

Mission—proclamation and more by Leonard Harms

WHEREVER LUTHERAN CHURCH–CANADA DOES MISSION WORK, we have one goal—to proclaim the Gospel by every appropriate means so that the hearer meets Jesus and not simply the missionary. When the Holy Spirit brings people to faith in Jesus, several things happen to which we as a church need to respond. The Holy Spirit brings the faithful together and they form congregations. The congregations want to worship Jesus and so ask the missionary how that can best be done. So, the missionary becomes a teacher of more than the Gospel. He also teaches Christians how to respond to their new faith and hope in God. When congregations gather to worship, the members want to share all the good things God has given them. They want to share the Sacraments, the gracious gifts of God. They may ask the missionary what is needed for someone to administer the sacraments and preach the Word of God to them. Pastoral election and training become part of the mission task.

When congregations sharing the same faith and confession form, they need to reach out to each other for support and encouragement in their new life in Christ and so church bodies are formed. Lutheran Church–Canada is involved in these activities because of the work of its missionaries. We work through an established church in Thailand to undertake mission work among the millions of non-believers in that country. We have called a pastor whom we were privileged to train for the ministry to do mission work along with Takuapa Sahatay Lutheran Church.

It is the same in Nicaragua. LCC has called two missionaries to work in Matagalpa and León. We will soon second a graduate of our seminary program in Ukraine to be our missionary to continue work in Dnepropetrovsk.

The simple act of communicating the Gospel to nonbelievers blossoms into many tasks related to opening the Kingdom of God by the proclamation of God's Word. As each new requirement unfolds, the resources of LCC are gathered and applied in creative

ways so that ultimately ever more people hear about Jesus. It involves a progression from simple proclamation to catechization to election to education and finally to the indigenous expansion of the church. It begins through the simple task of proclaiming God's love in Jesus Christ to people who yearn to hear a word of hope, love and forgiveness.

LCC works in Thailand to proclaim the Gospel to nonbelievers through its missionary, Rev. Suchat Chujit, to train additional workers for ministry, while also developing the present pastor's theological expertise.

Together, as Synod, our congregations work in Nicaragua, proclaiming the Gospel through missionaries Rev. Sandor Arguello, Rev. Hector Morales and Rev. Alexander, to train more pastors, deacons and deaconesses through a vibrant seminary program to expand work in Nicaragua, Honduras and Costa Rica.

We are working in Ukraine to proclaim the Gospel through our missionary, Rev. Roland Syens, to develop more pastors through the seminary program in Kamenka, to receive a new missionary to Dnepropetrovsk.

The missionary task in Canada and the rest of the world is to tell that Good News to people who

have not heard or have not believed so that they may, through faith, become children of God and fellow believers in Christ. The creation of congregations is the work of the Holy Spirit. It is the hope and expectation of mission work in Canada that the newly formed congregations will join with LCC in a common confession of faith and participation in the work to which God calls us. LCC is applying alternate means of preparing elected servants of the Gospel from special needs congregations in the PAT program. God continues to grant LCC many new challenges as we grow in our witness to Jesus in Canada and around the world.

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