



# Report of the Global Mission Unit

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### Advisory Members

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## Statement of Purpose

The Global Mission (GM) unit 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 2005-2007

The Global Mission unit walks "together in mission" with companion churches, member churches of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), and ELCA-related and ecumenical agencies. The ELCA relates "church-to-church" with over seventy-five churches in other countries, accompanying them through collaboration and common planning, sharing financial resources, and deploying mission personnel. The ELCA's "church-to-church" relationships complement relationships within the LWF, the global family of Lutherans, whose membership includes 66.2 million Christians in 140 churches in 78 countries. In all aspects of its work to deepen and extend global relationships, Global Mission staff members attempt to give expression to the mutuality that is at the heart of the accompaniment model for mission (see the "Global Mission in the 21st Century" link at [www.elca.org/globalmission/policy/index.html](http://www.elca.org/globalmission/policy/index.html)).

Global relationships can be built in many ways. Given the limitations of time and money, however, the Global Mission unit has made the strategic decision to give priority to activities that *build capacity for mission*.

## *Building the Capacity of Emerging Churches and Churches in Crisis*

Through the Global Mission unit, the ELCA developed new church-to-church relationships with five emerging churches in Africa: Angola, Botswana, Senegal, Rwanda, and Lesotho. The Global Mission unit builds such bilateral relationships within the context of the regional work of LWF and in close cooperation with Lutheran churches in neighboring countries, as they provide culture-appropriate support to these young, often struggling churches that are shaping their new ministries.

An example of a church in crisis is the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL), which lives in the shadow of the Separation Wall that divides Israel and Palestine. In the midst of occupation and civil unrest, this small church witnesses for peace with justice. Through the deployment of ELCA mission personnel, grants for ELCJHL ministries and schools, and two-way visits, Global Mission staff members help strength that church's capacity for mission. The Global Mission unit has given 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 (see Section V). At the same time, Global Mission provides major support for LWF ministries, including Augusta Victoria Hospital, that provide educational and health services to Palestinians. The ELCA also provides 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.

During the past biennium, the Global Mission unit also has rebuilt its ministries after the 14-year civil war that destroyed much of the country's infrastructure. Curran and Phebe Hospitals, which had been seriously damaged during the fighting, are being rebuilt. ELCA support included grants and the strategic placement of missionaries, companion synod commitments of both material aid and volunteers (provided by the Upper Susquehanna Synod), and a Web presence that builds awareness about Liberia within the ELCA. In addition, ELCA Global Mission, through World Hunger and International Disaster Response, supported the Lutheran World Federation's efforts to assist people displaced by the civil war and to help them to return to and rebuild their communities.

## *Building Capacity through Leadership Development*

Leadership development, guided by the insights and priorities of companion churches, is a major focus of the work of the Global Mission unit.

The Global Mission unit provides grants that strengthen in-country and regional seminaries and educational institutions and

sends professors who teach in specific disciplines (e.g., Old Testament) for which local professors are not available. The unit also provides in-country scholarships and training to equip leaders in companion churches with the skills those churches have identified as essential, including administration, planning, and finance.

The Global Mission program of scholarships enables leaders identified by their churches to study outside the home country, in cooperation with ELCA seminaries, the Lutheran World Federation, the World Council of Churches, and full communion partners. During the past two years, 44 people completed their studies, bringing to 665 the number who have studied under the ELCA international scholarship program since 1988. These scholarships generally provide graduate studies and specialized training, and Global Mission staff members work with ELCA seminaries to respond to needs identified by companion churches (e.g. the Theology, Development, and Evangelism program at Wartburg Theological Seminary (Dubuque, Iowa), and programs in Islamic Studies at Luther Seminary (Saint Paul, Minnesota) and The Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago (Illinois)).

### ***Building Capacity through Participation in Companion Churches' Ministries***

The Global Mission unit also accompanies companion churches by providing grants and sending mission personnel for specific tasks that have been identified by those churches. In 2006, grants totaling \$3.2 million (from mission-support contributions) and \$2.3 million (from the World Hunger Appeal) were provided to companion churches. 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, healthcare, education, development, and administration. Specific placements include congregational and outreach ministries, community development, hospital, HIV-AIDS, and hospice ministries, seminary instruction, formal and non-formal education, seminary internships, youth work, social services, financial administration, and communication. Global Mission recruits, calls, prepares, sends, and supports missionary personnel, including volunteers. Although the number of mission personnel fluctuates throughout the year, approximately 275 currently serve in 50 countries. A total of 117 new mission personnel began service in 2006, of whom 81 were volunteers, and 12 Regional Representatives enable the Global Mission unit to deepen its relationships with companion churches and better support mission personnel serving in other countries. Security (or rather global insecurity) is an increasing problem for Global Mission as it places and supports mission personnel. During the past biennium, a Security Policies and Guidelines document was drafted to guide Global Mission in responding to and managing crisis situations that may arise.

International service also builds the capacity of ELCA leaders to engage in mission in this country. For example, among the 2006-2007 volunteers are thirty-seven 19- to 30-year-olds who participate in the one-year Young Adults in Global Mission program, serving in church or social service ministries in eight

countries. The ELCA will benefit from these young leaders who have deepened their ability and facility to relate to people across the lines of culture, race, language, and faith. Between 20-25 percent of former Young Adults in Global Mission participants go on to attend seminary. Others serve as lay workers in church ministries, continue in other service with Global Mission, or pursue other vocational and educational opportunities. This new ELCA program was strengthened by the addition of a leadership development component, with experienced ELCA leaders serving as mentors to these young people.

### ***Building the Capacity of Companions to Meet Human Need***

The Global Mission unit works with companion churches, related Lutheran organizations (e.g., Lutheran World Federation and Lutheran World Relief) and ecumenical partners (e.g., Church World Service) to overcome poverty through community development, increasing food security, and providing access to clean water, medical and preventive care, and education. It helps companion churches to increase their capacity to operate effective sustainable development projects. Global Mission receives 71.4 percent of budgeted ELCA World Hunger funds for this work — funds that total over 40 percent of the Global Mission budget. World Hunger Appeal funds provide substantial support for two key partners in relief and development: Lutheran World Federation and Lutheran World Relief. 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.

The 2003 Churchwide Assembly re-affirmed the ELCA's commitment to respond to the growing HIV-AIDS pandemic by making the "Stand with Africa" campaign (launched three years earlier) an ongoing ELCA World Hunger commitment. The "Stand with Africa" campaign enables Global Mission to respond to the requests of companion churches and agencies as they engage in HIV-AIDS prevention, education, care of people living with HIV-AIDS, and support for AIDS orphans, who now number 12 million in Africa. Because of the "Stand with Africa" campaign, the Global Mission unit was able to provide an additional \$738,000 in 2005 and \$600,000 in 2006 to these companions. (HIV-AIDS programs in Asia and Latin America receive funding through regular World Hunger grants.) Global Mission staff members hope that the decline in contributions to the "Stand with Africa" campaign experienced in the last biennium will be reversed so that they can continue to provide much-needed support for companions.

The ELCA, in partnership with companion churches and Lutheran and ecumenical agencies, responds to disasters within the context of a global coordinating alliance of Protestant and Orthodox churches, Action by Churches Together (ACT). Gifts to ELCA International Disaster Response enabled Global Mission to provide \$3.6 million for relief and rehabilitation in 25 countries in 2005 and \$3.7 million for work in 18 countries in 2006. The following are some examples of GM's work. (For additional information, visit [www.elca.org/disaster](http://www.elca.org/disaster)).

*Africa:* The ELCA responded to the massive drought and famine that affected 3.5 million people in Kenya, 2.6 million in

Ethiopia, and over 500,000 in Tanzania. Emergency aid was also provided to refugees who fled the civil war in southern Sudan. Some are now able to return home and are receiving assistance that will enable them to rebuild their communities. One of the worst humanitarian crises of the biennium is in Darfur (the western part of Sudan). People fleeing the continuing violence are receiving assistance through a unique ecumenical response that links Protestants (ACT) and Catholics (Caritas) in meeting emergency needs.

*Latin America:* The ELCA responded with emergency aid following hurricanes and floods that hit El Salvador, Costa Rica, Colombia, Guatemala, Haiti, Nicaragua, and Mexico.

*Asia:* In 2006, the ELCA worked through Church World Service (CWS) to respond to the two major earthquakes that hit Java, Indonesia. Global Mission also continues to respond to the massive devastation that was caused by the December 26, 2004, tsunami, in coordination with ACT, assisting communities to rebuild infrastructure and regain their livelihood: in Indonesia, through CWS and Yakkum Emergency Unit; in Sri Lanka, in partnership with Lutheran World Relief's local partners; and in India, through the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in India, where rebuilding efforts include the "Jubilee Village." The \$11.4 million given for tsunami response will be used over five years for rehabilitation and disaster preparedness.

*Middle East:* In 2006, following the election victory of Hamas, the ELCA responded to the crisis in Palestine that resulted from the decision of international donors to freeze funds earmarked for the Palestinian Authority and Israel's decision to withhold taxes and custom duties collected for the Palestinian Authority. The funding crisis had a serious effect on agencies providing social services to Palestinians, including the LWF's Augusta Victoria Hospital (the only hospital that serves cancer patients from the West Bank). Also in 2006, the Global Mission unit provided funds for relief in the wake of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, which forced a quarter of Lebanon's population to flee their homes. ELCA support was directed to long-time partner, Contact Resource Center (CRC), which supports, trains, and advocates with disabled people, and to the Middle East Council of Churches, which provides emergency relief to civilians displaced by the bombing.

### ***Building the Capacity of this Church to Engage in God's Mission***

Mutuality in mission means that companions understand that each has gifts to give — and each has the need to receive the gifts of the other, which increase their capacity to be faithful and effective in mission. Global Mission activities with synods, congregations, and church-related institutions and agencies reflect the understanding that the ELCA benefits greatly when it receives the gifts of global companions.

Through the Companion Synod Program, ELCA synods and companion churches strengthen and nurture one another in their witness and service. Synods are engaged in 120 companion relationships with at least one Lutheran church or diocese in another country. Over half of all ELCA synods have two or more companion relationships, while 11 synods have three or more relationships. Consultations to enhance cooperation and coordination were held in 2005-2006 for synodical leadership and

companion churches in Tanzania, Namibia, Papua New Guinea, India, Central African Republic, Cameroon, and Nigeria. In this biennium, the Global Mission unit completed the *Companion Synods Handbook*, which provides guidance for increased synodical and congregational participation (see [www.elca.org/companionsynod/index.html](http://www.elca.org/companionsynod/index.html)).

At Global Mission Events (GMEs), the ELCA celebrates God's mission at home and throughout the world. Traditional summer GMEs were scheduled for Amherst, Massachusetts (summer 2006, co-sponsored by The Episcopal Church) and Columbus, Ohio (summer 2007). The Global Mission unit is experimenting with different models, including: a January 2007 Global Mission Festival in Orlando, Florida; a February 2007 Leadership Training Event in Arizona, planned in cooperation with the Grand Canyon Synod (a pilot for future GMEs); and a global emphasis within the annual "Rally in the Valley" (for seniors), also in Arizona in February 2007.

Hosting international guests is an important way the ELCA builds relationships and "receives the gifts" of companion churches. For example, in the summer 2006, GM helped to bring: (a) 34 International Camp Counselors from 18 countries in 25 ELCA outdoor ministries, in cooperation with the Vocation and Education unit; (b) 88 guests from 21 countries, who participated in an International Guest Program related to the July ELCA Youth Gathering (including Latin American youth, who were paired with 50 ELCA youth from host congregations); and (c) 18 Muslim and Christian high school students (and three chaperones), members of the Al Raja Folkloric Dance Troupe from the Lutheran School of Hope in Ramallah, Palestine. The troupe performed before 52,000 people in 50 performances in 50 days, traveling to 12 synods and churchwide events (such as the Multicultural Youth Leadership Event, Youth Gathering, Global Mission Event).

### **Major Directions for 2007-2009**

The context for global mission is changing. Advances in communication and travel provide opportunities for exchanges that our grandparents could scarcely have imagined. With relative ease, synods, congregations, and individuals are able to build relationships in other countries. International mission trips once rare, now abound.

Many companion churches have grown large and strong. For example, the Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus is approaching the ELCA in size, with over 4 million members. At the same time, membership in the ELCA and churches in Europe has declined. In the midst of this, the gap between rich countries and poor countries continues to widen, with environmental degradation and the HIV-AIDS pandemic contributing to human suffering.

It is in this context that the Global Mission unit recognizes both the wonderful opportunities and the major challenges created by this changing global context. In the coming biennium, Global Mission staff members will encourage conversation among ELCA expressions concerning the appropriate balance: between the parts and the whole, between individual projects and long-term strategic investments to leverage major change, and between individual connections and

church-to-church relationships. It will also be important for this wealthy church to both hear and amplify the voices of global companions as the U.S. government sets the aid, trade, and debt policies that have a huge impact on companions and makes decisions relating to war and peace, in particular in the Middle East.

The accompaniment model for mission provides the framework for healthy discussion about the future shape of our church's global mission system — a system of interdependent relationships. It is within this context that the Global Mission unit, in the coming biennium, will:

- undertake with synods and companion churches a major review of the Companion Synods Program, seeking agreement with the Conference of Bishops on the principles that will, in future years, guide this evolving and rapidly growing program;
- engage with church-related and independent Lutheran entities to maximize synergy in mission and minimize duplication, competition, and confusion vis-à-vis companion churches;
- reshape the Global Mission unit's education program to reflect the changing context for mission, identify new ways the churchwide organization can "add value" to the work of congregations and synods, and help ELCA members, congregations, synod, the churchwide organization, and related agencies "grow into" the accompaniment model for mission; and
- participate in Lutheran World Federation's efforts to reshape its work in the light of the changing context for mission.

Accompaniment among the ELCA's various expressions and between the ELCA and companion churches is not an aimless "walking together." Accompaniment means working together to understand the context for mission, identifying what we, in this time, will choose to accomplish together, and asking hard questions of each other — for the sake of God's mission. Accompaniment is hard work. But "walking together in mission" is also a source of tremendous joy, when companions utilize all the good gifts God has provided to enable Christ's church to witness and serve ever more faithfully and effectively.

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