

Chapter 1 – Methodology and Descriptive Statistics

1) Introduction

The following report summarizes the findings of the Planning Conference Research Survey that was conducted by Lutheran Church–Canada in 2003. The major goal of the survey was to establish what the congregational members believed were the most important issues and priorities for Lutheran Church–Canada. To achieve this end, a survey was constructed that sought the opinions of congregation members, clergy, teachers, deacons, and other church workers who attended the most recent Lutheran Church–Canada district conventions and LWML-Canada convention. Lutheran Church–Canada was particularly interested in seeking the opinions of its members on a number of important issues, such as a thorough evaluation of Lutheran Church–Canada, patterns of use of a variety of products and services, participation in the RSVP church worker recruitment initiative, and changes they would make in the church. As well, the importance of a number of societal and church concerns and issues were also evaluated. In the next sections, we will conduct an in-depth discussion of these issues. Moreover, an examination of the responses will be compared to the respondents who participated in the survey at the previous district in 2000. Where appropriate, any shifts in thinking between these two samples will be identified and discussed. From the analysis of this data, several priorities have emerged, revealing to Lutheran Church–Canada the need to address several critical issues when establishing the church’s future priorities.

2) Descriptive statistics

The data being used in this report was obtained from the most recent district conventions and LWML–Canada convention held in Lutheran Church–Canada. The respondents were asked to volunteer their time to answer a number of survey questions. The respondents were to assess and elaborate on important planning needs or critical issues the church needed to address. The surveys were handed out to all attendees. In total, Lutheran Church–Canada received 181 completed surveys.

Overall, a demographic examination of the survey revealed that the sample was comprised predominantly of male respondents (73.6%), with female respondents (26.4%) comprising only a minority of the sample (Fig. 1). The majority of the sample was predominantly comprised of older respondents (Fig. 2). Specifically, 35.4% of the respondents were between the ages of 50-65 years, while 34.8% were between the ages of 36-50 years and 12.2% were over the age of 65 years. There were very few younger respondents in the survey sample. Only 17.7% of the survey respondents were under the age of 35 years.

Referring to Figure 3, it is evident that a large majority of the respondents in the sample were either clergy (49.2%) or laity (42.5%) within Lutheran Church–Canada. Very few respondents indicated that they were teachers (3.4%) or church workers (5.1%). Two districts were highly represented within the current survey sample (Fig. 4). The majority of the respondents were from either the ABC District (35.5%) or the East District (48.3%). The Central District (16.1%) was the district least represented in the sample. The majority of the respondents indicated that they resided in more populous communities across Canada (Fig. 5). The majority of the sample resided in communities with populations exceeding 1 million residents (37.1%), followed by

communities with populations of 10001 to 50000 residents (20.8%), and 50001 to 100000 residents (9.9%). A sizeable minority of the sample indicated that they resided in smaller communities with populations of between 1001-10000 residents (23.6%) and less than 1000 residents (8.4%).

Fig. 1 -- Gender

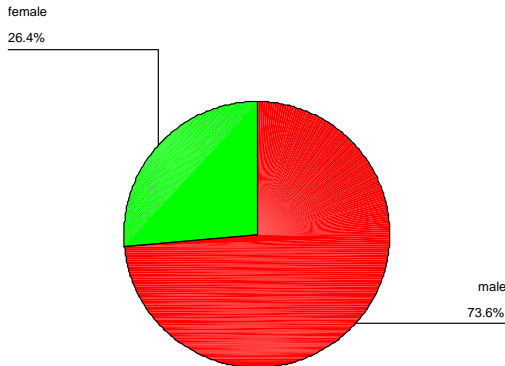


Fig. 2 -- Age

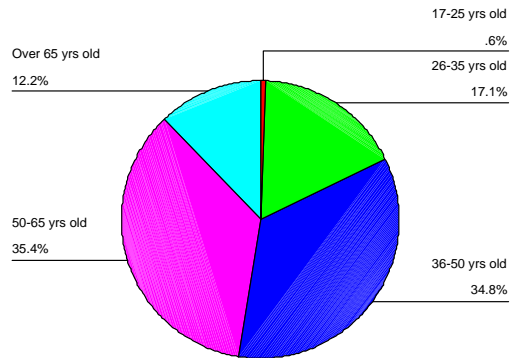


Fig. 3 -- Status

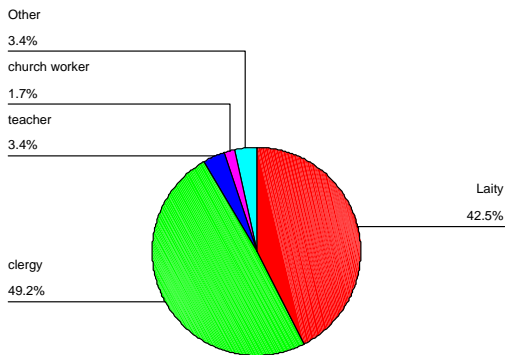


Fig. 4 -- District

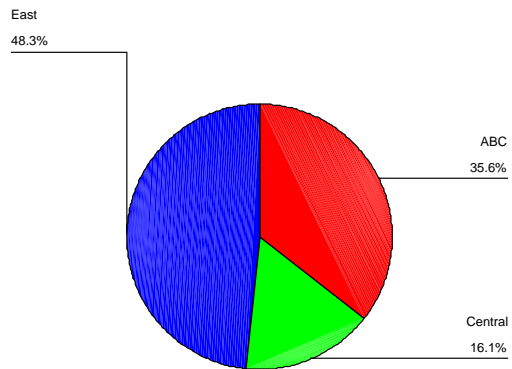
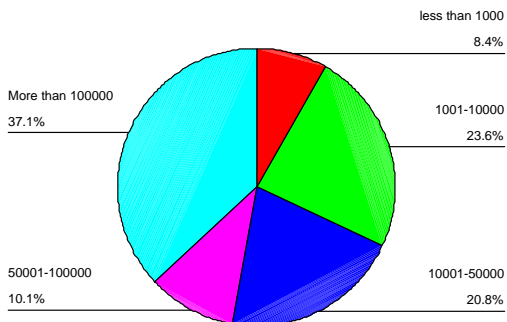


Fig 5 -- Size of community



A comparison with the previous LCC Planning Conference Research conducted in 2000 reveals that the two samples are fairly similar to one another. They differed only on a few key

demographic variables. More specifically, the 2000 sample had more male respondents (81.3%) than the 2003 sample (73.6%). Substantial differences also existed in the distribution of districts within the two samples. Within the 2000 sample, there were more attendees from the ABC District (48.4%), than the East District (25.1%) and the Central District (25.5%). This trend is reversed in the 2003 sample where there were more respondents from the East District (48.3%) than were the other districts (ABC, 35.5%; Central, 16.1%). The distribution of the remaining demographic variables was fairly consistent for the two sample years, differing only minutely.

Although the 2000 sample differed from the 2003 sample in some respects, these differences do not impact our ability to make comparisons with respect to important priorities for the church. Overall, the differences among 2000 and 2003 samples are not large enough to be considered statistically significant. As a result, the samples appear to be fairly comparable to one another, thereby enabling us to make comparisons to determine any shifts in thoughts or opinions regarding issues facing Lutheran Church–Canada.

3) Precautionary notes for interpreting the survey data

Although the current sample appears to be somewhat representative of the membership of Lutheran Church–Canada, several precautions must be acknowledged. Problems with the sample hinder our ability to generalize the findings to indicate what Lutheran Church–Canada, as an organization, feels about many of the issues that will be examined in the next sections.

More specifically, the overrepresentation of males as opposed to females and a higher representation of older respondents compared to younger respondents make extrapolating sound generalizable findings from the data difficult. Also, given that 900 surveys were originally distributed, the response rate (181 completed surveys; 20.1%) is fairly low. These problems make it highly difficult to get an accurate feeling of the true opinions of all Lutheran Church–Canada’s congregation members on a number of critical issues facing the church. Although the respondents might support the importance of certain critical issues, the remaining members within Lutheran Church–Canada who did not participate in the survey might not necessarily concur with this view. As a result, the analysis of the survey findings may not necessarily represent an accurate indication of the true opinions of the congregation on certain critical issues. Therefore, in light of these facts, it is the author’s recommendation that the reader should keep these issues in mind when examining the findings.

Chapter 2 – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats Facing Lutheran Church–Canada

The first section of the survey required the respondents to evaluate Lutheran Church–Canada. Specifically, the respondents were requested to list their perceived strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges/threats of the church body. An analysis of their answers revealed several recurrent themes for the above-mentioned aspects. The following chapter will examine the recurrent themes that emerged from the pooled answers of the respondents. For each aspect, a comparison will be made with the previous planning conference sample. Any significant shifts in the opinions made by the respondents will be highlighted.

1) Lutheran Church–Canada’s strengths

Lutheran Church–Canada was interested in determining its strengths; therefore they asked respondents to list three strengths they felt the Lutheran Church–Canada possessed. The following were some of the more frequently mentioned strengths of Lutheran Church–Canada:

- Scripturally and confessionally sound in teaching
- Small size (everyone knows your name)
- Decisions can be made quickly and implemented
- Creative ministry/outreach planning
- Training of pastoral leadership/Dedicated pastors
- The confessional movement within the Synod
- The faithful testimony of many within our Synod
- Ability to move quickly when evangelism/outreach opportunities arise
- Seminaries
- Gifted leaders and schools for training church workers
- Acknowledged commitment to Word and Sacrament ministry
- Strong push for missions
- Good communications among districts and circuits for emphasis on mission initiatives
- Depth of faith of members/pastors
- Dedicated church workers
- Strong identity, heritage, and history

A comparison with the previous survey sample reveals no significant differences in the answers provided for the strengths of Lutheran Church–Canada. The following list highlights the perceived strengths of Lutheran Church–Canada:

- 1) Strong identity, heritage, & history
- 2) Strong doctrinal stance
- 3) Commitment to Word and Sacrament
- 4) Exceptional training and dedication of the clergy
- 5) Dedication of the church workers
- 6) Dedication and faith of the laity

- 7) Strong presence in mission work
- 8) Seminaries and LCC elementary schools

2) Lutheran Church–Canada’s weaknesses

Although the respondents were quite vocal about the strengths of their religious organization, many respondents were also quite critical. A significant majority of the respondents listed many perceived weaknesses of Lutheran Church–Canada. More specifically, an analysis of the recurring themes in this question revealed the following weaknesses:

- Commitment to mission and outreach
- Poor understanding of what worship is
- Lack of knowledge of confessions
- Divided on what is scripturally and confessionally sound practice
- Not respecting, upholding in practice our Lutheran confessions
- Lack of unity in practice and, to a degree, doctrine
- Little emphasis on lay foreign missions
- Too much emphasis on missions
- Too little money spent on missions (more money spent on missions, less on college and seminaries)
- Necessity of maintaining district church offices across country because of distances – drains finances for missions
- Poor geographical presence (some provinces don’t have LCC congregations)
- Clergy disunity
- Our inability to mobilize our laity
- Two seminaries costs
- Tendency by some to be reactionary rather than proactive
- Lack of discussion on important issues internally – worship, relationships to other church bodies, etc.
- Lack of discussion on important issues externally – homosexuality, abortion, etc.
- Not enough Lutheran schools (grade schools)
- No unity of doctrine
- Seminaries not producing pastors that are mission driven. Many of our young pastors feel their sole purpose is to only deliver word and sacraments within their local church.
- Aging population.
- Not getting the young people to stay
- Communication between congregational pastors and congregations
- Communication between Districts
- Utilizing women to their full potential
- Not evangelical enough
- Resistance to change
- Rigid in the law

Once again, upon comparing the answers from the current survey to those collected 3 years ago, there appears to be no significant differences in the overall weaknesses inherent within Lutheran Church–Canada. Upon closer examination, there appears to be some concurrence

between the greatest weaknesses of Lutheran Church–Canada. Overall, it is the belief among many survey respondents from the 2000 and 2003 planning conference surveys, that the greatest weaknesses of the church can be tied to the following areas:

- 1) Geographical limitations
- 2) Financial commitments
- 3) Conflicts in the interpretation of the doctrine

The first two weaknesses are inherently entwined. For the most part, many respondents believed that the greatest weakness of Lutheran Church–Canada was its inability to overcome the Canadian geography. Given that Canada is such a large country, where vast unpopulated areas divide populations, Lutheran Church–Canada’s resources (monetary and human) are spread thin in an attempt to provide adequate religious services to the citizens of Canada. A large proportion of the two survey samples felt that too many resources are being squandered by establishing separate districts to serve regional areas in Canada. Because of the large geographical size of the country, the necessity of maintaining three districts eats into the budget, thereby severely decreasing the monies available for more important programs and services to be offered to their congregations (ex: Lutheran schools, mission work initiatives, programs/services for the visually challenged or hearing impaired, etc.).

Moreover, respondents highlighted a number of the current monetary conflicts. For example, a large proportion of the respondents concurred that it was unnecessary to maintain two independent and separate seminaries in Canada. Given that the Lutheran Church is itself a fairly small religious denomination, they felt that it was not financially feasible to maintain two seminaries. This practice, in their opinion, took precious financial resources away from more important services in Lutheran Church–Canada, more specifically: Lutheran schools as well as overseas and regional mission initiatives. These programs, in the opinion of many respondents, were under funded. More money should be devoted to these programs than to the maintenance of seminaries in Canada.

Finally, significant emphasis was devoted to conflicts in doctrinal interpretation within Lutheran Church–Canada. The lack of unity in the interpretation of Word, Sacraments and Confessions, creates such a varied religious belief system within Lutheran Church–Canada that many argued it is harming the unity of the church as a whole. It harms the unity of the church because it is creating among the laity a poor and highly fractured understanding of what is Lutheran worship, as well as what is the Lutheran confession. Many respondents feel that because of this, it is a serious critical weakness that Lutheran Church–Canada must address immediately.

3) Opportunities for Lutheran Church–Canada

In the survey, Lutheran Church–Canada was also interested in determining if there are certain opportunities they should undertake within the organization. The analysis uncovered many opportunities that Lutheran Church–Canada can undertake in the future. In particular, the respondents suggested the following opportunities:

- Ministry in the North and smaller communities (PAT)
- Reaching out to PEI and Newfoundland
- Multicultural ministry
- Use of modern technology, i.e. e-mail, internet, etc. to send messages and information
- Build unity in pastors and congregations
- Mission work in areas of Canada where we have no or little presence
- The gift of Lutheran schools in our midst
- Building AV library of lectures/essayists/workshops
- Wanting to use women in ministry more
- Witnessing via media to the deaf (CC and producing literatures for deaf)
- The glut of retired people on the volunteer front that can be utilized in new ways
- More Christian day schools
- Rural ministries
- More social ministry
- Active recruitment of pastors – scholarships and help
- Reaching new immigrants
- Ways to retain young people
- Effective promotion of alternative forms of worship and fellowship
- Youth ministries/ Using technology to reach post-modern generation
- Reaching out to non-church people
- Do more events that bring LCC churches together (even regionally...)
- Need for pastor assistants

Upon comparing the answers from the current survey to those collected 3 years ago, there appears to be no significant differences in the opportunities facing Lutheran Church–Canada. The two surveys mention many of the same opportunities that they believe would be most advantageous for Lutheran Church–Canada to undertake. Perhaps the most important opportunities Lutheran Church–Canada should take advantage of are: Ministry in the north and smaller communities, youth ministries, using technology to reach post-modern generation in an attempt to retain young congregational members, increase the presence of women and the elderly in volunteer activities as well as in other roles in the church, build an AV library of lectures, essayists, workshops, and further incorporate the use of modern technology into the church.

4) Challenges and threats facing Lutheran Church–Canada

Finally, Lutheran Church–Canada was also interested in determining whether there were any threats and/or challenges that they should be made aware of. The respondents were invited to list several challenges and/or threats that they felt Lutheran Church–Canada is currently facing. The following are the most frequently mentioned threats facing Lutheran Church–Canada:

- Sweeping under the carpet theological issues/controversies between pastors/congregations
- Financial challenges
- Lack of resources (money and volunteers)
- Smaller congregation sizes/ Smaller finances being generated

- Shortage of clergy versus graduates
- Apathy among majority of worshippers
- Stewardship
- Mission outreach
- Recruitment
- Secularism
- Greying of our congregations
- Ethnic ministry and cross-cultural mission in Canada
- Edmonton seminary theologically weak
- Disunity amongst congregations and pastors
- Decline in membership
- Lack of unity among churches
- Retention of young people and families
- Deterioration of morality in society
- Governments (national/provincial) stance on moral issues (e.g. abortion, same-sex marriage)
- “Worship wars”

Once again, there appears to be a consensus between the two independent survey samples concerning the threats and challenges facing Lutheran Church–Canada. For the most part, the important threats and challenges facing Lutheran Church–Canada can be summarized as follows:

- 1) Financial challenges
- 2) Declining church attendance
 - a. Aging population
 - b. Loss of young families
 - c. Loss of youth
- 3) Shortage of clergy
- 4) Secularism
- 5) Apathy of the laity
- 6) Lack of unity among churches in following doctrine

Interestingly, there is one shift in opinion that was observed when comparing the two samples. Within the current sample, there appears to be a greater concern for issues of morality. More specifically, several respondents viewed the changing moral acceptability of homosexuality as an emerging threat to Lutheran Church–Canada. The respondents viewed the recent approval by the federal government to allow same-sex marriages negatively. They felt that this decision runs counter to the doctrine and teaching of Lutheran Church–Canada.

Chapter 3 – Synod Services

The respondents were also asked to indicate which synodical services they frequently used¹. The following chapter highlights the major services used by the congregation. However, when analyzing the responses, it was apparent that the question was misinterpreted. Some interpreted services to mean worship services as opposed to customer services offered by the national office. Given this misinterpretation, the author separated the answers provided into two categories: laity and clergy. By analyzing the responses, it was discovered some of the lay respondents had misinterpreted the question. For the most part the lay respondents had answered the question correctly. Only a few of the laity had misinterpreted the question. The clergy answered the question correctly, providing a number of customer services that they frequently used. Therefore, we will analyze the two groups' responses separately.

The following responses represent the most commonly used synodical services as mentioned by the clergy in the sample:

- Worker Benefits Plan (33X)
- Website (16X)
- The Canadian Lutheran (15X)
- LCC Communications services (12X)
- Department of Missions, missions services, resources and involvement (7X)
- RSVP materials and services (6X)
- The synodical 800 number
- Programs, advice
- District
- Circuit connections/events
- LCC news/e-mail

As mentioned previously, a few of the laity misunderstood the question. Fortunately, there were only a few that misinterpreted the question (at most 5 or 6 respondents). The remainder were able to identify a number of customer relations services that their congregation used on a regular basis. In decreasing order, these were the most commonly mentioned customer services made by the laity:

- *The Canadian Lutheran* (12X)
- Website (9X)
- Workers Benefits Plan (6X)
- LCC Communications (3X)
- LWML materials (2X)
- Education resources and materials
- LCC news
- Material on website

In reference to the worship materials erroneously provided, the laity stated that the following services were most commonly used in their congregation:

- The Lutheran Hymnal (3X)
- Divine Services II (2X)
- The Other Song Book
- Traditional with some contemporary as well
- Blue Hymnal pg. 158
- Divine Service I

Excluding those who misinterpreted the question, the respondents in the current sample differed little in the responses that they had given compared to previous survey respondents. For the most part, the two samples listed many of the same customer services frequently used during the course of their daily activities.

Chapter 4 – Worship Information

The following chapter summarizes the findings on the use of worship materials by the clergy in Lutheran Church–Canada. Particularly, the following issues will be examined: the styles of worship most frequently used, what hymnals/song books/CCLI are utilized, as well as the use of printed order worship and/or hymnal.

An examination of the demographic background (see figures 6-8) of the clergy in this sample revealed that they were all male (100%) predominately between the age of 36-65 (77.3%), from either the East District (43.2%) or the ABC District (42%), and from communities with less than 1 million residents (69.3%). Interestingly, an in-depth examination of the clergy's responses revealed certain tendencies with regards to the use of several worship materials.

Fig. 6 -- Clergy's Age

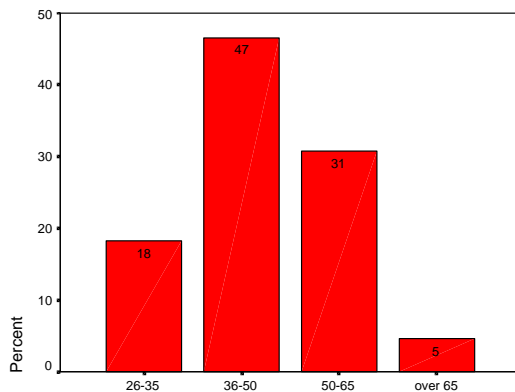


Fig. 7 -- Clergy's District

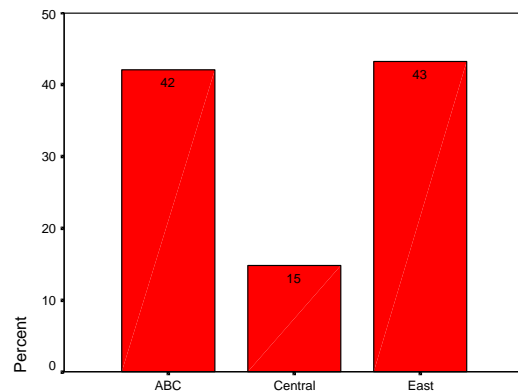
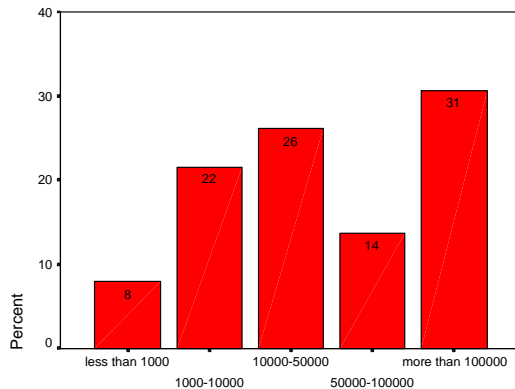


Fig. 8 -- Size of Clergy's Community



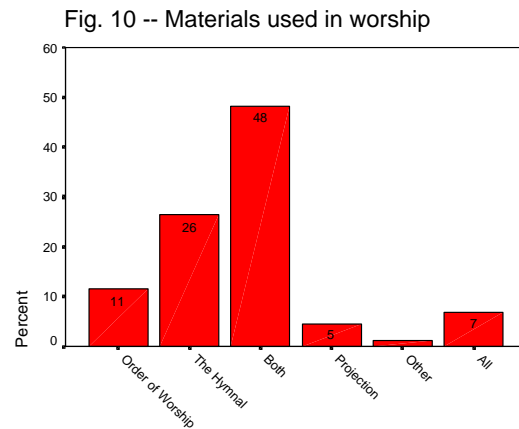
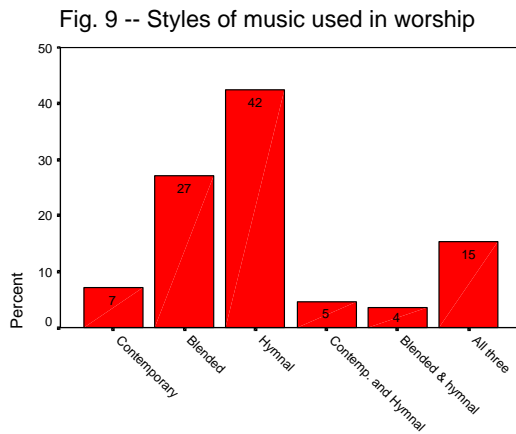
1) Use of worship materials by clergy

The survey included many questions directed at determining the use of worship materials by clergy within Lutheran Church–Canada. An analysis of these questions revealed that the clergy use a number of specific worship materials while undertaking their tasks within the church.

In regards to musical worship styles (Fig. 9), the clergy indicated that they used hymnal worship most frequently (42.9%), followed by a blended style of worship (27.1%), and

contemporary worship (7.1%). Interestingly, the current sample differed from the previous clergy sample in that they indicated the use of more than one worship style in their answer. Approximately twenty percent of the clergy sample checked off multiple musical worship styles in their answer. For the most part, a small minority of the clergy indicated that they frequently use two or more worship styles, namely: contemporary and hymnal (4.7%), blended and hymnal (3.5%), and/or all three worship styles (15.3%).

The clergy also indicated that they used several worship materials when conducting the services (Fig. 10). For the most part, the clergy repeatedly utilized both a printed Order of Worship in the bulletin and the hymnal when planning and conducting the services (48.3%). Fewer pastors had a tendency of solely using the hymnal (26.4%), printed order worship (11.5%), and other worship materials (1.1%); while a relatively small minority of the pastors indicated that they used all forms of worship materials (6.9%). A very small number of pastors indicated they use PowerPoint/overheads (4.6%) when delivering their sermon or in worship.



Several specific hymnals and songbooks were used by many of the clergy when conducting religious services. In order of mention, the most popular hymnals that were used by the clergy are as follows:

- 1) Lutheran Worship (59X)
- 2) The Lutheran Hymnal (38X)
- 3) Hymnal Supplement (19X)
- 4) Lutheran Book of Worship (9X)

The clergy also mentioned several popular songbooks. In decreasing order, the most popular songbooks utilized by the clergy were:

- 1) The Other Songbook (10X)
- 2) All God's People Sing (8X)
- 3) With One Voice (4X)
- 4) This Far by Faith (3X)

5) Great Hymns of the Faith (3X)

Moreover, a large number of the clergy mentioned that they used CCLI materials quite frequently (indicated 32X in their answers). However, there is no further elaboration by the clergy regarding what specific types of CCLI material they use on an ongoing basis.

2) Comparison of responses to previous survey sample

Examining the responses of the two samples with regards to worship materials, several differences emerged. In regards to worship music styles, there appears to be a decrease in the use of a sole style of congregational song, opting for a multi-style approach. Compared to the 2000 sample, there was a general decrease across some categories of musical worship styles (see Table 1). Over the three-year period, there appears to have been a decrease in the use of contemporary and hymnal as the sole worship style, used in celebrating the Lutheran faith. There also appears to be a trend favouring the use of blended services. It showed a minimal increase in popularity over the three-year period. The decrease in popularity sole us of the contemporary and hymnal worship style can be explained by the fact that the current sample is beginning to design a tailored musical worship styles by incorporating several of the above mentioned worship styles. A sizeable minority (approximately 20%) of the clergy indicated that they are combining several styles of worship and congregational song, thereby creating their own unique form of worship.

Table 1 – Comparison of musical worship styles (2000/2003)

Musical worship style	2000 sample	2003 sample
Contemporary	3.9%	7.1%
Blended	40.8%	50.5%
Hymnal	55.3%	42.4%

Clergy's responses only

The remaining worship information provided by the two samples has remained fairly constant over the three-year period. The use of the hymnal, printed Order of Worship in the bulletin has remained fairly consistent between the two samples. The only difference that emerged in this area was the increased use of PowerPoint/overheads by clergy when delivering their sermon and worship services. In the 2000 sample, no pastors indicated that they used PowerPoint or overheads during worship. In the 2003 sample, a small minority (4.6%) indicated that they used PowerPoint/overheads.

The use of hymnals, songbooks and CCLI materials showed no difference between the two samples. Many of the same hymnals and songbooks are still being used.

Chapter 5 – RSVP Church Worker Recruitment Initiative

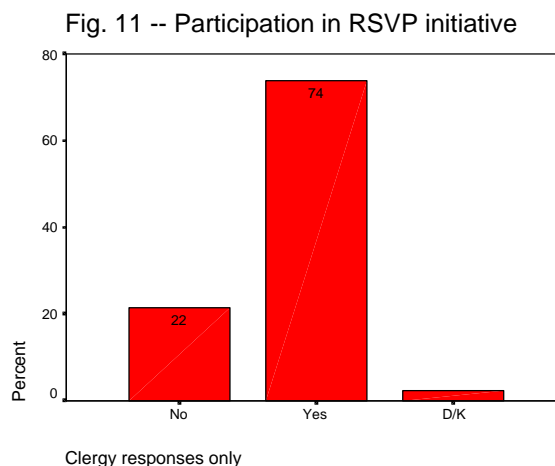
For the past six years, Lutheran Church–Canada has encouraged congregations to search within its ranks to discover future potential church workers. Within Lutheran Church–Canada’s administration, there was an interest in determining the extent to which this annual initiative for recruiting church workers is being used in the congregations across Canada. Therefore, several questions were included in the 2003 Planning Conference Research Survey to provide an indication of the use of this initiative and the recruitment material that is sent annually to the congregation. The following findings highlight the knowledge that congregations have of this program as well as the frequency with which they participate in the initiative.

1) Participation in the RSVP Church Worker Recruitment Initiative

In order to determine the degree of participation of the congregation in the church worker recruitment initiative, the respondents were asked if their congregation has ever participated in the program. Overall, there appears to be a fair degree of participation in the recruitment initiative. In examining the participation of the congregation in the church worker recruitment initiative, we will be examining the responses of the laity and clergy separately.

a. Clergy

As Figure 11 shows, the majority of the 88 clergy surveyed indicated their congregation has participated in the recruitment initiative (75.6%) over the past six years. Only 22.1% of the clergy indicated that their congregation had not participated in the initiative. A small number of the clergy within the sample (2.3%) were not aware if their congregation had ever participated in the church worker recruitment initiative.



The survey also inquired about the number of years and in which that the clergy’s congregation participated in the church worker initiative. These findings are presented below in Table 2.

Table 2 – Yearly Participation in RSVP⁽¹⁾

Participated (%)			
Years	Yes	No	Don't Know
1998	28.4	64.2	7.5
1999	41.8	50.7	7.5
2000	46.3	46.3	7.5
2001	56.7	35.8	7.5
2002	70.1	22.4	7.5
2003	50.7	41.8	7.5

(1) Sample size = 67 clergy members

It is apparent there has been a steady increase in the number of congregations participating in the church worker recruitment initiative. Marked by a fairly low participation rate in 1998 (28.4%), the average number of congregations that have started to participate in the church worker recruitment initiative has steadily increased until the year of 2002 (70.1%). However, there appears to be a drop in participation in 2003. Only 50.7% of the clergy indicated that their congregation had participated.

The survey was also interested in determining why certain congregations did not participate in the church worker recruitment initiative. Therefore, the survey asked of those clergy's congregation who did not participate in the initiative to elaborate on the reasons they chose not to become involved. The findings are presented below in Table 3.

Table 3 – Reasons for not participating in RSVP⁽¹⁾

Reasons for not participating	Yes (%)	No (%)
We never heard of it	4.8	95.2
Did not fit into our established schedule	9.5	90.5
The program is not effective	9.5	90.5
We have no potential church workers	28.6	71.4
Other reason specified	71.4	28.6

(1) Sample Size = 21 clergy members

For the most part, a sizeable majority of the clergy (71.4%) indicated that their congregation did not participate in the church worker recruitment initiative for a number of reasons not specified in the answers provided by the survey questionnaire. Many of the clergy offered a number of reasons why their congregation did not participate.

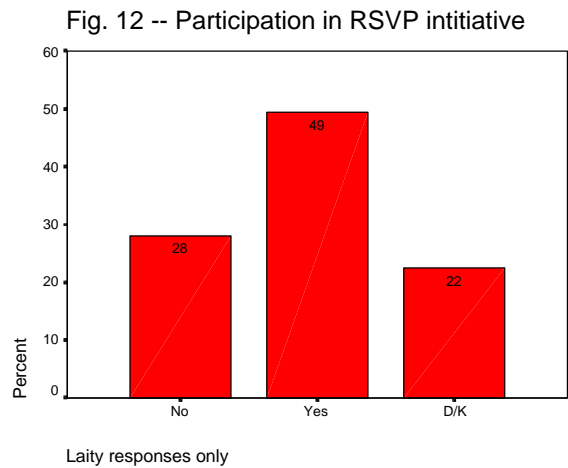
- No time/opportunity to implement
- I believe an informal approach is better
- Illness of pastor/used seminary Sunday
- I'm new in the parish
- We have our own aggressive recruitment initiative – five students at Lutheran schools in the past five years

- We are already encouraging several individuals and have hosted other recruitment events with seminary representatives
- I thought it was great and could be used just as needed in the parish

The second most common reason that many clergy indicated why their congregation did not participate was because they did not have any potential congregation members (28.6%) they felt could be referred to Lutheran Church–Canada. Only a small minority of the clergy indicated that their congregation did not participate because they felt the program was not effective (9.5%), it did not fit into their established schedule (9.5%), or they had never heard of the program (4.5%).

b. Laity

Lay responses to these questions provide some indication of the extent to which they were knowledgeable of their congregation’s participation in the church worker recruitment initiative. As illustrated in Figure 12, the majority of the laity had knowledge regarding their participation in the RSVP recruitment initiative. Of the 91 laity in the sample, a substantial majority indicated that their congregation had participated in the initiative (49.4%). Approximately one-quarter of the laity (28.1%) indicated that their congregation had not participated in this initiative. Interestingly, a fair number of the laity (22.5%) was not aware if their congregation had ever participated in the church worker recruitment initiative.



The survey also inquired among the lay respondents about the number of years their congregation has participated in the church worker initiative. These findings are presented below in Table 4.

Table 4– Yearly Participation in RSVP⁽¹⁾

Participated (%)			
Years	Yes	No	Don't Know
1998	6.3	53.1	40.6
1999	15.6	43.8	40.6
2000	18.8	40.6	40.6
2001	29.7	29.7	40.6
2002	43.8	15.6	40.6
2003	29.7	29.7	40.6

(1) Sample size = 64 laity members

As noted with the clergy responses, it is apparent there has been a steady increase in the number of congregations participating in the church worker recruitment initiative. Marked by a fairly low participation rate in 1998 (6.3%), the average number of congregations that have started to participate in the church worker recruitment initiative has steadily increased until the year of 2002 (43.8%). However, there appears to be a drop in participation in 2003. Only 29.7% of the laity indicated that their congregation has participated in the recruitment initiative. In addition, there appears to be a fair proportion that does not know in what years their congregations have participated. Although many remembered that their congregation had participated in this initiative, a large proportion (40.6%) of the laity could not determine participation for any given year.

The survey was also interested in determining why certain congregations did not participate in the church worker recruitment initiative. Therefore, the survey asked of those laity to elaborate on the reasons their congregation chose not to become involved. The findings are presented below in Table 5.

Table 5 – Reasons for not participating in RSVP⁽¹⁾

Reasons for not participating	Yes (%)	No (%)
We never heard of it	30.4	69.6
Did not fit into our established schedule	0	100
The program is not effective	8.7	91.3
We have no potential church workers	26.1	73.9
Other reason specified	56.5	43.5

(1) Sample Size = 23 laity members

Like the clergy, a sizeable majority of the laity (56.5%) indicated that their congregation did not participate in the church worker recruitment initiative for a number of reasons not specified by the survey questionnaire. Many of the laity offered a number of reasons why they did not participate.

- Lack of interest within our congregation to go beyond our local needs
- Change of pastor
- I personally do not remember this program.

- The pastors attitude and congregational character will create the right climate to produce workers
- Congregation too small
- We recruit and support with local funds
- I wish we would have but when I asked I got the response that “we did it last year” but personally I feel it should happen every year but our pastor didn’t think so.

The second most common reason that many laity indicated why their congregation did not participate was because they personally never heard of the initiative prior to the survey (30.4%). Another common reason that many laity indicated why their congregation did not participate was because they did not have any potential church workers (26.1%) they felt could be referred to Lutheran Church–Canada. The remaining reasons only represented a minor amount of the sample. Only a small minority of the laity indicated that their congregation did not participate because they felt the program was not effective (8.7%).

2) Primary human agent responsible for church worker recruitment

The survey was also interested in determining the opinions of the laity and clergy on who they believe should be the primary human recruiting agent for church workers in the congregations of Lutheran Church–Canada. Tables 6a and 6b highlight the opinions of the laity and the clergy on this important issue.

Table 6a – Primary human agent responsible for church worker recruitment⁽¹⁾

Human agent	Clergy responses (%)		
	Yes	No	Don’t Know
Family member	46.6	53.4	----
Pastor	44.3	55.7	----
Congregational members	63.6	36.4	----
Youth leaders	19.3	80.7	----
LCC educational institutions	12.5	87.5	----
Synod/district office	9.1	90.9	----

(1) Sample size = 88 clergy respondents

In regards to the opinions of the clergy, they believe that congregational members (63.6%) should be the primary agent through which recruitment for church workers should be accomplished within the congregation. The second most popular choice was family members (46.6%), which was followed closely by the pastor (44.3%) within the congregation. Interestingly, the clergy did not believe that youth leaders (80.7%), LCC educational institutions (87.5%), and the synod and district offices (90.9%) were suitable agents through which to recruit future church workers for Lutheran Church–Canada.

Table 6b represents the opinions of the laity with regard to who should play a primary human role in the recruitment of future church workers for Lutheran Church–Canada. The laity disagreed with the clergy. They felt that the primary human responsible for recruitment of church

workers should be the pastor and not congregational members. More specifically, a greater number of the laity believed that pastors (55.9%) should be the primary agent through which recruitment should be accomplished within the congregation. The second most popular choice by the laity was congregational members (52.4%), which was followed closely by family members (46.4%). In concurrence with the clergy, the laity felt that youth leaders (88.1%), LCC educational institutions (90.5%), and the Synod and District offices (97.6%) were inappropriate choices for church worker recruitment.

Table 6b – Primary human agent responsible for church worker recruitment⁽¹⁾

Human agent	Laity responses (%)		
	Yes	No	Don't Know
Family member	46.4	52.3	1.2
Pastor	55.9	42.9	1.2
Congregational member	52.4	46.4	1.2
Youth leaders	10.7	88.1	1.2
LCC educational institutions	8.3	90.5	1.2
Synod/district office	1.2	97.6	1.2

(1) Sample size = 84 lay respondents

Chapter 6 – Issues Within the Congregations of Lutheran Church–Canada

There is great interest within Lutheran Church–Canada to know how congregations feel about certain issues within church and society. As a result, the planning conference survey also listed many church concerns and societal issues which it wanted the respondents to rate on a scale of importance. The question asked respondents to rate these issues on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 = very important, 2 = important, 3 = neutral, 4 = not important, and 5 = no comment. This chapter examines these issues to determine which church concerns and societal issues respondents considered most important and those that were deemed as insignificant. Following this analysis, there will be an examination of the rating differences by church status, gender of laity, age, and district.

An examination of the entire sample's opinions regarding church concerns and societal issues revealed that the majority of them were extremely important issues and need to be further examined by Lutheran Church–Canada.

1) Overall analysis of church concerns and societal issues

There were several issues about which the respondents felt strongly rated as important or very important for themselves as well as their congregation. In order of importance, these issues were: Worship (96.0%), adult Bible studies (94.3%), post-confirmation dropout, visitation (86.1%), care-giving/support (82.6%), congregational leadership (81.1%), communion practices (80.3%), youth programs (77.5%), evangelism (77.0%), stewardship (73.2%), finances (73%), seminary education (72.7%), family programs (71.9%), the future of Lutheran Church–Canada (70.9%), overseas missions (69.5%), and seniors ministry (65.5%)².

For some of the issues mentioned above, there was also a significant proportion of the respondents who were neutral on many church concerns. These issues were: Singles ministry (46.7%), programs (43.6%), role of women (40.4%), CLWR (39.3%), Lutheran schools (39.3%), social ministry (39.1%), structure of the Synod (39.1%), cross-cultural ministry (34.7%), and family finances (29.7%). However, respondents rated few of these issues as not important. The only issues that had a sizeable proportion of the respondents rating them as not important were: Structure of the Synod (28.4%), cross-cultural ministry (23.5%), singles ministry (14.8%), and social ministry (10.1%).

² The percentages reflect the sum of the important and very important categories in the distribution of responses for this analysis. This is also the case for the societal issues that will be presented later in the report.

With respect to societal issues, the majority of respondents rated the following issues as highly important to themselves: abortion (82.8%), family breakdown (82.8%), aging population (73.0%), divorce (67.3%), homosexuality (64.6%), health services (62.9%), euthanasia (62.3%), retirement security (62.3%), youth delinquency (59.4%), public education (57.3%), financial security (57.0%), violence in society (56.0%), job security (53.8%), advancing technology (52.5%), poverty (52.2%), alcoholism (52.2%), and illegal drug use (51.6%).

But many of these societal issues also had a substantial proportion of the respondents rating them as neutral or not important. For instance there was a sizeable category of respondents who rated the following societal issues as neutral: environment (46.9%), government cutbacks (45.9%), immigration (44.9%), crime (42.4%), AIDS (42.0%), alcoholism (41.0%), unemployment (39.5%), advancing technology (38.6%), poverty (38.4%), job security (37.3%), cults (36.9%), financial security (36.1%), gambling (35.4%), public education (34.4%), illegal drug use (34.2%), violence in society (34.0%), youth delinquency (33.8%), Québec separatism (31.3%), health services (30.2%), divorce (29.6%), retirement security (27.7%), homosexuality (26.1%), euthanasia (24.4%), and aging population (22.1%). However, very few respondents rated many of the issues as not important. The only issues that had a fair proportion of respondents who rated them as unimportant were: Québec separatism (48.1%), immigration (22.2%), cults (15.0%), gambling (13.3%), AIDS (13.0%), crime (12.7%), illegal drug use (12.4%), government cutbacks (11.9%), and retirement security (10.1%).

Summary

Overall, several church concerns and societal issues emerged as very important issues. Many respondents indicated that the following church concerns were highly important issues within their congregations: Worship, Adult Bible studies, post-confirmation dropout, visitation, care-giving/support, congregational leadership, communion practices, youth programs, evangelism, stewardship, finances, seminary education, family programs, the future of Lutheran Church–Canada, overseas missions, and seniors ministry. The remaining church concerns were not viewed as important issues within Lutheran Church–Canada.

Several societal issues were viewed as highly important, most notably: abortion, family breakdown, aging population, divorce, homosexuality, health services, euthanasia, retirement security, youth delinquency, public education, financial security, and violence in society. Interestingly, the majority of the respondents believed that Québec separatism was an unimportant societal issue. This issue was the only one to have such a low rating of importance.

Examining the responses of the current survey sample with the previous one, several shifts in opinions have emerged, detailing respondents' view of the increasing or decreasing importance of a number of church and societal issues. Table 7a and 7b highlight the changes in the respondents' opinions of several church concerns and societal issues. Over the three year period, there appears to have been a decrease in the

importance of a number of church concerns (Table 7a). For example, issues such as evangelism, lay ministry, Lutheran schools, singles ministry, social ministry, youth adult ministry, and youth programs have significantly decreased in importance since the last survey was administered. Based on this trend, these particular church concerns are becoming less of a concern among the congregations within Lutheran Church–Canada.

Table 7a – Comparison of church concerns (2000/2003)

<i>Church Concerns</i>	Rated as an Important Issue (%)		
	<i>2000 sample</i>	<i>2003 sample</i>	<i>Difference</i>
<i>How important is:</i>			<i>(In %)</i>
Adult Bible study	93.0%	94.3%	+1.3
Care-giving/support	86.2%	82.6%	- 3.6
Communion practices	75.9%	80.3%	+ 4.4
Congregational leadership	85.3%	81.1%	- 4.2
Cross-cultural ministry	43.7%	72.9%	+ 29.2
CLWR	48.7%	85.7%	+ 37.0
Evangelism	86.3%	77.0%	- 9.3
Family programs	76.1%	92.4%	+ 16.3
Finances	63.9%	73.0%	+ 9.1
Future of LCC	59.6%	70.9%	+ 11.3
Lay ministry	69.2%	56.4%	-12.8
Lutheran schools	50.9%	40.5%	-10.4
Overseas missions	63.9%	69.5%	+ 6.4
Post-confirmation dropout	86.1%	84.0%	- 1.9
Programs	43.1%	82.4%	+ 39.3
Role of women	52.9%	49.1%	- 3.8
Seminary education	59.4%	72.7%	+ 13.3
Seniors ministry	69.9%	65.5%	- 4.4
Singles ministry	50.3%	36.7%	-13.6
Social ministry	65.2%	49.1%	-16.1
Stewardship	75.6%	73.2%	- 2.4
Structure of Synod	31.8%	29.0%	- 2.8
Visitation	86.6%	86.1%	- 0.5
Worship	92.4%	96.0%	+ 3.6
Young adult ministry	78.8%	68.4%	-10.4
Youth programs	86.7%	77.5%	- 9.2

A number of church concerns have increased in importance since the last survey. More specifically, the following church issues showed statistically significant increases in importance: Cross-cultural ministry, CLWR, programs, and seminary education. Concerns regarding family programs and the future of LCC showed modest increases in importance, but not to the degree and magnitude of the aforementioned church concerns.

A similar pattern also emerged when the author examined the difference in ratings among societal issues for the two samples. For the most part a number of different societal issues also showed an increase in importance, while others showed a decrease. Over the three year period (Table 7b), the following societal issues showed modest decreases in importance since the last survey: advancing technology, divorce, gambling, violence in society, and youth delinquency.

Table 7b – Comparison of societal issues (2000/2003)

<i>Societal Issues</i>	Rated as an Important Issue (%)		
	<i>2000 sample</i>	<i>2003 sample</i>	<i>Difference</i>
<i>How important is:</i>			<i>(In %)</i>
Abortion	80.4%	82.8%	+ 2.4
Advancing technology	63.0%	52.5%	- 10.5
AIDS	45.8%	42.6%	- 3.2
Alcoholism	59.4%	52.2%	- 7.2
Aging population	69.7%	73.0%	+ 3.3
Crime	47.1%	44.9%	- 2.2
Cults	52.9%	46.9%	- 6.0
Divorce	76.3%	67.3%	- 9.0
Environment	41.6%	40.0%	- 1.6
Euthanasia	64.1%	62.3%	- 1.8
Financial security	55.2%	57.0%	+ 1.8
Family breakdown	83.9%	82.8%	- 1.1
Gambling	58.1%	49.4%	- 8.7
Gvt. Cutbacks	42.9%	40.3%	- 2.6
Health services	64.9%	62.9%	- 2.0
Homosexuality	60.9%	64.6%	+ 3.7
Illegal drug use	51.3%	51.6%	+ 0.3
Immigration	29.4%	31.0%	+ 1.6
Job security	48.4%	53.8%	+ 5.4
Poverty	57.1%	52.2%	- 4.9
Public education	48.1%	57.3%	+ 9.2
Quebec separatism	17.6%	11.9%	- 5.7
Retirement security	53.6%	62.3%	+ 8.7
Unemployment	49.7%	49.7%	0
Violence in society	63.6%	56.0%	- 7.6
Youth delinquency	68.0%	59.4%	- 8.6

No societal issues showed a substantial increase in importance since the last survey like some of the church concerns. The following societal issues showed only a modest increase in importance: public education and retirement security. It is important to note that although some societal issues increased in importance, the difference was found not to be statistically significant. The remaining societal issues only showed slight increases or decreases in importance compared to the previous survey.

The shift in opinions regarding certain church concerns and societal opinions between the two sample years can possibly be explained through the categorical differences that emerged in the ratings examined by status, laity's gender, age, and district. We will be examining the plausible influences of these categorical differences in the remaining sections. It should be stressed that these differences should not be deemed to be causally influencing the changes in opinions. It is not possible to infer causation of the factors, given the nature of information gathered by the study.

2) Analysis of church concerns and societal issues by clergy/lay status

For the purposes of this report, the data was also sorted to examine the difference in responses between lay people and the clergy. Overall, the analysis revealed significant difference regarding their opinions on the importance of several of the church concerns and societal issues.

Particularly, the laity was significantly more likely (84.6%) to rate CLWR as very important compared to the clergy (15.4%). The clergy rated CLWR more often as a neutral or unimportant (respectively; 56.1% and 56.3%) church concern relative to the laity (respectively; 43.9% and 43.8%). There were also statistically significant differences that emerged when examining the issue of the future of Lutheran Church–Canada. Once again, the laity compared to the clergy believed that the future of LCC was an extremely important church issue (lay, 70%; clergy, 30%). However, the clergy viewed this issue more neutrally (71.8%) than the laity (28.8%).

The programs issue also showed significant differences in the ratings made by the clergy and the laity. Once again, the laity viewed programs as being important. Significantly more laity rated this as very important (83.8%) compared to the clergy (16.7%). This relationship was also seen of those respondents who rated this as important. More laity rated this as important (67.2%) compared to the clergy (32.8%). A greater number of clergy rated programs neutrally or as unimportant (respectively; 73.9% and 68.7%) compared to the laity (respectively; 26.1% and 33.3%).

Many laypersons felt that the role of women was an important issue for their congregation. Overwhelmingly, many laity rated the role of women as a very important issue (63.2%) compared to the clergy (36.8%). This was also the case for those rating the issue as important; many more laity (62.5%) rated the issue as important compared to the clergy (37.5%). Clergy rated this particular issue as being a less contentious issue within Lutheran Church–Canada. Many more clergy rated the issue of the role of women as unimportant or neutral (respectively 64.7% and 56.5%) compared to the laity in the sample (respectively, 35.3% and 43.5%).

Finally, significant differences were found in the ratings of the clergy and the laity for the issues of social ministry and youth adult ministry. In regards to social ministry, a large majority of the laity rated this as a very important concern (75%) compared to the

clergy (20%) in the sample. A large proportion of the clergy rated social ministry as an unimportant concern (70.6%) compared to the laity (29.4%).

A similar pattern was observed for youth adult ministry; many more laity (68.6%) than clergy (31.4%) rated youth adult ministry as a very important concern. More clergy, once again, rated youth ministry as either an unimportant or neutral concern (respectively, 58.3% and 65.9%) for the church when compared with the lay respondents (respectively, 41.7% and 34.1%).

Apart from these, the other issues did not show any discernible difference between the clergy and lay people in the sample. Where differences emerged in the distribution of responses, the patterns above emerged. For the most part, more laity tended to rate many of the many church concerns as very important or important than the clergy. The clergy tended to have a more neutral stance on several church concerns or viewed them as not important to their congregations. Although some sizeable differences emerged in the distribution of responses made by the laity and the clergy, an examination of the results revealed that these differences were not statistically significant.

With respect to the societal issues, the responses were quite similar to those mentioned above. For the most part, more laity rated several societal issues as either very important or important than the clergy. More specifically, the laity and the clergy differed significantly in their rating of the following issues: abortion, AIDS, crime, cults, euthanasia, poverty, and public education.

For the issue of abortion, many more laity than clergy rated this particular issue as very important (respectively, laity 67.6% and clergy 32.4%). However, a significant proportion of the clergy rated abortion as an important concern (63.3%) when compared to the laity (36.4%). Moreover, a larger proportion of the clergy (66.7%) rated abortion more neutrally than the laity in the sample (33.3%).

A similar pattern emerged for the AIDS issue in the survey. Many more lay respondents rated this issue as highly important or important (respectively, 71.4% and 57.4%) than the clergy in the sample (respectively, 28.6% and 42.6%). Like many of the other variables examined to date, many more clergy rated the issue of AIDS more neutrally or as unimportant (respectively, 60.3% and 57.1%) than compared to the lay respondents (respectively, 39.7% and 42.9%).

The issue of crime was the third variable that showed significant differences among the ratings of the laity and the clergy. Significantly more lay respondents (83.3%) rated this issue as being very important to themselves and their congregation than the clergy (16.7%). This pattern was also maintained with more lay respondents (55.2%) rating the issue as important when compared to the clergy (44.8%). However, the clergy (62.7%) rated the crime issue much more neutrally than the lay respondents in the sample (37.3%).

Categorical differences also emerged for the ratings provided for the cult issue. Substantially more lay respondents rated the issue of cults as either very important or

important (84.2%) than the clergy (15.8%). However, more clergy rated this issue as important or were neutral (56.4% and 55.9% respectively) on the matter than the lay respondents in the sample (43.6% and 44.1%).

The responses of the lay people and clergy regarding the other issues in the survey were not reported because they were fairly equally distributed among the response categories. Where differences emerged in the distribution of responses, the patterns above emerged. For the most part, more laity tended to rate many of the societal issues as very important or important than the clergy. The clergy tended to have a more neutral stance on some issues or viewed them as not important. Although some sizeable differences emerged in the distribution of responses made by the laity and the clergy, an examination of the chi-square results revealed that these differences were not statistically significant.

Summary

Overall, an analysis of the distribution of responses for the rating of a number of church concerns societal issues revealed that there is a significant deal of concurrence between the laity and the clergy. Both groups seem to agree consistently on the importance of the vast majority of issues found in the questionnaire. Only a few issues showed significant differences between the clergy and the laity. These were: CLWR, future of LCC, programs, role of women, social ministry, youth adult ministry, abortion, AIDS, crime cults, euthanasia, poverty, and public education. There was a clear divergence in opinions regarding these issues, establishing three distinct and consistent patterns in the rating of these issues:

- 1) The laity was much more likely to view these issues as more important to the church than the clergy.
- 2) The clergy were much more likely to take a neutral stance on many of these issues than the laity.
- 3) More clergy responses than laity were likely to indicate that these issues were not important to the congregation

A comparison with the findings of the previous planning conference survey reveals a number of differences in the rating of issues by the clergy and the laity. The two surveys are similar to one another in that, for the most part, there was a concurrence in the rating of many issues by the two groups. However, there are numerous differences that emerge in the issues where significant differences were observed regarding how each group perceived the importance of the issue. Perhaps the most readily evident difference between the two survey samples is that there is little concurrence in the issues. Within the first survey, significant differences were observed for a variety of church concerns and societal issues. The clergy and lay people differed significantly on the importance they placed on several certain societal issues. In fact, there was little concurrence that emerged for many of these variables in the 2000 planning conference. This was not the case for the 2003 planning conference survey, where there was a great deal of concurrence among the laity and the clergy. Interestingly, they only showed marginal differences in their rating

of several church concerns and societal issues. Both groups concurred that many issues were of important concern to them and their congregation.

3) Analysis of church concerns and societal issues by laity's gender

An analysis of the data uncovered several significant differences regarding the rating of church concerns and societal issues based on gender differences of the laity. These differences can be potentially one source through which the 2000 and 2003 sample differ significantly from one another, providing the reader with some plausible explanations for the shift in opinions regarding a number of the differences observed in several societal issues and church concerns.

Overall, several significant gendered differences were found for the following issues: communion practice, CLWR, future of LCC, youth programs, alcoholism, aging, divorce and government cutbacks. The remaining church concerns and societal issues did not show any discernible difference between the genders of the laity. Although some sizeable differences emerged in the distribution of responses made by the laity and the clergy, an examination of the chi-square results revealed that these differences were not statistically significant.

Both men and women in the laity rated communion practices differently. Significantly more women than men rated this issue as very important to their congregation (women, 57.1%; men, 42.9%). This pattern was also observed for the issue of the future of LCC. More women rated this issue as very important (61.8%) than compared to the men who comprised the laity sample (38.3%). This pattern also emerged in the number of women as opposed to men who rated the future of LCC as an important issue. Significantly more women (58.3%) rated this issue as important than the men (41.7%). The men differed from the women in that they were more likely to rate this issue neutrally (72.7%) than the women in the sample (27.3%).

With respect to the issue of youth programs, the male laity (57.1%) was more likely to rate this issue as very important, than were the female laity in the sample (42.9%). However, this does not mean that the women were not concerned about the youth programs being offered in their congregation. They still believed that youth programs were an important issue for many congregations. Many more women (38.8%) rated youth programs as an important issue than the men in the sample (61.5%).

Another interesting relationship emerged in the examination of the importance of CLWR. Interestingly, men rated this particular issue as important, whereas women were more neutral on their outlook of the issue of CLWR. More men (62.1%) indicated that this was a very important problem compared to the women (37.9%). However, significantly more women (75.9%) were ambivalent regarding the importance of CLWR as a critical issue for their congregations compared to the men (24.1%).

Differences between male and female laity also emerged when rating the issue of alcoholism. Two distinct patterns emerged. The first was the greater proportion of men

(57.1%) who indicated that the issue was important compared to the women (42.9%). However, a large proportion of the females (65.6%) had rated alcoholism as a neutral issue for themselves and within their congregation when compared to male laity (34.4%).

With respect to aging population in society, the male laity (73.7%) was more likely to rate this issue, as very important than were the female laity in the sample (26.3%). However, this does not mean that the women were not concerned about the aging population in society. Through their responses, they still believed that the aging population was an important issue. Many more women (59%) rated the aging population issue as an important issue than the men in the sample (41%).

Divorce was another issue that showed statistically significant differences in the allotted ratings assigned to it by male and female laity. Both groups believed that divorce was a highly important issue; however, the two groups differed on how important they perceived the issue. Whereas more men (73.7%) rated the issue as very important compared to women (26.3%), significantly more women (66.7%) believed that divorce was an important issue (as opposed to very important) compared to the men who answered similarly (33.3%).

Finally, government cutbacks also showed significant differences in the ratings assigned to it by male and female laity. Contrary to the other issues presented to date, there was an equal distribution in the male and female laity rating the issue as very important or important. Interestingly, the male and female laity differed on whether or not they were neutral regarding this particular issue or believed it was an unimportant concern for their congregations. Two relationships emerged from the responses provided. A greater proportion of men (60.6%) rated this issue neutrally compared to the female laity in the sample (39.4%). However, more women believed that this issue was not important than the male laity in the sample (28.6%).

Summary

Overall, an analysis of the distribution of responses by the laity's gender revealed that there is a significant deal of concurrence between male and female laity. Both groups seem to agree consistently on the importance of the vast majority of issues found in the questionnaire. There were only a few issues where significant differences emerged between male and female laity. These issues were: communion practices, CLWR, future of LCC, youth programs, alcoholism, aging population, divorce, and government cutbacks. There was a clear divergence in opinions regarding these issues, establishing two distinct and consistent patterns in the rating of these issues:

- 1) Male and female laity differed on a number of issues in determining the importance.
- 2) The male laity was much more likely to take a neutral stance on many of these issues compared to the female laity.

4) Analysis of church concerns and societal issues by age

The data was also sorted to examine the difference in responses between age categories. Overall, the analysis revealed numerous differences in the opinions of church concerns and societal issues by age categories. However, the reader should interpret these results cautiously. The high representation of older respondents, the relatively low response rate of younger individuals and the small sample size, interact to make it difficult to extrapolate sound generalized findings from the data. This created problems in analyzing the data because when smaller groups all answer similarly, it falsely skews the data, making it appear that certain groups overwhelmingly feel certain issues are very important compared to the other age groups when this was not necessarily the case. Therefore, to facilitate the interpretation of the data, several age categories were collapsed. The new age categories used in the analysis are: under 35 years, 36-50 years old, 50-65 years old, and 65 years old and over.

Overall, we observed several statistically significant differences between age categories for several church concerns and societal issues.

More specifically, the following issues showed significant differences between age categories: adult Bible study, communion practices, family programs, future of LCC, lay ministry, Lutheran schools, singles ministry, social ministry, structure of the Synod, abortion, AIDS, environment, euthanasia, gambling, illegal drug use and Quebec separatism. The remaining church concerns and societal issues did not show any discernible difference between age categories. Although some sizeable differences emerged in the distribution of responses made by different age categories, an examination of the chi-square results revealed that these differences were not statistically significant.

In regards to the importance of adult Bible study, it was revealed that slightly older respondents tended to view this issue as more important than any other age category. More specifically, more respondents aged 50-65 (41%) rated adult Bible study as a very important issue compared to any other age category in the sample (under 35, 15.2%; over 65, 15.2% and 36-50 years, 28.8%). Another relevant pattern that emerged is the apparent tendency of younger respondents (those under the age of 35) to be indifferent towards the issue of adult Bible study. A larger proportion of respondents under 35 years (42.9%) were more likely to rate this issue neutrally than any other age category (36-50 years, 14.3%; 50-65 years, 28.6% and over 65, 14.3%).

A similar pattern was observed for other family programs. Results showed a greater rating of importance based on age categories. More respondents aged 50-65 (50%) rated family programs as a very important issue compared to any other age category in the sample (under 35, 11.5%; over 65, 13.1% and 36-50 years, 39.3%).

Communion practices showed a greater rating of importance based on the age of the respondents. More respondents aged 50-65 (39.3%) rated communion practices as a very important issue compared to any other age category in the sample (under 35, 23.8%; over 65, 14.3% and 36-50 years, 22.6%).

The future of the LCC showed a similar pattern. More respondents aged 50-65 (45.1%) rated the future of the LCC as a very important issue compared to any other age category (under 35, 19.6%; over 65, 17.6% and 36-50 years, 17.6%).

Lutheran schools also replicated this pattern. More respondents aged 50-65 (55%) rated Lutheran schools as a very important issue compared to any other age category in the sample (under 35, 25%; over 65, 0% and 36-50 years, 20%).

The issue of the structure of the Synod was also found to have a similar distribution. More respondents aged 50-65 (38.5%) rated the structure of the Synod as an important issue than compared to any other age category (under 35, 23.1%; over 65, 10.3% and 36-50 years, 28.2%).

The social issue of abortion replicated this relationship with certain age categories. The distribution in the rating of the abortion issue showed that more respondents aged 50-65 (40.6%) rated this issue as a very important concern compared to any other age category (under 35, 15.9%; over 65, 17.4% and 36-50 years, 26.1%).

This was also observed for euthanasia. The distribution in the rating of the euthanasia issue showed that more respondents aged 50-65 (43.2%) rated this issue as a very important concern compared to any other age category (under 35, 13.5%; over 65, 21.6% and 36-50 years, 21.6%).

The gambling issue showed a similar relationship with certain age categories. The distribution in the rating of the gambling issue showed that more respondents aged 50-65 (41.8%) rated this issue as an important concern compared to any other age category in the sample (under 35, 9%; over 65, 16.4% and 36-50 years, 32.8%).

Lay ministry also showed that more respondents aged 50-65 (53.8%) rated this issue as a very important concern compared to any other age category (under 35, 3.8%; over 65, 11.5% and 36-50 years, 30.8%). However, this issue also revealed another interesting pattern. It showed a larger proportion of respondents under 35 years were more likely to rate lay ministry as unimportant (39.4%). This was significantly more than any other age category (36-50 years, 24.2%; 50-65 years, 27.3% and over 65, 9.8%). The ratings of the singles ministry showed that more respondents aged 50-65 (38.9%) rated this issue as an important concern compared to any other age category (under 35, 14.8%; over 65, 13% and 36-50 years, 33.3%). In addition, a larger proportion of respondents under 35 years (32%) were more likely to rate singles ministry as unimportant than compared to any other age category (36-50 years, 28%; 50-65 years, 16% and over 65, 24%). Social ministry showed a similar pattern. Respondents aged 50-65 (50%) rated the social ministry as a very important issue more so than any other age category in the sample (under 35, 0%; over 65, 20% and 36-50 years, 30.3%). Moreover, a larger proportion of respondents under 35 years (41.2%) were more likely to rate social ministry as unimportant than compared to any other age category (36-50 years, 29.4%; 50-65 years, 16.7% and over 65, 11.8%).

This was also observed for the AIDS issue. The distribution in the rating of the AIDS issue showed that more respondents aged 50-65 (37.1%) rated this issue as an important concern compared to any other age category (under 35, 16.1%; over 65, 11.1% and 36-50 years, 35.5%). In addition, a larger proportion of respondents under 35 years (33.3%) were more likely to rate AIDS as unimportant than compared to any other age category in the sample (36-50 years, 28.6%; 50-65 years, 28.6% and over 65, 9.5%).

Environmental issues revealed a significantly different pattern than what has been observed thus far. In examining the relationship between environmental issues and age categories, it was revealed that the age category 36-50 years had significantly higher ratings of this issue than any other age category. Respondents aged 36-50 (40.7%) rated the environmental issues as an important issue more so than any other age category in the sample (under 35, 14.8%; 50-65 years, 27.8% and over 65, 16.7%). It also showed an apparent tendency of older respondents to rate this issue as unimportant. Interestingly, a larger proportion of respondents aged 50-65 years were more likely to rate environmental issues as unimportant (42.1%). This was significantly more than any other age category in the sample (under 35 years, 21.1%; 36-50 years, 36.8% and over 65, 0%).

Finally, Quebec separatism also revealed a significantly different pattern than what has been observed to date. In examining the relationship between Quebec separatism and age categories, it was revealed that the age category 50-65 years had significantly higher ratings of neutrality for this issue than any other age category. Respondents aged 50-65 years old (42%) rated Quebec separatism as neutral issue more so than compared to any other age category in the sample (under 35, 20%; 36-50 years, 22% and over 65, 16%). It also showed an apparent tendency of middle-aged respondents to rate this issue as unimportant. Interestingly, a larger proportion of respondents aged 36-50 years were more likely to rate Quebec separatism as unimportant (45.5%). This was significantly more than any other age category in the sample (under 35 years, 19.5%; 36-50 years, 31.2% and over 65, 3.9%). At this point in time, very few in any of the age categories felt that Quebec separatism was an important concern.

Summary

Overall, an analysis of the distribution of responses revealed that there is a significant deal of concurrence between age categories. Group differences seem to agree consistently on the importance of the vast majority of issues found in the questionnaire. There were only a few issues where significant differences emerged between age categories. These issues were: adult bible studies, communion practices, family programs, future of LCC, lay ministry, Lutheran schools, singles ministry, social ministry, structure of the Synod, abortion, AIDS, environment, euthanasia, gambling, illegal drug use and Quebec separatism. There was a clear divergence in opinions regarding these issues, establishing several distinct and consistent patterns, which may or may not be interrelated, in the rating of these issues:

- 1) Slightly older respondents (i.e. 50-65 years old) tended to view several church concerns and social issues as more important than any other age category in the sample. Linked to this trend was the tendency of:

- 2) Younger individuals (under 35 years) tended to be more neutral for a number of issues compared to any other age category.
- 3) Middle-aged respondents (i.e. 36-50 years old) tended to view several church concerns and social issues as more important than any other age category in the sample. This trend was also linked to a second relationship:
- 4) Slightly older respondents (i.e. 50-65) tended to rate issues as unimportant compared to any other age category.

5) Analysis of church concerns and societal issues by district

The data was also sorted to examine the difference in responses between the districts. Overall, the analysis revealed that the districts differed significantly regarding their opinions on the importance of several of the church concerns and societal issues. These differences can be potentially one source through which the 2000 and 2003 sample differs significantly from one another, providing the reader with some plausible explanations for the shift in opinions regarding a number of the differences observed in several social issues and church concerns.

Several significant differences between districts were found for the following issues: congregational leadership, evangelism, overseas missions, role of women, youth adult ministry, youth programs, health services, job security, Quebec separatism. The remaining church concerns and societal issues did not show any discernible difference between the districts. Although some large differences emerged in the distribution of responses made by the district respondents, an examination of the chi-square results revealed that these differences were not statistically significant.

The districts differed significantly in how they rated the issue of congregational leadership. For the most part, several interesting patterns emerged. It was noted that the ABC District rated this issue more important than any other district. More respondents from the ABC District (45.3%) rated congregational leadership as a very important issue when compared to the responses given by the Central (20.3%) and the East District (34.4%) in this category. However, this does not mean that the other districts were not concerned about congregational leadership. Through their responses, some districts still believed that congregational leadership was important, however not to the extent to which the ABC District considers it to be. Many more respondents from the East District (56.4%) rated congregational leadership as an important issue than either the Central (12.8%) or the ABC District (30.8%). Moreover, the East District also had a fairly significant proportion of their respondents who considered the issue of congregational leadership indifferently. There were a fair proportion of the respondents from the East District (46.2%) who indicated they were neutral on the issue of congregational leadership when compared to the ABC (34.6%) and Central District (19.2%)

A similar pattern emerged for the issue of evangelism. Although the three groups differed significantly in how they rated this issue, certain groups felt more strongly about this issue. For this issue, the East District believed more strongly than any other district that evangelism was a highly important concern for their congregations. More specifically, the data revealed that more respondents from the East District (39.3%) rated evangelism as a very important issue for Lutheran Church–Canada compared to the ABC (32.8%) and the Central District (27.9%). This particular relationship was also substantiated in the number of respondents who rated evangelism as an important issue for Lutheran Church–Canada to consider. Once again, more respondents from the East District (48.1%) believed that evangelism was an important issue than any other of the districts in the current sample (ABC, 43.1% and Central, 8.3%). However, it is interesting to note that several members of the East District disagree with the position held by many of its brethren. A large proportion of the East District (25.3%) rated evangelism neutrally, providing some evidence indicating that not all members within the East District necessarily agree that this issue is highly important.

This pattern was also seen within the issue of overseas missions. Overall, many more respondents from the East District felt that this was a highly important concern for many congregations within Lutheran Church–Canada. However, a significant proportion of the East District did not agree with this, rating overseas missions more neutrally than the remainder of this group. More specifically, the data established that more respondents from the East District (37.5%) rated overseas missions as a very important issue for Lutheran Church–Canada compared to the ABC (33.3%) and the Central District (29.2%). More respondents from the East District (47.9%) also argued that overseas missions were an important issue compared to any other of the districts in the current sample (ABC, 34.4% and Central, 17.7%). Finally, it was also observed that a fairly large proportion of the East District (25.3%) rated overseas missions neutrally.

Interestingly, the issue of the role of women within Lutheran Church–Canada provided some interesting relationships between the districts. For the most part, there was little difference between the three districts and their rating the issue as very important. The difference emerged in the number of respondents within each district who rated the role of women as a neutral issue within their congregations. A larger proportion of the East District (56.5%) rated the role of women as a neutral issue. This proportion was quite a bit larger than any other of the districts in the sample (ABC, 27.5% and Central, 15.9%) who rated the issue of the role of women within Lutheran Church–Canada. The data also revealed a fairly large proportion of the East District's respondents disagreed with this position. Approximately 40% of the East District's respondents actually rated the issue of the role of women as an important issue compared to 48% who rated it neutrally. There were more East District's respondents (51.5%) rated the role of women than compared to the two other districts (ABC, 37.5% and Central, 10.9%). However, within the analysis, a larger proportion of the East District respondents were actually neutral in regards to this issue. A significant proportion of East District (56.5%) rated the role of women as a neutral issue, a larger proportion than any other of the districts in the sample (ABC, 27.5% and Central, 15.9%).

Young adult ministry showed an interesting series of relationships between the responses of the districts. The ABC District's respondents (42.9%) showed a greater probability of rating this issue as highly important when compared to any other district within Lutheran Church–Canada (Central, 28.6% and East, 28.6%). However, the largest differences between the districts were caused by the ratings provided by the East District regarding this issue. A larger proportion of the East District's respondents (51.2%) rated youth or adult ministry as an important issue within their congregations. This proportion was larger than either the ABC or the Central Districts (32.9% and 15.9% respectively). The data also revealed a fairly large proportion of the East District's respondents who disagreed with this position. Approximately one quarter of the East District's respondents actually rated the issue of the young adult ministry neutrally compared to one-half rating it as important. Within the analysis, a significant proportion of East District (56.5%) rated the young adults as a neutral issue; a proportion that was larger than any other of the districts in the sample (ABC, 27.5% and Central, 15.9%). A similar pattern was observed for the youth programs issue.

More ABC District's respondents (48.1%) rated youth programs as highly important when compared to any other district within Lutheran Church–Canada (Central, 21.2% and East, 20.8%). However, the East District provided the largest differences. A larger proportion of the East District's respondents (56.1%) rated youth programs as an important issue within their congregations; a proportion that was larger than either the ABC or the Central Districts (28% and 15.9% respectively). The data also revealed a fairly large proportion of the East District's respondents who disagreed with this position. Approximately 20 percent of the East District's respondents rated youth programs neutrally. A significant proportion of East District (58.1%) rated youth programs as a neutral issue; this proportion was larger than any other of the districts in the sample (ABC, 29% and Central, 12.9%).

An examination of the societal issues included in the survey revealed only three significant differences between the ratings provided by the districts within Lutheran Church–Canada. Health services was one of the issues where several differences were observed in the districts' ratings of this issue. Interestingly, the largest difference between the districts was observed in the proportion of respondents who rate the issue of health services neutrally. Interestingly, a larger proportion of the East District's respondents (62.5%) rated health services neutrally than any of the other districts in the sample (ABC, 27.1% and Central, 10.4%). Another interesting pattern that emerged was that a sizeable percentage of the respondents from both the ABC (38.9%) and the East District (38.9%) concurred that health services is an important societal issue than compared to the Central District (22.2%). This pattern was also observed for the issue of job security.

A larger proportion of the East District's respondents (60.3%) rated job security more neutrally than any of the other districts in the sample (ABC, 27.6% and Central, 12.1%). Also, a fairly similar percentage of the respondents from both the ABC (38.2%) and the East District (36.8%) concurred that job security is an important societal issue than compared to the Central District (25%).

Finally, the rating of the Quebec separatism issue by the districts revealed several interesting patterns. Primarily, very few of the respondents in either district actually rated the issue as being a highly important concern. For the most part, significant differences were observed in how many rated the issue as neutral or unimportant. Significantly more respondents from the East District were much more likely to rate Quebec separatism as unimportant or neutral than any other district within Lutheran Church–Canada. Much more of the East District’s respondents (62%) rated Quebec separatism neutrally than any other district within Lutheran Church–Canada (ABC, 28% and Central, 10%). The other pattern that emerged was the ABC’s position on Quebec separatism. It was noted that more respondents within the ABC District rated this issue as unimportant compared to the other districts within the sample. More respondents from the ABC District (46.1%) rated Quebec separatism as a very important issue when compared to the responses given by the Central (17.1%) and the East District (36.8%) in this category. Based on the evidence, it appears that the issue of Quebec separatism is waning in importance among the districts.

Summary

Overall, an analysis of the distribution of responses revealed that there is a significant deal of concurrence between district categories. Group differences seem to agree consistently on the importance of the vast majority of issues found in the questionnaire. There were only a few issues where significant differences emerged between districts. These issues were: congregational leadership, evangelism, overseas missions, role of women, youth adult ministry, youth programs, health services, job security, Quebec separatism. There was a clear divergence in opinions regarding these issues, establishing several distinct and consistent patterns, which may or may not be interrelated, in the rating of these issues:

- 1) The East District tended to rate more issues as being highly important compared to either the ABC and the Central District.
- 2) There was not necessarily concurrence among individual districts with regards to their overall view of the importance of several church concerns and societal issues. More specifically, a significant proportion of the East District actually rated several issues neutrally, disagreeing within their district’s rating of several issues. A significant proportion of East District tended to rate several issues more neutrally. This particular proportion was also larger than any other of the districts in the sample.
- 3) For a few issues, the ABC District tended to rate these issues as being highly important compared to either the East or the Central District.
- 4) For a few issues, the East District had an increased tendency to rate some issues as unimportant than any other district within Lutheran Church–Canada.

- 5) For a few issues, both the ABC and the East District concurred in their tendency to similarly rate the importance of several issues compared to the Central District.

Chapter 7 – Conclusion

An analysis of the respondents' answers revealed a number of priorities for Lutheran Church–Canada to focus upon. Specifically, the examination of several open-ended questions in the survey revealed several recurring themes. More specifically, several strengths of the Lutheran Church–Canada were: doctrine, missions, Word, Sacraments, confessions, and strong leadership. However, many respondents also indicated that the Lutheran Church–Canada had several weaknesses that need to be addressed, such as: finances, loss of youth, recruitment of pastors and clergy, declining populations in rural areas. Several respondents indicated that Lutheran Church–Canada could undertake several opportunities that were appearing to them, specifically: urban ministry, greater incorporation of communication technology, using youth talent, and ministry to Aboriginals. There were many challenges/threats that respondents felt the Lutheran Church–Canada have to address in the future, for instance: finances, missions, rural churches declining population, declining attendance/memberships, stewardship, recruitment, loss of young people, and the growing number of elderly congregations.

A comparison with the previous survey sample reveals no significant differences in the answers provided for the strengths of Lutheran Church–Canada. The survey respondents answered quite similarly, naming many of the same strengths. Overall, the two samples concurred on what they believed were the strengths of Lutheran Church–Canada:

- 1) Strong identity, heritage, & history
- 2) Its strong doctrinal stance
- 3) Commitment to Word and Sacrament
- 4) Exceptional training and dedication of the clergy
- 5) Dedication of the church workers
- 6) Dedication and faith of the laity
- 7) Strong presence in mission work
- 8) Seminaries and LCC elementary schools

A similar concurrence was observed regarding the weaknesses of Lutheran Church–Canada, as well as the opportunities and challenges/threats facing the organization in the future. Overall, it is the belief among many survey respondents from 2000 and 2003, that the greatest weaknesses of the church can be tied to the following areas: Geographical limitations, financial commitments, and conflicts in the interpretation of the doctrine. The two surveys mention many of the same opportunities that they believe would be most advantageous for Lutheran Church–Canada to undertake. Perhaps the most important opportunities Lutheran Church–Canada should take advantage of are: Ministry in the North and smaller communities, youth ministries, using technology to reach post-modern generation in an attempt to retain young congregational members, increase the presence of women and the elderly in volunteer activities as well as in other roles in the church (i.e. women as ministers), build an AV library of lectures, essayists, workshops, and further incorporate the use of modern technology in the church.

There was also significant consensus between the two independent survey samples concerning the threats and challenges facing Lutheran Church–Canada. For the most part, the important threats and challenges can be summarized as follows:

- 1) Financial challenges
- 2) Declining church attendance
 - a. Aging population
 - b. Loss of young families
 - c. Loss of youth
- 3) Shortage of clergy
- 4) Secularism
- 5) Apathy of the laity
- 6) Lack of unity among churches in following doctrine

An overview of the responses of clergy also revealed that they frequently use specific services and worship materials. For instance, the clergy within Lutheran Church–Canada tend to use worship styles based on the hymnal or some form of blended worship. They are most likely to frequently use either printed Order of Worship and/or the hymnal when planning and conducting their services. The use of the hymnal and printed Order of Worship in the bulletin has remained fairly consistent between the two samples. The only difference that emerged in this area was the increased use of PowerPoint/overheads. In the 2000 sample, no pastors used PowerPoint or overheads during worship. In the 2003 sample, a small minority (4.6%) indicated they used PowerPoint/overheads in the service.

A comparison with the 2000 survey revealed little differences in the use of hymnals or songbooks. Some of the most popular hymnals and songbooks still being used, namely: *The Lutheran Hymnal*, *Lutheran Worship*, *the Lutheran Book of Worship*, *The Other Songbook*, *All God's People Sing*, *Great Hymns of the Faith*, and *Hymnal Supplement '98*. However differences were found in the use of musical worship styles. There appears to be a decrease in the use of a sole musical worship style, opting for a multi-style approach when worshipping God in song. Compared to the 2000 sample, there was a general decrease across some categories of music worship styles. Overall, there appears to be a trend favouring the use of blended services when adopting music worship styles.

The following synodical services were most commonly utilized by the clergy and laity in the sample: Worker Benefits Plan, Website, *The Canadian Lutheran*, LCC Communications services, Department of Missions, mission services, resources and involvement, LWML materials and *RSVP* materials and services. Excluding those who misinterpreted the question, the respondents in the current sample differed little in the responses that they had given compared to previous survey respondents.

For the past six years, Lutheran Church–Canada has encouraged congregations to routinely search within its ranks to discover potential to church workers. Within Lutheran Church–Canada's administration, there was an interest in determining the extent to which this annual initiative for recruiting church workers is being used in the congregations

across Canada. An overall analysis of the data revealed a fairly large rate of participation in the church worker recruitment initiative. There also appears to be an increasing use of the RSVP materials among many congregations. The RSVP church worker recruitment initiative has shown a steady increase in participation since its inception in 1998.

The questionnaire was also quite informative regarding the reasons why certain congregations did not participate in the initiative. Most commonly many indicated that they did not participate because they did not have any potential workers, they had their own recruitment initiative, no time or opportunity to implement, believed an informal approach in these matters is better, congregation is too small, lack of interest within our congregation to go beyond our local needs, change of pastor, and many laity personally did not remember this program.

Finally, an analysis of the controversial social issues and church concerns provided some interesting findings. Several shifts in opinions have emerged, detailing respondents' view of the increasing or decreasing importance of a number of the societal issues and church concerns. Over the three year period, there appears to have been significant decreases or increases in the importance of a number of church concerns and societal issues. These trends can be plausibly explained by categorical differences that emerged in the ratings assigned by status, laity's gender, age, and district in the 2003 planning conference survey.

In conclusion, the survey established important priorities that can be addressed in future conventions. The analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, challenges/threats, and recruitment initiative in the congregation provides useful insight. Such information gives Lutheran Church–Canada an indication of the potential areas where they have problems as well as the areas where they are particularly strong in fulfilling the spiritual needs of its congregations. The respondents' insight provides pertinent issues, arguments, and suggestions to deal with the potential problems that are present within Lutheran Church–Canada. Hopefully, the information will help Lutheran Church–Canada to improve itself in order to be better able to provide services to its congregations.