

# A PROTOCOL

*For Cooperation with  
The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Haiti*

*February, 2009 A+D  
Revised May, 2009 A+D  
Revised September, 2009 A+D*

## **Context of This Document**

This proposal is a direct result of a series of consultations with Marky Kessa, President of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Haiti (ELCH) and Eliona Bernard, President of Concordia Theological Seminary–Haiti. The underlying dialog was initiated by Pastor Kessa, who requested that the parties interested in helping in Haiti consider forming a mission committee or similar entity to raise operating capital for the sake of the Church and fledgling seminary in Haiti.

## **Introduction**

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Haiti (ELCH) is a confessional Lutheran church body in church fellowship with the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod (LCMS). ELCH consists of approximately 100 congregations and 15,000 souls in the nation of Haiti, served by fourteen ordained pastors and a number of lay preachers. A seminary (Concordia Theological Seminary–Haiti, CTSH) has been established which operates in congregational facilities in four cities (Cap Haitien, Port-au-Prince, Jacmel, and Les Cayes), and is served by four professors, who are graduates of Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, Indiana. These four men travel from one location to another to teach regional, intensive seminary courses for the many lay preachers, leading to ordination. There are presently approximately forty students being served by CTSH, which has just recently achieved accreditation with the Haitian government, and may now grant the accredited degree of Bachelor of Theology. This is a crucial step forward for the ELCH, as it is prohibitively expensive to bring large numbers of pastoral candidates to the United States for a course of study at the LCMS seminaries.

The ELCH has sought to be a confessional Lutheran church body, and is differentiated from other nominally Lutheran bodies in Haiti in key Lutheran distinctives, such as the doctrine of the true and substantial presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper, the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, the practice of infant Baptism, and the practice of confession and absolution for the forgiveness of sins. To retain these Lutheran distinctives in Haiti is a challenge for the ELCH, as they are immersed in a Christian subculture that is markedly Reformed in its theological perspective. It is for this reason that a seminary that teaches in accord with the Lutheran Confessions is a necessity in Haiti.

The most daunting challenge created by the existence of a seminary in Haiti is financial: how will the ongoing training of pastors be funded? This concern, which is receiving renewed attention with the recent accreditation of the seminary, compounds an ongoing problem of poverty in Haiti which impacts the Church there in many ways. The ELCH has virtually no cash flow that could be directed with discretion to the areas of need for the Church. Almost all of the pastors in Haiti must hold one or more jobs—in addition to the vocation of pastor—in order to feed their families. Five of the pastors at present have sufficient connection to people and congregations in the United States, and sufficient fluency in English, to travel to America for fundraising. This is presently the chief, proactive method of funding the Church in Haiti. But the funds are vastly insufficient for the work that is to be done.

The unemployment rate in Haiti is among the highest in the world at approximately 75%. This means that general congregational offerings are (and are expected to remain for the foreseeable future) grossly insufficient to meet the basic needs of the Church in Haiti. A weekly collection at many congregations will yield perhaps the equivalent of \$2-3, which simply doesn't go very far, even in Haiti. Coupled with this is the reality that in African cultures, pastors are regarded as parish benefactors, and they are expected to expend available funds to assist parishioners who are in desperate need. The result is that most of the pastors in Haiti carry out their ministry in a near impossible context.

There are no easy solutions to these financial challenges. Indigenous financial growth cannot be expected in the near term, as the central government of Haiti is extremely weak and corruption abounds at every level. There has been little foreign investment in Haiti for generations, and none can be expected in the near term due to anarchic conditions which are counterproductive to business and investment. Although many groups in the U.S. attempt to ameliorate the poverty in Haiti, these efforts are small when compared to the vast scale of the problem.

The question for us, the people and congregations of the LCMS, is this: can we do anything to help our dear brothers and sisters in Christ, who are struggling to have a Lutheran Church in the midst of these grave challenges? Various groups have worked in specific areas to help in very specific ways. For example, the Kurt Marquart Fund for Theological Education in Haiti, Inc. has provided books and other material aid for the specific task of theological education, and has supported the accreditation effort for the seminary. Other mission groups have provided specific material aid, conducted mission trips for construction or other purposes, underwritten travel to Haiti, or even supported Haitians who were studying at the Fort Wayne seminary. The LCMS as an institution has promised help at many junctures, but has not been able to execute in a substantial, material way. All of these efforts are important and valuable—but they have not been able to address the ongoing capital needs that are intrinsic to operating a church body and a seminary in Haiti. The Church in Haiti needs operating capital.

This document is a proposal to provide the Church in Haiti with operating capital for the seminary, for pastors who are in profound need, and for other purposes which the ELCH leadership will, as God gives them wisdom, designate. The plan presents a framework for promoting the cause of the ELCH in the United States for the purpose of putting significant operating capital at the disposal of the Church, and also for reporting the use of capital to invested parties in the USA with transparency and accountability.

## **Potential Solution Models**

Various potential solutions have been proposed.

At one end of the spectrum is the possibility of maintaining the status-quo. In this model, the various organizations who are helping in their particular areas would continue to do so, with little

cooperation. Information-sharing would be minimal, and there would be no significant effort toward providing operating capital for the ELCH and her seminary.

Toward the middle of the spectrum of proposed solutions is the formation of a Committee that would coordinate communications between the various groups that are doing work in and for the Church in Haiti. Such information-sharing could be expected to decrease the communications burden on the leadership of the ELCH by providing a central target for dissemination of information, and could provide for some coordination of the disparate, US-based efforts. However, it would do little or nothing to help with raising capital for operating expenses of the ELCH/CTSH, as the various entities would continue to pursue their own fundraising interests.

At the other end of the spectrum, a new not-for-profit corporation could be created for the purpose of raising operating funds for the ELCH and her seminary. Although this may seem to be the simplest solution that addresses the need for operating capital, it could take nine months or more to have such an entity in place, because of the need to pursue 501(c)3 status under the Internal Revenue Code. In addition, a new entity would be starting with virtually no public awareness, and would need a couple of years to develop its name equity and a track record of assisting the Church in Haiti.

## **The Proposed Solution**

In a solution positioned between the extremes, The Kurt Marquart Fund for Theological Education in Haiti, Inc. (KMF), an Indiana nonprofit corporation, would expand its purpose to include the more holistic needs of the Haitian Church. KMF would be renamed simply “The Kurt Marquart Fund” to reflect its expanded focus, and would become the primary US-based fundraising entity for the operating capital needs of the ELCH and CTSH.

The primary advantage of this approach is that it would leverage the Marquart Fund name equity: both of Kurt Marquart himself, of blessed memory, who was so active in the Church in America and in Haiti; and also of KMF, which name equity has been built through a series of national mailings to more than four thousand LCMS pastors and congregations. KMF’s demonstrated ability to provide material assistance for theological education in Haiti is well-known amongst an increasing number of observers and donors, who now number in the hundreds. KMF has also been successful in raising a perpetual fund for theological education, with total donations near \$80,000 to-date.

Further, KMF is already established as a not-for-profit corporation, and has been granted the all-important 501(c)3 tax status (which permits personal income tax deductions for donors under rule 170 of the Internal Revenue Code). With KMF as the vehicle for ELCH/CTSH fundraising, the start-up time would be minimized.

## **A New Model**

It is important to note that this proposal does *not* envision establishing an entity to which the ELCH must petition to receive funds for various needs. Rather, this solution envisions a fund that will provide funds on an ongoing basis, essentially as they are received, to the ELCH. Such funds will be expended by the ELCH in such manner as they shall deem fit.

For American donors and for those who participate in the new KMF as volunteers, this model for foreign mission support requires that we, as Americans, not place ourselves in the role of benefactor, with all that entails, controlling the purse strings and dictating the expenditure of funds and the actions taken by our Haitian brothers. Rather, we must realize that by God's grace, we are the Lord's hands and the reflection of His love in the Gospel for our neighbors in Haiti. Thus, we will give our full confidence and trust to the leadership of the ELCH, refraining from micromanagement and giving them space to operate their church and seminary.

For such a plan to work in the long term there must always be a reciprocal transparency in the use of funds; and where funds have been designated to a specific purpose by fund donors, an accountability from the Church in Haiti as to the actual use of funds. Where there is not transparency and accountability, future fundraising will be stymied, as American donors will be uncomfortable with giving where there is no demonstrated track record of good stewardship. The present leadership of the ELCH are acutely aware of this need for transparent and accountable use of funds, and recognize that continued and successful fundraising in America will require such practice to continue. It is the authors' belief that the ELCH's continuing interest in sustainable fundraising will assure their ongoing cooperation in the areas of transparency and accountability.

A portion of funds received as "undesigned" will be set aside for permanent endowments. The existing KMF theological education endowment would be one target; perhaps a long-term endowment for general and operating funds could also be established within KMF. The endowments would be further funded by designated offerings, and would be suggested targets of bequests.

## **Impacts for The Kurt Marquart Fund**

KMF was organized by the 77 graduates of the Concordia Theological Seminary (Fort Wayne, Indiana) Class of 2007 as a perpetual fund that expends its income, but in any case not less than 5% of principal, each year to support theological education in the ELCH. The Board of Directors is drawn from Corporation Members, who must be graduates of the Class of 2007.

To expand the scope of KMF, and to embrace those engaged in the US-based work in Haiti in other organizations so as to form a single fundraising entity for the ELCH, KMF will have to be reconstituted to permit a more broad Board of Directors, and to allow funds to be collected that are for general, operating use, and not intended for a perpetual endowment. The purpose of the Corporation would be restated (and refiled in its legal governing documents) to embrace the more

comprehensive role of the KMF in raising funds to support the general work of the ELCH and CTSH.

The existing endowment fund for theological education would be preserved for its initial purpose, of course, and would be administered by a committee from the Class of 2007. In this way, the spirit and original intention of the fund's founders and of the donors who have invested in that original vision would be retained through the transition.

The new board would be constituted with seven members as follows:

- ELCH Appointee, the President of the ELCH, one board seat;
- ELCH Appointee, the President of CTS-H, one board seat;
- US-based Clergy, elected, two board seats;
- US-based Laity, elected, two board seats;
- UD-based Clergy or Lay, one board seat.

The board will thus consist of a total of 4 or 5 clergy, and 2 or 3 laypeople. The Chairman of the Board, the Secretary of the Corporation, the Treasurer of the Corporation, and an LCMS Liaison Officer would be elected from amongst the board members at the first board meeting, and every two years thereafter. Board members would serve three year terms, with no term limits. The Board would meet four times per year after an initial period of increased board activity.

#### *Standing Committees of the Board of Directors*

**Theological Review Committee**—A clergy committee of at least two ordained men. All mass-communications, collateral materials, presentations, etc. that are used for promotion of the ELCH, CTS-H, and KMF within the United States will be submitted to this committee for review, as well as any other matters which may arise that require theological discernment and discretion. Their recommendations will be submitted to the Board of Directors.

**Audit Committee**—Responsible to ensure that appropriate financial controls are in place, and that independent financial reviews/audits occur in a timely manner.

The Board would establish other standing committees as may be deemed helpful.

Upon its reconstitution, the KMF board would recruit an executive staff, and the executive staff and board together would begin to recruit associates to cover the various roles that are necessary to carry out the vision of the reconstituted KMF. The executive staff would consist of two communications executives and a financial executive (all volunteers):

#### Internal Communications Executive (1 volunteer)

- Database Administrator (1 volunteer)—maintains database for promotional direct mail, e-mail, donors, etc.
- Webmaster (1 volunteer)—web site administration for KMF and ELCH
- Copy Writer (1 volunteer)—provides copy for all promotional materials

- Designer (1 volunteer)—visual design of web pages, printed materials, etc.
- Logistics (1 volunteer)—trips, shipping, etc.

External Communications Executive (1 volunteer)

- Speaker/Witness (multiple volunteers)—those who speak at congregations in a geographic area on behalf of the ELCH. A Witness is a Speaker who has actually travelled to Haiti in connection with the ELCH.
- Donor Communications (1 volunteer)—prompt thank-you’s and follow-up
- Direct promotion (1 volunteer)—handles mailings and mail merges; coordinates volunteers and logistics in large promotional activities, like mass-mailings.
- Sponsorships (1 volunteer)—identifies and structures sponsored projects on behalf of ELCH—sister schools/ congregations, humanitarian needs, etc., etc.

Financial Executive (1 volunteer)

- Legal and Compliance (1 volunteer)—preferably someone with legal and tax background
- Investment/endowment (1 volunteer)—manages perpetual funds, like the pre-existing KMF Theological Education Fund
- Accounting (1 volunteer)—strong preference for someone with nonprofit fund accounting
- KMF Theological Education Committee (five members)—determines use of the KMF endowment for theological education; elected from the Class of 2007
- Economic Development (1 volunteer)—identifies opportunities for the ELCH to establish income-generating businesses in Haiti, or through export to USA, to move them toward decreased dependence on US funds.
- Endowment development (1 volunteer)—seeks funds for a permanent endowment for ELCH general use, and for the existing theological education fund, through bequests and direct solicitation.

The full staff for the reconstituted KMF will thus consist of perhaps 30+ volunteers.

## Use of Funds Raised

This proposal suggests the following use of funds:

	Initial %	Target %
Promotional Expenses	25%	10%
Theological Education Endowment	10%	10%
ELCH Endowment	10%	10%
ELCH Operating Funds	55%	70%

Promotional expenses include direct mailings, collateral materials (posters, bulletin inserts, etc.), communications, and other costs necessary to raising capital. The initial needs will be substantial, as it will be essential to update all of the pastors in the KMF promotional database (about 4300) concerning the changes in KMF's mission, and to produce new collateral materials for the effort. The percentage of total donations that must be directed to promotional activities will diminish over time as donations increase. A reserve should be held for future promotional activities when possible.

The Theological Education Endowment is the existing, perpetual fund managed by KMF at the present time.

The ELCH Endowment is a proposed new endowment fund that will be the primary target of bequests and other large gifts. The objective of the endowment is to provide a substantial and ongoing future income for ELCH and CTSH.

ELCH Operating Funds are monies which will be provided directly to the ELCH, essentially as they are received.

## **Impacts for Other Organizations and Individuals**

Other entities that are working in Haiti would be requested to cooperate with KMF in various ways, depending upon their particular situations and inclinations. Several kinds of cooperation would be encouraged:

Those entities and individuals who are helping in a narrow way in Haiti, and would like to participate in KMF, would be encouraged to join the KMF effort in some volunteer capacity. By working together in a more coordinated way, our efforts can achieve a multiplicative effect.

Those entities and individuals carrying out ongoing, periodic work in Haiti, such as mission trips, sending materials, etc., would be encouraged to continue their work, and to liaise with KMF for improved communications and coordination. KMF would request that such entities "remember the poor," by making some provision for the more general work of the ELCH, following the example of the apostolic Church (Cf. Rom. 15.25-8; 1Co. 16.3; Gal. 2.10). If each organization working in Haiti could provide a modest 10% override of donations to their projects, this would go a long way in providing for the holistic needs of the Haitian Church.

Finally, it is clear that a large number of volunteers will be needed to staff this effort. Certain roles could be best served by clergy; other roles by laypersons. Some roles, such as the role of Speaker, will be best served by retired clergy or laity, as many speaking opportunities will involve engaging a congregation on a Sunday morning. There will not be preference given to clergy or to laity in staffing the volunteer organization, excepting the requirements for a mixture of clergy and laity on the Board of Directors. Rather, preference will be given to best serving the objectives of ELCH.

## Conclusion

This document has been produced by the Board of Directors of KMF. However, no official action has been taken by KMF, except to recommend the restructuring of the organization in the manner indicated to the Members of the Corporation. The next steps are as follows:

- The KMF Board will circulate this document amongst others who have been engaged in the work in Haiti for comments, including the ELCH/CTS-H leadership. The document could be revised or amended as a result of those discussions.
- The amended document, along with proposed amendments to the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws of KMF, will be sent to the membership of the Corporation with a recommendation that the indicated actions be taken. The required changes in the Bylaws will require 60% of a quorum of the Membership of KMF to cast an affirmative vote for the changes to become effective. At this time, an election of directors will also be held. The existing KMF Board would become the Committee in charge of the disposition of the existing theological education endowment, and will recommend the election of an incoming Board of Directors that reflects the diversity of groups working for the sake of the Church in Haiti at this time.
- When the changes have become effective, Membership will be available to any person who meets the requirements for Membership, including agreement with the existing Confessional Statement of the Corporation:

“We confess without reservation the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the written Word of God and the only rule and norm of faith and practice, and The Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, as contained in the Book of Concord, 1580, as a true exposition of the Word of God.”

- The Board will then fill the three executive positions and the other volunteer positions as possible.

This working document outlines an ambitious plan. It must be so, because the scale of the need requires it. But we have Christ, who is Lord of the Church, with us at every step. The fifteen thousand souls in Haiti whom he has rescued out of darkness and brought into the glorious light of his holy Gospel are his, for he has led them through the waters and into the promised land of his grace and kingdom. Let us pray his continued blessing on our efforts, that all we do is done for the sake of his name in Haiti.

## **Signatories**

The following pledge their voices in the refinement of this concept, their help in its implementation, and their prayers for its success.

Pastor W. Perry Copus, Jr., Lexington, Missouri.

Pastor Daniel Herb, Middletown, Ohio.

Sem. David Preus, St. Louis, Missouri.

Pastor Peter Richert, Mt. Pocono, Pennsylvania.

Pastor Jacob Sutton, Plano, Texas.

Pastor Thomas Bernard, ELCH Executive Secretary/West District President, Haiti.

Pastor Paul Touloute, ELCH Church Relations/South District President, Haiti.

Pastor Marky Kessa, ELCH president/South East District President, Haiti.

Pastor Jean Gardy Cenat, ELCH Treasurer, Haiti.

Vicar Josue Dieudonne, Haiti.

Layman Lophane Laurent, Haiti.