

**Report of the Mission Committee of the ELCSA (N-T)
For the Synod in the Harburg Congregation from 20 – 23 October 2011
by Pastor Ronald Küsel**

1. Introduction

As we celebrate the 30th anniversary of the founding of the ELCSA (N-T), we will, among other things, reflect upon the historical roots of our past and the relevance of our church in the present and future. In such reflections the notion of “mission” is essential. The variety of linguistic derivatives, theological terms and interpretations thereof need to be debated, but never at the cost of doing mission.

The church is not merely a place where Christians gather in buildings filled with pews or chairs, but rather a God-ordained institution with people on a mission – a mission to live in obedience to God’s great commission to make disciples (Matthew 28:16-20; Mark 16:15-20; Luke 24:44-49; John 20:21-23; and Acts 1:4-11). This means that every Christian should be taking the message of the cross to his or her community. Being church is more than simply inviting a nonbeliever to come to one’s church services. It is also about living, speaking, and engaging in such a way, that we spread the life-saving news of Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection to everyone we meet. As such, the church is always relational and on the move. If the Church fails to be this, it becomes a people of the place, who commit resources and energy to the maintenance of the institution and building only.

Being a relevant church includes meeting social needs (i.e. the diaconical task of the church). It involves Christ-like compassion, social justice, and meeting of physical needs. But this should always be coupled with our disciple-making mandate.

All of this requires biblical thinking, strategic planning, and prayerful dependence upon Him whose mission we are fulfilling. In the process, we cannot simply focus on strategies and formulas that have worked among people who live in other areas. Instead we should find strategies that help us connect with the people in our context.

2. Purpose of the work of the Mission Committee.

We formulated our vision as follows: *The Mission Committee assists ELCSA (N-T) and its congregations to be relevant in the purpose that Christ has for the world.*

The Mission Committee wishes to serve ELCSA (N-T) in both reactive and proactive ways by:

- researching and assisting expansion of new or existing congregations;
- assisting and encouraging focussed and relevant strategies and formulas;
- motivating, supporting, encouraging and, when needed, initiating a mission- and diaconical-orientated vision;
- co-ordinating and acquiring resources in support of such visioning;
- assisting, advising, researching and analysing requirements for the training and sustaining of particular projects and activities;
- motivating, assisting, advising, researching, co-ordinating and acquiring resources in support of teaching and enabling the involvement of laity (“priesthood of all believers”) in church building;
- assisting individuals or groups in a missionary or diaconical field;
- assisting Church Council in the implementation of Synod recommendations and decisions on missionary and diaconical matters;

- together with Church Council, accepting accountability to Synod for supported projects and activities;
- accepting accountability to Synod and Church Council for managing the Mission Fund.

3. Projects

With representatives from Church Council, pastors and the laity from all the circuits of our church, we typically meet twice a year. One of these meetings is usually held over a period of two days and includes a visit to one of the supported projects or activities of the Mission Committee.

Since the last Synod, we have supported the following projects and activities: Midrand, Church of the Peace, Hillbrow (Johannesburg); the Greater Durban Area; Dolphin Coast; Polokwane and Nelspruit; Circuit Projects and co-workers at Trans World Radio, Gottfried Schiele and Eberhard Haberkorn. (Support for Udo Krueger of African Enterprise South Africa ended in July 2010). Detailed reports of these projects are available upon request and will in future be posted on the ELCSA (N-T) webpage.

4. Finance

We are very grateful that our income through donations and offerings by our congregations has increased by 10% in 2010 and the trend for 2011 (January to August) indicates a further increase (almost 6% compared to the same period in 2010). Even though the cumulative expenses of the 2009 to 2010 period have increased, we are not at all concerned because our cumulative increase in income rose by almost 24% over the same period. This is due to the increased support from the congregations, funds from the Church Council and the interest received on reserves (built up over the years since the inception of the Mission Fund).

Considering the economic climate, this is a phenomenal achievement and a clear sign that our congregations have fully embraced the work of the Mission Committee. The increase in reserves enables us to take on another larger project or further smaller ones with a minimum of risk. This in turn would further strengthen the mission- and diaconical-orientated vision of ELCSA (N-T).

5. Conclusion

On behalf of the Committee, I would like to thank all congregations, Church Council and individuals for their generous financial and spiritual support. Your munificent co-operation allows us to strive towards fulfilling Christ's missionary mandate for the Church.

In closing, I would like to thank my Committee members for their untiring commitment to the cause of the Mission Committee and their love for ELCSA (N-T).