

# Status of WELS World Missions on the Threshold of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

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On the threshold of the 21<sup>st</sup> century churches have become involved in worldwide activities and ministries on a scope and scale that are unprecedented. Many mainline denominations would define their mission in terms of what we in our circles would consider the “social gospel,” also known as the fights against poverty, hunger, disease, and social injustice. Although we would not agree with these churches in their singular focus on mankind’s physical needs, their involvement to address the world’s overwhelming humanitarian needs should be noted for it has been gargantuan. It would be nearly impossible to accurately measure the billions of dollars expended by churches in the last half of this century for disaster relief and other humanitarian assistance.

For reasons far more pertinent to mankind’s spiritual needs, most of the churches proclaiming Jesus as the world’s only Savior have also picked up the pace in doing worldwide Gospel outreach. In 1997 the Southern Baptists in a very emotional convention committed their church body to tripling its overseas mission force from 51,000 to 15,000 personnel. In 1995 the Global Consultation on World Evangelism, under the direction of such leaders as Ralph Winter, Donald McGavern, and C. Peter Wagner, initiated the Joshua project, an ambitious attempt to coordinate efforts between church bodies to reach “unreached” people groups in the 10/40 window (between the 10 and 40 north of the equator). In conjunction with this effort Bill Bright’s “Campus Crusade for Christ” financed the *Jesus Film* and claims that it has been seen by over two billion people since it was produced in 1978 and has resulted in approximately 90,000 decisions for Christ.

In a December 1998 article in *Mission Frontiers* entitled “Fueling the Passion in the Pew” the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (LCMS) is also cited as showing astounding mission growth in the ‘90s. Specifies on the LCMS growth include an increase of 220 percent (from \$12.6 million to \$28 million) for missions and new work in 20 additional countries. A record 268 missionaries have been placed by LCMS’s world mission arm for service in 23 countries worldwide. In the last ten years LCMS has opened international schools in China and hopes to start 1,000 new ministries to U.S. ethnic groups by 2001. According to the Missions Advance Research Center, 36 percent of those connected with the Christian Church are involved in some form of mission activity which brings the current mission emphasis to a historical high. It would seem that history is repeating itself in that the approach of another new millennium has spurred Christian churches to new mission initiatives by providing a powerful reminder that there is urgency to our work since we may be much closer to the day the Lord will return than we think.

It is equally significant that the current world population of six billion plus is to anyone’s knowledge the largest mission field in the history of mankind. The best estimates of the world’s population at the time of Christ are around 300,000,000 and the time of Luther at 500,000,000. It took until the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century for the world’s population to reach 1 billion and it was 1.6 billion at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. During the past 100 years, despite the mass destruction connected with two world wars, the world’s population took a quantum leap. As of last week, the planet was home to 6,023,514,208 souls. It was estimated there will be 131,468,233 births and 54,147,021 deaths in 1999 for a global increase of 77,321,212. The world

is thus growing on the average a little less than a third of the entire U.S. population annually.

The growth rates of Christendom have also shown some interesting trends. While numerical Christian growth is basically stagnant or declining in the United States and Europe, there has been a phenomenal growth in the numbers of Christians in Africa and Asia. In 1900 there were 7.5 million Christians in Africa. There were 67 million African Christians in 1955 and in 1970 a total of 130 million. In the first year of the new millennium 338 million Africans will claim membership in the Christian Church with an estimate of 760 million projected for the year 2025. Currently 20 percent of all Christians live in Africa. Similarly in 1900 less than four percent of all Christians lived in Asia; today 20 percent live in Asia. Ten of the twenty largest churches in the world are in Korea, est. 6-8 million Presbyterians, twice the number in America. In 1960 less than 50 percent of all professing Christians lived in Europe or North America. Today 70 percent of all Christians live in Latin America, Africa, Asia, and Oceania.

The planting of national churches, the use of new technologies, the targeting of unreached people groups, the publication of hundreds of new Bible translations, the developing of mission strategies for less accessible countries, all these factors have worked together to speed the course of the Gospel at a breathtaking pace. I have taken the time to detail a larger picture because I think it is cause for great rejoicing that our Lord is at work through his church on a far grander scale than most of us could ever imagine. Of the Church universal we sing in the hymn “by schisms rent asunder, by heresies distressed;” yet through that same Church, as feeble and misguided as its members and leaders often are, God is carrying out his master plan for evangelization of the world.

Indeed the amazing things our Savior Lord is accomplishing around the globe can be seen if we want to note them, though they are often hidden from the worldly and overlooked by the superficial. When the iron curtain fell in Eastern Europe and Russia, it was soon evident that vibrant churches existed there and had existed all along. As the dark empire of atheistic communism crumbled from the weight of its own corruption, the saints emerged stronger and more focused than ever for the trials they had endured. In China the Christians thrown into the concentration camps during Mao Tse Tung’s Cultural Revolution gained stature in the eyes of their countrymen as they proclaimed God’s truth in dark places with their mouths and lives. When their prison time was over they began the household church movement. Today Christian organizations that do province by province assessments of this movement give conservative estimates that there are somewhere between 60 to 80 million Christians in China. The Australian Aborigines as depicted on PBS documentaries appear to be a primitive and pagan people that the God of Israel might have overlooked. How surprised we were then to discover on a 1993 exploratory that around a hundred years ago German Lutherans from the Hermannsburg Mission Society had sent a mission team from South Australia to Alice Springs. This mission team established the Finke River Mission in central Australia to work among the Aborigines. Today there are over 4,000 Aboriginal Lutherans and 14 ordained Lutheran Aboriginal ministers, but you won’t hear about that from the National Geographic Society. With or without us God will accomplish his saving purposes on this planet!

### **Abundant Blessings of the Past**

By God’s grace the WELS has also had the privilege of participating in the Lord’s worldwide plan to reach the lost. As we begin to observe our *Forward in Christ* anniversary celebration, it is abundantly clear that among the blessings we have to celebrate are also those that the Lord has showered on our synod’s World Mission efforts. As of this writing a rich

harvest of 57,274 souls is evidenced in the 20 World Mission fields in which we have been working for a little over 100 years. Most of this growth has taken place in the past 50 years. Sixty-six national pastors and 232 evangelists from those respective fields have been educated in worker training programs so that, as gifts from the ascended Christ, they might provide scriptural leadership for their emerging national churches. The worldwide enrollment of 101 Bible institute students and 106 seminary students also points to a future bright with promise. To our God alone be the glory!

To oversee this vast program we have a World Mission team consisting of two administrators, three full-time office secretaries, 43 stateside administrative committee members, 76 missionaries, 22 teachers, and 36 lay workers. These workers and their respective families together with the emerging churches around the world continue to need the prayers, interest, and support of God's people throughout the synod for their important work.

### **Forward in Strategic Planning**

There are endless opportunities and possibilities for proclaiming the Gospel worldwide. Thus choosing where we want to invest our synod's limited manpower and monetary resources calls for thorough demographic studies and then evaluations of possible new mission fields on the basis of accepted criteria. In the past, Macedonian-type calls from "lonely Lutherans" often energized conventions and plunged the synod headlong into mission commitments that proved over time to be unwise. At times those "lonely Lutherans" turned out to be savvy opportunists. Some of them had secured a copy of "This We Believe" or its equivalent and, for the sake of earthly gain, played on our belief (our desire to believe?) that the Lord had led them to the same doctrinal understanding as us. We learned slowly and painfully that many people from third world cultures will say and do almost anything to get American dollars coming their way and that we had to resist the temptations to buy loyalty or try to purchase a church.

Currently a potential mission field will receive a minimum of three visitations before exploratory status is even considered. If it still shows great potential in comparison to other possible new fields an on site exploratory is initiated for up to two years. During this time culturally pertinent demographic information is gathered and, after it has been evaluated possible mission strategies are developed. Only after being compared to other fields that have had equivalent study is a decision for long-term commitment finally made. Today the conventions are less emotional, the fields are entered into far more cautiously, but the synod is getting a far better investment on its dollars in those fields to which we finally commit.

The following are further current and overarching issues in World Missions that impact our planning assumptions.

**The Imperative of Expanding Mission Outreach**—The synod has charged the Board for World Missions (BWM) to expand Gospel outreach worldwide. With infinite possibilities for outreach and limited resources the world board will be challenged to meet new outreach opportunities while being responsible to the commitments it has already made. **Action Plan:** The world board has committed itself to three planning priorities: 1) Indigenization (the plan for churches to become self-dependent); 2) Continued expansion of outreach; and 3) Alternate strategies. The outreach will be closely linked with the other two priorities, indigenization and alternate strategies. The Committee for Mission Expansion is even now working on an "exit strategy" recognizing that fields must be held accountable for reporting progress toward self dependence. A fair share of the manpower and money needed for expansion must come through redeployment of resources from one field to another as progress is made or possibly through

alternate strategies to assist fields that have experienced slow growth in a less expensive way. This will put greater pressure on the older fields (Apacheland, Africa, Japan) and on those fields whose progress over the years has been limited. Alternate strategies such as lay worker assistance, teaching visitations from stateside pastors and professors, extended learning programs, self-study instructional materials, and limited calls will also help to make continued expansion possible. Home and World Missions will need to increasingly do joint planning and sharing of resources to avoid duplication of effort and poor stewardship and to increase cross-cultural outreach.

**A Possible Special Funding Shortfall**—Two of our synod's mission fields, Bulgaria and Russia, have been almost totally funded for the past seven years by special gifts from the Schwan Foundation (\$1 million annually). For the first time the Foundation has informed us that there are no guarantees for funding for these fields beyond the first year of the biennium ('99-'01). Much will depend on the generosity of the Foundation, but the synod could be faced with the possibility of phasing anywhere from three to ten missionaries into its budget during the second year of the biennium ('00-'01) or the alternatives of recalling some missionaries or even closing a field. A negative development would certainly be counter productive to our mission objectives, particularly in those fields where a promising beginning has been made and extra time for church planting is crucial. **Action Plan:** There have already been a number of severe measures taken to fund the budget for this coming biennium, including some delays on vehicle purchases for several fields and the committed use of almost every restricted fund. We can only hope that the Foundation will allow further time to accomplish the transition of missionary support from special to budgetary funding. If there were severe cutbacks, the BWM would request the Synodical Council to provide emergency help from the Gift Trust Fund until an orderly budget phase in could be accomplished.

**Expatriate Manpower**—World Missions is presently fielding 76 missionaries. Thirty-eight additional manpower positions are requested with ten of those currently prioritized. Many of these positions have not been filled for several years due to limitations in both manpower and funding. As the Russia and Bulgaria missionaries begin to be assimilated into the budget, it will further restrict the number of "new" missionaries placed into world fields. Our present forecast would anticipate an optimum scenario of 15 additional missionaries by the year '06, but a more realistic scenario of six to seven additional missionaries by '06 bringing the total to 82. **Action Plans:** Re-deployment of manpower from one field to another. Greater retention of existing missionaries through enhanced support programs (comprehensive orientation, counseling, Third Culture Kids seminars, repatriation, etc). Encourage Ministerial Education to identify and facilitate training for potential world missionaries to increase the number of those with aptitude for and interest in overseas work. Limited special funding calls, e.g. Mexico #3. Increasingly use visitations from stateside pastors and retired pastors to facilitate the work. Use teachers and lay volunteers to assist in missionary work, especially in those tasks not requiring specialized training.

**Apacheland in Transition**—The recent budgetary process brought a number of long-standing problems in Apacheland to the forefront. East Fork Lutheran High School was floundering from a lack of direction, poor local support, a demoralized teaching staff, and an uncertain future. The work carried out on the reservation by long-standing missionaries did not adequately reflect world board policies and, in many instances, indicated a lack of confidence that the Apaches could lead. In a comprehensive prioritization meeting, the high school was taken out of the budget and given only one additional year of full funding through the world

board's Divisional Fund. **Action Plan:** As severe as the measure sounds, the challenge to provide support for the high school through alternate methods is proving to be a blessing in disguise. It has spurred the administrative committee and faculty to produce a comprehensive five-year plan to redirect the high school to a far greater contribution to the indigenous church process. Plans to provide funding for the high school during the second year of the biennium include: a tighter tuition policy; the seeking of additional financial support from local Apache congregations and nearby churches of the Arizona-California District, a full-scale effort for revenue enhancement through the PAL program; possible tribal subsidies, and widespread support from the WELS Area Lutheran High School Association. As a fail-safe the administrative committee has been asked to report to the world board on its progress in the January 2000 plenary meeting for evaluation and possible additional assistance from the Divisional Fund, In the past two years there has been a 90 percent change in missionary personnel and a 35 percent change in teacher personnel. These personnel changes in every instance reflect a greater commitment to world board policies and objectives. God willing, the infusion of Forward in Christ help in the next biennium will help ease the five-year transition to ultimate self-support.

**Humanitarian Aid**—The use of humanitarian aid has become critical to legitimizing our presence and effectiveness in a number of the less accessible countries around the world. In places like Africa, Bulgaria, India, and Russia, deeds of charity provide a way to express Christian faith and love that lend credibility to the messengers of the Gospel. Humanitarian efforts are also excellent vehicles for the involvement of lay people. The cost of present humanitarian programs in world fields is approaching about \$350,000 annually, or \$700,000 for each biennium. This does not include distribution of disaster aid coming through the synod's Committee on Relief. Much of the humanitarian funding has come in the past through special funding with the lion's share again coming from the Foundation. In view of foundation cutbacks and rising needs, the World Mission program will be challenged to have sufficient funding for its present programs, much less expanding needs. **Action Plan:** The world board has established a standing Humanitarian Aid Committee to raise awareness of humanitarian efforts and yet to oversee the programs so that they do not become unmanageable, excessive, or distracting from our primary ministry of the Word and Sacrament. Planned Giving intends to assist the BWM in funding humanitarian needs.

**Capital Projects**—Somewhere between \$700,000 to \$1 million is needed annually to keep up with current World Mission Building Fund (WMBF) requests for chapels, Christian Information Centers, Bible institutes, and national church headquarters. The backlog of projects is currently over a million dollars. As a matter of course World Missions tries to avoid building and property entanglements in foreign countries, but those buildings that are requested are usually urgently needed for valid reasons. Deficits in the WMBF can hinder planning, prevent timely and opportune purchases, and slow progress on a mission field. **Action Plan:** Home Missions Church Extension Fund Board of Directors was asked to extend a line of credit to the WMBF for approximately \$1 million to fund capital projects and has consented. Smaller projects of \$5,000-\$20,000 will be handled through Planned Giving requests. Eventually the synod will seek to address all its capital needs budgetarily through an orderly process and World Missions plans to be a part of that process.

**Increase a Passion and Sense of Urgency for the Lost**—Our church body has the valuable gift of the untarnished Gospel and is in prime position to offer this treasure to a dying world. This will only happen, however, if our synod's constituency is aware of the opportunity and solidly committed to reaching the oceans of lost humanity. There is an urgency about this

work that cannot be minimized. We don't have decades of time and generations of workers to "fritter away" with a half-hearted approach to getting out the Gospel. If we do outreach without determined commitment and a willingness to take risks, precious opportunities will be lost.

**Action Plans:** The BWM is trying to build more awareness. The Mission Information Center (MIC) has been set up at the WELS Kingdom Worker office to provide a central location for World Mission information, displays, and materials. As of January 1, 2000, the Northwestern Publishing House Audiovisual Services Department will be phased out and the World Mission videos and filmstrips will be transferred to the MIC. Anyone interested in ordering MIC items may call 1-800-466-9357. *Mission Connection*, a quarterly publication, also brings regular feedback to mission supporters. On yet another publicity track, World Mission information is constantly available through the WELS Web site, <<http://www.wels.net>>. There are now 18 fields that have an abundance of basic information provided on the web site. The WELS World Mission web pages are already being used in grade schools and by church organizations to promote interest in the far-flung fields. These pages contain human interest stories, pictures, prayer requests, and avenues for involvement. The Internet is an information vehicle that is being increasingly used in our day and, according to the opinions of almost every futurist, it is here to stay. A set of web site guidelines has been approved by the BWM to ensure more cautious use of the Internet for the safety of our missionaries in politically sensitive countries. The BWM has contracted with Boettcher Productions to produce three 12-minute videos about three respective fields each year. We are convinced that true mission awareness will only come on the scale desired when mission outreach is given proper biblical emphasis in our worker training institutions and in our churches. God's Word alone can inspire us to mission commitment, yet the reality of the needs seems to take hold best through involvement. We are counting on the mission involvement opportunities provided by WELS Kingdom Workers and through the upcoming *Forward in Christ* program to serve as a catalyst for greater mission involvement and awareness. World Missions is committed to doing its part to enable the mission teams programs to accomplish their desired goals.

**Worker Training**—Because our Savior instructed us that in the discipling of all nations we should teach them "to obey everything I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:20), our synod wants to commit itself to planting churches which are thoroughly taught the whole counsel of God. There are many half-baked mission initiatives around the world that are floundering for lack of solid training and direction. We don't want to plant "pumpkin" churches which grow to large size but are hollow, but rather "oak tree" type churches which will endure. Indigenous churches will depend upon a core of well-trained pastors, evangelists, and lay workers who will serve as national church leaders for the present and future and sound confessional material with which to work. **Action Plans:** We are further exploring the possibility of regional seminaries where feasible. We are using extended learning, teaching visitations, and self-study instructional materials to facilitate training in far-flung areas where an established seminary is not feasible. The World Mission Collection provides a wealth of resource material for reference across fields. An impressive number of confessional materials have been developed through the efforts of the Multi-Language Publications Program. These materials will give national workers tools with which to both learn and teach. Virtual learning may one day soon become a possibility.

**Missionary Compensation Issues**—The synod's World Mission program which currently supports 67 overseas missionary families is no longer the "mom and pop" operation it was even 30 years ago. In the past our synod has been very generous in meeting almost every need of our missionaries and their families as the cost of doing business. In the earlier years we

paid all educational costs from elementary school through college, We supplied furniture, vehicles for the field, furloughs every three years, furlough housing, furlough transportation, regular trips to see student children in the U.S., etc. With each passing decade the numbers of missionaries in the field increased and the cost of doing business took a quantum leap. Educational costs in overseas international schools skyrocketed and we had no control over increases. Three-year furloughs became two-year furloughs, then, for some fields, one-year furloughs. As family sizes increased and children grew up, the demand for larger vehicles and more spacious housing accommodations for furloughs also grew. The enhanced orientation and repatriation programs, while beneficial, have also caused significant increases to the annual budget. It is to the point where budget bloat for existing programs must either be reduced or ultimately consideration must be given to closing fields. **Action Plans:** Compensation issues cannot be dealt with reactively and individually. To preempt painful problems, compensation issues must be dealt with comprehensively. Our board has actually placed Jon Flanagan, Human Resources Director, in charge of our ad hoc committee on compensation matters. We need to develop several comprehensive package options that are acceptable to us and let the missionaries choose which ones they want. It would be desirable if this could be done before the next fiscal biennium.

**National Church Subsidy Issues**—Finding the golden mean between charity and paternalism, between helping and creating dependency, between compassion and a firm commitment to ultimate self dependency, is one of the foremost challenges in many of our mission fields. We cannot overstate how crucial the issue of subsidy is to people coming from subsistence living. The goal of self support is a major component in a national church's maturity. **Action Plans:** Phased goals toward self support are being jointly worked out and regularly evaluated when put into action. Biblical stewardship principles need to be taught to both missionaries and national church leaders if understanding and growth is to be attained. Measured risks and even "leaps of faith" must be taken if nationals are to be empowered with the responsible management of funds. Subsidy must only be given with caution and with the long-term goals in mind.

### **Forward with Joint Initiatives Across Areas of Ministry**

The Board for World Missions is also prepared to work with other areas of ministry. Over the years, the functions of the respective areas of ministry seemed to serve the church well as each area (i.e. Home Missions, Ministerial Education, World Missions, etc.) concentrated on what it did best. In recent decades, however, social, cultural, and economic trends have profoundly impacted and forever changed the way that we are looking at ministry. Included among these trends are such things as unprecedented immigration from Asia, Central and South America, and Eastern Europe, the coloring of America, and economic globalization.

As a result of these developments, there are a number of crucial issues that are demanding attention, discussion and, if possible, coordinated planning across areas of ministry. They include:

- the question of whether or not to promote the acquisition of a second language at every level of education;
- the challenge of how to provide greater cross-cultural awareness and sensitivity throughout the synod;
- the determination of how to best facilitate the use of English as a Second/Foreign Language programs into the outreach strategies of all areas of ministry;

the challenge of how best to provide ministerial training for potential future church workers from different ethnic groups within our own country;  
the facilitating of a process to produce and publish an ever-increasing amount of doctrinally sound materials in other languages; and  
the discovery of ways to link foreign students and businessmen who are converted to the Christian faith while visiting the U.S. with the national churches of their homeland when they return.

Now is the time for the BWM to work together with other areas of ministry to develop mutually beneficial programs and coordinate efforts. Why?

Because of the growing need for more overseas workers and the increasing stateside opportunities to do cross-cultural outreach.

Because our Synod in Convention accepted the recommendation of the Seeking Our Neighbor (SON) Committee “that WELS Board for Home Missions and Board for World Missions work cooperatively to seek positive ways to use current and former expatriate missionaries, as well as national workers and members from WELS foreign mission fields, in doing mission work in the United States...”

Because the new restructuring provides for the position of the Vice President of Mission and Ministry to facilitate cross-divisional efforts.

### **Forward Across Language Barriers**

The name of the Multi-Language Literature Committee has been changed to the *Multi-Language Publications Program* (MLPP), a name which better defines its interest in publishing good confessional materials as well as warehousing them. The following individuals serve on this committee: Mr. Mark Brunner; Rev. Paul Hartman; and Prof. John Hartwig. Rev. Harold Essmann serves as the project coordinator. To date 220,000 copies of *The Promise*, a basic presentation of the biblical history of salvation, have been printed. These copies are now available in 26 different languages and the demand for them continues to grow. The Multi-Language Publications Program Catalog has been distributed to all WELS and ELS pastors, missionaries, and principals. It contains about 350 items in 28 different languages that can be ordered by mail or through a shopping cart feature on the Internet at <<http://www.wels.net/mc/forsale>>. Projects to produce faithful translations of confessional materials, Bible studies, worker training courses, and useful commentaries such as *The People's Bible* are constantly being planned by this committee. The MLPP has also been working with Home Mission and Ministerial Education representatives to promote English as a Second Language and English as a Foreign Language (ESL/EFL) as methods for building relationships across cultures and providing new opportunities to reach out to the lost. Two ESL workshops were held to examine the use of ESL for our synod's mission efforts, one in August 1997 and one in August 1998, with representatives from four areas of ministry and a number of ESL teachers who have taught under a variety of circumstances. The initiative provided through the workshops enabled participants to see the synod-wide possibilities for ESL/EFL. The first workshop prompted Martin Luther College (MLC) to offer its first ESL summer course in 1998. Eighteen were enrolled in the MLC course, many of whom are now using their ESL, training to assist in outreach in our World Mission fields. The workshops also spurred the formation of an ESL Steering Committee made up of representatives from the various areas of ministry to promote the use of ESL wherever practical as a vehicle for Gospel outreach.



### **Forward in Mutual Support**

The BWM cares for the spiritual health and ongoing nurture of its World Mission team. That is why regular World Mission Conferences, World Mission Seminary Conferences, and regional conferences are held and regular overseas visitations by administrative committee members are standard procedure. These occasions offer opportunities for growth in God's Word, mutually strengthening fellowship, and needed reviews of mission principles and strategies.

The stresses of overseas living require special concern for the physical and emotional well-being of our missionaries and their families. In consideration of this the board approved a psychological evaluation program for new missionaries and their wives through Wisconsin Lutheran Child and Family Service. The process helps the missionary family evaluate the personal gifts needed for a cross-cultural ministry to enable them to better prepare for serving in an overseas field. A cross-cultural awareness exposure is also offered to those considering a World Mission call, and those accepting a call receive a thorough orientation before beginning their work. Finally, a repatriation process which brings closure to the missionary experience is provided for returning missionaries and greatly facilitates their re-assimilation into USA life and culture.

As mutual support is important for individual workers, it is equally important for isolated church bodies which are contending for the truth of God's Word in an environment of opposition. For this reason the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference (CELC) was established. The CELC provides a forum in which sister church bodies and emerging national churches may gather around Scripture for mutual support in contending for the truth, for fellowship, and for mutual encouragement in reaching the lost. The latest meeting of the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference was held this Spring in Winter Haven, Florida, and was attended by representatives of 18 church bodies. The majority of these were national churches growing out of World Mission endeavors.

### **Forward with New Outreach Initiatives**

WELS World Missions continues to receive calls for help from numerous people around the globe. The number of these appeals has increased due to our greater exposure through existing missions as well as over the Internet. Presently exploratory initiatives are taking place in such far-flung places as Sri Lanka, China, United Arab Emirates, Haiti, Laos, Ghana, Vietnam, Spain, North Korea, and Myanmar. The national churches are themselves starting to show enthusiasm and ownership for new outreach initiatives. Many of these are expansions within existing fields, but often there is a desire to reach across national borders with the Gospel. The Puerto Rico church is reaching out to Antigua. The Malawi church wants to do outreach in Mozambique. The church in Hong Kong is considering serving Cantonese-speaking Chinese in Toronto.

The future continues to be bright with unlimited possibilities for worldwide Gospel proclamation. Our big challenge will be how to get as much of it done as possible with the resources that are available to us. The future of worldwide outreach will call for ongoing research, experimentation, and risk taking. For the sake of the Gospel the BWM is willing to pursue such pathways. Included in a possible vision for the future are such things as:

- Establishing Cost-Effective International Schools Overseas
- Global Radio Broadcasting
- Establishing Cross-cultural Training Centers in the U.S.
- Worldwide Broadcasting via Satellite

Training International Student Converts for Ministry in their Homeland  
Establishing Virtual Learning Centers for Long Distance Training  
A Unified Mission Division  
Providing Second Living Language Opportunities within our Ministerial Training Program  
A Vast Integration of ESI, and EFL into our Church Structures  
Establishing a Flexible System of Ministerial Training for Ethnic  
Synod-wide Acceptance of a Variety of Forms of Ministry  
Entrance into Less Accessible Countries through Refined Humanitarian Aid Programs  
Development of Guided Self-Study Instructional Materials  
Regular Cross-cultural Exposure for all Ministerial Students

The World Mission team eagerly awaits the opportunity to join in thanking our Lord during the *Forward in Christ* anniversary observance for the many blessings his Gospel has brought around the world. We are encouraging some form of participation in this celebration by all the national churches of our world fields. We are confident that Jesus Christ who “is the same yesterday, today, and forever” will continue to bless our World Mission efforts in the future. In Him we move forward.