



# Missions Update

Spring 2014 · Biannual



## Proclaiming the eternal gospel “to every nation, tribe, language and people.” Revelation 14:6

Missions conducts gospel outreach in the United States, Canada, and 23 foreign countries through seed sowing and evangelism efforts, congregation and church planting, ethnic and national worker training, and providing religious materials in foreign languages. Through the Board for Home Missions and the Board for World Missions, we’re proclaiming the eternal gospel “to every nation, tribe, language and people” (Revelation 14:6).

## New Latin America mission team

WELS World Missions is announcing changes to its work in Latin America. All WELS missionaries serving in Latin America, including those who are members of the Latin American Traveling Theological Educators, will now be part of one Latin America mission team.

Rev. Larry Schlomer, administrator of WELS World Missions, explains, “The flexibility this group will have allows our missionaries to be deployed where they are needed most and to be redeployed when the assigned tasks are done. This one Latin America mission team can provide exploration of areas and contacts, church planting, an evangelism push, evangelism training, lay leader training, pre-seminary and seminary education, and whatever else can be useful and effective for each unique situation. Missionaries can be deployed for years at a time or serve a country with short visits and encouragement.”

Several factors contributed to this change in mission planning, including the growing maturity of national church leaders in WELS missions in Latin America, fluctuating security concerns in certain areas, and a reduction in missionary manpower.

Schlomer says, “For several years WELS mission work in Latin America has covered the training and support of national workers in many different countries. Our Latin American Traveling Theological Educators have traveled to Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Mexico, and Puerto Rico, and there are now 24 national pastors and seven evangelists serving in these Latin American countries. There are also 18 more seminarians who are being trained with the current program in conjunction with the national churches. These leaders form a small army of confessional, Lutheran, Hispanic ambassadors of Christ serving in local

congregations and reaching out into their communities. The growth of these national churches allows them to stand on their own with occasional visits and support from WELS.”

Missionary Nate Wagenknecht, who had served as a Latin American Traveling Theological Educator, is the first called worker to be

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## Online Bible study reaches world fields

Interactive Faith online Bible studies have been made available through WELS Adult Discipleship to serve as a mid-week Bible study for small groups.

Members from around the globe joined the classes led by President Mark Schroeder in February.

Several countries outside of the U.S. and Canada have logged on to join the discussion.

1. COLOMBIA

2. GERMANY

3. MEXICO

4. UK

5. BRAZIL

6. PORTUGAL

7. UKRAINE

8. INDONESIA



redeployed since the inception of this new strategy for serving Latin America. Wagenknecht, who had been based in Puebla, Mexico, has relocated to Houston, Texas, to help Hispanic members of WELS reach back into their home countries with the gospel. It is estimated that as many as 2,000 WELS members are immigrants from a Latin American country.



“The friends and family members of these brothers and sisters can be the starting point for mission work in many areas of the Americas that desperately need the saving truth,” says Schlomer.

Wagenknecht adds, “We want to network better with stateside Hispanic ministries and tap into the relationships our stateside members have with their family and friends back in their home country. We also want to maintain a healthy balance between outreach—sharing the gospel with new contacts—and discipleship—helping Christians mature in their faith and service in God’s kingdoms.”

If you know of a contact in Latin America who needs to hear the gospel and you would like to work with the Latin America mission team to reach them, contact Wagenknecht at [1LA@wels.net](mailto:1LA@wels.net).

## World Missions working with ULC

At its January 12-13 meeting, the WELS Board for World Missions (BWM) agreed to assume oversight of the partnership with the Ukrainian Lutheran Church (ULC), a 900-member church body started in the 1990s.

The Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS) had been the primary mission partner of this Ukrainian church body, but by mutual agreement between the three church bodies, WELS through its Board for World Missions will now assume that role. The ELS will continue to maintain its Gift of Life program, which provides humanitarian aid and pro-life counseling in Ukraine.

Gifts from foundations, grants, and individuals will provide the dollars to help support the work of this church, with minimal funding needed from Congregation Mission Offerings. WELS will not send any permanent missionaries to Ukraine but will provide training, workshops, and counsel to the ULC in areas such as stewardship, leadership, and discipleship. Rev. Larry Schlomer, administrator of WELS World Missions, says the goal—as it is with all world missions fields—is to help the ULC become self-supporting and self-administrating and able to stand on its own.

“By bringing them under the BWM, we’re able to use the expertise and experience that we’ve gained in dealing with many churches through the growing pangs of becoming their own independent church body,” says Schlomer.

Besides being able to financially support its ministry, Rev. Dr. Vyacheslav Horpynchuk, bishop of the Ukrainian Lutheran Church, says this also means the church has to grow in its ministry practices, including outreach, laypeople involvement, and continued education of its pastors. “This is what we need to do, and this is why we are so thankful to the WELS that they came and helped us—providing not only financial help but also providing guidance and wisdom,” says Horpynchuk. “This is what we need.”

Horpynchuk is grateful for the support and this new relationship, especially at this time of political unrest and violence in Ukraine. He says, “Sometimes you feel isolated. You feel threatened. Brotherly care and encouragement is extremely important. We know that the Lord never fails. We know that the Lord never leaves us alone. We know that his people never leave their brothers and sisters. And this is what we see now is taking place with WELS, and we are thankful to the Lord for your love and your care.”

The Ukrainian Lutheran Church consists of 907 baptized members in 22 congregations served by 21 pastors and two vicars. Learn more at [www.wels.net/missions/ukraine](http://www.wels.net/missions/ukraine).

## New Builders For Christ director

Kingdom Workers is blessed to announce Mr. John Lautz as the director of the Builders For Christ ministry program. John and his

## LWMS annual convention 2014

The 51st annual Lutheran Women’s Missionary Society (LWMS) will be held June 26-29, 2014, in Dallas, Texas. This year’s theme is “You Will be My Witnesses” and will highlight mission work in the U.S. and abroad.

LWMS Pastoral Advisors Brady Coleman and Paul Lindhorst will be conducting workshops that focus on our call to be witnesses of God’s truth, his expectations, and his guidance as we witness the truth.

Home mission speakers include Rev. Andrew Schroer speaking about a cross-cultural ministry in a small Texas town, and Rev. Gregory Hein speaking about his first year starting a home mission. Rev. Caleb Schoeneck will also do a workshop about his work in Campus Ministry. For World Missions, presentations will be given on work in East Asia.

Visit [www.lwms.org](http://www.lwms.org) for more information.



wife Nancy live in West Salem, Wis., and are members of Christ Lutheran Church. They have three daughters and eight grandchildren.

John has served as the president of the Wisconsin Builders Association and is a member of the Wisconsin Builders Association Hall of Fame. He has owned Lautz Custom Builders for nearly 30 years. Prior to working in construction, John served the U.S. Navy.

John's passion for reaching people with the gospel and service to our Lord has led to this opportunity. He says, "The first objective in the Kingdom Workers Strategic Plan, 'always focus on going, telling, and sharing the saving message of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ through service and evangelism,' is the calling of every Christian. I could not think of a better place for me to do this than with an organization like Kingdom Workers."

During 2013, Kingdom Workers' Builders For Christ volunteers worked on four projects. In 2014 four more projects are lined up, including Beverly Hills, Fla.; Greenwood, Ind.; Mandan, N.D.; Apache Missions, Ariz.

While serving a congregation or ministry, Builders For Christ volunteers actively participate in community outreach, evangelism, and gospel proclamation.

Volunteers are always needed. Contact the office at 414-771-6848 and join Builders For Christ.

## Connecting cross-cultural ministries

The Joint Mission Council (JMC) has called Rev. Paul Prange, administrator of the Board for Ministerial Education (BME), to serve for one year as a part-time coordinator of global cross-cultural outreach. In this position, Prange will explore ways to coordinate people working in the same ethnic groups here in the States as well as to connect cross-cultural stateside ministries to new opportunities in international settings.

"Coordinating the right people with the right tools for reaching out to stateside communities as well as to their home countries can be a solid and low-cost way to get the gospel into places we otherwise could not," says Mr. Sean Young, director of mission operations.

Connecting these cross-cultural ministries here at home to opportunities around the world fits directly into the work of the JMC, which was formed in 2004 to oversee mission opportunities that are the operational responsibility of both the Boards for World and Home Missions. "One of the biggest benefits is that we'll now be able to capitalize on the opportunities we know are out there yet are unable to quantify," says Young.

Prange, who will continue to serve as BME administrator in a part-time capacity during this sabbatical, says he's excited to have this opportunity to help the body of Christ gather and work together. "The Spirit promises that when people gather together, he's there in a special way," says Prange, a 1988 graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. "So connecting people around the gospel sounds to me like the way the Lord wants us to do his work."

According to Prange, serving in both roles will offer him new opportunities to examine how the ministerial education schools can further cooperate and work with both cross-cultural home and world mission fields, including how the synod can help serve these fields' sometimes very specific ministry and educational needs.

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## CEF grants Home Missions \$1.3M

Continuing its generous support to Home Missions, in the fall of 2013, the Church Extension Fund (CEF) board of directors authorized a special \$1.3 million grant to Home Missions. The purpose of this special grant is to give additional support to six missions for the purchase of land or the building/buying of a worship facility. Typically as a mission looks to buy land, they raise 10 percent of the land cost and CEF offers a grant for four times what the church raised. When it comes to the worship facility, the church again raises 10 percent on the building cost and CEF offers a grant for two times what the church raised.

With the special grant, six missions, prioritized by Home Missions, are now receiving an additional grant toward their land and building projects. Home Missions Administrator Rev. Keith Free says, "What a blessing it is for these churches to not only receive the normal grant but a special grant. It puts them so much farther down the line to be debt free as well as lowering their monthly mortgage payments. We thank the Lord for this additional support from CEF."

Since the grant program began in 1993, more than \$25 million in grants have been offered to mission congregations. If you would like to learn more about CEF, go to [wels.cef.net](http://wels.cef.net).

Prange will begin this work in April. He says his first priority is to interview as many people as possible who are involved in cross-cultural ministry around the country, especially focusing on ethnic groups who have contacts with their country of origin.

WELS currently has cross-cultural ministries reaching out to Vietnamese, Hispanic, Hmong, Korean, Chinese, Muslim, and Sudanese communities scattered throughout the United States. WELS campus ministries and area Lutheran high schools also minister to international students. Learn more about WELS cross-cultural missions at [www.wels.net/missions](http://www.wels.net/missions).

## MLP coordinates cross-cultural publishing

If you were to listen in on conversations with Multi-Language Publications (MLP) you would hear something like this:

**Q: I have family in Peru and my grandchild needs to be baptized. Pastor Bodjanac told me you might be able to help.**

**A: Pastor David Haeuser lives in Lima. Here's his information...**

**Q: We'd like to publish the Time of Grace devotional materials in Spanish and other languages. Can you help?**

**A: Northwestern Publishing House can help by making them available through their bookstore. And you can help world missions by letting us put the devotions on the WELS Spanish Web site.**

**Q: We've heard about how the Bible Teachings Series has reached 75,000 in South Asia and Latin America. We want to try using it in Ukraine.**

**A: We can fund the translation and publishing of a couple of volumes to test it. Let's get started.**

**Q: I have a contact in Istanbul who agrees with the WELS doctrinal statement, *This We Believe*. He'd like to translate something into Turkish or Armenian. Can you help?**

**A: How about translating the films *Road to Emmaus* or *Come Follow Me*? Foreign language subscribers can be synchronized to the English language dialog.**

The MLP office is located on the Mexican border in El Paso, Texas, primarily because the program grew out of the Latin American part of world missions. Translation work is done by native-speakers who serve in foreign countries or in cross-cultural ministries here in the United States. The program collaborates closely with various departments at the WELS Center for Mission and Ministry, Northwestern Publishing House, and various other ministries of

WELS. In a word, Multi-Language Publications coordinates cross-cultural publishing—both print and digital.

The program can also help you reach out to the millions of immigrants who live in the United States, many within the area served by your congregation. Look for ways to share the gospel. Use films, like *Road to Emmaus*, which is available in seven languages, and *Come Follow Me*, which includes a Spanish version. Use *The Promise*, which tells the story of salvation in seven short episodes and is available in 42 languages. Use the self-study books of the *Bible Teachings Series* some of whose titles are translated into 12 languages. These items and many more are available at Northwestern Publishing House. Go to [www.nph.net/mlp](http://www.nph.net/mlp) to order materials. Or call our office in El Paso at 1-800-876-1388.

## District Mission Boards

When you think of Home Missions one naturally thinks of mission congregations and mission pastors reaching out with the gospel of Jesus Christ. **By God's grace, over the past 50 years, close to 600 missions in the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod have opened.**

New missions open through the work of District Mission Boards (DMB) and mission counselors. DMBs are made up of pastors and laymen from a district. While serving as volunteers, DMBs are on the front lines, actively supporting new and existing missions.

At the spring 2013 Board for Home Mission (BHM) meeting, the BHM adopted a strategic plan with seven vision goals. To help the DMBs work at implementing these goals, during the 2014 winter months, the 14 mission boards attended training sessions. "We appreciate the time the DMB members take to better equip themselves to serve missions as well as to start missions," states Rev. Keith Free, Home Missions administrator. "These men are the first line of support for our missions, missionaries, and families. We truly are thankful for their service."

WELS 2013 Mission Facts:

 **12 NEW STARTS**

**FOR HOME MISSIONS**