

April 20, 2004

To: Bishops of synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Secretaries of synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Vice Presidents of synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Members of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Members of the Cabinet of Executives
Regional Coordinators

FROM: Dr. Lowell G. Almen

SUBJECT: Report of Actions of the Church Council (April 16-18, 2004)

The Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) met at the Lutheran Center, Chicago, Illinois, on April 16-18, 2004. A variety of matters received attention. Here is a summary of particular actions.

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I. RESPONSE ON MISSION SUPPORT

Church Council Action:

To request:

• that the Office of the Presiding Bishop, in consultation with the Division for Congregational Ministries, the Department for Synodical Relations, and the Conference of Bishops, develop and propose a process for addressing

reductions in the mission-support plans of congregations, synods, and churchwide units;

• that the proposed process reflect mutual consultation, mutual agreement, and mutual affirmation; and

• that a report and possible recommendations be brought to the November 2004 meeting of the Church Council.

II. RESPONSE TO MISSION-SUPPORT REPORTS

By action of the 1995 Churchwide Assembly, the process for determining mission-support commitments is to be “a process of continuous consultation, information sharing, and negotiation. Annual consultations will be held between synods and the churchwide organization. Consultations develop relationships through shared decision-making and partnership in God’s mission

“Mutual ratification of a mission-support commitment would progress in the following stages:

- A. Churchwide executive and synodical bishop (phone conversation);
- B. Churchwide organization representatives and synodical representatives (annual consultation);
- C. Synod Council and Church Council (statement of intent); and
- D. Synod Assembly and Churchwide Assembly (budget adoption).

“Any proposed change in the . . . commitment calls for additional consultation (*i.e.*, phone, face-to-face, teleconference), as appropriate”

The Conference of Bishops at its March 2004 meeting, discussed the issue of mission support and synod-churchwide consultations, adopting a sense motion as follows:

WHEREAS, our life together as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America over these next two years requires a unified and concerted effort by all 65 synods for partnership in good budget planning and consistent ministry; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that we, the Conference of Bishops, encourage each synod to maintain its current percentage of mission support to the churchwide organization for the 2004–2005 and 2005–2006 budgets, and, if possible, even to increase that percentage; and be it further

RESOLVED, that each of us will encourage our Synod Council to discuss that intent in its next meeting; and be it further

RESOLVED, that an update on that information be shared with the treasurer of this church following the discussion of that intent.

The ELCA Church Council has responsibility for reviewing and approving or withholding approval for synods regarding mission-support plans.

REVISIONS TO 2004 SYNOD MISSION-SUPPORT PLANS *Church Council Action:*

To acknowledge that the constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America established the process for determination of the percentage for the sharing of mission-support contributions for synodical and churchwide ministries, and this process has been affirmed by actions of the 1995 Churchwide Assembly;

To underscore that this process specifies that the implementation of churchwide constitutional provision 10.71. and +S15.12. in the *Constitution*

for Synods for the sharing for mission-support funds shall involve mutual consultation, mutual agreement, and mutual affirmation;

To acknowledge with gratitude the action of the Conference of Bishops in March 2004 “that we, the Conference of Bishops, encourage each synod to maintain its current percentage of mission support to [the] churchwide [organization] for the 2004–2005 and 2005–2006 budgets, and, if possible, even increase that percentage”;

To affirm the revised 2004 mission-support dollar estimates for the sharing of mission-support contributions by congregations for synodical and churchwide ministries of the following synods: Alaska, Northwest Washington, Sierra Pacific, Southwest California, Rocky Mountain, South Dakota, Northwestern Minnesota, Southwestern Minnesota, Saint Paul Area, Nebraska, Southwestern Texas, Metropolitan Chicago, Northern Illinois, Greater Milwaukee, New Jersey, Northeastern Pennsylvania, Southwestern Pennsylvania, Allegheny, Upper Susquehanna, Virginia; and

To affirm with sincere appreciation the increases in the percentage for the sharing of 2004 mission-support contributions by congregations for synodical and churchwide ministries of the following synods: Southeastern Minnesota, Arkansas-Oklahoma, Southeastern, Florida-Bahamas; and

To acknowledge the receipt of 2004 mission-support plans from and to request additional conversations with these synods: Southwestern Washington, Eastern Washington-Idaho, Oregon, Grand Canyon, Central States, Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana, Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast, Western Iowa, Northeastern Ohio, and Upstate New York; and

To request that the presiding bishop invite the listed synods into mutual conversation that may include the following steps:

- a. A meeting in Chicago of the presiding bishop and the individual synodical bishop and vice president;
- b. A meeting of appropriate members of the churchwide staff and, when possible, a member of the Church Council with the members of the Synod Councils in the listed synods to address concerns of the respective Synod Councils and the

Church Council. The framework for the mission-support discussions and decisions shall include: 1) historical income and expenditure patterns in the synod; 2) past mission-support commitments and trends; 3) size of the synod (geography, membership, and congregations); 4) core budget; 5) numbers of extremely small or large congregations on the synod's territory; 6) specific mission-support levels; 7) support of agencies and institutions in the synod; and 8) current and restricted fund balances; and

- c. Development of a plan by the stewardship staff related to the listed synods in consultation with the synod bishop and vice president for the generation of expanding mission-support income to be presented to a forthcoming meeting of the respective Synod Councils; and

To encourage all synods to contribute the mutually agreed upon percentage or dollar amount of mission-support income from congregations on a monthly basis for the support of churchwide ministries.

2005 MISSION-SUPPORT PLANS

Mission-support plan forms for 2005 mission support were due from synods by March 15, 2004.

Church Council Action:

To acknowledge that the constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America established the process for determination of the percentage for the sharing of mission-support contributions for synodical and churchwide ministries, and this process has been affirmed by actions of the 1995 Churchwide Assembly;

To underscore that this process specifies that the implementation of churchwide constitutional provision 10.71. and +S15.12. in the *Constitution for Synods* for the sharing for mission-support funds shall involve mutual consultation, mutual agreement, and mutual affirmation;

To acknowledge with gratitude the action of the Conference of Bishops in March 2004 “that we, the Conference of Bishops, encourage each synod to maintain its current percentage of mission support to [the] churchwide [organization] for the 2004–2005 and 2005–2006

budgets, and, if possible, even increase that percentage . . .”;

To affirm the 2005 mission-support dollar estimates for the sharing of mission-support contributions by congregations for synodical and churchwide ministries of the following synods: Alaska, Northwest Washington, Southwestern Washington, Sierra Pacific, Southwest California, Pacifica, Rocky Mountain, South Dakota, Northwestern Minnesota, Northeastern Minnesota, Southwestern Minnesota, Minneapolis Area, Saint Paul Area, Southeastern Minnesota, Nebraska, Metropolitan Chicago, Northern Illinois, Central/Southern Illinois, Southeastern Iowa, Western Iowa, Northeastern Iowa, Northwest Synod of Wisconsin, East-Central Synod of Wisconsin, Greater Milwaukee, South-Central Synod of Wisconsin, La Crosse Area, Southeast Michigan, North/West Lower Michigan, Indiana-Kentucky, Northwestern Ohio, Northeastern Ohio, New Jersey, Northeastern Pennsylvania, Southeastern Pennsylvania, Southwestern Pennsylvania, Allegheny, Lower Susquehanna, Upper Susquehanna, Delaware-Maryland, Metropolitan Washington, D.C., West Virginia-Western Maryland, Virginia, and Florida-Bahamas synods;

To affirm with sincere appreciation the increases in the percentage for the sharing of 2005 mission-support contributions by congregations for synodical and churchwide ministries of the following synods: Montana, Eastern North Dakota, Arkansas-Oklahoma, Southwestern Texas, Northern Great Lakes, Metropolitan New York, Northwestern Pennsylvania, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Caribbean synods;

To acknowledge the receipt of 2005 mission-support plans from and to request additional conversations with these synods: Eastern Washington-Idaho, Oregon, Grand Canyon, Central States, Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana, Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast, Southern Ohio, and Southeastern synods;

To request that the presiding bishop invite the listed synods into mutual conversation that may include the following steps:

- a. A meeting in Chicago of the presiding bishop and the individual synodical bishop and vice president;
- b. A meeting of appropriate members of the

churchwide staff and, when possible, a member of the Church Council with the members of the Synod Councils in the listed synods to address concerns of the respective Synod Councils and the Church Council. The framework for the mission-support discussions and decisions shall include: 1) historical income and expenditure patterns in the synod; 2) past mission-support commitments and trends; 3) size of the synod (geography, membership, and congregations); 4) core budget; 5) numbers of extremely small or large congregations on the synod's territory; 6) specific mission-support levels; 7) support of agencies and institutions in the synod; and 8) current and restricted fund balances; and

- c. Development of a plan by the stewardship staff related to the listed synods in consultation with the synod bishop and vice president for the generation of expanding mission-support income to be presented to a forthcoming meeting of the respective Synod Councils;

To request further discussion with the following synods in order for 2005 mission-support plans to be submitted to the Church Council for action: Western North Dakota, New England, Upstate New York, and Slovak-Zion synods; and

To encourage all synods to contribute the mutually agreed upon percentage or dollar amount of mission-support income from congregations on a monthly basis for the support of churchwide ministries.

III. MISSION-FUNDING INITIATIVE

Extensive attention has been devoted in recent months to ways to enhance mission-support income for synodical and churchwide ministries. At the same time, the need is increasingly evident for greater coordination and collaboration in the various other ways in which funding resources are developed for churchwide efforts.

Contributing significantly to this discussion are the results of the mission-support roundtable conducted in 2003. Emerging from all these deliberations is a "Mission Funding Proposal" for consideration by the Church Council.

To implement aspects of that proposal, a new continuing resolution was adopted.

Church Council Action:

To adopt the following new continuing resolution as 15.11.C04 to provide for the establishment of Development Services:

To oversee and direct efforts for support of the churchwide ministries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Development Services shall coordinate the work of development for the churchwide organization, including the World Hunger and Disaster Appeals, the Vision for Mission offering, the programs for Missionary Sponsorships, Mission Partners, and Mission Founders as well as the Fund for Leaders in Mission and the ELCA Foundation. In addition, Development Services shall coordinate present or future designated or restricted funding endeavors. To accomplish these responsibilities, Development Services shall:

- a. *Develop and maintain an integrated donor database to enhance coordination of the various funding opportunities offered to members and congregations of this church through the churchwide organization;*
- b. *Determine the pattern of staff leadership for the various development efforts and programs;*
- c. *Have an executive director who is appointed by the presiding bishop and accountable to the presiding bishop; and*
- d. *Receive the counsel of an advisory committee of five to seven members appointed by the presiding bishop for their knowledge and expertise in development;*

To direct that the operation of Development Services shall begin immediately and that, notwithstanding any continuing resolutions to the contrary, appeals, funds, and programs cited in this continuing resolution (above) shall be coordinated immediately by the Development Services unit;

To request that amendments to existing continuing resolutions germane to this action be developed and submitted to the November 2004 meeting of the Church Council through the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee.

IV. 2004 EXPENDITURE AUTHORIZATION

Income estimates for 2004 have been revised since the November 2003 Church Council meeting. The largest change from the estimate provided in November is in anticipated mission support, which reflects an anticipated decrease of \$2,635,000, to an annual amount of \$65,200,000. The revised estimate projects a decrease of \$1,248,700 from the actual mission-support receipts in 2003 of \$68,448,708. This also represents 94.2 percent of the current revised mission-support estimates as provided by synods. In 2003, synods met 95.3 percent of their November revised mission-support estimates, but only 93 percent of their April 2003 estimates. Other changes include reductions in anticipated investment income (\$450,000), gifts through Women of the ELCA (\$100,000), and unit designated gifts (\$25,000). The anticipated Church Extension grant from Thrivent Financial for Lutherans for the Division for Outreach is adjusted upward by \$100,000, rental income increased by \$50,000, and the temporarily restricted endowment income increased by \$25,000.

Support from the Mission Investment Fund of the ELCA (MIF) of \$1,200,000, designated for mission developer housing expenses, previously treated as a credit to expense, will be recognized as temporarily restricted gift income, beginning in 2004. This is reflected as an adjustment in the expense allocation for the Division for Outreach. MIF has increased its gift in 2004 by an additional \$300,000. This increase enables this church, under its unified budget principle, to allocate other funds to support the new Mission Funding Initiative. An additional \$187,000 from MIF, plus \$200,000 from accumulated fees from the ELCA Foundation deferred gift fund, provide the balance needed to fund the first year of the initiative.

No change is anticipated in World Hunger for 2004. The projected income remains at \$16,250,000.

The revised income estimates for 2004 necessitate a spending reduction of \$3,100,000 or 3.8 percent.

Church Council Action:

To approve a revised current fund spending authorization for fiscal year 2004 of \$80,392,000.

V. RESOLUTION OF APPRECIATION

Church Council Action:

To express the Church Council's appreciation to the Office of the Presiding Bishop, the Office of the Treasurer, and all unit executives of the churchwide organization for their efforts in managing the churchwide organization's financial affairs so that, in the face of decreased revenues, spending was reduced in a strategic and mission-sensitive way to achieve a small surplus in current operating fund activities for fiscal year 2003.

VI. COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

FOR THE CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION

Work done by the task force on mission funding and the mission-funding roundtable resulted in a mission-funding proposal, which recommended a four-part strategy on mission funding for the churchwide organization.

The third part of the proposal called for the development of a comprehensive communication and marketing strategy. While work on this comprehensive strategy is still in its early stages, two elements of the strategy were put on a fast track for completion and implementation: a new tag line and a case statement. The case statement is built around mission-funding challenges and opportunities for support related to this church's five strategic directions.

Research, professional consultation, and interunit staff support were critical to the development of both the tag line and case statement. These components, plus the criteria for and process of creating a tag line and case statement, were presented at the April 2004 meeting of the Church Council.

Church Council Action:

To endorse "Living in God's amazing grace" as the tag line for the churchwide organization and to request that it be incorporated broadly into churchwide print and electronic materials.

VII. UPDATE ON SEXUALITY STUDIES

In accordance with the "Protocol for Managing the ELCA Churchwide Study on Homosexuality and Aspects of the Social Statement on Human Sexuality," progress reports approved by the boards of the Division for Church in Society and the Division for Ministry are presented to each meeting of the Church Council.

The Rev. James F. Childs Jr., director for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality, and Ms. Judy Biffle, an advisory member of the task force and member of the Church Council, brought reports to the Church Council.

Church Council Action:

To express gratitude to the members of the task force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality and the director for the studies, Dr. James Childs, for their work thus far and for their faithful commitment to the tasks given them by this church;

To receive the process and time-line for the "Report and Recommendations" of the task force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality for the 2005 Churchwide Assembly. . . ;

To acknowledge the opportunities for broad participation in this study, which have been

provided to this church through the development of study materials such as “Journey Together Faithfully, Parts I and II” as well as readily available information on the studies’ Web site (www.elca.org/faithfuljourney) and through regular reports to the boards of the Division for Ministry and the Division for Church in Society, the Conference of Bishops, the Church Council, Synod Assemblies, and the Churchwide Assembly;

To express gratitude to individuals, congregations, synods, and others who have participated in the studies and provided feedback to assist the task force in its work;

To encourage this church to continue and expand its participation, conversation, learning, and feedback in preparation for decisions to be made at the 2005 Churchwide Assembly;

To anticipate that the “Report and Recommendations” will address the blessing of committed same-gender relationships and the rostering of approved candidates who are in committed same-gender relationships as requested by the 2001 ELCA Churchwide Assembly;

To endorse the following elements of the process and time-line for this portion of the ELCA Studies on Sexuality, anticipating that the process will include:

- E-mail updates through synods to congregations and rostered leaders beginning in April 2004, including an e-mail update on November 16, 2004, [target date] providing details and information in preparation for the January distribution and release of the task force “Report and Recommendations”;
- A confidential preview of the task force “Report and Recommendations” to be available electronically at 12:00 noon (EST) January 12, 2005, [target date] to rostered leaders, Church Council, and boards of the Division for Church in Society and Division for Ministry; the report will remain confidential and is embargoed (i.e., not for further distribution or publication) until 12:00 noon (EST) on January 13, 2005 [target date];
- Public release of the task force “Report and Recommendations” at 12:00 noon (EST) on January 13, 2005, [target date] through posting on the ELCA Web site (www.elca.org/faithfuljourney) and mailing to all congregations and rostered leaders;

- A news conference involving the Rev. James Childs, director for the studies, and Bishop Margaret Payne, task force chair, at the Lutheran Center at 12:00 noon (EST) on January 13, 2005 [target date];
- Broad distribution of the “Report and Recommendations” in congregations and synods and among rostered leaders with the invitation to respond through action by Synod Council resolutions to the Church Council or Synod Assembly memorials to the Churchwide Assembly;
- Review of the “Report and Recommendations” by the Conference of Bishops, the boards of the Division for Church in Society and the Division for Ministry in March 2005 and forwarding to the Church Council with additional comments and recommendations;
- Consideration of the “Report and Recommendations” by the Church Council at its April 2005 meeting, actions to include:
 1. Transmission of the “Report and Recommendations” as information to the 2005 Churchwide Assembly;
 2. Preparation of a resolution or resolutions for action by the 2005 Churchwide Assembly related to the “Report and Recommendations”;
- Action by the 2005 Churchwide Assembly on the resolution or resolutions related to the “Report and Recommendations.”

The Church Council also took the following action related to the task force on the ELCA Studies on Sexuality.

Church Council Action:

To request that a draft of the “Rules of Organization and Procedure” for the 2005 Churchwide Assembly be presented at the November 2004 meeting of the Church Council and that a quasi-committee of the whole discussion on the topic of human sexuality be scheduled for that meeting.

VIII. THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE WORLD HUNGER APPEAL AND BREAD FOR THE WORLD

At its February 2003 meeting, the board of the Division for Congregational Ministries acknowledged the 30th anniversary of the ELCA World Hunger Appeal and Bread for the World with the following action:

The year 2003 marks the 30th anniversary of the World Hunger Appeal of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

For the past 30 years, the World Hunger Appeal has been the means by which ELCA members, congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization work together in a faithful, reliable, effective, and comprehensive way to respond to God's call: feed those who are hungry and bring justice to those who are oppressed.

Gifts to the ELCA World Hunger Appeal enable the ELCA to accompany people in need in this country and throughout the world through relief efforts, sustainable development, education, and advocacy.

In 1999, on the 25th anniversary of the World Hunger Appeal, the Churchwide Assembly affirmed the goal of doubling giving to the Appeal over the next five years (to reach \$25 million). Individuals, congregations, synods, Lutheran youth, women's and men's groups, and church-related agencies and institutions have responded. Giving moved from a \$11–12.5 million plateau during the 1990s to \$17 million in 2003 (including \$1 million earmarked for the Appeal's second-mile "Stand with Africa" campaign). These gifts to the World Hunger Appeal enable people in need to escape the cycle of poverty that causes hunger.

Funds are distributed internationally through the Division for Global Mission and provide support for two long-time partners that carry out complementary functions: U.S.-based Lutheran World Relief (through which the ELCA works with The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod), and the Lutheran World Federation, headquartered in Switzerland (our "worldwide Lutheran family"—the way the ELCA addresses global hunger and poverty in partnership with Lutheran churches in Europe and the Middle East, Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and the Americas). World Hunger funds also enable ecumenical partners and companion churches to address poverty and hunger in their communities.

At home, World Hunger funds enable the whole of the ELCA to "walk with" congregations, synods, and agencies engaged in their communities in efforts to provide food, training, and community development that help people escape poverty. The ELCA World Hunger program also enables our church to live out its commitment to work with governments, businesses, and international organizations to change the conditions that cause hunger at home and throughout the world—and to educate ELCA members about hunger's causes and cures.

The year 2003 also marks the 30th anniversary of Bread for the World. Since Bread for the World's first year, the ELCA's predecessor bodies and then the ELCA have been strong and faithful partners in this grass-roots Christian movement. The goal of Bread for the World is to build the political will to end hunger—and to enact the federal legislation that is the concrete expression of this commitment. Over the past 30 years, Bread for the World has been an effective means by which the ELCA lives out

its commitment to be a "public church," witnessing boldly to God's love for all that God has created.

The board requested approval by the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America of the action below.

Church Council Action:

On the occasion of the 30th anniversary of both the ELCA World Hunger Appeal and Bread for the World,

1. To give thanks:

a. for the breath of the Spirit that stirred up the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and other churches in this country 30 years ago:

- opening eyes to the reality of human need;
- moving hearts to compassion and commitment;
- inspiring minds to imagine life in human community not as it is, but as God wills it to be; and
- engaging wills to work tirelessly to alleviate hunger and poverty at home and throughout the world;

b. for all within the ELCA who have participated in their church's World Hunger Appeal over the past 30 years and for those who have wisely and effectively utilized the funds raised by the ELCA's World Hunger Appeal to combat poverty and hunger at home and throughout the world; and

c. for the ecumenical anti-hunger commitment among Christians in the U.S. that gave birth to Bread for the World, a Christian citizens movement that seeks to build the political will to end hunger and encourages the U.S. government to take up its domestic and global responsibility in arena;

2. To reaffirm this church's commitment to combat hunger and poverty through the ELCA World Hunger Appeal and Bread for the World in this their 30th anniversary year; and

3. To call upon individuals, congregations, synods, youth, women's and men's groups, and church-related agencies and

institutions to deepen their commitment to these effective ways by which the ELCA combats hunger and poverty at home and throughout the world:

- a. by highlighting the 30th anniversary of the World Hunger Appeal, by sharing information about the work being done, and by offering additional giving opportunities;**
- b. by continuing to strive, through individual and common giving, to reach the \$25 million giving goal, which was set by the 1999 ELCA Churchwide Assembly for the ELCA World Hunger Appeal; and**
- c. by joining with other Christians throughout this country in Bread for the World, as it works to build the political will to end hunger.**

IX. “STAND WITH AFRICA” CAMPAIGN

At its November 2000 meeting, the Church Council approved “Stand with Africa: A Campaign of Hope” upon recommendation of the Division for Global Mission, the Division for Church in Society, and the Division for Congregational Ministries. The council voted (CC00.11.72) to:

(1) express the ELCA’s commitment to continue to accompany companion churches and partner agencies in Africa, especially as they address the HIV-AIDS crisis, the projected increase in chronic hunger, and the need for reconciliation and peacemaking; and

(2) affirm the development of “Stand with Africa: A Campaign of Hope” . . . to raise awareness about Africa, encourage advocacy in support of Africa, and make available additional funding to enable coordinated and effective partnership activities in the three areas of HIV-AIDS crisis, chronic hunger, and reconciliation and peacemaking.

The 2001 Churchwide Assembly affirmed “Stand with Africa: A Campaign of Hope” with the following action (CA01.06.27):

To call on individuals, congregations, synods, the churchwide organization, and related agencies and institutions to be strong and active partners in the emerging “Stand with Africa: A Campaign of Hope,” a cooperative effort of the World Hunger Program of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, World Relief of The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod, and Lutheran World Relief, and to join others in (1) learning more about Africa; (2) advocating for justice, including special assistance in responding to the HIV-AIDS emergency in Africa; and (3) responding to urgent need through additional designated World Hunger “Stand with Africa” gifts within the context of ongoing support for the World Hunger Appeal of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

At its April 2002 meeting, the Church Council received the report of a “Stand with Africa” study tour, which included four members of the council, and voted (CC02.04.13) to designate \$350,000 for “Stand with Africa” efforts.

The “Stand with Africa” campaign of education, giving, and advocacy has begun to take root in the ELCA and has raised an additional \$2.7 million to date. The money has been used to undergird ELCA companion churches and Lutheran World Relief (LWR) community-based partners to combat HIV and AIDS, banish hunger, and build peace.¹

The situation in Africa continues to be grave and merits a continuation of this emphasis. The HIV and AIDS crisis continues to cut a swath through Africa. One tragic result of the pandemic is the projected increase in the number of African children orphaned by AIDS. If current trends continue, the number is expected to double, reaching 25 million within the decade. Our companion churches, struggling to respond to often overwhelming needs, have called on the ELCA to continue walking with them through this crisis. In addition, the ELCA continues to accompany churches and partners as they rebuild after war and seek to avoid future conflicts. Finally, chronic hunger continues to increase in Africa, even as it is declining in other regions.

There are several compelling reasons to continue the “Stand with Africa” campaign:

- In its action, the 2001 Churchwide Assembly asserted that “business as usual” is not enough, but that a deeper commitment is needed. Given the continuing crises in Africa, returning to “business as usual” is not an adequate response. The continuation of the “Stand with Africa” campaign provides the means for the ELCA to live out its commitment to “walk with” the churches of Africa.
- Many ELCA congregations and synods have just begun to take up a “Stand with Africa” emphasis. Several synods are planning major “Stand with Africa” emphases in 2004, and, following this focus at the 2003 ELCA Youth Gathering in Atlanta, the Lutheran Youth Organization is planning to highlight “Stand with Africa” during this triennium (2003–2006).
- The ELCA has provided leadership and an example to other denominations, several of which have launched Africa-focused campaigns since the creation of “Stand with Africa.”
- Through “Stand with Africa,” the ELCA can continue to “step forward as a public church” through its advocacy. Significant additional U.S. funding to combat HIV and AIDS and to support sustainable

¹Lutheran World Relief is the U.S.-based common agency of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod. It is nationally recognized as one of the most effective and efficient relief and development agencies in the U.S.

development in Africa may be possible over the next few years.

- The ELCA would signal its support for the Lutheran World Federation's Global HIV and AIDS Campaign, which was launched in 2003.²

In light of this worldwide campaign and the experience of these past three years, some adjustments will be made. Cooperation with The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod in the “Stand with Africa” campaign will continue in future years, but it is likely to be more informal than in the past. There may continue to be communication and cooperation on specific projects, but there is likely to be the pattern of core common activity education, fundraising, and advocacy.

It is recommended that “Stand with Africa” be continued as an emphasis within the ELCA World Hunger Appeal and Program, with the intent to continue common activities with partners, as there is interest.

LWR has communicated its interest in and commitment to continued collaboration with the ELCA on “Stand with Africa,” building on the track record of the past three years and offering program experience, staff expertise, extensive networks, and quality programs.

In the campaign's first three years, funds were equally divided between grants to companion churches and LWR, which works through community-based organizations. As the “Stand with Africa” emphasis continues, our commitment to the LWF Global HIV and AIDS Campaign will make these allocations somewhat more complex. Therefore, the Division for Global Mission—in consultation with Lutheran World Relief, Lutheran World Federation, and companion churches—will make allocations of “Stand with Africa” funds to achieve the maximum leverage and effect and to ensure coordination among the on-the-ground partners.

As in the first phase of “Stand with Africa,” 100 percent of the funds raised will go to anti-hunger, peacemaking, and HIV and AIDS projects in Africa. As an emphasis within the ELCA World Hunger Appeal and Program, this campaign builds upon and extends the relief and development work in Africa that is funded by the ELCA World Hunger Appeal through the Division for Global Mission and the ELCA's ongoing work in advocacy and education through the Division for Church in Society, the Division for Congregational Ministries, and the Division for Global Mission. “Stand with Africa” does not encourage a shift in funding support, but rather additional ELCA action in response to the crisis in Africa. It also provides an effective way for the ELCA to move toward the \$25 million income goal for the ELCA World Hunger Appeal that was set by the 1999 Churchwide Assembly.

The action below was supported by the boards of the Division for Congregational Ministries, the Division for Church in Society, and the Division for Global Mission during their spring 2004 meetings.

Church Council Action:

WHEREAS, the ELCA has a long history of ministry with companion churches and partners in Africa, through which the gifts and strengths of the peoples of Africa and of this church are expressed; and

WHEREAS, the situation in Africa warrants a “second-mile” response from the ELCA because of three interrelated factors: (1) an increase in chronic hunger; (2) the devastating impact of the HIV-AIDS pandemic; and (3) conflict that has created an extraordinary number of refugees and displaced people; and

WHEREAS, companion churches in Africa and other partners in ministry are making a difference in the lives of people through health and prevention services, sustainable development activities, and efforts to promote reconciliation and peacemaking; and

WHEREAS, these companion churches and partners in ministry have requested increased help to be able to respond to these difficult circumstances; and

WHEREAS, the Division for Global Mission at its October 1999 board meeting called on the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to intensify efforts in the next decade to walk with companion churches and partner agencies in Africa, and Africa continues to be a major priority area for the Division for Global Mission; and

WHEREAS, the Division for Global Mission, the Division for Church in Society, and the Division for Congregational Ministries developed “Stand with Africa: A Campaign of Hope,” a three-year emphasis of the ELCA World Hunger Appeal and Program, The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod's World Relief, and Lutheran World Relief—the common agency of the ELCA and LCMS—to raise awareness, encourage advocacy for Africa, and increase the funds available to support new and expanded initiatives with companion churches and partner agencies; and

WHEREAS, companion churches and partners in ministry in Africa strongly affirmed the “Stand with Africa” campaign; and

WHEREAS, “Stand with Africa: A Campaign of Hope” was affirmed by the ELCA Conference of Bishops, Church Council, and 2001 Churchwide Assembly; and

WHEREAS, the congregations and synods of the ELCA have responded with enthusiasm to “Stand with Africa” and continue to plan activities in 2004 and beyond relating to this emphasis, sometimes in connection with their companion synod relationships in Africa; and

WHEREAS, “Stand with Africa” was an emphasis at the 2003 Youth Gatherings, and the board of the Lutheran Youth Organization will be continuing a “Stand with Africa” emphasis in the next triennium; and

WHEREAS, in 2003 the Lutheran World Federation has launched a Global HIV-AIDS Campaign and has strongly urged member church bodies to intensify their response to the HIV-AIDS pandemic through LWF and member churches; and

WHEREAS, the Division for Global Mission is providing a health care consultant on HIV-AIDS to assist companion

²The Lutheran World Federation, based in Switzerland, is a communion of 136 Lutheran churches in 76 countries that work together in relief and development as well as other areas of ministry.

churches as part of the Lutheran World Federation's HIV-AIDS initiative; and

WHEREAS, Lutheran World Relief's top program priorities in Africa are food security and a comprehensive response to the HIV-AIDS pandemic; and

WHEREAS, the current legislative situation presents an opportunity for growth in U.S. government commitment to deal with poverty and HIV-AIDS in Africa; and

WHEREAS, the "Stand with Africa" campaign has been an effective channel for giving, helping the ELCA to move toward the \$25 million goal set for the ELCA World Hunger Appeal by the 1999 Churchwide Assembly; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:

1. reaffirm the ELCA's commitment to continue to accompany companion churches and partner agencies in Africa, especially as they address the HIV-AIDS crisis, increases in chronic hunger, and the need for reconciliation and peacemaking;
2. express thanks to members of the ELCA, congregations, synods, and agencies and institutions for "standing with Africa" through increased giving, education, and advocacy over the past three years;
3. express thanks to companion churches, Lutheran World Relief, and the Lutheran World Federation for "walking with" the ELCA in this effort and for their leadership and service in addressing these issues;
4. affirm the continuation of "Stand with Africa: A Campaign of Hope" as a "second-mile" emphasis within the ELCA World Hunger Appeal and Program in order to raise awareness about Africa, encourage advocacy in support of Africa, and make available additional funding to enable coordinated and effective partnership activities in the three areas: the HIV-AIDS crisis, chronic hunger, and reconciliation and peacemaking;
5. continue to partner with The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod where possible and provide support for Lutheran World Relief, bilateral assistance to companion churches in Africa, and support for the Lutheran World Federation's Global HIV-AIDS Campaign through the "Stand with Africa" campaign;
6. call on members of the ELCA, congregations, synods, the churchwide organization, and related agencies and institutions to continue to support "Stand with Africa" as strong and active partners in this campaign of hope and to (1) learn more about Africa; (2) advocate

for justice, including special assistance in responding to the HIV-AIDS emergency in Africa and increased support for poverty-focused development; and (3) respond to urgent need through additional designated World Hunger "Stand with Africa" gifts, within the context of ongoing support for the ELCA World Hunger Appeal; and

7. request the presiding bishop of the ELCA to convey this expression of commitment and thanks to companion churches, Lutheran World Relief, and the Lutheran World Federation.

X. MESSAGE: "LIVING IN A TIME OF TERRORISM"

At its November 2003 meeting, the Program and Services Committee of the Church Council reviewed and discussed a preliminary draft of an ELCA Message on Terrorism. The final draft of the proposed message, "Living in a Time of Terrorism," was approved by the board of the Division for Church in Society for consideration by the Church Council at its April 2004 meeting.

At its October 2002 meeting, the division's board considered resolutions from the steering committees of the Commission for Women and the Commission for Multicultural Ministries requesting "the ELCA Church Council to direct the Division for Church in Society to develop a 'Message on Terrorism' to be issued in 2003." The board voted "to postpone the consideration of this action until the spring 2003 board meeting and request that the studies department come back to the board with a proposal at that time" (DS02.10.14).

"Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns" describes messages in the following way:

Messages are forms of communications which the Church Council adopts, and are thus distinctive from social statements, which are adopted only by the Churchwide Assembly. Messages are not the result of widespread deliberation in this church (as are social statements) but are intended primarily to encourage further discussion and action on specific current social issues among ELCA members. They are not new policy positions of the ELCA but build upon previously adopted social statements and social policy resolutions.

Messages address the contemporary situation in light of the prophetic and compassionate traditions of Scripture. They point to human suffering, grave injustice, pending danger, social perplexity, or hopeful developments and urge that evil be resisted, justice done, and commitment renewed.

Messages express the convictions of the church leadership that communicates them and who believe that their message should be heard in this church and beyond. They signal certain priority concerns that arise from this church's mission in the world. Messages are based upon

and are consistent with this church's social statements and social policy resolutions. Normally, no more than one message is considered in one meeting of the Church Council.

The Division for Church in Society and the Office of the Bishop shall consult with each other to insure proper coordination in the preparation and distribution of non-policy churchwide messages on social concerns (pages 20–21).

At its February 2003 meeting, the board of the Division for Church in Society received a report from the Department for Studies that recommended that the board call for a message on terrorism, citing "the crucial significance terrorism and efforts to combat it have in the present." The report noted that the social statement "For Peace in God's World" provided "a necessary policy basis for approaching terrorism." Subsequently, the board voted "to call upon the division to prepare a draft message on terrorism for consideration by the board at its meeting October 23–25, 2003" (DS03.02.9). A first draft of the message was reviewed by the board in October 2003.

A slightly revised first draft was then sent to reviewers. These reviewers included groups and individuals with whom the Department for Studies had consulted in preparing the draft: the board, the Church Council's Program and Services Committee, the Theology and Ethics Committee of the Conference of Bishops, division staff, and other reviewers. On November 14, 2003, the Program and Services Committee reviewed and commented on the draft. In light of these responses, a proposed draft was prepared. The board reviewed, revised, and approved the proposed message and recommended its adoption by the Church Council.

According to "Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns" (page 22): "the Church Council shall act upon the recommendations from the board of the Division for Church in Society, and adopt, modify, or reject the message."

The adopted message will be available on the ELCA Web site.

Church Council Action:

To adopt "Living in a Time of Terrorism" as a message of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

XI. AFFIRMATION OF THE ROAD MAP FOR PEACE

Church Council Action:

WHEREAS, in June of 2003 United States President George W. Bush pledged the active, determined leadership of the United States in support of the Road Map for Peace, which provides a framework for an end to all acts of violence as essential to building peace and negotiated steps to be taken by the Palestinian Authority and by the Israeli Government to help restore hope and make tangible progress toward

peace in the areas of Security, Palestinian Institution Building, Humanitarian Response, Civil Society, and Settlements; and,

WHEREAS, Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson and 30 other prominent national Jewish, Christian, and Muslim leaders wrote to President Bush on November 25, 2003, calling for continued U.S. leadership in support of the Road Map for Peace; and

WHEREAS, the Road Map for Peace was developed under the auspices of the United Nations, the European Union, Russia, and the United States; and

WHEREAS, President Bush has in recent days supported unilateral initiatives of Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon regarding key matters outstanding on the peace process and in so doing has potentially compromised the leadership role of the United States in the process of negotiation and reconciliation between the Israelis and Palestinians within the framework of the Road Map for Peace; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:

- 1. Express grave concern regarding recent unilateral initiatives being considered by Israel on key matters outstanding in the peace process;**
- 2. Affirm strongly the principle of a negotiated settlement within the context of international support as outlined in the Road Map for Peace; and**
- 3. Call upon President Bush to reconsider his recent support of these unilateral initiatives and to exercise determined leadership in the coming months within the context of the Road Map for Peace to press urgently for an end to all acts of violence as essential to building peace and for an immediate resumption of negotiations, including reciprocal, simultaneous steps by both sides, a specific timetable, and an effective monitoring system.**

XII. LIBERIA

The Lutheran Church in Liberia has asked the ELCA and other companion churches within the Lutheran World Federation for special assistance as Liberia attempts to rebuild in the wake of a 14-year civil war. In October 2003, mission personnel began to return to service in Liberia, as U.N. forces slowly established peace in Monrovia and beyond.

A major focus of the ELCA's participation in the rebuilding effort is Phebe Hospital, which was repeatedly damaged during the fighting. The Lutheran Church in Liberia and Phebe Hospital conducted assessments of the damage sustained over the past years of war and have shared those assessments at a church partner consultation held in Denmark in early March 2004. An initial resource

assessment was developed and reconstruction plans were prioritized.

In addition, the Lutheran World Federation will continue and expand its work with displaced people, helping them to return home and rebuild their lives and their communities.

Working in companionship through the ELCA World Hunger Program, the Division for Global Mission, Division for Congregational Ministries, and Division for Church in Society will be intensifying communication and coordination efforts with companion synods and other grass-roots networks interested in Liberia. The goal of this effort is to increase awareness of the situation in Liberia among ELCA members and encourage action, including advocacy with the federal government for assistance in the rebuilding of Liberia and giving by ELCA members to assist the church and companion agencies in Liberia to rebuild Phebe Hospital, help those displaced by the fighting, and undergird efforts at reconciliation. A new Web site (www.elca.org/liberia) will assist in this process.

The board of the Division for Global Mission at its March 2004 meeting commended a resolution to the Church Council for adoption.

Church Council Action:

To approve the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the combatants in the civil conflict in Liberia signed a peace accord on August 18, 2003, creating an opportunity for the people of the country to rebuild relationships, communities, and their future as a country;

WHEREAS, the ELCA and its predecessor bodies have accompanied the Lutheran Church in Liberia and Phebe Hospital in decades of ministry prior to the war and throughout the 14-year civil conflict;

WHEREAS, the interim transitional period of 2004–2005 provides an opportunity for the Lutheran Church in Liberia to contribute actively to trauma healing, reconciliation, and recovery processes within civil society and bring the witness of the church to this process;

WHEREAS, through the Lutheran World Federation, in partnership with the Lutheran Church in Liberia, those who have been displaced by the war will be assisted in returning to their communities, to rebuild local economies, and to increase food production;

WHEREAS, the ELCA joins ecumenical and interfaith partners in responding to the need for reconciliation and peacemaking efforts, including the Women in Peacemaking Network, the Council of Churches in Liberia, and the Liberian Interfaith Council;

WHEREAS, the ELCA is collaborating with European church partners (Lutheran Church in Bavaria, Danish Evangelical Mission, and Church of Sweden) and related agencies (Lutheran World Relief, DanMission, Church Development Service/Germany, and Norwegian Church Aid) to accompany the Lutheran Church and Phebe Hospital in the rebuilding of their ministry with people returning to their homes;

WHEREAS, the Division for Global Mission, working with World Hunger Program partner units (Division for

Church in Society, Division for Congregational Ministries, and Department for Communication) has launched a collaborative program of education, advocacy, and resource development to empower the ELCA's members to participate in the rebuilding of Liberia; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:

1. Expresses its deep appreciation to Liberians who are taking leadership in the reconstruction of their country: the Lutheran Church in Liberia, Phebe Hospital, Women in Peacemaking Network, the Council of Churches in Liberia, and the Liberian Interfaith Council;
2. Expresses its commitment to walk with the Lutheran Church in Liberia in this process, in partnership with European churches, relief and development agencies (including Lutheran World Relief), and the Lutheran World Federation; and
3. Calls on members, congregations, synods, and church-related agencies and institutions to:
 - a. Learn more about Liberia, particularly in light of the historical role of the U.S. in creating this nation, supporting its first government, and subsequent actions;
 - b. Make use of resources available through the special Liberia initiative of the ELCA (visit www.elca.org/liberia);
 - c. Monitor the peacemaking, reconciliation, and reconstruction processes and join the Division for Church in Society in advocating for U.S. policies and funding to advance the rehabilitation of Liberia, together with adequate U.N. support in this transitional period;
 - d. Contribute to the reconstruction of Liberia through ongoing mission-support and World Hunger giving, plus “second-mile” support through the “Stand with Africa” campaign (Phebe Hospital Reconstruction) and ELCA International Disaster Response (assistance to displaced people); and
 - e. Pray for the people and the church in Liberia in this time of transition.

XIII. SOCIAL POLICY RESOLUTION: “THE DONATION OF ORGANS, TISSUE, AND WHOLE BLOOD”

The Church Council at its April 16–18, 2004, meeting was asked to adopt an ELCA social policy resolution, “The Donation of Organs, Tissue, and Whole Blood.” This social policy resolution had been approved by the board of the Division for Church in Society and sent to the Church Council for its consideration.

The proposed social policy resolution comes in response to an action by the 2003 Churchwide Assembly. The assembly responded to a memorial from the Southwest California Synod, which asked the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to adopt the following resolution as its policy on organ and tissue donation and transplantation:

RESOLVED, that the Southwest California Synod memorialize the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to adopt the following as its policy on organ and tissue donation and transplantation:

1. Donation of organs and tissues is an appropriate means of contributing to the health and well-being of the human family; and
2. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
 - a. recognizes that the donation of renewable tissues (*e.g.*, bone marrow) and live organs (*e.g.*, a kidney) can be an expression of sacrificial love for a neighbor in need;
 - b. encourages its members to consider the possibility of organ and tissue donation and to communicate their wishes to family members, clergy people, physicians, and health care institutions;
 - c. encourages those willing to donate organs and tissues to make the necessary familial and legal arrangements for such donations, including the use of a signed donor card;
 - d. calls upon its pastors to acquaint themselves with the ethical and legal issues and clinical procedures involved in organ and tissue donations in order that they may counsel individuals and families considering the possibility of such donations; and
 - e. urges its pastors, congregations, synods, agencies, and institutions to sponsor educational programs on organ and tissue donation; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America call upon government to continue to enforce public policies that will encourage voluntary donations, discourage coercive donations, assure the efficient, equitable distribution of human organs and tissues for transplants, and disallow both the sale and purchase of human organs and tissues.

In response to this memorial, the 2003 Churchwide Assembly took the following action (CA03.06.44):

To commend the Southwest California Synod for reminding this church that organ and tissue donation can

be an expression of love for family members and neighbors;

To request that the Division for Church in Society develop a social policy resolution on this topic consistent with the teachings and social statements of this church; and

To request that the social policy resolution be brought to the April 2004 meeting of the ELCA Church Council for consideration and possible adoption by the council.

In its background to this proposed action, the Churchwide Assembly’s Memorials Committee observed that the Southwest California Synod memorial:

- stood in continuity with positions adopted by an ELCA predecessor church body. The social statement “Death and Dying” (Lutheran Church in America, 1982) stated that patients and their families have a responsibility to consider “the possibility of organ donation as a means of sharing life with others” (p. 7). In 1984 the Lutheran Church in America adopted a resolution on organ donation similar in language to the Southwest California Synod memorial.
- was consistent with the proposed social statement on health, healing, and health care, “Caring for Health: Our Shared Endeavor.”
- was timely in that the number of people willing to donate does not match the number of people who need organ and tissue transplants.
- did not speak of blood donation, yet what could be said in favor of organ and tissue donation also could be said in favor of blood donation.
- implicitly recognized the valuable contribution modern medicine provides for the human family, but was also alert to the dangers of coercion or injustice. In light of possible abuses, the memorial was concerned that the human dignity of all actors in the process of donation and transplantation must be respected.

At its November 2003 meeting, the Church Council voted (CC03.11.81a):

To receive the request of the Churchwide Assembly that a social policy resolution on organ and tissue donation be developed;

To refer the request to the Division for Church in Society, asking that the division develop a social policy resolution on this topic consistent with the teachings and social statements of this church; and

To request that the social policy resolution be brought to the April 2004 meeting of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for consideration and possible adoption by the council.

At its October 2003 meeting, the Division for Church in Society board reviewed and commented on a first draft of this social policy resolution. The Program and Services Committee of the Church Council reviewed the first draft at its November 2003 meeting.

The Division for Church in Society then prepared a second draft that was circulated for review and comments.

In light of these comments, a proposed social policy resolution was prepared. The board reviewed, revised, and approved the proposed message and recommended its adoption by the Church Council.

According to “Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns” (p. 17–18): “Social policy resolutions refer to actions, other than social statements, of the Churchwide Assembly or Church Council on matters of social concern.” Normally, they “shall rely upon or be consistent with the teachings and policy of social statements.” They are managed according to established rules and procedures.

The adopted text of the social policy resolution will be available on the ELCA Web site.

Church Council Action:

To adopt “The Donation of Organs, Tissue, and Whole Blood” as a social policy resolution of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

XIV. ELECTION TO BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE ELCA BOARD OF PENSIONS

Between meetings of the Churchwide Assembly, the Church Council has the responsibility of electing people to fill unexpired terms on churchwide boards, steering committees of churchwide commissions, and certain advisory committees.

Church Council Action:

1. **Board of Trustees of the ELCA Board of Pensions** Plan Participant [Term 2009] - *to fill resignation of Marcia B. Strahl, Chadwick, Ill. (5B)*

Pr. Kathleen O. Reed, Natick, Mass. (7B)

XV. SOCIAL MINISTRY ORGANIZATIONS ELECTIONS

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America serves as a corporate member of certain inter-Lutheran organizations and affiliated social ministry organizations. The role of corporate members includes the responsibility to elect representatives to the organization’s board of directors as prescribed in the organization’s governing documents. The relationship of this church to certain inter-Lutheran organizations and affiliated social ministry organizations is expressed through the Division for Church in Society.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America serves as a corporate member of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, Baltimore, Md., and of Lutheran Services in America, Baltimore, Md. The board of the Division for Church in Society, at its February 2004 meeting, forwarded to the Church Council the following

nominations for positions on the boards of these organizations.

Church Council Action:

To elect Ms. Edith M. Lohr and Ms. Grace El-Yateem to the board of directors of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service for regular terms in accord with the organization’s governing documents; and

To elect Mr. Chris Andersen to the board of directors of Lutheran Services in America for regular terms in accord with the organization’s governing documents.

XVI. 2007 CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY DATES AND SITE

Church Council Action:

To designate Chicago, Illinois—subject to satisfactory completion of negotiation in the judgment of the secretary of this church—as the site for the tenth Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, to be held on August 6-12, 2007.

XVII. UPDATE ON “FAITHFUL YET CHANGING”

At its November 2003 meeting, the ELCA Church Council requested (CC03.11.60) that the Executive Committee:

1. Plan and implement a period of consultation and study on the subject of governance of the churchwide organization; and
2. Prepare a report and recommendations to be considered by the Church Council no later than its November 2004 meeting, including any proposed changes to the governing documents of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

The Executive Committee at its December 2003 meeting reviewed suggestions made by members of the Administrative Team. The suggestions, included in the minutes of the meeting, formed the basis for the Executive Committee’s meeting January 9–10, 2004. The meeting, facilitated by Ms. Kathryn Sime, began with presentations by the Rev. Lowell G. Almen, secretary, on the history of governance in the ELCA, including the role of the Church Council in governance, and by the Rev. Charles S. Miller, executive for administration, on theories of nonprofit governance. Following the presentations, the committee discussed a series of questions posed by Ms. Sime:

1. What are the strengths and weaknesses of this church’s current governance model?
2. How does the governance model impact relationships and a sense of connectedness?

3. What guiding principles should be reflected in this church's governance structure?
- A commitment to representational principles, reflective of the diversity and experiences that exist in this church, should be retained.
 - Increased clarity and transparency in and about decision-making should be pursued.
 - Governance structure should be connected to, organized around, and reflective of this church's strategic directions and the commitments to implementation, regardless of what the structure of the organization might become.
 - Governance should be responsive, flexible, and accessible.
 - Governance should be effective and efficient.
 - Roles and responsibilities need to be clear.
 - Interdependent governance should be maintained.
 - The fundamental principle is that we are the church—not simply a corporation, but a corporation that is also God's church—focused on the discernment of the mission to which God calls us. Therefore this church engages in shared leadership and decision-making, being accountable to one another in community-making.
 - Commitment to the six principles of organization should be retained:
 1. Proclaim God's saving Gospel.
 2. Carry out the Great Commission.
 3. Serve in response to God's love to meet human needs.
 4. Worship God.
 5. Nurture members in faith.
 6. Manifest the unity given to the people of God.³

Following discussion of these questions, the Executive Committee defined the process, determined the time frame (January–April 2004), identified participants, and established the method. During this time frame, a survey instrument prepared by the Office of the Presiding Bishop in consultation with the Department for Research and Evaluation was distributed to the following groups: parish pastors (randomly selected); presidents of congregation councils (randomly selected); members of boards, steering committees, and advisory committees of churchwide units; boards of separately incorporated units; synodical vice presidents; members of Synod Councils; synodical bishops; the ELCA Planning Team; members of

the Church Council; former Church Council members and board and steering committee chairs; college and university presidents; and seminary presidents. Individual members of the ELCA were invited to respond through the ELCA Web site.

Information about the process has been communicated on the ELCA Web site and through a cover letter from Presiding Bishop Hanson that presents the governance and restructuring processes in a unified context. The cover letter was distributed with the survey instrument.

A subcommittee, composed of Mr. Grieg L. Anderson, Ms. Linda J. Brown, Mr. Kenneth W. Inskeep, Pr. Charles S. Miller, Ms. Myrna J. Sheie, and Mr. Allan E. Thomas, was named to coordinate the process.

At its April 2004 meeting, the Church Council received a summary and analysis for review and recommendations from the Executive Committee related to the next phase of the process.

Church Council Action:

To receive the report of the governance survey conducted by the Department for Research and Evaluation and discuss the primary governance issues that must be addressed and determine the spheres of inquiry in which these issues can be placed;

To request that the Administrative Team and a subcommittee of the Executive Committee previously named by Vice President Carlos Pena prepare for the May 12, 2004, conference call of the Executive Committee a listing of possible governance options for consideration by the Executive Committee;

To request that a draft survey instrument, distilled from these conversations, be developed for review by the Executive Committee as part of its June 9, 2004, conference call and that the survey instrument invite both qualitative and quantitative response to the options presented; and

To anticipate that the same diverse field of participants engaged in the first survey will be invited to participate in this second survey, the results of which are to be compiled by mid-July for review by the Executive Committee at its meeting August 3–4, 2004, in preparation for a report and recommendations to be circulated to the survey participants with a request for response by mid-October 2004, with a final report and recommendations to be prepared for presentation to the Church Council at its November 2004 meeting.

³ The full text of the "Statement of Purpose" is provided in churchwide constitutional provision 4.02. The same statement also is found in the *Constitution for Synods* (§S6.02.) and the *Model Constitution for Congregations* (*C4.02.).

**VIII. SEPARATION WALL IN
OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES**

Church Council Action:

RESOLVED, that the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:

- 1. affirm the recent statement of the Lutheran World Federation, “Break Down the Walls” and request the Secretary of the ELCA to convey this statement to all synods, along with Bishop Munib Younan’s and Dr. Tawfiq Nasser’s letters [attached];**
- 2. join with the Lutheran World Federation and the World Council of Churches in calling for an end to the wall’s construction;**
- 3. urge synods, in addition to highlighting these concerns at their synod assemblies, to find ways through prayer, through learning opportunities, through action, and through giving to support people in crisis in Palestine⁴ and respond to Bishop Younan’s request for advocacy (“No More Walls”), making use of resources available through the Division for Global Mission and the Division for Church in Society;**
- 4. encourage, as a model, joint visits of synod bishops with their members of Congress to the region to enable them to experience firsthand the perspective of our partners regarding the opportunities and obstacles to peace and the ministries of ELCJ, the LWF, and their partners;**
- 5. urge ELCA members to learn about the situation in Israel-Palestine and listen to the voices of Palestinians and Israelis through visits to the region in coordination with local partners;**
- 6. encourage relevant ELCA units to continue their collaboration with Jewish organizations that work in solidarity with the Palestinian people;**
- 7. reaffirm earlier ELCA actions (e.g., CA89.8.114 and CC02.04.02), which urged both Palestinian and Israeli commitments to self-determination and security and saw hope for peace in the acceptance of the provisions of U.N. Security Council resolutions that call for Israeli withdrawal from territories occupied as a result of the 1967 war, respect for and acknowledgment of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of every state in the area, and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries, free from threats or acts of force;**
- 8. encourage the development of an ELCA strategic plan for engagement in the Middle East; and**
- 9. request that the Division for Church in Society communicate this resolution to the President of the United States, the Secretary of State, the government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority and that the Division for Church in Society encourage ELCA members to communicate this resolution to their senators and members of Congress.**

⁴Giving to ELCA mission support and the ELCA World Hunger Appeal supports the ELCA’s ongoing work among Palestinians. Second-mile giving can be directed to International Disaster Response-Augusta Victoria Hospital or through DGM’s Level II projects that support the Lutheran Church in Palestine and its schools. Major gifts are directed to these ministries through the ELCA Foundation.