

# Annual Report 2019



Making known  
the light, love and  
peace of Jesus  
Christ throughout  
the world

"The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few."

Matthew 6:37

# Annual Report 2019

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Empowering the Priesthood of All Believers  
to Engage the World



Sihanoukville, Cambodia

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# From the Executive Director

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## **I love my job.**

Across the world Mission of Christ Network (MCN) mission partners are bearing witness to Christ's love each and every day.

It is easy to love your job when the focus is "intentional Gospel proclamation." The opportunities God has given Mission of Christ Network to be a part of His mission are astounding. We insist that intentional Gospel proclamation be a part of the work of each mission partner we send. This insistence does not cripple our ability to send missionaries, but in fact creates more requests and more partnerships around all the globe.

In Cambodia, Maria, Ashley, Samantha, Debbie, Tim & Dianne interacted this past year with 120 children each day who were beginning to learn about Jesus.

In Ethiopia, Dr. Haragewen Kinde serves in partnership with the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekana Yesus (EECMY), the largest Lutheran church in the world, to develop a Lutheran university in Ethiopia with two campuses.

In Slovakia, Clara & Anastasia teach high school students, many of whom do not yet know Jesus. They use teaching as a means to witness their faith, engage students and share their relationships with Christ.

**This work is not ours. It is God's.** God is using each mission partner to proclaim His love to the world. And He is using you to make that possible. Your prayers, encouragement, and financial support to MCN are critical. Your partnership helps make all of this possible.

God calls us to the cross where we see our sins forgiven and then sends us out to make disciples of all nations. That you for responding to God's call by supporting Mission of Christ Network and the mission partners who are proclaiming Christ around the world.

*I thank God for the opportunity to be part of His mission through MCN and pray you feel the same way.*



– Rev. Dr. John L. Mehl, Executive Director



# From the President

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## Dear MCN Contributor and Partner:

Our Annual Report for the year 2019 is one in which we see the handiwork of our Lord, through His baptized servants, bringing the Gospel of Jesus to the “lost of the world.” We not only have much to be thankful for, as seen in the report which follows, but much to look forward to.

It has been my privilege to serve as the President of Mission of Christ Network (MCN) since its inception and the sending of our first lay missionaries in July of 2014. That first year saw six individuals (whom we call Mission Partners) go into three countries under the MCN banner. As you will note in the information and charts that follow, **we are now looking toward an almost ten-fold increase in the number of Mission Partners that will be in the field encompassing work in today, some 14 countries. Wow!**

All of this could not have happened without **first** our Lord's guidance and blessings on the work of MCN, and **second** you – our faithful donors and partners in the work of MCN. Your contribution and support, which is highlighted in the facts and figures in this report, show a dramatic increase in not only the donors who support our Mission Partners and the growth of the Mission Partner budget but also our operating fund and the number of donors that now share in the work of our Lord through their support of the operating fund of MCN.

Over the past six years Mission of Christ Network has grown from a part time Executive Director in our first year, to paid and volunteer operational staff who now support the Mission Partners and their work in the field each and every day. Without these individuals, we would not be able to send and keep 40+ Mission Partners serving around the globe, sharing the love of Jesus. For all who have come on board the “MCN train” we all owe a big debt of thanks. They have been a God-send to accomplishing the objectives of MCN.

One thing that I am proud of and, yet humble in saying, is that MCN has remained faithful to its core Biblical values (which you can also review in this report) and its strategies for accomplishing God's mission. A mission as the Apostle Paul said in 1 Corinthians: 3:5-6, where some plant His Word while others water that Word so that the Holy Spirit may grow our Lord's Church on this, His planet. Simply put this is what MCN is all about.

Yet, to accomplish that mission it was important for MCN in its strategies to identify mission opportunities worldwide, train people (primarily the laity) to talk about Jesus, connect the opportunities to persons interested in serving, to support those servants, our Mission Partners, and then to continue to disciple them both while working abroad and when returning home. **You are a critical partner in making all of this happen.**

Please read through this annual report. It is our first that we are sending out to all our donors and partners and a report that will be forthcoming each year. May our gracious and loving Lord continue to bless each of you and your families and the work of Mission of Christ Network in the years ahead. **Thank you for all that you do.**

– Kermit W. (Butch) Almstedt, *President*



# About Mission of Christ Network

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Mission of Christ Network (MCN) is a missionary organization that sends lay workers to work in God's mission internationally.

We identify mission opportunities worldwide, train people to talk about Jesus, and send individuals and congregations into the mission field to boldly proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ.

MCN is rooted in the confessional beliefs and faith of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS) and is operated by a lay Board of Directors, all of which are members of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS). The board is advised by three LCMS Pastoral Advisors.

## Mission Objective

Multiply those involved in Gospel proclamation that the Spirit might work faith in those who hear His word.

## INTENTIONAL GOSPEL PROCLAMATION

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MCN is committed to education and training to ensure intentional Gospel proclamation in ways that are clear, especially when working cross-culturally, in order that the Spirit might have free course to work in the hearts of those who don't trust in Jesus as their Savior.

The father of the Protestant Reformation, Martin Luther, once said that "whatever remains of your life, live as those sent by Christ [for] it is the office of everyone to instruct [their] neighbor. . . and this power is given to all believers. When you have performed this highest work, seek to be-come Christ's apostle, to serve all people, so that they may come unto God as you have."

Our core Biblical values drive us in working towards this objective as we recognize that God's mission:

- Belongs to God and begins in His heart
- Is empowered by the Holy Spirit
- Is to and for everyone
- Is Urgent
- Involves all Christians
- Must be my Mission



MCN is funded 100% by donor support to Mission Partners and the MCN General Fund. The General Fund provides critical funding that facilitates all Mission Partner work. It underwrites the cost of equipping and supporting each mission partner and funds the operating budget which makes it possible for current mission partners to stay in the field and for new mission partners to pursue ministry.

# Intentional Gospel Proclamation



46 mission partners currently active



15 countries served



3000+ Gospel connections weekly

## LOCATIONS CURRENTLY SERVED

### Asia

- Hong Kong
- Taiwan
- Cambodia
- Thailand
- Mongolia
- Indonesia

### Africa

- Ethiopia
- South Africa
- Sierra Leone

### Europe

- Hungary
- Slovakia
- Germany

### Central America

- Costa Rica
- Haiti



"And you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Acts 1:8

# Stories from the Mission Field: THAILAND

## REV. DR. FUNGCHATOU (FUNG) AND DR. KALIA LO

"Is it worth it to come very far to share the Gospel in such a remote place where there are very few and uncommitted Christians?", asked the young man. He had traveled with Fung and Kalia Lo and others to visit a village mission church in the mountains of Thailand. Once they arrived, it was apparent that the little church hadn't seen much use lately.



Drs. Fung and Kalia Lo share the Gospel in a remote mountain village in Thailand, raising up Hmong leaders to continue this work.

Fung responded, "We still have a lot of opportunities to share the Gospel in this village. We also still have the opportunity to raise up leaders from within this village to lead others to Christ. So, it is worth it."

Fung and a Hmong pastor invited villagers to Bible study that night. Six showed up. Fung noted God's encouragement, "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up" (Gal. 6:9).

Fung and Kalia proclaim the Good News in a variety of ways. A graduate of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Fung provides theological training for church leaders and pastors from the Hmong people group, offers discipleship training for church members, and helps start new ministries. Kalia, who has a doctorate in education, provides leadership and Christian education to students and staff at a Christian children's center in Chiang Mai, a city in northern Thailand.



Fung says only 2 percent of the 69 million people in Thailand are Christian, adding, "This means there is still a lot of Gospel work needed to be done."

**"We still have a lot of opportunities to share the Gospel in this village. We also still have the opportunity to raise up leaders from within this village to lead others to Christ. So, it is worth it."**



# Stories from the Mission Field: ETHIOPIA



Dr. Haragewen Kinde (back row, 2nd from right) works with the Mekane Yesus church in Ethiopia.

## DR. HARAGEWEN ABRAHAM KINDE

Civil war and political violence were raging when Haragewen Kinde left her Ethiopian homeland in 1980. She settled and studied in the United States, eventually earning a doctorate in educational leadership, teaching, and serving as a college administrator. Last year, Haragewen was finally able to return to Ethiopia and is using her experiences to further God's kingdom.

"Due to the bad experiences and memories, although I prayed for my family, I had closed the chapter about ever going back to Ethiopia," Haragewen says today. But she adds that the Lord reminded her when she was a ninth-grade student taught by missionaries in Ethiopia, she had wished that she, too, could be a Christian missionary.

Today, in partnership with MCN, Haragewen is a missionary—in Ethiopia. "Through many prayers of Christian brothers and sisters," Haragewen recounts, "eventually I was able to forgive and transition to ministry work in serving the Lord utilizing my experience in education by loving, caring, mentoring, and teaching His children in Ethiopia through the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus."

Haragewen is helping the Mekane Yesus ("Place of Jesus") church, the largest Lutheran church in the world, to strengthen its existing management leadership college and to establish its own university. She recalls a day when she joined a group of students for lunch after learning that they had been out sharing their Christian faith with the local community. "I was touched to be among young college students with great desire to serve the Lord!"

**"It confirms to me why I am here, that is, to be the Lord's instrument among the youth to facilitate such an environment!"**



# Stories from the Mission Field: CAMBODIA



Five MCN mission partners and their Khmer colleagues serve disadvantaged students and their families through Stronghold Cambodia in the southern city of Kampot.



Tim and Diane Esala share the Gospel through music with these grade school children.

The organization's name comes from Isaiah 25:4, **"For you have been a stronghold to the poor, a stronghold to the needy in his distress, a shelter from the storm and a shade from the heat."**

In Cambodia, more than one out of ten children never attend school at all, and nearly half of kids age 5 to 14 work to support their families. Human trafficking is a very real threat, and the poorest communities, like the where Stronghold is located, are always at the greatest risk.



Stronghold ministers through a before- and after-school program that teaches English and basic computer skills and by providing a nourishing meal every day to the students they serve. More importantly, Jesus is introduced to children who live in a country that is 95 percent Buddhist.

Mission partners serving there are Tim and Diane Esala, Ashley Johnson, Maria Sasieta, and Samantha Welch.



[missionofchrist.org/stronghold-cambodia/](http://missionofchrist.org/stronghold-cambodia/)

# Stories from the Mission Field:

# SLOVAKIA



Clara meets weekly with her first and second year English club for learning, conversation, and games.

## CLARA RICH

"These students and colleagues have become dearer to my heart than I could've expected after a year of my own efforts to love them," says Clara Rich, who is wrapping up her second year at Evanjelické Gymnázium Tisovec (EGT) in Tisovec, Slovakia. "Rather, I know that Christ has called me to love them—indeed, that He has given me a glimpse of His own love for them."

A native Nebraskan, Clara grew up in Lincoln and studied music and biology at Concordia University in Seward, where she also took courses in education and Teaching English as a Second Language. It was on a 2017 choir tour in South Africa that she says she began to more clearly sense God calling her to cross-cultural mission work.

Loving her students at EGT, she says, "means joining them in their mess, celebrating in their joy, and mourning with them in their darkness, bearing their burdens as though their pain was mine. It means becoming vulnerable myself, allowing them to see my weakness and struggles, and showing them the One who gives strength."

The most love one can give is to point others to Christ, the One Whose love will never run out, she says. "This is the love we are delighted to have found, and can't help but offer to others."

**"I pray that I can live each day as a 'child of grace,' one who is so overwhelmed with gratitude to Christ that the joy of being His will inevitably spill over into the relationships with these people who He's slowly but surely etching into my heart."**



Tisovec, Slovakia

# 2019 Highlights

This past year much of our focus was on continuing to grow the number of mission partners in the field and in putting structures in place to support them so that intentional Gospel proclamation can unfold.

**Thank you** for your part in making these accomplishments possible. God is at work through you, and through MCN, to share His love with the world. Without the prayers and financial support from individuals like you – this work would not be possible.



## Mission Partners

Surpassed 40 mission partners in the field. In the course of five years, MCN has grown from just 5 mission partners to 40 mission partners.



## Metrics

Established data collection from mission partners to assess the level of intentional Gospel proclamation taking place, resulting in an estimated 2000 Gospel connections each week.



## Training

Held the first new mission partner training, designed specifically for missionaries going into the field for the first time.



## Staff

Cindy Rodewald, Director of Mission Partner Care, is our first full-time employee hired in addition to the Executive Director. Reflecting our commitment to provide the utmost care and support for each mission partner, she is their primary touch point ensuring that each one has what they need to be successful.



## Concordia Mission Institute

Second annual joint training with Lutheran Bible Translators called Concordia Mission Institute, with 147 participants. Designed for all mission partners and their families and is a time for learning, connecting, and refueling.

# 2020 Plans

We don't know exactly where God will lead us in 2020, but we do know that the opportunities for Gospel proclamation are bountiful. The following is a list of priorities for MCN in the coming months. God has opened many doors over the past five years and we trust that He will continue to lead us in this coming year as we seek to follow Him.

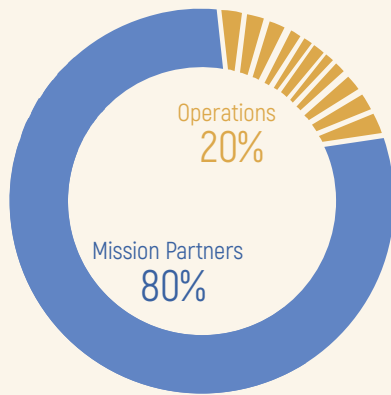
- Develop opportunities for congregational short-term mission teams.
- Expand mission fields for mission partner placement.
- Continue growing infrastructure within the MCN organization.
- Grow support for the MCN General Fund to help underwrite costs for mission partners and keep them in the field.
- Broaden international partnership in countries we already serve.
- Increase our investment in caring, supporting and training mission partners.



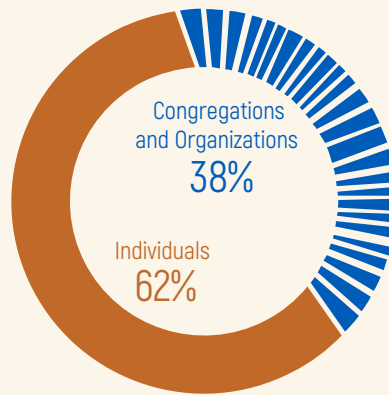
# 2019 Financials

Total 2019 Revenue: **\$1,117,555**

## SPENDING BREAKDOWN



## REVENUE SOURCES



## GROWTH 2015 - 2019

### Did You Know...

Since our inception just 6 years ago, we have increased mission partners in the field by more than 600%.

Because of donors like you, these mission partners have the financial means to serve and MCN has the financial capacity to send and support them in their ministry.

Thank YOU for your prayers and support

**\$183K Raised**



**\$1.1M Raised**



# Support MCN

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## Pray

Join us in prayer for the Good News of Jesus Christ to be proclaimed powerfully throughout the world. You can find a list of specific prayer requests from our mission partners at [missionofchrist.org/prayer-opportunities/](https://missionofchrist.org/prayer-opportunities/)



## Participate

Be the hands and feet of Jesus by becoming a mission partner, referring someone else to be a mission partner, or joining an upcoming short-term mission trip. [missionofchrist.org/mission-opportunities/](https://missionofchrist.org/mission-opportunities/)



## Connect

Engage with intentional Gospel proclamation happening around the world by joining our mailing list or email list.



## Donate

MCN and all our mission partners are funded 100% by donor support. Your gift matters! Consider making a gift to help make Jesus known to the world. [missionofchrist.org/ways-to-donate/](https://missionofchrist.org/ways-to-donate/)



Thank you for your continued prayers and partnership  
in intentional Gospel proclamation!

# Mission of Christ Network Leadership

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## BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND PASTORAL ADVISORS

Kermit W. (Butch) Almstedt, President

Paul Althoff, Vice President

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Jon Niederbrach

Gloria Edwards

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## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Rev. Dr. John Mehl

## DIRECTOR OF MISSION PARTNER CARE

Cindy Rodewald

## DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

Pat Klekamp



"And Peter said to Him,  
"Lord, You know all things;  
You know that I love You."

Jesus said to him,  
"Feed My sheep."

John 21:17b



"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

**Matthew 28:19**



missionofchrist.org

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missionofchrist.org

Mission of Christ Network (MCN) is a lay-led, pastor-advised 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation. MCN invites individuals, congregations and organizations to partner in mission efforts.

MISSION   
OF CHRIST  
Network