

TOGETHER


December 7, 2021

Bible study on the divine call available

People have always had questions about the divine call and the process we use to call people into the public ministry. With the high number of vacancies and with many congregations affected by the shortage, it's not surprising that there have been more questions than normal about exactly what the divine call is and how the doctrine of the call is applied among us.

For that reason, the 2021 synod convention passed a resolution encouraging the Conference of Presidents to develop resources and perhaps a series of instructive articles in *Forward in Christ* that will provide our people with a better understanding of the divine call and how it works.

The COP is now making available a Bible study that deals with the public ministry, the call, and our WELS call process. That Bible study, which includes a PowerPoint presentation and a leader's guide, is now available for download online at welscongregationalservices.net. While designed for a Bible class setting, it will also be available to anyone for personal self-study.

Serving with you in Christ,
WELS President Mark Schroeder 

New synod in Latin America forms

In October, representatives from WELS and WELS' sister churches throughout Latin America met in Medellín, Colombia, to form a new synod: *Iglesia Cristo WELS Internacional*. Founding members come from churches in Bolivia, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Haiti, and Venezuela.

"For years, our sister churches in Latin America have just been small, individual groups fighting against the wind," says Rev. Larry Schlomer, administrator of WELS World Missions. "For them to be able to have this much broader ministry that's clearly being blessed by the Lord, there's an excitement there."

As part of a synod, these churches will be able to do mission work together, train pastors together, and support each other with prayers and fellowship.

Synod membership is expected to swell in the future as new groups gathered during the *Academia Cristo* training efforts complete a two-year confessional process called *Ruta Cristo* (Christ path). "One of the needs that *Ruta Cristo* has given us is where will new congregations that come from *Academia Cristo* go?" says Rev. Henry Herrera, a pastor in Colombia and president of *Iglesia*

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Cristo WELS Internacional. "This is why we can tell them now that the answer is *Iglesia Cristo WELS Internacional.*"

Currently 12 groups are on that two-year path, with dozens more possible in the upcoming year. Leaders who complete the highest level of *Academia Cristo* classes also will be considered candidates for a new seminary program led by *Iglesia Cristo WELS Internacional* and supported by WELS missionaries.

"For years we were adding people to our churches [in Latin America] by the tens. To now have people joining our fellowship through the work of so many people by the hundreds—if not soon, the thousands—is just amazing," says Schlomer. "The real blessing is that the Lord is leading more people to learn about grace and what Jesus has done."

Learn more about *Academia Cristo* at wels.net/latinamerica. 

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