



Director of Ministry Resources

Commission for New Missions

In response to the Great Commission and Resolution 1-01 of the 2006 Ohio District Convention, the congregations of the Ohio District are committed to the expansion of the Kingdom of God through new mission churches. These new mission outposts are the focal point of making disciples in their communities. For this reason, the Commission for New Missions has been established replacing the former Board for Missions. The Director of Ministry Resources has the responsibility of overseeing the structure and system. It is our prayer that God will bless our nurture of church plants.

New missions are nurtured in three distinct ways through partnerships within the Ohio District. In accordance with our Synod's objectives as stated in Article III of its Constitution, each mission is to be provided with *resources, encouragement, and a means for accountability*.

Current members of the Commission for New Missions are:

Mr. Mike Haines
Mr. Brian Upton
Mr. Paul Vollbracht
Ms. Sandy Danneman
Deacon Doug Seletzky
Rev. Dale Kern
Rev. Kevin Wilson, Southern Region MMF
Rev. Jeff Stephens, Director of Ministry Resources

Resources: A regional Mission and Ministry Facilitator will provide on-going *equipping* for new missions. This includes such resources as training church plant teams, identifying and deploying coaches, organizing periodic training events and helping missions form yearly ministry plans.

The CNM reviews new mission grant applications and requests for loans from the Mission Start-Up Fund. It submits mission grant requests to the Ohio District Board of Directors through the annual budget and distributes mission funds.

Encouragement: Emerging missions receive continual *encouragement* through partnerships within the district. Partners include such diverse groups as the CNM, peer groups, a sponsoring church, a network of area churches, circuits, para-church groups or prayer networks. Encouragement comes in such forms as prayer support, service events, or financial gifts.

Means for Accountability: New missions are *accountable* to the CNM for the human and financial resources that have been entrusted to them. Accountability for these resources is monitored via regular mission reports, reports from the Mission and Ministry Facilitators and direct interaction with and visits to the new missions as appropriate.

Current Mission Start Congregations:

The Plant, Strongsville, OH	Rev. John Dawson
River of Faith, Waterville, OH	Rev. Tim Behnke
Emmaus Journey, North Ridgeville, OH	Rev. Mark Croucher
Living Truth, N. Marysville, OH	Rev. Derrick Hurst
Community of Hope, Lakewood, OH	Chris Steinmann, Ministry Coordinator

Relation to the Ohio District Mega-Ends Policies

The Ohio District strives to have healthy congregations, evidenced in part by a growing number of congregations. This work with new missions will, by God's grace, result in more and healthier new church starts. These, in turn, will contribute toward a District-wide increased worship and Bible study attendance, and an increase in the number of baptisms/confirmations.

The District also strives for healthy professional workers. The new mission ministry provides development programs in coaching and periodic training events.

Finally, the District desires healthy links among congregations, district and the synod. New missions touches on all three strategies, from multiplying partnerships to better communication to increased sharing of financial resources.

Mission Startup Fund

The Mission Startup Fund ("MSF") exists to provide ongoing funding for *new mission starts* through 0% interest loans. New Missions may qualify for up to six years of funding on an annual basis. *The Ohio District*, through the MSF, will loan funds at 0% interest to New Missions or to existing congregations that are launching a new Mission congregation. The amount of funds available to be loaned to New Missions on an annual basis will depend upon the total of all requests received by the CNM and the total amount held in the Fund.

A New Mission is a mission church that intends to become:

1. a self supporting congregation of the Ohio District; or
2. an additional site for an existing Ohio District congregation.

The MSF is a custodial account, held and managed by the designee(s) of the Ohio District Board of Directors subject to a biannual review of the Ohio District Board of Directors beginning in 2009.

The MSF is capitalized by:

- A portion of the annual District Mission budget.
- 50% of the value of all congregational property given or reverting to the Ohio District
- Gifts and bequests given directly to the fund
- At least 10% of all undesignated gifts or bequests given to the district
- At least 50% of all gifts or bequests designated to the Ohio District for "missions"
- The repayment of funds by New Missions

Acceptable assets to be donated to or held by the MSF include cash, stocks or bonds, real property and collectibles. The MSF Fund manager shall receive all donations and assets and will to liquidate, in a timely fashion, all non-cash items on behalf of the MSF. The Board of Directors maintains the right to accept or reject restricted gifts to the MSF with the advice of the Commission for New Missions ("CNM").

Mission & Ministry Structure

The 2003 Convention mandated that the District utilize the Mission and Ministry Facilitator structure in order to better serve the congregations and professional church workers. We have made great strides in the last triennium to accomplish this goal. Under the leadership of President Cripe and the direction of Director of Ministry Resources the following has been put in place:

<u>Rev. Kevin Wilson</u>	Full time MMF Southern Region, Specialty – New Missions
<u>Rev. Jim Herndon</u>	Part time MMF Northwest Region, Specialty – Rural/small town ministry
<u>Rev. Vern Bok</u>	Part time MMF Northeast Region, Specialty – Consecrated Stewards and Transforming Congregations
<u>Mr. Jonathan Reitz</u>	Part time MMF Northeast Region, Specialty – Coach training and Transforming Congregations

By God's grace the following has been accomplished:

In 2006 the Southern Region of the Ohio District received its first full time Mission and Ministry Facilitator in Rev. Kevin Wilson. During the last triennium Wilson worked directly with 37 of the region's 55 congregations. Well over half of the facilitations dealt with specific ministry issues, such as evangelism training, capital fund drives or daughter church planting. For example, six southern region churches utilized Consecrated Stewards and four congregations started the process of changing to Policy Based Governance. Other facilitations worked with the entire congregation with 12 churches going through Natural Church Development, Transforming Churches or Strategic Planning.

Missions in the Ohio District were significantly impacted by the district's change to Policy Based Governance. With the change in governance the Mission Board was dissolved. The responsibility for church planting and missions shifted to Rev. Jeff Stephens, Director of Ministry Resources.

In the area of starting new congregations, the District shifted to providing support in three ways to new churches. Each new congregation receives accountability, equipping and encouragement.

Accountability is found in the Commission for New Missions...

New congregations are equipped through MMF Kevin Wilson. In this role Wilson has developed an assessment process to identify church planters, provided coaching for church planters, helping new congregations get organized and leading planning processes after new churches are launched.

Encouragement for new congregations is found in sponsorship by sister congregations and gatherings of district church planters.

During the last triennium the New Mission Fund was also formed.

During the last triennium a thorough study of LCMS mission work in West Virginia was under taken by MMF Wilson. The resulting case study was used as part of the Fan into Flame emphasis. It also was key in designing the strategy to plant 20 new churches in West Virginia. The new mission work in West Virginia will be spearheaded by the Appalachian Mission Partnership (AMP), a Gospel outreach of the Ohio District- LCMS. AMP will be a catalyst for sowing Gospel seeds in West Virginia through spiritual, social and economic development.

The result of this structure is that congregations have more immediate access to the resources, help and encouragement provided by the District through the MMF's. Our communication has been enhanced and the relationship between the District and congregations has become more positive in the past triennium.

Shared Support Ministry Task Force

A Shared Support Mission is a mission that is not likely to become a self supporting congregation and/or not an established congregation of the Ohio District. Generally these Missions are: specialized, human care or ethnic missions such as but not limited to Deaf Congregations, Urban African American congregations, Campus ministries, Hispanic or Arabic ministries.

Task Force Purpose: To support these congregations and missions through

- Communication & links between Shared Support Missions and District and Synod.
- Creative funding opportunities.
- Encouragement for professional church workers in these missions.
- Oversight and accountability of the financial support provided by the congregations of the Ohio District to ensure the viability and fruitfulness of the mission.

Shared Support Ministry Task Force members:

Rev. Dan Bell
Rev. Shirrel Petzoldt
Rev. Everett Green
Rev. Jeff Stephens

Stewardship Task Force

An intentional attempt has been made to help pastors and congregational leaders grow in teaching Biblical Stewardship. Utilizing the tools of “Consecrated Stewards” as developed by Capital Funding Services of LCEF, we have been invited to 26 congregations in the past two years to host such a Stewardship Renaissance. Eleven “Guest Leaders” have been trained throughout the District and stand ready to guide congregations through the process. The following congregations have participated, some for consecutive years.

<u>Congregation</u>	<u>City</u>
Our Savior	Newark
St. John	Elyria
Shore Haven	Euclid
Royal Redeemer	North Royalton
Our Redeemer	Solon
Valley	Chagrin Falls
St. Paul	Amherst
St. Paul	Napoleon
St. Mark	Brunswick
Zion	Painesville
St. Paul	Westlake
St. John	Marysville
Pilgrim	Lakewood
Tallmadge	Tallmadge
Trinity	Willoughby
Immanuel	Hamilton
Bethany	Erlanger, KY
St. John	South Euclid
Bethany	Parma
Hosanna	Columbia Station
Prince of Peace	Medina
King of Kings	Mason
Gethsemane	Lakewood
Zion	Cincinnati
Beautiful Savior	Powell
Zion	Ashtabula

Transforming Congregations

In response to the 2007 Synodical Convention resolution to Transform or Revitalize 2000 LCMS congregations by the year 2017, the Ohio District under the leadership of President Cripe has established a goal of 60 Transformed congregations by that same year. This initiative began in earnest in our District in the spring of 2007. Since then 23 congregations have entered into the Transforming Process and 40 Pastors have joined Learning Communities connected to the Transforming Process. The Ohio District is currently in the process of recruiting and training 20-30 coaches who work with the congregations to help them achieve their goals.

Though the process is still in its infancy, some of the congregations are already seeing increased worship attendance, an increase in the number of adult baptisms and confirmations, and renewed enthusiasm for ministry on the part of the laity.

Evangelism – Partners in Outreach Task Force

The Partners in Outreach Task Force is currently developing two seminars for congregations of the Ohio District which will help God's saints become more confident and competent in their everyday witnessing opportunities. We hope to offer these seminars throughout Ohio, Kentucky and West Virginia beginning this fall. The first will train laypersons to share the Gospel in natural and spontaneous ways in everyday settings. The second is designed to help congregations attract more guests and visitors.

Partners in Outreach Task Force members:

Rev. Mark Etter
Rev. John Hohe
Rev. Jim Weist
Mr. Ron Rollins
Rev. Jim Herndon
Rev. Vern Bok
Rev. Kevin Wilson
Rev. Jeff Stephens

Any good that has been or will be accomplished through these efforts is solely attributed to the power of God working through His instruments, the people of this District. All praise and honor to the Father, our Creator, to the Son, the Head of the Church, and to the Spirit who gives us life through the Son.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Jeffrey B. Stephens, D. Min.
Director of Ministry Resources