

# Strategic Priorities 2002-2006

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## 1. Strategic Theological/Missiological Priorities

1.1 ELCA Global Mission, in its commitment to the *missio Dei*, is guided by a Trinitarian understanding of God. The division's approach to mission seeks to balance relational and programmatic commitments, as well as resource allocation, in such a way that each mission imperative derived from a missiological understanding of the Trinity is given appropriate weight. This triadic focus requires ELCA Global Mission to hold the following mission imperatives in balance in strategic planning:

1.1.1. The first mission imperative is drawn from a missiological understanding of the First Person of the Trinity -- God the creator and sustainer of life. The imperative is that the church engage in the struggle for peace, justice, and the integrity of creation (political, economic, social, and ecological action and advocacy).

1.1.2. The second mission imperative is drawn from a missiological understanding of the Second Person of the Trinity -- God the redeemer and reconciler of life. The imperative is that the church engage in witness to the redemption that is in Christ (evangelism) and engage in the ministry of reconciliation (creation of community out of diversity).

1.1.3. The third mission imperative is drawn from a missiological understanding of the Third Person of the Trinity -- God the giver and transformer of life. The imperative that the church be an agent of both personal and communal growth and transformation (capacity development, leadership development, church growth).

1.2. ELCA Global Mission relates to companion churches and agencies within the missiological paradigm of accompaniment and engages in an intentional, ongoing process of self-reflection and self-critique to ensure that its relationships, programs, and projects conform to the requirements of that paradigm.

1.2.1. ELCA Global Mission seeks to divest itself of residual attitudes and patterns of behavior marked by domination and subordination in order to more completely establish relationships of true mutuality in mission with companion churches and agencies, giving appropriate attention to their priorities.

## 2. Strategic Geographical Priorities

2.1. ELCA Global Mission remains committed to *global* mission. There is no geographic location outside of North America, *ipso facto*, where ELCA Global Mission will not consider engaging in the *missio Dei*. Given the reality of finite resources, however, there are certain criteria that will guide the division's engagement. ELCA Global Mission seeks to be engaged:

2.1.1. where people are most in need, e.g., places where poverty, violence, oppression, and health needs are extreme;

2.1.2. where there is little or no Christian presence/witness;

2.1.3. where there are growing population centers;

2.1.4. where there is an invitation to accompaniment in mission from a Lutheran or ecumenical companion or explore other areas where ecumenical resources already exist;

2.1.5. where ELCA Global Mission can participate either as a broker of relationships, e.g., south-south, south-north relationships, or as a facilitator, e.g., of LWF / LWR / WCC / NCCCUSA / CWSW / LOGA / NGO's, and regional or country-specific conciliar agency programs;

2.1.6. where it is a "crisis" situation that calls for urgent response, e.g., Palestine/Israel. In such situations, consideration is given to the reallocation of resources from other areas.

### 3. Strategic Relational Priorities

3.1. In keeping with its accompaniment model of mission, ELCA Global Mission seeks to develop simultaneously bilateral and multilateral relationships in mission that are genuinely mutual.

3.1.1. As much as possible ELCA Global Mission seeks to work in multilateral Lutheran and ecumenical relationships.

3.1.2. Bilateral relationships are conducted with attention to the potential impacts of those relationships on other members of the Lutheran communion and on the broader ecumenical community.

3.1.3. If unilateral decisions need to be made, they will only be made after consultation and negotiation with involved companions has failed to produce mutually acceptable bilateral or multilateral decisions.

3.2. As a matter of principle, ELCA Global Mission does not abandon historical relationships. As relationships of accompaniment develop and companion churches grow in their ability to sustain mission in their geographical location and help to support mission in other locations, ELCA Global Mission seeks the mutual reconfiguration of those relationships in order to reallocate limited resources to other areas of critical need.

3.2.1.<sup>1</sup> In this reconfiguration of relationships, ELCA Global Mission seeks to move toward the role of broker and facilitator in seeking new and creative alternatives to direct involvement through mission personnel and major grants from ELCA Global Mission.

3.2.2. As a result of reconfiguring relationships with relatively strong companion churches, ELCA Global Mission gives priority in resource allocation, mission personnel assignments, and program development to churches that are more internally or contextually vulnerable.

3.3. As a central component of accompaniment, ELCA Global Mission seeks to open itself and the larger ELCA to the gifts, resources, theological understanding, and prophetic voice of our companion churches.

3.3.1. ELCA Global Mission is intentional about inviting companion churches to respond to critical needs and issues of the ELCA, and creates structures and procedures to ensure that the gifts and voices of our companion churches are received and heard.

### 4. Strategic Programmatic Priorities

4.1. As a general principle, ELCA Global Mission is committed to the accompaniment vision that relationships provide the context for programmatic work. In relationships where ELCA Global Mission gives direct, designated financial support to particular programs and projects, priority is given to those that align with as many as possible of the following:

4.1.1. ELCA Global Mission's commitment to women;

4.1.2. ELCA Global Mission's commitment to the protection and nurture of children at risk;<sup>2</sup>

4.1.3. ELCA Global Mission's commitment to capacity building;

4.1.4. ELCA Global Mission's commitment to leadership development;

4.1.5. ELCA Global Mission's commitment to evangelism;

4.1.6. ELCA Global Mission's commitment to health ministries;

4.1.7. ELCA Global Mission's commitment to peace, justice, and the integrity of creation including poverty issues.

4.2. In keeping with the accompaniment model, the giving of designated grants in support of particular programs and projects is done in consultation with, and with the agreement of, companion churches and agencies.

#### NOTES

1 At its March 2002 meeting, the board of ELCA Global Mission tabled for further discussion in October: "In this reconfiguration of relationships, ELCA Global Mission will consider the possibility of moving more of the locus of initiative, energy, resource development, people exchanges, etc., from ELCA Global Mission to companion synod relationships."

2 See Guiding Principles and Commitments to Human Rights specifically the reference regarding education for children on page 2, footnote 4.

*Approved by the board of ELCA Global Mission, March 2002; March 2003*