



January 17, 2008

**LCMS World Mission Support**

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Dear Pastors, Principals, and Friends:

Greetings to you in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

As you may already know, the ***Ablaze!*** movement is the bold initiative sparked by LCMS World Mission within The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod to share the Good News of Jesus with 100 million people by the year 2017, the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation. The mission fields in your community, the nation, and internationally are ripe to hear of Jesus.

The Synod passed a resolution at the 2004 Convention establishing ***Fan into Flame*** as a fund raising campaign throughout the Synod in support of the ***Ablaze!*** movement. This campaign is to provide funding, above regular gifts to the Synod, for mission opportunities in all of the mission fields where they occur. The Nebraska District Board of Directors designated 2008 as the year for the District's participation in the ***Fan into Flame*** campaign. The purpose of my letter is to provide a brief overview of this special mission support project and to request that you share this valuable information with your congregation.

***Fan into Flame*** will secure new funds to reach the lost through mission work locally, nationally, and internationally. Indeed, ***Fan into Flame*** seeks to gather \$100 million in new gifts in support of the ***Ablaze!*** movement and its bold and inspiring vision.

Please find enclosed a brief overview of the case for support for the campaign which demonstrates how funds will be used. A percentage of the new money the Holy Spirit moves your congregation to raise will be returned to you for local mission outreach projects you designate. This campaign will also create a greater awareness among members about the stewardship of His blessings. For example, a local congregation can use the gifts that it gathers to help plant a new mission or fund projects that will reach the lost in its neighborhood.

These congregational projects may include providing materials for leading a Vacation Bible School in a nearby community without a church, tuition discounts to students who attend your Lutheran school and are not members of a church, or equipping members with materials and education for personal witnessing of their faith. I am confident He will move your members to support this effort through their hearts and hands.

The campaign will also provide new funds for district-wide projects that will be identified and shared during the ***Fan into Flame*** campaign in Nebraska. Internationally, the campaign has already provided resources to projects essential to sharing Christ's Word with a world that is in desperate need of His saving love. Seminary expansion for theological education is already occurring in Ghana and funds for new chapels in India have been given through ***Fan into Flame***. This important campaign, with God's blessing, will enable us to spread the seeds of the Gospel to the unsaved locally, district-wide, nationally, and internationally.

The ***Ablaze!*** emphasis to speak about Jesus to the unsaved and unchurched has already begun in many Nebraska congregations. If your congregation has not begun an intentional ***Ablaze!*** effort, I encourage you to go online at [www.lcms.org/ablaze](http://www.lcms.org/ablaze) and review all the wonderful ***Ablaze!*** resources. You may also contact the District Office for more information to help you get started.

We will be seeking a number of congregations to lead our ***Fan into Flame*** effort by serving as models in our District. A major gift effort will begin soon and will run throughout the year. The remaining congregations will be invited to orientation workshops and then asked to participate in ***Fan into Flame*** in the summer or fall. My hope is for congregation appeals to be completed by Advent 2008. There are flexible, successful appeal plans that your congregation can consider, along with resources available to help implement each plan.

I am excited about joining hands, spreading the Good News to so many who have not heard the saving Gospel message, and sharing His peace and love. Included with this introductory letter are a prayer and a sheet of frequently asked questions about ***Fan into Flame***. More information about our efforts in ***Fan into Flame*** is forthcoming and will be available on the District website at [www.ndlcms.org](http://www.ndlcms.org). You are also invited to join our *Email Update* mailing list to receive bi-weekly electronic newsletters with up-to-date ***Fan into Flame*** information. Visit the District website or email [info@ndlcms.org](mailto:info@ndlcms.org) to request being added to this list.

I ask that you keep your mind and heart open to working with the other 244 congregations in the Nebraska District to promote and participate in ***Ablaze!*** and ***Fan into Flame*** in the Nebraska District. Please join me in praying for God to use us in this important outreach movement to build His kingdom.

Thank you in the name of Jesus Christ.

Partnering with you in the Lord's mission field,

Rev. Russ Sommerfeld  
Nebraska District President

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