



Report of the Executive for Administration

Introduction

The Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) in 2003 adopted a Plan for Mission, which includes the statements of mission and vision for the ELCA and five strategic directions and four commitments for implementation for the churchwide organization for the period 2004–2012. The following report provides a summary of the progress of the churchwide organization during the 2007–2009 biennium in the implementation of the Plan for Mission. It is not exhaustive in its description of the accomplishments during this period. The reports to the 2009 Churchwide Assembly submitted by individual units and sections provide additional, more detailed information about the churchwide organization's activities.

Major points of reference for this report are the Plan for Mission and the Design for Mission, approved by the 2005 Churchwide Assembly. In addition to these major documents that frame the churchwide organization's priorities, the reality of the interplay of actions by the Church Council and the Churchwide Assembly continue to shape the churchwide organization's work.

This report is divided into three primary sections:

- **Assessment:** evaluate efficiency, effectiveness, and impact;
- **Alignment:** position for desired results; and
- **Advancement:** improve and grow for the sake of mission.

Assessment

In July 2007 Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson called for a professional review of the ELCA's three financial services units: the ELCA Board of Pensions, the Foundation of the ELCA, and the Mission Investment Fund. RSM McGladrey, Inc., was selected as the consultant for this project. This assessment project, "Mission: ONE (Opportunities Now Emerge)," is a collaborative effort to "develop cooperative strategies, tactics, and action plans to provide comprehensive financial services that both enhance the ELCA mission and bring unique value to our members, congregations, and institutions."

The review was conducted during the first six months of 2008. Mission ONE included a review of the units' staffing structures, legal charters, governance, and current practices. Mission ONE Joint Operating Guidelines and Implementing Actions have been adopted by all three boards of trustees. A financial services management team, composed of the three unit presidents and the executive for administration, continues to meet to implement the joint operating guidelines.

An assessment of the Information Technology (IT) section

was concluded in April 2008 by Virchow Krause & Company. Recommendations from the assessment have shaped IT staffing, training, and structure for increased efficiency and cost effectiveness.

A review of the World Hunger program was completed in June 2008. A report was received from the consultants, Criterion Ventures, which "... found that there is a strong base from which ELCA World Hunger can grow and become more collaborative and entrepreneurial. Its reputation is solid and established. There is deep support for its mission from across stakeholder groups." The report recommended deepening the involvement of the existing world hunger program advisory group to include more strategic direction along with continuing to provide accountability and budget oversight. The advisory group includes the executive directors of the unincorporated program units, the director for the ELCA World Hunger Appeal, the director for the ELCA World Hunger Program, the ELCA treasurer, the executive director for Communication Services, and the executive for administration. Further recommendations point to a greater use of working groups and external advisors.

A report on the review of the Plan for Mission is contained in Section V of this volume. This report provides an examination of how the work of churchwide units has supported both the strategic directions and the four commitments for implementation during 2008–2009. In addition to this continuous monitoring of the churchwide organization's overall progress in implementing the Plan for Mission, individual unit reviews have begun, based on the Plan for Mission and unit strategic plans. Multicultural Ministries was the first program unit to be reviewed by the Planning and Evaluation Committee of the Church Council in March 2009.

An assessment is underway of the churchwide organization's four strategic staff alliances: young adult ministry, multicultural ministries, poverty and wealth, and justice for women. The report is due in the fall of 2009. The alliances continue to aid the organization in expressing and deepening the Plan for Mission's commitments for implementation. The alliances assist the organization in understanding and, where necessary, changing its culture in these matters. Currently, several of the alliances are sharing reading material and engaging the topic of trust-building in the organization. The staff alliances report annually to the Cabinet of Executives.

Alignment

Strategic Planning

In August 2008, the Office of the Presiding Bishop convened a leadership retreat with senior leaders in the organization, including the executive directors of program units; the executives for communication, development services, research and evaluation, and human resources; the ELCA secretary and treasurer; the executive for administration; the executive assistants to the presiding bishop; and the presiding bishop. The purpose was to engage in strategic thinking that would continue to align the organization's mission and resources and position the churchwide organization for the future. This movement toward greater alignment of the organization's resources with its priorities was a major step in the deeper cooperation, coordination, collaboration, and communication among the units.

This senior leadership team worked with the Office of the Presiding Bishop to identify strategic priorities from the Plan for Mission's strategic directions and commitments for the 2010–2011 biennium. A major objective of this collaborative work is to become a more nimble and more clearly focused organization. The recent economic challenges have given this objective an increased sense of urgency.

Two priorities have been identified for the next biennium with an understanding that:

- these priorities flow from and are part of the ELCA Plan for Mission; they do not replace the Plan for Mission;
- the ELCA *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions* remain the foundation of the Plan for Mission;
- the strategic directions and commitments of the Plan for Mission as well as actions by the ELCA Churchwide Assembly and Church Council shape the priorities; and
- these priorities help the churchwide organization to focus its efforts and increase its impact in the areas named in the priorities as it continues to implement the Plan for Mission. The two priorities are that:

“The churchwide organization, working collaboratively with congregations, synods, agencies and institutions, and other partners, will give priority to:

1. accompanying congregations as growing centers for evangelical mission; and
2. building capacity for evangelical witness and service in the world to alleviate poverty and to work for justice and peace.”

While all churchwide units have focused their strategic plans to impact both of these strategic priorities, significant work has taken place to reorganize the Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission (EOCM) unit to increase partnership with synods and others, especially to impact the priority of accompanying congregations as growing centers of evangelical mission. Newly called directors for evangelical mission (DEMs) will convene local mission tables in each synod to facilitate and strengthen this church's shared mission. This includes intentional engagement for new evangelizing congregations; renewed evangelizing congregations; mission-support and stewardship education; and missional strategies—with specific attention to the ethnic ministries and evangelism strategies.

Strategic planning is a priority for the organization. The unincorporated programmatic units (Church in Society, Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission, Global Mission, Multicultural Ministries, and Vocation and Education) have developed strategic plans for the next biennium. This work was developed in a cross-functional collaborative process with the assistance of an external consultant. The plans are based in the context of the Plan for Mission and the two churchwide organization strategic priorities. While the executives of the two separately incorporated programmatic units, Women of the ELCA and Augsburg Fortress, Publishers, were at the planning table with the other executives, their units engage in extensive planning processes with their respective staffs and boards.

Along with the joint efforts in strategic planning, another step in deepening the interdependent functioning of the churchwide units was a review and reconfiguration of senior leadership tables. Beginning in January 2009, the Cabinet of Executives was revised by a slight change in membership and a clearer focus on critical analysis of major issues and trends, strategic planning, and budgeting. A new table, the Program Advisory Team, also is convened by the presiding bishop. It is composed of the executive directors of the five unincorporated program units and staff from the Office of the Presiding Bishop. This table provides for a more coherent approach to programmatically support the organization's strategic priorities.

Budgeting

The generosity of the members of this church and the careful budget management of churchwide organization units are things for which this church can truly give thanks. The recent downturn in the global economy resulted in major adjustments to the 2009 budget and 2010–2011 budget proposal. Revised projections required that the 2009 budget be decreased by \$7.5 million: \$5.6 million in the current fund and \$1.9 million in World Hunger. These reductions included reducing program budgets in every unit and eliminating a total of 23.5 full-time staff equivalent positions, plus 12 vacant positions. It also included reducing the salaries of senior staff, grade 20 and higher, by three percent beginning April 1, 2009, and continuing for the remainder of the 2009 fiscal year. The churchwide organization currently is operating under a partial hiring freeze until further notice. Making the freeze “partial” gives the organization the flexibility to fill a critical position if deemed necessary.

The way the churchwide organization has self-examined its work for over two decades has led to an organization where everything is valuable and operations are at minimal levels. The reduction decisions were very difficult. The process for making them included a careful review of every program activity in the organization, using a prioritization tool based on the Plan for Mission and the two strategic priorities. The organization's budget continues to honor a commitment in the Design for Mission for budgetary support of the organization to multicultural ministries.

Advancement

Blue Ribbon Committee on Mission Funding

The 2007 Churchwide Assembly approved recommendations from the Blue Ribbon Committee on Mission Funding. The implementation plan called for regular progress reports to the Church Council beginning in April 2008. Reports have been presented to the Planning and Evaluation Committee of the Council. The Office of the Presiding Bishop convenes the mission funding and interpretation team for the ongoing oversight of the implementation of the recommendations. A report of the progress toward implementation of the recommendations is found in Section V of this volume.

One recommendation approved the implementation of a feasibility study related to an ELCA fund appeal benefiting both synodical and churchwide ministries. At its March 2009 meeting, the Church Council received the summary of “The Report of the Readiness Assessment and Feasibility Study Project: Finding and Recommendations in Relation to a Churchwide Resource Development Initiative.” The council took an action to encourage Development Services and the ELCA Foundation to move toward implementation of capacity building in the next biennium (2009–2011), and to bring a report and recommendation for a possible campaign to the April 2011 meeting of the Church Council. An executive summary of the feasibility report is included as an appendix to the Development Services unit report in Section III of this volume.

Ecology Study Design Group

At its March 2009 meeting, the Church Council took an action to request the Office of the Presiding Bishop, in collaboration with the Executive Committee of the Church Council and the Conference of Bishops, to appoint a study group to formulate a plan for evaluation of the ecology of the ELCA, including its organization, governance, and interrelationships. This group will write the charter for a larger task force to conduct the actual evaluation and bring recommendations to the Church Council. The smaller study group has been appointed and will convene its first meeting in June 2009.

While this work is expected to be available to guide decision-making for 2011 and beyond, current economic realities demand closer attention to interrelationships and the sharing of resources for mission. This requires responsible contingency planning for the churchwide organization to ensure its ongoing mission. The Office of the Presiding Bishop and Office of the Treasurer, in consultation with the Conference of Bishops and Church Council, continue to engage in contingency planning. Prime objectives for contingency planning include positioning the organization for swift, strategic adjustments to spending if necessary; identifying potential areas for strategic disengagement (keeping in mind the implications for partners); and continuing to seek alignment of strategic priorities and available resources.

Justice for Women

One of the commitments in the Design for Mission is to further the work of justice for women in church and in society through the position for justice for women in the Church in

Society unit. The organization has pursued this commitment in collaboration with the Justice for Women Consulting Committee. A report is available as information in Section V of this volume.

Anti-Racism Education and Training

During 2008, all-staff anti-racism education and training events were held as required staff training in the churchwide organization. Five two-day trainings were attended by 418 staff members. The training design focused on the churchwide organization’s Diversity Audit and on generating unit plans for application and implementation of learnings from the training experience.

Anti-racism education and training events were also conducted with the Church Council and Conference of Bishops. An on-going Racial Justice Process Observation program is underway with the Church Council.

A comprehensive assessment of the capacity, assets, and needs of ELCA synodical anti-racism efforts was completed in 2008. The report, “Assessment Report of the Synod Anti-Racism Teams in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,” was presented at a churchwide gathering, “At the Intersection of Race and Poverty,” in September 2008.

Ethnic-Ministries Strategies

The following ethnic-ministry strategies were adopted by previous Churchwide Assemblies: American Indian and Alaska Native (1997), Asian and Pacific Islander (2001), Latino (2001), Arab and Middle Eastern (2005), and African Descent (2005). These five ethnic-ministry strategies are designed to assist this church in attaining its goal of membership that is at least 10 percent people of color and/or whose primary language is other than English (ELCA 5.01.A87.). The percentage of people of color and/or whose primary language is other than English remains near three percent. A report of the activities and impact of the strategies is found in Section V of this volume.

Integrated Database

At the request of the Office of the Presiding Bishop, an executive steering committee is moving forward the churchwide organization’s data management initiative. The primary objective of this effort is to consolidate the churchwide organization’s current donor and rostered data and mailing lists into an integrated, single-record database. This effort is designed to increase efficiency, prevent data duplication, reduce the risk of invalid data, produce higher-quality data, and provide access in a more consistent and timely manner.

Leadership Development

The temptation during a time of crisis is to focus energy on solving an immediate problem rather than attending to positioning an organization for the future. It is very difficult to focus on leadership development in the midst of decreasing organizational capacity. The Human Resources section is addressing staff development in a more comprehensive manner. Plans for staff training and education for 2009 and beyond will be more specifically tied to core competencies and organizational development objectives.

While the Human Resources section has continued to offer staff-development opportunities, plans for senior staff did slow down. At the same time, ELCA senior leaders have been engaged in activities that require mature leadership. In *Head, Heart and Guts*, Dotlich, Cairo, and Rhinesmith examine the development of mature leaders and suggest that organizations need leaders who have a balance of head, heart, and guts for today's business environment: leaders who can rethink the way things are done and develop a point of view (head); balance people and business needs and create trust (heart); and act with integrity in spite of the difficulty and be willing to make the tough decisions (guts). Churchwide staff have had to grow in all three areas during the challenging first months of 2009.

Other Organizational Matters

The churchwide organization continues to fine-tune the new Web site and introduce the new ELCA brandmark and tagline, "God's work. Our hands." Two new television ads were aired during the spring of 2009. We look forward to increased use of the brandmark and other resources to strengthen ELCA identity.

Key learnings from an August 2008 power outage at the Lutheran Center in Chicago pointed to the need for improvement in the building's telephone and Web site redirection, an updating of procedures for the business continuity planning (BCP) management team, and a review of security processes with the building's management firm, Jones, Lang, LaSalle. The BCP management team has addressed the learnings and moved our BCP processes forward.

During the 2007–2009 biennium, Pr. Stephen P. Bouman, executive director for Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission, and Pr. M. Wyvetta Bullock, executive for administration, were appointed by Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson and the Church Council. Presiding Bishop Hanson also appointed the following senior staff: Pr. Marcus R. Kunz, executive for Discernment of Contextual and Theological Issues; Pr. Walter S. May Jr., executive for Synodical and Constituent Relations; Pr. Donald J. McCoid, executive for Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations; and Pr. Robert G. Schaefer, executive for Worship and Liturgical Resources.

I am privileged to have served this past biennium with deeply committed and gifted staff in the churchwide organization. In recent months, a lot has changed in this nation and in the operations of the churchwide organization. Necessary staff and program reductions have required intense collaborative work and cooperation with many partners. I am thankful for the partnership we share in this ministry for the sake of God's love for the world.

M. Wyvetta Bullock, *executive for administration*