

TOGETHER

December 17, 2019


WELS-ELS-LCMS continue annual informal discussions

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Topics for this year’s discussions included the doctrine of justification (with a focus on objective justification), an area in which the three synods are in complete agreement. Also discussed were the doctrines of the ministry and prayer fellowship, where some differences remain.

New participants this year included Rev. Peter Lange, the newly elected first vice president of the LCMS, and Rev. Paul Prange, the newly appointed administrator for the WELS Commission on Inter-Church Relations.

Another meeting is planned for next year and will include continuing discussion of the topics of prayer fellowship and the ministry, as well as a discussion of the WELS statement on the roles of man and woman, “Male and Female in God’s World.”

Serving in Christ,
WELS President Mark Schroeder 

Funding secured for theological education facility in Vietnam

Through the support and prayers of WELS members, WELS has surpassed its goal of receiving \$2 million to support a theological education facility in Vietnam. This funding will pay for the land, building construction, and the first two years of operating expenses.

The communist Vietnamese government invited WELS in 2018 to

build this facility in Vietnam’s capital city of Hanoi to train leaders of the Hmong Fellowship Church (HFC).

“Since I became Christian in 1994, I’ve been searching and praying for a church body that would bring me the true Word of God,” says Rev. Zang, one of the HFC leaders who is receiving training. “I have been to much training in the last several years,

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“Since I became Christian in 1994, I’ve been searching and praying for a church body that would bring me the true Word of God,” says Rev. Zang, one of the HFC leaders who is receiving training. “I have been to much training in the last several years,

but none like WELS. Finally, God sends a church that teaches the true Word of God to Vietnam. The Word of God has brought peace to our community, and we are sure that our salvation is only found in Christ Jesus.”

WELS first had contact with the Hmong Fellowship Church in 2011, when a leader in that church got in touch with Rev. Bounkeo Lor, a Hmong pastor who then served in Kansas City, Kan., after reading his online sermons. Lor made his first training trip to Vietnam in 2012. Members of the Pastoral Studies Institute began to accompany Lor on some of these trips starting in 2016. Since that initial trip, the church has doubled in size—now with more than 120,000 members—and discovered the true message of God’s grace.

“The members of the HFC have been grateful for the message of the gospel, that they are saved by God’s grace alone,” says Rev. Xiong, one of the HFC leaders receiving training. “Now they are eager to have the opportunity to use the center in Hanoi for training pastors in the Word of God, especially in law and gospel.”


Lor, who now serves as Hmong Asia ministry coordinator, says the training center is important for the ministry in Vietnam so that Hmong leaders can continue to grow in their understanding of God’s Word. “Nowadays, many churches call themselves Christian, but it is sad that they don’t teach the true Word of God anymore,” says Lor. “One of the brothers in the HFC told me that before they met WELS, they thought

that every church taught the truth from the Bible, but now they know the differences between true and ideology teaching. They praise God for the teaching that WELS extends to their church body. They are eager to bring whatever they’ve learned from WELS to their leaders and members.”

So far, land has already been purchased in Vietnam, and plans are being made for construction to begin on a new campus that will include a worship space, dormitories and kitchen facilities, ministry offices, and four classrooms.

To date, more than 550 WELS congregations have given offerings to this campaign, and another 2,300 individuals and groups have offered special gifts or commitments. “While we trust our Lord to lovingly provide resources for the work we do together in his name,” says Rev. Kurt Lueneburg, director of WELS Christian Giving, “we marvel at how our Savior moved his people to give so quickly and generously to this unique opportunity. We praise Jesus and thank his people for their joyful, heartfelt participation!”

Lor asks for WELS members’ continued prayers on the ministry: “Please continue to ask God to bless the center so that it may serve more people, not only Hmong but also other minorities in Vietnam.”

Learn more about this opportunity at wels.net/vietnamhmongoutreach. 

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