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Wayne Schulz: A Ministry of Missions Past, Present and Future

It is a blessing to be counted among the many people who have been blessed by Pastor Wayne Schulz' ministry. Interviewing the retired Mission Counselor was an opportunity for the old-school to pass its vital knowledge of experience and dedicated hard work on to the new-school. And he was certainly excited to do so!

The focus of this interview is two-fold: primary focus is on the details of his ministry; subsequent focus is on his evaluation of the work of the Board of Home Missions in the past, present and future. His experience, evaluations and projections are priceless and a benefit for students, pastors and mission boards for years to come. To God be the glory!

Pastor Schulz and I gathered together in the kitchen of his Cottage Grove, Wisconsin home on Friday, December 3rd, 2010, at two in the afternoon. His wife teaches piano at Luther Prep and was still gone for the afternoon. Her studio in their living room, where she also gives lessons, was truly impressive. It consisted of a spinet piano, a baby grand piano as well as a small organ. I got the impression that talent and dedication was abundant in the Schulz family and ministry.

The interview began with talk of the Seminary and early ministry. Speaking of his graduation and assignment Pastor Schulz expressed humility and a servant's attitude. Rather than offering great detail about the time, he said he was simply excited to serve. These are tremendously encouraging words for me and every graduating senior as we prepare for the unknown of future ministry. He provided the historical context that his class was the last class not required to do a vicar year. With that being the case he was still able to do pre-graduation work as a Latin tutor in New Ulm as well as a summer vicar position in Sault Ste. Marie, Canada.

Assigned out of the Seminary in 1966 to Trinity in Aberdeen, South Dakota Pastor Schulz mentions a bit of nervousness to serve in a college town. Northern State University was certainly not the largest campus in the state, let alone the country; yet it was coupled with troubled times globally. He entered the ministry during the Vietnam war and peaks of counter culture. It was an unsettling and scary time nationally.

He retold bizarre stories of college students simply coming and going from his house following dinner and into the late hours of the night as if it were perfectly normal. He and wife became a beacon of real peace and truth in a time when fraudulent peace and truth were sought after and offered at every turn. In conclusion, he recalls fondly that in these shifting times his congregation actually grew and that some of these same young men and women eventually became leaders in that very congregation. Truly fascinating.

It was only a few years into his ministry in Aberdeen that an upgrade from their synod-issue chapel to an actual church building was necessary. In addition to this structural upgrade he was also appointed to the Dakota-Montana District Mission Board in 1969. This was the beginning of the service that would eventually characterize his ministry as a whole. In January of 1972 he became the chairman of the District Mission Board. Excitement for the position as well as for the state of missions in general was again his self-described attitude.

My notes from Dakota-Montana District convention proceedings were confirmed by Pastor Schulz concerning the push for urban expansion at this time. He mentions a gentleman's agreement that the WELS had with the Missouri Synod that the WELS would take the rural areas and the LCMS the urban. That quickly began to change for the Dakota-Montana District in the 1970s. Pushes were made for the bigger cities of Montana, such as Billings and Missoula, as well as the Canadian cities St. Albert, Edmonton and Calgary. Mergers were possible with WELS mission efforts and LCMS groups that were leaving to join with the WELS. The large fields of the Dakota-Montana District were ripe and Pastor Schulz and company were on the job.

Responsibilities had amassed in the first six years of Pastor Schulz' ministry. A congregation in Aberdeen, DMB Chairman and a growing family provided a healthy plateful. Describing the difficult tasks of long-distance traveling, evaluating critical mission decisions and crunching District and Synod budget numbers the long way, he said of his attitude at the time, "This is what you do."

While preparing my questions one of my concerns was the relationship between the position of DMB Chairman and parish pastor. How does one faithfully and beneficially combine the two ministries? His answer was enlightening: "Your pastor gains a lot by these other experiences, it opens his eyes to the whole larger kingdom out there and in many ways you are truly blessed as a congregation because of that." This positive perspective is of tremendous encouragement for pastor and congregation alike. These are words every pastor will do well to recall throughout his ministry.

He accepted a call to St. Paul in Rapid City, South Dakota in 1975. This congregation, along with so many in the district at the time, saw steady growth. By 1980 the congregation had completed a three year relocation and building project that included a school, church and parsonage. The Holy Spirit's work through Chairman Schulz' mission efforts could be seen in his own congregation as well as numerous expansions and missions throughout the district.

Such efforts and successes led to a momentous election at the Dakota-Montana District Convention in 1980. The circumstances were incredible: "I was totally shocked. Nobody, not one person ever said to me, 'Do you think you might be elected District President?' I was sitting there and, 'Wayne Schulz is elected,' and then everybody turns around and looks at you and you're supposed to say, 'Ok, yes.' That totally changes your life." He was careful to list the downsides of this election for him: the fresh circumstances at St. Paul in Rapid City that would be neglected, the necessary, frequent travel over the 1,000 mile wide Dakota-Montana District, his parish duties that would be neglected without an assistant or secretary, and his young family; yet, he was quick to say, "I did it, and God took care of his church."

He described his years as District President as "having to live with his conscience." He said it

was all too common to be gone all week and return home on a Friday to still have bulletins to create, calls to make, and a sermon to write for Sunday (and not to mention a family to Father). It was obviously no way to conduct one's ministry. In 1984, after four years, it was necessary for Wayne to request that he not be re-elected as DP. It was the intersection of an honest servant of the Gospel and an honest evaluation of where one's gifts and responsibilities could be best used. It was refreshing to hear that saying 'no' can be a God-pleasing decision.

He served six more years in Rapid City and was back on the District Mission Board, this time simply as an experienced member. It is quite clear that through his extensive mission experience, whether difficult, fruitful or both, the Lord had prepared this man for another calling. In 1990, Pastor Schulz accepted the call to become a Mission Counselor in Madison, Wisconsin. He described taking the call as quite natural. This would be the area of ministry that he spent the most time serving in – 21 years total – until he retired in 2010.

The transition from parish ministry to a specified, non-parish position was difficult at first; he recalls sitting in the pew in Madison and not being the pastor, not having that same connection with the members sitting around him. Yet, he was essentially a pastor to the Districts and Synod at large. He was able to serve mission congregations through his work for them as Counselor, as well as to preach and to teach while he was there with them.

It was his accurate and creative Mission Counselor perspective that expansion missions benefited from the most – just as, while interviewing him, I was benefiting from it as well. He had seen enough start-up situations, daughtering situations, relocations, and mergers that he could tell a congregation that what they were thinking of doing wasn't "a dumb idea," in fact he "could think of 25 other congregations [throughout the Synod] that were doing something similar." He enabled new ideas to blossom in areas where new ideas were needed.

I noticed a trend throughout my research that Home Missions and District Mission Boards were frequently making changes and improvements to the structure, funding, personnel and duties of their

respective fields. It seemed as if programs were continually being adopted and then adapted; it seemed less than consistent. This trend continued throughout Pastor Schulz' entire ministry. I was interested to hear his take on this tendency for missions in the past, present and future. Are Missions being conducted improperly or are times rapidly changing and thus necessitating new methods?

He explained that emphasis on and personnel within Home Missions had largely increased throughout his ministry. It was simply the nature of the beast on both ends – the missions themselves and the workers who are preparing for them – that times, methods and funding would change. The question is always, “How should we keep doing this?” The thrust for frequent evaluation and change was never negative, but as he explained, “It was always a joy to be part of the Home Mission Board because of the positive forward thinking.” Despite financial set-backs and the closing of missions this attitude stayed the same.

He did mention a few misjudgments from the past. The slogan that was unofficially adopted throughout the synod in the 70s, “Every state by '78,” had certainly increased emphasis and desire for home missions; yet, according to Schulz it had also led to some questionable core mission groups that were established too hastily. Some didn't necessarily foster a mission mindset; they became more of an exclusive group. This would, of course, pose outreach problems in the future when increased mission efforts in those areas wouldn't be supported.

Thus, it became the Mission Counselor and the BHM's goal to work with groups *before* they made requests for funding and establishment. More important than establishing a physical church was establishing a mission mindset within it. Biblical literacy and learning styles change from generation to generation; Pastor Schulz was very aware of this change and sought to bring mission work and its attitude to the changing generations through teaching.

Teaching evangelism was particularly personal to him; he recalled a time when 'evangelism' was almost a dirty word. There was an hour-long workshop his senior year at the seminary on evangelism. That was it. There were no evangelism committees; that was the pastor's job at the time. Obviously

Pastor Schulz' entire ministry would see that ancient trend be more than reversed as the Great Commission was instilled in members and missions alike.

The primary method for teaching evangelism and mission-mindedness was the School of Outreach. This presentation and the material that accompanied it helped congregations and mission expansions evaluate their own strengths and weaknesses as well as instill in them the Scriptural basis and ability to do this work well. These points are called the 'Evangelism Pie' and a congregation can evaluate how many pieces of the pie they already have and how many they need to work on.

He outlined the evolution of this teaching method as it took on several forms throughout his own ministry. At one time, members from several congregations came together for an entire week to hear and learn about the School of Outreach and then to report back to their respective churches. What quickly seemed more beneficial was having the School of Outreach go to each congregation over a weekend. Mission Counselor Schulz estimated the number of presentations that he personally conducted between sixty and seventy.

Faithful and accurate proclamation of the Gospel has been, and has to be, the constant throughout the past and into the future of mission work. The times will always be the variable: funding, mind-sets, cultures, learning styles, locations, structure and so on. What Pastor Wayne Schulz instilled in me was the fact that the Lord blesses his church. Period. And he does so through the Gospel. What goes hand in hand with the Gospel is hard work, creative work and teaching the next generation to do the same. "It's God's people going out into the world. It's part of their being as Christians. It's part of the baggage that we carry with us that God gives us. We're manifesting our Christianity in the world in which we live." Thank you Pastor Schulz. To God be the Glory.

Questions

Early Ministry

I noticed that you were classmates with Paul Seiltz. He was my pastor when I was a kid in Door County. Nice man. My parents still stay in touch with him and his wife.

1. What were your thoughts about your strengths and weaknesses coming out of the Seminary, beginning your ministry?
2. Did you ever think that your ministry would take such a focus on missions?
3. The Dakota-Montana District, prior to your assignment '66, was steadily growing.
4. The majority of my research on your ministry came from district convention proceedings. These don't paint much of a picture of your parish ministry life. How were your early years in Aberdeen?
5. Within 4 years of your ministry you were on the DMB – within 6 years you were its Chairman. What were your thoughts initially on this added responsibility?
6. What obligation, if any, did you feel to serve both your congregation and the district/synod at large?
7. What reactions did you get from your own congregation and family?
8. Were you ever able to say no to certain tasks or responsibilities?

Campus Ministry

You were involved with Campus Ministry in Aberdeen.

9. How did you begin this ministry?
10. Did you enjoy this aspect of ministry?
11. What types of activities did you engage in?

Call to Rapid City

12. You broke ground in Aberdeen in 1973. What were the circumstances for that?
13. How was that experience?
14. You took the call to Rapid City in 1975, was the church in Aberdeen finished by that point?
15. What kind of a transition would you say this change was for you?

District President

16. You were elected District 2nd Vice-President in 1976 and President in 1980. How did these positions affect your parish ministry duties?
17. In 1984 you requested not to be nominated again as DP. What circumstances led to this decision?
18. Was this in a time where District Presidents' duties were less defined in connection with their parish responsibilities?
19. What were some highlights for you of your District Presidency?
20. What things were you able to do after you were no longer DP that you couldn't before?

Western Wisconsin Mission Counselor

21. My research really didn't highlight much of your career as a mission counselor. This was your longest career in WELS. Can you tell me what your primary duties, positives negatives, and so forth?
22. What was it like, departing from parish ministry into a much more specified calling?
23. One thing that surprised me was the statement made at the 1990 Dakota-Montana District convention, the year you were called to the WWD, that you would be returning as their mission counselor, also serving WW, NW and MD – 4 districts. Was that really how it played out? That is a lot of territory.
24. Was this also a time when Mission Counselors' duties were largely undefined or at least underestimated?

School of Outreach

25. What is the School of Outreach?
26. Who started it?
27. What role did you serve in this program?
28. Could you explain the 7 pieces of the Evangelical Pie?

Trends in DMB and BHM

29. The Seminary essay file has your essay, *Mother/Daughter Concepts for Starting Churches*. When did you write that?
30. Would you say that daughtering congregations is more beneficial when there isn't significant funds available or simply beneficial in general?
31. What about the pilot project?
32. What are pros and cons of each?

33. You outline many different ways to open new missions. Obviously there are many circumstantial factors, but what would you say is overall most effective?

Structure

One thing that I noticed throughout the District Convention proceedings is that the District Mission Board and Home missions seems to be in flux. New ideas seem to come up frequently for change of structure or for change in the period of time for exploratory mission.

34. I understand that continued evaluation is necessary for improvement, but would you say that things were done poorly that needed change?
35. Would you also say things were done well that shouldn't have changed?
36. What has remained the same over the past 10, 20, 30 years in missions, whether good or bad?
37. What is your take on reorganizing the 13 mission districts into 4?
38. How will that benefit/hinder mission efforts?
39. The 2010 report for DMB states this: *"All functions and forms of Home Missions are on the table and under evaluation. Specific areas are structure, funding, mission counselor program, subsidiaries, campus ministry, and personnel."* Again, do you feel this evaluation is necessary for improvement?

Personally

40. What has been the most rewarding part of you ministry?
41. Can you pick out a mission in particular that stands out in your mind?
42. What are some encouragements, joys or challenges that you can share?

Post Interview Email Correspondence Question

Pastor,

It was great meeting with you today, thanks again.

There was one question that I wanted to ask and either forgot or didn't get to, if I could ask you one more: What are your thoughts on the new proposal/plan to reorganize the mission districts from 13 to 4? How will that help? How will it not help?

Thanks again,
Stephen

Hi Steve,

Thanks for the interview!

For a long time the BHM has been tweaking its manner of operation to fit the circumstances. My feeling is that to regain some Home Mission Expansion momentum, we have to try something new. Momentum does not occur by tweaking something old. New creates momentum under God's blessing. This is something new for the district boards to digest. I am pleased that they are moving forward with the plan. Whether or not it will soon open more new missions or new dual-sites with partnering congregations, I don't know. Some things depend a bit on finances, too.

Another positive is that the new system will create more cross-breeding of ideas among the mission boards of the districts. Gathering together in regions and hearing about regional possibilities will be eye-opening to most board members and cause them to look beyond their own district. Their eyes will be open to more of the fields ripe for harvest. There will also be increased determination to submit excellent requests. To do that they will have to be doing more careful research and preliminary work than in the past. I am prayerfully optimistic, but it will take some time to implement.

This is about the third time the BHM has moved toward regionalization plans. The first time it was shot down at the Synod Convention. The second time it did not make it through the BHM, I believe. So the idea is not exactly new; but the manner in which it will occur and the divisions of the regions are different than in previous proposals.

Blessings on your report and your studies, in Jesus!
Wayne Schulz

Pastor Wayne I. Schulz

Sketched from Dakota-Montana and Western Wisconsin District Convention notes

Dakota-Montana District Prior to his Assignment

- 1964 DMD Convention spoke of greatly blessed efforts. Home missions reported 24 new fields, 2 in DMD, 7 self-supporting. Resolved that DMD encourage the General Mission Board for increased efforts in organizing Inner Mission Work.
- 1966 DMD Whereas missions extent exceeds present and future needs be it resolved that every DMD congregation renew CEF in every way. Possibility of Synod reaching every state in union. Announced that Trinity Aberdeen is self-supporting.

1966 Assigned July 24th, Trinity Aberdeen, SD (9 years)

- 1968 DMD Convention, District Nominee for Position on Academy Board of Control; Appointment as member of District Auditing Committee and District Financial Secretary.
 - New policies from General Board for Home Missions: a full mission plant not be requested until mission reaches a communicant strength of 50; missions that are not self-supporting by 15 years shall be formed into a parish with another congregation.
- 1970 DMD Convention, **DMB Member** (Secretary); Appointment as member of District Music Workshop Committee and DMB.
 - Served 20-30 college students at Aberdeen.
 - BHM: Whereas our district mission boards are faced with many opportunities and nearly all dmbs have enjoyed expansion resolved praise God. Whereas shift of mission emphasis to larger, growing cities.
 - DMB: Lists a dozen urban cities in SD, ND, MN, and Canada that cannot be reached with existing man power.
- 1972 DMD Convention, **DMB Chairman**.
 - BHM: Resolved it does not support the reorganization as presently proposed because of problems: indirect representation of districts, creation of new "southern district", remoteness from Canadian parishes, and ambiguity concerning distribution of funds.
 - DMB: Exploratory work reduced in all areas due to lack of funds – GBHM 6 month approval required.

(1973 April 8, Groundbreaking Trinity Aberdeen, SD)

(1973 July 22, Cornerstone Laying """)

- 1974 DMD Convention, DMB Chairman
 - Appoint campus pastors, continued emphasis on populated areas

1975 Installed October 5th, St. Paul Rapid City, SD (14 years)

- 1976 DMD Convention, DMB Chairman, **Elected 2nd Vice-President**
 - Boldness encouraged and evident in continued growth of mission prospects and success.
- 1978 DMD Convention, DMB Chairman, 2nd Vice-President
 - 19 congregations receive synod support in DMD, 10 are synod assisted (over 15 years old), in compliance with GBHM.
 - CEF is a blessing in the past 2 years. Parsonages and Chapels were constructed and more on the way.
 - Exploratory mission work conducted in 4 areas, representing a high point
 - Dec. 17th St. Paul Rapid City Church, School, Parsonage – Complete Relocation
- 1980 DMD Convention, DMB Chairman, 2nd Vice-President, **Elected District President**
 - 3 of 4 Exploratory missions obtain mission status
 - Continued district growth – 103 communicants, 55 adult confirmands in the biennium alone
 - Campus ministry a continued blessing and success.
- 1982 DMD Convention, DMB ex officio, District President
 - If proposal of New Districts is adopted at 1983 Synod Convention DMD would be eliminated. Encouragement offered to oppose such adoption.
 - Exploratory work in 3 towns with requests for 2 more.
 - Sister and Daughter congregations are projected for highly populated areas

- Necessary to reiterate DMB goal: "to become independent of synodical subsidy." This appears to be a difficult aspect of expansion churches.
- 1984 DMD Convention, District President
 - Request not to be nominated again for sake of congregation in Grand Rapids, which in his 8 and a half years as pastor has seen a 518 soul/334 communicant member increase.
 - Request for missionary in Bozeman was differed by GBHM as well as 21 other requests throughout the synod's 12 districts. Reason is major crisis in Synod budget.
 - Healthy condition of CEF allows loans to average double compared to previous years.
 - Whereas district presidents' workload causes concern resolved they be supplied with vicars, graduate assistants, part time offices help and basic supplies.
- 1986 DMD Convention, DMB, District Nominating Committee
- 1988 DMD Convention, Additional member to *Reorganized* DMB
 - 18 mission congregations, 16 pastors serving, 872 communicants (up 65 from previous 2 years)
 - Mt. Zion Missoula became self-supporting Jan. 1st, 1987.
- 1989 Synod Convention
 - Aid in Home Mission Planting: Whereas the Mission Counselor position has been beneficial in planting and guiding of home mission congregations be it resolved and encouraged to continue.
- 1990 DMD Convention, Transfers out: W. Schulz WWD
 - "A man who needs no introduction, returning as our (DMD) Mission Counselor. Located in Madison, WI he may also serve the WW, NW and MD mission boards

1989 Installed October 30th, East Side Madison, WI (21 years)

- 1990 WWD Convention, **Western Wisconsin Mission Counselor**
 - Mission Counselor Program was regionalized, giving every district access to a M.C. A position description for the M.C. was adopted which stresses working with new men and new missions.
- 1994 WWD Convention
 - Mothering-Daughter system used in establishing missions due to decline in Synod Mission Offerings

2010 Retired June 30

- 2010 Synodical Report: Pastor Wayne Schulz, mission counselor, is retiring from his mission counselor position on June 30, 2010. In addition to serving as parish pastor in Aberdeen and Rapid City, S.D., Pastor Schulz served the church at large as a district mission board member and chairman, district president, and as a mission counselor. His Spirit-worked caring for souls and for those working to gather, nurture, and equip many in Christ will be missed. We join in giving thanks for his service and for his continued service on a limited basis.
- Home Missions has established a BHM Evaluation Task Force "to evaluate the work of Home Missions and to determine what forms and functions best serve the purpose of Home Missions helping as many as possible to serve as Christ's ambassadors by establishing new congregations and new ministries." All functions and forms of Home Missions are on the table and under evaluation. Specific areas are structure, funding, mission counselor program, subsidiaries, campus ministry, and personnel.