



Final Report on  
Strategic Planning Activities

March 2007 Meeting

National Board  
Episcopal Church Women

Submitted by Marcia White, ABC

## Recalling Our Work

The group reviewed its work from the September 2006 meeting including the norms for working together adopted by the group and the best test for servant leaders. The norms are included in Appendix A of this report.

*The Best Test for Servant Leaders*  
*“Do those served grow as persons?”*  
*“Do they while being served become healthier, wiser,*  
*freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants?”*  
*-- Robert Greenleaf*

The “best test” is a reminder to focus not on the internal workings of the organization but on those who should ultimately benefit – the members of ECW, the women of the church and the Church as a whole.

## Clarifying the Mission

When the Board began its planning work in September, ECW had two mission statements – one for the organization and one for the Board, and a new mission statement was adopted for each new Board. The Board decided to adopt one mission statement.

After considering and commenting on several drafts, the Board agreed on this powerful, compelling and clear mission statement:

**Centered in congregations,  
ECW empowers women to do  
Christ’s ministry in the world.**

This mission will not vary from Board to Board, but will transcend changes in leadership, both of ECW and of the Church.

## Role of the Board

Given the mission, what, then, is the role of the National Board? How should the Board live out and support the mission in service to the organization? After reflecting on its current program of work, the Board outlined its functions in relationship to the organization:

**The role of the National Board of ECW is to:**

- Model and share best practices in communication, programming, leadership and governance.
- Develop, support and inspire leaders at all levels: local, diocesan, provincial, national.
- Represent and build support for ECW in the wider church and the world

that all ECW programs support the mission of the organization, the Board developed the following questions to use when reviewing programs:

*For everything ECW does now or hopes to do, ask:*

- *Does this empower women to do Christ's ministry?*
- *How?*
- *How do we know?*
- *Of the things ECW does now,*
  - *What do we keep?*
  - *What can we do differently or better?*
  - *What do we let go?*
- *What else can we do?*

Using these questions to reviewing each program and activity will enable ECW to keep what is working, revise or retire what is not working and add new programs and activities that support and achieve the mission of empowering women to do Christ's ministry in the world.

## **Reviewing the Program of Work**

The current program of work for ECW includes the following areas:

- **Social Justice**
- **Communication**
- **Worship**
- **Finance**
- **Women of Vision/Leadership Development**
- **TMT (Triennial Meeting Team)**

As the Board began to discuss programs, it became apparent that there is a critical need to identify accurate statistics and information about the current state of ECW. This information would give the Board has a true picture of the number of congregations that have ECW, the health of those groups, the programs in place within congregations and the group's connection to the National organization.

The Board should encourage/enforce use of the following reporting structure which is already in place, but not used consistently: local/deanery contacts report to diocesan reps; diocesan presidents report to province reps; province reps report to Mary Ann; Mary Ann reports to the Board.

The Board identified all the components within each area of the Program of Work, and then applied the questions listed above to one component within each area. This provides a model for discussing all components in each area of the Program of Work.

### ***Social Justice*** \_\_\_\_\_

- Women-to-Women Grant Program
- Call to Action

## *Worship*

---

- Worship at Board meetings
- Forward Day by Day meditations – select meditation writers, submit to FDD
- Activities related to Triennial Meeting:
  - Recommend musician, chaplain, speakers
  - Prayer walk
  - Plan opening and closing celebrations
  - If requested, TM cross, letters and flyers

*What can we do differently or better?*

- Resources for women's meetings – opening prayers, ceremonies, etc.
- Bible study in Communique

### **The Board focused on the TM opening celebration.**

*Does the opening celebration empower women to do Christ's ministry?*

Yes. It sets the tone, inspires, brings the participants together.

*How do we know? TM evaluation.*

*What do we keep?*

- Ritual
- Doing things together

*What can we do differently or better?*

- Have the Presiding Bishop there
- Give crosses at the opening celebration
- Webcast and podcast – have available on web site
- Produce a service booklet
- Make it easy to duplicate at the local level
- Early liaison with the General Convention Worship committee

## *Finance*

---

- Receive Committee budgets
- Develop proposed budget
- Recommend Triennium budget
- Help VP of Programs with Triennial Meeting
- Triennial Meeting Delegate Aid
  - accept gifts, applications
- Help committee chairs with budget problems and questions
- Triennial Meeting Booth

### **The Board focused on the Triennial Meeting Booth.**

*What can we do differently or better?*

- Have ECW people in the booth all the time

- Train volunteers
- Have different resources available -- packets of information, etc. and “key” items for sale (not key chains, etc. but important, relevant things people can use to build ECW in their parish/diocese/province)
- The Board enthusiastically agreed on the following point. The booth should:

***Sell ECW, not stuff!***

***Women of Vision*** \_\_\_\_\_

*Does this empower women to do Christ’s ministry?*  
Yes, it develops skills and inspires women.

*How do we know?*  
Anecdotal stories, evaluations, statistics

*What do we keep?*

- Current list of presenters
- Promotional materials

*What can we do differently or better?*

- Compile evaluations and share with presenters, the WoV Management committee and the ECW Board.
- Compile statistics including presenters, # of sessions, and # of attendees.
- Present in the Diocese of each ECW Board Member.
- Offer scholarships.
- Advertise in Communique’, Episcopal Life and Living Church.
- Use as an ECW recruiting tool – connect the WoV experience with ECW
- Share information more widely – distribute promotional materials
- Put information about WoV on web site
- Use modules as workshop sessions at TM, province and diocesan meetings

The WoV management team should:

- Consider content update
- Institute presenter training
- Find funding
- Be at TM

***Triennial Meeting Team*** \_\_\_\_\_

- Propose schedule and theme
- Key note speaker and featured speakers
- Evening of entertainment
- Other special events
- Workshops
- Appoint committees/”staff” – secretary, floor manager, booth manager, etc.

## Consultant's Final Words

*As you might have predicted, I couldn't send this report without some personal comments. These are my thoughts and opinions only. I appreciate the opportunity to share them with you.*

First, continue the review of ECW's Program of Work. Review each program using the questions the Board developed in March. Be honest about what is working and not working.

Conducting an honest and thorough review of your Program of Work will help you discern what steps to take next. A journey begins with both knowing where you're going (visioning) and knowing where you are.

As you refine your Program of Work, focus on outcomes. Recognize the difference between output and outcome. I don't mean to single out an area, but my background is communications, so my best examples of the difference between output and outcome come from that field. Newsletters and brochures are outputs. The changes in attitudes or behavior that result from those materials being available are outcomes. Did more people go to the website to download information as a result of reading an article in *Communique*? And did getting that information change anything? Did a brochure ECW produced raise more funds for the Women-to-Women program? Outcomes are more difficult to measure than outputs, but they are a better gauge of the difference the organization is making.

Have the courage to let some things go or do things differently. The Board displayed this already when you unanimously agreed that the Triennial Meeting Booth should take a different direction. Collective courage may be harder to muster when you're considering a program that has more sentimental value or in which some Board members are more personally invested. It will help you to focus on the mission, the vision themes and on outcomes.

Get more mileage from what you already do. Consider Triennial Meeting for example. In and of itself, it reaches a very small percentage of the women in the church. Given the investment of time, talent and treasure that ECW makes in the Triennial Meeting, you should leverage this investment in as many ways as possible. A few ideas:

- Require every workshop presenter to provide electronic copies of their presentation and post those on the website.
- As you discussed in March, package the workshops for use in congregations.
- Write about the workshops in *Communique*'s – not just that they occurred, but pass along useful content.
- Find out if you can record them to for podcasting or video podcasting. If ECW's website isn't equipped for that, find out if you can post them on the National Church website and create a link.
- Send a packet with notes from all the presentations to each diocesan president and ask them to use the materials in their programming.

These are just a few examples, but you can see the idea and apply to all program areas.

Increase ECW's effectiveness by working collaboratively with the Women's Ministries Office at 815 and the other women's organizations in the church. This is part of "blessing the work of others" that Rev. Kinman spoke about when he visited the Board