

Hispanic Outreach in the WELS

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Outline

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America the melting pot – so some have called this country. In reality, however, the different peoples and cultures in this country have not melted to form one specific culture. From its founding America has welcomed people of every nation, tribe, people, and language into its friendly confines. It has offered its freedom and freedoms to the world. Many have taken America up on its offer. However, while some gladly come to America willing to change their lives and lifestyles, many wish to enjoy the freedom of America within the culture and background of their homeland. As a result, many, if not most, of the different peoples in America have not forsaken the ways of their homeland to form a new “American” culture. Rather, they fight to preserve their individuality among the diversity. After all, America promises tolerance along with its freedom.

This tolerant diversity in America has had far reaching effects on the churches of America. As many churches strive to fulfill the Great Commission, they must cope with the diversity that surrounds them. This provides two options. One, they can ignore those who do not fit into their mold. Two, they must reshape their mold to include those around them. Thankfully, the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) has chosen the latter. In recent years the WELS has recognized the need to reach the “foreign” mission fields that present themselves right here in our very own country.

In 1984 one senior pointed to one of the largest growing “foreign” mission fields here in America, the Hispanics. His church history paper questioned whether or not there was a need for Hispanic outreach. Based upon the opinions of many workers and synodical officials, he emphatically concluded, “The need does exist.”¹ We will briefly consider this need in 2000.

¹ Dick, Robert J. “The Need For a Hispanic Outreach.” Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Library, 1984: Essay File 2102: 10.

Then we will examine the work that the WELS is currently doing throughout the country. Finally, we will consider the future of this work in our synod.

I. The Need

The overall need for churches of The Church to proclaim the gospel to all people is evident from Scripture. Jesus plainly commanded his disciples of all generations, “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always to the very end of the age,” (Mt. 28:19-20). There is not a doubt that Jesus wanted people throughout the world to know his name and his teachings, namely how he had earned salvation for them. Nor is there any doubt that Jesus’ disciples should continue to proclaim this message until the end of the age, as indicated by his promise.

While making another promise, namely to send the Holy Spirit to his disciples, Jesus again clearly indicated that they would share his message with all people. “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth,” (Acts 1:8). The time has come when Jesus’ followers no longer need to leave their hometown to find people from the ends of the earth. Certainly, the church will continue to send people throughout the world; at the same time, it will not over look those from the other side of the world who suddenly live right next to them. Hispanics from throughout the ends of the earth now live in our cities, in our states and in our country.

The US Census statistics show how the number of Hispanics in America is growing at a consistent rate.² The most recent census of 1990 numbered the Hispanic population at over

² Statistics acquired via Telephone call to IL regional bureau: 312-353-9747.

twenty-two million, nearly nine percent of the total population in America. Current projections for 2005 estimate of nearly fourteen million or over 3 ½%. For 2010 projections break forty one million which will be close to fourteen percent of America's people. At that time the Hispanic population will also outnumber the African American population becoming the largest minority group in the United States. Certainly no church will want to overlook such a large group of souls who need to know about their Savior.

The statistical numbers of Wisconsin show just as urgent a need to reach out to this group.³ The 1990 census of Milwaukee showed over fifty-one thousand Hispanic residents in the county and over thirty nine thousand in the city of Milwaukee. Currently the synod is also working in three other cities in the state: Appleton, Oshkosh and Watertown. The 1990 census reported the number of Hispanics in those cities as follows: Appleton – 577; Oshkosh – 456; and Watertown 239. Certainly those numbers have increased in the past decade. Especially in Milwaukee the need for a special program of outreach to the Hispanic community is evident.

“All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus,” (Ro. 3:23-24). Because all humans are born sinful, we all have an urgent need for a Savior. Because Jesus lived, died and rose again as that Savior in order to earn the salvation of all people, all people have the right to know what he has done for him. This includes the growing Hispanic population in our country. In America's mixed bag of culture one feature stands out – freedom. The rights of the people top the list of America's “culture.” America provides freedom for churches to proclaim the saving grace of Jesus Christ. Let's see how our church has used this freedom to reach out to the Hispanics with the gospel.

³ Statistics acquired via Telephone call to the Milwaukee chamber of commerce: 414-287-4100.

II. The Work

This part of the paper intends to show how the WELS has not only recognized the need to reach out to the Hispanic community in its midst but also has addressed that need. The author acquired information about the work being done among Hispanics throughout the country by sending out surveys to the leaders of the work in different areas. Out of the eleven surveys he sent out seven were returned. The author also conducted one personal interview and researched one essay. This portion of the paper will report by state and city the different ministries being carried out as described in these resources.

Wisconsin

Milwaukee, Lutheran Southside Ministries.⁴ – Lutheran Southside Ministries (LSM) was the brainchild of Northwestern College professor, Roger Sprain. As the Spanish and Minority Cultures professor at Northwestern Prof. Sprain was interested in reaching out to the Hispanics. Since Milwaukee, the central and founding city of the synod, contains the largest concentration of Hispanics in the state it made sense to begin work there. Milwaukee was also close enough for Prof. Sprain to help start his idea. It also made sense to work on the south side of the city since most of the Hispanics in the city lived on that side of town. As a result in connection with St. Peter and Christ churches Lutheran Southside Ministries began in 1993.

St. Peter and Christ serve as prime starting points because both are situated on the inner south side of Milwaukee in the midst of a dominantly Hispanic neighborhood. The two churches are located a mile or two apart, St. Peter on 9th and Scott and Christ on 23rd and Greenfield. At the time that LSM began Pastor Tetzlaff was serving at Christ and Pastor Schupmann at St. Peter.

⁴ Personal Interview with Pastor Michael Roth on 3/30/2000.

From its beginning LSM employed Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary students as its main workers. Prof. Sprain maintained oversight from a distance, and Pastors Tetzlaff and Schupmann provided guidance locally. Junior seminarians Stephen Mueller and Nathan Strutz were the first students to work at LSM. Ideally this would have begun a rotation that would provide students on a yearly basis. Most of the students would return and train the new students. However, it didn't take long to break the rotation. For the 1994-1995 school year Nate Strutz returned and Stephen Lange joined in place of Steve Mueller, who took a year off to teach at Winnebago Lutheran Academy. The following year Steve Mueller returned as a middler and was joined by senior Michael Roth, who just returned from vicaring in Puerto Rico. They also picked up junior Andrew Schroer in the spring. In 1996-1997 both Steve Lange and Nate Strutz returned from vicaring to join Andy Schroer. They were also joined by former Puerto Rican vicar Timothy Otto. Steve Mueller returned for his third term in 1997-1998. He worked with three new workers: ^{middler} senior Paul Rydecki, junior Anthony Crowder and junior Jeff Enderle. For the 1998-1999 year the number was back to three. Andrew Schroer returned during his final year and juniors Ben Wessel and Ryan Heiman signed up. This year Ryan Heiman and Ben Wessel continue. Jeff Enderle has also returned. Two former Puerto Rican vicars Nathan Wagenknecht and Timothy Westendorf also joined.

Over the past seven to eight years thirteen different students have worked in conjunction with LSM to bring the good news about Jesus to the Hispanics living on the south side of Milwaukee. While these students were busy at work, new pastors arrived both at St. Peter and Christ. Pastor James Getka accepted a call to serve at St. Peter in the summer of 1995. Former senior worker Michael Roth accepted the assignment to Christ in May of 1996. They now assumed control of the group since Prof. Sprain had left to teach at ML C in Minnesota.

Funding for LSM has always been and still is an issue. They don't have permanent funding from anyone yet. When the mission began in 1993, the Siebert Lutheran Foundation provided a \$10,000 grant. This money was used to pay the workers for the most part, but it also allowed the mission to purchase or create some materials for distribution. The money from Siebert ran out quickly. After that funding was secured on a temporary basis from the Kingdom Workers. This funding continued for several years. More recently the local chapter of Kingdom Workers has teamed up with Christ and St. Peter to provide the money necessary to keep the mission alive. LSM is in the process of trying to secure more permanent revenue from the Board for Home Missions. Their application is on the table; the BHM will discuss the issue in May 2000. May the Board recognize the need and the great work LSM has done to fulfill the need among the Hispanics and may it act accordingly!

LSM has carried out its work in a number of forms throughout the years. Most of the time the students and pastors have tried to spread the Word beginning in the home. Through canvassing and the ethnographic interview (which focuses on the needs and concerns of the people) the workers have been able to secure some good contacts and prospects. They follow up on these prospects by conducting Bible studies and/or classes in the homes of the people. In this way they also find more prospects through families or word of mouth. The ethnographic interview continues to be a main resource ^{for} to 1) establishing more relationships and 2) learning how they can specifically serve the needs of the people living in the community. The LSM also maintains a food pantry. After classes or devotions the people have a chance to pick up some food or clothing. Another way of keeping contact with the people is through a regular newsletter. Ryan Heiman currently produces a monthly newsletter in both English and Spanish.

In October of 1995 there was enough interest to begin a Spanish worship service as well. From the list of workers one might gather that Spanish is an important quality for the LSM missionary. Many of the student workers returned from vicaring in a Hispanic field such as Mexico or Puerto Rico. A couple taught Spanish in one of the synod schools. All of them have some ability in Spanish, which they cultivate as they work. As a vicar in Puerto Rico and a former LSM worker Pastor Roth also has good Spanish abilities. Pastor Getka is in the process of learning the language. These workers use their Spanish. Some of the Bible classes are taught in Spanish. Some of the canvassing or interviewing is done in Spanish. And there is now a weekly service in Spanish. The workers and the pastors all help conducting the Spanish service and preaching. Surely this is a tremendous tool when reaching out to a Spanish-speaking people. The weekly attendance average is about twenty.

The work that Lutheran Southside Ministries has conducted over the years is tremendous. In the middle of a city that is as diverse as the country these student workers along with guiding pastors have carved a niche in the Hispanic community that allows them to spread the good news of the Savior of the world. Faithfully for almost eight years these men have been proclaiming the gospel in the foreign mission found in the heart of the WELS. May God continue to bless their work for many years to come!

Appleton, WI.⁵ –The author has not received a response from this area.

Oshkosh, WI.⁶ – Pastor Eggert certainly has a unique Hispanic mission in northern Wisconsin. Almost three summers ago a neighboring pastor called Pastor Eggert for help. One Sunday in the summer of 1997 several migrant workers from the canning factory in Pickett, WI

⁵ Pope, Stephen. Survey sent on 4/3/2000.

⁶ Eggert, Jan. Survey #2.

wandered into Pastor Dorn's church. They were looking for a Spanish service. Pastor Dorn remembered his Spanish-speaking friend from school and called for his help.

It had been over twenty-five years since Pastor Eggert used his Spanish, but he wanted to help. Pastor Eggert went to the canning factory and received permission to talk to the workers in their lounge area. Although they were a bit suspicious of him, they were very cordial. That summer Pastor Eggert began a Spanish service for the workers and their families. At first the attendance was small; he estimates fifty worshippers throughout the rest of that summer.

Because the workers are only in town during the summer, Pastor Eggert had a chance to plan a little better for 1998. He decided that the best thing to do was simply to ask the workers when most could come. Their long summer hours made planning difficult; however, with their input attendance doubled for 1998. That year Pastor Eggert also received the opportunity to brush up on his Spanish skills when the Board for Home Missions (BHM) sent him to study in Mexico for six weeks. The synod also offered help in the form of Hispanic Outreach Workshops. In 1999 the numbers again rose; in fact, they tripled topping 300.

Besides the services Pastor Eggert looked for other ways to serve the Hispanic workers. He has purchased hymnals, Spanish devotional books, and a Spanish publication. *El Mensajero Luterano* is like the Northwestern Lutheran (Forward in Christ). Unfortunately Pastor Eggert doesn't have a streaming income yet. He has funded everything from private donations and a gift from a local day school.

Although the Hispanic community in Oshkosh is by no means large, Pastor Eggert took the opportunity to serve God's people. The situation is certainly unique. Carrying out a "summer time" ministry must have its problems. Yet for three years the LORD has seen fit to bring more

and more Hispanic workers to hear his message. It all began by simply offering help to those who asked.

Watertown, WI⁷ - Pastor Walther estimates that currently the number of Hispanics in Watertown is near 1000, most of them Mexican. That would account for approximately five percent of Watertown's population. Although Pastor Walther didn't exactly spell out the work he is conducting in Watertown, he did elude to some different aspects of the work. He notes that the Mexicans living in the area need help with everyday life. Because they have trouble communicating in English, they also have trouble finding such things as housing and medical help, two necessities of everyday life. The church can help. Perhaps the best way to help is to focus on the root of the problem before the symptoms. In order to do so Watertown is expecting a deaconess to arrive this summer to teach English as a Second Language (ESL) classes. Pastor Walther also noted that the congregation wasn't able to utilize the Hispanics in the work because they are just reaching confirmation instruction. He didn't indicate whether this instruction is in English or Spanish or both. The WELS Kingdom Workers and an Opportunity Outreach Grant from the synod have helped fund the work being done in Watertown over the past three and a half years.

California

Pomona, CA.⁸ – California has one of the bigger mission fields in regard to Hispanics. Pastor Zimdars estimates that 65-70% of the area is Hispanic. He wrote, "Greater Los Angeles has about 6 million Hispanics. Within a five-mile radius of our church we have perhaps 150,000

⁷ Walther, Karl. Survey #4.

⁸ Zimdars, Ernest. Survey #1.

Hispanics. Within 5 blocks of church we have at least 1,000 Hispanics.”⁹ These Hispanics come from Mexico, Puerto Rico, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Guatemala and other countries in Central America. Our Savior Lutheran Church started working with this large group of people about three and a half years ago. Because Hispanics soon filled the area, the congregation had to change as well. The English-speaking congregation had become stagnant and needed a change. That change brought the Word to many Hispanic families.

Most of the work that Our Savior is doing begins in the homes. The congregation keeps a list of prospects to visit. Currently they are visiting about twenty homes on a regular basis. The people welcome them into their homes for Bible studies and devotions. Unfortunately, many of the people aren't as willing to attend a service. Many of the men, especially the older ones, do not want their families to go. Pastor Zimdars conducts late afternoon services. An average Sunday will see twenty-five people in attendance. There are currently fourteen communicant members and twenty-five souls. In addition to the services, Pastor Zimdars meets once a week at a lighted basketball court for devotion. This is especially appealing to the younger men. Working with the younger men also helps when trying to work with their families.

Often the families who hear God's Word want others to know as well. They will give new contacts to the pastor so that he may also try to reach them. Our Savior also utilizes a lay evangelist. He is a former Pentecostal minister who helps pastor with the visits and the classes. His ideas about how to reach out to the people are invaluable. Kingdom Workers helps support his salary.

Like many of the workers in the Hispanic mission field, and probably other fields as well, Pastor Zimdars notes the need for more focus. Many pastors do not have the time to train more

⁹ Ibid. 1-1.

workers to help in this field. Certainly using Hispanics to reach out to other Hispanics would provide abundant blessings. However, they need training. Many of those willing and able to work are just learning the truths of God's word themselves. If the church wants to use these men and women and give them the opportunity to serve, it needs to train them. Such training calls for manpower, which may not be readily accessible. Let us pray that the LORD will send more workers into his ripe fields!

Chula Vista, CA.¹⁰ - The author has not received a response from this area.

Canyon Country, CA.¹¹ - The author has not received a response from this area.

Other States

Anchorage, AK.¹² – Perhaps one would not think of Alaska as a possible field for Hispanic Outreach. However, Faith Lutheran Church in Anchorage has been serving a Hispanic population of nearly 16,000 for six years. In Alaska, as throughout the entire country, Hispanics are the fastest growing minority. Such numbers perked the interest of James Lillo, a member of Faith. Mr. Lillo saw the need to serve his neighbors who were from places like Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and South and Central America.

Although Mr. Lillo speaks very little Spanish, he has been serving the Hispanics in Alaska in many ways. He teaches the adults with a Spanish course, *Curso de Doctrina Christiana*. He offers ESL classes. He also provides Spanish worship services by means of video from Phoenix, AZ. Mr. Lillo does his best to include the students in the work whenever possible. They are able to help with transportation, translating, calling on members, and even conducting classes from time to time.

¹⁰ Meyer, Ib. Survey sent on 4/5/2000.

¹¹ Zwieg. Larry. No contact.

The Alaskan Hispanics also receive help from out of the state. About six times a year the synod provides airfare to fly Spanish-speaking pastors to Alaska to serve for a week. What a blessing such help must provide for both the workers and the students! Mr. Lillo agrees that a full-time Spanish-speaking pastor would be very beneficial. Our prayers go with him.

Phoenix, AZ.¹³ – Pastor Timothy Otto was called to begin Hispanic outreach in the St. Thomas area of Phoenix, AZ. He used his background as a Puerto Rican vicar and Lutheran Southside Ministries worker to begin his work. First he canvassed the area looking to make appointments to inform the people of the church he was starting. He used those appointments to learn about the people, the community and how the church could serve both. He also used his contact to find a core group with which to begin in-home Bible studies. Through those initial contacts the church began to grow.

Before long Pastor Otto was able to provide a Spanish worship service. God blessed the classes and the services. The church has confirmed twenty-five members and serves about seventy-five souls. The average attendance every week is between forty and forty-five. The congregation offers Bible and Catechism classes, outings for fellowship and even includes a choir. Pastor Otto says, “We’re pretty much an active little church.”¹⁴

As a little church Pastor Otto also utilizes his members like any other church would. He has a three-man council which helps him in his work. The members help with maintenance and cleaning, substituting for Sunday School and help with ESL classes. However, the best help the people can provide is contacts. The members carry out the Great Commission by inviting their

¹² Lillo, James. Survey #3.

¹³ Otto, Timothy. Survey #5.

¹⁴ Ibid. 5-2.

neighbors, friends and family members. Through their invitations Pastor Otto has the opportunity to follow up.

Pastor Otto marks one of the problems of this work that has not yet been mentioned. Most Hispanics are familiar with Christianity; however, they ^{were} are mostly brought up in the Roman Catholic Church. They do have some contact with Pentecostals, but the Lutheran church is completely foreign to them. Because they are afraid of something new and different, they may hesitate. This only shows all the more the need to communicate the truth to a large group of people who may not know it.

Montrose, CO.^{15, 16} - Perhaps only a brief overview of the work in this area is necessary because less than two years ago Stephen Mueller wrote a comprehensive paper on this work. In September of 1987 work among the Cora Indians in Montrose began with the help of one willing member. Nicki Parsons was at the school that day to register her children. While she was there, a Cora family came to register their son as well. However, the parents had trouble with English and needed some help. Although Nicki was hesitant at first, she knew that her Spanish would provide some help. Her simple act of offering what help she could turned into a large mission field.

Through Nicki Parson's contact with the Molina family the Word of God spread to many Cora Indians and continues to spread today. Like many others St. John's, and Nicki for the most part, began offering classes and devotions in the homes of prospects. Language was a difficult barrier to overcome. Although some of the Coras knew Spanish, most of them spoke their own dialect of Cora. While most of the parents were speaking Cora and Spanish, the children were

¹⁵ Mueller, Stephen T. "If you cannot speak like angels..." Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Library, 1998: Essay File 2709.

¹⁶ Festerling, Michael. Survey #7.

beginning to learn English. As a result Nicki and the pastors who were helping her had to cross three languages! They did their best to work with Spanish and English.

When Nicki first began the work Pastor Spiegelberg, who was from a neighboring congregation, helped her. Some time later Pastor Poetter accepted the call to St. John's. While Nicki brushed up on her Spanish, Pastor Poetter just began to learn. In September of 1996 a full-time Spanish-speaking worker arrived on the scene, Michael Festerling. He and the others continued to offer classes in the home. The congregation also offered a Spanish service at certain times of the year, especially at holidays. Quite often they took the services to one of the homes too. In addition VBS played a large part in their ministry. VBS in Montrose included parents as well as children.

In July of 1998 Michael Festerling left his position, which the Kingdom Workers supported. Jace Holden took his place. Jace and Pastor Poetter continue the work in CO. Unfortunately neither one of them was available in time for this paper. Nevertheless, we pray that the LORD continue to bless them and all who are working among the Coras in Colorado.

Falls Church, VA.¹⁷ – Pastor Wattles also has a unique setting in Virginia. While most of the Hispanic mission fields are reaching out to lower-middle class residents, upper-middle class Hispanics surround Grace Lutheran church. Pastor Wattles writes, “it’s important that people understand that many of the Hispanics in our area are well-educated and have ‘good jobs.’ These are not migrant workers who have run across the border.”¹⁸ In addition, Pastor Wattles reports that the area, which is near Washington D.C., is the most ethnically diverse county in the country, has the highest income per capita of any place in the US and ranks second

¹⁷ Wattles, Kevin. Survey #6.

¹⁸ Ibid. 6-1.

in college degrees per capita. This diversity also includes the different cultures in the area. In addition to the Hispanics there are up to sixteen other nationalities. Certainly such high rankings provides a unique mission field.

At the present time Grace doesn't have any called workers fluent in Spanish; this obviously affects the work they can do. However, Pastor Wattles, the LES principal and another teacher are planning for intensive language training in the summer of 2000. A grant from AAL insurance company will allow them to enroll in the same course that the State Department uses to train their employees. Thankfully two Anglo families can speak Spanish. Together with them two Hispanic families help with the language barrier. For the most part they help by translating. Pastor Wattles mentioned one special Hispanic lady who is great with evangelism. She teaches Spanish in the elementary school and offers Spanish VBS during the summer.

Pastor Wattles and his congregation do their best to serve in the same ways that they serve all people. They invite their Hispanic friends to hear the Word in Sunday School, Bible class, worship, and the elementary school. They also provide the Spanish "Northwestern Lutheran," *El Mensajero Luterano*. They use the Spanish adult information video course, *Communication Christ*. As the workers learn Spanish, hopefully they will be able to use these and many other ways to continue spreading the Good News to the Hispanics and all nations in their neighborhood.

Miami, FL.¹⁹ - The author has not received a response from this area.

III. The Future

Indeed the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod has recognized the need to cross cultures in order to spread the gospel to all nations. It has also recognized the need to do this in

¹⁹ Leyrer, Carl. Survey sent on 4/8/2000.

our very own diverse country. In cities and states throughout our country the synod has begun working with numerous groups. We have inner city mission programs like Northside Lutheran Ministries, which mainly serves the African-American community. We have missions to the Apaches. We also have many Hispanic mission fields. While the work of spreading the gospel never ends in any culture, are we doing enough in these specific fields? Are we using the opportunities and open doors that the LORD of the Harvest has provided into the Hispanic communities across the country? What can we do?

One pastor and worker after another stressed the need to train leaders for this work. In order to make our very best efforts to reach out to the wide-open Hispanic mission field in the US we need both called workers and lay workers.

The long list of LSM workers attests to the fact that WELS is producing Spanish-speaking called workers. The longer list of Puerto Rican vicars gives more evidence. Most of those vicars are using the skills and knowledge they learned to serve Hispanic fields. However, the number of pastors who are able to function within the Hispanic culture remains relatively low. One or two vicars a year will not be able to keep up for the demand of the fields. Almost every area could use a full-time pastor to work exclusively among its Hispanic people. Certainly, manpower in general is low. ^{However} But, can the worker training system encourage more of the able men to acquire the skills necessary so that they can do cross-cultural work if called upon to do so? The education system does not have the time or the tools to train everyone in all of the different cultures. However, perhaps the minority cultures class offered at MLC should no longer be an elective. Perhaps Spanish should no longer be one of the extra languages offered mainly for those interested. Encouragement to learn Spanish and some basic cultural ideas would benefit all of our called workers.

At the same time, our congregations need help fostering lay workers. Many of the churches recognize the great blessing of using Hispanics to reach other Hispanics. By nature this hospitable group relates its newfound joy to others among their families and friends. What a blessing it would be to train lay evangelists to do what comes naturally on a more formal basis! What a blessing it would be to have materials to train others to teach Sunday School or VBS! What a blessing it would be to train men to become leaders in their congregations! How can this be done? Perhaps only the leaders in the field can answer that. Perhaps answers can be found in other fields both here at home and abroad. Perhaps time and patience is also part of the answer. However, we must continue to look for new and better ways to train leaders at the local level.

Admittedly, the synod has begun to offer help to the called workers and their helpers. A number of the survey responses mentioned Hispanic Outreach Workshops being conducted across the US. The synod has also provided funding directly and indirectly. For example, ^{the synod} ~~they~~ provides airfare for Spanish-speaking pastors to make one-week visits to Alaska. They fund mission churches and pastors such as Timothy Otto in Phoenix. Parasynodical groups like the Kingdom workers have also provided funding for many projects such as LSM or a staff minister in Montrose, CO. We also would not want to forget the many generous donations of individual congregations and members. In addition, the synod has begun to produce many different materials such as *El Mensajero Luterano* or the *Communicating Christ* video in Spanish. All of these avenues help the local congregations serve the Hispanic portion of their people.

However, should the synod use these and other resources for separate mission efforts as well? How well can one congregation carry out two ministries at the same time? At the very least it is difficult without manpower. This inexperienced author does not pretend to have answers. He only wishes to raise the questions asked by those already working in these fields. It doesn't seem

practical to the author to create separate churches or missions for every culture in this country. That would be near^ly impossible. Yet, when such large fields exist in different pockets of the country, some solution or compromise is necessary. Pray not only that the LORD of the Harvest send workers into his fields but also that He guides those workers as they try to answer some of these difficult dilemmas.

The statistics show that within the next decade the Hispanic-Americans will become the largest minority group in America. They will account for over thirteen percent of the US population, numbering over forty-one million, i.e. ~~41,000,000~~. Here lies a large group of people, of which most do not know Jesus Christ as their Savior. WELS and its members have the chance to make an impact on this large number of lost souls. The task that lies before us is long and difficult, it brings many questions, yet it is not impossible. With our prayers and with our work and most importantly with the blessing of the LORD we can continue to spread the gospel across cultures from 2000 until the Last Day. By doing the work before us we can assure ourselves that when Jesus returns, he will say, "Well done, good and faithful servants."

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Survey

I. The People

1. If possible, estimate the number of Hispanics presently in your area
2. Do you current predictions for the next 5 to 10 years?
3. What kind of diversity exists among the Hispanics in your area?
If possible, please give general percentages.
4. How does that diversity affect your work?

II. The Work

1. Please describe the work you are doing among the Hispanics
2. Why did you start working with the Hispanic population?
3. How long have you been doing this work?
4. In what ways do you utilize Hispanics in your efforts?
5. What are the benefits of involving Hispanics in the work?
6. What are the drawbacks of involving Hispanics in the work?
7. Please note the main problems you encounter with Hispanic outreach.
(at whatever stage applicable)

III. The Synod

1. What help does the Synod provide?
2. What other help could the Synod offer?
3. Are you aware of the other work being done in the USA by the WELS?
4. Would such information be useful?
5. Please note any comments or concerns about the future of Hispanic work in the WELS?

Please note any general comments or other questions you would like to see answered.

Survey #1
Pastor Ernest Zimdars
Pomona, CA

Survey

I. The People

1. If possible, estimate the number of Hispanics presently in your area

This depends on the size of the area. Greater Los Angeles has about 6 million Hispanics. Within a five mile radius of our church we have perhaps 150,000 Hispanics. Within 5 blocks of the church we have at least 1,000 Hispanics.

2. Do you know current predictions for the next 5 to 10 years?

Predictions as to what? In the area about 65-70% of the population is Hispanic.

3. What kind of diversity exists among the Hispanics in your area?
If possible, please give general percentages.

Most of the Hispanics are from central/southern regions of Mexico (Michoacan and Puebla) in this area. There are other nationalities, such as Ecuatorians, Nicaraguans, people from San Salvador/Guatemala and other Central American countries, as also from Puerto Rico.

4. How does that diversity affect your work?

It does not.

II. The Work

1. Please describe the work you are doing among the Hispanics

We have a Hispanic mission outreach based at Our Savior Lutheran Church. We visit approximately 20 homes in which we are welcome, and have services on Sunday late afternoon (summer at 6:30 p.m.) with about 25 in attendance. We have 14 communicants and 25 souls. Once a month we have picnics and usually have 35-40 in attendance at our services and activities. We visit many homes and get new contacts quite often which we try to follow up on. People receive us in their homes and enjoy devotions/studies, but it is harder for them to come to church, and especially for the men. We have younger men who do come and we meet them at the lighted basketball court once a week where we have a devotion in the evening.

2. Why did you start working with the Hispanic population?

The area became more and more Hispanic and the English speaking congregation was not growing because of the ethnic makeup of the neighborhood.

3. How long have you been doing this work?

Since approximately 3-1/2 years.

4. In what ways do you utilize Hispanics in your efforts?

We have a lay evangelist, a former Pentecostal minister, who helps us and is receiving support from the Kingdom workers. He shares about 50% of the visits/classes and he has good ideas about how to reach Hispanics and program we try to initiate.

5. What are the benefits of involving Hispanics in the work?

It is invaluable, for the simple reason that they are much more easily accepted by their own, and thus have perhaps more open doors than an Anglo would have.

6. What are the drawbacks of involving Hispanics in the work?

They need more training in doctrine. Otherwise they are open and their friendliness helps in making new contacts.

7. Please note the main problems you encounter with Hispanic outreach.
(at whatever stage applicable)

Getting the men into the church and having entire Hispanic families join it. Also baptism of infants, since usually the men, even though they do not go to their church, want their children baptized in the Catholic Church.

III. The Synod

1. What help does the Synod provide?

They pay the salary of the missionary and provide more and more materials for outreach.

2. What other help could the Synod offer?

Facilitate training people as evangelists and making this in a larger metropolitan area a top priority by perhaps calling a full time instructor/professor to a larger area, such as greater L.A. and letting him train more fully those who want and are able to be leaders in a specific area.

3. Are you aware of the other work being done in the USA by the WELS?

Certainly

4. Would such information be useful?

It is already being shared to some degree by such conferences as the HOW workshop held already on several occasions (Pastor Hagedorn has more details.)

5. Please note any comments or concerns about the future of Hispanic work in the WELS?

We need to make it a more concentrated effort and more supported on the grass roots level in the congregations by the mission boards.

Please note any general comments or other questions you would like to see answered.

Survey #2
Pastor Jan Eggert
Oshkosh, WI

Survey

I. The People

1. If possible, estimate the number of Hispanics presently in your area

Oshkosh currently has the lowest number of Hispanics in the Fox River Valley. I would have to estimate quite low, approximately 50 families, perhaps less. The official stats from the 1990 census say that there are 8 Hispanics living in Winnebago County. I know there are many, many more than that. Neenah/Menasha has a significant population, as does Fond du Lac. Appleton and Green Bay also have very large populations, compared to Oshkosh. We don't even have a Hispanic Grocery store.

2. Do you current predictions for the next 5 to 10 years?

I feel that Oshkosh will indeed increase it's number of Latinos. This is just from observation by shopping. I have no hard evidence to that effect. I also do know that in the outlying areas of Oshkosh (the farm areas of Omro, Fisk, Pickett) several of the large farms employ Hispanics. They do not live in Oshkosh, however. If you want a guess on the numbers, I'd say in 5 more years there would be 200 families here, and in ten years perhaps as high as 500.

3. What kind of diversity exists among the Hispanics in your area?
If possible, please give general percentages.

In the last several years I have only made personal contact with a few Hispanics in Oshkosh. They were all manual laborers of some sort (painters, factory workers). I'm afraid this won't give you an accurate picture. It doesn't afford me one either. I have one Hispanic in my congregation. She arrived here a few years ago from Honduras. She was a licensed nurse in her hometown of Siguatepeque. Here, her license means nothing. She recently graduated from a dental school in Milwaukee with a license to serve as a dental technician. She has yet to find employment. Her English isn't up to par yet.

4. How does that diversity affect your work?

The diversity hasn't so had an effect on what I do because the numbers aren't there to make any kind of an impact.

II. The Work

1. Please describe the work you are doing among the Hispanics

With great pleasure. It is currently a limited type of work. I conduct worship services on Sundays from the end of May to the end of October at our WELS church in Pickett, Wisconsin. This is west of Oshkosh in the countryside. There is a canning factory there which has employed Mexicans and Texans for many years. They don't stay here year round, however.

It is my goal to someday have a core group here in Oshkosh and continue services and add Bible study all year round at Immanuel. Whether or not this happens, only the Lord knows.

2. Why did you start working with the Hispanic population?

Back in '97 a friend of mine, Pastor John Dorn who was serving Grace in Pickett (about 11 miles west of Oshkosh) called me to tell me about something that had happened to him before a Sunday service. It seems that several migrant workers walked into the church looking for a service in Spanish. They spoke no English. John remembered from school (back at Northwestern in '72) that I spoke fluent Spanish. He called to ask if there was something I could do to meet the needs of these people. I really felt bad. Here I had been in Oshkosh since 1988 and I had no idea there were any migrants in Pickett. I never even had sense enough to ask Pastor Alvin Aichele whom Pastor Dorn replaced when he retired.

That summer (of 97) I started exploratory services at Pickett. At first, every other week. I went out to the Stokely (now Fridays) canning factory and received permission from the office to go to the workers cantine/cafeteria/rec room and speak with them. They were very cordial, naturally. But they didn't know this gringo from Adam and I suspect were reluctant to get to know me. From June until October I conducted services every other week. Sometimes nobody would come (except the Hispanic lady from my congregation, her husband and her daughter). There were two shifts working at the factory. They were twelve hour shifts (6-6). So to accommodate them, I had two services on Sundays. This didn't appeal to the 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. shift. That was subsequently dropped. Throughout that summer I had perhaps a total of 50 people in attendance. In 98 the

attendance was better. They told me what time they wanted services. I had over 100 in total attendance. Last summer (99) I had service every Sunday. Attendance was almost 300. They now know that I don't want anything from them, and that I am only there to bring them God's Word. In fact, that's exactly what I told them from the onset.

3. How long have you been doing this work?

This will be my 4th year.

4. In what ways do you utilize Hispanics in your efforts?

I use my member, Betty, as a greeter out at Pickett. Ella es muy guapa y simpatica. The migrants enjoy visiting with her, both the men and the women.

5. What are the benefits of involving Hispanics in the work?

The people I am trying to reach out to are very loyal to their own. When they see a Latina with me I feel that some of the walls come down immediately and somewhat of a trust is built up.

6. What are the drawbacks of involving Hispanics in the work?

I haven't found any in my very limited circumstances.

7. Please note the main problems you encounter with Hispanic outreach.
(at whatever stage applicable)

Not a problem, just an observation. I have found that the time element is much greater in Hispanic Outreach. Without the passing of time and exposure missionary to people, no trust is built up. In other words, it just takes time for them to get to know you and trust you.

III. The Synod

1. What help does the Synod provide?

I receive no subsidy for the work I do out at Pickett. I only wish I could dedicate more time to it. My congregation just sort of "lets me" do it. The money I need to buy hymnals, bulletins, El Mensajero Luterano, Portales de Oración, etc. have come from a large gift I received from the Christian Day school children at Grace Lutheran here in town. Last year I asked my congregation if there were any who would donate anything. I received three gifts totaling \$150. It all helps as I don't have a budget from Immanuel

to spend a penny out there. I think that many of the members like the idea of the mission work I do out there, as long as it's "out there".

Personally I received a tremendous amount of help from synod. In 98 the BHM sent me for six weeks to Oaxaca to study. I went again in 99 on a grant from AAL. I couldn't go this past year due to two back surgeries, one in 10/99 and another in 1/2000 (laminectomy). I'm first now feeling better. I have been asked to go to Anchorage and serve a core group of Cubanos and Dominicanos there for a week at a time. I am extremely excited to go and serve in a limited way (but full time for one week!), but I will have to wait a bit before I can sit that long on a plane, according to the doctor.

2. What other help could the Synod offer?

I don't look to synod for any help at this time. I've been told that by administrators, anyway. I would like to raise awareness in our district, though. There's so much more we could be doing here. I wish I could do it in some of the other cities. I just don't have a call to do that work. I'm just grateful for what the Lord gives me now.

I knew Spanish so very well back in 72. I had studied Spanish from 4th grade through 12th grade. It was an experimental program where I grew up. Sadly, twenty-five years passed before I would use it again.

3. Are you aware of the other work being done in the USA by the WELS?

I have attended two Hispanic Outreach Workshops sponsored by the BHM. So I am familiar with much of it, but certainly not all of it. I don't know what's going on in Watertown. I have been in touch with Southside Ministries (Getka & Roth). They have both provided me with valuable advice. I know Ernie Zimdars from California. I don't know who the Cancun5 are though. I knew of some work that Joey Leyrer was doing up in Sleepy Eye, MN. But he's no longer there, he took a call to Waukesha. I heard something that Charlie Degner was doing some work up in MN as well. I emailed him but he never answered me. I can't help but wonder if there are others who have seen a need and tried to meet it that nobody talks about.

4. Would such information be useful?

The information would be very useful to me. It would save lots of detective work on my part. I have, in the past, questioned Paul Bases about any particular knowledge he had. He's a great resource person.

5. Please note any comments or concerns about the future of Hispanic work in the WELS?

We need to be doing this ten years ago! We are missing the boat. In ten years there will be more Hispanics in the US than African Americans.

Please note any general comments or other questions you would like to see answered.

Ben,

I want to thank you for what you are doing and pray God's choice blessings upon your efforts. I hope I have answered both the letter and the spirit of your questions. I want you to feel free to contact me if I can help you any further. If you are short on shekels (and what sem student isn't), just email me with a date, time and phone number and I will call you. It's the least I can do.

I feel the Lord has really given me a love for this work. I've felt that way for years and years. I had to wait a very long time before I could start doing it, however. But that's all right. The Lord knows better than I do. I have always had a desire to serve in this field full time. Maybe someday the Lord will want me to do that too. Right now, we just bloom where the Lord plants us.

I also hope that this specialized ministry will find it's way into your paper. It's all I have right now and I'd sure like people to know about it, pray about it, and give thanks for it.

Just one anecdote. Around the middle of February, about three weeks after my last back surgery, when I was feeling just miserable (pain) the phone rang. I didn't recognize the number, it was quite strange. The voice on the other end said, "¿Habla Español?". I answered yes. It was one of the migrant workers calling me from Sabinas Hidalgo (Nuevo Leon, Mexico). He said, "Pastor, when we left you back in the fall we knew your back was quite bad. We just want to know 'How are you doing?'" You could have knocked me over with a feather. I was strongly reminded just how much the Holy Spirit accomplishes through the simple preaching of the Word and simple Christian love. They are very special people to me.

Keep in touch. Blessings also on these last seminary days and special blessings as you prepare your heart to receive your first Call into the holy ministry.

Survey #3
Pastor James Oldfield
James Lillo
Anchorage, AK

Survey

I. The People

1. If possible, estimate the number of Hispanics presently in your area

ca. 16,000 in the Anchorage "Bowl"

2. Do you know current predictions for the next 5 to 10 years?

? -- Hispanics are noted to be the fastest-growing minority here

3. What kind of diversity exists among the Hispanics in your area?
If possible, please give general percentages.

Mexican 47% Puerto Rican 13% Cuban/Dominican 7% S. American 8%
Central American 4% other 22%

4. How does that diversity affect your work?

So far, no problem; we have several of these groups represented and they seem to get along fine.

II. The Work

1. Please describe the work you are doing among the Hispanics

Teaching adults with Curso de Doctrina Christiana; Spanish worship on video (from Phoenix); ESL classes

2. Why did you start working with the Hispanic population?

Hispanic neighbors -- Lord showed one of our members the need (Jim Lillo, who has done almost everything with this ministry so far)

3. How long have you been doing this work?

about 6 years

4. In what ways do you utilize Hispanics in your efforts?

Help with transportation, translating, calling members, conducting classes on occasion

5. What are the benefits of involving Hispanics in the work?

not enough experience with this to have an opinion

6. What are the drawbacks of involving Hispanics in the work?

same as #5

7. Please note the main problems you encounter with Hispanic outreach.
(at whatever stage applicable)

-- the language (Jim L. speaks very little Spanish)

-- starting classes on time

-- interpersonal problems between family members

-- knowing the difference between giving them a "hand up" vs. only a "hand out"

III. The Synod

1. What help does the Synod provide?

encouragement; airfare for visiting Spanish-speaking pastors (ca 6 times/year)

2. What other help could the Synod offer?

send us a full-time Spanish-speaking pastor! (if it were able)

3. Are you aware of the other work being done in the USA by the WELS?

yes

4. Would such information be useful?

it already has been

5. Please note any comments or concerns about the future of Hispanic work in the WELS?

harvest field is great and growing, laborers are few....etc.

Please note any general comments or other questions you would like to see answered.

I and my Hispanic members have been impressed with the language skills of our Hispanic pastors; WELS has done a good job of training.

I am very thankful for such material as "Soul Search" in Spanish and especially the video instruction course (Curso...); without these tools this gringo would be dead in the water.

I am thankful that WELS is publishing The Peoples' Bible in Spanish; I would also like to see Meditations available in this language.

Survey #4
Pastor Karl Walther
Watertown, WI

Survey

I. The People

1. If possible, estimate the number of Hispanics presently in your area

Maybe 1000 of Watertown's 20000

2. Do you know current predictions for the next 5 to 10 years?

Increasing = it could double in the next decade

3. What kind of diversity exists among the Hispanics in your area?

If possible, please give general percentages.

It seems like not a whole lot – near 100% Mexicans – many/most from Guerrero

4. How does that diversity affect your work?

II. The Work

1. Please describe the work you are doing among the Hispanics

2. Why did you start working with the Hispanic population?

I Timothy 2:4-5 (“who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus”)

3. How long have you been doing this work?

3 ½ years

4. In what ways do you utilize Hispanics in your efforts?

Currently, not a lot; we have just reached confirmation instruction with them

5. What are the benefits of involving Hispanics in the work?

I Peter 2:9 (“But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.”)

6. What are the drawbacks of involving Hispanics in the work?

7. Please note the main problems you encounter with Hispanic outreach.
(at whatever stage applicable)

We are overwhelmed with trying to help them cope with life in an English speaking world – especially accessing housing, medical help, etc. An ESL deaconess for this purpose is arriving this summer. Religiously, we are gratified that many are willing to visit us – though they’re more reluctant to seek their children’s baptism here

III. The Synod

1. What help does the Synod provide?

WELS Kingdom Workers has provided \$8000 for 2 years; Opportunity Outreach Grant = \$4000

2. What other help could the Synod offer?

We could use this being a home mission opening – but we don’t have time to provide hundreds of pages of paperwork

3. Are you aware of the other work being done in the USA by the WELS?

Pretty much

4. Would such information be useful?

It’s encouraging.

5. Please note any comments or concerns about the future of Hispanic work in the WELS?

Matthew 9: 35-38 (“Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, ‘The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.’”)

Survey #5
Pastor Timothy Otto
Phoenix, AZ

Survey

I. The People

1. If possible, estimate the number of Hispanics presently in your area

In the metropolitan area of Phoenix there are some 3.5-4 million people of which 350,000-400,000 are Hispanic. The immediate area of the church - 75% Hispanic.

2. Do you know current predictions for the next 5 to 10 years?

They predict that the Hispanic population will keep growing rapidly. It is the largest minority by far in Arizona. By 2050 1 in every 4 Arizonans will be Hispanic. In the area of the church, what I see is that every time a black or caucasian family moves out a Hispanic family moves in.

3. What kind of diversity exists among the Hispanics in your area?
If possible, please give general percentages.

This is a guess

25% - are chicanos (Mexican Americans born here in the U.S.

60% - Mexicans who have moved from Mexico in their lifetime

15% - Central and South Americans

4. How does that diversity affect your work?

Have to be flexible because not all the Hispanic cultures are the same. Just like German culture, Polish, American, Canadian and Australian etc differ. Guatemalans and Mexicans are very different and one has to learn the differences and act accordingly.

II. The Work

1. Please describe the work you are doing among the Hispanics

When I came down about 2 1/2 - 3 years ago I was called to start Hispanic outreach here in the area of St. Thomas. I started out by canvassing asking for appointments on which I could tell people about our church. I would ask questions about them and the community and how we could serve them and I told them that I was starting out by offering in-home Bible Studies. Studies were

started and a core group was formed. We soon started regular Spanish worship services every Sunday which has turned out to be a blessing and an evangelism tool. We now have 25 confirmed members with about 75 or so souls. We get about 40-45 average church attendance have bible classes, catechism classes, a choir, go on outings, have fellowship gatherings. We're pretty much an active little church

2. Why did you start working with the Hispanic population?

Through the cong. the Holy Spirit called me to do Hispanic work at St. Thomas

3. How long have you been doing this work?

Counting my vicar year and South-side ministries - going on five years.

4. In what ways do you utilize Hispanics in your efforts?

The Hispanic members lately have been getting many of my prospects because they invite neighbor, families, and acquaintances. They help me put together mailings and hand out flyers. I have a three-man Hispanic council. I ask them many questions as to what would be the best way to go about things. They help with maintenance and cleaning, ESL teaching, and substitute Sunday school teaching.

5. What are the benefits of involving Hispanics in the work?

They see it as their church and an opportunity to serve God. They can often say things to their own people that I being gringo cannot. Without them we would not be where we are.

6. What are the drawbacks of involving Hispanics in the work?

I don't know of any drawbacks. It is hard however at times to get them to feel they can take a part. And because they work their butts off it's hard for them to volunteer their time. They also grew up with the idea that the priest does everything.

7. Please note the main problems you encounter with Hispanic outreach.
(at whatever stage applicable)

the RC church - their worship of Mary and the saints. The fact that the RC church is part of their being and going to another church is like betraying what they have always known. Most have never heard of the Lutheran

church. Most of the time their only experience with another Christian church are the jump around/speaking in tongues/stand on your head Pentecostals. Having said that "fear" s the biggest obstacle.

III. The Synod

1. What help does the Synod provide?

they pay my check. I am a home missionary under full subsidy.

2. What other help could the Synod offer?

Not really off hand. My mission board is very cooperative and supportive.

3. Are you aware of the other work being done in the USA by the WELS?

Pretty much

4. Would such information be useful?

Already got it.

5. Please note any comments or concerns about the future of Hispanic work in the WELS?

On the home front I would like to see us go into to New York or Chicago with Hispanic work (two of the biggest Hispanic populations in US) On the world front I would like to see us to into Vevzuela or Argentina or Central America (As far as I know we have not tried in these areas) The main problem is of course man power. I also think that if the leaders (heads of committees) keep thinking that the only way to do Hispanic work is build an indigenous church as fast as possilbe. I have nothing against the theory and I work towards it, but such a close-minded attitude (that it is our only goal and must be accomplished yesterday) I believe shuts us off from opportunities for evangelism and limits the work we can do with the poorer. And I also believe that their over hiper search for leaders scares off prospects and often puts too much pressure on the Hispanic and may turn him off from the work. We need to remember that Paul did not put untrained men in those churches nor were they recent converts. (But I still love all those committee leaders)

Please note any general comments or other questions you would like to see answered.

Survey # 6
Pastor Kevin Waffles
Falls Church, VA

1. The People

The Washington D.C. metro area is a region of 6 ½ million people. Fairfax County, Virginia, the county in which Grace is located, has a population of about 1 million. According to US government population statistics it is the most ethnically diverse county in the country. It has the highest cost of living per capita of any county in the US. The City of Falls Church has the highest income per capita of any place in the US. It ranks 2nd in the United States as far as college degrees per capita. Fairfax County has an unemployment rate of 1.4% - one of the lowest in the US.

About 20% of the people who live in Fairfax County are of Hispanic origin. There are more heavy pockets of Hispanics throughout the County, and there are places where the concentration of Hispanics is less. I would say that our area is somewhere's in the middle.

From 1995 to 2000 the number of Hispanics living in our area has increased about 4%. I would assume this trend will continue, and perhaps, increase a little.

The reason that I share this information with you is because I think it's important that people (and you for your paper) understand that many of the Hispanics in our area are well-educated and have "good jobs." These are not uneducated migrant workers who have run across the border. Many (I would hesitate to say all) are here legally and are pursuing citizenship in the US. In fact, a couple of our members are currently helping a lady from Spain obtain her US citizenship. She came to us through ESL, has been through BIC, but has not yet joined the WELS.

The other thing that I think that is important to understand about the people of our area is their ethnic diversity. We have seventeen different ethnic groups represented in our congregation. Hispanics are the dominant ethnic group in our area (other than Anglos), but there are many people of many different nationalities here. For us, this means that WE CAN'T ONLY FOCUS ON THE HISPANICS. There are many people, of many languages, cultures and backgrounds who are hungry for the gospel.

2. The Work

Let me begin by saying that the work we are doing among the Hispanics isn't as much, or the quality, of what we'd like to be doing! But we're trying!

The big thing that seems to hinder our efforts right now is the lack of Grace staff who know Spanish, that includes me! This summer 3 of our staff, including myself, the principal of our LES and a teacher, are going to begin intensive Spanish language training. What I mean by "intensive" is that we are using the same service that the State Department uses to train their people. We owe a big thanks to an AAL Outreach Grant for picking up a major portion of the cost of this program.

We have a couple Anglos in our congregation who are fluent in Spanish. We have 2 families of Hispanic origin (Bolivian) who are members of our congregation. They've gone through the Bible Information Class for membership. One family came from the Catholic Church. The other came out of Mormonism. These people are all able to help with our "Spanish language gap" somewhat, but there is a downfall with none of our staff knowing Spanish. Those fluent in Spanish can serve as translators and sit in on Bible classes and such, but still it would be beneficial if some of our staff could work in Spanish. We praying that the Lord will bless our efforts with Spanish language training and that will then happen!

To answer your questions more specifically, the work we are doing among the Hispanics is essentially the same as we're doing among everybody else. They are taught the Word in Sunday School, Elementary School, Bible classes and worship as best as we can teach them.

I "guess" that we have been working with Hispanics since 1994. One of the families (who has now joined the church) enrolled their daughter in our elementary school. To be honest, we didn't go out and get them, the Lord blessed us by having them come to us!

As far as utilizing Hispanics in our efforts, we have one lady who works hard at evangelism – not just among Hispanics but among everyone. She also teaches Spanish in our elementary school and teaches a "Spanish speaking class" at our summer VBS (the big problem with this is that I don't speak Spanish!!!) This woman's husband is on the board of trustees of our congregation and does very good work.

I don't mean to belabor the point, but the big drawback I see in involving Hispanics in the work of our congregation is that they do great work, their efforts are blessed by the Lord, they bring their friends and family to us....and I can't speak Spanish! Frustrating...as you can tell!

The blessings of involving Hispanics in the work of our congregation are truly great, words can't really justify the blessings they bring.

3. The Synod

As far as the WELS support of our Hispanic outreach efforts are concerned, I am very thankful for the help they've given. A couple years ago I was encouraged by Mike Roth to attend the Hispanic Missionary's Conference. That was a real blessing and gave me some guidance as to the direction our congregation needed (and needs) to go in Hispanic work.

Our Spanish speaking members receive *EL MENSAJERO LUTERANO*. They are very appreciative of the message of the gospel being brought to them in this format.

I have already spoken of the Outreach Grant we received from AAL. That was conveyed to us by the Synodical Council. We are thankful to them for their support and belief in our program.

We also use the Spanish edition of Communicating Christ videos. Again, we are very thankful for this tool.

The only thing I wish the Synod would have done (and this is mostly my fault) is impressed Spanish language training upon us – more heavily – while we were at Northwestern and the Sem. I definitely would use Spanish more than I find myself using Latin!

Thank you for taking the time to ask me about Hispanic work here at Grace, Falls Church, Virginia, and the blessings God has brought to me and to our congregation through it. If you have any more questions, please feel free to email or call. I'll try to help you if I can.

I also want to wish God's richest blessings as you finish your time at the Sem. Treasure your days there and the opportunity you have to study God's Word. I also want to wish you God's blessings on Call Day and as you begin your ministry.

God's peace be with you.

Kevin Wattles

Pastor

Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church

Falls Church, Virginia

Survey #7
Michael Festerling
Montrose, CO

Survey

I. The People

1. If possible, estimate the number of Hispanics presently in your area

In Montrose, the estimates were 13% in 1998. Total population of 12, 000 or so. However, there were surrounding towns in the area with similar percentages or higher. (Olathe, Delta) This figure may be inaccurate as "illegal immigrants" probably are not counted.

2. Do you know current predictions for the next 5 to 10 years?

Sorry, no.

3. What kind of diversity exists among the Hispanics in your area?
If possible, please give general percentages.

There are the Hispanics (Mestizos) who have been in Montrose for many generations to those straight out of Mexico from all areas. There are also the indigenous peoples from other areas of Mexico, specifically Nayarit, Mexico, the Cora and the Huichole. % is a ? (Check with WELS Kingdom Workers for possible reports on the mission from 1996-1998 with better numbers.)

4. How does that diversity affect your work?

The language is a large factor. For the indigenous people, Spanish is their second language and would probably prefer to hear the Gospel in their native tongue. The education level is a factor with confirmation classes, lessons were modified to fit their levels/needs. Also, at times, the Mestizos referred to the indigenous as "dirty". Their were "class" distinctions evident at times, perhaps affecting why some did not want to "mix" with others at church. Backgrounds were varied as far as religious beliefs went. Catholic in the heart, but the indigenous people had their traditions and religion combined with the Catholicism.

II. The Work

1. Please describe the work you are doing among the Hispanics

Talk to Jace Holden and Pastor Tim Poetter about the current work.

2. Why did you start working with the Hispanic population?

They were there. They needed to hear the Gospel. Sounded like a great opportunity, and more so, a privilege, to do mission work to the Hispanic population.

3. How long have you been doing this work?

We did for 2 years. September 96-July 98

4. In what ways do you utilize Hispanics in your efforts?

When we were working there, we did not have any "official" members from the mission, however, they would bring their friends, and of course we encouraged friendship evangelism. They would help with canvassing and work days in the Youth Group. At the Spanish worship mini service, they would "usher". The kids would sing in the Sunday School choir.

5. What are the benefits of involving Hispanics in the work?

Ownership of their "home church", a feeling of belonging, which can be difficult to overcome in a church where most of the people are not of Hispanic origin. Brings others to hear the WORD.

6. What are the drawbacks of involving Hispanics in the work?

We hoped and prayed for membership, many were Catholic in the heart for their lives and their families. Difficult to break some of the old traditions/beliefs.

7. Please note the main problems you encounter with Hispanic outreach.
(at whatever stage applicable)

Reaching the adult males— the leaders of the families. They would usually not come to church with the rest of the family.

III. The Synod

1. What help does the Synod provide?

Mucho support in the form of prayers, dollars- Kingdom Workers, advice, consultation, materials in Spanish. Whatever pretty much was needed they would help or try to help.

2. What other help could the Synod offer?

The Synod was pretty new at the whole Spanish outreach, so we did not have a lot of background knowledge going into it, we had ideas, they worked, Synod had ideas that worked, but perhaps, which only time can help, is more "what works, what doesn't" advice for Hispanic outreach.

3. Are you aware of the other work being done in the USA by the WELS?

Yes, it appears like a bunch, and the synod is good at referring one another to other missions which are similar in nature to talk to one another, share ideas, materials, etc.

4. Would such information be useful?

Very important, as that the "wheel is not reinvented", rather, we can learn from other people's successes and "failures".

5. Please note any comments or concerns about the future of Hispanic work in the WELS?

It costs time and money- our long term plan was to bring up the young adults, and kids through confirmation classes, they would then be members and leaders in the church, (as we had tremendous difficulty reaching the adult males.)

Please note any general comments or other questions you would like to see answered.

The work was challenging but rewarding, never easy, we keep all pastors, teachers, lay workers in our prayers. Kingdom Workers was great!