

Reaching souls with 100 new home missions

“Go.” It begins with that one word from our Savior as he sends us to carry out the mission he has given us. He wants us to go to our families, to our friends and co-workers, to our communities, and, in fact, to all the world. But going is not enough. It’s what he gives us to take along when we go that is at the heart of that mission. He sends us to go with a message—a lifechanging and soul-saving message—of a Savior who came to this world to rescue people from guilt, despair, and eternal death. “Go . . . and preach the gospel!” (Mark 16:15).

At our synod’s convention in 2021, delegates heard about an ambitious proposal to further the spread of the saving gospel. Rev. Mark Gabb, chairman of the WELS Board for Home Missions, outlined a plan to establish 100 new home missions and enhance 75 existing ministries in 10 years. It was a breathtakingly ambitious idea, but it was one that the delegates of the convention endorsed without hesitation. Since that convention, the Board for Home Missions has been working to develop plans and strategies for accomplishing that goal—a goal we know can only be reached with the blessing of our gracious God.

Through the collective efforts of WELS and all our congregations, members, and affiliated ministries, we want to aggressively reach lost souls. Here’s how you can help:

Pray: This is no small thing. Pray that the Lord of the church would provide

workers. Pray for our WELS Home Missions leaders, our home missionaries, and our worker training schools as they recruit and train future missionaries. Pray that the Lord provides us with the financial support needed to do the work.

Get Involved: Talk with your district mission board to see what you or your congregation might do to get involved in this synodwide church planting effort. Encourage young men and women in your church to consider full-time ministry. Ask your pastor to keep our synod’s work in your congregational prayers and provide updates on a regular basis.

Give: You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. He was rich, yet he became poor so that through his poverty we might become rich (2 Corinthians 8:9). God’s generosity has resulted in the riches of forgiveness, peace, joy, and hope. Let that move you to give generously to your local congregation, to your synod through your church, and to this initiative.

The 100 Missions in 10 Years effort is not about numbers and statistics. Rather, it is simply a concerted effort to boldly take the gospel to people in new locations throughout the country. And when the gospel is preached and proclaimed, the Holy Spirit works in his way and in his time to build his church.

Serving him,
WELS President Mark Schroeder

Learn more at [wels100in10.net](https://www.wels100in10.net). 

A new approach to African mission work

In May and June of this year, three of WELS' sister church bodies in Cameroon and Nigeria graduated a combined 25 men after five years of seminary studies. Seven of those men will serve as pastors in the Lutheran Church of Cameroon (LCC); nine will serve Christ the King Lutheran Church of Nigeria; and nine will serve All Saints Lutheran Church of Nigeria.

Mission work in Africa looks significantly different now than it did 30 years ago. Gone are the days of American seminary-trained pastors driving out to remote African villages to preach in churches. "Years ago, we had the idea that we were going to bring what we knew from the United States and just transplant that into Africa. It was generally missionary-driven," says Rev. Dan Kroll, a One Africa Team missionary based in Malawi.

Now the relationship between WELS missionaries and our African church bodies is shifting to one of partnership.

The ministerial training of the recent Cameroonian and Nigerian graduates demonstrates this shift. At the outset of the LCC's five-year seminary program, Kroll was working in person to hand the worker training program over to the capable, spirit-driven men of Africa. Kroll's time in Cameroon soon came to an unexpected end, however, when COVID-related challenges and dangerous political unrest made face-to-face contact with the men impossible for the final three years. The situation in Nigeria was similar.

Suddenly, the African teachers in both Cameroon and Nigeria bore the responsibility for completing the

seminarians' training. While Kroll and Rev. Dan Witte, a One Africa Team missionary based in Zambia, worked tirelessly to provide guidance and materials via e-mail, the stunted communication proved challenging.

But the Lord promises us in Isaiah 55:11 that when his Word is preached, his purposes are fulfilled. Kroll explains, "The men graduated, and they're going to be in ministry. They studied, and the Holy Spirit will strengthen them and encourage them and put out whatever he wants to put out."

The next seminary class began its studies this month, with the African national pastors now taking the lead in the training. "Now it's their thing, and we're going to assist," says Witte. "It's important for us to empower people with Holy Spirit-given gospel gifts to do their thing their way, as opposed to us saying, 'How can they replicate our thing our way?'"

Witte and Kroll recently met in Cameroon with their African brothers to preview course materials and seek feedback as the national pastors work to shape their own ministerial programs. "Our goal is to work ourselves out of a job," Witte explains. "Our goal is that on the day we need to leave, [this ministry] is in someone else's hands."

Learn more about work in Africa at wels.net/missions/africa. Read more about our African partners at forwardinchrist.net/doing-their-thing-their-way. 

Images of Grace: Communicating the gospel through art


Many cultures don't have a strong tradition of reading and writing and communicate concepts and stories in other ways, often through oral traditions and through art. This often makes communicating God's Word to people unfamiliar with it a difficult challenge. With those realities in mind, Missionary Terry Schultz began exploring ways to create art that can be used to more easily teach the Word of God in any culture.

Recognizing the great need and drawing upon longtime friendships with Bethany Lutheran College, Mankato, Minn., art professors Andy Overn and Jason Jaspersen, Schultz suggested a project involving the professors and interested students in partnership with WELS Multi-Language Productions. The project would involve creating new artwork of as much of the Bible as possible.

A group of students met with the professors and Missionary Schultz, and the project was immediately launched. An initial 54 Bible stories were chosen and divided between the students and professors. The artists spent many hours studying the Bible, utilizing commentaries, and talking with theology professors before beginning final artwork. At the same time, they needed to study various cultures to make the art as usable as possible in a variety of cultural contexts.

Each Bible story was created in a poster-sized format with multiple frames. These posters can easily and economically be printed in nearly every mission field.

Bethany Lutheran College students Holly Harris, Maida Jaspersen, Lydia Kratz, and Abby Nelson joined Missionary Schultz and Professors Overn and Jaspersen along with WELS World Missions Administrator Rev. Larry Schlomer for a gallery exhibition and panel discussion on September 1, 2022. The exhibition, "Images of Grace," showcased the artwork at Bethany Lutheran College.

Bethany students, faculty, and staff, as well as guests, turned out to see the artwork and listen to the story behind the project. Missionary Schultz stressed that this project is only beginning, and his hope is to have many more Bible stories available in this format in the future. 



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