



# Mobilizing Against Systemic Racism in the Church - Final Report

[Home](#)

[About Us](#)

[Grants](#)

[Major Grants](#)

[Short-Term Grants](#)

[Congregation Grants](#)

[Good Samaritan Grants](#)

[Grant Writing Resources](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)

[Ways to Give](#)

[Special Projects](#)

[News/Events](#)

[Resources](#)

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## **Name of Project:**

"One Lord, One Father, One Baptism, One God and Father of Us All"

## **Location:**

Northern Illinois District - LCMS  
2301 South Wolf Road  
Hillside, IL 60162

## **Starting/Ending Dates of the Wheat Ridge Grant:**

1/1/01-12/31/03

## **Sponsoring Organization:**

Northern Illinois District - LCMS

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## **This report prepared by:**

Rev. William H. Griffin

## **Date of This Report:**

February 13, 2003

## **LIST EACH OF THE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES THAT APPEARED IN THE ORIGINAL GRANT PROPOSAL. BENEATH EACH GOAL AND OBJECTIVE, STATE THE DEGREE TO WHICH IT HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED.**

To build a long-term strategic plan to assist congregations and agencies in the Northern Illinois District to become racially inclusive and build multi cultural congregations and agencies by developing a Biblically based and Gospel centered multiracial ministry that works toward the elimination of barriers of institutional and individual racism that prevent the accomplishment of this goal through leadership teams that are trained in the skills of education and organizing to eliminate racism and build multi cultural diversity and inclusiveness.

The Crossroads ten day training began with three teams in September 2002 Three teams are involved in this training. There are two teams from the Northern Illinois District and one from Concordia University, River Forest. This training is to be completed by the end of March 2003. We were successful in our efforts to include people who represent a variety of ethnic, sex, and age groups in each of our teams.

The original Project and Design Task Force has been disbanded and replaced with an Implementation team and a District team. The job description for this team is written below.

The Implementation team is to oversee the project and find ways to involve congregations and agencies in the second round of training. The

Implementation Team has begun the ten-day training with Crossroads. The first phase of training was completed in November 2002. Additional training dates have been set for early spring 2003. Once this training is complete, this team will prepare a report for the Northern Illinois District Board of Directors. This report will include goals and strategies for the continuation of the Project. We will share this document with you as well.

The District Team is to examine the written documents and structures of the District to determine how they perpetrate racism in the District. It is to look at the various boards and committees of the District to determine if there are issues there pertaining to race in these structures. It is to examine the formal and informal decision making process as well. Four sub-committees have been appointed to look at four areas of the District. They are a Rules committee, a Power analysis of the Structures, The Culture of the District examines for cultural racism and a history committee to comment ways in which the District has been involved in racism in the past. These committees will prepare a report for the Board of Directors with goals and strategies to deal with the issues that they discover that need to be addressed. This team is also begun the ten day training that was held in November 2002.

Concordia University has also appointed a team that will be examining issues around race at the University. The University team is also involved in the ten-day training conducted by Crossroads.

**OUTCOME GOAL:** To develop a module on combating racism that could be used by congregations in their planning process.

**PROCESS OBJECTIVE:** During the second year of the project, the Project Coordinator will convene a group of at least three educators who know how to develop models for teaching and planning. This group will begin the process of developing a module together with Crossroads Ministries. After the module has been developed, it will be tested in at least four different types of congregations.

Since the project is behind schedule we have not begun the implementation phase of this goal. It is still a viable goal and is to be addressed during 2004.

**LIST ANY NEW GOALS AND OBJECTIVES ESTABLISHED SINCE THE GRANT WAS APPROVED.**

We have not established any new goals.

**WHAT MAJOR CHANGES (IF ANY) IN PROCEDURES AND ACTIVITIES ESTABLISHED AT THE BEGINNING OF THE PROJECT DID YOU MAKE?**

We have appointed an implementation team. The need for such a team grows out of the fact that congregations seem to be reluctant to be involved in a program of this length. They felt that the time commitment was too great for their membership. We discovered that much more time and effort would be needed to help congregations deal with issues around race. Our way of dealing with this was the appointment of an implementation team.

This team is to:

- Work with the Northern Illinois District, Agencies and Institutions in their selection of leadership teams.

- Assist the Northern Illinois District, Concordia University, River Forest and Lutheran Child and Family Services as they develop short and long term goals and objectives for their particular group.
- Assist the Northern Illinois District, Lutheran Child and Family Services and Concordia University, River Forest in the selection of the actual people to be trained.
- Continue working with congregations to introduce them to this project, invite, and encourage their participation in the project.
- Continue to monitor and oversee the project as it moves to its next phases.
- Serve as an "Umbrella" group that will track the needs of organizations and Congregations who have been part of the program in order to facilitate on going training as the team membership change.
- Document, evaluate and interpret the project within the district and to the whole church; as well as to further develop the project's goals and directions in the light of on going accomplishments and needs.

Make-up of such an Implementation Team includes people who represent a variety of ethnic, sex, and age groups. The Implementation Team includes people from the previous task force as well as new members.

**WHAT MAJOR OBSTACLES OR PROBLEMS DID YOU ENCOUNTER?**

One of the major obstacles has been to enlisting congregational involvement in the project. We have developed a strategy to get at that.

The second obstacle is to get Hispanic involvement in the project. We made special effort to correct this situation. We have not been successful up to this time. There are no Hispanics on any of our teams at this time. We plan to continue to work at changing this.

**WHAT NEW IDEAS FOR IMPROVING THIS PROJECT OR IDEAS FOR OTHER PROJECTS SURFACED AS YOU LEARNED FROM THIS PROJECT?**

Up to this time, the project has been directed mainly at Caucasian congregations. Very little effort went into involving congregations serving African Americans. We felt the need to address this audience as well. A session was conducted for pastors serving African Americans in the fall of 2001. No further efforts in this direction were made in 2002.

**OVERALL, WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED FROM THIS PROJECT? WHAT ADVICE OR ENCOURAGEMENT CAN YOU OFFER TO OTHERS WHO MAY ATTEMPT A SIMILAR EFFORT?**

It may be that a new proposal could be developed for congregations who have been the victims of Racism. . We know that a different kind of effort would be necessary in these congregations. This is worth exploring. When the proposal was in its early stages, we presented the proposal to a group of African American pastors for their advice. They stated that it would prove to be a waste of time to be working with Caucasian congregation on issues around race. They said that we should be spending our energy on working with African American congregations.

**PLEASE SHARE ANY OPPORTUNITIES YOU HAD TO SHARE INFORMATION ABOUT IT WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS OR**

**AGENCIES.**

We have not shared information about the project with any other congregation, agency or institution. We believe that it is too early for that. After we have begun the training of the leadership teams of the Northern Illinois District and Concordia University, River Forest we will be making efforts to share with similar entities. We also plan to share our finding with the National Church as well.

**IF THIS PROJECT WAS INTENDED TO CONTINUE BEYOND THE TERM OF THE GRANT, WHAT PLANS ARE NOW IN PLACE TO ASSURE ITS CONTINUATION?**

The project will be continuing after the funds from Wheat Ridge. It is been approved as an ongoing program of the District and has a line in the District budget. The plan is that the direction of the project will be a part of the job descriptions of one of the congregational service representative. We are seeking funds from other funding sources for the congregational phase of the project.

[Contact Wheat Ridge Ministries](#)