



Report of the Vocation and Education Unit

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Statement of Purpose

The Vocation and Education (VE) unit equips people for their callings by developing and supporting leaders—from the Gospel, through the ELCA, for the world. The constitutional description of this unit appears in continuing resolution 16.12.C06, printed in Section X of this volume.

Report of Work for 2005-2007

Organization of the Unit

The Vocation and Education unit is organized as three work groups, each with several major responsibilities.

- *Youth and Young Adult Ministries Group*: campus ministry, outdoor ministry, young adult ministry, and youth ministry
- *Leadership Group*: candidacy and deployment, chaplaincy, pastoral care and clinical education, disability and deaf ministries, health and wellness, leadership of women in ministry, multicultural leadership development, prevention of misconduct, and rostered and authorized ministries
- *Educational Partnerships and Institutions Group*: colleges and universities, first call theological education, lifelong learning, *Lutheran Partners* magazine, schools and early childhood education, seminaries and theological education network, theology and daily life

Youth and Young Adult Ministries

In response to action of the 2005 Churchwide Assembly, Vocation and Education has added a position and program in young adult ministry to equip, resource, and connect 18- to 30-year-olds for service in the church and the world. The director has been building connections with others who work with young adults including professionals in synods, congregations, outdoor ministry, campus ministry, ELCA military chaplains, and the Ecumenical Young Adult Ministry Team of the National Council of the Churches of Christ. A collaboration with ELCA World Hunger Education and synods is aimed at gathering young adults in congregations around the issues of hunger and justice. The Churchwide Assembly young adult convocation has been redesigned this year as an intentional place of connection for the young adult voting members of the assembly.

Outdoor ministry programs in 145 ELCA-affiliated locations serve an estimated 225,000 children, youth, and adults every summer. An additional 225,000 people are served during the non-summer months in retreats and other special programs.



Lutheran Outdoor Ministries (LOM) is an independent membership organization, incorporated in 2005, and is a partner with the Vocation and Education unit to support outdoor ministry organizations, programs, and leaders throughout this church. LOM intends to encourage, educate, equip, and empower bold and faithful outdoor ministry leaders for service in the Church and the world.

Campus ministry in the ELCA celebrates its centennial year in 2007. The beginning was the 1907 call to Rev. Howard Gold to serve as pastor to students at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. ELCA campus ministry now encompasses 185 agencies across the country and nearly 400 partner congregations. Over 30,000 contacts were made with students this past year and 4,400 regularly attend campus ministry worship each week. A large proportion of present ELCA seminary students report having been active in campus ministry while in college. Campus ministry helps shape students' vocations for work in the Church and in the world.



In July 2006 some 37,000 youth and adults came together in San Antonio, Texas, for two sessions of the triennial ELCA Youth Gathering. The theme, "Cruzando: Journey with Jesus," emphasized Jesus' saving action, crossing over ("cruzando") the boundaries of sin and evil that separate us from God and from our neighbors. Joined to Jesus' own cross and resurrection in their baptism, young people were reminded of their calls as followers of Jesus to cross over



boundaries that separate people and cause suffering. The generosity of ELCA youth was evident in the hours of service they did in San Antonio, and in a total of over \$1 million in gifts for the ELCA Hunger Appeal and other ministries.

The Vocation and Education unit is responsible to guide and support the Lutheran Youth Organization (LYO) which operates with youth leadership elected by its own members. The LYO report is appended to this report.

Leadership

The Leadership Group has primary responsibility to help this church call forth and support pastors, associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers. Other leadership development arenas include synodically authorized ministry and broad attention to other leadership by the members of this church.

Candidacy for rostered ministry is a collaborative effort among synods, seminaries, and the churchwide organization. The Vocation and Education unit tracks students in candidacy from their entrance until a call is accepted and received.

Roster	Candidates	
	January 2005	January 2007
Associate in Ministry	318	320
Diaconal Minister	180	189
Deaconess	8	13
Pastor	2,025	2,051
Total Candidates	2,531	2,573

This number of candidates fluctuates somewhat month to month, but long-term trends appear stable. This church presently is seeing a trend toward somewhat younger candidates, especially in candidacy for ordained ministry.

The number of people in active service on the three Word and service rosters—associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers—continues to grow slowly. People and Places is our new online database of lay rostered leaders and of openings. Synods are learning to use it to facilitate mobility. In February 2007 Vocation and Education worked with roster leaders to convene a “Consultation on Vocation and Service” to look anew at the calling and work of the lay rosters. That consultation has called for a continued conversation to attempt to develop a consensus understanding of and proposal regarding the public ministry of Word and service. The Deaconess Community of the ELCA provided a generous grant that made the consultation possible.

With stable numbers entering ordained ministry and anticipated increases in retirements in the next decades, there will likely be fewer active pastors. With present trends, there will be fewer congregations large enough to call their own pastor or even to share a pastor as part of a multi-point parish. On the other hand, rostered leaders are regularly needed for new ministries and expansions. All in all, it is difficult to predict the near and mid-term balance between mission opportunities and available leadership. Nevertheless, it is clear that this church must continue to seek and prepare gifted people who sense a call to public ministry.

New approaches to ministry are being tried. For example, Region 8 has a pilot project evaluating membership and leadership issues. In consultation with VE and other units, the

project explores asset-based strategies for small-membership congregations.

The Leadership Group coordinates our efforts in Multicultural Leadership Development and Recruitment. Our purpose is collaborative support for our candidates of color who are preparing to serve in the ministry and mission of the church. Attention is also being given here and by our seminaries to raising up the next generation of teaching theologians of color. In the past year, Vocation and Education has provided our students of color with scholarships totaling \$161,000.

“Live well: Healthy Leaders Enhance Lives” is an initiative of the Board of Pensions in partnership with the Vocation and Education Unit. A message of multi-dimensional wellness and a call to action has been a part of First Call Theological Education events, candidacy retreats, convocations, synod assemblies, new bishop orientation, and a Seminary Health and Wellness Summit.

ELCA ministers who desire to be professionally certified to serve in chaplaincy, pastoral counseling, or clinical education must receive ecclesiastical endorsement. In 1995 there were a total of 429 rostered persons with ecclesiastical endorsement and professional certification serving in chaplaincy, pastoral counseling, and clinical education; in 2006 the number had dropped to 366. This decrease, along with trends in healthcare and longer life spans, suggests the need to encourage more of our rostered leaders to consider a call to such work. As an encouragement, an inter-Lutheran scholarship fund has been established to provide financial assistance to qualified persons.

The 2005 Churchwide Assembly incorporated two areas of work into the Vocation and Education unit that had previously been in other units—the ministry of women, and disability and deaf ministries. Work continues in these areas, though it has been slowed by unavoidable interruptions in staffing for each. We anticipate significant expansion of efforts in 2007 and beyond.

The unit has also received added funds to allow a full time staff position in the prevention of misconduct by rostered persons. This work is expanding in constant collaboration with bishops and other synodical leaders. The focus is on preparing others to offer important training and on being available to give counsel to synods on particular cases.

Educational Partnerships and Institutions

The Vocation and Education unit sustains relationships with a wide variety of ELCA-related educational institutions and programs.

Seminaries	8
Colleges and Universities	28
Lifelong Learning Programs	34
High Schools*	18
Elementary/Middle Schools*	267
Early Childhood Education Centers*	1,722

* The numbers in these three categories are for programs, not institutions. There are 1,751 institutions, some of which have two or three types of program.

For ELCA colleges and universities, and for seminaries and seminary clusters, Vocation and Education staff members

regularly attend board meetings, convene presidents, deans, and other leaders, and offer counsel in various ways. The unit provides comparative audits for the seminary system and for the colleges and universities, and publishes *Intersections*, a journal serving Lutheran higher education. A staff member normally advises presidential search committees. Since the 2005 Churchwide Assembly, the following new presidents have been selected and installed by their institutions:

Robert C. Oliver, Augustana College, Sioux Falls, S.D.
Paul C. Pribbenow, Augsburg College, Minneapolis, Minn.
John R. Sladek, California Lutheran University, Thousand Oaks, Calif.

David R. Anderson, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minn.
Marcus J. Miller, Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary, Columbia, S.C.

Denvy A. Bowman will serve as interim president through June 2008 at Capital University, Columbus, Ohio.

For ELCA early childhood education centers and schools, our staff person advises pastors and school administrators and offers counsel to congregations and others considering the establishment of a school. We collaborate with the Evangelical Lutheran Education Association and regional school associations. Nearly 200 pastors, principals, and other administrators attended the biennial administrators' conference in October 2007.

Last year we concluded work on a five-year Lilly Endowment grant project, "Transition into Ministry" that worked with first call rostered leaders and gathered much useful information to help synods support these leaders. Results of that effort were affirmed by a four-year \$525,000 extension grant from Lilly to explore "The Vocation of a First Call Congregation" and identify success predicting qualities and practices in the congregation.

The theological education network in the ELCA is well served by the three seminary clusters. At the end of this biennium, all are now legally incorporated and all are actively convening and collaborating much more with partners such as colleges and universities, campus ministries, lifelong learning centers, and outdoor ministries. These partnerships were envisioned in *Faithful Leaders for a Changing World: Theological Education for Mission in the ELCA*, a study received by the 1995 Churchwide Assembly, and have come to fruition through the hard work of many individuals and the risk-taking of institutions that looked toward larger purposes rather than simple self-interest.

Select Multimedia Resources, which provides DVD resources for lifelong learning and professional continuing education, and Fisher's Net, the online learning platform of the ELCA, joined into a single corporation, Fisher's Net Select, for an expanded venture in distance education. Staff members of the Vocation and Education unit advise this ministry and serve on its board.

Lutheran Partners magazine, which is sent to all ELCA rostered leaders six times a year, completed a strategic planning process with the crafting of a new purpose statement and plans to launch a redesigned print and online magazine in the latter part of 2007.

The constitution of this church calls for regular gatherings of the teaching theologians of this church. These include some of the bishops. These annual events and a triennial gathering of

teaching theologians with the whole Conference of Bishops are arranged by the unit in cooperation with the newly formed Association Teaching Theologians-ELCA (ATT-ELCA). Two teaching theologians selected through ATT-ELCA will be present at the 2007 Churchwide Assembly for the first time, joining teaching theologians from our eight seminaries as advisors to the assembly.

Major Directions for 2007-2009

Three goals have been identified for work begun in this biennium and continuing through 2009:

- Goal 1: Vocation Claimed – Vocation and Education staff members will center their work in the Lutheran conversation about vocation, and the staff will assist congregational, synodical, churchwide, agency, and institutional leaders to engage in this conversation for the sake of our common work and public witness.
- Goal 2: Networks Nurtured – Vocation and Education staff members will adopt networking as their primary organizational principle and method to equip people for their callings and to develop and support leaders; staff members will engage and enable others to strengthen interdependent partnerships.
- Goal 3: Leaders Equipped – Vocation and Education program staff will facilitate the equipping of pastors, associates in ministry, deaconesses, diaconal ministers, synodically authorized ministers, and other leaders in Vocation and Education areas of responsibility and will engage them in addressing future leadership needs of this church and the world.

Unit staff members played a large role in planning the consultation "Book of Faith: Lutherans Read the Bible." If this 2007 Churchwide Assembly approves a five-year Book of Faith initiative to help the ELCA be renewed in its Lutheran vocation as a church of the Word, the Vocation and Education unit will eagerly accept programmatic responsibility for it. It will be a major collaborative effort of the next biennium, one that relates to and undergirds the other work of this unit.

The proposed social statement, "Our Calling in Education: A Lutheran Study," if adopted by the 2007 Churchwide Assembly, will offer significant counsel and direction to the Vocation and Education unit. We have been fully engaged with the task force that has prepared the statement. Two members of the VE staff served on the task force as advisors. Other staff and the program committee have assisted the task force by reviewing and commenting on drafts.

There is vital work being done and much to do, for the sake of Christ's mission.

Kathryn L. Johnson, *program committee chair*
Stanley N. Olson, *executive director*



Appendix A

Lutheran Youth Organization

Statement of Purpose

The Lutheran Youth Organization (LYO) continues to serve young people throughout this church in providing a context where youth share in the oneness of Christ and encouraging young leaders to be full participants in carrying out the mission of the larger church. LYO work is done, in part, through several triennial and annual gatherings.

Triennial Youth Leadership Events

Multicultural Youth Leadership Event

The triennial Multicultural Youth Leadership Event (MYLE) was held July 2-5, 2006, in San Antonio, Texas. This leadership event gathered over 800 people from across the ELCA, most of whom were youth of color. They worshiped, celebrated diversity, and participated in small group leadership development sessions, workshops, and ethnic caucuses. In ethnic caucuses they elected twelve new members of the 2006 – 2009 Multicultural Advisory Committee (MAC) to the LYO board.

Definitely Abled Youth Leadership Event

The triennial Definitely Abled Youth Leadership Event (DAYLE) was held July 2-5, 2006, in San Antonio, Texas. There a group of thirty people — youth with disabilities, their companions, special guests and staff — worshiped, developed their leadership skills, and elected new members of the 2006–2009 Definitely Abled Advisory Committee (DAC) to the LYO Board.

LYO Convention

The LYO seventh triennial convention was held July 9-12, 2006, in San Antonio, Texas. Approximately 250 youth delegates from 50 synods participated with support from 77 synodical adult advisors and nearly 100 visitors, special guests, and staff. The LYO Convention passed 16 resolutions, received reports from the board and its advisory committees and councils, elected new board members, and received greetings from a number of partner organizations.

Council of Synodical LYO Presidents

The annual Council of Synodical LYO Presidents met November 9-12, 2006, in Washington, D.C. Over 100 youth leaders, synodical adult advisors, special guests and staff spent several days networking and focusing on advocacy ministry. Staff members from the ELCA Washington Office and the Multicultural Ministries unit facilitated field trip workshops including topics such as the crisis in Darfur, ministry with American Indians, and corporate and social responsibility. The youth members of the council elect male and female co-chairs to serve on the LYO board for a two-year term. The first year they serve as co-chairs-elect; the second year as co-chairs.

4:24 Prayer Campaign

As part of its focus to share in the oneness of Christ, the LYO invites all members of the 2007 Churchwide Assembly to join in its 4:24 Prayer Campaign, committing to one minute of silent prayer each day at precisely 4:24 P.M. This prayer campaign is based upon Acts 4:24 which states, “when they heard it [that the disciples were released from prison], they raised their voices together to God.”

Major Directions for 2007-2009

Between 2007 and 2009, the board of the LYO will conduct the first self-study in its 20-year history for the purpose of self-reflection and possible modification. In addition, the board will continue to lift up and implement the actions taken by the 2006 LYO Convention. Some of these topics include illegal immigration, youth representation at synod assemblies, awareness and fund-raising for world hunger, the conflict in Darfur, and signing the Kairos 2006 document.

For additional information such as minutes, resolution text, contact information for churchwide and synodical LYO leaders and leadership event materials, please visit the Lutheran Youth Organization Web site (www.elca.org/lyo).