Ukraine.

Historical background: The Synod of Evangelical Lutheran Churches in Ukraine (SELCU) was founded in 1996. In the late 1990s, SELCU invited LCC to provide theological instructors for its pastoral training program. That program was originally located in the rural town of Kamenka and moved to suburban Odessa in 2010 when the present seminary building was dedicated.

Concordia Lutheran Seminary (Edmonton) took a leading role in providing a succession of theological instructors for this work under the leadership of Rev. Dr. Norman Threinen, who in retirement continues as Rector of the seminary in Odessa. Three separate graduating classes of vicars and pastors have completed their studies over the years.

Statistics: The head of SELCU is Bishop Viktor Graefenstein. Currently, the church has thirteen congregations, eight mission stations, nine

UKRAINE (CONTINUED)

pastors, four vicars, and about 300 members.

Current projects supported by LCC: Lutheran Church–Canada supports a full-time missionary in Ukraine, as well as SELCU's seminary program in Odessa. In addition to this,



Orphanage ministry in Ukraine.

LCC supports SELCU's mission and ministry to prisoners; Vacation Bible schools, summer camps and winter street mission outreach; outreach to university students in Odessa; and outreach through sports ministry in Dnepropetrovsk.



Sports ministry. LCC's missionary Alexey Navrotsky stands in the back-right.



Deaconess Nak Mao (back right) and children from the education program in Kampot.

Historical background: Around the year 2000, Lutheran Heritage Foundation offered to interested pastors of all denominations in Cambodia the opportunity to take classes on Luther's Small Catechism, which had just been translated into Khmer.

Dr. Leonard Harms, then LCC's Missions Director, became involved with managing those classes. Lutheran Institute Southeast Asia (LISA) began as a mission strategy to train men and women to speak the Gospel in clear Biblical terms. There was no real intent at the time to form a Lutheran Church but rather to offer clear Gospel-instruction for the sake of the people of Cambodia.

Dr. Harms became the director of LISA. He developed the first curriculum and engaged LCC professors to teach the courses. Out of those courses the men and women being taught formed the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Cambodia (ELCC) in the year 2009.

CAMBODIA (CONTINUED)

Statistics: The head of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Cambodia is President Vanarith Chhim. Currently, the church has 15 pastors, 5 deaconesses, 10 women



Students take part in a class through the Lutheran Institute South-east Asia.

evangelists, 33 congregations, and about 1850 members.

Current projects supported by LCC: LCC currently supports ELCC's mission and social work in a number of ways, including congregational visits and diaconal work; providing motorcycles for deaconesses; supporting the ELCC's women evangelists; and providing assistance in the theological education of church workers through the Lutheran Institute Southeast Asia.



The congregation in Kampot.



Rev. Suchart Chujit meets with local fishermen and their families.

Historical background: One year after the formation of LCC—in 1989—then President Edwin Lehman visited Thailand to meet with Dr. Herb Gernand, a Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod engineer who had worked for years in the southern region, Phang Nga. He had reached out with the Gospel to many and mentored several new Christians. He expressed the desire that LCC would support the formation of church workers under Sahathai Lutheran Church, registered by Dr. Gernand with the Government. Rev. Dr. Leonard V. Harms, then LCC’s Mission Director, designed the theological curriculum, and after few years LCC trained and ordained two pastors, Rev. Rev. Suchart Chujit and Rev. Suchart Srikakarn.

Statistics: The head of the Thailand Concordia Lutheran Church (TCLC) is President Ted Na Thalang. The church currently has five pastors and around 300 members.

THAILAND (CONTINUED)

Current projects supported by

LCC: Lutheran Church–Canada supports one full-time missionary in Thailand: Rev. Suchart Chujit. LCC also continues long-term relief development for victims of 2004's tsunami, providing fishing boats for families



Many fishermen lost their boats in the 2004 tsunami. LCC helped these people by purchasing new ones. Now, ten years later, the boats have reached the end of their life-span, so LCC is replacing them again.

of fishermen affected by the storm. LCC further supports children's Christian education program in the country.



A Thai fisherman works on his nets.

NICARAGUA



Some of the many children blessed through Lutheran Church–Canada supported feeding programs in Nicaragua.

Historical background: Lutheran Church–Canada started its mission work in Nicaragua in the spring of 1997. Just over a year later, in October 1998, Hurricane Mitch hit that country. LCC responded to the needs of people and reached out to them with the Gospel of Jesus Christ in works of mercy and care. People responded. On January 11, 2009 the Iglesia Luterana Sínodo de Nicaragua (ILSN) was founded.

Statistics: The head of the ILSN is President Marvin Donaire. The church has 23 congregations, 12 pastors, 12 vicars, 36 deaconesses, and about 1,800 members. In addition, more than 700 children take part in the ILSN's Christian children education and feeding programs.

Current projects supported by LCC: LCC supports a wide-range of programs in Nicaragua, including Vacation Bible

NICARAGUA (CONTINUED)

schools; deaconess stipend support; children's education and feeding programs; medical and dental clinics; motorcycles for pastors' mission and ministry; rentals for mission and pastors houses; musical instruments and training for churches; desks for schools; a church workers library; tarps for outreach services; a new mission start in Managua; a sewing school; continuing education for church workers; and several other smaller projects.



An ILSN pastor poses next to a motorcycle provided by LCC.



The Cristo Verdad y Vida congregation of Somotillo, Nicaragua pose outside their church building.

HONDURAS



Rev. Junior and Rosita Martinez visit La Paz. Rev. Junior is a member of the ILSN, and recently accepted a call to serve LaPaz as a missionary-pastor.

Historical background: LCC's Honduras mission is an outgrowth of its work in Nicaragua. In 2005, a pastor from the Iglesia Luterana Sínodo de Nicaragua was commissioned by LCC to start mission work in the city of Olanchito, where he arrived in July 2005. The local congregation there was founded in September 2007.

Statistics: Iglesia Luterana Fe en Cristo (Faith in Christ Lutheran Church) in Olanchito has 26 baptized members, and is served by missionary-pastor Rev. Douglas Aguilar. New mission starts are also scheduled to begin in the communities of La Paz and Tegucigalpa—the capital of Honduras—in 2014.

Current projects supported by LCC: LCC supports a full-time missionary in Honduras. It also supports a children feeding program. The new mission starts in Tegucigalpa and La Paz are expected to build on a history of outreach already established in the

HONDURAS (CONTINUED)

regions. While pursuing seminary studies through the Iglesia Luterana Sínodo de Nicaragua, Tulio Meza established a children's education program near Tegucigalpa to provide Christian



A clothing give-away in Honduras.

instruction for local children. Outreach in La Paz will build on the long-time work of the Children of Love Foundation, an organization founded by Doris Patilano which serves orphans and children who have been abandoned by their parents.



At the baptism of three children in August 2013.



Every Sunday, about 20 people in Cartago gather together to hear God's Word and celebrate the Lord's Supper.

Historical background: LCC's Costa Rica mission is an outgrowth of its work in Nicaragua. In March 2006, an ILSN pastor was commissioned to start mission work in Costa Rica. In May 29, 2009, the first Costa Rican Lutheran pastor was received by LCC and the ILSN through the Colloquy Program. On this same day a group of people met in the city of Cartago and founded the beginning of the mission in that city, which is today Congregación La Gracia. The national synod will officially be named Iglesia Luterana Confesional de Costa Rica (ILCRA).

Statistics: The mission in Costa Rica has two congregations: one in Cartago, where LCC's missionary pastor (Rev. Edmundo Retana) and his wife (Deaconess Betty Solorzano) live. The second is in Alajuelita, a suburb of the capital San Jose. In total, the congregations have approximately 50 members.



LCC's international missions and social ministry work is certainly important, but so is the work taking place in Canada. There are numerous individuals, congregations, mission societies, schools, and other organizations striving to sow the seed in Canadian ground—as challenging as that work can be today. We thank our Lord for all those involved in such work.

At the very last Day, we will celebrate the great harvest together, when every knee will bow before Christ and acknowledge that He is the Lord. The celebration of the harvest takes place every time someone comes to faith in Jesus, for He says that “there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents” (Luke 15:10). This celebration will continue for all eternity, as the full harvest of believers will be gathered to the Lord and Saviour in perfect blessedness.

For more news on LCC's Missions and Social Ministry Services, and to donate online, visit www.lutheranchurch.ca. Be sure also to read the Mission Section in *The Canadian Lutheran* and to watch for regular updates at CanadianLutheran.ca.

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