



Report of the Division for Ministry

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¹Executive Committee

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⁴Theological Education Network Committee

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Statement of Purpose

Serving the mission and vision of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and with particular attention to the churchwide organization's intention to "assist this church to bring forth and support faithful, wise, and courageous leaders whose vocations serve God's mission in a pluralistic world," the Division for Ministry will serve the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in supporting and fostering a culture that values God's call, theological wisdom, and servant leadership.

Report of Work for 2003-2005

The Division for Ministry envisions a Church in which all the baptized understand their call to ministry and are equipped to use their gifts to proclaim and live out the Gospel of Jesus Christ within the Church and in the world. The Division for Ministry has focused on three primary areas of resources that support this culture of vocation, theological wisdom, and servant leadership.

1) *A welcoming system for bringing forth gifted servant leaders to equip the whole church*

Persons preparing to serve as pastors, associates in ministry, diaconal ministers, or deaconesses in the ELCA are candidates for rostered ministry and prepare under the direction of a synod candidacy committee. Candidacy in the ELCA is the churchwide process of preparation and formation leading to approval for public ministry. Candidacy is an active partnership of candidate, congregation, synod, seminary, and the Division for Ministry.

In 2004 the Division for Ministry developed a revised Candidacy Manual that included for the first time a requirement for background checks of all persons seeking to enter candidacy in the ELCA. Training events were held across the ELCA in 2005 as committee members were oriented to this revised manual, underscoring the importance of a consistent candidacy process throughout the ELCA.

Multicultural leadership development and recruitment continues to present the ELCA with both challenges and opportunities as this church seeks to identify leaders to serve in the increasing multicultural ministry settings in this church. The Theological Education for Emerging Ministry program (TEEM) continues to be a significant resource for identifying and preparing candidates in a contextual theological education process.

Support to rostered leaders in their first call has been funded through a five-year grant from the Lilly Endowment on "Transitions into Ministry." Two surveys of first call rostered

leaders, along with focus groups and other events, have provided significant findings about how prepared these leaders are for rostered ministry in the ELCA. The research suggests that more intentional communication and connection among institutional partners (e.g. candidacy committees, synod offices, seminary education and internship programs, churchwide assignment process and First-Call Theological Education (FCTE) programs) will strengthen the preparation of candidates.

Lutheran Partners magazine, published six times a year, is sent free of charge to all active and retired pastors and rostered lay ministers of the ELCA. During the 2003-2005 biennium, editorial and graphic redesign of the magazine for both print and on-line editions was begun and a new design of the print edition debuted in early 2005.

2) *A fruitful network of institutions for theological teaching and learning*

The eight seminaries of the ELCA continue to be at the heart of theological education in this church. These seminaries are key to the strengthening of the network of theological teaching and learning as they prepare persons for rostered ministry and as they provide resources for the theological learning of all the members of this church.

In 2003-2005, the Division for Ministry worked with each of the three seminary clusters as they took significant steps toward enduring viability and missional significance. The clusters continued and expanded their cooperative programs; even more significantly, the seminary clusters increasingly became vehicles for comprehensive theological education strategic planning. They have begun to convene non-seminary partners and engaged them in the continued development of the ELCA theological education network, as envisioned by the 1995 Study of Theological Education.

3) *Robust servant leaders for mission opportunities*

The Division for Ministry worked closely with the ELCA Conference of Bishops in their study of the ministry needs and resources within this church. During 2003-2005 the Conference of Bishops engaged in theological study and reflection, facilitated by the Division for Ministry and involving teaching theologians from ELCA seminaries, of the ministry needs and opportunities facing this church and what leadership resources and strategies are needed to respond.

SELECT, a program of continuing theological education videos designed for rostered leaders and lay, received a new director in 2004 and continues to experiment with using The Fisher's Net as the place for virtual classroom discussion among participants.

In partnership with the Department for Synodical Relations, "People and Places Online" was launched in 2004 as a resource for use by associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers seeking calls, and the congregations, institutions, and agencies seeking to call rostered lay leaders.

"*Healthy Leaders Enhance Lives*" is a partnership between the Division for Ministry and the ELCA Board of Pensions that

focuses on the importance of exercise, good nutrition and self-care for rostered leaders, candidates, and their families. During this biennium the Web site (www.elcaforwellness.org) was developed in collaboration with the Mayo Clinic, and an on-line health risk assessment was offered with links to resources to enhance the health and well-being of those who completed this assessment.

Major Directions for 2005-2007

The Division for Ministry looks ahead to the proposed "Design for Mission through the Churchwide Organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America," and becoming a part of the "Vision and Education" unit. This new unit will bring together ELCA churchwide ministries involved in the development and support of faithful, wise, and courageous leaders whose vocations serve God's mission in a pluralistic world. We anticipate work with new colleagues in encouraging a sense of vocation in children, youth, and adults; lifting up the centrality of the church in education and education in the church; sustaining the foundational place of seminaries and theological education; overseeing the preparation of people for ordained and lay rostered ministry; and serving as a steward of the ELCA's network and systems for leadership development and support for leaders in church and world.

In existing Division for Ministry programs there will be a major First-Call Theological Education consultation, "Harvesting Wisdom," that will focus on the insights and wisdom that have emerged from research with first-call leaders. On-line offerings will be offered to first call leaders and well as an opportunity for online mentoring.

In 2005-2007, efforts in theological education will focus on working with the ELCA seminary clusters to link the resources of a wide variety of theological education network partners in making theological education available to a larger number and variety of mission leaders.

There will be work toward a more unified ministry leadership system by increasing integration among systems within this church for the identification, preparation, and deployment of leaders for effective ministry. Specific improvements will include: 1) continuing to improve the network of connections among accredited and non-accredited educational programs for ministry leadership training; 2) working with the seminaries and first-call theological education programs on the assessment of educational outcomes for seminary graduates; 3) assessing the place of non-ELCA seminary education and improving coordination among those programs and ELCA seminaries and candidacy committees; and 4) working to coordinate more effectively leadership development for mission outreach.

DIVISION FOR MINISTRY

Robert J. Karli, *chair*
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