

# World Missions Connection

## Missions Commission

World Assemblies of God Fellowship

The Acts One-Eight Project



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## In Anticipation of Bangkok 2015

In a little less than a month, many of you will be gathered together with leaders from around the globe at the World Missions Congress in Bangkok. ***If you still haven't made plans to come to Bangkok on February 4–6, we encourage you to do so.*** To my knowledge, no worldwide meetings exist like the ones the World Assemblies of God Fellowship (WAGF) sponsors that are dedicated to and focused exclusively on world missions and the Great Commission, especially with so many nations represented (we expect between 80 and 100 nations in Bangkok).



How exciting it was to have 60 nations represented in Cancun in 2013, when our last World Missions Congress was held. The positive impact of that event continues to reverberate throughout the world, as many countries caught a vision for the first time and were inspired by the Holy Spirit.

Ultimately, that is what we hunger for at the congress—that the Holy Spirit would speak to us and convict us to face our challenging task in this eleventh-hour harvest. In the past few years several Assemblies of God partners around the globe have celebrated their hundredth anniversaries. It has been a time of looking back and appreciating the vision of the first churches and missionaries who had a passion to touch the entire world. Part of that vision took place in the United States, where in Hot Springs, Arkansas, 300 people boldly believed their vision would impact nations. If they could see us today, some might find it hard to believe their vision truly came to pass.

Yet it is our belief that the start of this second century of the Assemblies of God is when a new purpose and impact can emerge, that today the many great churches raised up in the Global South and non-West would also embrace that vision and see themselves not just as receivers but as ordained and anointed senders. Truly, the Great Commission was never given only to the West or to the wealthy; it is for every church. And indeed, most of the early pioneers were not wealthy but made great sacrifices to either go themselves or send others.

God is raising up a spiritual workforce for this eleventh-hour harvest from Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, and Latin America. Of course, the Spirit continues to call from the West; God is not done with Western Europe, North America, and Oceania, but a handful of nations are incapable of bringing in the great harvest awaiting us.

Only with the Spirit's leading, vision, and empowering of the 90 percent of the world that are new senders and goers will God's purpose be fulfilled. We believe this congress will make a historic impact on that process. We thank you for making the sacrifice and effort in your busy schedule to share these few days with us. We believe Bangkok 2015 will also impact the WAGF. We encourage you, if you have not already made plans to attend, please do your best to join us!

**Brad Walz, Chairman**  
**WAGF Missions Commission**

David Mohan  
Liaison WAGF

# The Impact of Nordic Pentecostals in World Missions

The three Nordic countries of Norway, Sweden, and Finland have made a huge impact on world missions. Some missiologists have observed that up to 50 percent of the Pentecostals around the world can trace their spiritual heritage (or at least a relationship and impact) to one of the three Nordic "giants." They are small nations population-wise (though not land-wise), ranging from 5 million to 9.5 million, but they are giants in the history and spiritual impact of world missions. If you removed these three countries from world missions history, undoubtedly, there would be a huge void to fill.

Sweden has sent thousands of missionaries over the years and at one point in time had up to 1000 missionaries on the field. Pentecost first came to Sweden in 1907, and Lewi Pethrus was a key part of that history. According to Wikipedia:

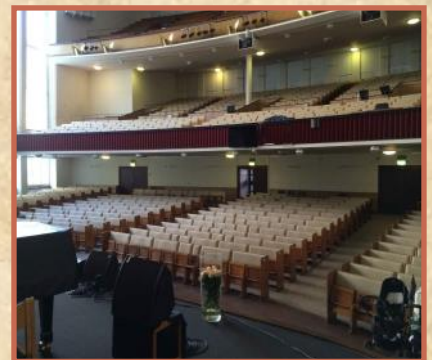
Pethrus joined the Pentecostal movement in 1907 after meeting the Norwegian Pentecostal minister Thomas Ball Barratt in Oslo. It was then that the doctrine of the baptism in the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues became clear to him; he claimed: "From that moment I was part of the Pentecostal Revival."

Pethrus became pastor of the Seventh Baptist Church in Stockholm in 1910 and of the Philadelphia Church in 1911. In 1913, the year in which he married Lydia Danielsson, his church was expelled from the Swedish Baptist Union due to disagreements about holy Communion (his church practiced open Communion). This was the beginning of a separate Pentecostal movement in Sweden. During the same phase of his life Pethrus wrote the words and music for his gospel song ("The promises cannot fail"). The Philadelphia Church started a Bible school in 1915 and a weekly magazine, *The Gospel Herald*, in 1916. In the same year, the church sent its first missionaries, Samuel and Lina Nyström, to Brazil, helping the Assembleias de Deus.

All three countries face challenges today, but they each also have unique testimonies of faithfulness. Norway gives testimony to a renewal taking place and a fresh commitment on the part of many young people. Sweden shares about a church rebirthing movement and church planting. Finland maintains a high ratio of missionaries per local church.

In September I had the privilege of visiting Norway and Sweden, and I have been in Finland more than once and maintain a close dialogue and relationship with its missions leadership. In our WAGF *World Missions Connection* newsletters, we often focus on the future and the newly emerging senders from Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, and Latin America. But in this issue I felt we should also honor and recognize the great spiritual giants of our missions history. (We want to do the same in the future regarding Canada and the United States.)

So in this newsletter, we feature interviews with the missions leadership of these three Nordic nations who have made such a great impact and left a spiritual footprint on the Church as we know it today. Enjoy a glimpse into these three nations.



## Norway | Interview with Torsten Mentzoni

Chairman, Missions Board, Pentecostal Foreign Mission in Norway (PYM)



Norwegian General Superintendent Sigmund Terje Kristoffersen, Brad Walz, Missions Director Bjørn Bjørnø

**Tell us a bit about the Pentecostal network in your country. How many churches? How many believers?**

Our network has a history dating back to 1907 and the first apostolic wave of Pentecostal revival emerging from the Azusa Street Revival. It has a little over 300 churches and 40,000 members. In Norway there are an additional 10,000 Pentecostal Christians in independent churches and one other network with a common history with us dating back around 100 years.

**How many missionaries do you have at the current time and to how many countries?**

We have 97 missionaries and are working with between 20 and 25 countries.

**Your country has impacted the world in a great way with the missionaries sent. What are some of your reflections of that history?**

Our rich missions story emerged in a time when Norway was a poor country in the backwaters of the Western world. It helped us that we had an outward mentality from centuries of seafaring, but it was an evident move of God that touched a lot of people. Norway had a great missions movement prior to the Pentecostal movement, and this impulse was integrated in our history. Our apostolic leader, Thomas Ball Barratt, spent 50 percent of his own time abroad during the first three years of the revival.

**What is your vision for the next ten years and beyond?**

To some extent our missions work has become old, something we have been doing for a long time, and we need a renewed image of the future of missions in our churches. I would like to see an increased devotion to a Kingdom mentality, including a commitment to worldwide missions for our churches with a strong emphasis on building of churches. I envision a new level of sharing of competence in a globalized Pentecostal church.

**Carlos Annacondia of Argentina says that “the three Nordic sending countries, Norway, Sweden, and Finland, have some of the strongest economies of the world. Though the churches have declined in recent years, I believe that the reason those countries have been so blessed is because they blessed and impacted the world with the sending of missionaries. Only until Argentina becomes a missionary nation can we also become a ‘blessed nation.’ ” What is your reaction to that reflection? You seem optimistic about renewal taking place in churches and among the youth.**

I think Annacondia is basically right. As nations we have been blessed by the effort to send. When you send, your thoughts and practices are tested in a very maturing way. When you try to make a small amount reach further, the godliness with contentment gives great gain. And when you sow abundantly, in time you will reap abundantly. Also, due to several Christian revivals, our politicians and leaders were left with a culture of righteousness free from corruption, which gives great blessing to the national economy.

Slaves or servants will never take responsibility as a master. The relative freedom of Norwegian farmers helped to create a good environment for Christians to take responsibility for the sending of missionaries. And when the spirit of responsibility is taught in the local churches, this gives the people a strong and fruitful mentality that they bring to the rest of their lives that is generating a prosperous work ethic, an attitude of faithful serving, and a willingness to put the greater need above oneself. So the blessing of sending is not only spiritual; it is quite measurable in this world.



Torsten Mentzoni with Brad and Rhonda Walz

*(Continued on page 4)*

## Norway | Interview with Torsten Mentzoni *(continued)*

**You are optimistic about renewal and new things happening among the youth. Tell us a bit about that.**

There are several young pastors that have started a wave of planting new churches with a culture that aims to be relevant for the young and the coming generations. This is a great opportunity in our network!

**Do you have anything else you would like to share or add?**

The job is not done; we are not finished! What would your life be like if you never received an opportunity to connect with the gospel? So we ought to give the gospel to someone new!

## Sweden | Interview with Pelle Hörnmark Chairman, Pentecostal Association of Sweden

**Tell us a bit about the Pentecostal network in your country. How many churches? How many believers?**

We have 470 churches and 110,000 believers (85,000 baptized and voting members).

**How many missionaries do you have at the current time and to how many countries?**

We have 160 missionaries officially working in 44 countries.

**Your country has impacted the world in a great way with the missionaries sent. What are some of your reflections of that history?**

Our churches have strong relations with churches in the Third World. Every church has the DNA of missions and evangelism. Our churches are greatly involved in working with immigrants, refugees, and integration of new people. Our churches' understanding of the world is greater than the rest of the society due to the big exposure to other parts of the world.

**What is your vision for the next ten years and beyond in terms of missions sending?**

We are now focusing on a new generation of missionaries, ten big cities in the world, and unreached people groups.

**Carlos Annacondia of Argentina says the following: "The three Nordic sending countries, Norway, Sweden, and Finland, have some of the strongest economies of the world. Though the churches have declined in recent years, I believe that the reason those countries have been so blessed is because they blessed and impacted the world with the sending of missionaries. Only until Argentina becomes a missionary nation can we also become a 'blessed nation.'" What is your reaction to that reflection?**

Probably true. When the Pentecostal movement started sending missionaries, Sweden was a poor country with many needs and economic depression. Our big wave of missionaries started during World War II. Within two decades the number of missionaries increased to 700.

**You are optimistic about renewal and new things happening among the youth. Tell us a bit about that.**

We just had a missions trip with 35 of our young key pastors. They show great interest and fire for missions. We see many young people in our Bible schools/colleges. Our new, planted, young churches are attractive to nonbelievers.



Brad Walz (second from left) with Swedish leadership Pelle Hörnmark, Gunnar Swahn, and David Johansson

## Finland | Interview with Harri Hakola

Director, Fida International , [www.fidainternational.fi](http://www.fidainternational.fi)

**Tell us a bit about the Pentecostal network in your country. How many churches? How many believers?**

There were 241 churches and 46,423 baptized believers as of December 31, 2013.

**How many missionaries do you have at the current time and to how many countries?**

The total number of missionaries is 249 in 36 countries. There are 189 missionaries on the field, and the rest are on furlough or returned back to Finland less than two years ago. The number does not include the Fida employees in the office (41) and in the Second Hand Shops (122), although we are doing one hundred percent missions work. There are several pastors employed as missions pastors in the local churches as well. The other mission organization, Keymedia, employs 15. The total number employed in missions activities in Finland is around 450 people. There are hundreds of volunteers also involved.

**Your country has impacted the world in a great way with the missionaries sent. What are some of your reflections of that history?**

The first missionaries from Finland were sent by a Lutheran missions agency in 1870 to Namibia. The Pentecostal churches have been active in sending missionaries since 1927. The first missionary was sent in 1912, but World War I and the first years of Finland's independence affected the early Pentecostal work so that the missionary work was neglected for some years. The history shows that missions work has been a vital part of the church's operations. Some churches have even contributed first to the missions work and then to a local ministry. An average spending on missions work is 15–25 percent of the local church budget. There are small churches that spend 60 percent of their budget to missions. The Finnish government has been supporting the social side of our missions work for 40 years.

**What is your vision for the next ten years and beyond?**

To keep the missionary spirit alive and fire up the young generation to the mission. The number of missionaries may not increase a lot, but there will be more tentmakers and fewer traditional missionaries. The work will be more focused on church planting.

**Carlos Annacondia of Argentina says the following: "The three Nordic sending countries, Norway, Sweden, and Finland, have some of the strongest economies of the world. Though the churches have declined in recent years, I believe that the reason those countries have been so blessed is because they blessed and impacted the world with the sending of missionaries. Only until Argentina becomes a missionary nation can we also become a 'blessed nation.'" What is your reaction to that reflection?**

I would say that Annacondia has understood the only reason for our success. God has really blessed us in many ways. I myself agree with what Annacondia says. We are rich because we have been willing to share our blessings. Nordic countries have been blessing to the rest of the world both spiritually and physically.

**Fida is unique in that, although local churches continue to send, Fida is also involved in networking and in motivating churches for missions vision (at least that is our perception). Tell us a bit about Fida.**

Fida was established in 1927 to support local churches in their missions activities. Due to emphasis of the local church leadership, the office was closed from 1929 to 1950. From 1950 to 1987, the Fida office had a quite restricted role in missions work. There were only few people employed, and the local churches led the field work. Dr. Arto Hämäläinen started his 22-year leadership career in Fida in 1987. During his time Fida's role changed from a supporting to a leadership role, and Fida became a more influential player in world missions. Fida's strategic goals are to plant churches among the unreached people groups with our partners and networks and to strengthen the mission and social work of our main partner churches.

**Finland has maintained a high, almost 1:1 church to sent missionary ratio, most likely the strongest in the world among the WAGF network. The other Nordic countries have not maintained that ratio. How much of this might be attributed to Fida?**

Fida has a central role in Finnish Pentecostal missions work. We are actively motivating and encouraging our local churches and members to participate, send, and go for missions. Several people are visiting churches, and our trustees are active in promoting missions in our churches. I would say that Fida has been able to keep the fire burning.

# Events Calendar

## **WAGF 4th World Missions Congress**

Bangkok, Thailand  
February 2–6, 2015

## **San Jose 2015**

*A consultation on the national church and  
unreached people*  
San Jose, Costa Rica  
April 13–17, 2015

## **Latin America Missions Leaders Summit**

San Jose, Costa Rica  
April 18–19, 2015

## **Pentecostal European Mission Consultation**

November 16-19, 2015  
Milan, Italy

## **6° Latin American Missions Congress**

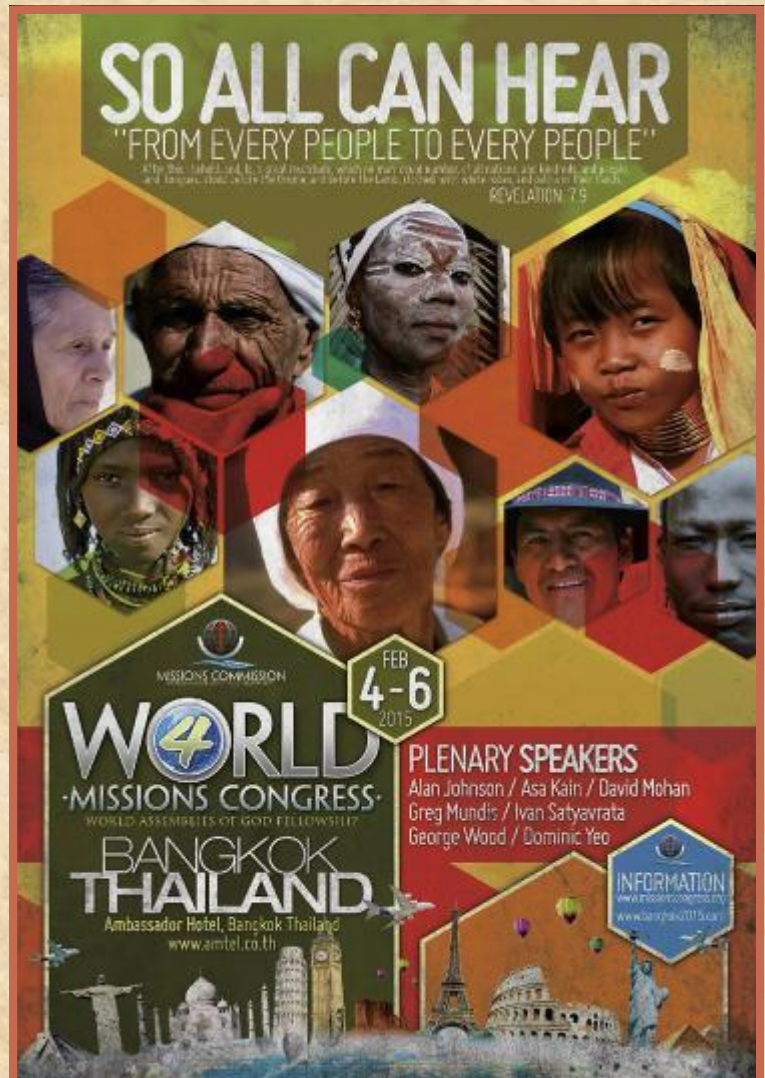
March 2016  
Location TBD

## **PWF Africa Missions Congress**

April or May 2016  
Location TBD

## **PWF World Congress**

Pre-congress missions focus  
September 7–10, 2016, São Paulo, Brazil



Word Missions Congress Website:

[bangkok2015.com](http://bangkok2015.com)

Check out the WAGF Missions tab and the WAGF Web page:

<http://worldagfellowship.org/> and <http://worldagfellowship.org/missions/>