

Review of the Multicultural Ministries Program Unit

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the Multicultural Ministries Program Unit (MM) in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) is to guide and assist this church in becoming multicultural and reaching the goal of full partnership and participation of African Descent, Arab and Middle Eastern, Asian and Pacific Islander, Latino, and American Indian and Alaskan Native people in church and society.¹ To this end the program unit has developed a strategic plan which reflects its priorities for 2007 to 2009 within the context of its constitutional mandate.²

The review of MM will include a short analysis of the progress of this church with regard to the involvement of people from the five ethnic communities, noted above (referred to throughout this reports as the ethnic communities). The primary focus of the review will be MM's progress toward achieving the goals and objectives it set for itself in its current strategic plan. This aspect of the review will be based on interviews and survey work with selected individuals and constituencies of the unit as well as the annual reports of congregations to the Office of the Secretary of the ELCA and the leadership roster of the ELCA.

BACKGROUND

As of December 2007, 20 years after this church set for itself a membership goal of at least 10 percent persons of color and/or primary language other than English, people from the ethnic communities make up three percent of the baptized membership of the ELCA.³ (See Table 1.)

¹ Multicultural Ministries Strategic Plan for 2007-2009.

² The section of the ELCA Constitution addressing MM is attached as Appendix 1.

³ The numbers presented in this report on the people of color or primary language other than English who are baptized members of the ELCA are based on the annual reports filed by congregations. These reports are compiled by the Office of the Secretary of the ELCA. The categories used for the collection of data reflect the guidance of Multicultural Ministries of the ELCA. The categories also take into account those used by the United States Census Bureau so that it is possible to make comparisons to the population of the United States as a whole. The reports are completed by an individual in the congregation. Most frequently this person is the pastor of the congregation. These individuals are asked to report the number of persons in each category. In 1988, approximately 360,000 baptized members were not categorized. In 1990, about 70,000 were not categorized. In 2000, about 7,000.

Table 1: Number and Percent of Persons of Color or Primary Language Other Than English in the ELCA as of December 2007

Group	Number	Percent
African American/Black	52,450	1.12%
American Indian/Alaska Native	6,896	0.15%
Arab/Middle Eastern	2,118	0.05%
Asian/Pacific Islander	22,163	0.47%
Latino/Hispanic	39,647	0.84%
Multiethnic	15,436	0.33%
Other	11,426	0.24%
Subtotal	150,136	3.20%
White	4,546,944	96.80%
Total	4,697,080	100.00%

People from the ethnic communities make up about 35 percent of the population of the United States. Figure 1 shows the comparison of the membership of the ELCA with the U.S. population in 2007.⁴

There has been little numerical movement toward the goal since the last time this analysis was conducted in 2005. In the past nine years, the total membership of the ELCA has gradually decreased while the overall ethnic membership of the ELCA has increased slightly. However, the proportion of the overall ethnic membership in the ELCA has virtually remained the same in the past two years and increased by half of a percent in the past eight years.

Table 2 presents the trends for the ELCA from 1990 to 2007. There was slight growth in most of the communities, and very slow growth in the overall ethnic proportion of membership in the ELCA. Even though the African Descent communities makes up the largest community in the ELCA, they still comprise only one percent of the total membership of the church. In terms of overall numerical growth, the Latino community has grown the most. At the same time, between 2000 and 2007 there was a slight decline in the overall number of American Indians or Alaska Natives and Asians or Pacific Islanders in the ELCA.

⁴ Source: 2007 Annual Congregational Reports, ELCA, and Claritas, Inc.

Figure 1: The Ethnicity of the Baptized Membership of the ELCA Compared to the U.S. Population

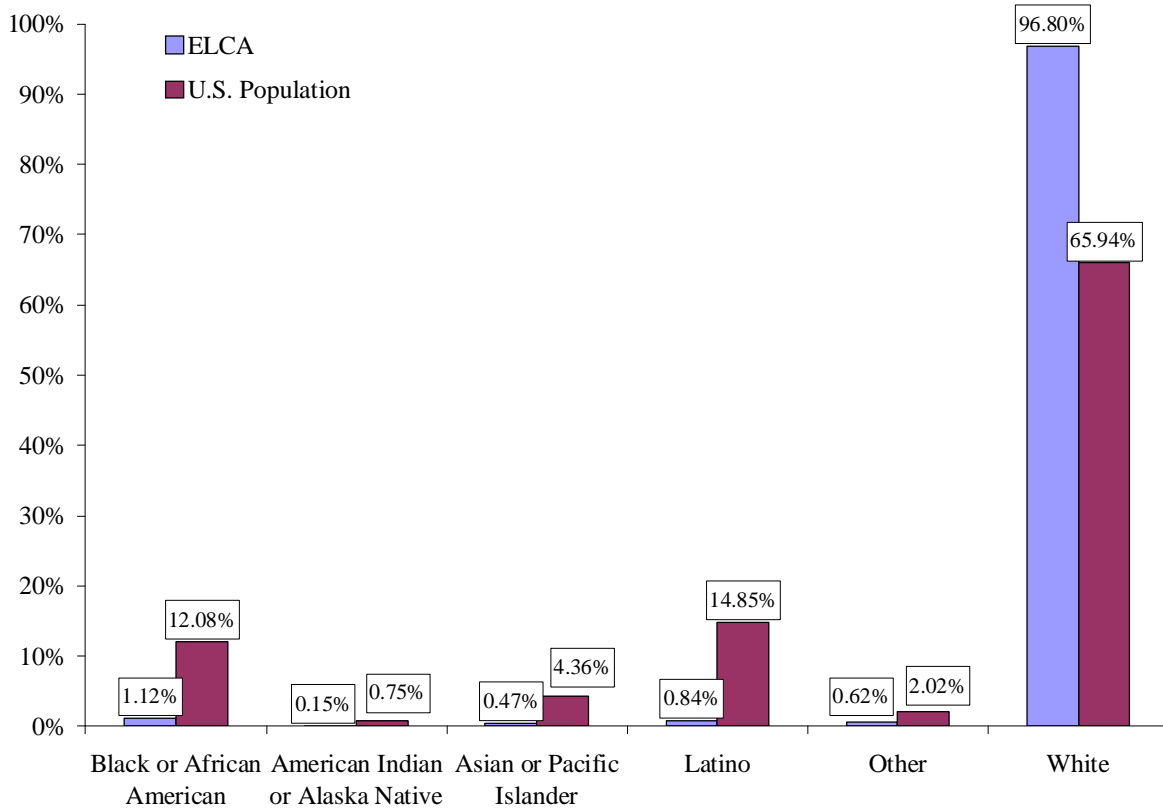
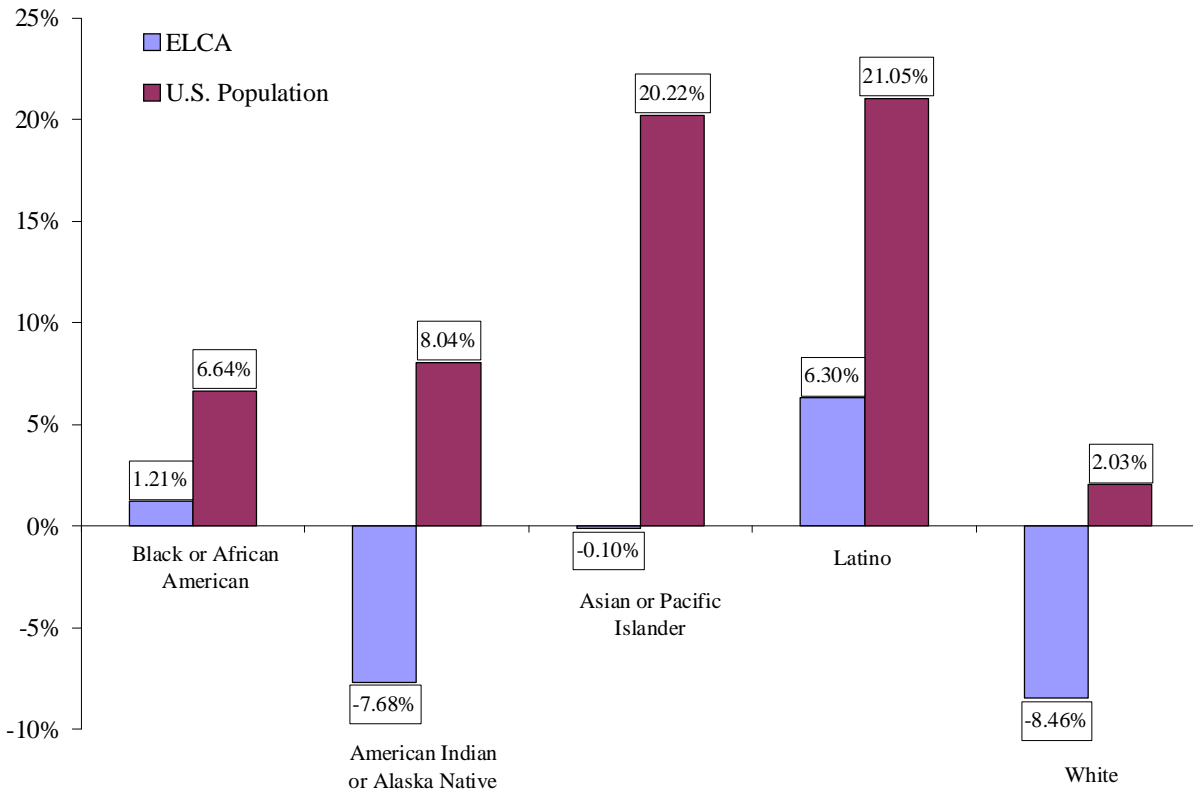


Table 2: Number of People of Color or Language Other Than English in the ELCA in 1990, 1995, 2000, and 2007

	1990	1995	2000	2007	Proportion in . . .		
					1990	2000	2007
African American/Black	50,336	49,460	52,265	52,450	0.96%	1.02%	1.12%
American Indian/Alaska Native	5,833	6,912	7,437	6,896	0.11%	0.15%	0.15%
Arab/Middle Eastern				2,118			0.05%
Asian/Pacific Islander	20,547	22,007	22,225	22,163	0.39%	0.43%	0.47%
Latino/Hispanic	23,299	28,118	37,404	39,647	0.44%	0.73%	0.84%
Multiethnic				15,436			0.33%
Other	3,700	3,926	10,823	11,426	0.07%	0.21%	0.24%
Subtotal	103,715	110,423	130,154	150,136	1.98%	2.55%	3.20%
White	5,137,024	5,080,066	4,980,777	4,546,944	98.02%	97.45%	96.80%
Total	5,240,739	5,190,489	5,110,931	4,697,080	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Figure 3 presents the change in the membership of the ELCA by group compared to the U.S. population from 2000 to 2007.

Figure 3: Change in the Membership of the ELCA by Group Compared to the U.S. Population from 2000 to 2007



The total number of ordained clergy in the ELCA has gradually decreased over the past nine years. Table 3 presents the ethnicity of active rostered leaders in the ELCA in 2000 and 2008. Even though the number of ordained clergy who come from one of the ethnic communities has increased by approximately 32 percent over the past nine years, the number continues to comprise less than 5 percent of all clergy in the ELCA. Only among the deaconesses is the proportion of people from the ethnic communities close to 10 percent, and there are no diaconal ministers who are from the ethnic communities.

Table 3: Race/Ethnicity of Active Rostered Leaders in the ELCA in 2000 and 2008

	Ordained Clergy		Associate in Ministry		Deaconess		Diaconal Minister	
	2000	2008	2000	2008	2000	2008	2000	2008
African American/Black	144	197	4	2	2	2	0	0
American Indian/Alaska Native	25	23	2	2	0	0	1	0
Arab/Middle Eastern	5	7	0	0	0	0	0	0
Asian/Pacific Islander	86	118	1	1	0	0	0	0
Latino/Hispanic	119	150	1	4	0	1	0	0
Subtotal	375	495	8	9	2	3	1	0
White	11,723	10,551	734	657	31	32	29	139
Total	12,098	11,046	742	666	33	35	30	139
Percent Nonwhite	3.10%	4.48%	1.10%	1.35%	6.10%	8.57%	3.30%	0.00%

CONTACT WITH MM

We wanted to know the level of direct contact with MM among the synod bishops (or their staff) and the ethnic-ministry pastors. The majority of responding bishops (56%) (or a member of their staff) contacted or attempted to contact MM at least once in the last year.⁵ Sixty percent of the responding bishops (or a member of their staff) worked with an ethnic-specific ministry director at least once and 57 percent used a resource developed or made available by MM at least once in the last year. (See Table 4.) Fewer than a majority of the responding bishops (38%) said they had visited MM’s Web site at least once in the last year.

Table 4: Direct Contact with MM								
In the last year have you done any of the following?	Responding Bishops				Responding Ethnic-specific Pastors			
	No Contact	1 or 2 Times	3 or More Times	Not Sure	No Contact	1 or 2 Times	3 or More Times	Not Sure
contacted or attempted to contact MM	44%	21%	35%	0%	37%	34%	27%	2%
received various forms of communication from MM (asked only of the ethnic-specific pastors)	-	-	-	-	13%	39%	39%	9%
worked with an ethnic-specific ministry director from MM	35%	29%	31%	5%	34%	32%	27%	7%
visited MM’s Web site	62%	26%	12%	0%	39%	29%	29%	3%
use resources developed or made available by MM	41%	36%	21%	2%	37%	37%	20%	6%

Among ethnic-specific pastors who responded, 61 percent contacted or attempted to contact MM at least once in the last year. Seventy-eight percent reported receiving some form of communication from MM at least once and 59 percent worked with an ethnic-specific ministry director at least once. Fifty-seven percent of the responding ethnic-specific pastors used a resource developed or made available by MM at least once in the last year and 58 percent had visited the MM Web site.

THE MM UNIT PLAN

The MM Unit Plan was intended to guide the work of MM from 2007 to 2009. The plan includes four basic goals.

⁵ These survey results are from a questionnaire fielded to the 65 synod bishops and to 447 ethnic-specific pastors in the ELCA. Forty-two of the synod bishops returned questionnaires for a response rate of 65 percent and 137 ethnic-specific pastors returned questionnaire for a response rate of 31 percent.

1. Increasing the number of ethnic-specific and multicultural congregations in the ELCA and deepening the discipleship of the members of ethnic-specific and multicultural congregations.
2. Increasing and strengthening the cohesiveness within and among ethnic-specific communities.
3. Equipping congregations, synods, seminaries and the churchwide expression to become an anti-racist, multicultural church.
4. Increasing the number of rostered and lay leaders in congregations, synods, seminaries, and churchwide expression from the ELCA's ethnic-specific communities.

Support for the Goals of the Plan

We were interested in the extent to which these goals were embraced by the synod bishops and the ethnic-specific pastors. Table 5 shows the percent in each of these groups who “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that the goals set out in MM’s plan should be the primary goals for the work of MM. The support for these goals among both the responding ethnic-specific pastors and the responding bishops was considerable.

Table 5: Extent to Which the Synod Bishops and the Ethnic-specific Pastors Agreed or Strongly Agreed These Goals Should be the Primary Goals of the Work of MM						
	Responding Bishops			Responding Ethnic-specific Pastors		
	Agree	Dis-agree	Not Sure	Agree	Dis-agree	Not Sure
increasing the number of ethnic-specific and multicultural congregations in the ELCA	83%	5%	12%	76%	14%	10%
deepening the discipleship of the members of ethnic-specific and multicultural congregations	98%	0%	2%	87%	9%	4%
increasing and strengthening cohesiveness within and among ethnic-specific communities	81%	6%	13%	83%	9%	8%
equipping congregations, synods, seminaries and churchwide expression to become an anti-racist, multicultural church	85%	10%	5%	86%	9%	5%
increasing the number of rostered and lay leaders in congregations, synods, seminaries, and churchwide expression from the ELCA's ethnic-specific communities	98%	2%	0%	91%	5%	5%

It is also clear that the responding bishops believe their synods are not responding positively to the potential for growth among the ethnic-specific communities in the territory of their synods. Forty-five percent said they were “dissatisfied” with their synod’s response and 21 percent said they were “very dissatisfied.” Thirty-four percent said they were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the ability of MM to assist their synod in responding positively to the growth of the ethnic-specific synods in the territory of their synods. Conversely, 30 percent said they were “dissatisfied” or “very dissatisfied,” and 37 percent said they were “not sure.”

The Contribution of MM Toward Achieving The Goals

The bishops who responded (61%) are most likely to believe the work of MM is making a significant contribution to increasing the number of lay rostered and lay leaders in congregations, synods, seminaries, and the churchwide expression from the ELCA’s ethnic communities. (See Table 6.) A majority (57%) also believe MM is making a significant contribution in equipping congregations, synods, seminaries and the churchwide expression to become an anti-racist, multicultural church. On none of the other goals do a majority of the responding bishops indicate MM is making a significant contribution. In part, this is because of the proportion of responding bishops who say they are “not sure” if MM is making a contribution. This may be due to the number of bishops who have been recently elected and are not fully aware of the work of MM.

	Responding Bishops			Responding Ethnic-specific Pastors		
	To Some or a Great Extent	To Little or No Extent	Not Sure	To Some or a Great Extent	To Little or No Extent	Not Sure
increasing the number of ethnic-specific and multicultural congregations in the ELCA	45%	41%	14%	51%	14%	35%
deepening the discipleship of the members of ethnic-specific and multicultural congregations	40%	31%	29%	56%	19%	25%
increasing and strengthening cohesiveness within the ethnic-specific communities	38%	24%	38%	60%	16%	24%
increasing and strengthening cohesiveness among the ethnic-specific communities	28%	29%	43%	55%	20%	25%
equipping congregations, synods, seminaries and churchwide expression to become an anti-racist, multicultural church	57%	24%	19%	58%	20%	22%
increasing the number of rostered and lay leaders in congregations, synods, seminaries, and churchwide expression from the ELCA’s ethnic-specific communities	61%	15%	24%	53%	22%	25%
increasing the level of communication within the ethnic-specific communities	36%	26%	38%	53%	23%	24%
increasing the level of communication among the ethnic-specific communities	31%	31%	38%	49%	26%	25%
providing activities to share, interact, learn, or build relationships within your ethnic community	-	-	-	54%	23%	23%
providing activities to share, interact, learn, or build relationships among ethnic community	-	-	-	52%	25%	23%

The opinions of the bishops who responded on the contribution of MM in increasing the number of ethnic-specific and multicultural congregations in the ELCA is split with 45 percent indicating MM is making a significant contribution and 41 percent indicating it is not making a significant contribution.

On the other hand, a majority of the responding ethnic-specific pastors said that MM was making at least some contribution to all of the goals with the exception of increasing the level of communication among the ethnic-specific communities where 49 percent said MM was making at least some contribution.

AN OUTCOME BY OUTCOME ANALYSIS OF THE PLAN

The following is an outcome by outcome analysis of the MM Unit Plan. This analysis is intended as a review of the work of the unit within the context of the plan. For each of the outcomes and objectives with the outcomes we provide an evaluative summary. The data we use are from several different sources: surveys of the synod bishops, the ethnic-specific pastors in the ELCA, and the executive committee members of the ethnic associations; the annual reports of congregations; the leadership roster of the ELCA; and interviews we conducted with churchwide staff in support of the review. We define ethnic-specific congregation as those with 65 percent or more of their membership from one or more of the five ethnic-specific communities.

GOAL 1: The Multicultural Ministries Unit work will be centered on increasing the number of ethnic-specific and multicultural congregations, and deepening the discipleship of congregational members.

Outcomes Related to Goal 1

- 1. Aggregate number of ethnic-specific congregations will grow by two percent at the end of 2009 (or by the number according to ethnic strategies).*

From 2000 to 2007 the ELCA officially began 208 new congregations. Twenty-eight percent of these new congregation were ethnic-specific congregations. Table 7 shows the number and percent of new ethnic-specific congregations per year from 2000 to 2007.

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	Total
American Indian or Alaska Native	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Asian or Pacific Islander	2	0	2	2	1	2	0	5	14
African Descent	4	1	1	0	2	5	4	6	23
Latino	2	6	0	1	3	3	4	0	19
Multicultural	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Ethnic-specific Subtotal	8	7	3	3	6	10	9	12	58
White	26	16	25	9	12	17	17	28	150
Total	34	23	28	12	18	27	26	40	208
Percent Ethnic-specific	23.5%	30.4%	10.7%	25.0%	33.3%	37.0%	34.6%	30.0%	27.9%

2. *Ethnic-specific congregations will show an aggregate of at least one percent increase in financial stewardship annually.*

The rate of change from year to year in total giving (regular and designated) of the ethnic-specific congregation has varied from 2000 to 2007. The average amount of total giving in 2000 for the 410 congregations with giving figures for both 2000 and 2007 was \$79,000. In 2007 the total giving for these same congregations was \$90,000. The figure for 2007, however, declined from its peak of \$93,000 in 2006. Over the period, however, the average rate of increase for these congregations from year to year was 1.8 percent.

3. *Three percent of existing ELCA congregations will reflect their ethnic-specific community.*

Presently, 12 percent of the existing ELCA congregations located in ethnic-specific (65% or more of a particular ethnic-specific community) or multicultural ZIP Code areas reflect their ZIP code’s community composition.

4. *More people will be involved in Bible study, faith formation adult studies, evangelizing, advocacy and service.*

Fifty-seven percent of the responding ethnic-specific pastors said they were “dissatisfied” or “very dissatisfied” with the attendance at their congregation’s adult educational activities and 58 percent were “dissatisfied” or “very dissatisfied” with their congregational members’ commitment to sharing the good news of the Gospel with the unchurched. On the other hand, 67 percent said they were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the quality of resources

available to their congregation for Christian education and 57 percent said they believe MM is making a significant contribution to “some” or to a “great extent” to the deepening of the discipleship of the members of ethnic-specific and multicultural congregations.

With regard to advocacy and service, 80 percent of the responding ethnic-specific pastors said they were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with their congregation’s acts of charity and service to persons in need and 68 percent said they were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with their congregation’s members acting out of faith on social, political, and economic issues.

Objectives Related to Goal 1

1. *Partner with Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission (EOCM), synods and ethnic networks to identify new ministry locations for ethnic specific ministries.*

There is conversation between the ethnic ministry directors and EOCM staff, though there is no written report identifying potential new ministry locations for the individual ethnic-specific communities with the exception of the Asian community. To some extent, this is attributable to the vacancies in the African Descent and the Latino ministry desks and it is due to the philosophy of EOCM that site selection be the product of local initiative. MM and EOCM do meet twice yearly to identify potential sites and to review proposals. A list of potential sites will be made available later in 2009 from each of the ethnic ministry directors.

2. *Partner with EOCM in training and orientation for mission developers.*

In our interviews, we encountered some concern about the training and orientation of mission developers with regard to accounting for cultural differences. Discussions addressing these issues are in the early stages especially with regard to developing appropriate contextual training and orientation for mission developers.

3. *Partner with EOCM and VE (Vocation and Education) to recruit and equip rostered leaders who have a passion for evangelical outreach.*

The Latino and Asian and Pacific Islander ministries in MM have established a working relationship with VE on outreach. Through this collaboration, new models have been developed that attempt to respond directly to the expressed needs of the Asian and Latino communities primarily through the use of Theological Education for Emerging Ministries (TEEM).

MM is working with EOCM on interviewing and training potential leaders from the ethnic-specific communities. A leadership training event for Arab and Middle Eastern lay and clergy leaders is scheduled for 2009.

In our interviews, some expressed the opinion that leadership training in the ELCA focuses too much on the theology and not enough on leadership skills (e.g., a passion for outreach,

listening skills, interpersonal skills) that are critical to engaging people on issues of faith and involvement in the church.

MM has been intentional about incorporating a leadership component in most of the events it sponsors.

4. *Partner with EOCM to identify, recruit and train congregational members of color and primary language other than English in the discipline of stewardship.*

Preliminary discussions are underway with the individual ethnic-specific associations and with some individual congregations to raise the awareness of the importance of stewardship. EOCM has conducted stewardship workshops at the Asian and Pacific Islanders association meeting and the American Indian and Alaska Native association meeting. The same workshop is scheduled to be conducted at the African Descent association meeting. There is, however, no formal mechanism for tracking the impact of this work.

Based on the survey of ethnic-specific pastors, 59 percent of the respondents said they were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with their congregation’s ability to help members understand their use of money, time, and talent as expressions of Christian stewardship.

5. *Partner with EOCM, synods and Research and Evaluation to identify congregations in multicultural communities and provide demographic information to them.*

Congregations in multicultural communities have been identified and provided with demographic information about their communities. Lists of congregations have also been shared with the synods.

6. *Equip ethnic-specific congregations with ethnic specific resources and training.*

Some resources are available on the MM website including the resource “One Body, Many Members.” These resources are also incorporated in a number of MM events. MM has a marketing committee and through the work of the committee has developed an MM resource brochure. An updated brochure will be available in 2010.

MM has conducted an initial needs assessment in the Latino community and will be conducting a needs assessment for the other communities in 2009.

Seventy-eight percent of the responding ethnic-specific pastors said they were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the quality of worship resources available to their congregation and 68 percent said they were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the quality of resources available to their congregation for Christian education. While our sample sizes are small within each of the ethnic-specific communities, there is no group of respondents that has a majority that are “dissatisfied” or “very dissatisfied” with either the worship or educational resources that are available to them.

7. *Work with synods, offering training and resources for multicultural ministries.*

“One Body, Many Members” was created to help the church better understanding multiculturalism. A Web site “roadmap” is also being developed to support a brochure promoting the resource.

It appears MM resources are mostly promoted through the use of the unit’s Web site. The problem with this approach, at least with regard to synods, is that 62 percent the responding bishops have never visited MM’s Web site. (We asked the bishops to consult with their staff about their use of the Web site and to indicate if others had been to the Web site. We do not know if this occurred.) Forty-three percent of the responding bishops said they have never contacted or attempted to contact MM and 41 percent said they have never used resources developed by, or made available through MM. If others in the synod are going to the Web site or using resource produced by MM, these bishops are unaware of it.

The percentage of responding ethnic-specific pastors who say they have never contacted or attempted to contact MM is lower at 37 percent. Thirty-seven percent also indicated they have never used resources developed or made available by MM.

GOAL 2: The Multicultural Ministries Unit will focus its resources on increasing and strengthening cohesiveness within and among ethnic specific communities.

Outcomes Related to Goal 2

1. *There will be increased/regular communication within and among ethnic communities.*

We were able to establish through the survey of the executive members of each of the ethnic associations, that according to these members, regular communication is taking place with ethnic-specific congregations and their leaders.

At the same time, less than a majority of the responding ethnic-specific pastors said they were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the relationship of their congregation to other ethnic-specific congregations in the ELCA (48%, “satisfied” or “very satisfied”), the relationship of their congregation to their ethnic-specific association (49%, “satisfied” or “very satisfied”), or the relationship of their congregation to MM (46%, “satisfied” or “very satisfied”).

2. *There will be action on common issues within and among ethnic-specific associations and communities.*

The majority of respondents among the executive members of the ethnic-specific associations believe that MM has, to some extent, increased the cohesiveness within their ethnic-specific community and among the ethnic-specific communities. We do not know if this has produced action on common issues.

3. *There will be increased participation and membership in the ethnic-specific associations.*

We do not know if there has been increased participation and membership in the ethnic-specific associations. With the exception of the African American Lutheran Association, membership lists do not exist. In short, it appears that the associations do not keep reliable records of membership or even participation in events.

Objectives Related to Goal 2

1. *Work with associations to plan regular meetings at grass roots level, and provide opportunities for regular gatherings within their respective communities.*

The ethnic directors meet regularly with the associations and help with planning and budgeting.

2. *Set up and strengthen communications with ethnic-specific communities.*

MM has a feature on their Web site that serves as a newsletter and the ethnic directors have a listserv that includes rostered leaders, seminarians, TEEM candidates and lay leaders which they use as their primary means of direct communication. Thirteen percent of the responding ethnic-specific pastors indicated they had never received some form of communication from MM.

3. *Organize activities to share, interact, learn, build relationships between and among ethnic specific communities.*

Activities are organized regularly by MM but it is difficult to judge the effectiveness of these activities. As noted above less than a majority of the responding ethnic-specific pastors said they were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the relationship of their congregation to other ethnic-specific congregations in the ELCA, the relationship of their congregation to their ethnic-specific association, or the relationship of their congregation to MM. At the same time, a majority of the responding ethnic-specific pastors indicated that to “some” or to a “great extent” MM had provided activities to share, interact, learn, or build relationships within their ethnic-specific community (54%) and among the ethnic-specific communities (51%).

4. *Use faith-based community organizing tactics to identify and work on common issues.*

Each of the ethnic ministry directors has recruited members from the various ethnic-specific communities to participate in community organizing training. However, we could not establish how often community organizing has been used as a tactic or if its use is effective. We were able to establish from interviews that the Indonesian community in Seattle that has been very active in community organizing events.

GOAL 3: The Multicultural Ministries Unit will equip congregations, synods, seminaries and churchwide expression to become an anti-racist, multicultural church.

Outcomes Related to Goal 3

1. *There will be an increased number of white allies in congregations, synods, seminaries and churchwide expression.*

Again, it is difficult to determine if the number of white allies in congregations, synods, seminaries, and the churchwide expression are increasing due to the work of MM. We did ask the responding bishops, however, about their view of the relationship of their synod's ethnic-specific congregations to the predominantly White congregations in their synod. Thirty-eight percent of the responding bishops said they were "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the relationship but 43 percent said they were "dissatisfied" or "very dissatisfied" with the relationship. Nineteen percent said they were "not sure" about the relationship.

Most of the responding bishops (66%) said they were "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the relationship of the synod office to the ethnic-specific congregations in the synod and 74 percent of the responding ethnic-specific pastors said they were "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the relationship. At the same time, the vast majority of responding bishops said they were "not sure" what the relationship of their synod office was to any of the ethnic-specific associations with the exception of the Association of Latino Ministries. This association seems to have engaged more of the responding bishops than any other association.

2. *There will be increased activity around anti-racism and multicultural training.*

Again, it was difficult to determine if there has been increased activity around anti-racism and multicultural training. We believe that in 2002 there were over 30 anti-racism training events held around the church but by 2008 the number has declined by at least half.

It is clear, based on our interviews, that the respective duties and responsibilities of Director for Anti-Racism Commitment in the Office of the Presiding Bishop and those of the Director of Racial Justice Ministries in MM are unclear. A review of the job descriptions for these positions showed considerable overlap in duties and responsibilities.

3. *There will be an increased number of people in ethnic-specific communities in the decision-making processes of the ELCA, so that all people will have a voice in the life and witness of the church.*

The number people from the ethnic-specific communities on the ELCA Church Council has fluctuated between 5 and 6 of the 33 members over the past 10 years. This number reflects the stipulation of the *ELCA Constitution* (5.01.f.) and the number has not exceeded the requirements of the *ELCA Constitution*.

The number of people from the ethnic-specific communities employed by the churchwide offices of the ELCA has increased from 27 percent in 2000 to 34 percent in 2008. However, this growth is not evenly distributed. The proportion of people from the ethnic-specific communities in senior executive positions has been consistent while the proportion of the people from the ethnic-specific communities who are in mid-level positions has grown from 4.6 percent in 2001 to 7.2 in 2008.

4. *There will be increased activity around networking and knowledge-building in regards to anti-racism and multicultural resources.*

We can not determine if this is the case. As noted above, it appears that the level of activity has decreased. At the same time, 57 percent of the responding bishops indicated that to “some” or to a “great extent” they believe the work of MM is making a significant contribution to equipping congregations, synods, seminaries, and the churchwide organization to become an anti-racist, multicultural church. Fifty-eight percent of the responding ethnic-specific pastors held the same belief.

Objectives Related to Goal 3

1. *In partnership with Office of the Bishop, provide training and education, consultation workshops, resource development, and connect groups with appropriate resources on anti-racism and racial justice.*

There is on-going collaboration between the two offices on developing strategies for training. However, it appears that recently fewer training events have occurred. A significant study on anti-racism work in the synods was conducted in 2008 and a well attended event for synod anti-racism teams was held in Baltimore, Maryland, in 2008. There are no “tools” posted on the Office of the Presiding Bishop’s Web site but there are several resources available from Augsburg Fortress posted on MM’s Web site.

2. *Provide consultation workshops and resource development to promote a multicultural church.*

At the churchwide level, the Racial Justice Coordinating Team was dissolved and the responsibility of this team shifted to the Racial Justice Ministry Transition Team. The new team is in the early planning stage for consultations, workshops, and resource development. No consultations have been planned to date.

3. *Train and equip congregations, synods, seminaries and churchwide expression in welcoming all cultures and races.*

Several events have been held to train and equip congregations, synods, seminaries and churchwide expression in welcoming all cultures and races, including the Baltimore, Maryland, conference noted above. More events are being planned.

4. *Through networking and knowledge-building, identify White allies and identify persons of color and primary language other than English to understand the concept of an anti-racist organization.*

This was one of the primary goals of the Baltimore, Maryland event but we do not know if it was accomplished.

5. *Conduct forums in various locations about race relations and “community.”*

It appears these forums are yet to be conducted. A meeting has been held with one regional coordinator and a second regional coordinator meeting is scheduled for early in 2009.

6. *Provide interactive learning activities through the multicultural Web site.*

These activities are not yet available at the Web site.

7. *Work with churchwide entities (Multicultural Ministries Staff Alliance, Inter-Unit Staff Team on Inclusivity, Racial Justice Ministry Coordinating Team) on common strategic activities.*

This work is yet to be completed.

GOAL 4: The Multicultural Ministries unit will work to increase the number of rostered and lay leaders in congregations, synods, seminaries, and churchwide expression from the ELCA's ethnic-specific communities.

Outcomes Related to Goal 4

1. *There will be an increased number of ethnic-specific teaching theologians in ELCA seminaries.*

Over the past nine years the number of ethnic-specific teaching theologians in ELCA seminaries has fluctuated between 9 and 12 percent of faculty members. The average is 9 percent.

2. *There will be an increase in the number of ethnic specific congregations with leaders from the same ethnic community.*

Over the past eight years the number of ethnic-specific congregations with leaders from the same ethnic community increased from 119 to 148.

3. *There will be more ethnic-specific people serving multicultural and White congregations.*

Over the past eight years the number of ethnic specific people serving multicultural and white congregations rose from 109 to 142.

4. *Retiring rostered leaders will be adequately replaced by leaders from the same ethnic-specific community.*

Very few people from the ethnic-specific communities (between 3 and 5) retire from the ELCA each year. Based on an analysis of the current leadership roster, there are about 20 new ethnic-specific pastors ordained each year who go on to serve congregations in the ELCA.

Objectives Related to Goal 4

1. *Reach out to persons of color and primary language other than English in congregations to identify persons who may have a call to rostered service, and get them placed in the candidacy process.*

Although a great proportion of the tactics specified by the strategy have been accomplished, it appears relatively few individuals have been recommended for candidacy.

2. *Partner with VE, seminaries, and other programs such as Spectrum, Project Connect, and Bridges to increase enrollment of persons of color and primary language other than English.*

Bridges is a scholarship program available to six students a year and MM recommends individuals for the scholarship. Project Connect is a program designed to identify young people with ministry potential and to encourage them to become clergy. It appears the African Descent desk is most involved with "Project Connect." MM's program assistant is working with VE to develop and improve tracking systems of MM's participation with these programs.

3. *Compile and provide lists, as well as advocate for rostered leaders who are ready to serve from ethnic specific communities.*

A list of rostered leaders who are not on call has been compiled and has been distributed to the respective synods. There has also been direct contact with some bishops advocating for people from the ethnic-specific communities.

4. *Advocate to H.R. and Unit Executive Directors to intentionally seek persons of color and primary language other than English for churchwide positions.*

Vacant position descriptions are sent to the ethnic directors by the Human Resources (HR) section of the churchwide organization and the ethnic directors are asked for nominees. It appears, however, names are seldom forwarded to HR.

5. *Advocate to synodical bishops to intentionally seek persons of color and primary language other than English for synodical positions.*

It appears that steps have been taken to contact some bishops, however, no regular system is in place for identifying or advocating for people from the ethnic-specific communities to fill synodical positions.

6. *Encourage participation in “terminal degree” disciplines.*

We are unaware of any actions taken by MM to encourage participation in terminal degree disciplines.

CONCLUSIONS

The Constitution of the ELCA gives MM the responsibility of guiding the churchwide organization in the multicultural dimensions of its work. This includes working with synods, regions, and agencies and institutions. It means working to implement the ethnic-specific ministry strategies. It means maintaining and enhancing the ELCA’s central commitment to becoming an anti-racist, multicultural church and providing programs of multicultural education and education on racial justice. It means relating to and assisting the ethnic-specific associations in the ELCA. It means working with other program units and synods in ethnic-specific leadership development and in providing advice, counsel, and recommendations to other churchwide units concerning the development of multicultural and community specific programs and resources. It means assisting this church in working toward the goal of full partnership and participation of African Descent, Arab and Middle Eastern, Asian and Pacific Islander, Latino, American Indian and Alaska Native people in the life of this church and society.

MM is responsible for accomplishing all of these tasks with six full-time executive positions and a budget of \$1.3 million which is 1.6 percent of the total budget of the churchwide organization. MM is also responsible for accomplishing these tasks in a church that continues to be overwhelmingly White. The largest ethnic community in the ELCA, which is the African Descent community, makes up one percent of the baptized membership of the ELCA and the Latino community, which is the only community growing significantly, makes up less than one percent of the membership of the ELCA.

In this context, we set out to evaluate the impact of MM based on its own strategic plan for 2007-2009. As noted above, MM identified four basic goals and it is clear that these goals are widely embraced as the “right” goals by the respondents of two key constituencies of the unit including the bishops and ethnic-specific pastors in the ELCA.

Evaluating the impact of MM from within the context of these goals is considerably more complicated but some conclusions can be drawn. Is MM making a significant contribution to the achievement of these goals? From the point of view of the responding bishops the work of MM is making a significant contribution on two of the four goals: increasing the number of rostered

and lay leaders from the ELCA's ethnic-specific communities in congregations, synods, seminaries, and the churchwide expression of the ELCA; and, in equipping congregations, synods, seminaries, and the churchwide expression to become an anti-racist church. The bishops who responded are split on whether MM is making a significant contribution to increasing the number of ethnic-specific and multicultural congregations and deepening the discipleship of the members of ethnic-specific and multicultural congregation in the ELCA. Too many responding bishops are also not sure if the unit is making a contribution to increasing and strengthening the cohesiveness within and among ethnic-specific communities to draw a conclusion about this work.⁶ On the other hand, about a quarter of the responding bishops consistently indicated they believe the work of MM has made no significant contribution to the achievement of any of these goals in their synods and the vast majority of responding bishops are also unaware of any work, to the extent that it exists, of the ethnic-specific ministry associations with their synods.

The ethnic-specific pastors who responded are more likely to indicate MM is making a significant contribution. The percent of respondents who chose to a "great extent" as their response when asked about these goals increased from an average of two percent of the responding bishops to an average of ten percent among the responding ethnic-specific pastors. On each of the goals a majority of the responding ethnic-specific pastors said the work of MM is making a significant contribution. On the other hand, about a fifth of the responding ethnic-specific pastors consistently indicated the work of MM has made no significant contribution to the achievement of these goals.

Areas for Improvement

In the course of our work, we heard many suggestions about how MM could improve its work. It is difficult to evaluate the substance of these proposals, but we heard them enough to include them in this report. We believe the following should be considered.

First, the unit should better monitor its own work. At the very least, this means keeping better records with regard to meetings and events—when and where meetings or events take place, their purpose, and lists of attendees. The fact that this kind of information is not readily available undermines the accountability of the unit and calls into question its efficacy. For example, without this information it is difficult to challenge the view that MM events draw heavily on a relatively small "pool" of attendees which at best, limits the impact of its work. In fact, the unit's strategic plan itself calls for documenting meetings, activities, correspondence and the number of issues addressed within and among the associations, but as far as we can tell, this documentation does not yet exist. Finally in this regard, some of the measurement outcomes in the strategic plan are simply not useful because they do not reflect current circumstances. For example, the membership of 12 percent of existing ELCA congregations already reflect the ethnic composition of their communities while the goal specified in the plan is set at 3 percent.

⁶ Many of the responding bishops may have indicated they are not sure because they are relatively new and have not had enough time in office to become familiar with the work of MM.

Second, perhaps the most substantive issue raised during the course of the evaluation had to do with the lingering question of which unit has the ultimate authority for ethnic-specific or multicultural ministry in the ELCA. For many, this question was not resolved by the most recent churchwide reorganization. In fact, some believe the reorganization made matters less, rather than more clear. The division of labor for multicultural ministries within the churchwide organization seems to undermine the authority of any particular unit and therefore the accountability of any particular unit. The former Commission for Multicultural Ministries was not a program unit while MM is. At the same time, MM appears to have very limited capacity to sponsor or facilitate on-going programmatic work. This is perhaps why the responding bishops are split on the contribution of MM to increasing the number of ethnic-specific and multicultural congregations in the ELCA. It appears to some that when it comes to Asian or Pacific Islander congregations, MM plays a key role, but when it comes to African Descent or Latino congregations, EOCM is the key player. When it comes to anti-racism or racial justice work, it is not clear if the Office of the Bishop is the key player or MM. When it comes to leadership development the role of MM seems secondary to the role of VE. When it comes to global questions, MM appears to play a role that is, at times, even contradictory to that of Global Mission.

Third, there appears to be several issues that need to be addressed regarding the role of the ethnic-specific ministry associations. At best, to many responding bishops the role of the associations in the life of the church is unclear. For example, how does the work of the associations and the unit compliment each other and what is the role of MM in dealing with issues such as the role of African national pastors in the African American Lutheran Association?

The Constitutional Mandate for the Multicultural Ministries Unit (16.12.E05.)

The Multicultural Ministries unit shall guide the churchwide organization in the multicultural dimensions of its work. To fulfill these responsibilities, this program unit shall:

- a. foster programs of the churchwide organization with synods, regions, and agencies and institutions as they identify, develop, and strengthen the multicultural dimensions of their work.
- b. coordinate the churchwide implementation of ethnic-specific ministry strategies.
- c. review and monitor all churchwide programs to maintain and enhance the ELCA's central commitment in becoming an anti-racist, multicultural church.
- d. present annually to the Church Council and biennially to the Churchwide Assembly a program plan, including ongoing evaluation of the churchwide organization's work in the area of multicultural ministries.
- e. provide programs of multicultural education and education on racial justice for this church in cooperation with ecumenical and global multicultural ministry partners.
- f. relate to and assist the African American Lutheran Association in the ELCA, the American Indian and Alaska Native Lutheran Association in the ELCA, the Association of Lutherans of Arab and Middle Eastern Heritage, the Association of Asians and Pacific Islanders in the ELCA, and the Association of Latino Ministries in the ELCA, and encourage and support associations in their relationship with other churchwide units.
- g. convene and guide an internal multicultural ministries alliance of all program areas in the churchwide organization.
- h. cooperate with other churchwide units and appropriate synods to undergird maritime ministries.
- i. work with other program units and synods in ethnic specific leadership development.
- j. work with other appropriate program units for border and immigrant ministries.
- k. work with the Church in Society unit in its coordination of ethnic specific and racial-justice advocacy.
- l. provide advice, counsel, and recommendations to other churchwide units concerning the development of multicultural and community specific programs and resources.
- m. assist this church in developing and implementing cooperative efforts with the African American, Black, Arab and Middle Eastern, Asian and Pacific Islander, Latino, American Indian, and Alaska Native communities in society, in other Christian communions, and in other religious traditions.
- n. assist this church in working toward the goal of full partnership and participation of African American, Black, Arab and Middle Eastern, Asian and Pacific Islander, Latino, American Indian, and Alaska Native people in the life of this church and society.