
Stipends for 8 Probationer-As-Church Planters in Sri Lanka

\$2,625



The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) began work in Sri Lanka in 1927 as a natural outgrowth of its work in India. Missionaries worked primarily in the mountainous tea estate region of central Sri Lanka, among the Tamil-speaking Hindus. The last LCMS resident missionary left in 1998. LCMS consultants visit annually to conduct leadership training among the church workers.

The Lanka Lutheran Church (LLC) was accepted as a partner church at the 2001 LCMS convention. Two of their 17 congregations are in the capital, Colombo. The remainder are located on tea plantations. A major development in the church's outreach work has been a series of pre-schools, which meets a major need on the tea plantations.

As in India, new seminary graduates, called "probationers," are sent out on three-year assignments to unchurched areas as church planters. Most of their work is done on the distant tea plantations. They commute from their homes daily for three to six hours by bus and on foot. This means that they often must stay overnight, since the workers are only able to meet with them in the late afternoon and evening and the buses stop running. Each probationer works on two or three tea plantations. Each has had many Baptisms, which are performed by one of the five ordained LLC pastors who come once a month to administer Holy Communion. They provide regular reports on their work to their supervising pastors.

The plan is to build Mission Stations for each of them in the more remote tea plantations where they are serving. Funds were gathered for the first Mission Station, and it has been built. The building plan is a parsonage with a community hall attached for worship, education, pre-school and the like.

As part of the probationer training, the young men are regularly sent to a local Bible college to supplement their training. There are currently eight young men serving full-time as church planters. The LLC has set a goal of starting new ministries on 200 of the 500 tea plantations. Thus far, there have been approximately 20 new churches planted.

Funding will be used for:

Funding provides the probationers with a monthly stipend to cover their travel expenses.

Prayer needs:

- Pray that the probationers will be able to endure the long commute to the tea plantations.
- Pray that the Lord will continue to bless the efforts of the probationers as they plant new churches.
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to strengthen the faith of Lutheran Christians in Sri Lanka who may be persecuted for their faith.