

INTO ALL CREATION: STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS FOR GOSPEL OUTREACH IN A
HIGHLY MOBILE WORLD

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ABSTRACT

Our world is changing. It is smaller and more mobile than ever before. People from every part of the globe are immigrating to Canada and the United States. People come for school, work, and to be with family. Some return to their country of origin, but most have come to Canada and the United States to live permanently. This great and current immigration to North America affects not only WELS home missions and local congregations, but it also affects the way WELS does world missions. With the world at its fingertips, WELS is better poised to “Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation”¹ than ever before. This recent immigration presents great opportunities for world outreach as the 40 million foreign born in the United States and 7 million foreign born in Canada are part of families and communities that stretch across oceans. WELS can continue to “Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation” by partnering with all the world. When WELS leaders, pastors, and members embrace foreign nationals as their brothers and sisters in Christ and as partners in sharing the gospel, God’s kingdom and the lost he seeks to bring into it are greatly blessed.

¹ Mark 16:15

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INTRODUCTION

“Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation.”² “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.”³ Our risen Savior, Jesus Christ, gave this command, privilege, and opportunity to his followers before he was taken up into heaven. We recognize it as the Great Commission. The Great Commission is also ours. Jesus has given us this command and we continue to make it our own. We take pride and ownership in this command to “Go into all the world.” It truly guides the mission of our church body. The Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) continues to carry out the Great Commission as it goes into all the world and seeks all people with the gospel. WELS seeks to carry out the Lord Jesus’ command both at home and abroad.

Yet, the world we live in is changing right before our eyes. The world, even the continent, we live in looks different than it ever has before. The world is smaller. It is becoming more and more mobile. Individuals, families, even whole communities are picking up and moving. They are not only moving from one village or region to another in the same county, but they are often moving to an entirely new continent. In many instances, their new continent is our continent. It is common for people to work, study at a university, or even study at a high school on the opposite side of the globe from the place where they were born, grew up, or have lived. Furthermore, not only are people going from one continent to the next for work or education and then returning to their country of origin, but many times they make this new country their home. This globalization truly has affected North America. In the United States alone, 40 million of the 310 million residents, as of 2010, were born in a foreign country.⁴ The world, the “all creation” spoke of in Mark 16, has literally come to us.

How does this great immigration to North America, Canada and the United States specifically, affect the way WELS does missions? It certainly presents opportunities and

² All Scripture references quoted in this paper are taken from the *Holy Bible NIV 1984*, Zondervan Publishing House. Mark 16:15

³ Matthew 28:19-20

⁴ United States Census Bureau, “The Foreign-Born Population in the United States 2010,” under “Population by Nativity Status and Citizenship: 2010.” <http://www.census.gov/prod/2012pubs/acs-19.pdf> (accessed November 22, 2013).

challenges on the home front rarely seen before. Cross-cultural ministry is no longer something local congregations should start thinking about, but it is reality.

By the year 2035, demographers believe that the Anglo-Saxon population will be one minority patch in the cultural quilt of America. 1990 census figures show that White America's current growth rate was 6% between 1980 and 1990 while minority groups grew at rates many times that. The Hispanic community grew by 53%. The Asian community boasted of a growth rate of almost 108% over that decade.⁵

There is no disputing whether this great immigration to Canada and the United States has and will continue to affect our home missions and local congregations. However, what about world missions? Does immigration to Canada and the United States affect WELS global mission work? "Hold on a minute, you jumped ahead way too quickly! Shouldn't we focus on the people whom God has brought to us from the world, and minister to them before we run right past them to where they came from?" Absolutely; both on synodical and local levels WELS must make diverse, cross-cultural ministry a priority, and by God's grace this is currently happening. Many WELS congregations are blessed to serve and reach out to foreign nationals and those who have immigrated to North America. WELS should and will continue to serve those who are on our home turf.

Should we now cease from going into all creation because the highly mobile world in which we live has come to us? Absolutely not. The globalization of our modern world and the recent immigration to Canada and the United States must affect and trigger actions in both home and world mission efforts. Because of this immigration WELS has opportunities for world missions unlike ever before.

The question this paper seeks to address is this: How can WELS continue global gospel outreach in a highly mobile world? That being said, it must be understood that it is not we as individuals or a synod who are benefiting from this globalization and immigration, but it is God's kingdom and the lost he seeks to bring into it. Such a question takes for granted that WELS local congregations in Canada and the United States have already come in contact and have relationships with many foreign nationals and have had the opportunity, given to them by God, to share the message of Christ with people from all parts of the globe. The reason why WELS is poised for world mission work unlike ever before is because WELS is now more

⁵ E.A. Sorum, *Change: Mission & Ministry Across Cultures* (Milwaukee: WELS Outreach Resources, 1997), 163.

equipped to go into all the world than ever before. How can we use the experiences and blessings of working with “all nations” God has given to us in our North American congregations to continue to go into all creation?

World mission work via home mission work became a topic of interest for this writer over his vicar year.⁶ As I entered the church sanctuary each morning and looked up toward the cross above the chancel, I saw hanging below the cross flags from 20 different countries that represented the original homes of the individuals who worshipped there. These countries ranged from Australia to Cuba to Grenada to Guyana to Namibia to Poland to Sri Lanka to China and many other countries in between. And as I stood up in the chancel on a Sunday morning and looked at the faces of those whom those flags represented, I couldn't help but think of all the faces behind the faces in front of me. I couldn't help but think of transcontinental relationships and connections many of those individuals certainly had.

In approaching this topic, what questions must be addressed? Is this great immigration actually happening, and what opportunities has God given by means of this immigration? Another part, and perhaps the most important, of world mission work via home mission work takes for granted that we are and will continue to work with foreign nationals in North America to carry out the Great Commission this way. It will be beneficial to look at how mission work in WELS has benefitted from working with nationals in the past. By looking at how God has blessed WELS world missions in the past with relationships with national converts, we may see ways in which God's kingdom can continue to benefit and grow from such relationships.

Partnering with foreign nationals in order to continue to carry out the Great Commission given by Christ is really the key to this entire effort. This paper will look at the continued importance and blessings of such relationships and partnerships. Once these issues are laid out and explored, this paper will look at some questions which need to be asked, suggested paradigms to move forward, and current efforts in WELS concerning this issue.

⁶ I spent my vicar year at Hope Evangelical Lutheran Church in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Though I crossed the border into Canada at the beginning of the year expecting to find moose, Mounties, and hockey pucks, I left with an exposure to much more of the world than just the Great White North.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There simply is not a lot in print specifically addressing how immigration to North America has benefitted world missions going out from North America or the issues and mission strategies attached to it. Are these types of things happening? I believe these types of things are happening right now. People simply have not written specifically about them yet. After all, this globalization and immigration to Canada and the United States is still in progress. Church bodies are still in the process of trying to wrap their minds around it and draw up mission strategies that God's kingdom may benefit. For example, in the past WELS Board for World Missions (BWM) and Board for Home Missions (BHM) generally worked separate from each other as they addressed separate issues and needs. This immigration is one of the issues and needs that affects both mission boards. These different issues and needs that could fall under both the BWM and BHM have caused the formation of the Joint Mission Council (JMC). These groups are currently looking at ways to approach the very issue at hand in this paper.

Though there may not have been a lot written about this issue specifically, there are certainly things that have been written related to it and which can benefit such a study. There are books and articles which speak to globalization and immigration, such as Doug Saunders's *Arrival City: How the Largest Migration in History is Reshaping Our World*. But Saunders is neither a theologian nor a missionary and simply does not look at that side of it. In Lucas Bitter's WLS senior thesis project *The World at our Doorstop: The Stream of Immigrants Flooding into North America's Largest Cities Demands our Stronger Commitment to Global City Mission Work*, he looked at the impact of urbanization and globalization in North America and the need for WELS to get a foothold in the global cities of North America, but he did not get into the world missions side of it. There is also literature on cross-cultural ministry, but it does not talk about world mission opportunities from the relationships and connections made in cross-cultural ministry at home. There are also countless missions and missiology books and articles out there, but they do not specifically address how the diverse populations coming into North America present opportunities for global gospel outreach.

This study greatly benefited from Theodore Sauer's, Harold Johnes's, and Ernst H. Wendland's work in their book *To Every Nation, Tribe, Language, and People*. This book presents a wonderful overview of the first 100 years of WELS world missions. It also highlights

the relationships and working partnerships between expatriate missionaries and nationals in the mission fields that served to be a blessing to the missions.

The writer also benefitted from books and journal articles which spoke about the importance of involving nationals in mission work and about the necessity of seeing and including nationals and foreign nationals as our brothers in Christ and our partners in gospel ministry. An insightful book for this portion of the research was Roland Allen's *Mission Methods: St Paul's Or Ours?*. Allen emphasized the importance of not only preaching the gospel to people of different cultural backgrounds, but he also stressed the importance of enabling them for gospel outreach. There were also several articles in mission quarterlies such as *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*, *Missio Apostolica*, and *Missiology* which spoke to similar matters that were of benefit to this study.

In WELS circles there are several missiology and mission strategy essays which were a joy for this writer during his study to see what was going on in his church body's missions as well as what motivated them. A majority of these essays were written before the present issue was in front of us, yet they certainly have applications to this pressing issue and help reiterate the importance doing this type of mission work. Two such essays were Harold Johnes's *Mission Strategy* and Daniel Koelpin's *Status of WELS World Missions on the Threshold of the 21st Century*. This writer also gained knowledge in regards to what was happening in missions in WELS circles from the last several "Books of Reports and Memorials" (BoRaM) from recent synod conventions. These showed the shifts that are currently happening in WELS missions. They even seemed to dictate shifts in the direction of this paper while it was underway.

As mentioned earlier there is not a lot in print concerning world missions via relationships and contacts at the local congregational level currently. Yet, this writer expects that more and more literature specifically tied to this topic will appear in the years ahead as progress is made and mission strategies are put into effect.

IMMIGRATION TRENDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Is this relevant? Is looking at ways and strategies in which to do global mission work by using and building relationships with those who have global connections and are part of a global network or community worth time, energy, and, yes, funds? When looking at the immigration

trends and numbers of people landing upon the shores, or more likely airport runways, of the United States and Canada the answer has to be a resounding “YES!”

In 2010, the United States Census Bureau estimated the number of foreign born⁷ in the United States to be nearly 40 million of the 309 million total population, or 13 percent.⁸ To put this into perspective, more than one out of every 10 people you encounter on a daily basis has friends, relatives, and family members in another country. The 40 million foreign born people are from every part of the globe. A majority of the foreign-born population is from Latin America, yet the entire globe is represented, and by no small number.

The foreign-born population from Latin America was the largest region-of-birth group, accounting for over half (53 percent) of all foreign born. By comparison, 28 percent of the foreign born were born in Asia, 12 percent in Europe, 4 percent in Africa, 2 percent in Northern America, and less than 1 percent in Oceania. Among the 21.2 million foreign born from Latin America, 11.7 million, or over half (55 percent), were born in Mexico. Of the total foreign-born population, 29 percent were born in Mexico.⁹

Foreign-Born Population by Region of Birth: 2010¹⁰

| Region of birth | Population | Percent |
|---------------------------------|---------------|--------------|
| Total | 39,956 | 100.0 |
| Africa | 1,607 | 4.0 |
| Asia | 11,284 | 28.2 |
| Europe | 4,817 | 12.1 |
| Latin America and the Caribbean | 21,224 | 53.1 |
| Mexico | 11,711 | 29.3 |
| Other Central America | 3,053 | 7.6 |

⁷ This report presents a portrait of the foreign-born population in the United States. The U.S. Census Bureau uses the term *foreign born* to refer to anyone who is not a U.S. citizen at birth. This includes naturalized citizens, lawful permanent residents, temporary migrants (such as foreign students), humanitarian migrants (such as refugees), and undocumented migrants. The term *native born* refers to anyone born in the United States, Puerto Rico, or a U.S. Island Area, or those born abroad of at least one U.S. citizen parent.

⁸ <http://www.census.gov/prod/2012pubs/acs-19.pdf>

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Numbers in thousands. Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see www.census.gov/acs/www/

| | | |
|------------------|-------|-----|
| South America | 2,730 | 6.8 |
| Caribbean | 3,731 | 9.3 |
| Northern America | 807 | 2.0 |
| Oceania | 217 | 0.5 |

The foreign-born population has increased steadily since 1970, when the foreign born population was 9.7 million.¹¹ At that time, the foreign-born population was only 4.8 percent of the total population of the United States. Not only has the total number of foreign born grown, as one might expect, but the percentage of the total population has also grown. The biggest jump came from 1990, 7.9%, to 2000, 11.1%.¹² Over half of the foreign-born population today came to live in the United States since 1990, with about one-third entering the country in 2000 or later.¹³

Since 1960 and 1970 there have also been other changes in the foreign-born population than just sheer numbers. “Origin countries of the foreign born have changed since 1960 in ways that have increased U.S. population diversity. The proportion of all foreign-born persons originating from Europe declined from 74% in 1960 to 13% by 2008. Over the same period, fivefold increases occurred in the proportion from Latin America (9% to 53%) and Asia (5% to 27%).”¹⁴

Foreign-Born Population by Region of Birth, 1960 to 2008¹⁵
(Millions of persons)

| | 1960 | 1970 | 1980 | 1990 | 2000 | 2008 |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Other Areas | 1.1 | 1.2 | 2.1 | 2.1 | 1.8 | 2.5 |
| Europe | 7.3 | 5.7 | 5.1 | 4.4 | 4.9 | 5.0 |
| Asia | 0.5 | 0.8 | 2.5 | 5.0 | 8.2 | 10.3 |

¹¹ There was no increase in the foreign born population from 1960 to 1970.

¹² Congressional Research Service, “The U.S. Foreign-Born Population: Trends and Selected Characteristics,” <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R41592.pdf> (accessed November 22, 2013).

¹³ <http://www.census.gov/prod/2012pubs/acs-19.pdf>

¹⁴ <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R41592.pdf>

¹⁵ Ibid.

| | | | | | | |
|---------------|-----|-----|------|------|------|------|
| Latin America | 0.9 | 1.8 | 4.4 | 8.4 | 16.1 | 20.2 |
| Total | 9.8 | 9.5 | 14.1 | 19.9 | 31.1 | 38.0 |

The shift in the origins of the foreign born becomes more vivid when examining specific countries. In 1960, European nations represented eight of the top 10 origin countries for the foreign born. By 1990, that figure had dropped to three countries, and by 2008, no European country ranked among the top 10 origin countries. In contrast, in 1960 only one country from either Latin America or Asia ranked among the top 10 origin countries (Mexico), but by 2008 that figure had increased to nine. Trends on the top 10 origin countries for the foreign-born population reflect not only foreign-born composition but also immigrant diversity.¹⁶

Ten Leading Countries of Birth for the Foreign-Born Population, 1960-2008¹⁷

| Rank | 1960 | 1970 | 1980 | 1990 | 2000 | 2008 |
|-------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1 | Italy | Italy | Mexico | Mexico | Mexico | Mexico |
| 2 | Germany | Germany | Germany | China | China | China |
| 3 | Canada | Canada | Canada | Philippines | Philippines | Philippines |
| 4 | U.K. | Mexico | Italy | Canada | India | India |
| 5 | Poland | U.K. | U.K. | Cuba | Cuba | Vietnam |
| 6 | Soviet Union | Poland | Cuba | Germany | Vietnam | El Salvador |
| 7 | Mexico | Soviet Union | Philippines | U.K. | El Salvador | Korea |
| 8 | Ireland | Cuba | Poland | Italy | Korea | Cuba |
| 9 | Austria | Ireland | Soviet Union | Korea | D.R. | Canada |
| 10 | Hungary | Austria | Korea | Vietnam | Canada | D.R. |

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

The immigration statistics in Canada are even more staggering, especially considering how recently this mass immigration has occurred.

In 2011, Canada had a foreign-born population of about 6,775,800 people. They represented 20.6% of the total population. Between 2006 and 2011, around 1,162,900 foreign-born people immigrated to Canada. These recent immigrants made up 17.2% of the foreign-born population and 3.5% of the total population in Canada. Asia (including the Middle East) was Canada's largest source of immigrants during the past five years, although the share of immigration from Africa, Caribbean, Central and South America increased slightly.¹⁸

The numbers of foreign born flowing into the United States and Canada speak for themselves. The steady increase in the past 40 years in the United States and the even more recent trend in Canada demand our attention. Our interactions with foreign born will only increase, and the number of foreign born in WELS congregations will only increase as well.

There is even more relevance in studying the trend of where from the foreign born are immigrating to the United States and Canada. This diversity presents great opportunities for our local congregations, but it presents great and new opportunities for world missions as well. The communities these foreign born are leaving behind are in need of the gospel. If God sees fit to place many of these foreign born into our congregations, as he already has, and bring them into his family, they will undoubtedly want to share the good news with their friends, relatives, family members, and community from which they came. If these opportunities are given to us by God, will we not want to act on them?

The diversity of WELS and its congregations is on a rise. This diversity has already presented ministry opportunities here at home in the United States and Canada. Hope Ev. Lutheran Church in Toronto, Canada and the 20 different countries represented is one example previously mentioned, but there are other diverse congregations in our circles as well. Many WELS members could probably name at least 4 to 5 congregations that offer services in a language other than English, perhaps congregations that worship in Hmong, Mandarin, or Spanish. Moreover, the number of foreign students hearing the gospel in WELS high schools is staggering and a huge blessing. In the 2012-13 school year there were 346 international students from 37 different countries at our high schools.¹⁹ The next step is helping these individuals share

¹⁸ Statistics Canada, "Immigration and Ethnocultural Diversity in Canada," <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/as-sa/99-010-x/99-010-x2011001-eng.cfm> (accessed November 22, 2013).

¹⁹ A majority of these international students come from countries in East Asia.

Jesus with their friends and families across the globe and using these relationships as opportunities to continue to go into all creation. The opportunities are there. We just need to be aware of and act upon the opportunities and situations that God provides.

GOD WANTS US TO DO THIS

“Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation.”²⁰ “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.”²¹ No one will ever argue against the Great Commission. No one will say, “Mission work isn’t really that important,” or “We shouldn’t do cross-cultural or global ministry.” It is stated quite clearly in Revelation, “After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people, and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb.”²² People from every nation, race, ethnicity, and culture are among God’s elect, and he will gather them into his heavenly kingdom. Through the Great Commission, God has made us part of his plan to gather his diverse elect, of which we are part. How exactly does God want us to carry out his mission? How do we make disciples of all nations? Specific directives besides “baptize,” “teach,” “go,” and “preach,” are not given by Jesus. When speaking of the Great Commission and searching for different ways and strategies to carry it out, we must go back to the source of missions and look at God’s mission strategy before we are able to discuss in rational, human terms the possible ways to accomplish such a lofty command given to us by our Savior.

God’s idea of missions goes back farther than Jesus’ command to “Go and make disciples of all nations.” It goes all the way back to Eden. As soon as there was a need God searched out mankind and began to reveal his mission strategy. “The LORD God called to the man, ‘Where are you?’”²³ “This question testifies to the nature of God throughout all generations. He continually seeks to initiate reconciliation between himself and his fallen creation.”²⁴ Before God even

²⁰ Mark 16:15

²¹ Matthew 28:19-20

²² Revelation 7:9

²³ Genesis 3:9

²⁴ Gailyn Van Rheenen, *Biblical Foundations & Contemporary Strategies* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 14.

announces his plan, his mission, he hints at it by his actions. God doesn't leave or abandon man in his sin. No, he immediately seeks out the lost. Then God reveals, in part, his mission strategy. "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head and you will strike his heel."²⁵ "What the LORD God announced to Satan for the comfort of Adam and Eve in their fallen state was this: A descendant of Eve, as the champion and substitute of all mankind, would win a victory over Satan and rob him of his power."²⁶ At this point, Adam and Eve did not know "the how" or "the who" exactly, but God told them "the what" of his plan, a promise of a Savior and his victory. "The Christian church has had full warrant for seeing in Genesis 3:15 the protevangelium, the very first promise of the Savior and of his victory over Satan and sin, a victory won through suffering and death."²⁷

Throughout the Old Testament, God would continue to share and act on his mission strategy. He chose and called Abraham to be the father of the nation by whom God would bless all nations, the nation through whom he would send the Savior. He again shared his strategy to save mankind by means of the Old Testament Ceremonial Law. It would be by means of a substitutionary blood sacrifice that he would reconcile the world to himself. God shared his mission strategy in greatest detail through the prophet Isaiah. He spoke of the servant who through his suffering and death would redeem many. In many times and many places through the Old Testament era, God continued to reveal his mission strategy of atonement for all mankind.²⁸

Harold Johne mentions that there are two very important characteristics of the atonement phase of God's mission strategy to keep in mind. First, it was not fully clear to men until it was carried out. Second, it was surprising, beyond our capacity to imagine. A human mind never would have dreamed of such a plan.²⁹ These two points are incredibly important when considering mission strategies today. We will not fully understand God's mission strategy until we are in heaven with him, and much of what we see now concerning his strategy will not make

²⁵ Genesis 3:15.

²⁶ Carl J. Lawrenz and John C. Jeske, *A Commentary on Genesis 1-11* (Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Northwestern Publishing House, 2004), 151.

²⁷ Ibid. 153.

²⁸ The thoughts of this paragraph parallel those of Professor Harold Johne's essay "Mission Strategy." Harold R. Johne, "Mission Strategy" Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Essay File, <http://wlsessays.net/files/JohneMission.pdf> (accessed October 11, 2013).

²⁹ Ibid.

sense to our rational human minds. Yet, we simply continue to do his work following the directives he has revealed to us in his Word and trusting him as the source and root of missions.

God reveals many things in Scripture concerning the second phase, the gathering phase, of his mission strategy. In the Old Testament, he tells us that this gathering would begin with the nation of Israel and then would reach out to all nations. In the New Testament, God tells us that he will gather his diverse elect through the preaching of his Word.³⁰

Why examine God's mission strategy when studying ways to continue to share the gospel with an ever transforming world? Why wouldn't we? There is a temptation to get caught up in strategies, plans, ideas, and all of the logistics of missions and forget about the mission altogether. God's mission strategy is centered on his Son Jesus Christ from beginning to end. All human mission strategies must share that very same center. God's mission strategy answered a need. It is the very need we seek to answer in our missions: to seek and to save the lost. Ultimately, by examining God's mission strategy we are reminded who is behind the mission. Our missions are nothing more than both a response to and part of God's mission.

Does the history of God's mission strategy recorded in the Bible say anything concerning world mission opportunities sprouting from home missions or local congregations? Did God use the world's diversity of culture and language to carry out his plan of salvation and to make his plan known to all? Absolutely, he did.

Consider Moses. Moses was God's instrument of deliverance for his people Israel from slavery in Egypt. Moses was a Hebrew raised in the palace of an Egyptian Pharaoh. Certainly this was ideal for the training of the man who would lead God's people out of Egypt. Stephen tells us in Acts, "Moses was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was powerful in speech and action."³¹ "We now can see how God made use of the wisdom of Egypt, Israel's persecutors, to carry out his mighty act of deliverance."³² In many ways, Moses seems to be a very unlikely candidate to be God's instrument of deliverance. He was a runaway murderer who had spent 40 years away from Egypt and his people. Not to mention that Moses did not want the job. Yet, who better? He knew the Egyptian language and culture, and he was familiar with the

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Acts 7:22

³² Ernst H. Wendland, *People's Bible Commentary: Exodus* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2005), 15.

protocol of the palace he would need to enter time and time again to approach Pharaoh. He also had a love for his Hebrew people. Moses is a prime example of how God uses people who are raised and trained in a culture which is foreign to the larger, present population to go back to their culture in order to carry out God's mission.

In addition, consider the events of Pentecost. At the time God sent the Holy Spirit to the apostles "there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven."³³ "Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Capadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs."³⁴ These countries represented three continents: Asia, Africa, and Europe. It was not by mere coincidence that God would give the spiritual gift of tongues permitting the apostles to speak in languages foreign to them at a time when people of every nation were in Jerusalem, but it was part of God's plan. Rather than sending the apostles into all the world as missionaries, as he would do soon enough, God brought all the world to the apostles in Jerusalem. These people from every nation were in Jerusalem for the feast which took place 50 days following the Passover Sabbath. After the Pentecost feast, they would then return to the places they came from ready to share the message of the gospel. Rather than sending out 12 missionaries, God sent out 3,000.

Could God be using this recent immigration to North America in a way similar to the way he used the gathering of "every nation under heaven" in Jerusalem at Pentecost? Rather than missionaries going out to every region and country on earth, representatives from every region and country on earth are gathering in North America. By making disciples of every nation who have immigrated to North America, we might just be making missionaries to every nation.

Consider the Apostle Paul. Paul of Tarsus was both a Roman citizen³⁵ and a Jew.³⁶ God used Paul's diverse and unique background along with Paul's wide spectrum of experiences and education to make Paul his "Apostle to the Gentiles."³⁷ Paul's early life in Tarsus certainly gave him great exposure to the gentile world. Tarsus was one of the largest trade centers on the

³³ Acts 2:5

³⁴ Acts 2:9-11

³⁵ Acts 16:37-38, Acts 22:25-29

³⁶ Philippians 3:5, 2 Corinthians 11:22

³⁷ Romans 1:5, Romans 11:13, Galatians 2:8

Mediterranean coast. Paul's Roman citizenship also proved to be of great benefit to him throughout his ministry in the Roman world, giving him privileges and protection unknown to those who were not Roman citizens. Finally, as a Jew Paul received extensive training in the Old Testament and in Jewish law and traditions. All of this helped to make Paul God's instrument through which he spread the gospel and established churches throughout the Roman world. Paul is a great example of how God's Church benefits from the diversity and the unique experiences of its members.

God uses all things for the benefit of his kingdom and those he seeks to gather into it. The three examples above are just a few ways God chose to carry out his mission strategy by using diverse and unique experiences of individuals and real events in time. God continues to act in the same way as he has throughout all of history.

A LOOK AT THE PAST

When considering strategic partnerships for gospel outreach in a highly mobile world it is helpful to look at how God has blessed WELS world missions in the past, and to look specifically at how God's work in foreign mission fields has benefitted from our partnership with national converts. Were our relationships with nationals simply a way for us to enter a field? Did we simply train some to be pastors and evangelists? Or was there more? By looking at the past and the many ways in which God has blessed our world mission efforts with relationships and partnerships with those in foreign fields we may see ways in which we can partner with foreign nationals living in Canada or the United States in order to carry out the Great Commission.

We start by looking back to where our synod first started their world mission efforts, Apacheland. Pastor Edgar and Minnie Guenther began their time in Apacheland in December 1910. Their first year on the reservation they met a Chiricahua Apache woman by the description of B-3.³⁸ The Guenthers visited her often, sharing the message of Jesus with her small daughter who was facing death. Later that year the daughter of B-3 passed away. In February 1912, when Minnie Guenther gave birth to her first child, it was difficult for Minnie to give up her school duties, so she often strapped the child into an Apache cradleboard and brought her along to the

³⁸ When General Crook took over the reservation back in the 1800s, he found it difficult to keep track of the nomadic Apaches. So he assigned numbers to them that roughly corresponded to the geographical area and clan in which they lived.

school room and continued to teach. One day B-3 walked into the classroom, picked up the small Guenther child, walked out the door and proceeded to the Guenther's house. She was fussing over the baby, and began to do the dishes, sweep the floor, and make up the beds. This routine became the norm for B-3. She had found a new daughter, even calling the child Wenonah "my daughter" in Apache. The Guenthers in turn called B-3 Shima, meaning "my mother" in Apache. Shima practically raised Wenonah as Minnie continued to carry out her duties at the school. Eventually the Guenthers had eight more children and Shima loved them all.³⁹

Shima may not have realized it, but she was Edgar and Minnie Guenther's partner in sharing the gospel in Apacheland. Minnie Guenther would have had a very difficult time carrying on with her duties at the school. Perhaps she wouldn't have been able to teach at all if it was not for the motherly care of this Apache woman. By caring for the Guenther children, Shima allowed Minnie to continue teaching Apache children about their loving Savior.

There is much more to gospel ministry than preaching and teaching. There is much more to it than all the things that pastors, teachers, and staff ministers learn at the WELS ministry training schools, or what a national pastor or evangelist learns at a seminary in a foreign field. This is a very important message we can learn from Shima and apply to our mission efforts today. There are so many things people can do besides preach and teach to enhance the spreading of the gospel. In WELS home missions and local congregations there are now individuals who can speak languages our pastors, teachers, and missionaries cannot speak as well as individuals who can relate and connect to cultures we have a difficult time relating to. If a person has a love for their Savior and a want to help spread his message, there are opportunities for them to help enhance our work in foreign fields besides becoming pastors, teachers, or missionaries themselves.

Around the time of the First World War, the Wisconsin Synod began to receive appeals for help from confessional Lutherans in Lodz, Poland. Many of the people asking for help had relatives who had previously immigrated to the United States and these relatives were members of the Wisconsin Synod. In 1921 the synod authorized Pastor Otto Engel of Randolph, Wisconsin, a native of Lodz, to study the church situation in Poland and present a report. God blessed the work of Engel and the national pastors in Poland so much that eventually there was a

³⁹ Theodore A. Sauer, *To Every Nation, Tribe, Language, and People* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1992), 41.

need for someone to superintend the work there. Engel accepted the call to superintend in 1924. Eventually, Engel would return to his family in the Midwest. At that time, Adolf Dasler, another native of Lodz, was called to take his place. Dasler had come from Poland to study at Northwestern College and the Wauwatosa Seminary. He had been serving the Wisconsin Synod congregation at Kingston, Wisconsin, when he accepted the call to Poland.⁴⁰

God blessed the efforts of both Engel and Dasler in Poland and the decisions which led both men to share the gospel and superintend the work in their native land. Engel helped organize and extend the mission work. He especially recruited young men for seminary at Berlin-Zehlendorf in 1924. Under Dasler's directorship the congregations at Lodz and Andrespol were contributing more and more to their pastors' salaries, helping the poor, and assisting the students at Zehlendorf.⁴¹

The decisions to call two Polish immigrants to superintend the mission work in Poland must have been obvious. Sending two men who spoke Polish as their first language and who were raised in the very city that was appealing for help makes a lot of sense. The very ideas and work being discussed in this paper are not necessarily foreign or new to our circles. They were happening almost 100 years ago. At the beginning of the 20th century, WELS had opportunities similar to those we have today due to the large percent of the population that was foreign born. Pastors Engel and Dasler are perfect examples of world missions benefitting from immigration to the United States and acting on the gifts God has given to his church.

A decade after Pastor Otto Engel returned to Lodz, Poland, Jonathan Udo Ekong was sent by his Ibesikpo clan in Nigeria to the United States to receive an education and to find a church body that would help bring his people the true word of God. Ekong came in contact with the Synodical Conference and gave them glowing reports of the Ibesikpo mission. Ekong later became a leading figure in the establishment and work of the Lutheran Church of Nigeria. Following his ordination into the Lutheran ministry in 1938, Ekong returned to Nigeria and began a ministry there that extended over a period of 46 years. Through Ekong's contacts with Synodical Conference officials, a survey commission was authorized to visit the Ibesikpos. Pastor Immanuel Albrecht of WELS, Dr. Henry Nau, and other representatives of the Synodical

⁴⁰ Ibid, 69-71.

⁴¹ Ibid, 71.

Conference were selected to serve on this survey trip. After their trip, they recommended that these African congregations be assured of the support of the Synodical Conference and of the sending of resident missionaries to Nigeria as soon as possible. This mission field later became an organized church body known as the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Nigeria (ELCN). In December 1960, as the ELCN neared the end of its twenty-fifth year, it numbered 194 congregations, 33 preaching stations, 33,433 baptized members, 13,645 communicants, and was served by 18 African pastors and 18 missionaries. The mission staff also included nine medical workers, seven teachers, and two lay workers.⁴²

A look back at the history of WELS world missions truly shows the amazing and wondrous ways in which the Lord works to expand his kingdom. By leading one man, Jonathan Udo Ekong, to study in the United States God brought thousands upon thousands of souls into his family. This was not done by the initial sending of expatriate missionaries, though it would lead to that, but by one student traveling across the Atlantic to look for a confessional Lutheran church to support and expand the ministry of his small group back in Nigeria. We can thank God that the Synodical Conference acted upon the opportunity for Nigerian mission work he gave to them by putting them in contact with a foreign student who had a vigor for confessional Lutheranism and the desire to share it with his people.

WELS mission efforts in Japan greatly benefitted from relationships and partnerships with Japanese nationals as well. One example of this was the help expatriate missionaries received from nationals when producing radio broadcasts.

Already in 1963, we began proclaiming the Savior to the Japanese by means of radio. These radio broadcasts serve to illustrate that the church is one body made up of many parts with each part having its own function and purpose. Japanese pastors, American missionaries, and laymen all preach over the radio. The missionaries usually need to have their sermons checked by a Japanese for grammar. The Japanese laymen in turn need to have their sermons checked by a pastor or missionary for content before they go on the air. The result is a broadcast that proclaims the comforting truth of God's word in Japanese to anyone who will listen.⁴³

Japanese nationals also played a large role in making printed materials available in Japanese by translating many publications such as Luther's Catechism.

⁴² Ibid, 120-126.

⁴³ Ibid, 161.

When producing printed materials, radio broadcasts, and other language related ministries today, nationals and foreign nationals still play a huge role. As stated in the excerpt above, God has given many gifts to his Church and none of them go unused. One gift that will continue to be a great asset to world mission work is the gift of language. Since the language of the foreign field is often very difficult, or even impossible, for an expatriate missionary to master, this is one part of ministry that will continue to be blessed by native speakers.

The Central African mission field is one in which the Lord God has also blessed with amazing success. Success which can only be attributed to the partnership between expatriate missionaries, national leaders, and congregational members. Often times it was more than a partnership with nationals, but ownership by the nationals for the mission through which God granted success. “The Lutheran Church of Central Africa has been blessed with a large number of highly consecrated national pastors, evangelists, and lay people, who, with great zeal and with marked success, have spread the saving gospel in their land, and who increasingly have assumed responsible leadership of their church.”⁴⁴ Evidence of this is shown by the great number of national pastors, seminarians, evangelists, teachers, lay leaders, interpreters, medical staff, and even tribal chiefs who made the spreading of the gospel their own. Certainly, this brief look in the past is not able to acknowledge the efforts of all those whom God has used to share his message in Central Africa. The great number of nationals who took part in this mission certainly speaks to the willingness of the expatriate missionaries and administrators to embrace such a partnership with nationals as well as how important such partnerships are in carrying out God’s Great Commission.

One way in which God’s kingdom has benefited from WELS connections and relationships with nationals is when these relationships have served as bridges into new mission fields. Such was the case with Rev. David Orea Luna and our entrance into the Mexican field. Previous mission work across the border from El Paso, Texas was attempted, but was hindered by Mexican law. However, when Dr. Luna sent a letter of appeal to WELS President Nauman, he was later declared to be in doctrinal agreement with WELS by a formal colloquy along with one of Luna’s former students Pastor David Chichia Gonzales in March 1968. The door was finally open for WELS gospel work in Mexico. By November of 1970, the Confessional Evangelical

⁴⁴ Ibid, 176.

Lutheran Church of Mexico (IELC) was formally organized, with Dr. Luna as its first president.⁴⁵

One never knows the gospel opportunities which God will place in front of us as a church body. Many of these opportunities are presented in the form of an appeal by a lone individual or by another church body. Both have happened and have been blessed by God in WELS world missions. Through human eyes some of these mission opportunities have appeared to be of great risk. As stewards of the resources and means God has given us to carry out mission work, it is important for us to evaluate these potential risks, but at the same time we need to trust that God will bless our efforts when doing his work. This very thought also applies when speaking of helping foreign nationals in Canada and the United States take the gospel to their family, friends, and community in different parts of the world.

WELS entered several other mission fields by appeals as well. Some were fields that by law were only accessible if there was an existing church body of the same fellowship or that had individuals with whom WELS had been in contact with previously. This continues to be the case today as many foreign mission fields are closed to foreign church bodies and expatriate missionaries. This fact then reiterates the importance and need to embrace contacts, relationships, and partnerships with foreign nationals in Canada and the United States.

In this brief look at how God's kingdom and WELS world missions have been blessed by the work and partnership with nationals there were many significant persons, places, and situations left out. Those which have been included have proven beneficial to this study in showing the importance of embracing nationals as our partners and encouraging their God-given gifts, whatever they may be, in the spread of the gospel globally. This brief history has also shown unique ways in which the Lord brings individuals and groups in contact with the gospel and with one another. *To Every Nation's* praise for the role national Christians played in the history of WELS world missions is a fitting way to conclude this section.

It's a story about national Christians and their vital role in the development from mission to church on foreign soil. Missionaries will unanimously agree that without men like Salimo Hachibamba or Ryuichi Igarashi or Chen Tung Ke their work could never be properly indigenized. Training such men to become church workers is of the essence. What a joy to see their talents developed and used in ways better adapted than those of foreigners to serve the needs of their own people! What a thrill to see that first love of the gospel bring forth fruit in miracles wrought by the Spirit of God! Our world mission

⁴⁵ Ibid, 232-233.

outreach today rests more on the number of national Christians reaching out to their own people than on the amount of missionaries sent from America.⁴⁶

PARTNERSHIP IS THE KEY

Christians love to think about and celebrate global and cross-cultural mission work. We love thinking about all the people all over the globe WELS is reaching with our offerings. We love celebrating Pentecost. We love to look back and rejoice at the way in which God brought his saving message to so many different nations through so many different languages. We love hosting mission festivals at our local congregations and praising God for continuing to reap his harvest all over the globe. We also love that God has allowed us to participate in such ministries in word, deed, and offerings. We love reaching people who look and speak differently than we do with God's love.

In theory, the statements in the previous paragraph sound pretty good. They seem to really highlight the right attitude toward global and cross-cultural ministry. In reality however, those reasons for loving and those attitudes toward global and cross-cultural ministry are the same reasons that often make such ministry efforts so difficult and slow developing. They are also why there are often struggles when trying to partner with others to spread the gospel with those who look and speak differently than we do.

We must stop looking at immigrants as immigrants and foreign nationals as foreign nationals. We must stop seeing them and referring to them as something different. Rather than seeing them as another resource or tool we can use to reach the lost, we must see them for who they really are: our brothers and sisters in Christ and partners in sharing the gospel. It is not until we do this that we will be able to do gospel ministry together and continue to reach the lost. We are not far removed from being in their shoes. At one time or another, we were all immigrants and foreign to this land we now call home and see as ours. Yet, being immigrants to North America is not the only thing we have in common. We are all children of God, blood-bought by Jesus Christ. When these truths are realized and are part of us, we will then truly be able to be partners with foreign nationals for gospel ministry.

⁴⁶ Ibid, 301.

Roland Allen speaks quite seriously and to great depth concerning this matter in his book *Missionary Methods: St Paul's or Ours?*. When considering a few quotations from his book it is important to keep in mind that these statements were originally written in 1912. Yet, the principles and truths behind his perhaps harsh words are still important for us to think about and be cautious of in the 21st century.

We have allowed racial and religious pride to direct our attitude towards those whom we have been wont to call "poor heathen"... Consequently we have preached the Gospel from the point of view of the wealthy man who casts a mite into the lap of a beggar, rather than from the point of view of the husbandman who casts his seed into the earth, knowing that his own life and the lives of all connected with him depend upon the crop which will result from his labor. Approaching them in that spirit, we have desired to help them. We have been anxious to do something for them. And we have done much. We have done everything for them... We have done everything for them except acknowledge any equality. We have done everything for them, but very little with them. We have done everything for them except give place to them. We have treated them as "dear children", but not as "brethren."⁴⁷

Allen is speaking from the perspective of world missions and establishing indigenous churches. The key for both establishing indigenous church bodies and partnering and working with foreign nationals at home and nationals abroad is still equality and as brothers and sisters in Christ.

The past three years an international high school student from East Asia has lived with my parents. By God's grace, during that time she has come to know Jesus as her Savior and has been baptized and is currently going through confirmation class with our Pastor. When she asks how she can share the message of Jesus Christ with her family and friends when she returns home, what is my response? Do I approach her situation as the lifelong Christian and seminary student who has all the answers and certainly knows better than she does? Or do I ask her what she thinks and place much of the responsibility on her? After all, she knows her family and the culture in which they live far better than I do. Also she is the one returning to them, not I. Yet, she is asking for help. Her family will only hear the gospel if we truly work together. She will feel more self-confident to share the message in a relevant way to her family and friends if I show her that I trust she can do it. In such a situation it is of the utmost importance that we are partners in sharing the gospel with her family and friends.

Partnership in gospel ministry between expatriate missionaries and nationals, between local pastors and foreign nationals is shown and achieved through the sharing of responsibility. If

⁴⁷ Roland Allen, *Mission Methods: St Paul's or Ours?* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1968) 142-143.

responsibility is not shared, the perception is that there is a lack of trust, and often perception is reality.

Allen also stresses the importance of giving responsibility and involving converts early, since that is the natural response for someone whose heart has been touched by the gospel. He speaks of the dangers of a mission that is totally dependent on the missionary. In such cases, converts become dependent on the missionary and do not make the mission their own. Once again, Allen is speaking of establishing indigenous churches, yet this is certainly applicable to helping foreign nationals take responsibility in sharing the gospel with their loved ones who reside in a different part of the globe.

Consider the recent spread of the gospel in less accessible places such as Nepal and Pakistan. Nepal has a 4,000 member confessional church in the span of eight years without a resident missionary. There is also a confessional Lutheran church, Bible correspondence, and teaching program reaching 35,000 students in Christian schools in Pakistan.⁴⁸ Can such success be attributed to the fact that there was not a resident missionary in either field? There was no missionary to depend on or to be the one person with all the answers. Rather the nationals were forced to take responsibility for the gospel outreach. Now, it's a little extreme to say we should never send an expatriate missionary into a foreign field again based on the success in these two fields. Perhaps Nepal and Pakistan are exceptions, however there is often a temptation for the mission to become dependent on the missionary.

Consider our local congregations. One of the very first things a pastor does after taking a person through Bible Information Class and confirmation is to try to involve them in the ministry of the congregation somehow, somehow. The pastor knows that if they have responsibility and feel a sense of ownership in the congregation and the ministry being done there, they will continue to be involved and grow as part of the church and, yes, even in their faith.

The very same can be said when partnering with a foreign national to share the gospel with their network and community that stretches to another continent. If they know that part of the responsibility lies with them and, perhaps more importantly, that they have the trust of their pastor and church leaders, they will ever the more want to share Christ.

⁴⁸ Numbers and information considering gospel work in Nepal and Pakistan gained from a BWM administrator via an email interview.

“Pastor, I have family back home in Trinidad that I would like to hear the same message you preach on Sunday here in Toronto, how do you think we should do that?” “Well, what do you think might be the most effective way? You know them and the things they face every day much better than I.” “Well, would it be possible to place your sermons on the Internet and they could gather together and watch them as a group?” “We could definitely make the sermons available online. And when they gather they could even sing a few hymns and pray together.”

Striving for partnership is more than sharing responsibility and showing trust. It is also respecting each other’s ideas. Allen shares what happens and what it looks like when partnership and equality in mission is taught and preached but then not practiced. “We have taught them that the church is a brotherhood, and that they must all work together for the good of the whole, but in practice we have denied their right and their duty to exercise that responsibility, and that at a most vital point.”⁴⁹ When their right and duty to exercise responsibility is denied, the real thing that has been denied is the opportunity to work with them to share the gospel.

As we see foreign nationals for who they really are, our brothers and sisters in Christ and our partners in carrying out God’s Great Commission, the gifts God has given them become evident and obvious. We praise God for all the gifts he has given his Church. Also, as we partner with foreign nationals for gospel ministry we may come to the realization that there are many areas of ministry, especially cross-cultural and ministry in foreign fields, in which our foreign national brothers and sisters have a great advantage.

As national converts who become pastors in a foreign mission field, foreign nationals can more authentically and credibly share the gospel with their family, friends, and community than an expatriate missionary or a Canadian or American pastor can. The reason for this is even more than being familiar with the same language, people, places, and culture, but they also still do or at one time did share the same world view as those we are trying to reach with the gospel.

Worldviews are the most fundamental and encompassing views of reality shared by a people in a culture. A worldview is a grid through which one interprets and interacts with all aspects of life... Worldview grids are emotionally held; they shape personal and collective identities. As a whole system a worldview gives meaning to every aspect of life. They are usually formed in affectionate relationships and reinforced through ritual... At the foundation of a worldview system are core assumptions with closely associated values. Out from this core, societal structure and processes emerge in the form of laws, codes of behavior, community ethics, and institutions, such as the family, government,

⁴⁹ Allen, 98.

religion, economic exchange, and education. A process of reciprocation back and forth between core assumptions with their latent meaning and outward behavior is endemic to all societies. As we age, most of us become increasingly aware of these layers of culture, both in plurality and complexity. There is much more to life than meets the eye. Underneath every exterior there is something deeper, just as in an iceberg. Behavior and beliefs are what we see above the surface of the ocean. The worldview is the large hidden mass beneath the surface that holds the whole iceberg.⁵⁰

This excerpt speaks to the fact that it is much easier to change the outward behavior of a person than the inward beliefs or worldviews behind their exterior. That is, inward beliefs or worldviews can only be adjusted when the behaviors are acknowledged in some form. This principle applies to mission work in that those who truly understand and have lived in the beliefs and worldviews of a person are much better equipped, first, to understand what makes their outward behavior the way it is and second, share the gospel with them in an effort to help transform their previous behaviors and worldviews into Christian behaviors and worldviews.

Conversion to Christianity includes a transformation of worldview. The Christian convert's grid through which he now interprets and interacts with the world is Christ. Yet, how does such a worldview shift take place? "In close relationships worldviews are formed, and then reinforced through experience. It will also be in close relationships and by experiences that worldviews are transformed."⁵¹ It may very well be that foreign nationals are much more equipped to form such a relationship and gain an opportunity to share their Christian worldview. Someone who does not know Christ is perhaps much more likely to give a hearing to the gospel when it is coming from someone who looks, acts, and talks the same way as they do. Some of the most difficult barriers for an expatriate missionary to overcome are never an issue for the foreign national who shares the same culture and language as those we are trying to reach with the gospel.

In an article concerning cross-cultural evangelism the author asks six key questions. "1. Can we do evangelism without knowing the language? 2. Can we do evangelism without understanding the culture? 3. Can we do evangelism without relationships? 4. Can we do evangelism from a position of power? 5. Can we do evangelism for the wrong reasons? 6. Can

⁵⁰ Robert Strauss and Tom Steffen, "Change the Worldview... Change the World" *EMQ* volume 45 number 4 October 2009, 461-462.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, 462-463.

we do evangelism without words?”⁵² Without getting into why he is asking these questions or his answers to them, it is pretty obvious that when addressing such questions, people who share the same language and culture have the edge in gospel outreach. This is yet another reason why a partnering with foreign nationals in Canada and the United States will prove so vital in our efforts to continue to carry out the Great Commission in a highly mobile world.

As touched on previously in this section, a partnership in the planning process for a mission or outreach plan along with the sharing of responsibilities is very important when working with foreign nationals in gospel work. When talking about these different advantages in terms of a foreign national in Canada or the United States who is sharing the gospel with those of his or her culture in another part of the globe, being part of the mission plan process seems to be one of those very special advantages. Planning is an advantage that we will want to be careful that we do not take away or jeopardize in the future.

“We usually don’t ask local leaders what their visions are because we are too busy thinking about our own. We find it easier to use them as a means to reach our dreams than to help them explore theirs.”⁵³ This author is also writing in the context of planting indigenous churches, yet his principle certainly applies to partnering with foreign nationals as well.

Nationals who come on board with our agenda may become so absorbed in Western organizational culture, patterns of ministry, and models that they suffer “extraction.” Other nationals begin to regard them as Western rather than as participants in the local culture and society. The final result is that the enlisted workers capacity for truly contextualized evangelism ministry, discipleship, leadership, and church development becomes limited... We must enable gifted national leaders to develop churches in which the forms and styles of worship, music, leadership, communication, community, and learning... are contextual to the culture of the people.⁵⁴

Another key part of our partnership is embracing foreign nationals’ planning and organizational styles, even if it is different from our own or is not what we are used to. By neglecting them in the planning phase of the outreach effort or mission, it is not only the foreign national we might be hurting or limiting, but the mission itself.

⁵² Phil Thornton, “Cross-cultural Evangelism & Short-term Missions: How Do We Do It Well?” *EMQ* volume 48 number 3 July 2012, 302-303.

⁵³ Kelly Malone, “Releasing Indigenous Leaders: Empowerment v. Enlistment” *EMQ* volume 48 number 4 October 2012, 408.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 410.

When doing world missions with foreign nationals as our partners, “partner” truly is the key word. Once we see them as our brothers and sisters in Christ and as partners in global gospel outreach, God’s kingdom and those whom he seeks to bring into it are blessed through our partnership. We looked at a few of the advantages to partnering with foreign nationals in world missions, yet the most important thing which will allow all those apparent advantages to truly be advantages remains trust. A foreign national pastor who serves in the United States commented, “When we have trust then we can work together and learn from each other. This factor will educate and bridge for a better bond in the future.”⁵⁵

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Much has been said showing the relevance and need for strategic partnerships for gospel outreach in a highly mobile world. No one can deny the obvious opportunities for global gospel outreach which are right at our fingertips as a result of the mobility of the world, especially in terms of the recent, massive immigration to Canada and the United States. No one can deny God’s will for us to continue to preach the good news to all creation and the many unique ways in which God often carries out his will. Finally, no one can deny the importance of forming true gospel partnerships and the blessings for God’s kingdom which flow from such partnerships. The “what,” “why,” and “who” are all there, but what about the “how?” How do we move forward? What questions must be considered in order to turn the abstract into concrete?

There are 40 million foreign nationals living in the United States. Many of them have come in contact with WELS in a variety of ways. Some are members of local congregations while others have come into our circles through programs other than worship such as ESL (English as a Second Language) classes, Early Childhood Centers, Human Aide, etc. Not to mention the fact that there are 346 international students in WELS high schools.

One question that needs to be asked is this: Should we actively seek out partnerships with some of the individuals and groups we have come in contact with and discuss gospel outreach as it pertains to their families, friends, and communities in other parts of the world, or should we wait to be approached for this conversation by them?

⁵⁵ Comments gained from an email interview.

In the Great Commission, Jesus tells us to make disciples. He tells us to do this by bringing people in contact with the Word and Sacrament by baptizing and teaching. This is how followers of Christ are made. Therefore, before we send missionaries into the world or seek partnerships for gospel outreach, we must first create and equip mission-minded Christians through Word and Sacrament. In others words, before we have lofty hopes and dreams to do world mission work as soon as a foreign national walks into our church building, we must first integrate him or her into our local church family. It is then, and only then, that we may proceed in forming a partnership to take the message of Jesus Christ to the lost. It is not until after a person has come to faith and seen the love of Christ in his or her own life that he or she will see the need to share their faith and the love of Christ with others. Including foreign nationals as part of our local congregations is the first and perhaps the most important step in building a gospel partnership with them. After a relationship is established with these brothers or sisters in Christ, we are then able to proceed by forming a partnership for such an endeavor if the opportunity presents itself. At this time, we need to let them know that we want to partner with them so that they are able to reach their family and community with the love of Christ. If we are open to the idea by showing them how much we love them and care for their whole family, they also will be encouraged to share the love of Christ they have seen in their own lives with their families.

Why is it so important to first integrate foreign nationals into our local congregations before partnering with them for global gospel outreach? This foreign national is now part of the local community, and the primary mission of our local congregations is to reach the lost in our communities. The foreign nationals in our communities are souls for whom our Savior died before they are our partners for global gospel outreach. The growing mobility of the world is changing our local communities. God is giving us many opportunities to share the gospel with those many different people, and he will continue to do so. We must first care for the souls he has placed right in front of us. If a global mission opportunity sprouts from sharing the gospel with those in our local communities, then may God be praised. But an awareness and effort towards strategic partnerships for gospel outreach is different than turning every foreign national we meet into a missionary.

After the foreign nationals who are part of our community have been integrated into our local congregation and have expressed interest in sharing the gospel with their community abroad, how do we proceed? Should there be a paradigm or procedure in place? Every situation

will be different. Not only is every person and partnership going to be different, but every family and culture with whom we are seeking to share the gospel with will be different as well. With this case-by-case nature having been stated, it will still be wise to have thought through a few steps that can be taken in every situation.⁵⁶

When giving support for and exploring the idea of strategic partnerships for gospel outreach in a highly mobile world with the purpose of continuing to go into all creation, perhaps the most important question is: What is the end goal? Are we hoping to start new missions? I believe the goal must simply start out being to connect more people with God's love and to use any opportunity before us to do so. Just as with any outreach or mission strategy, the goal is to reach the lost with the gospel and make disciples of Christ. How we do that will be determined by the situation. If by God's grace our partnership efforts would lead to an opportunity to start a new mission in a foreign land, then may God be praised, but this should not be the primary goal initially when we are made aware of such an opportunity.

There are many more questions to be asked. The more we get into this cross-cultural phenomena as individual congregations and as an entire synod, the right questions to ask, hopefully along with the right answers as well, will become clearer.

A SUGGESTED PARADIGM

As mentioned in the previous section, no two mission opportunities will be the same. Therefore, whenever there is an opportunity to share the gospel with those in a different part of the world by partnering with someone of another culture, each situation must be approached as the unique situation that it is. Yet there may be common steps to be taken in each situation. In this section of the paper a suggested paradigm for a local congregational setting will be offered using a hypothetical situation. Though the situation is completely hypothetical, it may be quite similar to many current situations of our WELS congregations.

There is a growing Latino population in the community surrounding St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church. Shortly after they held a community outreach event, a Latino family started attending worship. The adults of the family also started coming to St. Paul's weekly ESL class. A few months later the family showed interest in St. Paul's membership class,

⁵⁶ This is will be explored in more detail in the following section.

and not long after that they were confirmed and welcomed into membership at St. Paul's. While the family was going through membership classes with Pastor, it was mentioned that they had come to the United States from Honduras just a few years previously. One Sunday Pastor preached a sermon about heaven, after the service the father of the family confided in Pastor that he was afraid he wouldn't see his brothers and sisters in heaven. After being asked why, the father went on to say that his siblings were disgruntled with the church in their Honduran community and haven't attended a worship service in over 15 years. He then added that the church they once attended taught salvation by works, and his brothers and sisters may never have known Jesus as their Savior and only way to heaven. The father also shared his frustrations of not being able to do anything about the situation since he was several countries away. He ended the conversation by saying, "If only my brothers and sisters had a chance to hear the message of the gospel."

Those words stuck with Pastor for the next several days. He thought and prayed about what that concerned member and Christian brother had said after church. A few days later Pastor contacted a member of the Board for World Missions to ask if WELS had a mission or sister synod in the part of Honduras where his member's family was living. It appeared there was no mission near that area. The next Sunday Pastor told the Honduran man that he had thought and prayed about what they talked about last week and wanted to brainstorm with him possible ways to reach his family in Honduras with the message of the gospel. Pastor told him that he checked to see if WELS had a mission or sister church near his family. It made the man very happy and hopeful just hearing that his pastor cared enough about him and his family to look into the situation.

During the following week, the two men got together, had a devotion and prayer, and discussed different ways they could connect the man's siblings with the gospel. Pastor suggested that the man slowly start talking about God and his faith with his siblings again whenever he contacted them. He could share the message he heard at St. Paul's with his family when he called them on the phone. The member asked Pastor if he could have a digital copy of the Sunday sermons so that he could translate them into Spanish and pass them along to his family if they were interested. This was something that Pastor himself was not able to do since he did not know Spanish. A few other suggestions were to send printed materials such as "The Promise," post St. Paul's worship service online, and share simple Law/Gospel presentations with his family. Pastor

taught and helped him prepare such a presentation. The member also shared with Pastor more about his family and their culture, since not only was the Spanish language foreign to Pastor but the Honduran culture as well.

Pastor and the member slowly started to place some of their ideas into practice, and the member started sharing his faith with his siblings in Honduras and sending WELS publications to them in Spanish as well. By partnering together the two of them were able to share the gospel with this family in a different part of the world.

How did this happen? It started by a local pastor and congregation doing exactly what local pastors and congregations are in place to do: to gather and feed the lambs of their community. The Honduran family was involved and integrated into the local congregation. It was then that a partnership between the pastor and member was formed. The partnership was formed by a mutual concern for the lost. Being conscious of WELS world mission efforts, a local pastor should contact The Board for World Missions to see if there is a mission or sister church nearby those he is seeking to share the gospel with. It would be great if the family or community could be connected with one of the 520 worldwide national churches in 23 different fields. Strategic partnerships for global gospel outreach will be something that takes place at both the congregational and synodical level.

The relationship between the pastor and member was a true partnership. It was not simply one giving direction or guidance to the other, but it was mutual. One could not have done it without the other. The pastor did not know the family in Honduras, the language, or the culture. The member received the knowledge, encouragement, confidence, and means he needed to share the gospel with his family from his pastor. This example demonstrated a few possible conduits to share the gospel with those in a different part of the globe, such as through the use of Internet and various translated materials as well as those of the talents of the man.

As was clear from this example and this paper as a whole, the key for gospel outreach in a highly mobile world is partnering with the members of the highly mobile world. Partnerships are really the key for all cross-cultural ministry efforts. A pastor, church leader, administrator, etc. must ask himself, "Am I able to work with, trust, and empower a person of another culture for gospel outreach?" When we fully grasp this concept and are excited about these partnerships, gospel outreach in a highly mobile world will be the natural result.

The hypothetical situation above with St. Paul's Ev. Lutheran Church is what strategic partnerships for gospel outreach might look like at a pastoral or local congregational level, but as mentioned above this is also something we must wrestle with at a synodical level. When a pastor calls and says, "I'm the pastor at St. Paul's Lutheran Church. A member at St. Paul's has family in Honduras with whom we would like to share the gospel," what is synod's plan of action? Does the synod have a plan of action? The more mobile our world becomes the more we as a synod at large definitely should have a plan of action in place.

As mentioned over and over again, this will prove to be a case-by-case situation, yet we should still have a basic plan of action in place in order to help the local pastor and congregation. As the world continues to move and immigrate, I believe strategic partnerships for gospel outreach will prove to be perhaps the most effective strategy for taking the gospel into all creation. I also believe that WELS currently has all the information and resources it needs to use this as a primary strategy to reach the lost. The first step at the synodical level, specifically the BWM or JMC, when receiving such a call would be to check if there is a missionary or sister church nearby and then contact said missionary or church body. WELS obviously has information concerning the location of all our missions and sister churches. If there is a local church nearby to contact, the next step is to put the two parties in touch. But what can we do if there is no church to put the person in contact with? Our synod has been very blessed in the area of multi-language publications. We would certainly be able to provide publications in just about any language needed.

The third thing we could do as a church body is to create a global database and network. This database would have a record of all the people and places throughout the world with whom we have contact and who are looking to be nurtured with the gospel. For example, a WELS member of a local American congregation is abroad for business for an extended period of time. His name along with his location abroad would be recorded in the database. Similarly, the hundreds of international students who have been enrolled in our WELS high schools, the international students who were in contact with WELS campus ministries, individuals and families who were once part of a local congregation in Canada or the United States and are now abroad, or those in a foreign field who have now moved abroad elsewhere, would also be listed. In addition, their current locations would be recorded as well. The purpose of this database would be to create a global network of both mature and immature Christians looking for mutual

support. If the database showed that there are several people in one location, they would be able to gather together and support one another with God's Word. What an amazing blessing this would be! I believe as a synod we certainly have the resources to put something like this together.⁵⁷

The above ideas are simply suggestions and could be applied in different ways in different situations. The suggested paradigms at both the congregational and synodical level are simple and basic things which could be put into practice.

AS WE SPEAK⁵⁸

We have talked a lot concerning the relevance, foundation, and blessings of continuing to go into all creation by partnering with our cross-cultural brothers and sisters in Christ for gospel outreach. After having discussed a few practical questions I want to conclude by simply giving a few examples of strategic partnerships for gospel outreach in a highly mobile world that are taking place as we speak as well as plans to make such a mission strategy a higher priority in WELS outreach efforts. By God's grace there are more examples of this than can be shared. So not everything happening is mentioned. If something is left out of the following, it does not mean it is of less importance or value than the others being shared.

On the congregational level many of the efforts taking place to reach individuals and groups in other parts of the world involve the sharing of both printed and digital resources. In January a group of students and one professor went to Puebla, Mexico for Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary's annual Spanish immersion trip. While we were spending time with one of the congregations in Puebla, the Mexican national pastor mentioned how he and some of his members were able to watch via Internet the Reformation service in Spanish of a Milwaukee congregation that has a large Hispanic ministry. He said it was a great blessing to all those who were able to watch the service. This same Milwaukee congregation posts all of their sermons from their Spanish worship services online. Many members of this congregation share these sermons with their families and friends who live in countries all across Latin America.

⁵⁷ The database and networking suggestion is something that would need to be studied and researched to a far greater extent. My study and research did not take be down this path specifically. It was simply a late observation and thought in the thesis process.

⁵⁸ Much of the information in this section was gathered via email conversations with mission administrators and others close to the examples given.

Sermons from Hmong services are being shared as well. Hmong pastors who serve WELS congregation in the United States post their sermons on YouTube so that Hmong speakers who live literally on the other side of the globe in Laos and Thailand are able to hear the gospel message. Many of those with whom these Hmong pastors share their sermons are members of their own families and communities in Laos and Thailand. These two examples perhaps sound simple and obvious, but think of what is taking place. Gospel messages recorded in the Midwest are strengthening and perhaps even creating saving faith in individuals in different parts of the world. Also, especially in the case of the Spanish sermons and worship services, it is not the American pastors who are passing on the messages, but the members themselves. This is a partnership between a pastor and foreign national members for global gospel outreach.

A similar example with printed materials is taking place in Houston, Texas. A Hispanic liaison has recently been placed by the Latin American Mission team in Houston. He will be working to gather and develop materials which can be used by the Latinos in WELS congregations to share the gospel with their countries of origin. The Houston congregation is a testing ground to see what seems to work best and where improvements are needed. The Latin American missionaries and stateside Hispanic workers can then follow up on leads and groups as needed. Only God knows what blessings will come from the sharing and sending of materials by lay member Latinos and the follow up of Latin American national pastors and missionaries.

The hundreds of international students in WELS high schools have been mentioned several times up to this point. As of the 2012-2013 school year there were 346 international students from 37 different countries. This proves to be an excellent outreach opportunity. Ways to better share the gospel with the students themselves and with their families are currently being explored. A large majority of the WELS high schools who have international students provide them with a special simplified version of Christian instruction in addition to mainstream religion classes. A few of the schools are using supplemental materials that provide Christian instruction in the international student's native language. Some use "The Promise" and a few others use Bibles in the students' native language. Three areas in which the schools would like to see additional resources that are directly related to this topic are: more religious material in the native languages of the students, connections to reach students of various nationalities, and resources to help with unbelieving students. Improvement in these three areas would certainly provide more and better opportunities for cross-cultural gospel outreach. Many of the students

have been baptized and confirmed. They are now interested in sharing the gospel they heard here in the United States with their family and friends in their home countries. Ways to better equip them to share the gospel when they return are still being explored and researched.⁵⁹

On a synodical level, the Joint Mission Council (JMC) is an attempt by WELS Missions to coordinate work which has an impact both home and abroad. The group was formed as a help to work which was being started by stateside groups in East Asia and Thailand. As those first examples have shown, this type of global ministry is very real and the JMC is looking for ways to meet these needs. The JMC is also looking into matters discussed in this paper as well. They are looking for ways to connect with individuals in other countries who have direct connections with ministries in the United States. The JMC recently created a position and issued a call for a Cross-Cultural Global Outreach Coordinator. This position will identify the different entities and groups within the WELS that already exist and do work with distinct cultural groups. Where possible the person in this position will assist in organizing a nationwide collaboration and help organize methods and support for foreign individuals and groups who have heard or carried the gospel to these countries. This new position will have a few assigned tasks that directly reflect ideas discussed in this paper. The individual will investigate the best ways to reach out to WELS members who have moved back to a foreign country. He will investigate and provide ideas of how groups or individuals overseas can be nurtured and fed with minimal cost so that a stateside congregation can continue this ministry even when people move back to their country. He will evaluate the status of foreign born students at WELS schools and see what might be done to promote ministry when they return home. He will also help evaluate the status of current Board for Home Missions cross-cultural ministries to determine if any are ripe for overseas outreach and if not, what the status of those missions should be moving forward. The existence of the JMC and the creation of this new position show there is an awareness and desire for global outreach which sparks from cross-cultural outreach at home.⁶⁰

These are just a few examples of things happening right now that clearly demonstrate many of the thoughts and ideas in this paper. God willing much more related gospel outreach will continue to take place as we continue to take hold of the opportunities God has placed in front of us.

⁵⁹ See Appendix II.

⁶⁰ See Appendix III

CONCLUDING REMARKS

“Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation.”⁶¹ “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.”⁶² The Great Commission remains the same as when Jesus spoke it to his disciples 2,000 years ago. As our world changes and different opportunities are placed in front of us, the way in which we carry out the Great Commission may change with the world around us. Our communities look different. Those with whom we gather together for worship and share God’s Word with look different. Yet, they are no different from us, nor are we different from them with respect to what matters most. We and they are all souls for whom our Savior died. These people who may look and speak differently than us are our Christian brothers and sisters and partners in sharing the gospel with the world. By partnering with these brothers and sisters for gospel outreach in a highly mobile world, God’s kingdom and the lost he seeks to bring into it will be blessed. My prayer is that our awareness and passion for cross-cultural ministry both at home and abroad will continue to go grow and lead to opportunities that reach many souls with the saving message of Jesus Christ crucified and risen. I am filled with joy to think of the gospel outreach opportunities God may place in front of us in this highly mobile world.

⁶¹ Mark 16:15

⁶² Matthew 28:19-20

APPENDIX I

Interview form sent to mission administrators and several pastors with cross-cultural ministry experience. A representation of the responses are included.⁶³

1. What changes have you observed in WELS world missions over the past 20 years?

50% fewer world missionaries since 1997, but double the number of members in the national churches from 33,000 to over 84,000; changing of missionaries' role from gathering and shepherding congregations in foreign lands to training national leaders and mentoring them, much greater use of U.S. volunteers (short and long-term), substantial increase in the role of the use of humanitarian aid as a bridge to Gospel proclamation, restructuring of the Board for World Missions from 15 members who traveled to only two or three fields to 5 members who will eventually visit all 23 fields for better judgment and wiser allocation of resources, much greater use of alternate mission strategies in less accessible countries that do not allow western missionaries; the implementation of orientation, repatriation and third-culture kid programs to better use and retain the talented missionary resource; a shift to phase out of fields that were not growing in spite of faithful effort to those fields where the Lord was blessing the efforts and opening doors of opportunity; increased security problems as the world turns more violent and we enter countries hostile to the gospel; advances in technology shrinking the world and making the cyber highways of the 21st century the equivalent of the Roman roads of the 1st century for advancing the spread of the gospel, the establishment of Multi-language Publications in 1997 was at the root of much progress by translating gospel materials into over 40 different languages.

Since I have arrived in this field, there have been an increasing change in philosophy about what we are to accomplish. 11 years ago, we followed the current World Mission philosophy at that time which was to achieve the four self's of self-sufficiency: 1. Self-propagating (supplying it's own leaders) 2. Self-supporting (financially supporting themselves) 3. Self-disciplining (knowing enough doctrine to discipline erring brothers and defend the truth) 4. Self-administering (determining the future of the congregation on their own). Since then, I think our philosophy has changed. In order for us to be a successful mission outside of American soil, we are working toward becoming self-supporting financially. The goal is not necessarily to have a black man or a foreigner in the pulpit. The goal is to build up the congregation to value well trained leaders, to set a salary and build ministries that are self-supporting while working toward the goal of every other church - to go out and make disciples, baptizing and teaching them. It doesn't matter what color or what country the man in the pulpit is as long as he is trained and can be supported by the congregation. To that end, our goal is to establish congregations

⁶³ Anonymous interview responses are used with permission.

that can support a man who has been trained as a pastor at a local salary and to establish ministries that can sustain themselves. However congregations do that is up to the congregation. For instance, at this point instead of trying to open our own seminary or Bible college, we are using the system currently in place to train our young people at MLC and WLS. The region doesn't have to be completely self-sufficient.

2. How has the ever growing diversity of the U.S. and/or Canada affected your ministry?

It has meant a change in the perspective of our WELS Ministerial Education schools which formerly produced workers primarily for our own kind of people, but were compelled by the overwhelming demographic changes to do a better job of preparing workers for the ethnically diverse challenges they will meet in our country. These changes are reflected in the greater acceptance of Spanish and Mandarin training, the student exposures to overseas fields, things like the Friends of China program, the Pastoral Studies Institute at WLS, the assimilation of almost a 1000 international students into our Lutheran elementary, area high schools, and colleges. With U.S. universities having almost 15% international students, campus ministry programs, when well run, provide opportunities to not only see conversions to Christianity but training programs that enable the converts to become effective evangelists in their native lands.

I think the diversity in the US and Canada have helped us to understand that you can't neatly divide up the world anymore. What that reminds us is that if we can get our young people trained in the gospel, we can send those pastors and teachers in the world or to our urban centers. In our home missions, we have become very one dimensional in our outreach. We look for the same opportunities that Lowe's Building Supply looks for. As soon as a suburb reaches 50,000 people, we look to expand and build a church. But the future of the US is not in suburbs. The urban population is growing at an increasingly faster rate. Only reaching out to new growing communities limits our outreach and who we share the gospel with.

3. From what you have observed, how has the ever growing diversity of the U.S. and Canada changed the way WELS does world and home missions?

The teaching of English as either a foreign language or a second language has provided excellent ways to develop relationships and provide opportunities to share the gospel both here in the U.S. and abroad. The challenge with ethnic work is that people are in various stages of assimilation into U.S. life and culture. Those who are 85% 'Americanized' can fit into almost any WELS church in the U.S. But instead of being a melting pot, the U.S. assimilation of foreign cultures in recent years has been more like a lumpy soup. Some cultures keep to themselves and the ways of their homelands and surround themselves with their own kind, and may even reinforce their cultural heritage with frequent trips to their native lands as is the case with many Latinos who frequently

go back to Mexico and Central and South America. These immigrants, even though in a generation their children will become Americanized, must be approached at first a little more on a world mission mode with Spanish, Chinese, Japanese, or Indonesian speakers and materials. This takes planning, but once the first group of immigrants comes to find welcome and acceptance in a church, future generations as well as newer immigrants will be inclined to come to the same place. However, we dare not kid ourselves. Reaching across cultures is not easy. It takes love and patience and continual attention. Ethnic churches which are made up of people who are not used to our way of doing church will have to be given a certain amount of latitude in their operation so long as they don't violate the Scripture. Many of the poorer immigrants who can be reached will not be in a position to support the WELS parish as those who have lived here for several generations. This is one of the reasons why home missions can only afford to do so much of its work across cultures. Perhaps this paradigm change is helping us to realize that it's not so easy anymore to even reach people of our own culture. There are generational gaps, spiritual gaps, societal change gaps and church culture gaps that have to be looked at and overcome if we are to impact the world with the word in our time. A great challenge!

4. Have there been foreign nationals you have come in contact with and with whom you have shared the Gospel that have expressed interest in sharing the gospel message with their family, community, and people in their country of origin? If so, please share your experience.

One young man who attended WLC returned to Hong Kong and even though his parents were communist and atheists he worked for the seminary in Hong Kong and gave a consistent example of Christian witness with life and wherever feasible with words.

Any who knows the gospel has a desire to share it. But don't assume that means they want to share it with people that look, act, feel or speak the same way they do.

In serving and working with the Hmong in the US, I have seen that first hand. When the Hmong have a National Convention, it is there hope to bring a pastor from Thailand to be a part of the Convention. We have 11 Hmong pastors. I know of four of them who have traveled to Thailand in the past twelve months. While there, one of the things they want to do is share the gospel of Jesus Christ. They travel to Thailand to support the ministry our church body is doing as well as to share.

5. How could WELS world missions benefit from contacts and relationships with foreign nationals in North America?

Our next big challenge is for home and world missions to do networking. With national church members overseas informing us of relatives and friends who might be brought into WELS churches in the U.S. and U.S. WELS churches who reach across cultures get their immigrant members to tell us of family members and friends who could be exposed to our national churches in world fields. The real challenge in this is that many immigrants and even a good many people overseas are not static. They jump from city to city, even country to country, looking for education, jobs, and an economic situation suitable for raising a family. It takes a full time detective agency to keep track of all these trans-migrations of new ethnic converts, but maybe in our computerized age the Lord is presenting us with an opportunity to do so.

We need to stop thinking of immigrants and foreign nationals as something different than we are and train our Anglo Midwest people to realize they live in a global society and capitalize on it. I think it is training the core of our congregations to realize that they will soon be the minorities and accept cultural influences from around the world. Once a church in Norfolk Nebraska is comfortable with a black Lutheran pastor from Nigeria, then we will be getting somewhere.

It is very important to have relationship with world missions because relationship earned more trust and easier for communication. First, relationship is the trust factor in any relationship. When we have trust than we can work to learn from each other. This factor will educate and bridge for better bond in the future. Relationship -- in most cases I have seen in the past are friendship and relatives. When you have this connection, you are incline to open for further dialog across the ocean because nowadays relationship is the connection between people in different countries.

6. In what ways other than training them for pastoral ministry could WELS work together with individuals or groups of foreign nationals for global gospel outreach?

If the immigrants become solid in the faith they can advise us on how best to reach their own, or even take trips to their native lands as short-term volunteers to open up doors into areas that Anglos could not easily reach.

Integrate them into the congregation to build a stronger local global church. Use them like you would any other member. But don't marginalize them. Find ways to get into urban settings. As them how they do outreach, how they do gospel ministry, how they spread the message because something they are doing in their homeland is working a lot better than what we are doing. And then use that information to reach our urban areas.

From my perspective, just as we have Project Timothy and Titus going on mission trips, just as we have area Lutheran High Schools and WELS campus ministries and WLC doing mission trips, and just as we have Kingdom Worker volunteers serving on mission trips, I could see many advantages of having immigrants returning to their country to share the message of Jesus Christ. Hearing about whom Jesus Christ is and what He has done and what that means from anyone is important to have happen. When it is in the native language of that person and there is clear communication on important points of Scripture that certainly can be a blessing as the Spirit works through the spoken word.

WELS will have to be opened minded so that men from other culture can open their mind to the WELS. Many times people of other denomination and culture are coming from back ground and experiences that are not considered to be normal for WELS. We, the WELS have to open our stories to them and have to allow men in the field to share with us what they have back in other countries. Technology -- it is a training course we can open to teach English to other. This can be done by Skype or other technological tools.

APPENDIX II

International Students in WELS Schools⁶⁴

Summary

It appears that all of the WELS high schools accept international students, except for Illinois and Rocky Mountain. There are no international students at Huron Valley this year even though they are approved to accept them. Michigan Lutheran High School plans to begin accepting them next year.

Percentage of the student body ranges from .5% (Lakeside) to 22% (St. Croix).

Divine Savior Academy, Doral, FL is comprised of mostly international students (85-90% of 494 students PreK-12th grade), but not students who come over and stay with host families. Doral students are living with their families in the United States. Doral students are not included in the tally below.

The 346 international students at our high schools in 2012-13 come from:

China - 124
 South Korea - 111
 Germany – 18
 Vietnam – 18
 Japan – 11
 Taiwan – 10
 Thailand - 8
 Spain – 4
 Brazil - 3
 Canada - 3
 Czech Republic - 3
 Mexico - 3
 Thailand – 3
 Congo - 2
 France – 2
 Italy – 2
 Azerbaijan - 1
 Bolivia – 1
 Denmark – 1
 Dominican Republic - 1
 Eritrea – 1
 Ethiopia - 1
 Finland - 1
 Honduras – 1

⁶⁴ This information is used with permission of the Board for Ministerial Education.

Hong Kong - 1
 Libya – 1
 Malawi - 1
 Mexico – 1
 Portugal – 1
 Saudi Arabia – 1
 Singapore – 1
 St. Maarten - 1
 Tanzania – 1
 Ukraine – 1
 United Kingdom – 1
 Venezuela - 1
 Zambia – 1

Of those 346 international students, five high schools with 108 students did not report in this category. Of the ones that reported,

73 students are in fellowship with us,
 27 students come from other Christian churches, and
 138 students are not Christian yet.

All of the schools that answered the question provide international students with a special and simplified version of Christian instruction in addition to mainstream religion classes, except for Great Plains (which plans to add such instruction next year), Nebraska (which offers only ESL for this purpose), and Shoreland (which has only students who are already baptized and confirmed in Korean).

When the schools were asked whether they are using supplemental materials that provide Christian instruction in the international student's native language, some mentioned "The Promise," and others mentioned Bibles in the students' native language, but most said no, because they understand that the desire of both the parents and the students that the students be instructed in English.

The schools would like to see additional resources in the areas of—

- more religious material in their native language.
- network/connections to reach students of various nationalities.
- ideas to recruit host families
- resources to help with unbelieving students
- assistance in gaining students from a variety of countries; help expanding
- native tongue of International student / English translation of Catechism

APPENDIX III

Cross-Cultural Global Outreach Coordinator⁶⁵

Purpose of call

The purpose is to enhance the cross-cultural mission of the WELS. This person would help jump start a refocused purpose for the JMC. This person would help WELS members find ways to minister to the vast world mission field in the USA without having to fear the cost or scope.

Assigned Tasks

- Poll existing congregations, schools and ministries to see what cross-cultural ministry is being done already.
- Poll the existing membership of WELS to see what kind of a cross cultural lay ministry team already exists
- Meets with the STPCG, the foreign student committee, the Hmong ministry committee, the Cristo Palabra de Vida group, the One China Team, the PSI organizers, etc. to investigate needs and determine scope.
- Develop a tool kit of resources, ideas and materials for those considering cross cultural outreach. (Others involved with that culture, MLP resources, what materials to translate first, how to work with MLP on those translations, ideas and where to find advice for getting underway, how to connect WELS members from the same culture even when they are spread out, etc.)
- Investigate the best ways to reach out to WELS members who have moved back to a foreign country
- Investigate and provide ideas of how groups or individuals overseas can be nurtured and fed with minimal cost so a stateside congregation can continue this ministry even when people move back to their country.
- Evaluates status of foreign born students at WELS schools and see what might be done to promote ministry when they return home.
- Help evaluate the status of current BHM cross cultural ministries to determine if any are ripe for overseas outreach and if not, what the status of those missions should be moving forward.

⁶⁵ This information is used with permission of the Joint Mission Council.

- Works closely with the BME, BHM and BWM administrators as well as the JMO to set concrete goals, report progress and share ideas. Within the first month we ask him to lay out a timeline in three month increments to guide his progress and JMC evaluation.
- Help promote a renewed enthusiasm for this outreach
- Propose a structure for the JMC that will allow the JMC to continue this ministry into the future and Give a map and timeline of how to proceed.
- Once tool kit is complete, begin a trial run with interested groups or individuals.
- Have initial recommendations to the JMC by May 1st, 2015 so the BWM, BHM, JMC and others could react and provide input and guidance as work is completed.

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ADDITIONAL RESEARCH

A Personal interview was conducted with the BWM administrator.

Email interviews were sent to several WELS missions administrators, mission counselors, missionaries, pastors, and others who serve in cross-cultural settings.