



THE EPISCOPAL
MEDIA CENTER

STRATEGIC PLAN
2002-2005

Strategic Plan (2002-2005)

Executive Summary

The Episcopal Media Center is set to continue to position itself as a national organization that applies the power of the mass media to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ and as a principal media resource for the ministry of the Episcopal Church.

Key strategies:

- Develop the capacity to fund new programs
- Integrate and expand EMC development efforts
- Develop long-range program plan
- Build awareness of EMC at all levels of the church
- Continue to develop EMC Board of Trustees
- Create national training center for church leaders

A work in progress

The plan, adopted by the Board of Trustees on November 2, 2001, is a tool for the governance and management of The Episcopal Media Center during the next four years. Like all good plans, it is a work in progress that we will continue to refine and annually update as we seek to employ the contemporary mass media for the proclamation of the gospel and the enhancement of the ministry of the Episcopal Church. We welcome your comments and suggestions.

Strategic Plan (2002-2005)

The Episcopal Media Center, Inc.

Adopted by the Board of Trustees
November 2, 2001

Executive Summary

Independent agencies in the Episcopal Church have historically proven to be essential to mission and able to deliver specialized ministries in a more direct manner than parishes. Such independent agencies are nonetheless constantly challenged by a lack of constituent support and the constant need for funding. "Adoption" by official structures of the church can seem attractive but will always present difficulties in maintaining control of mission and program and the efficiencies by which agencies can deliver their service. Also, the presumption that the church is a vast funding resource is a false one. Independence becomes at once a great asset and a great liability. Independent agencies move without the lumbering structures of bureaucracy, but also without access to the funds that channel through mainline church structures, i.e. parish, diocese, national church.

Thus, The Episcopal Media Center has always lived somewhat "outside the box." It is attached to the whole but claimed directly by none. It is an exciting yet tricky place to live. It requires efficient, discerning and persuasive management, a committed and entrepreneurial staff and a board that understands their trusteeship in terms of hard work and frequent frustration. The satisfaction of living so close to a mission we cherish and the uniqueness of our successes is yet profoundly gratifying.

Many independent church agencies are new or temporary, shaped by issues and arguments of the times. In our case, The Episcopal Media Center, formerly The Episcopal Radio-TV Foundation, stands firmly in a tradition that has been true to its mission for over a half century. The legacy of a founding director who for thirty years broke new ground in religious communication is invaluable. It laid the groundwork for the renewal and growth we experienced in the 1980s and 1990s.

By 1997 the board of trustees was ready to draft a comprehensive strategic plan under the guidance of consultant Martin Leheldt. Following a board retreat, five months of committee work, and the adoption of the final report, the plan went into effect and essentially was fully implemented.

We now find The Episcopal Media Center poised for new and larger dimensions of growth. Thus, in May 2001, the board of trustees passed a resolution calling for the continuation of strategic planning. The sense of the board was not to waste time in doing it and to "get on with it."

Situation and Assumptions

The proposed plan recommends going straight to core business funding and programming issues. No one seems to feel a need (a) to revisit our mission statement, or (b) to radically alter course from our present priorities and hopes for the future. This plan emphasizes institutional development more than product and services or the rationale for our mission.

#1: Develop the capacity to fund new programs

It is proposed that the Center name as its first goal creating sources of revenues directed to program development.

To fully implement our mission the Center must be able to fund the development, production and distribution of new programs. Donors are now funding the Center's overhead, the Center's core business (tapes, Protestant Hour, spots, Christmas programming, consulting) and the recently launched Endowment for The Episcopal Media Center. New programs are the most difficult to fund as recently experienced with *Living with Money*. Our proposals seem to be outside the guidelines of most major foundations that give to religion

Action Steps

1. Establish a Program Fund to which monies will be directed solely for seeding new programs as established by the board. (2002)
2. Hire a Director of Business Development (DBD) to create new sources of revenue for the Program Fund (2002)
3. Launch a major global revival of "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe." (2002 ff) and review all other properties for market potential (2002).
4. DBD will assist the director of marketing in identifying and reaching new markets, including commercial markets for EMC product. (2000 ff)
5. DBD will assist the executive director and director of development in setting fund raising plans and participate in major gift cultivation and solicitations primarily for the benefit of the Program Fund (2002 ff)

#2: Integrate and expand EMC development efforts

A comprehensive strategy for keeping the momentum of all these initiatives must be created to give our fund-raising a coordinated purpose and goal. In a few short years, the Center grew from a hand-to-mouth existence to seven consecutive years of balanced budgets, funded 65% by charitable contributions. While earned income streams are created, the EMC must also expand its development program. One staff person now oversees the annual fund, generously supported by trustees and about 700 donors, an improved direct mail program, newsletters (*The Link*), and events such as the first annual benefit dinner, which we hope to continue on an annual basis. In addition, special campaigns for projects like *Living with Money* have raised

significant dollars from many of our current donors. Fund-raising for all these activities is enormously time-consuming and involves all members of the staff from time to time, particularly the time of the executive director. The Center's success in building its development efforts has resulted in the potential of internal competition for donors and their contributions.

Action Steps

1. Engage the services of a professional consultant to assist in coordinating existing fund raising efforts and expanding our national donor base (2002).
2. Target high net worth Episcopalian media professionals. (2003 ff.)
3. Recommend to the directors of the Endowment for the Episcopal Media Center a plan to reach endowment fund goal of \$5 million (2002).
4. Continue and develop annual benefit event concept (2002 ff)
5. Utilize the DBD in major gift area (2002 ff).

#3: Develop long-range program plan

Assuming the successful implementation of Goals 1 and 2 as stated above, it will be necessary to develop a production menu that is comprehensive, inclusive of all forms of media, and market driven. Major program successes consume enormous amounts of time over months and sometimes years. It makes long range program planning less urgent. Media program development is also fraught with risk. We have seen projects like *The Great Divorce* fizzle. Yet these questions are frequently asked, "What do we have in the pipeline?" "What's our next big project," "How can the EMC have a more regular presence in public media?"

Action Steps

1. Conduct a special meeting/retreat/conference of board and experts focusing exclusively on future program plans (2002-2003).
2. Identify and establish best means of distribution for EMC product and develop strategic relationships with others (e.g., PBS, Hallmark, A&E, Radio, Others) (2002 ff)
3. Develop plans by medium not solely by scope or content; thus eventually establishing task forces for radio, broadcast/cable TV, video, web, etc. (2002 ff)
4. Develop relationships with charitable foundations that will give to production (2002 ff).
5. Work more closely with national church to achieve common goals and to be of service to their efforts (2002 ff).

#4: Improve relations with churches, and increase awareness of EMC

Create position of Director of Church Relations. Market research conducted in 1999 revealed interesting statistics, among them an 80% EMC recognition rate of the 214 Episcopal rectors surveyed. Yet, use of EMC products and services remains low and increased parochialism makes it more difficult to get inside a diocese or parish with our story. The vast majority of Episcopal lay people have never heard of the Episcopal Media Center. Funding from church

sources has fallen dramatically in 20 years. While our current director travels the church widely, it limits the time he can devote to other activities. Given his visibility in the church, it has also fostered a "personalization" of the ministry that can be unhealthy for growth. EMC needs "new faces" on the church front that can articulate EMC's mission and sell our worthy strategic objectives.

Action Steps

1. Hire a Director of Church Relations (2004) to be in contact with parishes and dioceses, requiring extensive travel to export awareness, sales, services and funding needs of EMC.
2. Further develop relationship with All Saints', Atlanta.
3. Visit Episcopal seminaries on an annual or semi-annual basis.
4. Create linkage to the House of Bishops and the General Convention (2004 ff)
5. Identify new links and collaborations with the ELCA.
6. Establish theological advisory committee.
7. Conduct focus groups around the country.

5: Continue to develop EMC Board of Trustees

To continue to develop the strongest board of trustees possible. Any not-for-profit is only as strong as its board. The Episcopal Media Center has been fortunate to have a committed working board as one of its best assets. A board's primary duty is (a) to hire the director, (b) to set policy and establish long-range goals, and (c) ensure the financial health of the organization. Our board has functioned in each of these capacities and inherently seems to know that it is not a super-management committee. As the Media Center grows, so must its board.

Action Steps

1. Put trustees to work in new, creative ways.
2. Continue the precedent of 100% financial support from trustees.
3. Utilize trustees to increase institutional giving.
4. Identify major donor prospects and assist in solicitations.
5. Reconsider meeting out of Atlanta.
6. Develop board prospect list for nominating committee.

#6: Create national training center for church leaders

The move to All Saints' presents new opportunities for partnership in ministry and service to the community and the wider church. A national communication training center for church leaders has long been one of our goals. Our relocation to a church campus with excellent meeting facilities in a downtown area with lodging capabilities makes this all the more viable. All Saints' rector has enthusiastically accepted membership on the EMC board. The new Protestant Hour studio is wired into the nave of the church. The time appears to be right.

Action Steps

1. Research possibility of All Saints' becoming a nationally recognized center for media training and other products and services (2003).
2. Create a joint task force to create a plan for parish/EMC partnerships.
3. Seek national, institutional church partners.
4. Hold open houses regularly for All Saints' parishioners.

