2008 SURVEY OF NAECED MEMBERS

Foreword:

With approval of other board members of NAECED and the affirmation of PEALL (Proclaiming Education for All), Sharon Pearson spearheaded this survey of the NAECED listserv membership. The questions on this survey represent those of specific interest to NAECED, as well as questions about members’ use of various networks and associations for informing their Christian Education ministries of particular interest to Bud Holland, Wally Fletcher, Adair Lummis and others working with PEALL. This report on which those just mentioned have collaborated, is part of a larger research agenda for educational ministries within the Episcopal Church.¹

For this survey, Sharon Pearson conducted preliminary research to ascertain what networks a sample of leaders used in their Christian Education ministry, as well as what other questions were important to include. Working with Adair Lummis in construction and analysis of the web-based survey, Sharon wrote a cover letter, distributed the web address of the survey, and send out follow-up reminders to listserv members for completing the survey. By the end of February 2008, 200 completed surveys had been received. ² This response represents about 80% of the NAECED listserv.

I. NAECED MEMBERS: Backgrounds

Most (over 85%) of the members of the NAECED Listserv are laypersons, although the majority have a four year college degree (58%) or higher. Many have specialized education for their Christian Ministry work, and may be licensed as counselors and teachers. Further, a three-fourths majority (75%) has had continuing education in the last couple of years, in most case for work in Christian education. Almost all are white

¹ Within months of this NAECED survey being sent, two other surveys closely connected with Christian education and programs were also sent: (1) an email survey of diocesan youth ministry coordinators (completed fall 2007); (2) and email & web survey of congregational youth and young adult ministers/group leaders (soon to be completed). A survey gathering some information on networks and sources of assistance used in planning educational programs (but to adults in formation) is the (3) survey recently sent to directors of diaconal schools and formation programs.

² The Appendix to this Report gives numerical responses of the 199 who had filled out the survey by 2/23/08. Any that came in later do not significantly alter the distributions reported in the Appendix.
women, who range in age from under 40 (17%) to over 60 (16%), and represent 60 USA dioceses as well as a couple of judicatories of other denominations or locations.

II. LOCATION FROM/IN WHICH NAECED MEMBERS DO MOST OF THEIR CHRISTIAN EDUCATION MINISTRY FOR VARIOUS AGE GROUPS

A four-fifths majority (82%) of these responding NAECED members carry out their Christian education ministries within or for a congregation. Most of the others work primarily for a diocese (10%), and the remainder (8%) work in variety of settings, mainly both diocese and a congregation, for an Episcopal agency/foundation, or Episcopal school/seminary.

Given the congregational location of the majority of NAECED members, the fact that the age groups with whom they primarily work are children and teens might be expected. By far the largest age group targeted by NAECED members in designing or teaching in Christian education programs are children from age three through grade five. Yet not all NAECED members work out of a congregation. The following table suggests that NAECED members working for a diocese, not only develop programs for those younger age groups most served by congregations, but also are central to program development for older teens and young and older adults.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% = % Indicating that in Christian education programs, do have some responsibility for this Age Group</th>
<th>LOCATION OF Christian Ed MINISTRY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Congregation</td>
<td>Diocese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children, birth to age 2</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children, age 3 through grade 5</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior/middle high students, grades 6-8</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior high students, grades 9-12</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College age young adults, ages 18-22</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young employed adults, no children, age 22-30</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young parents, under age 30</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults over age 30</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired persons</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

III. SALARY, BENEFITS AND HOURS SPEND IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Only 15% of the NAECED members are unpaid volunteers working out of a congregation or other organization where they carry out their Christian education ministries. Still, less that half (45%) are paid for full-time work. NAECED members

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3 These statistics from 2008 reflect the results Sharon Pearson found in her 2007 survey of 90 NAECED members; 72% of whom were in congregations, 21% located in dioceses, and 7% in other institutions.
working for dioceses are more likely to have full time salaries (68%) than those employed by other organizations (53%), and especially than those working in congregations (41%). Health care and retirement benefits follow a similar pattern.

**TABLE 2**

**WORK LOCATION & FINANCIAL BENEFITS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORK LOCATION for:</th>
<th>Full Time Salary</th>
<th>Health Benefits</th>
<th>Retirement Benefits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DIOCESE</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTHER EPIS. ORG.</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONGREGATION</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE 3**

**EMPLOYMENT STATUS BY PROVINCE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PAID</th>
<th>One</th>
<th>Two</th>
<th>Three</th>
<th>Four</th>
<th>Five</th>
<th>Six</th>
<th>Seven</th>
<th>Eight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL # Persons</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* There were no respondents from Province IX

The weekly hours NAECED members spent in Christian education ministries varied from under 5 hours (9%) to over 36 hours (37%). Those spending the fewest hours tended to be volunteers, while those spending the greatest number of hours weekly are most likely to be full-time employees, as illustrated in the chart below.

**Chart I**

**PAID POSITION AT WORKPLACE AND WEEKLY HOURS FOR CE**
Full-time paid NAECED members are not necessarily spending full-time on Christian education ministries, as also evident from the chart above. However, those employed full-time in a congregation are more apt to putting all or most of their time into Christian education than those employed elsewhere, as seen in Table 4 next.

TABLE 4
FULL TIME PAID EMPLOYEES ONLY: WORK LOCATION & HRS WEEKLY IN CHRIS. ED.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORK LOCATION for:</th>
<th>20 hrs or less</th>
<th>21 – 35 hrs</th>
<th>36 + hrs = 100%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DIOCESE</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTHER EPIS. ORG.</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONGREGATION</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Salaries: Yearly salaries for those employed vary from under $10,000 (7%) to $50,000 and over (12%). Looking at the range of yearly salaries for full-time paid employees only, those NAECED members who are priests get the higher salaries, and most of these priests are men. Fully employed persons younger than 35 or older than 65 had slightly lower salaries than those in the middle years. No other individual characteristics including education (other than M.Div.) were related to salary among full-time employed NAECED members. Work location, however, is a major factor in dividing NAECED full time paid workers by salary as depicted in Table 5. Dioceses typically can afford to pay more than congregations, and do.

TABLE 5
FULL TIME PAID EMPLOYEES ONLY: WORK LOCATION & YEARLY SALARY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEARLY SALARY, FULL-TIME POSITION</th>
<th>LOCATION OF Christian Ed MINISTRY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Congregation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under $25,000 per year</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$35,000 - $39,999</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50,000 - $49,999</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50,000 and Higher</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Benefits: Of the respondents who are paid full time (88), 16% DO NOT receive health care benefits and 15% DO NOT receive retirement plan benefits.
IV. NETWORKS FOR CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Where do NAECED members get information for their work as Christian educators?

Websites: Some go to websites. In responding to a list of seventeen websites that do at times offer information that might be helpful for Christian education ministries, the top five sites most frequently visited six times a year or more by about half or more of the NAECED members, are:  

- **Visited at least Six times a Year**
  1. Own diocesan website (70% visited 6+ times yearly)
  2. Episcopal Church main websites
  3. Church Publishing
  4. Lectionary Page, Episcopal
  5. Leader Resources website (48% visited 6+ times yearly)

Some sites were more mixed in knowledge of or appeal to NAECED members. About a two-thirds majority at least knew of the following four sites, and about a third had visited these six or more times in the last year.

- **Visited at least Six times a Year**
  6. Ministry with Young People (44% visited 6+ times yearly)
  7. Diocese of CT website pages
  8. Candle Press
  9. Workshop Rotation: Sunday School (24% visit 6+ times yearly)

Some sites are nearly invisible to at least a two-thirds majority of NAECED members:

- **Do Not Know or Rarely Visit**
  10. Group Magazine website (67% do not know/rarely visit)
  11. E-Ministry network
  12. Theological Education for All
  13. ELCA website
  14. Diocese of Texas websites
  15. Diocese of Western NC websites
  16. Faith and Wisdom: Lifelong Learning
  17. SACEM (98% do not know or rarely visit site)

Some of the last grouping of websites, those mainly unknown or ignored by the majority of NAECED members, may post occasionally or often material that that would be valuable, if known. However, the learning here is that unless this material is also copied or noted on those sites the majority of NAECED members do visit regularly, it will not be seen or used.

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4 See Appendix, page 3 for full distribution of websites and times visited.
5 SACEM: Society for the Advancement of Continuing Education for Ministry
This conclusion is also based on the fact the great majority of NAECED members in their mainly congregational locations are “locals” in their use of and search for assistance in designing Christian education programs. They are most likely to ask for and receive helpful assistance in their Christian education work first from colleagues and friends at other churches; secondly from clergy or members of their own congregation; and thirdly from programs, conferences or workshops put on by their dioceses; and fourth simply through looking through publishers catalogs. About half indicate they asked and received some help through attending provincial conferences and workshops. A minority, however, sought such assistance through taking academic courses or attending national annual Episcopal conferences.

NAECED is likely the only professional association to which most of these respondents belong. On a list of twelve associations (and their listserv) that have some connection with religious education or youth and young adult programs, typically less that 15% of NAECED are also members of these or even have some contact. One partial exception is the DCE (Diocesan Christian Education Directors) listserv where a fifth (20%) of NAECED are also members. In short, the NAECED listserv is the primary, and if not only, source of information about Christian education outside their own dioceses for the great majority of respondents, and several wrote comments that this is indeed the case.

There are many Episcopal and ecumenical online resource networks and professional associations for those involved in congregational Christian education ministries, but they each have their own membership lists with likely minimal overlap. This generalization is not restricted to Christian educators who are NAECED members. In 2004-2005 a survey sent by the DFMS Research Office to a sample of Episcopal congregations, and filled out by 452 of the their primary Christian education and formation leaders had a similar finding, as reported by Kirk Hadaway:

“Very few Episcopal Christian education/formation leaders are members of Christian education-related associations of networks. Only 1% of clergy and 5% of lay leaders indicated membership in NAECED (the National Association of Episcopal Christian Education Directors.) Likewise, only 1% of lay leaders are members of the National Network of Lay Professionals. And no survey respondents (clergy or lay) indicated membership in the Religious Education Association (REA) or APRRE. “

If there some NAECED members can share what they have gleaned from other networks and organizations to which they belong through the NAECED listserv, the benefits to members would likely be great.

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6 See Appendix, page 4, question 11, for a list of which groups were asked for assistance and how helpful each were.
7 See Appendix, page 4, question 13, for a list of these associations and NAECED member contact with these.
V. THE RESOURCES MEMBERS STILL NEED FOR THEIR MINISTRIES

NAECED members stated that even they don’t have time/money to spend hours searching online networks or attending conferences and workshops out of their diocese; they still need resources that perhaps NAECED or their diocese can help them obtain:

In illustration, the Chart 2 are the types of resources most requested.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resources 30%</th>
<th>Diocesan Support 20%</th>
<th>Training, Conferences, Continuing Ed 14%</th>
<th>Salary &amp; Benefits 11%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

The need for additional resources in several areas was requested: curriculum (especially for pre-teens), adult education, professional development, worship, and faith formation in the home. Responses show that there is a feeling of isolation and the desire to be more connected to their diocese and neighboring parishes as shown in a request for better communication, networking and a desire for the formation of a staff position that would oversee Christian formation on the diocesan level.

See Appendix A for more details.
VI. NAECED MEMBER RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STRENGTHENING CHRISTIAN EDUCATION MINISTRY:

A. IN THEIR DIOCESE:

As in the previous question, over 50% of respondents desired their diocese to be a support to their ministry by providing a staff person and/or better communication and networking opportunities. Training is requested for the local and regional level, as budgetary constraints prohibit travel and conference fees.

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**Chart 3**

Hire Diocesan Formation Staff 26%
Better Networking & Communication 25%
Provide Training & Support 14%

See Appendix B for detailed responses.
March 2008

B. THROUGHOUT THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Each response was related to the issue of visibility and professionalism of the Christian educator in The Episcopal Church. Comments such as, “Clergy might better support (with funds and verbal announcements) formation/education offerings and emphasize that consistent attendance, particularly in the case of children, is essential for formation” and “Continue consciousness-raising in the area of budget requirements for lay salaries & benefits.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parish Level Education Issues 27%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional Staff Issues 19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place Education as a Mission Priority 17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Chart 4**

*How to Make Christian Education More Effective in The Episcopal Church*

See Appendix C for detailed responses.
SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATIONS:

NAECED is an active and responsive network of Christian Educators in the Episcopal Church. Largely comprised of female lay leaders of Anglo descent, they primarily work within the children’s and youth ministries area of a local congregation, although 10% are on a diocesan staff. The majority of members are part-time employees.

Most members use NAECED as their primary means of networking and resource support, through a very active list-serv. In addition, their own diocesan websites also assist them in their ministries. Members work locally and desire their diocese to support them more through resources, staff support, networking and better communication. Local training is most sought after. Working in a local congregation, a Christian educator tends to be isolated. At the moment, NAECED seems to be one of the only means of connection to the parish Christian educator. Resources for local use continue to be sought after, or better communication for finding what already exists that may be unknown to the local church.

The largest concern of the Christian educator is how Christian formation is undervalued at the local and diocesan level. The membership desires a focus on advocacy issues regarding equity of salary and benefits as well as the hiring of more diocesan personnel to oversee Christian formation ministries in those dioceses who do not have such a staff person.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NAECED:

1. Develop advocacy strategies for raising awareness of equity and accountability issues for lay Christian educators employed on the local church level.

2. Continue to network and recruit new members through seminaries and underserved populations of the church, including Province IX. Be more intentional about reaching out to

3. Offer links and resources on the NAECED website that are current, and offer links to seminaries and dioceses to link back for mutual sharing and support.


5. As the organization grows, develop regional networks (by Province or geographic region) for events, training and support groups.
COMMENTS FROM THE NAECE BD BOARD OF DIRECTORS UPON REVIEWING THE SURVEY:

1. Christian Formation is undervalued and more intentional teaching needs to be placed on Christian Formation in seminaries.

2. It is also important that the laity's contributions be given greater value. For example, the very best youth leaders are more likely than not lay leaders. These positions and those of Christian Formation Directors need to be valued and nurtured through compensation, continuing education, and having an equal voice in planning.

3. Until Christian Formation is taken seriously... and that means time for Christian Formation that does not coincide with church services... it will never be valued.

4. We believe the seminaries already know this, but we wish to state it again: that education for ministry, in the broadest sense, needs to look different in the decades to come. Seminaries need to become hotbeds of formation for faith formation! Not all those called to teach are also called to preside at Eucharist. It would be exciting to see seminaries with half their students on an ordination track and half not within the next 10 years?! (And, of course, to see seminaries as no longer primarily residential.)

5. We strongly believe that the diocesan level ministries that support Christian education and formation are lacking. Each diocese should have at least one person whose main responsibility is to support local life long Christian formation – for children, youth and adults. Local educators need better communication, networking, training and resource sharing from the diocesan leadership.

6. We need to make an effort to keep recruiting young clergy and lay professionals to take up the torch for something that is vital to the growth of the church.

7. A certification process is needed (such as currently in place in the Presbyterian Church USA, United Methodist Church and United Church of Christ) for professional Christian educators that could eventually lead to higher salaries, better education and better ministry placements.

8. There has been a cultural shift in faith formation over the last few decades. Faith formation has become the “job” of the church instead of the family. Today’s parents feel ill-equipped to teach their children about religion, faith and spirituality. Due to this, as well as a time-pressured society and fewer “stay at home moms/dads”, less parents and other adults are willing to volunteer their time for teaching in the church. The job of the Christian educator has also become parent education as well as helping to “form” children and youth.
9. Re-emphasize The Children’s Charter for the Church” so that all congregations are aware of it and live it out by including children in all aspects of parish life – especially worship. Having a dedicated “Education Hour” in all congregations in which learning is valued for all ages. “When the noise of the children is heard in the church, then the noise of the Church will be heard in the children.” The Rev. Dr. Glenn E. Busch, Rector of St. Mary’s Episcopal Church, High Point, North Carolina