

**The following are the Recommendations reported in the ELCIC Structural Renewal Task Force Report. The full report (42 pages) is found on the ELCIC website:**

**<http://elcic.ca/Structural-Renewal/documents/SRTFReport2011.pdf>**

## RECOMMENDATIONS

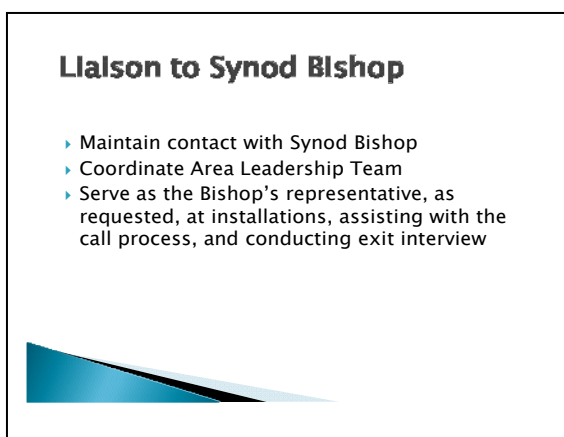
This section contains nine recommendations of the SRTF supported by the accompanying vision and rationale.

### 1. Create “Areas”—Groups of congregations that work together in mission led by an Area Leadership Team.

**Vision:** To create a structure that delivers more direct support for mission and ministry at the local level. The recommendation to create Areas and Area Leadership Teams is based on the belief that small groups of congregations working together to respond to the needs of people in their geographic area can accomplish more in ministry than individual congregations working in isolation. The proposed formation of Areas and Area Leadership Teams offers the opportunity for deliberate networking and mutual support among rostered leaders and lay people. Moreover, it provides assistance to the synodical bishop in serving congregations in the call process and in providing pastoral care to rostered leaders. In this new structure, leadership will be closer to the local level and it will model a grassroots team approach. The creation of areas and Area Leadership Teams and support for their role is key to the success of the proposed new structure as a whole.

**Recommendation:** The SRTF recommends that congregations be grouped into “Areas” to strengthen mission and ministry:

- Areas will replace the existing conferences and have a different mandate.
- Areas may be smaller than many existing conferences.
- The size and configuration of areas will be determined by the synod with 15 congregations being an ideal number for one area. Local characteristics could result in some areas having as few as six congregations and others as many as 25. Geography will be a key factor. Areas will be relational in function, building networks among congregations and collegial support among rostered leaders and lay people.
- Each area will be led by an Area Leadership Team comprised of one or more individuals (rostered or lay) who are skilled in the following functions:



### **Mission Leadership**

- ▶ Maintain contact with Synod Mission Staff
- ▶ Work with Congregational leaders, rostered and lay, to create area mission strategies
- ▶ Work within area to arrange for continuing education opportunities for rostered and lay to support and encourage area mission strategies



### **Pastoral Care Leadership**

- ▶ Encourage networking and mutual support among rostered leaders
- ▶ Provide pastoral support to area rostered leaders as required
- ▶ Maintain contact with the Synod Bishop as required



- Initially the Area Leadership Team will be appointed by the synod bishop in consultation with the Synod Council. Following an inaugural period, Areas will appoint a discernment committee to nominate individuals for the Area Leadership Team.
- Area leaders will serve a three-year, renewable term.
- Area leaders will receive training and support from the Synod office.
- Electoral Regions for the purposes of electing the Synod officers and delegates to the National Convention may be different from Areas. Several Areas may be grouped together to form an Electoral Region to ensure balanced representation. The exact number and size of Electoral Regions is to be determined.

### **Rationale for Grouping Congregations into Areas:**

The SRTF hopes to accomplish the following through this new structure:

#### **Area**

- ▶ What do we hope this will accomplish?
  - Tie into Spiritual Renewal
  - Recognize that ministry happens at local level
  - Nurtures relationships especially when congregations/people not in crisis
- ▶ Models team and co-operation for whole system
- ▶ Clearer focus than role of current conferences
- ▶ Size - to be determined by Synod Bishops in conjunction with the Synod Council
- ▶ Areas might be small, electoral regions may be comprised of several areas



## 2. Reduce the number of synods to three and clarify the role of the synods.


**Vision:** To create a structure that is flexible, affordable and sustainable and to recognize the value of clear roles and relationships. The SRTF believes that synods are more appropriately focused on the ministry of governance and leadership development while areas, congregations, and specialized ministries focus on ministry at the local level. The creation of three Synods rather than five or more will serve to maximize the support of local ministry with available resources. In the proposed structure, the three synodical offices will be appropriately staffed and equipped. A structure with three synods will have less replication of governance structures across the church while the creation of areas and Area Leadership Teams will address the needs of congregations and specialized ministries for mission and ministry support.

**Recommendation:** The SRTF recommends that the ELCIC have three synods and that the roles and responsibilities for synods be clarified as follows:

- The BC and ABT Synods will amalgamate and the SK and MNO Synods will amalgamate.
- The names of the three synods will be proposed through joint consultation between the National and synodical implementation teams.
- The role of the synods will include:


### Role of Synod

- ▶ Relate to Areas, Congregations and the National Church
- ▶ Support area strategies
- ▶ Training/support of Area Leadership Team (ALT)
- ▶ Support Congregations:
  - Develop compensation schedule and related professional leadership issues
  - Conflict management
  - Discipline



### Role of Synod (continued)

- ▶ Support rostered ministry:
  - Candidacy/colloquy/ordination/consecration
  - Call process
- ▶ Oversight and support of Seminary
- ▶ Ministry planting and development
- ▶ Regional ecumenical expressions
- ▶ Communication in cooperation with National Church communication strategy



### Rationale for reducing the number of synods to three:

The reality of reducing membership over the years means that the current model is not sustainable into the short or long-term. The survey results indicate good support for three synods. An analysis of the current membership numbers indicates that the proposed grouping is logical. A scenario wherein the number of congregations and total membership is reduced by 50% continues to support the proposed grouping. Finally, the proposed geographical boundaries are logical when congregations' locations are plotted on a map of Canada.

REGION	# CONGREGATIONS CURRENT	BAPTIZED MEMBERS
East	201	61,000
MNO-SK	193	45,000
ABT-BC	202	43,000
Total	596	149,000

The SRTF also considered a two-synod model. This is not being recommended because the synods would be disproportionate in geographical and numerical size. The Eastern Synod would have 201 Congregations and the western, 392 congregations. The survey results favoured the three-Synod model and finally, a two-Synod model could contribute to polarization in the church.

The SRTF considered a model with no synods, making the ELCIC one Church with a strong National Office and no middle judicatory bodies. This is not being recommended because the survey results indicated minimal support for this model. The SRTF thinks that our church continues to be well served by having Synods.

The SRTF considered a model with no national expression of the church. This is not being recommended because the survey results indicated minimal support for this model, and that there are important areas of ministries that are appropriately and more effectively done from a single platform. Examples of this would include relationships with ecumenical partners, public policy and establishment of standards for rostered leadership.

### 3. Clarify the role of the synod bishops

**Vision:** To create a focused framework that recognizes of the value of clear roles and relationships.

#### Recommendation:

Synod bishops will continue to serve as leaders and counsellors to the congregations, rostered ministers and “Areas” of the synod, although some of these responsibilities will be shared with synod staff and Area Leadership Teams. Their administrative role will continue in overseeing the governance and programmatic functions of their synod. Their pastoral role will continue in their responsibility for ordinations and consecrations and their oversight of installations. Their prophetic role will continue as they serve as the chief spokesperson for the synod and as they work in cooperation with their bishop colleagues to lift up the vision of this church as it applies nationally and on the territory of their synod.

#### 4. Streamline Synodical governance and redirect resources to mission


**Vision:** To align with the conviction that the majority of our mission and ministry happens at the local level, and to be consistent with the principle that the synods relate to “Areas” and congregations and also to the National Church.

**Recommendation:** The SRTF recommends that governance in the synods be streamlined by decreasing the number of Synod Councils (consistent with the three-synod model) and holding Synod Conventions triennially.

- Synod Councils will be reconfigured as follows:

**Synod Councils**


- ▶ Representation from each electoral region (electoral regions may include more than one Area)
- ▶ Balance of rostered and lay (alternating)
- ▶ Nominated by electoral region, elected by all at Synod Convention



- Synod Conventions will be changed as follows:

**Synod Conventions**

- ▶ Triennial (renewal events – National or Synodical could occur in the “fallow” year)
- ▶ Representation
  - Every Congregation represented by lay delegate with mechanism to allow more from larger congregations
  - All rostered leaders on active call



#### Rationale for changes to Synod Councils and Synod Conventions

The proposed changes will have an immediate and significant positive impact on the cost of governance at the synodical level. Travel and accommodation costs for Synod Council meetings will be reduced. Moreover, the time and funds recovered for the Synod Leadership Team by moving to a triennial cycle for conventions can be allocated to the support of mission and ministry at the local level and to on-going support for Area Leadership Teams.

The SRTF is also recommending that National Conventions move to a triennial cycle. It is envisioned that the fallow year be used for renewal events across the church. These could be larger, national gatherings or smaller, regional events planned and organized as appropriate to the needs and interests of members from time-to-time.


## 5. Clarify the role of the National expression of the church

**Vision:** To create a focused framework for a church that is distinctly Canadian. Also, to be consistent with the principle that the National Church relates to the synods.

**Recommendation:** The SRTF recommends that the role of the National Church be as follows:

**Role of National**

- ▶ Articulate the identity, vision and mission of the ELCIC
- ▶ Relate to the Synods
- ▶ Relate to partner Churches and Church Organizations, e.g., ACC, LWF, WCC, ELCA, etc.
- ▶ Relate to partner organizations, e.g., CLWR, KAIROS, Project Ploughshares, etc.
- ▶ Global Mission



**Role of National (continued)**

- ▶ Facilitate cooperative programming among Synods, e.g., CLAY, Worship Conference, CECF, etc.
- ▶ Establish Church-wide policy
  - Public policies, e.g., Peace in the Holy Land
  - Standards for rostered ministry
  - Social statements
- ▶ Oversight of pension and benefits (GSI)
- ▶ Communications: policy, strategy, delivery



## 6. Clarify the role of the National Bishop

**Vision:** To create a focused framework that reflects a recognition of the value of clear roles and relationships.

**Recommendation:**

The National Bishop will continue to serve as the leader and counsellor of this church. The National Bishop will exercise: an administrative role through oversight of the governance and programmatic aspects of this church, a pastoral role through the responsibility of ordaining Bishops; a prophetic role as chief spokesperson of this church and, in cooperation with bishop colleagues, lifting up the vision of this church; and a relational role in nurturing partnerships with synods, with partner churches, and with ecumenical and international partner church organizations and agencies.

## 7. Streamline the governance of the National expression of the ELCIC and redirect resources to mission

**Vision:** To create a focused framework that is flexible, affordable and sustainable and recognizes the value of clear roles and relationships. To align the structure with the principle that the National Church relates to the synods and the synods relate to areas and congregations.


## Recommendation:

The SRTF recommends that the cost of governance at the National level be reduced by decreasing the number of people on National Church Council, holding National Conventions triennially and reducing the number of delegates at National Conventions.

- National Church Council will be reconfigured as follows:

### National Church Council


- ▶ 4 officers
- ▶ 4 representatives from each Synod (1 Bishop, 1 rostered leader, 2 lay)
- ▶ Elected at National Convention (Synod Bishops ex-officio)
- ▶ One Anglican representative appointed by COGS



- National Conventions will be changed as follows:


### National Convention

- ▶ Triennial (renewal events – National or Synodical -- could occur in the “fallow” year)
- ▶ Delegates elected at Synod Conventions
- ▶ Each Synod has equal number of delegates
- ▶ Size:
  - 150 delegates (50 per Synod)
  - 30 lay delegates per Synod
  - 20 rostered delegates (on active call) per Synod
  - NCC (without vote)
- ▶ Funding:
  - Synods pay based on number of delegates



### Renewal Event(s)

- ▶ Triennial – held in the “fallow” year of the convention cycle
- ▶ Organized Synodically or by Synods working together
- ▶ No governance role
- ▶ Programs designed to respond to the changing needs of the Church
- ▶ Focussed on worship, mission, continuing education, etc.
- ▶ Ties in with spiritual renewal
- ▶ Emphasis on camaraderie



## Rationale for changes to National Church Council and National Conventions

Delegates to the National Convention will be elected by the delegates at the synodical conventions. This puts decision-making responsibility at the National level in the hands of people who have more direct influence on the implementation of those decisions. For example, those who approve the National budget will have the power to fund it because funding flows from the synods to the National Church.

The proposed changes will have an immediate and significant positive impact on the cost of governance at the National level. Travel and accommodation costs for National Church Council meetings and National Conventions will be reduced and the ability to choose smaller venues could also save money. Moreover, the time and funds recovered for the National Leadership Team by moving to a triennial cycle for conventions can be allocated to the support of its unique mission and ministry.

The current governance structure calls for approximately 600 delegates at National Convention. In recent years delegates have barely numbered 300. Financial constraints in the congregations are believed to be a primary reason for low attendance. The suggested new funding model would eliminate the obligation of individual congregations to pay delegates' expenses to the National Convention. This would allow election of delegates regardless of the ability of particular congregations to pay registration fees.

The SRTF is also recommending that Synod Conventions move to a triennial cycle. It is envisioned that the fallow year be used for renewal events across the church. These could be larger, national gatherings or smaller, regional events planned and organized as appropriate to the needs and interests of members from time-to-time.

#### **8. Change the process through which congregations bring their concerns to the National Church**

**Vision:** To align with the principle that congregations and areas relate to the synods and synods relate to the National Church. Also to clarify roles of the different expressions of the church.

**Recommendation:**

The SRTF recommends that the means whereby congregations bring their concerns before the wider church will be to petition their Synod Convention or Synod Council and once affirmed the matter would come before the National Convention.

**Rationale:**

Due to the smaller size of National Conventions not every congregation will have a representative. This recommendation delineates a clear process for congregations to bring their concerns to National Convention.

An alternative avenue for congregations and individuals to bring their concerns to the attention of the National Church is to write to National Church Council. This remains unchanged in the proposed structure.

#### **9. Recommendation: that National Church Council establish Implementation Teams, one National in scope and others focused on the synods with terms and tasks as outlined in Supporting Document J.**