



Report of the Research and Evaluation Section

Statement of Purpose

The Research and Evaluation section of the Office of the Presiding Bishop is committed to assisting the leaders and staff of the churchwide organization, synods, and congregations by providing reliable and relevant information and appropriate evaluation related to the purposes of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). The section makes available to this church the experience, knowledge, and technical skills of its staff members. The governing description for this section is contained in continuing resolution 15.11.F05, printed in Section X of this volume.

Report of Work for 2005-2007

The Research and Evaluation section has worked closely with the Office of the Presiding Bishop on strategic planning. The attention of the section has been focused on outcomes and outcome indicators particularly with regard to the ethnic ministry strategies, the Evangelism Strategy, and the strategic plans of the program units of the churchwide organization. The section also works with the Office of the Presiding Bishop on the regular analysis of the context for ministry in the ELCA and on the evaluation of projects made possible by grants from Thrivent Financial for Lutherans.

The section assists the Office of the Secretary with the collection and analysis of congregational annual reports. It regularly provides synods with reports on their congregations based on information collected from the annual report. The section also maintains the congregational “trend report”, which is available online, and responds to regular requests from synods for information based on the analysis of the leadership roster of the ELCA.

The section has been very active in providing presentations reviewing the ministry content of synods. Presentations have been made in the Pacifica Synod, the Sierra Pacific Synod, the La Crosse Area Synod, Metropolitan, D.C., Synod, the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, and the Lower Susquehanna Synod. Extensive work on small congregations is currently underway in the Sierra Pacific Synod and the Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod.

Presentations were also made on the context for ministry to the Luther Seminary Board, the Lutheran Leaders Program (supported by Thrivent Financial for Lutherans), and the Conference of Bishops. Presentations on the future of mainline denominations were made to a clergy conference in the Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod, the Lutheridge Ministries Board in Arden, North Carolina, and to a Central States Synod group of lay and clergy leaders in Russell, Kansas.

The section continues to respond to many requests for demographic studies to assist in outreach. The section focuses on providing estimates and projections for use by the Mission Directors and Mission Developers in Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission. The section also works with many of the synods.

The map printed on the following page is an example of our work, and shows the estimated Latino population by county and synod in 2006. Maps showing the concentration of African American and Black, American Indian and Alaska Native, and Asian and Pacific Islander populations, are available at the section’s Web site. Such maps help this church better to understand and plan for future mission and ministry.

The Research and Evaluation section has conducted many research projects over the past two years. Below is a list of the range and type of work conducted.

- a survey in conjunction with the 35th anniversary of the ordination of women on the role of women in ministry in the ELCA;
- an evaluation of the Lutheran Theological Center in Atlanta;
- a survey of ELCA schools and Early Childhood Education centers;
- a series of surveys on the services provided by the Mission Investment Fund of the ELCA;
- an Internet survey with the Women of the ELCA on the Internet magazine *Café*;
- a survey on the *Lutheran Woman Today* magazine;
- a evaluation of the effectiveness of the churchwide organization in starting new congregations;
- a survey of worship practices in the ELCA;
- a survey of ELCA congregations and pastors focusing on practices related to church growth;
- studies of the Rocky Mountain Synod, the Delaware-Maryland Synod, the Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod, and the Southwestern Texas Synod;
- a review of Lutheran Advocacy Ministries of Pennsylvania;
- a review of Mission Support in the ELCA; and
- an evaluation of the Youth Gathering.

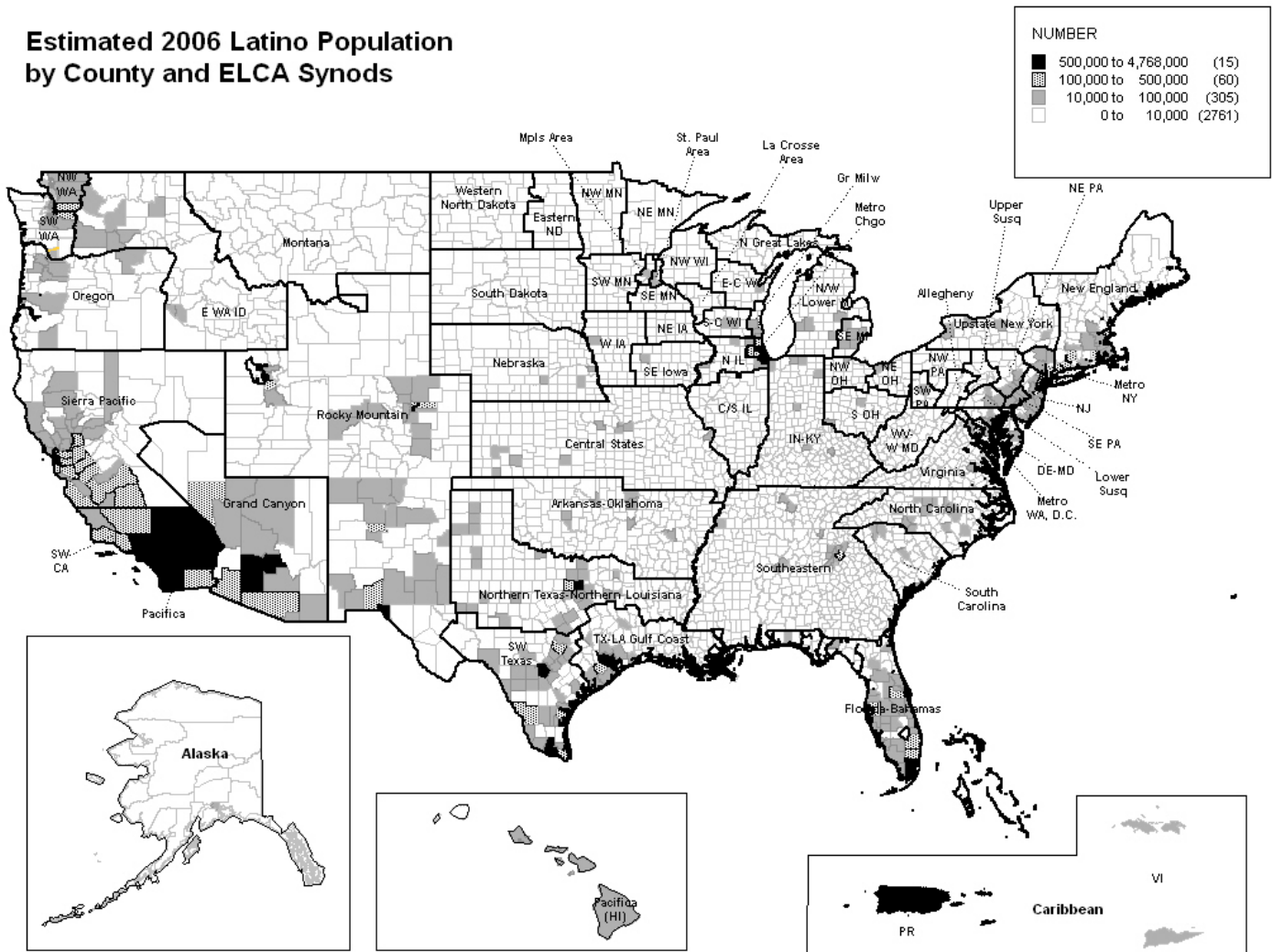
Finally, two members of the staff, Rebecca Sims and Marty Smith, presented papers at the annual meeting of the Religious Research Association. The papers addressed online surveys and the use of the Internet to collect congregational data. The paper presented by Ms. Sims is forthcoming in the journal *The Review of Religious Research*. Mr. Kenneth W. Inskip and the Rev. Robert N. Bacher also published *Chasing Down a Rumor: The Death of Mainline Denominations*, Augsburg Books.

Major Directions for 2007-2009

For the future, the section will continue its work in support of the churchwide units, but it is placing increased attention on the evaluation of the work of those units. Each of the various program units has worked diligently to establish outcomes for its work and Research and Evaluation staff members will work diligently to measure the extent to which those outcomes have been achieved.

Kenneth W. Inskeep, *executive for research and evaluation*

Estimated 2006 Latino Population by County and ELCA Synods



Prepared by ELCA Research and Evaluation, 6/07. Source: Claritas, Inc.