



**NATIONAL CHURCH COUNCIL
STRATEGIC PLAN 2008-2013**

**Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada
March 2009**

**The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada
National Church Council
Strategic Plan 2008-2013**

Table of Contents

1.0	Strategic Context	3
	1.1 Historical Context	3
	1.2 Environmental Context	3
2.0	Values	4
3.0	Those Whom We Serve, Those Who Serve With Us	4
	Those Affected by Our Service	4
	3.1 Those Whom We Serve	
	3.2 Those Who Serve With Us	
	3.3 Those Affected by Our Service	5
4.0	Services	5
	4.1 Spirited Discipleship	
	4.2 Diverse Faces	
	4.3 Compassionate Justice	
	4.4 Focused Framework	
	4.5 Effective Partnership	
5.0	Places	6
6.0	Vision	6
7.0	Mission	7
8.0	Priorities	7
9.0	Strategic Goals for Service	7
	9.1 Strategic Goals for Service 4.1 Spirited Discipleship	
	4.1.1 Model spirited discipleship	
	4.1.2 Foster a sense of pride in the work of the ELCIC	
	4.1.3 Foster a spirit of joyful giving	
	4.1.4 Create a climate of faith sharing	
	4.1.5 Strengthen the sense of partnership and collegiality with all levels of the church	
	9.2 Strategic Goals for Service 4.2 Diverse Faces	8
	4.2.1 Foster a climate of welcome and hospitality within this church	
	4.2.2 Encourage this church to reflect the diversity of Canadian society	
	9.3 Strategic Goals for Service 4.3 Compassionate Justice	
	4.3.1 Strive to be a prophetic public voice	
	4.3.2 Reclaim compassionate justice as a Biblical imperative and key to our Lutheran identity	
	9.4 Strategic Goals for Service 4.4 Focused Framework	
	4.4.1 Practice responsible stewardship of our finances, time and personnel	
	9.5 Strategic Goals for Service 4.5 Effective Partnership	
	4.5.1 Work together with our partners both within the Lutheran communion and ecumenically so that our work <i>In Mission for Others</i> is multiplied	
10.0	Critical Success Factors	9

1.0 Strategic Context

1.1 Historical Context

Our denominational identity dates from the Lutheran Reformation, but we have always considered ourselves to be part of the continuity of catholic history. We hold to the essentials of apostolic tradition, Word and Sacrament, but consider church governance, ritual forms and orders of ministry to be discretionary.

Remaining in conversation and communion with other churches is essential to our self-understanding as catholic Christians. Such communication occurs through bilateral initiatives, full-communion agreements and membership in ecumenical councils and agencies.

The ELCIC has come about as a result of multiple mergers of independent Canadian and United States (US) church bodies and has, in the process, attempted to combine church polities and traditions from a broad initial spectrum. These multiple polities and changes in historical conditions have challenged this church's sense of internal unity and external identity. Geographic regionalism creates further tensions.

The ELCIC was incorporated by an act of the Parliament of Canada in 1986.

The ELCIC has been able to make a variety of theological responses and changes to its practices in order to address its particular mission in Canada and to respond to the plurality of needs within its membership. Adaptation, compromise and accommodation have accompanied communion of the baptized, ordination of women, and the Office of Bishop. In addition, it has made a variety of responses to socio-political matters.

1.2 Environmental Context

The place of the church and religion in general has undergone a dramatic shift in relation to politics and culture. Christianity is no longer a definitive voice in Canadian society and finds itself to be seen as simply one of a variety of faiths and ideologies. Materialism, individualism and lifestyle demands impact the way in which Canadians view the importance of the church. An expressed interest in spiritual matters remains part of the Canadian makeup, but the church, as institution, is of declining interest to many.

An erosion of trust in public leadership along with political and ideological polarization of the church's membership makes it difficult to present a single front on some issues. At the same time, the church's theology of ethics and justice is confronted with complex domestic and international issues.

The ethnicity of the original Lutheran immigrants to Canada was once a defining aspect of the church's identity, but has waned due to the multicultural and regional evolution of the nation. The church, within the nation, is cosmopolitan in some areas, parochial in others.

The Canadian church, in its desire for autonomy, was prepared to accept loss of financial support from the US parent churches. This reduction in income has led the church to adopt an infrastructure appropriate to its economies of scale.

Although almost half of all ELCIC congregations are located in centres with populations under 25,000, 80% of the general population lives in larger urban areas. (*Millennium Study of Leadership Needs*, p. 219)

2.0 Values

The scriptures, as the highest authority in this church, are understood as the traditional repository of the gospel. Lutheran doctrine and practice constitute the ELCIC's highest values. The central authority of the gospel, expressed in the doctrine of justification by grace through faith, is the core of its proclamation and the spirit of its practice. This doctrinal position is preserved in the writings of the Lutheran Confessions and forms the basis for proclamation and sacramental practice. Lutheran tradition further values theological education for ordained and lay members, rational theological discourse and a healthy balance between the gospel of grace and the civil use of the law.

In order that we might remain in conversation and communion with other churches, we understand ecumenical work to be intrinsic to this church's self-identity.

The ELCIC's structure is constitutionally defined and characterized by clarity of definition between the roles of congregations, synods and the National Church. Decision-making occurs in a representative parliamentary manner with a high degree of accountability to the constituency. Diversity of experience and opinion is viewed in a positive light so that the church's processes are designed to be inclusive and receptive.

3.0 Those whom we serve, those who serve with us those affected by our service.

3.1 Those whom we serve

The National Church Council (NCC) serves:

1. Within the ELCIC,
 - Synods
 - Rostered Ministers
 - Conference of Bishops
 - Program Committees
2. Beyond the ELCIC, other partner churches and agencies with which it has agreements for financial aid and provision of personnel.

3.2 Those who serve with us

The National Church Council works in partnership with church bodies, councils of churches and parachurch agencies to implement its strategic plans.

Church Bodies

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)
 Anglican Church of Canada (ACC)
 Lutheran World Federation Partner Churches

Councils of Churches

Lutheran Council in Canada (LCIC)
 Lutheran World Federation (LWF)
 Canadian Council of Churches (CCC)
 World Council of Churches (WCC)

Agencies

Canadian Lutheran World Relief (CLWR)
 Evangelical Lutheran Women Inc. (ELW)
 KAIROS Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives (KAIROS)

3.3 Those affected by our service

In addition to those who benefit directly from the service of National Church Council, there exists a number of others who experience an indirect effect of NCC's decisions.

4.0 Strategic Directions and Goals for Service**4.1 Spirited Discipleship**

1. Model spirited discipleship
2. Foster a sense of pride in the work of the ELCIC
3. Foster a spirit of joyful giving
4. Create a climate of faith sharing
5. Strengthen the sense of partnership and collegiality with all levels of this church

4.2 Diverse Faces

1. Foster a climate of welcome and hospitality within this church
2. Encourage this church to reflect the diversity of Canadian society

4.3 Compassionate Justice

1. Strive to be a prophetic public voice and actively address social, environmental and justice issues locally, nationally and internationally, working cooperatively wherever possible.
2. Reclaim compassionate justice as a Biblical imperative and key to our Lutheran identity

4.4 Focused Framework

1. Practice responsible stewardship of our finances, time and personnel

4.5 Effective Partnership

1. Work together with our partners both within the Lutheran communion and ecumenically so that our work *In Mission for Others* is multiplied.

5.0 Places

The National Church Council implements its strategic plans in three areas both internal and external to the territory of the ELCIC. Internally, the five geographical synods of the ELCIC is the area most often and most directly impacted. Externally, the NCC works mainly with member churches of the Lutheran World Federation, primarily through the Mission in the World program.

ELCIC Mission in the World

Seven partner church relationships provide the foundation and focus for the Mission in the World programs. Five of the seven partner churches are twinned with ELCIC Synods in the Companion Synod Program to facilitate further engagement in the world mission by synods, congregations and individual members.

Mission in the World Partner Churches

Salvadoran Lutheran Synod
 Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL)
 Peruvian Evangelical Lutheran Church (ILEP)
 United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Argentina and Uruguay (IELU)
 Evangelical Lutheran Church of Guyana (ELCG)
 Evangelical Lutheran Church of Colombia (IELCO)
 Evangelical Lutheran Church of Cameroon (EELC)

Companion Synod Program relationships

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Guyana and Eastern Synod
 Evangelical Lutheran Church of Colombia and ABT
 Evangelical Lutheran church of Cameroon and MNO
 Peruvian Evangelical Lutheran Church and BC Synod
 United Evangelical Lutheran Church, Argentina and Uruguay and SK Synod

Special Partnership Agreements, clergy supply:

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland
 The Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD)
 The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Iceland

6.0 Vision

To be a church in mission for others.

7.0 Mission

“For the benefit of synods, congregations, and rostered ministers, the broader church and the world, the National Church Council seeks to nurture and uphold doctrinal integrity, and enable mutual participation with our ecumenical and other Lutheran partners.”

8.0 Priorities

Priority Allocation of Services

% of Staff Time

% of Finances

Spirited Discipleship

Diverse Faces

Compassionate Justice

Focused Framework

Effective Partnership

Infrastructure Costs

% of Staff time

% of Finances

9.0 Strategies for Service

Strategic Goals require SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time Limited) actions in which the NCC engages in order to ensure that it is continuing to proceed in the Strategic Directions it has set for itself.

9.1 Strategic Goals for Service

4.1.1 Model spirited discipleship

- a) National Bishop to model spirited discipleship through things like the walk of witness, video messages on youtube etc.
- b) Develop a communication strategy for telling stories that model spirited discipleship
- c) Ensure spirited discipleship is modelled at conventions, NCC, committee and task force meetings

4.1.2 Foster a sense of pride in the work of the ELCIC

- a) Develop a communication strategy as per above
- b) Building a public profile as part of a communication strategy
- c) Build team in the National Office

4.1.3 Foster a spirit of joyful giving

- a. **Resource Generation Task Force** to supply actions

4.1.4 Create a climate of faith sharing

- a) Encourage leaders of this church to model faith sharing
- b) Create opportunities to practice faith sharing
- c) Participate in the ELCA Book of Faith initiative

- d) Continue the work of the Human Sexuality Task Force

4.1.5 Strengthen the sense of partnership and collegiality with all levels of the church

9.2 Strategic Goals for Service 4.2 Diverse Faces

4.2.1 Foster a climate of welcome and hospitality within this church

- a) Consider a program of “anti-racism” training–NCC, Staff, committees etc
- b) Consult with special interest conferences regarding suggestions for this strategy
- c) Think about how we host and engage visitors to the National Office and to National Church Events

4.2.2. Encourage this church to reflect the diversity of Canadian society

- a) Reach out to aboriginal community
- b) Participate in Partners in Mission and Ecojustice Committee and Aboriginal Council of Indigenous Peoples of the ACC
- c) Participate in KAIROS
- d) Create policies that encourage diversity without tokenism for hiring, nominations, appointments
- e) Select stories and images that reflect diversity for use in our communications
- f) Remove barriers to service to and through this church to all members where possible

9.3 Strategic Goals for Service 4.3 Compassionate Justice

4.3.1 Strive to be a prophetic public voice and actively address social, environmental and justice issues locally, nationally and internationally, working cooperatively wherever possible.

- a. Work on the following issues with the identified partners
 - i. Relief and development work–CLWR
 - i. Immigration and refugee work–CLWR
 - ii. Carbon Sabbath/Green Church–KAIROS, ACC
 - iii. Tar sands (mining, aboriginal)–KAIROS, ACC
 - iv. International debt–LWF
 - v. HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis–LWF
 - vi. Human rights–LWF
 - vii. Poverty reduction (MDG, homelessness)–ACC
- b. Review policies on writing to government with ACC, CCC and KAIROS

4.3.2 Reclaim compassionate justice as a Biblical imperative and key to our Lutheran identity

- a. Develop NCC policy resolutions consistent with this

9.4 Strategic Goals for Service 4.4 Focused Framework

4.4.1. Practice responsible stewardship of our finances, time and personnel

- a) Operate within a balanced budget
- b) Review existing work for efficiencies
- c) Develop policies to help streamline operations
- d) Review constitutional and organizational structures

9.5 Strategic Goals for Service 4.5 Effective Partnership

4.5.1. Work together with our partners both within the Lutheran communion and ecumenically so that our work *In Mission for Others* is multiplied.

- a) Ask “do we need to do this alone?”
- b) Work towards joint programming (including finances, staffing) in selected areas with ACC, ELCA, CLWR
- c) Review existing partnerships, both within and outside of this church, to make sure they are effective and sustainable

10.0 Critical Success Factors

The following factors are critical for National Church Council to achieve its vision and mission successfully. Identifying the critical success factors allows the NCC to monitor the bishop’s management of risk without becoming directly involved in management. We must:

1. ensure that our values are the foundation on which we base our service.
2. ensure that planning, development and provision of programs are consistent with the priorities of this strategic plan.
3. ensure continual organizational development at the governance and management level.
4. generate financial resources to sustain and extend our ministry and mission.
5. listen faithfully to the needs of our constituencies and the wider church as expressed by the ELCIC and ecumenical partners.
6. sustain our ecumenical relationships.
7. challenge synods to share in fulfilling the mission of the ELCIC.
8. evaluate the management of financial, staff and volunteer resources.
9. measure the progress of this Strategic Plan in accordance with the *National Church Council Governance Manual*.