

Section 3 – Report of the National Bishop



Ambassadors for Christ: *In Mission for Others*

Grace and peace to you in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ!

“We are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us” (2 Cor 5:20).

I am looking forward to being with you as your synod meets in convention this year and it is my pleasure to share with you highlights of our mission and ministry from the National Office.

We have taken many significant steps within our church over the last two years. Your upcoming Synod Convention will address another step in our journey of faith. I am keenly aware that our commitment within the church to a common faithful journey can at times be challenging, even painful and difficult for some. It feeds my soul to hear from you (as I do on so many occasions) about how you are supporting one another on this journey, as hard or uncertain as it may be at times. Our mission and ministry grows stronger as we journey together, and that gives me great hope!

This year we introduced the second year of the ELCIC Praise Appeal – Ambassadors for Christ: *In Mission for Others*. I feel the theme for this year’s appeal is so fitting for this journey we have embarked on as a church.

At the National Office we live out our call to be Ambassadors for Christ: *In Mission for Others* through our work in five areas of focus identified by National Church Council. The following provides just a few highlights from our work, but hopefully this gives you a glimpse at how we carry out the mandate we receive from the church, a mandate carried out by staff, by committees, and by volunteers all serving to help us be a church *In Mission for Others*.

Effective Partnerships

One of the most important things I do as National Bishop is nurturing and maintaining the many partnerships we are blessed with through the ELCIC. Partnerships provide a multiplying effect to the mission and ministry we can do together.

- Our partnership with Canadian Lutheran World Relief continues to grow and strengthen. This is shown in the increased giving by ELCIC members towards this important and life-giving work.
- Our partnership with the Anglican Church of Canada continues to bear fruit. We celebrate the joint meetings of our executive councils, shared work among staff at the national level, and planning for joint conventions in 2013. We also honoured the 10th anniversary of full communion (Waterloo Declaration and Called to Common Mission).
- Our partnership with The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) is becoming increasingly important. The LWF is also facing resource challenges and looking for creative and strategic ways to accomplish its mission in partnership with all of its member churches and associated agencies. I have had the privilege of visiting member churches in Germany, Peru, and Ethiopia this past biennium. We have much to learn from each other and many gifts to share with each other. By working together, we are able to maximize our mission and ministry. For example,

did you know that LWF is the second largest NGO (non-governmental organization) working with refugees, helping 500,000 refugees around the world on a daily basis? We are part of that work and so much more!

- Our partnership with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America also continues to strengthen. We continue to live into our partnership in Global Mission. We are learning new ways to collaborate as members of the North American Region of the LWF. And with our Anglican counterparts, we are looking for opportunities of doing work together across the borders.
- And we continue to grow into new partnerships! With the action LWF took at its 2009 Assembly in Stuttgart in issuing an apology to the Mennonite World Council for the persecution of Anabaptists during the Reformation, we have begun some work with Mennonite Church Canada, including the joint preparation of *Healing Memories, Reconciling in Christ: A Lutheran- Mennonite Study Guide for Congregations*. Senior staff of our two offices met together in December.
- The National Church also works in partnership with the synods and these relationships have been strengthening as well. Over the past two years it has been a joy to visit Synod Councils, Synod Conventions/Assemblies and even a few congregations! I enjoy the partnership and friendship of our Synod Bishops who struggle with challenges but also experience signs of hope in their own work. Whether we are gathered in person as the Conference of Bishops or working together via email, our collegiality and friendship help us as we strive to work together as Ambassadors for Christ: *In Mission for Others*.

Compassionate Justice

As a church together, and in my role as National Bishop, the ELCIC has been an active witness through its public presence, in communication with the Canadian Government, and in the media. It is important for us as a church to speak out and lend our voice on issues that are important to us. Some highlights of this work include:

- In October 2011, I wrote to the Government of Canada to urge them to "work collaboratively with indigenous peoples to fully and effectively implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples." This was at the request of the National Convention, motion NC-2011-22.
- In April 2011, I wrote to the Chief Electoral Officer, and to party leaders, asking for a review of the practices regarding advance-polling procedures, including the fact that advance polls were open on Good Friday.
- Also in April 2011, I was in communication with the Parole Board of Canada (PBC) about the large increase to the fee being charged to ex-offenders who apply for a pardon. The formal complaint process is a legal protocol, promised to Canadians by law. The ELCIC received much support from the Church Council on Justice and Corrections (CCJC) in this process. Based on several complaints, the PBC set up an Independent Advisory Panel, whose recommendations will be presented to the Minister of Public Safety for consideration and will form part of the package the Minister will table in Parliament.
- In June 2011, I was in Ottawa as a church leader to participate in a day of events encouraging Canada to implement the UN Declaration of Rights of Indigenous Peoples. I spoke at a press conference in the Centre Block and later addressed participants and some Members of Parliament on the ground of Parliament Hill. The event was organized by KAIROS.
- Last year we issued three domestic disaster appeals during the summer (in partnership with CLWR) for: wildfires in Alberta, flooding in Manitoba, and flooding in Saskatchewan with funds being used to support local relief efforts. Because of your generous giving, in

Alberta, \$34,498 is supporting the Canadian Red Cross, Salvation Army, and congregational relief programming by St. Peter's Ecumenical/Faith Lutheran, Slave Lake; in Manitoba, \$12,576 is supporting the Salvation Army; and in Saskatchewan, \$5,579 is supporting the Canadian Red Cross and Salvation Army.

Diverse Faces

Indigenous rights are an ongoing priority for our church. We work primary through KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives in this area. Their current public campaign is entitled "Truth, Reconciliation and Equity," and will continue for few more years. In October 2011, KAIROS, in partnership with First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada, issued "Honouring the Children," a "shadow report" sent to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child. It focuses on the plight of First Nations, Inuit and Métis Children in the areas of education, welfare and health care.

Last year in National Convention our church adopted a motion regarding right relationships with Indigenous peoples. We have provided each congregation with a copy of the resource *In Peace and Friendship: A New Relationship with Aboriginal Peoples*. I encourage you to do all you can in your local setting to work towards right relationships with the First Nations in your community.

Using compassionate justice funds, the ELCIC is providing \$2000 for each synod to support a diverse faces training opportunity. Synod leaders are developing plans for training, which will happen before June 2012.

Focused Framework

This is an important year in the life of our church. Throughout 2012, all five synods will be meeting in convention and considering next steps in the structural renewal process. Last summer delegates at the National Convention approved in principle the outline for structural renewal. Now we will be seeing specifics in terms of implications for synods and for congregations. While the process of restructuring began by being finance driven, we have let the Holy Spirit direct us to focusing more on being driven by mission. The proposed changes create a structure to encourage and support mission at the congregational and area levels, providing opportunities for new ways of working together to reach out in witness and service to our local communities.

Spirited Discipleship

Structural renewal, even if it's Spirit-led and mission-driven will not make a difference in our church unless it goes hand in hand with spiritual renewal. The call to deeper discipleship as we pray, read, worship, study, serve, give and tell has to be answered alongside the call to structural renewal. These two strands must be interwoven if we are to grow as Ambassadors for Christ: *In Mission for Others*.

If you have heard me speak or read my column in Canada Lutheran or other publications over the last two years, you will know that I am very passionate about this Call to Spiritual Renewal. Resources were introduced at the 2011 National Convention and are available online (www.elcic.ca/csr). This year I hope you will consider ways to further your involvement in this initiative, including how you might share the Call to Spiritual Renewal with your friends, family, congregation and community.

We are Ambassadors for Christ as we answer the Call to Spiritual Renewal. We are Ambassadors for Christ as we are involved in mission with our Companion Synods and partner churches. We are

Ambassadors for Christ as we work towards a right relationship with Indigenous peoples. We are Ambassadors for Christ as we respond as a part of the Lutheran World Federation to train leaders, strengthen churches, and respond to human need around the world. Your financial support of the National Church through the ELCIC Praise Appeal helps us to accomplish all these things. I encourage you and your congregation will consider ways you can support this year's Praise Appeal (www.elcic.ca/praiseappeal).

I am excited for the future of our church because I know in the end it is God's church. We do not know for sure how things are going to turn out but we know that with God they will be good. As Ambassadors for Christ: *In Mission for Others*, we know that with God we will be blessed and that with God's help we will be a blessing to others.

God bless you all as embark on this exciting journey together!

I look forward to seeing you all soon at your upcoming Synod conventions.

Yours in Christ,

The Rev. Susan C. Johnson
National Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada



Canadian Lutheran World Relief

Report to the Eastern Synod Assembly

July 2012

As the executive director of Canadian Lutheran World Relief, it is my pleasure to bring greetings to people of the Eastern Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) as you gather for your Synod Assembly.

Now in its 66th year of service, CLWR's mission and vision remain focused on challenging the causes of human poverty and suffering in order that we might move closer to a world where people live in peace and dignity, united in diversity, and are empowered to achieve their universal rights to basic needs and quality of life. This report highlights work carried out towards this mission and vision over the past two years.

Rural-based community development in Bolivia, Peru, Mozambique, Zambia and India remains a key component of CLWR's efforts. In the past two years, programming in these countries has assisted thousands of households. Improvements to water supply and sanitation systems and the provision of seeds, livestock and tools are some of the tangible things being done. Less tangible, but equally important, are efforts to educate farmers in sustainable agricultural practices and to train community leaders to facilitate more just and democratic governance of their communities. These and other initiatives are part of an ongoing five-year master plan supported by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). The entire five-year program has a budget of \$12 million, of which 25 percent comes from CLWR and the balance from CIDA.

In addition to CIDA-supported community development programming, CLWR continues to support other important work such as services provided by Augusta Victoria Hospital and Vocational Training Centre to citizens of East Jerusalem and the West Bank.

The We Care donated commodities program continues to receive tremendous support from congregations across the country. During the last two years, eight overseas shipments were completed to places such as Mauritania, East Jerusalem, Tanzania, Nicaragua and Haiti. Collectively, they included 22,500 We Care kits, 10,500 baby bundles and just over 35,000 quilts and blankets. Through a newly formed partnership with International Hope, recent shipments have also included surplus medical supplies and equipment.

CLWR's International Volunteer Service (IVS) program provides opportunities for members of our constituency to offer the gift of time and talent, and for CLWR to support its overseas partners. While the IVS program operates with limited funding, it has been possible to support a number of placements over the past two years. In November 2010, Heather Pryse began a 10-month placement with the Lutheran World Federation-Ethiopia as Assistant for Program Operations. Based in Addis Ababa, Heather travelled throughout the country visiting projects funded by CLWR. Graham and Jannaya Jensen, a young couple from Saskatchewan, are in the midst of a seven-month volunteer placement in Lima, Peru, where they are providing English language lessons and IT support for several of CLWR's Latin American partners.

CLWR has also been fortunate this past year to have Kristy Bergman serving as an intern at its Winnipeg office. Kristy has primarily supported the Program team. Her responsibilities have

included working alongside the CLWR staff to develop resources on refugee sponsorship for congregations. Kristy has also been relating, on behalf of CLWR, to Interfaith Action for Peace in Africa (IFAPA), a unique African-based network that brings together people of different faiths to pursue peace through grassroots development projects.

Serving those whose lives have been disrupted by natural disasters or civil conflict has also been a prominent component of CLWR's work in recent years. Beginning with the Haiti earthquake in January 2010, there has been what seems an endless stream of humanitarian crises, including severe flooding in Colombia and Pakistan, the damaging quake and tsunami in Japan and, more recently, the humanitarian crisis in the horn of Africa, resulting from years of drought and conflict. Lutherans in Canada have responded with generous hearts to these situations. Over the past two years, emergency appeals issued by CLWR have raised over \$2.3 million. These funds have been used to support emergency aid and redevelopment projects being carried out by The Lutheran World Federation and other partner agencies within the Act Alliance.

Closer to home, CLWR also served as a conduit for Canadians to provide emergency support for those affected by natural disasters occurring within Canada. In 2011, appeals were issued in the aftermath of the wildfires that destroyed much of Slave Lake, Alberta, and the severe overland flooding experienced in southeastern Saskatchewan and southern Manitoba.


Another way Lutheran congregations and groups continue to respond to the call to be in mission is through refugee sponsorship. Since April 2010, their efforts have enabled 93 refugees from places such as Afghanistan, Colombia, Eritrea and Sudan to begin new lives in Canada. Moreover, CLWR has assisted congregations and groups wishing to sponsor refugees to complete a further 379 applications through its status as an agreement holder in the federal Private Sponsorship of Refugee Program. CLWR provides support for congregations embarking on a refugee sponsorship through its satellite offices in Vancouver and Toronto. I invite you to make contact with them to find out how you can become involved in this important ministry.

This report has presented some highlights of the ongoing work of CLWR. To learn more about what CLWR is doing to make a difference in people's lives, please visit our website at www.clwr.org.

Lastly, I want to recognize two members of your Synod who are currently serving on the CLWR Board of Directors: Rev. Dr. Mark Harris (President) and Mr. David Schulze. Their willingness to serve in this capacity along with their valuable contributions to the guidance and governance of CLWR have been much appreciated.

On behalf of the thousands of people across the globe we serve, I want to conclude by expressing my sincere appreciation and that of the CLWR staff for your ongoing commitment and support for the work of CLWR.

Respectfully submitted



Robert Granke
Executive Director