

## DISTRICT CONVENTION

# Division Reports Offer Overviews, Updates on District Work

Delegates to the recent Florida-Georgia Convention heard reports from District executives on work under way in the two states. These reports are summarized below.

## Multi-Cultural Outreach - Rev. Douglas Kallesen

God is sending people from all over the world to Florida-Georgia, providing us with a wonderful opportunity to be about His work. The District includes 52 mission grant congregations, with \$1.4 million in grants this year supporting such outreach. Outreach efforts under way encompass 11 languages representing 42 nations.

Within the District, 31 missions were begun between 2000-2005. In 2004, the District's 14 mission starts were the most in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

In 2006, we have started or will begin work in another seven mission areas: Amazing Grace Mission-Oxford, FL; Mt. Calvary daughter plant-Perry, GA; new mission-New Smyrna, FL; new mission-N. Cape Coral, FL; Atlanta urban; Miami urban; and a preaching station-Villa Rica, GA.

Most new missions are started locally using either a daughter church planting or satellite model. Sometimes this is done through a circuit or grouping of a few churches rather than by a congregation. Side-by-side or parallel mission starts such as Esperanza Viva at Hope-Orlando are especially useful when beginning an ethnic ministry. The Open Arms Child Care Center model allows a mission congregation such as Grace-Merritt Island, FL, to buy land and build a phase one

multi-purpose building to start a ministry to families in the community.

Goals and objectives for 2006-2009 include:

- 1 — Share the Gospel of Jesus with 2 million or more people by 2017 — which would mean that each baptized District member would share their faith three or more times over each of the next ten years.
- 2 — Start 200 or more missions or ministries by 2017 (counting from 2000).
- 3 — Identify and work to revitalize 22 existing congregations (one or more from each circuit).
- 4 — Double the number of cam-



DISTRICT TREASURER Jim Ingersoll presented a financial update.

pus ministries to 16 by 2010.

5 — Continue to expand our work in multi-cultural outreach and urban ministry areas of our District.

6 — Expand our efforts in Thailand and Southeastern Asia, including the identification and support of short-term volunteer missionaries.

## Lutheran Schools - Mark Brink

Lutheran schools in America date back to the mid-1600s, when Swedish immigrants settled in what would become Delaware, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Maryland. Salzburg

Lutherans started schools in Georgia in the mid-1700s.

Today, 250 years later, the love for the Lord and His people that motivated the Salzburger to build that orphanage moved the students in Florida-Georgia District schools to reach out to children from cultures half a world away.

In the 2003-2004 school year, the District-wide Hearts for Jesus project in our schools raised more than \$16,000 to provide Bible story books for children in Romania. We know for a fact that the children's chapel offerings made an eternal difference in the lives of some Romanian children as they read Bible stories in their native language for the very first time.

The spirit of giving and sharing the Gospel in other parts of the world blossomed in the 2004-2005 school year, when District students and teachers pledged to build an early childhood center for orphans in Roteang, Cambodia. They eventually contributed more than \$45,000 toward the goal — almost double to \$25,000 goal.

This past school year, the Hearts for Jesus project stayed closer to home as the children contributed their dollars to help the schools in the Southern District that were so devastated by Hurricane Katrina. The school children and their families gave tens of thousands of dollars toward that effort. Thrivent Financial matched a portion of the funds.

The Hearts for Jesus project for next year will support the efforts of Mission India to develop small group Bible study opportunities for children.

About 40% of all congregations in the Synod operate some kind of school ministry.

In the Florida-Georgia District, 89 — or 47% — of the 190 congregations directly support a Lutheran school ministry. It is also correct to say that 100% of Florida and Georgia congregations that pledge financial support to the mission of the District are involved in Lutheran school ministry.

Today in the Florida-Georgia District, there are 41 free-standing early childhood programs, 40 elementary/middle schools and two high schools. A number of congregations are exploring the possibility of starting new schools, including the potential for a high school in the Jacksonville area.

There are various challenges facing District schools. Skyrocketing costs of health care benefits, rapidly escalating housing costs and salaries that barely keep up with inflation are making it difficult for congregations and teachers.

Yet God has placed churches and schools in Florida-Georgia to be tools to carry out His work and to minister to a hurting world.

## Concordia House of Studies - Dr. Wayne Wilke

The role of the Concordia House of Studies is to bring

Lutheran higher education opportunities to God's people to equip them for ministry.

The CHS curriculum consists of two major parts: the traditional college and the lay ministry/Distance Education Leading to Ordination formats. CHS courses have been taken by more than 100 individual students.

Four students have taken a part of the curriculum as preparation for enrollment at an LCMS seminary. Two CHS graduates have been installed as Lutheran teachers, several other graduates are teaching in public schools and one graduate is serving as a Director of Children and Family Ministry.

The vision for Concordia House of Studies includes a multi-track curriculum. One track would continue to offer for-credit courses for traditional students, with classes in areas adjacent to local colleges or universities in Orlando and Gainesville. A second track would be a mix of credit and not-for credit courses in specific areas such as DELTO, lay ministry, colloquy and parish nurse offered in geographically diverse groups using varied delivery systems. A third track would be non-credit offerings intended for students already engaged in

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REV. ED TRINKLEIN — shown here with his wife, Carol — spoke of the District's Stewardship Advisory Council which "encourages and assists congregations in stewardship response." He is a former District President and pastor emeritus of St. Paul-Lakeland, FL.



TAKING A BREAK between Convention sessions are (clockwise from lower left) Richard Neubauer, Lutheran Church Extension Fund; District President Gerhard Michael; Jim Ingersoll, District Treasurer; and Rev. Pat O'Brien, District Secretary.



DISTRICT SUPPORT STAFF MEMBERS (left to right) Carol Graves, Division of Outreach; Paulette Isaacs, President's Office; Lynda Voss, Division of School Ministries; Cecilia Mercon, Administration/Finance; Cindy Hammerstrom, Concordia House of Studies and Division of Congregational Services; and Mary Byrd, Lutheran Church Extension Fund were thanked for their service by District President Gerhard Michael.