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## The Dollar

Caleb worshipped next to his father at Trinity Lutheran Church. As the offering plate approached his father gave Caleb a dollar to place in the plate. This is the story of Caleb's dollar. The dollar found its way into the church office where it was counted and recorded with many others. It was deposited in the community bank.

The dollar could have helped pay the pastor's salary, the church utility bill, the Sunday school curriculum bill or dozens of other local needs. Caleb's dollar was sent by the congregation treasurer to the office of Iowa District West. The dollar was part of the congregation's first fruits commitment to their District/Synod partnerships.

The dollar was again recorded, this time by Roger Curtis, the Iowa District West business manager. It was deposited in a Fort Dodge bank. The dollar didn't rest long. It could have been used at the District office to pay the office utilities, the staff salaries, or to pay for supplies or mailings to produce resources for congregations. It could have been sent to the offices of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod to pay the salary of a missionary or to pay for the administration of a church body of over six thousand congregations.

Caleb's dollar was directly used for Iowa District West missions. It could have paid the salary of Mission Executive Assistant Mark Gerken in consultation with mission congregations. It could have supported missionaries to the deaf Rev. Konkel or Pat Monroe. It could have paid the chaplain who called on the patient in the Sioux City hospital. It could have been used to reach more Sudanese or Laotians in Des Moines or other communities. It could have been used to expand Hispanic missions in Sioux City. Caleb's dollar traveled all the way to Denison, Iowa.

It was used to support the mission work of Missionary Dan Vogel. The dollar helped

pay for Missionary Vogel's salary and to help pay his travel expenses from Denison to Storm Lake. Rev. Vogel makes that journey several times a week as he serves both communities. This dollar was invested in ESL (English as a second language) classes, in Sunday school for children of immigrants, and in a conversation with a family needing the guidance of a Lutheran pastor.

The dollar from Caleb's father was in reality from Caleb's heavenly Father. The family knew that God had given them the privilege of managing and sharing what was God's. Trinity Lutheran Church shared God's grace and rejoiced in the grace of giving.

Caleb's dollar was one of over \$1.9 million contributed by congregations to the 2008 Iowa District West budget. The generosity of God's people and the management of the District staff and Board of Directors enabled the District to finish the year "in the black."

Economic challenges in the country and communities along with changing congregation demographics cause congregation leaders to re-evaluate "mission" designations. Congregations are encouraged to look beyond their "Jerusalem" to the "Judea, Samaria, and ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8)

District partnerships facilitate outreach in the western half of Iowa and into the world.

The Iowa District West Stewardship Committee has resources available to assist congregations

in stewardship education. Several congregations have been blessed through the "Consecrated Stewards" process. Stewardship education emphasizes that all of life is a response to God's grace and that stewardship goes beyond dollars to time and talent. District staff and District missionaries are available to visit congregations to explain specific mission activities. Thank you Caleb and the thousands of fellow faithful stewards in Iowa District West who respond so generously.

