

**MISSIONS IN THE MAKING:
MEXICO AND MEDELLIN**

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If you were starting a business from square one, from the ground up, an important factor you would have to consider would be making arrangements for the facilities of this business. One option you would have for acquiring factory space, office space and a warehouse would be to buy a building, possibly one that had served a purpose similar to yours, and renovate this building to suit your needs. Another option would be to build a new facility, planning and designing everything yourself. You could see how each way would have its advantages and disadvantages.

An existing building would probably be cheaper and could allow you to get your operation into full swing sooner. However, you might be stuck with some problems in the renovation or maintenance that go along with taking over an existing structure.

If you built from scratch, you could design everything just how you wanted it and could be sure that every inch served your purposes nicely. This way would probably take more time and money, however.

The illustration of one facet of starting a business could be used and applied in doing mission work in our Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. The illustration is not used to talk about how to acquire physical church buildings, but how to start a whole mission field in the first place. Would it be better when beginning mission work to inherit a mission field or to start one from scratch?

Inheriting the mission field could be compared to buying the building to start a business. It would seem that many things would be in place already. Does that mean, however, that some underlying problems may already be in place as well?

Starting a mission field from scratch is like building yourself. Just as the builder has more control when he builds, so our synod would have more control over a mission field it had started from scratch. But would this method take longer and be more expensive to our synod in the long run?

This balance, this struggle, is what this paper will attempt to examine, not by coming up with dogmatic rules from the Scripture or by devising canon law. Rather this essay will look at this balance by undertaking a case study and comparing the beginnings of two different foreign mission fields in our synod, the work in and around Mexico City, Mexico and the work in and around Medellín, Colombia.

In the case of the mission work in Mexico, our synod in essence inherited a church, while in Colombia our synod began the work from scratch. It is the opinion of this author that in comparing these two particular cases, it was better for our synod when it started from scratch.

The advantages will be examined in three areas. One is control of the mother church in leading the mission field to the goal of self support. Here the inherited church, Mexico, would seem to have the advantage because many things would be in place: buildings, congregations, etc. However, in this instance the mother church had to take more control as time went on because there were no buildings and the congregations lacked training in several areas. In fact WELS by inheriting a church inherited a large financial burden.

The second advantage the start-from-scratch mission of Colombia enjoyed was in the area of worker training. Here the mission field which started from scratch could better establish a

uniform policy and curriculum as well as better train incoming workers.

A third advantage came in dealing with struggles confronting these young churches. In Mexico the national workers caused many struggles, most of which were avoided in Colombia. The one common factor to both mission fields was the struggle with Catholic influences, which exerted themselves even in the government.

But before delving into the thesis itself, it would be good to be reminded of the goal of all mission work. Looking at this briefly will help the reader evaluate which was the better way to do mission work in this case.

The first, primary and absolute goal of all mission work must be the glorification of God by making disciples of all nations, using the Means of Grace to win the lost and strengthen the believers. This purpose is so clearly stated in Matthew 28:19 and Mark 16 that no other elaboration is necessary. This goal must be always first and foremost in the minds of those doing the mission work for it to have any validity before God.

This goal was carried out earnestly and faithfully by both of these missions. In this first, primary goal then, there can be no advantage given to the work inherited in Mexico or the work begun from scratch in Colombia.

It is in the secondary goal of mission work on which this essay will focus. This goal, which God has neither commanded nor forbidden, has been established by our synod in all its foreign mission work. That goal is the three 'selfs.'

When WELS does mission work it tries to move the mission field to be self-governing,

self-supporting and self-propagating. Which method of mission work will better carry out this goal which is not divinely given? It is the author's opinion that in this case starting a church from scratch in Colombia better promoted these goals more quickly. This is not to say that Mexico made no progress or that the inheritance of a church hindered these goals. Instead it says that in this particular instance, Colombia was able to move toward these three 'selfs' in a smoother manner.

THE EARLY MOVE TOWARD THE THREE 'SELFS' IN MEXICO

One way our synod's mission in Colombia moved toward the three 'selfs' more smoothly was in the area of dealing with the mother church. It may seem that the inherited church of Mexico would have many things in place such as buildings, congregations and national pastors which would allow it to move more easily toward self-support. However, as will be shown, the initial extra control WELS exerted in Colombia permitted WELS to have less control in the long run.

First we will look at how the mission work in Mexico began and how its early relations with WELS fared. Keep in mind that this essay will not examine WELS work in Juarez, Mexico, for that work was really an extension of home mission work in El Paso, Texas. Some of the men from that area play a part, but the work in that city will not be covered. The work in Mexico City which was delegated to our synod's World Mission Board and specifically to the Latin American Committee is all that is here under discussion.

The work of inheriting a church began rather simply, almost meekly. A Mexican national pastor by the name of David Orea Luna wrote

to the WELS president at that time, Oscar J. Naumann. In his letter Dr. Luna explained that he was the “president of the Mexican Lutheran Church, a group of 15 congregations in the republic of Mexico affiliated with the TALC.”ⁱ In this letter from November of 1964, Dr. Luna also stated that he was troubled by the ecumenical and unionistic drift he saw the ALC taking. He said he had heard of WELS and their firm stance on Lutheran teaching and wanted some more information about exactly what WELS taught. President Naumann was glad to reply with the request and he soon discovered what a fine, confessional pastor Dr. Luna truly was.

Even in early letters the strength and tenacity by which Dr. Luna held to the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions were evident. As the reader has a chance to sample Dr. Luna’s letters, keep in mind that he spoke English as his second language. Often the grammar is not precise nor the sentences crafted just so, but his point is clear. He wrote on December 5, 1964, “Unfortunately, in this time we have seen certain trend, among the Lutheran theologians, toward the modernism and ecumenism. I wonder what would be the attitude of Dr. Luther, if he awake and could hear what the Lutheran theologians are teaching.”

The conviction which Dr. Luna showed and his adherence to the truth are themes which will run throughout the early history of our synod’s work in Mexico. Every time the work in Mexico is mentioned, Dr. Luna’s name cannot be long in coming. He is an example both in how he handled himself, and in how he attracted others to the truth. Edgar Hoenecke, the Executive Secretary of World Missions for

WELS at that time, had this to say about Dr. Luna:

It is a fact that Orea Luna has a record of having motivated fifteen young men whom he gained for the Lutheran Church from Roman Catholicism to secure religious training at the Lutheran Bible Institute in Texas and that these men are among the key men of his present group ... Pastor David Orea Luna IS A SUCCESSFUL MISSIONARY who has demonstrated his ability under God ... (he is) a serious, dedicated, Lutheran pastor.ⁱⁱ

What a blessing this man was to this church and to our synod! If the account of Pastor Luna would be all of the story, it certainly would have been better to do mission work by inheriting a church, for Pastor Luna was a model pastor in many respects.

However, the history of the Mexican church is not only about Pastor Luna. There is the important question of how WELS would fund this mission work. One might expect that in an established church such as the one of which Pastor Luna was in charge, support from the mother church would not be much of an issue, as the people in the mission field could largely support the work themselves. This was sadly not the case, however.

As WELS inherited many blessings from this church, such as a man like Pastor Luna, so WELS also inherited the problems of this church, one of which was little stewardship training and almost the expectation that the mother church would support the work entirely. Pastor Harold Essmann, the Chairman of the WELS executive committee for Latin American Missions, wrote about this. He said, “The people of the congregations in Mexico must be educated to support the work.”ⁱⁱⁱ He also intimated in this same letter that the congregation which Pastor Luna served, who

also came with him into WELS, had supported the work of the church very little in their previous affiliation.

Another reason it was difficult for WELS to support the work at first was that Pastor Luna and his congregation broke fellowship with their previous church body quite suddenly, and so for a time the work could not be fully endorsed by anyone in WELS or supported whole-heartedly without approval from a synod convention.

As was earlier stated, Pastor Luna first corresponded with President Naumann in 1964, but then there was a three year lapse, until 1967, before there was further correspondence. Luna and his group then decided to break ties in 1968, leaving about one year before the synod as a whole could vote on whether or not to expand its mission work into Mexico.

It was certainly a blessing that Pastor Luna and another Pastor, David Chichia Gonzalez, were accepted as pastors of WELS based on a colloquy held between March 17 and March 21, 1968. However, that brought up the important issue of how to fund the work. The result of the intensive colloquy, which covered a wide range of topics, was "complete agreement of doctrine and practice of these two pastors and the WELS,"^{iv} but how would the salaries of these men be paid when the synod had yet to approve the mission work?

At first the author's pessimism may seem unwarranted. Why should it be a problem to accept a congregation into fellowship? Because by doing so money was required. This was true partly because the congregation Pastor Luna brought with him had not been properly trained in stewardship and partly because when these believers broke with their previous church, their buildings and many materials and other

things remained with the previous church, not with the members.

In fact Pastor Luna's original 'wish list' of necessities for his people came to a cost of over \$100,000 in American currency for the purchase of land, building of chapels, etc. This request was made at a time when the synod's mission funds were taxed to the limit with all kinds of other projects. Yet the synod laid out \$60,000 of extra-budgetary funds for the purchase of a house and chapel.^v

Right from the start this group was heavily dependant on WELS financially. This was not a good start in the move toward independence. Appendix A will show that even though the Mexican group was larger in its formative years, it contributed less money to the work than did the Columbian church.

The huge, up-front expenditure of money requested caused several WELS leaders to shy away from inheriting a church. While they wished to encourage Pastors Luna, Chichia and their flocks for taking a decisive stand for the truth, Pastor Hoenecke wrote on May 21 of 1968, urging Pastor Luna to cut down the cost. While encouragement was given that their worst battle was over, there was concern. "I do not want to price the Mexican work out of our ability to support it," Pastor Hoenecke wrote one day later. While Hoenecke could write and strengthen Pastor Luna that God would bless Pastor Luna abundantly, he also had to confess to Pastor Luna that between conventions it was tough to procure funds from the synodical budget.

In was in this rough year before synodical approval that it first became apparent that inheriting a church may not be the best way to do mission work. This was especially true given the circumstances by which this group

came into our synod. Pastor Hoenecke wrote on three separate occasions, in very close chronological proximity reminding other WELS leaders not to spoil the Mexican group financially for fear of undermining the indigenous church policy of WELS. He also wrote that the high cost and relatively large facilities Pastor Luna first requested, as well as a second request he submitted which was about half the cost, did not fill WELS leaders with complete confidence in the judgment of the Mexican men. Pastor Hoenecke also stated in writing, on July 11, 1968, "This is not the ideal way for us to enter a new mission field."

Yet in spite of these initial difficulties, the Lord's work was accomplished and these flocks with their shepherds entered our synod as a mission field at the 1969 synod convention and were authorized funding. In fact the account of how these people took a stand for God's Word so moved the convention that it was decided to use the offering from one of the special services to support this new mission field.

Other believers who showed their thanks to God with financial support soon followed. Schools gave their mission offerings to this new arm of synod work. Pastor Essmann himself gave of his own personal funds to further the mission work. But the most heart-warming, touching story involves not a large amount of money, but a large amount of love.

A lady who had been invalid for over 15 years was being visited by Pastor Essmann. She had a very small income of relief payments. Yet she kept a jar into which she placed nickels and dimes to support mission work. This money was over and above her usual offerings. When she heard what had happened in Mexico, she emptied her jar and gave the entire contents to support this work. The \$9.07 she gave is an

excellent, modern day example of the widow's mite. It shows how grateful the members of WELS were to support this new mission work. It serves as a constant reminder that no matter how well subscriptions are doing or regardless of whether or not every budget item is met, God will continue to move His people to love His work and support it financially, even at the expense of great personal sacrifice.

Another lesson to be learned from the most early contacts of WELS with Pastor Luna and his group in Mexico is that God has His believers all over the world. How we are reminded of the vision John saw in Revelation where people of every nation, language and tribe gathered around the throne to praise and give thanks to the lamb. We can rejoice that God has permitted us to see a foretaste of this vision realized here on earth.

The account of this Mexican group also reminds us that there are people, where the Word has been taught, who are willing to take a stand for the truth of the Scriptures. Inheriting a church may not be the ideal way to do mission work humanly speaking, but seeing believers proclaim the truth publicly will always further the kingdom of God.

THE EARLY MOVE TOWARD THE THREE 'SELFS' IN COLOMBIA

The kingdom of God was also furthered greatly when WELS began mission work in Colombia. This work started in a much different way. There were no groups of Lutherans who separated from false teachers, no colloquies or immediate requests for building projects. Instead the work started quite literally from scratch.

The work started from the ground up, as is the way WELS usually operates when opening a new mission field. The work had its roots in a 1967 survey conducted by Theodore Sauer and his wife. The purpose of this initial survey was to cover as much ground as possible, visiting many countries for a once over lightly impression of the possibilities of WELS conducting mission work there. What is interesting is that this survey did not include Colombia. Several countries were visited, many of which bordered Colombia, yet Colombia was bypassed.

But the Lord led WELS to choose Colombia as its first mission on the continent of South America after a visit in early 1971 by Pastor Ruppert Eggert, a WELS missionary in Puerto Rico at the time and Pastor Ernest Zimdars, who was serving in El Paso, Texas. These men presented three cities as possibilities for mission work: Tucuman, Argentina; Santa Cruz, Bolivia; and Medellín, Colombia.

Medellín was chosen because it had the greatest middle class of any city in South America. While it was an objective to do mission work in all classes of society, it was hoped that this middle class would have greater opportunity to support the national mission work, allowing the three selfs to be realized more quickly. Other factors which moved WELS to choose Colombia were its great potential for urban work, its greater population concentration, as well as the greater promise of expanding the work to other areas, possibly including an expansion of the work to Indian peoples living nearby.

Once Colombia, and specifically Medellín were chosen, three WELS men began the work as expatriate missionaries. These men were Pastor Roger Sprain, Pastor Ernest Zimdars and Teacher Francis Warner. These men all shared

the view that the mission work should transfer as much as possible to the hands of the local believers as soon as possible.

This view of promoting the three selfs and working toward an indigenous church helped this mission move toward independence as quickly as possible. This view of making the church a national church, or nationalizing the church, helped the group in Colombia nationalize the church more quickly than in Mexico.

In fact as the mission in Colombia progressed under God, more and more things were put in the hands of the national people. The missionaries worked with a policy of “sound, controlled expansion from the beginning.”^{vi} By this was meant that mission work would be confined to areas where work was being done until the people of that area could be properly trained to assist in the work and take control of some aspects. This enabled the missionaries to focus their efforts and build a solid church from day one. At first this way may seem too slow, but in the long run it led to a stronger church and actually allowed certain aspects of nationalization to take place more rapidly.

Most importantly, in Colombia, largely because the work was begun with experienced, expatriate missionaries, the policies and procedures of WELS were carried out in full from the beginning. As early as 1973 a survey report from the field indicated that the national people were being used as much as possible in all phases of church work. This same report also stated that the indigenous church principles are the most effective. The “Colombian Mission Handbook” of 1974 says, “The understanding of the nationals is the key to effective mission work.” Also, less than two months after the first member of the Colombian national church, Reinaldo Gómez, was

confirmed, an offering was taken to allow the people to express their love for the Savior.

By 1975 the central congregation of Santa Trinidad (Holy Trinity) had formed visitation teams for evangelizing. And in this same year a Bible Institute was started with two students for the purpose of training national pastors. More will be told later on about the important role the training of nationals played. Pastor Sprain was happy to report on June 29, 1975, only about two years after the mission work began, "More and more we are going to be turning into advisors and consultants, allowing the nationals to do the work."^{vii}

It is clear from the above that the men working in the field had a clear grasp of the financial situation of WELS and did not carry the baggage of prior connections with a different church body. Even though WELS had more control over the work at first and this apparently would hinder a group from promoting the three selfs as quickly, experience showed that the group in Colombia suffered fewer setbacks on the road to nationalization.

With a dedicated and faithful group of missionaries applying indigenous church principles as they spread the Good News about Jesus Christ, the influence of WELS became less and less. In Mexico things began so quickly. Instantly there were two pastors with congregations. It was difficult to instill in this group the need to move away from the control of the mother church. If a strong national church is to be achieved, this particular case would seem to point to the mother church exerting more influence at first, rather than inheriting a church who may not agree with or be aware of what the mother church is trying to accomplish as far as nationalization.

THE IMPORTANCE OF TRAINING NATIONAL PASTORS

In addition to nationalization a very important aspect to consider is that of training national pastors. This is an area which ties right in with the move toward nationalization and is a very good barometer of how the national church is progressing in the movement toward becoming an indigenous church. The importance of training national pastors can hardly be underestimated. Both WELS and the national people realized this. It is therefore not surprising that a program for training national pastors began almost immediately in both Mexico and Colombia.

In the area of training national pastors, it would seem abundantly clear that inheriting a church body would have numerous advantages. The work in Mexico began with two national pastors. And more pastors were ready to come on board in a short time. In Colombia national pastors had to rise through the ranks, so to speak. That means that first people from the area of the mission work had to be converted by the power of the Holy Spirit, be moved to train for the ministry, and then acquire the necessary training. One can see how the latter process would be much more costly, both in terms of time and money.

While this is true, the actual experience of these mission fields showed something a little different. While in Mexico there were more national pastors right from the start and the men who came overcame great personal obstacles to join WELS fellowship, there were some sticky issues involved before these men could enter our fellowship and there was not much time for them to be tested and viewed in action before they began serving. In Colombia on the other hand, the time it took for the men to be trained was a chance for them to get

valuable

value service experience and show their commitment not only to the Lord, but to the ministry as well.

THE TRAINING OF NATIONAL PASTORS IN MEXICO

Now Mexico will be looked at more in depth. The need for national pastors in Mexico was an absolute necessity at the time, for the government did not allow expatriate missionaries. In this way it is plain to see how God blessed WELS by providing national pastors to carry on the work. When WELS pastors first visited Mexico to interview Dr. Luna and David Chichia Gonzalez, they gave thanks to God that a group from within Mexico wished to join WELS, for "Mexican law required nationals as pastors of churches."^{viii}

The initial contact and colloquy were causes for much rejoicing, both for WELS and for Pastors Luna and Gonzalez. The result of this colloquy was "complete agreement of doctrine and practice of these two pastors with the WELS."^{ix}

The colloquy committee and the Mexican pastors took this colloquy very seriously, delving into very deep theological issues, involving both doctrine and practice. Not only did the WELS pastors present question the two Mexican men about creation and the lodges, they also went into such things as the millennium and the intuitu fidei controversy.

The Mexican men did not merely answer questions, they also asked about certain topics to be sure that they were joining a church body which professed the truth publicly. Pastor Luna specifically asked why the WELS pamphlet "This We Believe" made no reference to the pope as the antichrist. It was only after being

assured that WELS took this stance that he was willing to join fellowship. Truly these were men well-grounded in the Scriptures and in theology which is distinctively Lutheran.

After the colloquy was finished, Pastors Luna and Chichia officially terminated their relationships with the American Lutheran Church (ALC) and its affiliated body, the Mexican Lutheran Church (MLC). The WELS committee was happy to report "our hearts ought to surge in a prayer of thanksgiving to our gracious Heavenly Father."^x

But these two men were not the only national pastors who wished to leave other synods and join WELS. This was largely due to the influence and work of Pastor Luna himself. Not only was he a most confessional man, willing to give up all for the truth as was mentioned earlier, he also had a great gift for attracting other men into the ministry. Pastor Hoenecke was very impressed with Pastor Luna's track record. The reader will recall the earlier quote taken from one of Pastor Hoenecke's letters regarding this matter.

Pastor Luna also attracted more national workers to WELS after his colloquy was received favorably. While these men do not play as big a role in the mission work as Pastor Luna did, they are nevertheless worthy of mention, if for no other reason than that they overcame great personal obstacles to join our fellowship.

One such man was Pastor Carlos Avendaño. This man was serving as a pastor in the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod but wanted to leave because he saw the liberal teachings that church body was permitting. He resigned from that synod on October 3, 1969 and studied under pastor Luna for two months until his colloquy.

He, more than any man, endured much earthly difficulty to enter fellowship with WELS. Pastor Avendaño was offered bribes by LC - MS pastors to remain in their fellowship. He was also offered a higher salary not to leave. When this was unsuccessful, the pastors then tried to steal the souls with whom Pastor Avendaño was working. He, along with Pastor Luna, was called an "out-dated biblicist, a fanatic, and an enemy of the fraternal love among Lutherans."^{xi}

But all these slanderous accusations and downright unchristian attempts to dissuade Pastor Avendaño from leaving the LC - MS were unsuccessful. Not only that, but they served to strengthen his conviction that his former church body was not in possession of the truth and convinced Pastor Luna that Pastor Avendaño was a valuable man who was committed to true, confessional Lutheranism.

Several other Mexican men came onto the scene and impressed many people. Speaking of Pastors Avendaño, Vincente Chavez and Felipe Luna Garcia, the visiting WELS pastors said, "These men certainly could form the foundation of a strong, well-knit, Mexican Lutheran Church body."^{xii} Another WELS pastor also said of Avendaño and Felipe Garcia that they were men of sound faith and deep knowledge. This pastor found them to be in agreement with WELS and saw no reason why they should be prevented from serving as pastors. What a blessing the Lord gave to the church in Mexico and to WELS through these national men who left churches to join our fellowship.

Not all was entirely well with the situation, however. There were some intrinsic problems which were caused by inheriting several national workers in such a short time. One is that many of these men were serving in other

church bodies at the time they requested entrance into WELS fellowship. Since the ministry was their call and their livelihood, it was often difficult for them to present themselves with no strings attached. Unfortunately it happened more than once that these men continued to serve in other Lutheran and even in other Protestant churches while they waited for a colloquy. Others kept their positions as sort of a 'Plan B' if they did not agree with Lutheran teachings. One can surely see how this was not the best situation.

Another difficulty arose in the area of training these men. It is true that often times not much training was required, as these were men well-versed in Scripture and able to work in the original languages of the Bible. But still these men usually needed to study under Pastor Luna at least for some time before they could be declared ready for colloquy. The length of time these men studied was rarely the same and the topics to be covered also varied greatly from man to man, making the teaching difficult for Pastor Luna. One can imagine how tough it would be for our Seminary in Mequon to admit men on an individual basis, for varying amounts of time, to study different subjects. This is done to some degree with colloquy students, but is the exception, not the rule. In Mexico this individualized set-up was the norm.

Another sticky issue that had to be dealt with was the issue of paying these men when they entered service. Because there was almost a glut of workers at times, especially in the beginning, it became difficult to support the work of these men financially without burdening WELS or the national church. WELS and the believers in Mexico gave thanks for these men and the stance they took, but the means to pay their salaries was not always such an easy matter.

An additional question which had to be answered was that of subsidy to those studying to be national pastors. Should men studying for the ministry receive financial help or not? As these men were usually older, married students who had children, the issue of subsidies came up right away.

On the one side were the arguments that these men could show their sincerity and willingness to enter the ministry by supporting themselves while studying. On the other side were the realities that short-term, part-time work was not readily available. This was coupled with the fact that many of these men studied for only a short period. In such instances it made more sense to have the men study more intensely and be ready for the ministry sooner.

In the final analysis, a report adopted June 16, 1970 stated that it would be necessary to provide student aid for those students studying at the Seminary. These sticky issues of subsidies, individualized study programs and serving in other churches make it difficult to say if inheriting a church body along with several national pastors in a short time is always the best way to go.

THE TRAINING OF NATIONAL PASTORS IN COLOMBIA

In Colombia the situation was very different. There was still the need for national pastors to be sure. Missionary Sprain commented on February 4, 1975, regarding this fact. He said, "We see how practically every other Protestant church here is suffering because of a lack of well-trained clergy." No church can stand on its own unless some of its own people serve as the spiritual overseers. Yet the church in Colombia went about training these national pastors in a very different way, a difference

that was due in large part to how the mission work began.

Because the work began from scratch, so to speak, the men who were trained for the ministry were ones who came to faith through the means of grace into the WELS - affiliated church and who started and ended their studies under WELS missionaries. This different way of training and acquiring national pastors had advantages and disadvantages.

One advantage that the work in Colombia enjoyed over the work in Mexico was the time they had to train the men before they entered the public ministry. It could be seen as a disadvantage in that it took longer to get men trained and out into the field. Actually, however, the length of time for training served to allow the men opportunities to study the Word more in depth as well as to prove their commitment to serving in the ministry.

Another advantage was that policies regarding training could be established right from the start. Things did not have to be done so much on a case by case basis as happened in Mexico.

For example, the missionaries to Colombia, in consultation with the national members could very early up set up the policy that "the students (of the Bible Institute and Seminary) must be from our Lutheran Congregations without exceptions."^{xiii} This policy was established early on in the mission work and laid down an important guideline, stating clearly the specific nature and purpose of the schools which would be established. This principle could not ensure that every man who entered the program of study would complete it with flying colors, but it could ensure that those who did study would come with no strings attached.

Another policy it could establish was a policy regarding subsidies to students. Concerns were raised regarding the dangerous precedent this might set. In spite of this, the church in Colombia came to the same decision as the church in Mexico: it decided to give subsidies to those studying for the ministry. The reasons were quite similar. It was difficult to find part-time work in Colombia and the church wished to help make it possible for students to study for the ministry, especially for married students with families.

But even a similar policy was carried out in a different way. In Colombia the policy was established at an early time when it could be carried on in a more orderly manner. Already on March 16, 1975, a scholarship fund for the Bible Institute (pre-seminary) level of study was established. The national church contributed to this fund right from the beginning, making it their school and making the men their pastors.

One such man who entered the ministry according to these guidelines was Omar Ortiz. His story is quite similar to that of Martin Luther himself. Omar Ortiz had been a monk in the Catholic church when he began to study the works of Luther. God used this study to open his eyes to the truth. Omar then left his monastic order. He studied under a Presbyterian pastor for a time, but was never really convinced.

When WELS entered Medellín, he was quick to convert. It may seem that this would put him in the same boat as some of the Mexican men referred to earlier, but that was not the case. He had completely severed ties with any other church before coming to WELS and even the Presbyterian pastor who had worked with him had to admit that Omar was “more Lutheran than anything else.”^{xiv}

This man who was more Lutheran than anything else became a great asset to the work of WELS in Colombia. Every reference made about him is positive. He was spoken of as a man with good abilities, a man who was faithful in class attendance and preparation, a man who didn't ask about money, a man who made his own decisions. It was reported that his first sermon and other early church work were well done. Without question this man was a gift from God to the church in Colombia. Still, the policies established helped this man be as good and as faithful a servant as he could be.

A disadvantage to starting the work of training national pastors from scratch was the lack of materials for teaching. Two documents from 1977, the “Plan of Action” and the “Colombian Mission Handbook” both lament the urgent need for materials. The missionaries regret that they must translate and prepare materials as they go, barely staying ahead of the class due to the time required and the press of other duties.

It might be thought that other WELS fields such as Mexico might be of help here, but this was not the case to a large degree. For one thing, as was stated earlier, the work in Mexico took place mostly on an individual, case by case, basis. Much of the training was not very lengthy, but only served to prepare men for colloquy. For these reasons not many Seminary and pre-Seminary materials had been developed in the Mexican mission field. The work in Puerto Rico had been going on for some time as well, yet they had not had the need to write materials, as practically no nationals had studied for the ministry.

There was training of national pastors occurring in Juarez, Mexico in the Spanish language, but it was decided by the

missionaries and nationals not to use this avenue. This was decided because there was fear that men who went to Mexico for several years of study would lose much of their Colombian culture. This would make them strangers to the Colombian people and make the Colombian people strange to them when they returned ready for service. Pastor Hoenecke noticed this feeling of the Colombian missionaries and commented, "I was interested to note that you feel the best way to bring the gospel to these people would be to train workers at Medellín to return to their people."^{xv} Pastor Hoenecke went on to state in the same letter that that may be the best way to train workers.

To an American it may seem strange that a Colombian trained in Mexico would lose his culture, for most Americans have a tendency to lump all Spanish-speaking people under one title such as Hispanic or Latino. To the Spanish-speaking person this is not the case. Puerto Ricans consider themselves as different from Mexicans as they consider themselves different from Americans. Differences in dialects allow native Spanish speakers to tell the country of origin of others simply by greeting them and asking, "How are you?"

The Colombian church was sort of in a pickle in the area of worker training. Without materials to train the men, it would be a time-consuming task to train national pastors, but they had to take the time for they could not rely on other fields or sending their men away for training.

In spite of these difficulties, an excellent program was up and running quite quickly. Constantly staying one step ahead, and with all the missionaries teaching some classes, a complete worker training system was

developed. First the Bible Institute level was established. Generally speaking, this program was more practical than our current WELS pre-seminary program at MLC and in many cases offered simpler classes. This is so because those training for the ministry were at the same time actively involved in work at a local congregation. This explains why many of the classes were more practical. Also it would be almost impossible that those training would have grown up with the blessings of Christian day school and Lutheran high school training. This explains why the classes were of a simpler nature in many cases.

The statement that some of the Bible Institute classes were simpler is meant in no way as a degradation of the studies. A perusal of even a few pages of the Seminary level dogmatics notes reveals that they are on par with what is studied at the Seminary in Mequon, in fact the notes used in Colombia were an exact translation of the class notes used in Mequon to this day.

A schedule of the Seminary level classes appears in Appendix B. This schedule is a translation from a schedule which was printed in Spanish. Some of the course titles have been translated to reflect current Mequon titles. The training of nationals was in no way haphazard or shoddy. The missionaries realized what important work this was and did a fine job.

STRUGGLES WITH COLOMBIAN NATIONAL PASTORS

They did such a fine job, in fact, that there were, by the grace of God, very few problems with the national workers. Up to this point, the discussion has focused primarily on principles and objectives in worker training, without

looking at how the men who were taught using these principles and objectives did in actual service to the Lord's Church. In Colombia it appears that there were very few problems with those actually trained. Whether this was due to the way workers were trained or not is difficult to say, but it would be safe to assume that the policies in Colombia contributed to the ease with which worker training was carried on and to the fine service of the men who were trained.

An important disclaimer must be made here. Due to the limited time frame of this case study, there are not many cases of individual students participating in the worker training program. Therefore not many cases can be examined. But the cases which do appear are very positive for the most part. It seems that by the grace of God, the missionaries to Colombia put sound principles in place and determined to train the students well, even if this would be more time-consuming up front. It appears that by this method they were able to get to know the students well and allow the students an opportunity to prove themselves through study and service to the church.

This is not to say that there were no difficulties in worker training. The troubles in establishing the course have already been documented, so they need not be discussed any further here. There were also a limited number of troubles with individual students who entered the worker training program.

One student who had troubles was Hugo Benitez Tobon. He began studying at the Bible Institute, but was asked to discontinue his studies because he had missed two weeks of classes due to family difficulties. He also had troubles attending classes because he had found better employment which did not permit him the time to do the Bible Institute work. It

was not a matter of unfaithfulness, false doctrine or scandalous lifestyle, but rather a matter of circumstances.

Yet even such a case as Hugo Benitez Tobon was the exception, not the rule. One student discontinuing studies did not mean the end of worker training. Also the fact that he was not far along brought no disgrace to the gospel or to the area congregations. Even in difficulties the value of training the churches' own members thoroughly can be seen.

But such difficulties were few and far between. Most reports state things like, "The students are doing well."^{xvi} In fact several students who studied at the Bible Institute had the pleasure of instructing women in the basics of Christianity. In some cases these women became the wives of some of the students. The Lord richly blessed worker training in Colombia.

STRUGGLES WITH NATIONAL WORKERS AND THOSE IN WORKER TRAINING IN MEXICO

The Lord also blessed the worker training in Mexico, but here there were far more difficulties with those being trained and with those who had already entered into full-time service of the Mexican church. What follows will summarize some of the difficulties that occurred with the national workers in the Mexican church. The author's intent in what follows is not to disregard the eighth commandment or cast a bad light on the Mexican church or insinuate that these men were not sincere servants of the Savior. The purpose is rather to show how the Lord blessed this work in spite of difficulties and guided the church through difficult times.

Also for the purpose of this case study, it may be valuable for the reader to consider if the problems mentioned could have been avoided by at least some degree through a different system of training workers. One can only wonder if the problems would have been less if the men had been trained for a longer time. To put it another way, is it better to inherit a church or do mission work from scratch? In this area of worker training it appears that it was better to do work from scratch.

One difficulty encountered in the work in Mexico was the almost constant loss of workers. Far too often there appear reports about men in the ministry or men studying for the ministry who had trouble carrying out their pastoral duties.

One man with whom there were difficulties was Pastor Chichia. He was mentioned previously as the man who was colloquized with Pastor Luna at the very beginning. He was one of the first men in Mexico to enter fellowship with WELS. Yet by the year 1970, Pastor Luna had this to say, "I am told that Pastor Chichia had neglected the pastoral activities and had not shown great interest for the erecting of the chapel."^{xvii} Pastor Luna related that he tried to encourage Pastor Chichia to work more faithfully but was still very concerned about this problem.

This problem also caused concern in the states. Pastor Hoenecke wrote in response to Luna's letter, "Your problem with Pastor Chichia seems to be a serious one of a lack of independent responsibility on the part of the young man. In my judgment, Pastor Chichia works best under almost direct supervision."^{xviii}

This did not appear to be an isolated incident or a simple case of temporary discouragement on the part of Pastor Chichia. Pastor Luna had

written a month before this that Pastor Chichia really needed to be under close supervision to be sure that he carried out his duties with the proper amount of zeal and faithfulness. Also, just the fact that Pastor Luna would put something down in official correspondence shows that it was a serious problem.

Sadly, this is not the only case of having trouble with a national worker. There were troubles with those studying for the ministry as well. As mentioned earlier, cases of problems with students are not as detrimental to the work of the gospel and are practically unavoidable, especially in the case of younger people. However, the cases of problems in Mexico were of a more serious nature than employment or family troubles.

One man, Tomas Chavez Calleja, retired from his studies because his brother Patricio was not accepted into the program. Also, when Pastor Luna asked him to work harder, he decided he did not want to enter the ministry. What was possibly saddest about this case, beside the lack of faithfulness shown by this man, was the fact that he had been working with the Huasteca Indians. This man, who could have been a door to open a new mission field, was lost.

There were also difficulties with another student, Isidor Olvera Alarcon. He was studying for the ministry, but problems with his attitude arose. Pastor Luna writes, "He feels he superior above all the people -- doesn't work well with Church authority ... (and worse) he is not happy if he has to accept the Theology of the Lutheran Church."^{xix} In fact, studying under Pastor Luna and being taught Lutheran doctrine was making him physically ill, to the point that only one real option was left, that of asking him to resign his studies.

Obviously, cases like this one made Pastor Luna very sad. He wrote, "(It is) sad to see some come to our Church -- trying to deceive us. They don't accept our doctrines and uses, nevertheless, they hypocritically seem to accept them."^{xxx} This sad case made Pastor Luna, by his own admission, reluctant to admit others to the program of study. This is perhaps where the greatest damage was done. Yet through all this, the Lord was still guiding His Church and bringing people to faith, using the abilities of the men who were in the ministry.

Many of the men in the ministry also had problems and caused grief to the church, both in Mexico and in the states. The case of Pastor Chichia has been recorded. Another man who caused difficulties was Pastor Avendaño. His case was talked about earlier as a man who endured much persecution for leaving the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod to join our fellowship and stand up for the truth. Here a less encouraging side of Pastor Avendaño must be told.

In late 1970 the church in Mexico formally organized and elections for various officers were held. Everything seemed to go well. Pastor Luna was elected president of the new church. He seemed like the natural choice: he had been with the church from the beginning and had a good record of being confessional and a good missionary. Pastor Avendaño did not feel the same way, however, and let his feelings be known. Pastor Luna writes that Avendaño threatened to return to the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod for better pay and benefits. Pastor Avendaño also encouraged other Mexican pastors to do the same when he was not elected. He was so upset at not being elected that on December 6, 1970, he verbally presented his resignation as a pastor in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Mexico.

Pastor Avendaño filed this resignation on the grounds that Pastor Luna ruled the church almost like a pope and required the Mexican pastors to pay for business trips from their own pockets. He stated that Pastor Luna was domineering and difficult to work with. Pastor Avendaño wrote, "Luna thinks he is the pope and can't let a pastor tell him his mistakes."^{xxxi}

So where did the truth lie? Was Pastor Avendaño greedy and power-hungry or was Luna domineering and difficult to work with? As in most cases, the truth was somewhere in the middle.

Pastor Venus Winter, a Spanish-speaking WELS pastor serving in Arizona, visited the Mexican men to discover more information about the situation. His final take on this whole debacle was, "Avendaño isn't the only sinner, (but) Orea Luna has no monopoly on innocence either."^{xxxii} Pastor Winter goes on to report that there was much change in how the men sided. One day Avendaño was friend, and then enemy and on and on. He called the meeting he attended "lawless" and fraught with accusations.

Pastor Winters also noted the saddest thing about the whole situation. He wrote in the same report, "The devil is having a field day and must be gloating over that scene in the group of Christians that still have the truth."

This affair almost tore the Mexican church apart, to the point that WELS was very close to removing all support from this church body. Pastor Essmann stated this in a letter to three of the Mexican national pastors on January 26, 1971. He wrote, "If conditions do not improve, we simply cannot continue to expend our meager resources, time and energy in Mexico."

By the grace of God, none of this happened. Both men recognized their sins and asked for forgiveness from the Lord and their fellow workers. To avoid future problems, Pastor Avendaño was moved to Juarez, a great distance from the congregation Pastor Luna was serving in Mexico City. To take Avendaño's place, Felipe Luna Garcia, a young pastor who had been trained at Juarez by Pastor Zimdars, was moved to the congregation in Puebla which Pastor Avendaño had been serving. The Mexican church had troubles with its workers, but the Lord always saw them through.

One final difficulty with national workers through which the Lord guided the Mexican church in its early years was the death of Pastor Luna on March 9, 1972. While his death was a severe blow to the church, it offered a chance for the believers in Mexico and WELS people involved to reflect on the grace of God.

A note of encouragement written by then WELS President Pastor Oscar J. Naumann on this occasion is produced below to show that Pastor Luna's passing was in reality a cause for rejoicing and served as a reminder to all believers involved that the final goal of any of the Lord's work is to see sinners realize their salvation. Here is what President Naumann wrote:

Oh, His unsearchable wisdom and judgments! Our gracious God has called your faithful husband and father, your beloved pastor and teacher, and your courageous president and fearless confessor of Jesus Christ out of this vale of tears to Himself in heaven.

Once more Jesus has kept His promise, "I go and prepare a place for you, I

will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

Because we are convinced that it is our gracious Lord and Savior who has called Dr. David Orea Luna to be with Him in our Father's House in heaven, we repeat the Savior's own words to his disciples, "Let not your hearts be troubled; ye believe in God. Believe and trust also in His Son Jesus Christ." "Because He was delivered for our offenses and raised again for our justification." He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life and your beloved pastor, our brother in Christ, has now gone to be with his dear Savior in heaven.

STRUGGLES WITH CATHOLIC INFLUENCE IN MEXICO

It was this encouragement, this constant focus on the goal of seeing souls enter heaven that gave strength to both missions as they struggled with a formidable opponent, the Catholic Church. In both Mexico and Colombia, the Catholic Church has a stronger grip on people than anyone living in the religiously-free United States can imagine. Catholicism is a part of the culture and the way of life. But with God's help and armed with His Word, both of these missions were able to gather God's elect in these areas, in spite of opposition by the Catholic Church.

In Mexico opposition by the Catholic Church was written into the laws of the land. Any church building or church property had to be nationalized, meaning that it technically became the property of the national government. Churches could still be built and

used for worship places, even by non-Catholics, but the government control and hassle and red-tape made this process very difficult. Pastor Luna wrote this fact on May 27, 1968. He said, "Any property used for religious meetings would have to be nationalized."

This rule of nationalization created some big headaches for the Mexican church. Because this group of people left a previous church affiliation, everything they had stayed with the previous group. This had to be because the body they left would not want to give up their nationalized property and facilities and hymnals and books and so on. So when this group broke with their denomination, they gave up their building, their land and everything else, except the truth of God's Word.

This truth saw them through an exceedingly difficult time when they could hold no public worship services. This was again due to the laws of the land. Notice in the above statement from Pastor Luna that any property used for *religious meetings* would have to be nationalized. This meant that when they gave up their church building, they essentially gave up the right to publicly meet, for someone who offered his house as a meeting place would risk having the government nationalize that house. Pastor Luna lamented this dilemma in the same letter of May 27. He said that it would be a crime to get together with my brethren in my house. He could possibly have services, but in these 'services' they dare not sing or talk out loud. These people who held to the truth were being persecuted in their own land by other 'Christians.'

All of these rules and regulations achieved their goal of keeping people out of the true-teaching church. Pastor Luna writes, "be Protestant Minister in Mexico means be an outcast."^{xxiii}

Many members left the church Pastor Luna served during the time they could hold no public services. But there were still those who remained faithful during the time of silence as well as during the time of meeting illegally, yet in a way pleasing to God, in Pastor Luna's home.

Even when a meeting site was purchased, there was difficulty in building a chapel on it. A site for worship was purchased at Monrovia #522 in Mexico City to hold services. A church had been on the site, and the location was good, so it seemed like a good place to have services again. But the Catholic influence reared its head again.

After the site was purchased, but before the prior tenants vacated the property they literally destroyed the facility which was there. Allow a report to fill in the details of just how bad it was. "The entire rear structure ... is razed to the cement slab! ... The shack in the front corner, 9'x16', is completely wrecked beyond repair and use! The whole roof is removed ... All walls are broken ... All lead-in wiring is gone. All doors have been broken or taken away ... All water lines are gone."^{xxiv}

On top of this, the members themselves could not rebuild due to strict labor union rules, which were also controlled by Catholic interests. Some attempts the members made to clear the rubble and refuse were also unsuccessful as their work was undone as soon as they left. Imagine trying to construct a church building under such circumstances, keeping in mind that these people had not had a service in almost one year!

Catholic interests and interference also caused trouble in other areas of the work, namely the use of mass communications, as it would be called today. Pastor Luna had been publishing

a monthly paper in Spanish called El Amanecer (The Dawn), even before he entered WELS fellowship. He had hoped to continue this project as a way to report the truth. It was to be sort of a cross between Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly, with theological articles, and Northwestern Lutheran, with news articles on different mission fields. Pastor Luna was delighted to see publication resumed in March of 1970. That same year, many positive letters complimenting this paper were received from such places as Guatemala, El Salvador and even Spanish-speaking Missouri Synod pastors in the United States.

It was not long, however, before the Catholic control of Mexico made trouble, at least indirectly. First of all, it was against the law to sell subscriptions. This made financial support of the paper difficult. Secondly, the people who were doing the actual publication of El Amanecer for Pastor Luna had some internal problems at their print shop. This made many of the issues late. This was indirectly the role the Catholic Church played in distributing this paper.

The real trouble came in when Pastor Luna began to look for other, more reliable print shops. He quickly discovered that many of them were owned by Catholics. Even if these other shops would be willing to print the paper, they would charge very high prices to do so. But by the grace of God, eventually publication and printing materials were purchased for Pastor Luna so that he could take care of producing the paper on his own, with no interference.

Another area of mass communications affected by Catholic control of Mexico was radio broadcasts. The story is similar to that of El Amanecer. At first things went well. The church was able to purchase a fifteen minute

block of time on a network of stations which covered all the major cities of Mexico. For the cost of \$110 per week, it was estimated that the broadcast could reach thirty million people. A simple format including music, prayer and a sermonette was established and things seemed to be going well. Favorable letters were received, including many from people who were unchurched and very impressed by the message.

Then more troubles began. A law was passed to drop all announcements for radio broadcast. Then the block of time was pushed to 11:45 PM, hardly a prime slot. Pastor Luna reported on April 27, 1971 that these moves were made because the Catholic Church was trying to push Protestant shows off the air.

Once again, the Catholic influence made some waves, but was unable to overcome the Lord. In less than one month, the radio program was returned to its 7:45 AM slot on the radio station XEX. Many of the listeners even requested tapes of the programs they had missed while the program was on at a different time. The Lord was hard at work, testing His people with trouble, but never allowing them to be overcome.

STRUGGLES WITH CATHOLIC INFLUENCE IN COLOMBIA

The Lord was also hard at work in Colombia, making sure His people there not be overcome by the roadblocks of the Catholic Church. For all the differences between how these two missions started, this is one thing they had in common. The church which was inherited and the church which was started from scratch both had to deal with a strong Catholic influence.

In Colombia this influence was very evident, both on individuals and through the government. Pastor Strackbein, an expatriate missionary who arrived in 1981, wrote in his initial reaction to Colombia, "If a man here by the power of the Holy Spirit turns to Christ alone as His Savior and renounces his former worshiping of Mary and subservience to the Pope, he automatically becomes an outcast to society."^{xxv} Pastor Strackbein said this in connection with one particular man, Don Alfonso, who was not officially a member of the Lutheran Church. Yet because he was attending services he was persecuted and his business of making and selling shoes had vanished almost entirely.

The Catholic Church also used more official means to make the work difficult. Reports from the missionaries in 1978 state that in one area of the work, Miramar, Catholic Seminary students entered the area the missionaries were working and tried to combat the work by showing Bible filmstrips. It seems that this was done only after the WELS missionaries had been working in the area for a while. The Catholic Church was doing what it could to make life difficult for the Lutherans, even to the point of physical abuse.^{xxvi}

The "Colombian Mission Handbook," written by the WELS missionaries in 1977 as a guide to help incoming missionaries, told a similar story. It reported that 95% of the people professed to be Roman Catholic. There was persecution of Protestant ministers, who were unable to legally perform marriages in Colombia. "It is the only church the people have known," this report stated. Generation upon generation had grown up Catholic and overcoming this influence would not be easy, but with the power of God it would be possible. The final conclusion which this report drew is that for all practical purposes the

Roman Catholic Church was the state church.

As the state church, the Roman Catholics were able to use the government to make the work in Colombia difficult at times. This was especially true in the area of acquiring visas. Almost every time a new or additional worker visa was applied for, there was some kind of difficulty. One man waited almost his entire vicar year to acquire a visa. These struggles led the missionaries to report that the difficulty in getting workers increased annually.

The visa question came to some kind of resolution in January 1979, when a visa for a fifth expatriate missionary was denied, but then reconsidered. The final policy which the Colombian government established for WELS mission work was that five expatriate workers would be allowed, but no more. In the final analysis this was a blessing for the mission work because it caused the national church to take more of a lead role. All things work together for good, the Lord once again reminded them.

Warnings were also given to incoming missionaries that they should be very careful to comply with special laws that apply to foreign residence in Colombia. One of these special laws required that foreign residents always carry a special identification book with them. The missionaries also wondered out loud how much control the government would want to exercise over the Bible Institute and Seminary. It was finally decided that a license should be acquired to operate the Bible Institute, just to prevent any governmental difficulties later on. Every step of the way, the Catholic church and its influence in the government had to be considered.

Having considered the influence of the Catholic Church in Colombia, all in all the government

really hampered the work very little. A survey report in 1973 gave thanks to God that while other church groups were having trouble with the government, WELS really was not. Another report on the work in Colombia from 1976 was elated to state that WELS was the only church to be approved by the government after filling out an extensive questionnaire. One must finally give the glory and thanks for this special treatment to the Lord. In Colombia as in Mexico, the Catholic Church exerted its influence and flexed its muscles, at times using the government as its agent to make mission work difficult. In the end, however, it was the Lord's purpose of gathering His elect which prevailed.

CONCLUSION

Is it better to inherit a church or to start one from scratch? Remembering that the goal of all mission work is to glorify God, either one of these ways would be acceptable. Remembering that the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod has established as a secondary purpose of mission work to move toward self-governing, self-propagating and self-supporting, inheriting a church may seem to be the better way. However, in this particular case study, comparing the beginnings of WELS mission work in Mexico and Colombia, this was not the case.

It would seem that one would inherit much good by inheriting a church, such as congregations, buildings etc., things that would help toward self-support. And WELS inherited

much good from the work in Mexico, particularly a confessional church body under the guidance of Pastor David Orea Luna. In this case, however, much of the inherited good was countered by some problems which were also inherited. Buildings and materials were lost to Mexican rules of nationalization. The people were not well-trained in stewardship and depended heavily on WELS for financial support. Those national pastors who came from a different church often came with baggage attached and with little loyalty and respect for the other workers and the mother church.

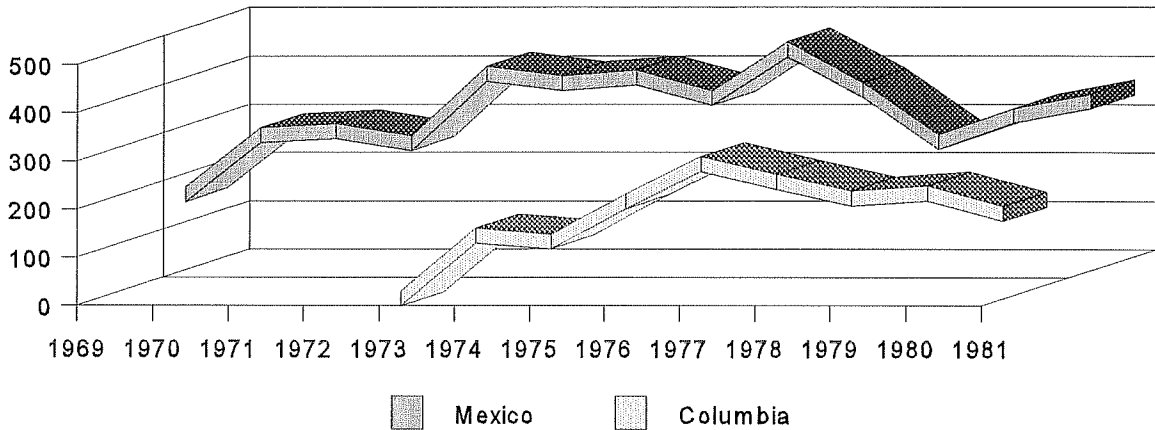
With the work in Colombia, on the other hand, there were no problems to inherit, as the church was started from scratch. Missionaries who understood WELS' objectives in mission work were on the scene from the beginning. This prevented many of the setbacks in the move to nationalization which the Mexican church encountered. Also national workers could be taken from the membership and trained thoroughly. This allowed time for them to prove their faithfulness. Training in this way was more costly in terms of time and money, but in the long run was the better way to operate and actually led to more things being controlled by the nationals sooner.

But in spite of all the debate and all the difficulties in doing mission work anywhere, one thing needs to be kept in mind: the Lord is the Lord of all and He richly blesses all who call on His name, whether that be in mission work or anywhere else. To Him alone be the glory!

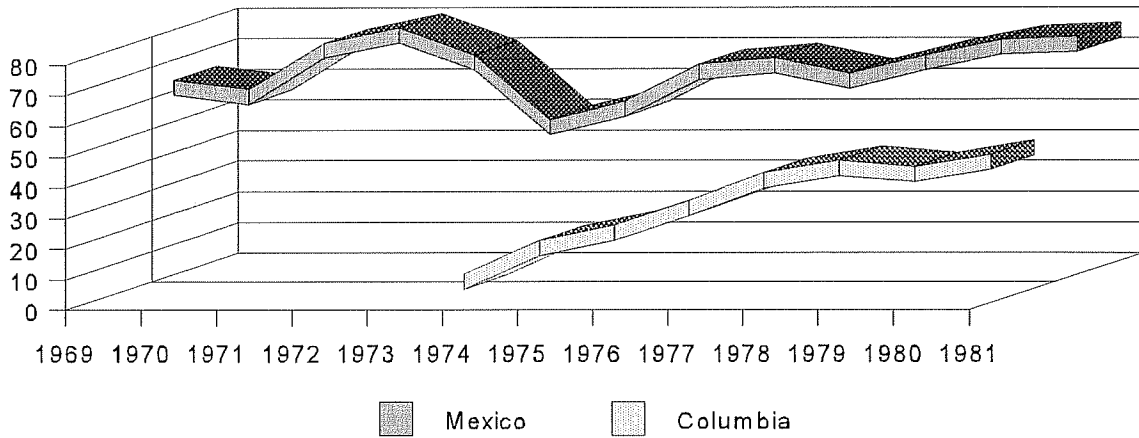
APPENDIX A: SUMMARY STATISTICS FOR THE MISSION WORK

Mexico:	Souls under our care	Communicants	Contributions
1969	157	61	N/A
1970	280	58	438
1971	288	73	542
1972	263	78	1,344
1973	407	69	1,977
1974	388	48	1,786
1975	399	54	1,815
1976	357	66	1,434
1977	457	68	1,473
1978	373	63	1,732
1979	266	69	2,111
1980	320	74	2,512
1981	350	75	2,910
Colombia:			
1974	130	7	1,148
1975	118	18	1,950
1976	201	23	2,020
1977	278	31	2,767
1978	242	40	3,022
1979	208	44	3,897
1980	218	42	3,207
1981	176	46	3,359

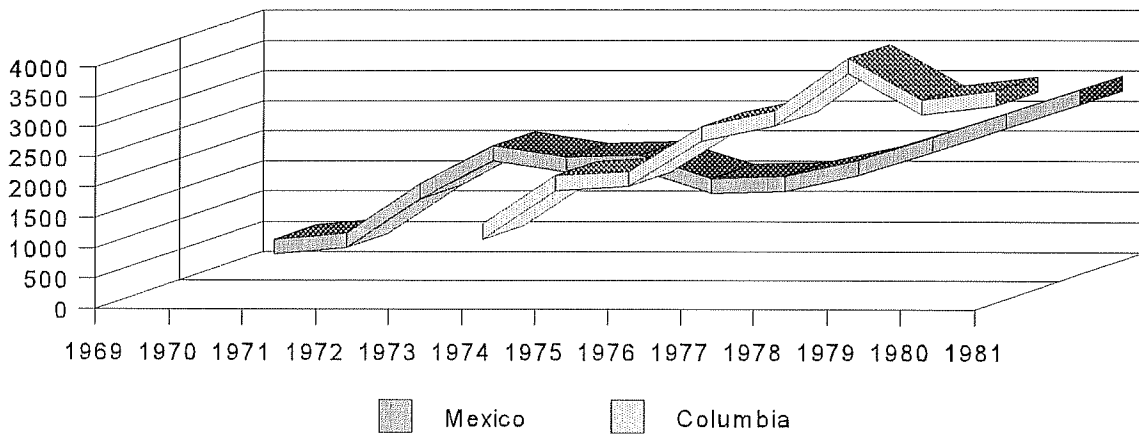
Summary Statistics
Souls Under Our Care



Summary Statistics Communicant Members



Summary Statistics Contributions in Dollars



APPENDIX B: COLOMBIAN SEMINARY SCHEDULE
(for September 8- December 11, 1981)

Note: The schedule is for Tuesday-Friday only. Many of the students helped out with local congregations on the weekends, which was part of the course of study. Note also the similarity to the course of study at Mequon.

Time	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:00 - 8:50	Homiletics (3 sermons/year)	Church History	Education	Church History
8:55 - 9:45	Pastoral Theology	Psalms	Pastoral Theology	Psalms
9:45 - 10:05	Devotion			
10:05 - 10:55	Symbolics	OT Introduction	Symbolics	OT Introduction
11:00 - 11:50	I Peter	Dogmatics (1.5 hours)	I Peter	Dogmatics (1.5 hours)

END NOTES

All sources cited were taken from correspondence and materials which Pastor Harold Essmann, chairman of the WELS Executive Committee for Latin-American Missions, donated to the Synod Archives. These are housed at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wisconsin. At the time this essay was written, the fourteen boxes of materials had not been cataloged, but were available for study through Professor Emeritus Martin Westerhaus.

- i. Correspondence dated November 24, 1964.
- ii. Letter from Edgar Hoenecke to Harold Essmann, the Chairman of the Executive Committee for Latin-American Missions of WELS at that time. The letter was dated August 21, 1968. The quotes given were found on pages two and three of the letter.
- iii. From a letter dated May 21, 1968.
- iv. Taken from a report of the colloquy of Pastors Luna and Chichia.
- v. Figure taken from a letter written by Pastor Edgar Hoenecke on November 19, 1968.
- vi. This mission principle was taken from a 1977 document which highlighted the plans and policies utilized in the Colombian mission work.
- vii. Stated in regular correspondence between Pastor Sprain and Pastor Harold Essmann.
- viii. This was stated as the reason why WELS could not enter Mexico sooner, other than work done in Juarez, Mexico, which is just across the border from El Paso, Texas. This fact was given in a report from the committee which was sent for the colloquy of the two Mexican men.
- ix. This is also quoted from the report of the colloquy committee. The colloquy took place over the span of four days, March 17- March 21, 1968.
- x. This also taken from the same committee report mentioned just above.
- xi. Taken from a letter by Pastor Luna to Pastor Essmann on November 15, 1969.
- xii. This is taken from a report regarding Mexican men who wished to enter fellowship with WELS and become pastors. The interviews which formed the basis for the report were held October 20-26, 1969.
- xiii. This came from a 1975 document which outlined the policies for the Theological Training Program in Colombia.
- xiv. This was quoted by Pastor Roger Sprain in a letter to Pastor Essmann dated August 26, 1974.
- xv. Pastor Hoenecke made this comment in correspondence on February 12, 1976.

- xvi. Written by Pastor Sprain to Pastor Essmann, June 29, 1975.
- xvii. Pastor Luna wrote this to Pastor Essmann on March 13, 1970.
- xviii. Taken from a letter to Pastor Luna dated March 19, 1970.
- xix. Written to Pastor Essmann on October 16, 1970.
- xx. Ibid.
- xxi. Written to Pastor Winters on January 29, 1971. It may be noted here that perhaps Pastor Avendaño does not receive entirely fair treatment in this matter because he was not able to work in English and so all of his correspondence had to go through Pastor Winters or Pastor Zimdars for translation.
- xxii. This was written to the Latin American Mission Committee on January 14, 1971.
- xxiii. This also appeared in the same letter of May 27, 1968.
- xxiv. This painful description appeared in a report by Pastor Hoenecke dated March 27, 1969.
- xxv. This is taken from a letter written as Pastor Strackbein made his first tour of Colombia in 1981.
- xxvi. This sad note appeared in a January- March 1979 newsletter from the missionaries.