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Colorado Mission District Mission Board

Report to the 2010 Nebraska District Convention

June 14-16, 2010

Greetings in the name of the Lord of the Church, our risen and ascended Savior, Jesus!

Some might suppose that the less money Home Missions has to work with, the less work they have to do. Our District Mission Board has found the opposite to be true. For one thing, not having as much money as we'd like doesn't stop the need for telling people that the risen Jesus died and rose them. Souls – people – our neighbors - perish forever in hell if they do not know their risen Savior and believe in him. And so our DMB has even more mission-oriented work to do especially when we can't fund a mission establishment, or a mission enhancement, or a mission development. It's been a busy couple of years for our Colorado DMB, but the Lord has blessed the efforts of his people, with funding or without.

And yet one new mission establishment has been started - Castle Rock, CO!

Ask Board for Home Mission chairman / Convention essayist Pastor Chuck Westra how easy it was to go forward with opening a new mission at this time in our Synod. There are sound and wise arguments that can be made about funding and re-funding missions that are already going and perhaps struggling. But what could happen to our church body if all we do is maintain congregations and never start any new ones? More importantly, what happens to the people in communities that may never know Christ without us preaching the saving Good News to them?

And so we rejoice that the Lord led **Pastor Jared Oldenburg** to accept the Call to be mission explorer in Castle Rock. Some of you may remember that Jared spent his vicar year at Lord of Life in Thornton, CO in 2000-01. We value his experience and gifts and ask the Lord to bless his efforts. Jared's installation is set for July 18 at Abiding Word in Highlands Ranch.

There are tremendous blessings from a mighty and gracious God happening even where monies cannot be sent. In **Sheridan, WY**, where Pastor Gary Schult serves a semi-retirement call at **Valley Lutheran**.

At **Living Hope in Brighton** – where Pastor Chad Walta is serving in this shared time ministry with RMLHS. Who would have thought they would be up and running and expanding and doing so well one year after they had to be de-funded? They had 63 attend Easter services!! How about **Peace in Boulder**, where Pastor Gene Ahlswede has been faithfully serving this past year! They looked at creative ways (refinancing their loan working with RMLHS) to call a Seminary graduate to serve them and reach out in the community. And there is **Prince of Peace in Salt Lake City**. They got approval and funding and called eight times for a 2nd pastor to concentrate on outreach. Eight times the call was returned. Then they got that position defunded. Then last spring they learned their former vicar graduated from the Seminary without a call. So they scrapped together some funds and a ministry plan and called him for one year. Now in under one year, they've been able to call them full-time, and Home Missions was able to give them subsidy for two years, to help make sure the outreach pastor position is funded and Pastor Noah Bater (working with Pastor Jonathon Micheel) actually gets paid for being a pastor! **King of Kings in Scottsbluff** is considering the possible shortage of calls for Seminary graduates as an opportunity to have a pastor called there. He would probably have to pick up part-time work to supplement his income. But its an opportunity. And that's the beauty of what God is doing with us and through us during these challenging economic times. He's raising us up to see opportunity through adversity. And he's doing remarkable things. And he has maybe even sharpened our focus on telling more and more people the Good News of salvation in the risen Christ!

Another great series of outreach events going on this summer are our soccer camps. Two MLC students - Daniel Slaughter and Justin Pomije- will spend their summer at eleven different Colorado Mission District congregations helping them reach out in their communities by conducting soccer camps. Please join us in praying that these camps are a blessing to the outreach efforts of the congregations and that Daniel and Justin's summer is safe and productive. Funding for these summer jobs come from a grant given to Martin Luther College.

Now, let's take a look at **some** of the work of the Lord in our Colorado Mission District that I have not yet mentioned:

Shepherd of the Mesa, Battlement Mesa, Colorado. Pastor Bill Cornelius and Staff ministers Adam and Sarah Lambrecht continue to be involved in the community, working basketball and soccer camps, serving on community boards, visiting nursing homes, doing radio work, (including play by play announcing of away high school football games) hosting over 250 people recently at their Community Cookout held where they worship and meet at the Grand Valley Historical Society.

Crown of Life, Pueblo West, CO. – saw 265 people attend their Easter services this year – they average a little over 100 per Sunday! They continue to see new people each week visit their (practically) brand new facility. They have a BIC in double digits. CoL is served by Pastor Mark Hayes.

Living Savior, Littleton, CO. – raised the necessary money themselves to start an Early Childhood Education program this fall. They have continued to keep the pace of rising offerings vs. decreasing amounts of subsidy. The Lord has blessed the work of Pastor Dave Koelpin.

Good Shepherd, Cheyenne – has expanded westward – dedicating their Good Shepherd , Laramie, church site on Palm Sunday. Over 25 attend there every week on Sundays as Pastor Jeff Heitsch drives over after services in Cheyenne. Now that they have a permanent location they can stop playing their version of Where’s Waldo – Where’s the WELS in Laramie? Congregation members raised \$20,000 in about a week, in order to help purchase the church!

Christ Lutheran, Denver – continues to be blessed through the faithful service of Pastor Paul Biedenbender and CLC coordinator Eileen Zanto. They had about 120 attend on Easter Sunday – 75 in the English service and 45 in the Spanish speaking service. On Sunday, April 25th and then after school on April 30th, they celebrated El Dia del Nino – the traditional Mexican holiday which celebrates the responsibility of caring for the needs of our children and celebrates them as the blessing they are. They have been working with architects who have drawn up a beautiful permanent facility for them.

Mountain Valley, Eagle – had 168 on Easter Sunday – their highest total ever for Easter worship, including 40 visitors, 20 some were first time visitors. The economy has hit this resort community hard, but Pastor Brent Merten is doing well as they get set to receive their second vicar in a mission setting.

Christ the Rock, Farmington – continues their tradition of aggressive summer outreach with two WELS Kingdom Workers, an outreach basketball camp that recently received a two page newspaper article in the local paper, and more. They have also begun to hold services, once per month, for their folks that are members there but live in Durango. The members are bringing their friends, too! CTR is served faithfully by Pastor Tom Glende and Pastor Jim Fleming.

Fount of Life, Colorado Springs – raised the necessary 20% down payment (\$295,000) and then some and applied for a CEF loan for a 8500 square foot expansion. They plan to break ground soon. FOL is served by the undersigned.

Light of the Valley, Layton, UT – is back to averaging over 70 in worship, over 30 in Adult Bible class, and has 16 enrolled in Bible information class. It’s a challenging field filled with many LDS – but the Lord is blessing the work of Pastor Doug Lange.

Living Word, Montrose – recently found a 2 acre piece of land where they hope to relocate the parsonage, expand a garage to 2700 square feet for worship and a preschool, and plan for a future sanctuary. This allows them to get out of their temporary storefront and start a preschool, God willing, in the fall of 2011. Already Jessica Frey (Pastor Matt Frey’s wife, Tim and Dori Winkel’s daughter, Nathaniel’s sister) is offering a “Mostly Music” class that is a big hit in the community.

And we’d love to start something in St. George, Utah. And Durango. And north Colorado Springs. And get full-time manpower in Laramie. And help with the Hispanic Outreach in Thornton. And get Living Hope, Brighton to call Chad full-time. And more.

I wanted to quick mention that I'm not sure how much money will be available from Wels Kingdom Workers. But I don't want to make the mistake I made last year and give the impression that there's no need to even apply if you've got a good idea for outreach. Remember, WKW has funded National Projects, like Adam and Sarah Lambrecht in Battlement Mesa. MMA projects like summer workers in Farmington, NM. And YIS projects like TCW teams that come and spend a week during spring break. Applications are due to our Board by August 15th.

In late April the Board for Home Missions met in Milwaukee. We'll heard the good news that the Executive Committee approved all our requests for continued subsidy for Christ, Denver; Living Word, Montrose; Prince of Peace, Salt Lake City; and Christ the Rock, Farmington. We learned that four of our five Vicars in Mission setting requests were prioritized (the four that have vicar this year –FOL in CO Springs, Zion, Denver, Mountain Valley in Eagle, and Lord of Life in Thornton,St. Peter, Fort Collins plans to reapply next year).

And we discussed the Task Force report which has recommendations concerning everything from Mission Board Structure and Operation to the use of Mission Counselors to the Promotion of Home Missions to the future of funding for Missions. We plan to discuss the Task Force Proposals during the Home Missions section of this convention. But while structure and funding and so many other things may change, may our zeal to reach the lost without Christ never change.

And it won't when we remember how the apostle Paul encouraged the Corinthians at the conclusion of his great resurrection chapter (15) in 1Corinthians, to always give themselves fully to the Lord. It won't when we are compelled by the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. It won't when we remember that One died for all. After all, take a look at what happened in the book of Acts. **²⁰Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus. (Acts 11:20)** Take a look at the examples in this report. And then, go labor on!

Pastor Wayne Uhlhorn,
Chairman, Colorado Mission Board