

## Envisioning the Future

### *Appreciative Inquiry*

To begin the process of envisioning, the Board used the process of appreciative inquiry. Appreciative inquiry (AI) identifies successes and strengths that provide the foundation for a vision that will engage and excite the organization. As part of the process, the Board considered these questions:

- Recall a time when you were most proud of being a part of ECW. What was going on? Why were you proud?
- What has ECW done that produced the most benefit?
- What gives life to ECW?
- What are ECW's strengths?

The answers to those questions identified the following themes:

- Connecting/connectedness
- Being at the table
- Empower
- Local
- Inspire
- Celebration
- Communication

### *Picturing the Future*

In small groups, the Board used those themes to graphically represent visions for ECW. Those visions are included in Appendix B. of this report.

While the Board did not arrive at one vision statement, the themes and shared concepts included in the visions provide valuable guidance for the current and future work of the Board.

## Defining Success

With the mission and the vision themes in mind, the Board considered this question: "If ECW is 100% successful in living out its mission, what does that look like?"

Answers included:

- More congregations have ECWs
- More women are involved in ECW activities and leadership including younger women and women of color
- Women feel better equipped for involvement and leadership
- Women are more engaged in and passionate about their work in the church

## Working on Goals

Rather than developing new goal areas, the Board decided to review its current program of work through the lenses of the new mission statement and vision themes. To ensure

- tracks what ECWs are doing for outreach
- Update ECW board on social justice issues
- Activities related to Triennial Meeting:
  - TM program
  - Unifying Gift
  - Community Gift

**The Board focused on Call to Action.**

*Does Call to Action empower women to do Christ's ministry?*  
 It could, but not in its current form.

*Why?*

Call to Action should:

- Recognize local efforts
- Exchange ideas for outreach
- Inspire and challenge

*What do we keep?*

- Articles in Communique'

*What can we do differently or better?*

- More tangible presentation at TM
- Focus on MDGs – use free resources currently available from others (UN, Episcopalians for Global Reconciliation, etc.) to provide suggestions/support for projects, etc.
- Pilot projects

**Communication** \_\_\_\_\_

- Communique'
- All printed material – creation, distribution, storage
- Province rep materials – TM materials, rep letter
- Press releases
- Triennial Today editor/staff monitoring
- Web site

**The Board focused on the web site.**

*Does the website empower women to do Christ's ministry? Yes*

*How do we know? Emails, tracking hits and page views, surveys*

*What can we do differently or better?*

- More offered online
- Online meetings
- Blog
- Communique' online

- 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