

# Home Mission 2017 Winter Report

*Keith Free – January 16, 2017*

As Home Missions looks forward to its March 30-31, 2017 Board for Home Mission meeting, over the past years, the Spring meeting has been the meeting at which new missions are authorized. District Mission Boards have been working at either submitting new start requests (mission request) or new ministry requests (enhancement request). Yet, we all know that there's one thing which is going to dictate how many requests will be authorized (funded) and that is money. Thus, the natural question at this time of the year is "How much money will the BHM be able to authorize?" While that is a great question, at this time we can't offer an answer because there are a number of variables.

- 1) How did the 2016 CMO end up? Did WELS hit its projections? Are we over? Are we under? That figure plays into the allocation Home Missions could receive.
- 2) What will the 2017 CMO be? Will WELS congregations increase their CMO, remain static, or decrease their CMO? Again, this figure which is in hand around the first Friday in February can play a role in budget allocation.
- 3) Another factor is this – how are individual gifts to the Home Mission Division Fund tracking this FY? The past fiscal year (FY16) Home Missions received \$407K in divisional fund gifts. Prior to that the past four fiscal years Home Missions received on average \$825K in divisional fund gifts. Through Dec. 31, 2016, Home Missions has received around \$237K in divisional fund gifts (in the divisional fund worksheet we have budgeted for \$600K). How much might Home Missions receive in FY 17 and how much should be planned to be spent in FY 18?
- 4) For FY 17, Home Missions planned to spend almost \$1.8M of the divisional fund gifts. The BHM EC realized there would be pastoral vacancies in some of the missions. The EC realized Home Missions would not spend its complete budget. How much will Home Missions spend from the divisional fund over the course of FY 17?
- 5) What will the DMBs submit for the 50 missions renewing their MPSAs? While I don't have an average total for the past 4-5 years, usually those 50 missions which are renewing their MPSAs, rather than seeing a decline in the request for MPSAs, usually as a whole, we see an increase in subsidy for those 50 missions. Now the majority of missions do see reductions, but usually there are some which stay at the previous subsidy figure and there are some special situations where 4-6-8 missions go up significantly. That impacts the budget.
- 6) There are 30 missions whose 2017-2018 MPSA is already set. While we haven't figured out what that reduction is, that certainly does help the budget.
- 7) The synodical council meets the last Thursday and Friday in February. The next biennium budget will be recommended for synod approval (or at least that is the plan). At this point, the Home Mission portion of the synod proposed budget is dropping Home Missions from \$5,705,000 to \$5,555,000, a reduction of \$150K each fiscal year.
- 8) In the Home Mission budget, we set aside \$250K each fiscal year for new missions.
- 9) What impact, if any, will the New Mission Initiative have on Home Missions budget?
- 10) What impact, if any, will Joint Mission Council dollars have on the Home Missions budget?
- 11) Will CEF continue its annual special grant to Home Missions?

And so Pastor Free, how many missions do you think Home Missions will open? Ask me that question after the BHM EC has made all its decisions on the 50 MPSA requests (and any other special

requests with which the EC may have to deal at the March 30-31 meeting). Lord-willing, those decisions will happen the morning of March 30. By that time, in addition to the MPSA question being answered, some of the questions above will be answered, trends will be better understood, and the decisions of the BHM EC on new ministry requests will be in hand. Believe me, Sean and I would prefer to work with known figures and give a bottom line answer. We realize our DMBs do so much work in preparing requests for consideration. Sometimes the sentiment might be, why bother if there are no funds. As you see from the list of 11 points, we are working with a number of variables as it relates to Home Mission finances. Thank you DMBs for your faithful service in working at and submitting requests and MPSA renewals.

### **District Mission Board Reminders**

As DMBs work with the subsidized and unsubsidized missions in their district, you have the right and the authority to decide if a mission is to be defunded. Sometimes a mission has been struggling for a number of years. Humanly speaking it doesn't seem as if subsidy will come to an end any time soon. The mission might be on track to receive subsidy for 15-20 years or longer. In situations like that, the DMB has the authority to determine if and when that mission would no longer receive subsidy. As we all realize, we need to be wise in the way in which we manage missions. Or, in some situations, a younger mission is struggling to gain traction. Worship has been taking place for 2-3 years and attendance is in the teens or low to mid-twenties. Faithful outreach has been ongoing. Lots of invitations have been extended. The mission members and pastors have followed a ministry outreach plan, but numerically speaking, the Lord hasn't blessed the efforts. Again, a DMB has the right to consider defunding and ultimately making the decision that the mission be defunded. I offer this for DMB consideration because sometimes it seems that the DMB thought process is let the BHM EC make those decisions. But, the DMB is the one working most closely with the mission and in the best position to evaluating and determine what steps should be taken regarding subsidy.

As DMBs consider the step of defunding, in the BHM Handbook, policy 330-01 and 330-02, there is the description and the policy for defunding a mission. Ideally there is at least a year of working with a mission if defunding is a possibility. As you will see in the policy, it takes the defunding process over two years.

Another item for DMB consideration is receiving the monthly report form from mission congregations (subsidized and unsubsidized – please note unsubsidized missions are to be submitting monthly reports just as subsidized mission are expected to do so). Sometimes a mission(s) can get into the habit of not submitting the monthly report in a timely fashion or may not submit a report for 2-3 months. DMBs, encourage these missions that as a matter of good stewardship, their reports come in a timely monthly fashion. Taking 15-60 minutes per month to let the DMB know how God is blessing a mission isn't too much to ask, especially when we understand how the gifts of God's people in our church body are allowing missions to receive financial support.

Currently, BHM Administration (Wayne, Sean, Keith) and a DMB are working with a mission which has not been submitting monthly reports for months at a time. The shepherd has offered encouragement. A well-worded letter was sent by the DMB chairman. Personal encouragements have been shared. The leadership of this mission will be contacted because up to this time monthly reports still are few and far between. Thus, if this matter does not change, subsidy will be suspended. We pray that doesn't have to happen.

The reason for sharing this is to remind our DMBs that we do expect each mission to regularly and promptly submit a monthly report. As you know the on line report form has recently been implemented. That should help facilitate and encourage an even more efficient process. Yet, if reports are not coming in, DMBs, after encouragement and contact with mission pastor and leaders, you have the right to say to a mission that subsidy is being suspended.

### **District Mission Board Training**

Since 2011 Home Missions has been offering annual DMB training during the winter months. By having an annual training session DMBs are kept abreast of documents, policies and guidelines which aid them in their ministry to and for missions. In 2017 (in addition to various reports) DMBs will be going through “Shepherd - The Barnabas Program” document. An important role DMBs have is working with missions (subsidized and unsubsidized) to encourage and support the missions in ministry. The Barnabas document gives direction and advice to DMB members. Most DMBs assign a member to be the “shepherd” for a mission. This document goes over a number of features related to shepherding. We pray the Lord continue to bless these annual training sessions.

### **District Mission Board Member - Synod Delegates?**

We would ask that the DMB members who are going to serve as delegates at the 2017 Synod Convention please email Sean and Keith with that information.

### **Mission Church's Classifications**

At the 2016 spring BHM meeting, Home Missions settled on two designations for missions; subsidized missions and unsubsidized missions. Currently we have 80 missions which receive subsidy (twenty-four are cross-cultural). There are 30 (by Keith's count) which are unsubsidized.

Over the past years Home Missions has continued to clarify how a ministry becomes an unsubsidized mission and how an unsubsidized mission is the same in every way as a subsidized mission, except for the fact it is not receiving financial support. We have two documents which give more information and background on unsubsidized missions.

This past November President Mark Schroeder weighed in with some thoughts on unsubsidized missions. For the complete letter, DMB members, you can go to the training site and look in the Report Folder for that communication. An issue which President Schroeder would like Home Missions to address relates to self-supporting congregations that seek to be declared missions long after they have been established or long after their daughter or second site effort has taken place. Even though there may be some contact with a mission board, are those congregations in fact missions? In the letter he lists some potential problems this could create for CEF. Wayne, Sean and I have talked about this matter. We let President Schroeder know we would bring this to the attention of the DMBs during the training sessions. After DMB input, we will put together a report to share with President Schroeder. Come the spring BHM meeting, we will then share an updated report.

## **Mission Vacancies**

As we know, our church body has a number of vacancies. Currently Home Missions has subsidized vacancies at Centennial in Milwaukee WI, Redeemer in Edna / Victoria TX, Atlanta GA, and St. John in Antigua, W.I (two vacancies). During the fiscal year some subsidized vacancies have been filled; Cross of Glory in Peoria / Vistancia AZ with Pastor Ben Foxen, Living Hope in Commerce City CO with Pastor Josh Sternhagen, Lehi UT with Pastor Dan Heiderich, Cross of Christ in Boise / Meridian with Pastor Ben Workentine and Sure Foundation in Woodside NY with Pastor Dave Salinas.

## **Individual Mission Campaign**

Through Christian Planned Giving, Missions (Home and World) is having an Individual Campaign that started July 1, 2016. Christian Giving Counselors (CGC) along with mission personnel, in many cases, are making visits to donors sharing the Mission story. To help share that story Northwestern Publishing House published a special Missions Forward in Christ edition. That special edition has been well received. Through the first six months, 1,072 visits were made by Christian Giving Counselors and during those visits 218 were made with mission personnel. Through January 15, 2017, \$491,000 in gifts have been received from 999 donations. The campaign will continue through June 30, 2017.

While there has been considerable discussion about using the gifts in ministry, Home Missions hasn't yet nailed down how to use the special gifts Home Missions receives. We continue to work through that process realizing that the total amount of the gifts will somewhat dictate to what Home Missions allocates its portion of the special gifts. Regardless of the total of the gifts which are received, it has been an important process to share with more WELS members in personal visits the stories of Home and World Missions. More WELS members are able to join with us in giving thanks for all the souls who are being reached with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

## **Multi-Site Conference 2016 Recap**

The National Multi-Site Conference for WELS Churches met November 14-16, 2016 at Grace Lutheran Church of Southern Arizona, a WELS multi-site church in Benson, Sahuarita, Tucson, and Vail. 144 pastors, teachers, staff ministers, laypersons, and other ministry leaders attended.

**What is multi-site?** Multi-site is a strategy for gospel ministry and mission work: one church carrying out gospel ministry at more than one physical location, created for the primary purpose of expanding gospel outreach. In addition to simply positioning churches to share Jesus with more people, there can be other benefits such as shared resources, efficient organization, cost effective programs, reaching a new community or target audience, expanded volunteer and leadership opportunities, and more.

**Why a conference?** This conference provided a venue for networking and building relationships with the growing number of WELS churches investing in this work. It was designed for churches already doing multi-site ministry, as well as churches just getting started or merely considering it. The conference workshops covered a wide selection of presentations to meet the needs of everyone regardless of their level of experience. Some workshop topics, for example, focused on key multi-site components such as communication, staffing, volunteers, budget and finances, merging two or more churches, organizational structure, and more.

**Who is doing multi-site?** The multi-site strategy is a good fit with our Lutheran beliefs and values that have stood the test of time. While the multi-site strategy is just one of many ways to expand mission work, it is significant to note that five of the eight new mission starts authorized by WELS Home Missions in April 2016 have a multi-site component.

### **Conference highlights:**

The keynote address set the tone for the conference. Pastor Rick Johnson shared the multi-site story of Crown of Life Lutheran Church in Corona, Beaumont, and Riverside, CA “bringing the gospel to more people, and more people to the gospel.” The multi-site strategy at Crown of Life has developed over the last 8 years, and the church plans to add more campuses.

Pastor Ron Koehler, representing our host church, Grace Lutheran in Tucson, presented an overview of their 4 locations. A video demonstrated the different look and layout of each location’s facility. Pictures also helped tell the story of Grace’s multi-site ministry which includes “saving sacred spaces.” Grace has responded to requests of neighboring churches, declining in numbers, desiring Grace’s leadership and ministry to assimilate their church into Grace’s multi-site strategy.

Pastor Daron Lindemann, chairman of the conference planning committee, and pastor of Holy Word, a multi-site church in Austin and Pflugerville, TX, comments: “The level of interest in multi-site amazed our planning committee. We had hoped for 80 people to attend, set up plans for possibly 100, and needed to make some exciting adjustments to accommodate over 140 who registered. I believe that the multi-site strategy, and its variations such as mergers, offer both an answer to some challenges, and a plan for expanded gospel outreach in the WELS.”

### **Comments from conference attendees:**

“It was a great conference. I especially enjoyed the optimism and excitement about sharing Jesus with people that was evident in the presenters and participants.”

“Having such a large variety of multi-site ministries to ‘sample’ at one time came about in the varieties of presentations, the attendees from all across the country, and having the opportunity to converse with them about their ministries.”

“We came with 16 questions for our site and had most of them answered well.”

“I appreciated hearing practical suggestions from people who are active in multi-site right now. Also that none of the presenters said, ‘You have to do it my way.’ They simply told us what they do, and said that we can make use of that info as we see fit.”

## **Fall – Winter Home Mission Action Items / Information**

Over the course of a calendar year there are various action items related to Home Missions. Here are some of those items which have taken place since the fall 2016 Home Mission meeting. In addition, there is some news to share since the fall 2016 BHM meeting.

*Summer Student Assistants* - the deadline for mission congregations to submit a request was November 15, 2016. There were two missions / mission minded congregations which submitted requests through their respective DMBs. By March 1<sup>st</sup> Professor Tiefel will let Home Missions know if there are two students to fill these requests.

*Antioch II Foundation Requests* – through the past number of years Antioch and its two foundations have contributed very generously to WELS ministries. Over the past years Antioch II has given special gifts to ministries supported by the WELS budget. Over those years Home Missions receiving subsidy have been recipients of a portion of those special gifts. This December Antioch II met to allocate the 2017 distribution of funds. Two of the Home Mission requests out of the five submitted received grants. While the BHM Administration prioritizes the requests which come in, Antioch II reserves the right to make grants based on its final prioritizations. While the Home Mission prioritized list is taken into account, usually that list is not followed exactly. We are certainly thankful for the two missions which received grants totaling \$16,200.00 from the \$130,000.00 which Antioch II granted.

As a reminder, Antioch II's distributions were significantly reduced for calendar year 2017. For calendar year 2015 close to \$750K was distributed to WELS areas of ministry. For calendar year 2016 around \$400K was distributed. As noted above, for the 2017 calendar year, \$130,000 was granted. The reason for this is in order to keep the Antioch II Foundation viable in the future. The Trustees' plan is to distribute only the net income of the Foundation's net assets which starts in 2017. You will want to keep that in mind for your future planning. While that is a significant decrease, we do give thanks to the Lord for all the gifts Antioch has been able to give to WELS and WELS related ministries these past years.

October 28 was the last day of employment on the Missions Staff for Katy Walker. Katy found other employment outside the CMM. We give thanks to the Lord for her 2 + years of service in Missions. At this time Peg Thiele has taken over the majority of Katy's responsibilities.

Over the fall months, the SA DMB and the SA District President (Pastor Chuck Westra – name may ring a bell ☺) have been working with the ministry in Grenada and its oversight committee. The decision has been made that oversight ministry will be transferred from the Grenada committee to the SA DMB. The funds which have been provided by an individual donor will now come to Home Missions to be used in Grenada. Over the next period of time the donor has committed \$3.4M. Mission staff will manage the finances and the SA DMB will manage the ministry. We pray the Lord's blessings on this change. As you may have concluded from the information above, there will be no financial costs to Home Missions.

While the logistics are still being pursued, Sure Foundation in NYC is looking at the potential of buying a larger space for its growing ministry. There might even be a chance to swap facilities with an interested party. While there is nothing concrete, just thought it would be good for our Home Mission members to realize what may happen.

### **Campus Ministry Conference**

The WELS National Campus Ministry Staff Conference will take place May 15-16, 2017 from Noon to Noon at the Wildwood Lodge in Pewaukee (1/2 mile from the Center for Mission and Ministry). The Conference is designed to help campus pastors and lay people in their training of students for ministry by studying God's Word and sharing ideas for campus work – whether a big, small, or just starting out campus ministry. Watch for online registration and agenda in late February 2017 located on the WELS Campus Ministry Web page:

<https://connect.wels.net/campus-ministry>. The Campus Ministry Committee contact person is Pastor Jonathan Klein; [pastorklein@lightofthevalley-wels.org](mailto:pastorklein@lightofthevalley-wels.org).

## **Church Extension Fund**

A vital partner to Home Missions is the Church Extension Fund (CEF). Since 1993 CEF has offered over \$35M in grants to missions. Through the years CEF has been active in helping mission congregations take important steps forward in purchasing land, constructing or buying a worship facility.

At the September 2016 fall CEF Board of Director meeting (BOD), the BODs approved the allocation of \$843,000.00 from a net asset policy adopted at the CEF February 2015 BOD meeting. Understanding it was the intent of the CEF BODs to make a fall distribution of at least \$700k, in the spring of 2015 Home Missions authorized two additional missions. Thanks to allocations in 2015 and the allocation in 2016 from the net asset policy, two missions will be close to being fully funded during the years in which they need subsidy. We give thanks to the Lord for the strong financial position of CEF and the willingness of the CEF BOD to help support starting more home missions.

## **Joint Mission Council**

For a number of years Home Missions has been working with World Missions through the Joint Mission Council (JMC = Home / World Administrators, Chairmen and a board member from the World and Home Mission Boards plus the Director of Missions Operations, 7 total). Over the past 30 months a concentrated effort has been enacted to coordinate, enhance, and create cross cultural ministry in the US and throughout the world. Part of that effort was in the hands of the Global Ministry Committee. Now that a number of steps have been taken, the GMC has “retired” (which is a nice way to say the committee no longer functions or exists).

At a meeting in early February 2016, Mission and Education Administrators and Leaders met to discuss the growing opportunities around the world for training spiritual leaders. As a result of that meeting and other meetings including approval by the Synodical Council, ultimately the Pastoral Study Institute (PSI) Team was created by adding a third called worker – Pastor Jon Bare. He joins Professor Allen Sorum and Professor Brad Wordell as the men who make up the PSI Team. The purpose of the PSI Team is to investigate, vet and put together study programs for individuals or groups of spiritual leaders who want to receive WELS training for ministry. Over the past years WELS Board for World Missions had been receiving many requests for such training.

This past fall, as well as through the winter members of the PSI Team have made and will make several trips around the globe to investigate these training opportunities. While a lot could be shared, the area which has connection to Home Missions is a trip to Vietnam. The middle of November, 2016 Professor Sorum and Pastor Bare joined Pastor Bounkeo Lor and Vicar Evangelist Hue Thao for two weeks in North Vietnam. Training took place the first week with 60 spiritual leaders from the Hmong Fellowship Church in attendance. The second week the PSI Team went to the villages to hear first-hand how the past years had an impact on the members in the village congregations.

At this point the Global Hmong Committee and the Board for World Missions (BWM) have received the report from the PSI Team about Vietnam. It was a promising report which indicated there is a willingness by the Hmong Fellowship Church (HFC) and its leadership team to have the WELS train and instruct its pastors. The HFC numbers are close to 70,000 members and over 300 pastors. Yet, while a good size ministry, there has been little training on the teachings of Scripture. In February the PSI Team will work with Pastor Lor in putting together a strategic plan. On March 16 the GHC will meet to set up budgets for 17-18 and

18-19. If the strategic plan meets with the approval of the GHC and the BWM, funding a full-time Asian Hmong Ministry Coordinator could be one of the decisions the GHC makes at its March 16 meeting.

In addition to considering Hmong ministry in Vietnam, the Global Hmong Committee (GHC) continues to look at how to serve the Hmong in the US and Thailand. Regarding Thailand, a committee of four Hmong pastors in Thailand has been established to work with the GHC. The TC4 and the GHC had its first teleconference in December. Additional teleconference or skype meetings will take place between these two groups at least once every two months. At the fall 2016 BHM meeting, Home Missions approved the GHC overseeing Hmong ministry through June 30, 2019.

### **Academia Cristo USA – One Year Exploratory Plan**

The Joint Mission Council approached WELS Latin America missionaries in the spring of 2016 and asked them to develop a plan for utilizing Academia Cristo in the USA. Like Latin America, many areas of the United States have little confessional Lutheran presence. Additionally, divisions are blurring as more travel and communication take place between Latinos on both sides of the border.

In October 2016 the Joint Mission Council approved a 1-year Academia Cristo USA exploratory plan. What follows is a basic outline of that plan:

- In Lent 2017, Academia Cristo will begin using online means to promote itself inside the USA for 12 months.
- Academia Cristo will target Spanish speakers in the USA who live more than one hour from a WELS congregation with a Spanish ministry. Urban areas with little to no WELS presence will be prioritized.
- If a WELS congregation in the USA specifically requests Academia Cristo to target their area, we are happy to oblige. Requests can be made by visiting [academiacristo.com](http://academiacristo.com) and chatting live with or leaving a message for one of Academia Cristo's operators.

What Does This Targeting Mean?

- 1) Academia Cristo's goal is to distribute at least 1 million online "digital fliers" a week to Spanish speakers in the US that meet the above criteria.
- 2) Facebook and other online means will be used to distribute the digital fliers.
- 3) Contact Follow Up - Latin America missionaries will prioritize and coordinate follow up on contacts made via these efforts.
  - a) Any Spanish speaking prospect who lives within one hour of a WELS congregation that has a Spanish ministry will be encouraged to connect with that congregation. Latin American missionaries will attempt to facilitate the connection, and follow the local ministry's guidance.
  - b) Any English speaking prospect who lives within one hour of a WELS congregation will be encouraged to connect with that congregation. Latin American missionaries will attempt to facilitate the connection and follow the local ministry's guidance.

The 1LA Field Coordinator will provide monthly reports to the Joint Mission council and the Board for Home Missions Hispanic Outreach Coordinator.



## Builders for Christ

Mr. John Lautz, Builders for Christ (BFC) Director has been working with Kingdom Workers (KW) and Home Missions to have advisors assist missions from looking to land through getting a contract with a construction company in place. There will be a phase one and phase two. A few volunteers have indicated their desire to serve in this capacity. At this point Mr. Lautz would make the first visit to lay out the program, determine where they are in the process and who would be the next contact for them. This process is not quite complete, yet we wanted our DMBs to be aware of it. Hopefully come the spring BHM meeting, we will have a report from Mr. Lautz on this program and will better understand its blessings for mission congregations. At this time, please do not contact Mr. Lautz about this potential “new” program. Now, if a mission wants to have BFC consider working on their building program, by all means, go ahead and contact Mr. Lautz.

## Home Mission Activities

For those attending a DMB training session, the 2016 BHM calendar is posted on the training site. For those reading this report and would like the 2016 BHM calendar, communicate that to Keith Free or Sean Young.

- Jan. 5; Mission Counselor / BHM Administration in Orlando FL
- Jan. 26 & 27; DMB Training @ CMM
- Jan. 23; DMB Training in Denver CO
- Jan. 26-27; Mission Conference in Denver CO
- Jan. 26 & 27; DMB Training @ CMM
- Feb. 8; Home Mission “Day” for Mission and Ministry @ WLS
- Feb. 9; Global Hmong Committee with TC4 (4 Hmong Pastors on Thailand Committee)
- Feb. 13-15; DMB Training in Phoenix AZ
- Feb 14 & 15; CEF Board of Directors in Los Angeles CA
- Feb. 15; Semi-annual 2-3 paragraph report on missions by DMBs**
- Feb. 22; DMB Training in Ottawa ON
- Feb. 23; Joint Council Meeting at CMM
- Feb. 24 & 25; Synodical Council at CMM
- Feb. 27 & 28; DMB Training in Austin TX
- March 3; **Noon Deadline for DMB submissions for BHM Mt.**
- March 16; Global Hmong Committee meeting in Wausau
- March 29 & 30; BHM EC meeting @ CMM
- March 30 & 31; BHM spring meeting starts with lunch at Noon and ends at 3:00 p.m. on March 31
- May 15 & 16; Campus Ministry Staff Conference in Waukesha
- June 22-25; LWMS International Convention in Orlando FL

Respectfully Submitted,  
Keith Free – Home Mission Administrator (01/18/17)