

# BELC - India

Berea Evangelical Lutheran Church of India (BELC)

## STATUS

In Fellowship ☒

## STATISTICS

Ordained Pastors	<u>716</u>	Congregations	<u>442</u>
Pastors in Training	<u>20</u>	Preaching stations	<u>1284</u>

## RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

In December 2016, the BELC was tested again by a hurricane that hit Chennai and coastal Andhra Pradesh. Special funds were sent to help repair damaged churches. In the spring of 2017, eighteen new pastors graduated from the seminary and were ordained, and twenty new students joined the new session. A new district of twenty-four pastors was started in Chengalpet and the BELC continues to have monthly continuing education seminars for pastors taught by the district chairmen and Missionary Peter Evensen. Last year around 14,600 children enrolled in the annual VBS. The BELC continues to carry out a film outreach ministry in remote rural villages, tribal areas, and in urban centers. The BELC has started two-day leaders' seminars, conducted three to four times a year, to train new leaders in each of the twenty-three districts.

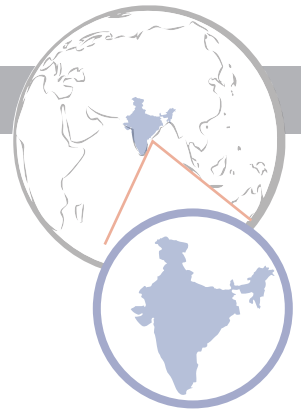
## SCOPE AND FOCUS OF MINISTRY

The BELC currently ministers to people in four states and one territory of India, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Odisha, and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Seven district chairmen hold monthly meetings, with all the pastors attending, teaching them the catechism. VBS summer programs are held and they work with children in after school programs. Some of the pastors work with the blind and others work in leprosy compounds. The BELC pastors also work hard to reach out to rural villages and tribal colonies. The BELC has a twofold program with the goal of increasing correct doctrinal teaching in India and proclaiming the Gospel to the heathen. They hold regular monthly district meetings for the training of men who are already pastors throughout the districts. They also have a school in Andhra Pradesh for a more immersive training of young men desiring to become ministers.



## FUTURE PLANS/CHALLENGES

Missionary Evensen looks to continue a busy schedule of conducting pastoral trainings, sometimes with more pastors showing up than are officially invited. Pastor Bhaskar is currently looking to add twenty men in Madanappalli. There are always more opportunities to establish new districts and train new men for the ministry. We pray that the Lord would provide us with the resources needed to spread further the Gospel in the BELC.



## HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

In 1983, Pastor Mohan Bas, who lived at the far southern tip of India, sent a letter to the CLC Board of Missions requesting contact. Pastor Bas had previously been trained in Lutheran doctrine and had since started his own church - the Bharath Evangelical Lutheran Church (BELC). In July of 1986, the CLC, in convention, recognized confessional fellowship with the BELC. At this time the BELC consisted of 2 pastors and 300 souls.

In July of 2000, Pastor Todd Ohlmann traveled to the Andaman and Nicobar Islands to explore a new field where the BELC had contacts. In December of 2000, it was discovered that Pastor Mohan Bas was receiving money from another Lutheran Church body with which the CLC was not in fellowship. An end to our fellowship with Mohan Bas was declared.

Many of the men who had previously been studying under Bas came to Missionary David Koenig desiring to remain in fellowship with the CLC. This was the beginning of the new BELC. A new name was chosen, Berea Evangelical Lutheran Church, and a new building available for rent was found in Nagalapuram, Andhra Pradesh.



## PERSONNEL

The men are listed in the order that they appear in the picture to the left (left to right, and front row first):

**Pastor D Paul** is the president of the BELC, as well as the head teacher at the Martin Luther Bible School (MLBS), he also serves as a district chairman.

**Pastor Rajamani** serves as a district chairman and teaches music at the MLBS.

**Pastor Moses Raghu** is a district chairman, intelligent and dedicated. He is always pushing for the start of another Bible school in his district of Nellore. He works with Pastor Bhaskar to conduct Evangelism meetings in western Andhra Pradesh and is also overseeing the work in Bengaluru in Karnataka.

**Pastor Bhaskar**, district chairman, is very humble and dedicated. He had the Luther rose carved on his front door. Pastor Bhaskar works closely with Pastor Moses.

**Pastor T Sampath**, district chairman, helps out teaching at the MLBS.

**Pastor Victor Vemuri**, district chairman, previously in the Indian army, extremely energetic and friendly.