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## Report of the Global Mission Unit

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### Program Committee

Ms. Terry E. Cole, Albuquerque, N.M. (2013)  
Ms. Cari Skogberg Eastman, Queens Valley, Ariz. (2009)  
Ms. Sarah J. Gedadda, Floral Park, N.Y. (2011)  
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Pr. Mari L. Thorkelson, Alameda, Calif. (2009)  
Mr. Henry T. Tkachuk, Moorhead, Minn. (2013)

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### Statement of Purpose

The ELCA's Global Mission program unit (GM) is responsible for this church's mission outside its territory and shall be the channel through which churches in other countries engage in mission to this church and society. The constitutional description of this unit appears in continuing resolution 16.12.B05., printed in Section X of this volume.

### Report of Work for 2007–2009

The Global Mission program unit participates in God's mission with companion churches, the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), and ELCA-related and ecumenical agencies. The ELCA has church-to-church relationships with more than 75 churches in other countries, accompanying them through collaboration and common planning, sharing of financial resources, and deployment of mission personnel. These bilateral relationships complement the ELCA's multilateral relationships within the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), the global "family" of Lutherans, whose membership includes 68.5 million Christians in 140 churches in 79 countries. As it deepens and extends ELCA relationships throughout the world, Global Mission gives expression to the mutuality that is at the heart of the accompaniment model for mission (see the article "Global Mission in the 21st Century" online at [www.elca.org/globalmission/policy/index.html](http://www.elca.org/globalmission/policy/index.html)).

This understanding of mission has shaped GM's strategic decision to give priority to activities that "build the capacity for mission of both companion churches in other countries and the ELCA."

### Building Capacity:

#### Emerging and Re-emerging Churches and Churches in Crisis

Even as it accompanied new and re-emerging churches during the past biennium, GM also responded to companion churches in crisis, including the following:

**Zimbabwe:** In the midst of a wrenching political and economic crisis, Zimbabwe's hyperinflation is almost beyond comprehension, spiraling upward from the government's Fall 2008 estimate of 231 million percent annual inflation rate to informal estimates that currently exceed a billion percent. Zimbabwe's political and economic implosion resulted in severe hunger, lack of health care and other services, and a tragic cholera epidemic. A World Hunger bequest enabled the ELCA to assist in an extraordinary way the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe and the Lutheran Communion in Southern Africa as they respond to this crisis. GM made an emergency allocation of more than \$1 million to help keep open four of the Zimbabwean church's hospitals, which serve the wider community as referral hospitals even as government-run hospitals were folding, and to address the immediate food crisis by providing food for consumption as well as grain for planting, which was not available in the country. This community distribution by that church over the Christmas season—just as the rains began—restored a measure of hope to communities facing the bleakest of futures.

**China:** Through GM, the ELCA is developing a new companion relationship with the Sichuan Christian Council and with the Luzhou Christian Church. On May 12, 2007, a 7.9 magnitude earthquake, the most powerful to hit China in 30 years, struck the southwestern Sichuan province, killing approximately 70,000 people and leaving millions homeless. In the following months the region suffered from smaller earthquakes that resulted in additional deaths and injuries. Working with companions in the region and with other Lutheran partners in Asia, the ELCA is participating in a multi-year strategy to assist that church in post-earthquake relief and rebuilding, bringing \$1.6 million to this effort. The Chinese church in this region, working in partnership with the Chinese government, is providing special assistance for elders, persons with handicapping conditions, and orphans left homeless by the earthquake. The rebuilding of church structures leveled by the earthquake also will be part of this integrated effort.

Just a few months after the earthquake, word of the catastrophic flooding that had hit Iowa, Wisconsin, Minnesota,

and other Midwestern states reached Luzhou Christian Church. The members, who were already going the “second and third mile” to help earthquake survivors in their own region, responded in love to the need of their companion-in-mission, the ELCA. A special offering was taken in the congregation, and a \$400 gift (which represents a significant sacrifice by church members) was sent to help those affected by the Midwest floods—a wonderful illustration of how mutuality in mission plays out in the life of the global church.

**The Middle East:** In the midst of occupation and civil unrest that was intensified by the January 2009 Israeli offensive in Gaza, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL) continues to witness for peace with justice in the Holy Land. Through the deployment of ELCA mission personnel, grants for ELCJHL ministries and schools, and two-way visits, GM helps strengthen that church’s capacity for mission.

In this biennium, GM gave priority to efforts to implement the Churchwide Strategy for Engagement in Israel and Palestine and the related “Peace Not Walls” campaign, which was endorsed by the 2005 Churchwide Assembly. The January 2009 Bishops’ Academy in Jerusalem and the West Bank and the development of a new country program for ELCA Young Adults in Global Mission were expressions of that continuing commitment. GM continued to support LWF ministries, including Augusta Victoria Hospital, that provide educational and health services to Palestinians. It also increased support for the Mount of Olives Housing Project, being built on the hospital grounds, which will provide desperately needed housing for Palestinian Christians in Jerusalem. GM also provided emergency aid to assist Palestinians who had to flee their homes in the midst of the Israeli invasion of Gaza.

### **Building Capacity: Leadership Development**

Global Mission supports the initiatives of companion churches as they work to identify and train strong and effective leaders for mission. GM provides grants that strengthen in-country and regional seminaries and educational institutions. It sends ELCA college and seminary professors who teach in specific disciplines for which local professors are not available. GM also provides in-country scholarships and training to equip leaders in companion churches with the skills those churches have identified as essential (e.g., administration, planning, and finance).

GM also provides scholarships for leaders chosen by their churches to study outside the home country, in cooperation with ELCA seminaries, LWF, the World Council of Churches, and full-communion partners. Over the past two years 51 people completed their studies, bringing to 750 the number who have studied under the ELCA international scholarship program since the beginning of this church. These leaders have received training in such disciplines as biblical studies, pastoral care, youth and family ministry, music, development, surgery, and library science.

### **Building Capacity: Ministries of Companion Churches**

ELCA Global Mission also accompanies companion churches by providing grants and sending mission personnel for specific tasks identified by those churches. In 2008, grants to companions totaled \$3.2 million from mission support and \$3.3 million from World Hunger. These grants support the churches’ work in evangelism and outreach, leadership development, communication, administration, health care, education, relief, and sustainable development.

ELCA missionaries work at the request and under the supervision of companion churches in pastoral and evangelism ministries, health care, education, development, and administration. Specific placements include congregational and outreach ministries, community development, hospitals, HIV and AIDS ministries, hospice ministries, seminary instruction, formal and non-formal education, seminary internships, youth work, social services, financial administration, and communication. GM recruits, calls, prepares, sends, and supports missionary personnel, including volunteers. The number of mission personnel fluctuates throughout the year; at this writing 249 persons are serving in 47 countries. In 2008, 118 new mission personnel began service, of whom 33 were volunteers. Twelve regional representatives enable GM to deepen its relationships with companion churches and better support mission personnel serving in other countries. The number of participants in GM’s Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGM) program plateaued at 36 in 2008–2009. The ELCA had partnered closely with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in YAGM, sharing placement sites. However, changes within that church necessitated that GM open additional ELCA country sites in Jerusalem/West Bank and South Africa during the past biennium. A new site in Malaysia is in the planning stages; additional sites in Asia and Africa are being explored.

### **Building Capacity: Meeting Human Need through Sustainable Development**

Global Mission works with companion churches and other global partners to overcome poverty through community development and organizing, increasing food security, and providing access to clean water, medical and preventive care, and education. It helps companion churches increase their capacity to engage in effective sustainable development projects. In 2008, GM administered about 73 percent of budgeted ELCA World Hunger funds, which made up an increasing proportion of GM’s budget (49.3 percent in 2008). GM has provided substantial support for two key Lutheran partners in relief and development, Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and Lutheran World Relief (LWR), as well as for ecumenical partners like Church World Service (CWS). Through this work, the ELCA joins other churches, agencies, and governments in a global effort to achieve the United Nation’s Millennium Development Goals, which seek to cut extreme poverty and chronic hunger in half by 2015. Within

the context of this ongoing development and in the midst of a global food crisis that continues to affect very poor communities, the following were areas of special focus in the past biennium:

**Lutheran Malaria Initiative:** The Global Mission unit engaged in conversations with companions relating to the emerging Lutheran Malaria Initiative (LMI), within the context of the ELCA's ongoing HIV and AIDS commitments. Initial conversations revealed strong interest among ELCA companions—in particular LWF's regional expression in southern Africa—to engage in a coordinated effort to address these two diseases, which together with tuberculosis are major causes of death in the developing world. In addition, GM has engaged in fruitful conversations with LWR concerning coordination of LMI engagement with the LWF (World Service and Mission and Development), the ELCA's Companion Synods program, the many GM-related networks in the ELCA, and Global Mission Events and resources.

**HIV and AIDS Response:** For more than 20 years, Global Mission has walked with global companions as they respond to the HIV and AIDS crisis. In 2008, \$507,500 in World Hunger "Stand with Africa" funds and \$419,700 from general World Hunger and mission support were designated for HIV and AIDS response. These funds enabled both placement of ELCA personnel and grants to companion churches. In addition, in the past biennium, the Lutheran World Federation implemented a revised strategy for engagement in three regions of Africa, using special funds provided by GM and the Church of Sweden. This approach was designed to better assist member churches as they work with people affected and infected by HIV as they seek to access other sources of funding for this work. In addition, GM worked with the ELCA inter-unit team developing a churchwide HIV and AIDS strategy, in response to the action taken by the 2007 Churchwide Assembly. In the development of a churchwide HIV and AIDS strategy, the ELCA has an opportunity to learn from LWF member churches that have already developed action plans within the context of the Lutheran communion's commitments to engage in this area: to reflect theologically on this issue, address HIV- and AIDS-related stigma at the congregational and community level, engage in advocacy with people living with HIV, and articulate specific commitments that will enable churches to become "HIV- and AIDS-competent" in all aspects of their life and work.

### **Building Capacity: Meeting Human Need through Disaster Response**

**Crisis Response:** The ELCA, in partnership with companion churches and Lutheran and ecumenical agencies, responds to disasters within the context of Action by Churches Together (ACT), a global coordinating alliance of Protestant and Orthodox churches. Gifts to the ELCA International Disaster Response enabled Global Mission to provide \$2.5 million for

relief and rehabilitation in 20 countries in 2007 and \$1.5 million in 2008 for work in 17, including: \$100,000 to respond to the drought in Ethiopia (2007); \$100,000 for food, water, and shelter for families displaced from the unprecedented flooding of Bihar, India (2007); \$350,000 to respond to the continuing crisis in Darfur (2007-2008); \$75,000 to respond to the civil war in the Democratic Republic of Congo (2008); and \$110,000 for Latin America and the Caribbean following Hurricane Gustav, Tropical Storm Hanna, and Hurricane Ike (2008).

**Disaster Preparedness:** GM released approximately \$300,000 from tsunami funds in 2008 for the initial stage of development of the Center for Disaster Risk Management and Community Development Studies at Nommensen University, Indonesia. (Nommensen is a university of the Huria Kristen Batak Protestant Church, the largest Lutheran church in Indonesia.) This effort, under Lutheran World Federation leadership, is a cooperative effort of LWF-member churches in Indonesia (whose combined membership is more than 4 million members), plus the ELCA, Lutheran World Relief, and Australian Lutheran World Service. The Nommensen University initiative is a comprehensive disaster response effort in Indonesia, which is prone to natural disasters such as earthquakes and floods, and which continues to recover from the tsunami and several other recent large-scale disasters. The engagement of partners with the Indonesian churches and Nommensen University in this initiative likely will continue through 2012.

### **Building Capacity: ELCA Engagement in God's Mission**

Mutuality in mission also means enthusiastically receiving the gifts of companions, which increase the ELCA's capacity to be faithful and effective in mission. Global Mission Events, like the 2008 event in La Crosse, Wis., that drew approximately 1,250 participants, are one way the gifts of companion churches are received by ELCA members and the global mission of the ELCA is celebrated. GM also developed and piloted new ways to engage with synods and congregations though smaller, congregation-focused "Global Formation Events" that equip groups within participating congregations to deepen their global engagement. Three Global Formation Events took place in 2008 in Wausau, Wis., Des Moines, Iowa, and Golden Valley, Minn., and more are planned in 2009–2011. In addition, GM continues to develop resources to assist ELCA members and congregations to deepen and expand their understanding of accompaniment in mission (e.g., the new handbook for congregational participants in Global Formation Events.)

### **Major Directions for 2009–2011**

During the past biennium, the Global Mission unit completed a restructuring into three program sections to enable more effective engagement with both international and domestic companions. These three sections are emblematic of several significant directions for GM in the coming biennium:

**Global Program:** The Global Program section will facilitate increased coordination and synergy between three streams of GM work: engagement with companion churches, leadership development, and sustainable development. This section also will develop and implement a new system of program planning, evaluation, and monitoring. Such a system will build up the capacity of both companions and GM to utilize effectively the projected increases in World Hunger grants for companion churches' community-based health and development work.

**Global Formation:** The Global Formation section broadens GM's previous "global education" focus. It will encourage the ELCA not only to give to companion churches but also to receive their gifts to this church. It will walk with synods, congregations, and acknowledged Lutheran organizations as they shape their global engagement in ways that reflect a shared understanding of accompaniment in mission. Recognizing that new communication technologies and the ease of travel have enabled more direct global engagement by congregations, synods, and para-church organizations, GM's Global Formation section will give increased attention to "stewarding the ecology of the ELCA's global relationships" in creative ways. Early in 2009, GM will convene a meeting of all independent Lutheran organizations engaged in international ministries that have an acknowledged relationship with the ELCA. This first-time gathering is intended to deepen relationships and build the foundation for increased coordination and synergy among those within the ELCA system that engage in mission in other countries.

Both local and churchwide action is needed for the ELCA to achieve its full potential to engage in God's mission with global companions in an increasingly complex world. The Global Formation section will seek to assist all expressions of the ELCA to keep in balance both the part and the whole—both the commitments to specific ministries and the commitment to be one church through church-to-church engagement with companions and shared churchwide ministries. Global Formation staff will provide additional support and coordination for the ELCA's Companion Synods program. A Conference of Bishops protocol document that clarifies roles and expectations of synods and GM is near completion.

The Companion Synods program has grown remarkably since the early years of the ELCA, and some companion-synod relationships are now more than 20 years old. The protocol document reflects the maturation of this program. It provides a clear framework for engagement in the coming biennium that builds on both the relationships between synods and companion dioceses or churches (including the sharing of financial resources) and the wider church-to-church relationships and broad scope of mission commitments shepherded by GM.

**Global Service:** Formerly called "International Personnel," this section will continue to recruit, interview, place, and support missionaries and volunteers serving with global companions on behalf of the ELCA. GM hopes to both grow the Young Adults in Global Mission program and recruit for the increasingly diverse positions companions are requesting be filled by ELCA missionaries.

ELCA Global Mission understands accompaniment to be both a way of thinking and a way of being. Accompaniment gives modern-day expression to St. Paul's hope for the beloved (though sometimes fractious) community in Philippi: that companions in God's mission will seek to be "of one mind," patterning their common life on the self-giving love of Christ. Being of one mind means counting the interests (and the insights) of the other as more important than one's own. It means not being satisfied when independent actions are good. As St. Paul writes, "And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight to help you to determine what is best" (Philippians 1:9–10a). Companions who seek to discern the mind of Christ and who seek to move beyond good to best as they shape their common ministries inevitably find their knowledge base broadened and their assumptions challenged. Seeking such creative and challenging synergy in God's mission, both within the ELCA and with companion churches in other countries, is both Global Mission's duty and its delight.

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