

1997 Churchwide Assembly

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



MAKING CHRIST KNOWN

*Alive in
Our Heritage
and Hope!*

**REPORTS AND RECORDS:
ASSEMBLY MINUTES**

August 14-20, 1997 ! Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

**1997 Churchwide Assembly
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

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Assembly Minutes**

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The Rev. Lowell G. Almen
Secretary

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Introduction

You have before you the historic record of the official minutes of the fifth Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The assembly was held August 14 through 20, 1997, under the theme, “Making Christ Known: Alive in Our Heritage and Hope!” The site for the assembly was the Pennsylvania Convention Center in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Work of the Churchwide Assembly

The Churchwide Assembly is “the highest legislative authority of the churchwide organization.” According to the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, the assembly deals with matters that “are necessary in the pursuit of the purpose and functions of this church” (churchwide constitutional provision 12.11.).

Responsibilities of the Churchwide Assembly include: review of the work of the churchwide officers and churchwide units and action on business proposed by them through the Church Council; consideration of proposals from synodical assemblies (i.e., memorials); establishment of churchwide policy; adoption of a budget; election of officers, the Church Council, and members of churchwide unit boards and various committees; amendment of this church’s constitutions and bylaws; and fulfillment of other functions necessary for this church’s work (churchwide constitutional provision 12.21.).

About this Volume

The *1997 Reports and Records: Assembly Minutes* was prepared to be a complete and conveniently useable official record of the Churchwide Assembly. Therefore, reports and approved documents have been printed in the text of the minutes at the point of presentation or adoption, rather than appended elsewhere as exhibits. The content of the minutes, as a result, records the historical sequence of actions taken by the assembly.

Prior to Assembly

Various information items and proposals for action were presented to the voting members in the *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*. Included in the *1997 Pre-Assembly Report* were summaries of minutes of the Church Council held during the 1995-1997 biennium, reports of churchwide units, and printed documentation from the officers.

The *1997 Pre-Assembly Report* also contained various appendices to the Report of the Secretary, including summaries of the annual parochial statistics and the names of persons added to or removed from the roster of ordained ministers and the officially recognized lay rosters of this church during the previous biennium.

In this volume, *Reports and Records: Assembly Minutes*, those summaries and registers have been revised, according to the latest available data reported by synods, and are reprinted as appendices to the Report of the Secretary.

For historical purposes, the financial audits for fiscal years 1995 and 1996 are appended to the Report of the Treasurer.

Action Numbers

The numbers attached to each final action of the Churchwide Assembly are preceded by the letters, “CA,” to designate that the action was taken by the Churchwide Assembly. The designation, “CA,” is followed by the year of the assembly, 1997; thus, “CA97.”

Then follows the notation of the day of the assembly on which the action occurred, and the number of the action taken sequentially during the assembly. Thus, the action number, CA97.2.6, signifies that the sixth action of the assembly occurred on the second day of the 1997 Churchwide Assembly.

References to actions of various ELCA governing bodies also are cited by a code. For example, CC96.4.5, refers to the action taken by the Church Council (CC) at the council’s April (fourth month) meeting in 1996 (96), which represented the fifth action (5) of that governing body in the calendar year. Similarly, the designations, “EC,” and “CB,” refer respectively to the Executive Committee of the Church Council and the Conference of Bishops.

Citations of Governing Documents

Care should be taken to distinguish between action numbers and citations to the sections of the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*. References to this church’s governing documents are codified variously as ELCA 8.11. (a churchwide constitutional provision), ELCA 8.11.01. (a churchwide bylaw), S9.04. (Constitution for Synods), and C10.02. (Model Constitution for Congregations). A dagger (†) preceding the letter “S” or an asterisk (*) before “C” indicates that the provision is required rather than only recommended. Continuing resolutions are designated by a letter and the year in which they were adopted; thus, an ELCA churchwide continuing resolution is numbered, for example, 15.31.C95.

Reprint of Governing Documents

Various amendments to the governing documents of this church were adopted by the 1997 Churchwide Assembly. As a convenience to readers and for historical documentation, the full text of the 1997 edition of the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, as amended, is printed at the end of this volume.

Words of Gratitude

Special appreciation is due those persons who recorded the proceedings of the assembly and prepared the preliminary minutes. Three teams of two persons each carried out that task: Ms. Virginia K. Frantz (Upper Susquehanna Synod staff, Lewisburg, Pa.); Ms. Ruth E. Hamilton (Chicago, Ill.); the Rev. Richard E. Mueller (Florissant, Mo.); Ms. Carolyn Thomas (Rocky Mountain Synod staff, Denver, Colo.); the Rev. Karl J. Nelson (Sheboygan, Wis.); and the Rev. Leslie G. Svendsen (Northfield, Minn.). I am deeply grateful to each of them.

The monumental challenge of editing and preparing the minutes for publication was accomplished by Ms. Lorraine G. Bergquist (Issaquah, Wash.); and by Mr. Thomas J. Ehlen, the Rev. Randall R. Lee, and the Rev. Paul A. Schreck, members of the staff of the Office of the Secretary. To them, I declare personal gratitude for their conscientious service.

Abundant gratitude is conveyed to Ms. Mary Beth Nowak, assembly arrangements director, and all those who worked as part of the assembly operation, particularly members of the staff of the Office of the Presiding Bishop and the Office of the Secretary. Appreciation, too, is affirmed for the thorough efforts of staff members of the Department for Communication and *The Lutheran* magazine.

The Local Arrangements Committee was co-chaired by Ms. Joanne Rowan Carlson and the Rev. Paul M. Cornell. Several sub-committee chairs and members working with them contributed diligently and graciously to the work of the assembly. Members of the committees are listed on page 23 of the minutes. I thank all of those who contributed diligently and graciously to the work of the assembly.

Making Christ Known

Even as the themes of our previous churchwide assemblies have called this church to sing with “Many Voices, One Song,” to “See, Grow, and Serve to the Glory of God,” and to be “Rooted in the Gospel for Witness and Service,” so this assembly challenged the members, congregations, synods, and churchwide ministries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to serve with vigor and love in “Making Christ Known,” even as we are by God’s grace “Alive in Our Heritage and Hope!”

THE REV. LOWELL G. ALMEN, *Secretary*
Festival of Pentecost
May 31, 1998

**Fifth Churchwide Assembly
of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church
in America**

Minutes

August 14-20, 1997
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Plenary Session One

Friday, August 15, 1997

8:00 A.M.–12:30 P.M.

Order for the Opening of the Assembly

Plenary Session One was preceded by the order for the Opening of an Assembly, which took place at 7:52 A.M. Eastern Daylight Time, following a procession of assembly members, singing “A Mighty Fortress,” from the Ballroom of the Pennsylvania Convention Center at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to Exhibit Hall A, where all plenary sessions were to be held during this fifth Churchwide Assembly.

Organization of the Assembly

The Rev. H. George Anderson, presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, declared the Churchwide Assembly to be in session at 7:57 A.M. The assembly was invited to join in singing the hymn, “Praised Be the Rock.” Bishop Anderson greeted those in attendance to this Churchwide Assembly and said, “Welcome to this fifth Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. It is good to be here as the church in assembly in Philadelphia, very much alive in our heritage and hope, seeking to make Christ known through our worship and celebration, through our speaking and listening to each other, and through the decisions we are going to be making on behalf of all the members of our church. We know that these are decisions that will both touch their daily lives and will chart future directions for our church as a whole. We ask God’s guidance as we take up the responsibility that has been given to us.”

Report of the Credentials Committee: Determination of a Quorum

Reference: *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section I, pages 5-7; 12.

The Church Council and the secretary of this church had determined that the proper number of voting members for the 1997 Churchwide Assembly was 1,045 according to the formula prescribed by ELCA bylaw 12.41.11. That number included an allocation of 1,041 voting members from synods, plus the four churchwide officers.

Reporting on behalf of the Credentials Committee, the Rev. Lowell G. Almen, secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, presented the initial report of the Credentials Committee, current as of 9:00 P.M. on Thursday, August 14, 1997:

Voting members 993

Officers	4
TOTAL	997

Secretary Almen stated that since registration was continuing the morning of August 15, the number of voting members who may vote may exceed the number of voting members as set forth in this report of the Credentials Committee.

Bishop Anderson thereupon declared a quorum to be present.

Voting Procedures

Bishop Anderson expressed thanks to Lutheran Brotherhood Securities Corporation (Minneapolis, Minnesota) for underwriting the cost of the electronic voting system. Bishop Anderson explained that most votes would be cast electronically, although some might be cast by voice vote, or by using colored voting cards (green cards for “yes”; red cards for “no”; and white cards for “abstain”). He also asked that voting members use the colored cards to identify whether they were speaking for (green) or against (red) a motion. Bishop Anderson then explained the mechanics of the electronic voting system (key one for “yes”; key two for “no”), and reminded voting members to use only their own keypads, as proxy voting is not permitted under the assembly’s Rules of Organization and Procedure nor the bylaws of this church. Bishop Anderson then led voting members through a practice session vote.

Adoption of Rules of Organization and Procedures

Reference: *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section I, pages 5-18.

Bishop Anderson referred voting members to the Rules of Organization and Procedure for this assembly. He reminded the assembly that “new business” was to be submitted to the secretary of this church by Sunday, August 17, at 12:30 P.M.

Nominations

Reference: *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section I, pages 7-8.

Bishop Anderson explained the procedures for the submission of floor nominations for vacancies on churchwide boards, committees, and the Church Council, announcing a deadline of 2:25 P.M., on Saturday, August 16, 1997, for such nominations.

Election Process for Officers

Reference: *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section I, pages 9-12.

Bishop Anderson stated that the election for vice president of this church would proceed by ecclesiastical ballot as described on pages 9-10 of the *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*. He referred voting members to the section titled “Election of the Vice President” on page 11 for a step-by-step description of the procedure. The “scheduling of the five ballots may be found in the Order of Business,” he said.

Access to Seating

Reference: *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section I, page 12.

Bishop Anderson reminded assembly members that only voting members and those with appropriate credentials would be admitted to the floor of the assembly, that is, the restricted seating areas.

Speeches

Reference: *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section I, pages 12-13.

Bishop Anderson highlighted the three-minute time limitation on speeches, reminded voting members that they should refrain from applause, and outlined the procedures for requesting permission to speak. He stated that a person speaking in favor of a resolution would be followed by one speaking against it and asked that voting members use their green card to indicate that they wished to speak in favor, the red card to speak against, and the white if offering an amendment or rising for some other purpose.

Motions and Resolutions

Reference: *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section I, page 13.

Bishop Anderson stated that the Committee of Reference and Counsel was charged with the responsibility of assisting this assembly in dealing with the resolutions of voting members. He reminded the voting members that resolutions must be given in writing to the secretary of this church no later than Sunday, August 17, at 12:30 P.M. for referral to the Reference and Counsel Committee.

He also reminded the assembly that any amendment or motion that was going to be offered at any time during the assembly must be brought to the secretary of this church in writing so that accurate wording was available while the amendment or motion was being dealt with.

Substitute Motions

Reference: *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section I, pages 13-14.

Bishop Anderson reviewed the procedures for making motions, resolutions, and substitute motions. He commented that this was a change from the procedure used in previous assemblies when both were before the assembly simultaneously. Under these 1997 Rules of Organization and Procedures, all amendments to the original motion would be finished before dealing with amendments to the substitute motion if there were any. Then a vote would be taken on the substitute motion and then on the original motion.

Amendments to the Statement on Sacramental Practices

Reference: *1977 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section I, page 14.

Bishop Anderson outlined the procedures for amending the proposed “Statement on Sacramental Practices” and announced a deadline of 12:30 P.M., Saturday, August 16, 1997, for submission of amendments, in writing, to the secretary of this church.

Amendments to ELCA Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions

Reference: *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section I, pages 14-15, and Section IV, pages 129-134.

Bishop Anderson referred the assembly to Section IV, pages 129-134.1 for the text of proposed changes. He stated that the changes had been recommended by the Church Council and appear as an *en bloc* resolution. Bishop Anderson then reviewed the procedures for submission of amendments to the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, and announced the deadline of 12:30 P.M. Saturday, August 16, 1997, for removing proposed amendments from the *en bloc* resolution. He reminded the assembly that any proposed changes in the constitution that were different from the text provided in the *Pre-Assembly Report* must be submitted as a main motion which would then be referred to the Committee of Reference and Counsel before the assembly would be asked to consider it for a first reading. Bishop Anderson announced the deadline for submission of proposed bylaw or continuing resolution amendments as Saturday, August 16, 1997, at 6:00 P.M.

Budget Procedures

Reference: *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section I, pages 15-16.

Bishop Anderson announced that the deadline for submission of proposed amendments to the 1998-1999 Budget Proposal was 12:30 P.M. on Monday, August 18, 1997.

Memorials from Synods

Reference: *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section I, page 17.

Bishop Anderson explained, “Memorials are resolutions from synodical assemblies that call on the Churchwide Assembly to take a particular course of action.” Bishop Anderson announced that the less controversial memorials would be voted *en bloc* and the more controversial ones separately. He referred the assembly to Section VI, “Report of the Memorials Committee” for the texts of memorials received. The deadline for removing a memorial from *en bloc* was 3:00 P.M., Friday, August 15, 1997. The text of proposed revisions did not need to be submitted at that time, only requests for particular memorials to be removed from the *en bloc* resolution for individual consideration.

Voting on Ecumenical Proposals on Full Communion

Reference: *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section I, page 14.

Bishop Anderson described how the assembly was going to approach decision-making related to the proposals for full communion with the Reformed Churches and The Episcopal Church. Reference to the *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section I, page 14, he said the pattern “sets up two basic ground rules for the full communion discussion. First, by action of the 1995 [Churchwide] Assembly, a bylaw was adopted that requires a two-thirds vote by the voting members of the Churchwide Assembly for adoption of official church-to-church relationships and agreements. So a two-thirds majority will be needed for passage of a full communion proposal. Second, neither amendments nor substitute motions shall be in order with respect to either of these proposals. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Reformed Church in America, the United Church of Christ, and The Episcopal Church have all voted on exactly the same text that we have before us, as was agreed. For us too this means, as it did for them, an up or down vote on each of the two proposals. However, this rule does not preclude another resolution being offered should the original proposal be voted down, nor does it prohibit an additional resolution being offered should the resolution be adopted.

“Because of the importance of the full communion decisions, the order of business provides for a process in which the discussion is going to spend three to four days to allow adequate time for reflection, discussion, and prayer. Let me walk through this plan. Later this morning, we are going to spend about an hour in plenary on the proposal for full communion with the Reformed churches. At this time, you are going to have an opportunity to ask any questions you like of representatives of the Reformed churches who are with us. Then we are going to spend an hour in plenary on the proposal for full communion with The Episcopal Church. Again this is a time for gathering information, for asking questions of the persons who represent The Episcopal Church. We are not debating but simply gathering information.

“This afternoon, there are going to be three sets of hearings on each of these full communion proposals. Since you will have had the introductory in plenary this morning, these hearings then are yours; that is, they are your time to share with each other your opinions about these proposals, to describe in a smaller group how you think this will affect the life and ministry of our church and of your own congregation as well as the whole Church of Christ. There are not going to be any presentations at these two hearings on full communion, although resource persons are going to be there so that if you still have specific questions, or others come up, you may ask them at that time. There also will be two opportunities this afternoon for discussion of the Joint Declaration on [the Doctrine of] Justification [with the Roman Catholic Church].

“Then tomorrow, we are going to discuss again but not yet vote on the full communion decisions. In the morning we are going to take a half-hour to hear from two teaching theologians who have differing views on the proposal for full communion with the Reformed churches: Dr. William H. Lazareth, bishop emeritus of the Metropolitan New York Synod, opposing the proposal and Dr. Timothy F. Lull of Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary [Berkeley, Calif.], supporting it. Then we will move into a committee of the whole and will take about 45 minutes to discuss in plenary, but in a more informal committee-like way, the proposals before us. If you are not familiar with committee of the whole and how that works, you might want to look at the description of committee of the whole found on page 20 of Section I. On Saturday afternoon [August 16, 1997], we will follow a similar process for the full communion proposal with The Episcopal Church. Dr. Michael Rogness from Luther Seminary [St. Paul, Minn.] will present for 15 minutes opposing the proposal and Dr. Walter R. Bouman from Trinity Seminary [Columbus, Ohio] will speak for an equal period in favor of the proposal. Again, there will be a 45-minute assembly discussion in committee of the whole. This is still just discussion, as on page 14 the rules provide that no vote can be taken prior to the Sunday morning [August 17, 1997] session.

“I want to thank our synod bishops for their help in selecting these teaching theologians. The bishops from the synods who took action opposing these proposals, chose the theologians to articulate that position for the assembly. Conversely, the bishops from synods supporting the proposals advised me on who would present in support of the full communion proposals.

“Now back to the schedule. We have work today, discussion tomorrow. After there has been ample opportunity for questions to be answered and general discussion in these formats, on Sunday morning we will move to formal debate. First on the proposal for full communion with the Reformed churches. When a vote has been completed on that proposal, we will move to discussion and vote on the full communion proposal with The Episcopal Church. The rules provide that we will complete debate and vote on both proposals by supper-time on Monday [August 18, 1997].”

Adoption of “Rules of Organization and Procedure”

Reference: *1977 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section I, pages 5-18.

Bishop Anderson read the resolution that was before the assembly as a recommendation of the Church Council:

MOVED;

SECONDED: To adopt the Rules of Organization and Procedure for the 1997 Churchwide Assembly (exclusive of quoted constitution and bylaw provisions that are already in force).

The Rev. Bradley C. Jenson [Northeastern Minnesota Synod] moved an amendment related to distribution of materials during the course of the Churchwide Assembly (*1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section I, page 18).

MOVED;

SECONDED: To amend the section of the proposed Rules of Organization and Procedure on “Distribution of Materials” by adding at the end of the paragraph:

Materials may be freely distributed by voting members among voting members outside of the plenary-session area without approval of this church’s secretary or the Reference and Counsel Committee.

Pastor Jenson, speaking to his motion, said he was supportive of the rule “with respect to this plenary gathering. I think all of us are very sympathetic with all of the written materials that need to be passed out during the plenary session time and it makes excellent sense to have control over the written materials that are passed out during our time together in plenary. We do not want to be blitzed with all kinds of materials that are not germane to what is before us with the business of this assembly. However, when we are outside those doors, we ought to be free as voting members to share any written materials we would want with one another as voting members. I think it is an important freedom. This church is committed to a philosophy of inclusiveness and diversity and having the freedom to share materials without having to send everything that we want of a written nature to the secretary of the church or [the Committee of] Reference and Counsel. [This is] an unwarranted restriction. I would encourage the freedom that this amendment would allow us as voting members. We have been entrusted with the responsibility and we should have the freedom to share materials with one another outside this hall.”

The Rev. Maria E. Erling [New England Synod] spoke against the amendment. She said, “I have been receiving a lot of mail this summer about some proposals before our gathering and I have wanted to wait until I have been able to speak face-to-face about these important issues. I do not want to be bombarded by a leaflet campaign whenever I leave this assembly with a continuing amount of material

opposed to important issues before us that I think are more appropriately addressed when we are together and are able to speak on them.”

Mr. Albert Quie [Minneapolis Area Synod] said, in favor of the amendment, “I find it very difficult with the restrictive nature of this rule that we are proposing to amend of the voting members inability to communicate with each other in writing. I spent some years in the Congress of the United States and our state legislature, and it would have been inconceivable that members could not communicate with each other in writing. I understand that you need the opportunity to place on the table what the church offices wants us to see, but to be able to communicate some way, for people to read—many people make their decisions on reading the material. I urge us to be open, to let us communicate. We, as voting members, have already established our credential of being responsible individuals and will not be using this privilege in an offensive way.”

Bishop Jon S. Enslin [South-Central Synod of Wisconsin] asked for clarification saying, “Unless I’m confused as to what the amendment is requesting—and I’d like some kind of clarification in that—it seems to me that the amendment is to a rule that talks about the assembly floor. I am not sure the restriction is there, unless I am misreading the rule as it currently states.”

The Rev. Bradley C. Jenson [Northeastern Minnesota Synod] commented, “There is a concern between the difference between the policy on the distribution of materials passed by the ELCA Church Council and what the assembly is asked to act on. The policy, adopted by the Church Council, is much more sweeping and restrictive. It reads as follows, which you can find, I believe, in [the “Introduction,” page viii] your materials: ‘Only materials authorized by this church’s secretary, with the approval of the Reference and Counsel Committee, will be distributed to voting members of the assembly during the assembly.’ ‘During the assembly’ has been variously defined, but basically without any spacial reference to this room, meaning that the entire time we are here in Philadelphia conducting the business of [this] church, we cannot share under church policy, written materials with one another as voting members without receiving that approval.”

Bishop Donald J. McCoid [Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod] spoke against the motion, “We need to have some good order and it is important that we have opportunity to trust those who have been entrusted with making decisions about the distribution of material. It is nothing about freedom. It is just for the sake of order so that we might be able to have before us the materials that we should have to make decisions. We should trust the process.”

The Rev. Barbara Berry-Bailey [Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod] said in speaking against the motion, “The question that I have, and which raises a concern, is if these materials are passed outside of these doors, how do you insure that all the voting members get this information, or is that the intent?”

Bishop Richard H. Jessen [Nebraska Synod] asked the chair for a ruling whether or not the assembly could restrict what is distributed outside its meeting rooms.

Bishop Anderson responded, “The reason for the rule is also to do with the church’s relationship to the public and so it includes the area we lease. That has been the [Church] Council’s understanding of where its ruling would cover. That would mean the area of the display and the Heritage [and Hope] Village but not the hotel for example.”

The Rev. John H. P. Reumann [Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod] said, “I want to be sure I understand the proposal. On the one hand, the rule continues to stand that the ELCA and this body controls what is placed on our desks each morning. That is proper and correct and in order. What happens once one leaves this assembly room in adjacent hotels or elsewhere—I think it is a very dangerous precedent to try to control the flow of information. Everybody is afraid on this proposal who’s ox will be gored, but as one who has long espoused the view, ‘let a thousand flowers bloom, let the people read,’ as one who has been accosted with material I do not agree with, I have to defend the view of minority groups of all sorts—and majority groups—to be able to provide written material. I do not want to be a part of a church that attempts to restrict the flow of information, not through its official channels but outside of meeting places. I am willing to trust the maturity of [voting members] to read, discern, debate, and discuss whatever is put before them, things that many of us will not agree with, but that have a right to be heard. In terms then of a civil liberties position, I think we have to err on the side of allowing material to be made available whether we, on this issue or that, agree with varying points of view.”

Ms. Sandra Cline [North Carolina Synod] called the previous question.

MOVED;

Two-Thirds Vote Required

SECONDED;

Yes—909; No—47

CARRIED: To move the previous question.

MOVED;

Yes—654; No—355

SECONDED;

CARRIED: To amend the section of the proposed Rules of Organization and Procedure on “Distribution of Materials” by adding at the end of the paragraph:

Materials may be freely distributed by voting members among voting members outside of the plenary-session area without approval of this church’s secretary or the Reference and Counsel Committee.

Mr. Nelvin Vos [Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod] inquired about abstentions regarding the votes on the proposals on full communion, “Will an abstention vote be called for, and if so, is that interpreted as a ‘no’ vote?” Bishop Anderson responded, “I think you will find in the rules that it states that when you vote it is

‘yes’ or ‘no’ and abstentions do not count nor do they count in the total. The parliamentarian says that an abstention simply falls with the majority wherever the majority is.”

The Rev. Sandra J. Kessinger [Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod] moved an addition to the previously adopted amendment:

MOVED;

SECONDED: To amend the previously adopted amendment to the section of the proposed Rules of Organization and Procedure on “Distribution of Materials” by addition of the following:

All such new materials must be identified with the name of the voting member or members.

Pastor Kessinger spoke to her motion, “In the past we have had materials distributed that were not identified and I think, just for accountability and credibility, it would be helpful.”

MOVED;

SECONDED;

Voice Vote

CARRIED: To amend the previously adopted amendment to the section of the proposed Rules of Organization and Procedure on “Distribution of Materials” by addition of the following:

All such new materials must be identified with the name of the voting member or members.

Mr. William E. Diehl [Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod] offered the following amendment to the main motion:

MOVED;

SECONDED: That the vote on the two ecumenical proposals be held until after the debate on both proposals has been completed; and

That the vote on the first of the proposals for full communion not be revealed until after the vote on the second proposal has been taken.

Mr. Diehl spoke to his motion, “My concern is that these proposals are very important. I think each of them should stand on their own merit and I think there will be a strong inclination that whatever way the first one goes, the second one should go also regardless of its merit. While it would be good to vote them both the same either way, it is important that we look at each one completely on its merit and have the courage to vote in that direction.”

Bishop Paull E. Spring [Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod] spoke in opposition to the amendment. He said, “First of all, we have a right to know and be informed about what the actions are in respect to each one. Secondly, while both

proposals relate to the common concern for ecumenism, they deal with the issue in different respects, different issues are raised and each has its own integrity.”

The Rev. Franklin D. Fry [New Jersey Synod] commented, “I speak in opposition to this amendment for two reasons. First of all, I am among those who believe it would be very important for this assembly either to vote both up or both down so that we do not skew the position of our church in ecumenical life. And also so that we can temper both by having both of them approved if they are. Secondly, I do not want to be asked to vote in the dark. I would like to know what the first vote was. That could very well influence how I would vote on the second one.”

The Rev. Darrell H. Jodock [Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod] spoke in favor of the motion. He said, “It seems to me that it would allow the assembly to consider the proposals on their own without respect to the other one. If, after the voting is completed, somebody feels that we should reconsider one of them in light of the two votes, then it would be appropriate and time to take the consideration of how they should be considered together. Let’s look at each one on its own merits and vote each one on its own merits, and then reflect on what the connection between the two of them might be. In a parliamentary way, it is perfectly possible to reconsider in the light of the two votes and what could be done at that point. This works either way. If one does one vote first or one vote second and reverses them, the effect is that it influences the second one. This proposal keeps the vote clearly on the merits of each proposal.”

The Rev. Susan E. Nagle [New Jersey Synod] moved to divide the question.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To divide the question.

Bishop Anderson elicited clarification from Pastor Nagle that the motion would be divided by paragraphs. He then called for the vote. Because the initial voice vote was inconclusive, an electronic ballot subsequently was taken.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

Yes—484; No—468

CARRIED: To divide the question.

Bishop Anderson then called for the vote on the first paragraph of the divided motion. Mr. Sam Shapiro [Southern Ohio Synod] requested that the motion be displayed on the video screens.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

Yes—464; No—444

CARRIED: That the vote on the two ecumenical proposals be held until after the debate on both proposals has been completed.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

Yes—308; No—678

DEFEATED: That the vote on the first of the proposals for full communion not be revealed until after the vote of the second proposal has been taken.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

Yes—949; No—50

CA97.1.1 To adopt the Rules of Organization and Procedure for the 1997 Churchwide Assembly (exclusive of quoted constitution and bylaw provisions that are already in force), with the following additions:

Materials may be freely distributed by voting members among voting members outside of the plenary-session area without approval of this church’s secretary or the Reference and Counsel Committee;

All such new materials must be identified with the name of the voting member or members; and

The vote on the two ecumenical proposals will be held until after the debate on both proposals has been completed.

Report of the Credentials Committee:

Roll of Assembly Members

Reference: *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section I, pages 23-35.

Secretary Lowell G. Almen, on behalf of the Credentials Committee, presented a revised Roll of Voting Members as printed on pages 23-33 of Section I of the *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*. He stated that exceptions to the list as printed would be “when a synodical bishop has certified the absence of a voting member previously selected and an alternate has been chosen and submitted to the secretary by the synod. The revised listing of those registered as voting members at the end of this assembly will be included in the minutes of this assembly. Additional persons, under the bylaws, have been registered as advisory members and others. Those persons are included on pages 33-35 of Section I. Also in accordance with the rules of procedure related to resource members, certain persons have been registered as resource members with limited voice in plenary sessions, open hearings, and review groups.” There being no objection, the revised roll of assembly members was received by common consent. Bishop Anderson ordered that the roll of assembly members be entered into the official minutes of the assembly.

Committees of the Churchwide Assembly

Reference: *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section I, pages 35-36.

Bishop Anderson drew attention to the membership of the Memorials Committee, the Nominating Committee, and the Committee of Reference and Counsel. Membership of other committees called for in the Rules of Procedure were listed on pages 35-36 of Section I. Hearing no objection, he declared those committees authorized and so constituted.

Memorials Committee

Mr. Raymond E. Bailey
Mr. William T. Billings
Mr. Paul W. Dare
Pr. Robert L. Dasher
Ms. Karen Dietz
Ms. Diane McNally Forsyth
Ms. Solveig E. Gregory
Ms. Bonny Groshong
Ms. Sandra G. Gustavson, *chair*
Pr. Rachel Thorson Mithelman
Ms. Beverley A. Peterson
Pr. Thomas A. Prinz
Bishop Curtis H. Miller
Pr. Nelson T. Strobert

Nominating Committee

Mr. Robert A. Addy
Pr. Kirk W. Bish, *vice chair*
Pr. James E. Braaten
Mr. Keith P. Brown
Ms. Barbara J. Eaves
Ms. Marlene H. Engstrom, *chair*
Pr. Joyce M. Heintz
Pr. Cynthia A. Ishler
Mr. Don Jones

Nominating Committee (cont.)

Ms. Mary R. Jones
Ms. Nancy L. Lee
Pr. James A. Nestingen
Ms. Dorothy K. Peterman
Mr. Fred B. Renwick
Ms. Roberta C. Schott
Mr. Willie G. Scott
Pr. Robert L. Vogel

Committee of Reference and Counsel

Mr. W. (“Bill”) D. Alderfer
Ms. Kathleen Snedden Cook
Pr. James K. Echols
Pr. Susan L. Engh
Mr. William H. Englebrecht, *chair*
Pr. Franklin D. Fry
Ms. Cynthia P. Johnson
Ms. Cindy Campbell Jones
Mr. Steven E. Koenig
Ms. Betty Marquardt
Bishop Robert C. Mattheis
Mr. Carlos Peña
Pr. Connie D. Sassanella
Mr. Robert S. Schroeder

The Rules of Organization and Procedure for the 1997 Churchwide Assembly, as adopted by this assembly [CA97.1.1], provided for additional committees, the members of which were listed on page 6 in the assembly Program booklet. Hearing no objection, Presiding Bishop Anderson declared those committees to be duly authorized and constituted.

Credentials Committee

Pr. David L. Alderfer

Pr. Lowell G. Almen, *ex officio chair*
Ms. RosaLinda Ceballos
Mr. David J. Hardy, *vice chair*
Ms. Emilie C. Scott, *registrar*
Ms. Nancy L. Vaughn

Elections Committee

Mr. Phillip H. Harris, *chair*
Pr. David L. Alderfer, *vice chair*
Ms. C. Loraine Shields, *secretary*

Minutes Committee

Pr. Lowell G. Almen, *ex officio chair*
Mr. Thomas J. Ehlen
Ms. Virginia K. Frantz
Ms. Ruth E. Hamilton
Pr. Randall R. Lee
Pr. Richard E. Mueller
Pr. Karl J. Nelson
Pr. William L. Smith
Pr. Leslie G. Svendsen
Ms. Carolyn Thomas

Agenda Committee

Pr. Lowell G. Almen
Pr. Robert N. Bacher
Bishop H. George Anderson, *chair*
Ms. Lita Brusick Johnson
Ms. Kathy J. Magnus
Pr. Michael L. Cooper-White

Staff Planning Committee

Pr. Lowell G. Almen
Bishop H. George Anderson
Ms. Rhonda W. Campbell
Ms. Ann E. Hafften
Ms. Sanda Horeis
Ms. Lita Brusick Johnson, *chair*
Pr. Randall R. Lee
Pr. Paul R. Nelson
Ms. Mary Beth Nowak,
assembly manager
Mr. John L. Peterson
Pr. Kurt A. Reichardt
Pr. Eric C. Shafer

Local Arrangements Committee

Ms. Joanne Rowan Carlson, *co-chair*
Pr. Paul M. Cornell, *co-chair*
Ms. Debra Detweiler,
volunteers co-chair
Ms. Carole Kriebel,
volunteers co-chair
Ms. Frances Lee, *registration chair*
Ms. Lois Leffler, *hospitality co-chair*
Ms. Phyllis Linn, *facilities co-chair*
Ms. Sharon McCullough,
special events chair
Pr. Robert E. Mitman,
facilities co-chair
Mr. Andrew Preis,
hospitality co-chair
Ms. Paula Viksne, *quilts chair*
Ms. Janet Waechter, *secretary*
Pr. Stephen J. Weisser,
special needs chair
Pr. G. Warren Weleck, *worship chair*

Worship Committee

Pr. Lowell G. Almen
Ms. Ruth A. Allin
Bishop H. George Anderson
Ms. Teresa Bowers
Ms. Lita Brusick Johnson
Pr. Paul R. Nelson,
director for worship
Pr. Karen M. Ward
Mr. Scott C. Weidler,
assembly organist

10th Anniversary Banquet Planning Committee

Ms. Sally Clark Almen
Ms. Jutta Anderson
Ms. Elizabeth M. Harris
Pr. Randall R. Lee, *chair*

Ms. Mary Beth Nowak
Ms. Betty Lee Nyhus
Ms. Glenndy L. Sculley
Mr. James M. Unglaube
Mr. Scott C. Weidler
Pr. Stuart W. Wright

Local Arrangements Committee

Bishop Anderson introduced and thanked the Local Arrangements Committee and said, "As you can imagine the planning for this assembly has involved an enormous amount of work on the part of many volunteers who serve on the Local Arrangements Committee." The members of the Local Arrangements Committee were listed on page 36 of Section I of the *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*. Bishop Anderson then presented the co-chairs, Ms. Joanne Rowan Carlson and the Rev. Paul M. Cornell, with gifts of appreciation. He also thanked Bishop Roy G. Almquist, bishop of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, for his assistance in preparation for this assembly.

Introduction of the Parliamentarian

Bishop Anderson introduced and thanked Ms. Angeline M. Haines, Lutherville, Md., who served as parliamentarian for this assembly.

Adoption of the Order of Business

Bishop Anderson announced two changes to the proposed Order of Business as printed. First, on page 6 in Plenary Session Three, under "Study of Theological Education," add the notation "IV:109" under the column "Action on Page" as an additional reference. Second, on page 7 in Plenary Session Four, move "Second Ballot for Vice President" to follow "Report of the Secretary."

Secretary Lowell G. Almen announced that the Report of the Nominating Committee on page 6 in Plenary Session Three would be omitted. He then moved:

MOVED;

SECONDED: To approve, as emended, the Order of Business as the agenda of the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, in keeping with the provisions of the "Rules of Organization and Procedure" for the calling of items of business before the assembly.

The Rev. Darrell H. Jodock [Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod] moved:

MOVED;

SECONDED: To vote on the *Concordat of Agreement* occur prior to the vote on *A Formula of Agreement*.

Pastor Jodock, speaking to his motion, said, “This assembly has already agreed that it would postpone the vote so that the two votes would be taken at the same time. It seems to me that it would be appropriate to vote on the one that appears to have generated the more controversy before voting on the one that appears to have lesser amounts of controversy.”

MOVED;

SECONDED; Yes—404; No—500

DEFEATED: To vote on the *Concordat of Agreement* occur prior to the vote on *A Formula of Agreement*.

The Rev. Kurt S. Strause [Lower Susquehanna Synod] asked, “I have a question regarding the debates on the ecumenical proposals on the agenda. Considering the action we took adopting the rules, usually debate is closed by some kind of consideration of a question, voting on the question on hand. What will close the debate on the Reformed proposal and then move to the debate on the Concordat? Will it be an action by the assembly, [or] will it be a determination by the chair when enough debate has occurred?” Bishop Anderson replied, “I would rule that we would do it by previous question. I would ask for a motion from the floor and at that point the assembly would choose whether it wished to close debate. . . . We would rule at that point that discussion is closed and by action taken by this assembly would proceed to the discussion of the next motion because the assembly is the one that has now determined that discussion and voting will not occur at the same time.”

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

Voice Vote

CA97.1.2 To approve, as amended, the Order of Business as the agenda of the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, in keeping with the provisions of the “Rules of Organization and Procedure” for the calling of items of business before the assembly.

Greetings from the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod

The Rev. Roy G. Almquist, bishop of Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, brought greetings to the members of the 1997 Churchwide Assembly on behalf of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, stating that it was a pleasure for him to welcome the assembly to Philadelphia, the birthplace of our nation and “America’s Friendliest City.” He said that the synod was thrilled to have the assembly convene in Philadelphia, to enjoy the Philadelphia experience as assembly members gather under the assembly theme, “Making Christ Known: Alive in Our Heritage and Hope.” He stated, “From the first Swedish settlers who sailed up the Delaware River and landed not far from here in 1689, this area has been home to Lutheran people. In places like Philadelphia, Germantown, Trappe, Lancaster, and New Hanover, the Lutheran Church took root in this region. Almost 250 years ago here in Philadelphia, Henry Melchior Mühlenberg established the first Lutheran synod, the Ministerium of Pennsylvania. But we are more than an historical theme park . . . we are alive in heritage and hope here in Philadelphia. On any given Sunday you can join Lutherans here in worship in Spanish, German, Hmong, Russian, Mandarin, and American Sign Language.”

Report of the Presiding Bishop

Reference: *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section II, pages 1-6, 7-12, 13-18.

Bishop Anderson introduced Ms. Kathy J. Magnus, vice president of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, who assumed the chair. He said, “As you may know, Kathy is leaving office after this assembly and that is why we are having the election for the office of vice president. Kathy’s work with us has been memorable and healthy for the church in many ways. I am grateful to offer her this opportunity to meet you and to take the chair.”

Ms. Magnus then called upon Bishop Anderson to present his report to the assembly. She said, “One of the marvelous gifts God has given to this church is a bishop with deep faith, focused vision, broad compassion, and a great sense of humor. For all of those gifts we are a grateful people.” The complete text of Bishop Anderson’s report follows.

Initiatives for a New Century: A Call to Commitment

What does God have in mind for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as we move toward the turn of the century—and of the millennium? Just as the calendar tells us we are at a crossroads, our world also presents us with a series of dramatic changes that invite our response. How should we read these “signs of the times”? How can we use the gifts that God has given us to seize this opportunity and participate in God’s mission in the world?

We all feel that the nature of life has changed in the last decades. No matter where we live, we describe the same cluster of factors that have made our lives different. For many these changes are disturbing or inconvenient; for others in our society they are devastating. Often these factors are connected with a sense of loss,

but a second look will reveal that these changes have also brought new possibilities with them.

The Time Is Right

A Fluid Situation. In the five years between 1985 and 1990, 103 million Americans—about 40 percent of the population—moved. The result is a sense of rootlessness and a lack of connection to a wider community. The old landmarks of authority also have disappeared or been discredited. Many feel there is no center, no stable reference point for persons or societies.

The flip side of mobility, combined with technological advances in travel and communication like the worldwide web, is that our individual and collective views of the world are broadened. Our population is becoming more diverse, bringing new voices to public discussion. Advances in medicine have prolonged average life spans, giving us more years of activity and more discretionary time in the years of retirement.

In this time when society is in a molten state, when everything is being “reinvented,” the church has a matchless opportunity to be engaged in shaping whatever new society will emerge from these years of transition. In such times, it is the communities that have a clear purpose and definite goals that will become the crystallization points for the world of the future.

Increased Stress. Do you remember the prediction from twenty years ago, that the big problem of the ‘90s was going to be what to do with our leisure time? Things have turned out just the opposite. Families feel that two incomes are needed in order to maintain adequate living standards. “Down-sizing,” “right-sizing,” “reductions in force,” and other euphemisms for loss of jobs raise uncertainty in the work place and put monumental pressures on those who remain employed. Children and young people face greater requirements on their time from school activities. Life is experienced as a series of demands, exceeding the resources available. Leisure itself has become work.

This situation begs for a message of grace, a word of release to simplify life and help people find the “one thing needful” (Luke 10:42).

Seeking a Voice

People feel themselves pushed farther out to the margins of society. They believe that decisions about their lives are being made by others who do not consult them or even care about their welfare. The social conventions that formerly protected Sunday and made church membership one of the assumptions of community life have dissolved. Congregations in rural areas and in urban settings often discover that they are the only local institution left.

This unique position, however, offers the possibility of identity with the poor and dispossessed in a way that our former privileged position did not. The church need not be afraid of being pushed to the edge of society. That is where the church was born. The church is genetically engineered to thrive in adversity and

“tribulation.” It is in the church’s DNA. Or perhaps we should call it BNA: “Be Not Afraid.”

Polarization. Social pressures have not led to common action, but to separation and polarization. Rodney King’s plea after his beating—“Why can’t we all get along?”—still echoes unanswered. “Litigation” has become an everyday word, and violence has become everyday fare on the news. The United States has one of the greatest differentials between rich and poor in the world, and the gap is widening. Young and old find themselves in tension over dwindling resources. Individuals and groups feel isolated, but their solution is to pull up the drawbridge and further cut themselves off. Each day when I turn my car into the main road, I see a sign on the property directly across the street. It says, “Forget the dog, beware of owner.” Just to make sure you get the message, the owner has now added a new sign underneath: “No trespassing.”

In this tense environment the church is called to demonstrate the possibility of a community where members are “reconciled to one another” across all the fault lines of society. In our fractured world that would indeed be a sign of hope.

Widespread Spiritual Hunger. We are in the midst of a major spiritual revival in the United States, but many people are seeking answers outside the Christian church. New age religions, Zen Buddhism, adaptations of native American religion, astrology, and a host of other movements will account for a market of half a billion dollars for “spirituality” this year. Our ELCA web site tracks the number of visits it receives from countries outside the United States. During a given period last year, the highest number of visits—3,800—came from Japan! Do we realize that we must literally “speak to the world” about our faith?

Many persons seem to yearn for the deeper community that is offered in our congregations, particularly those where small group ministries and service opportunities are offered. They are coming, like those biblical inquirers, to ask, “Is there any word from the Lord?” Are we ready to tell them in words they can understand?

Who We Are

The Lutheran Church has time-tested resources to bring to this moment of opportunity for God’s mission. Indeed God may have given us exactly this time to discover what strengths our church has to offer to a world in transition.

A Praising Church. Our Reformation heritage emphasizes grace and gratitude. We believe that God created the world to be a good place and that God wills wholeness for creation. We bring the good news that God loves us and comes to us in Jesus Christ before we are ready. So we are a church of song and praise—“Now Thank We All Our God.”

A Realistic Church. We understand the depth and craftiness of sin. We are not paralyzed by seemingly intractable social problems. We can tolerate paradox and ambiguity, and even expect them as part of human imperfection in knowledge. But

we trust even more firmly in the power of God to deal with sin and overcome human frailty and injustice.

A Serving Church. We see the daily work of every person as the calling of God. This daily work is used by God to maintain human life. When persons lack the essentials of home and work, family and health, we both call for justice and seek to fill the need. As a result we provide helping ministries—from one-to-one sharing in congregations to a nationwide network of human service agencies.

A Teaching Church. The origin of our church in the study of the Bible has led us to emphasize an educated clergy and membership. We recognize the authority of Scripture. Our confessions give us a clear doctrinal identity. We instruct children in the basics of the faith. We are known for our colleges and universities, our seminaries, and our publication program.

A Global Church. As the largest and oldest church of the Reformation in the world we maintain fellowship with one another across oceans and national boundaries. Through our membership in the Lutheran World Federation we have pulpit and altar fellowship with 56 million other believers in 68 nations. We can learn much from these brothers and sisters about prayer, witness, and steadfastness in times of hardship. We have been leaders in ecumenical councils and dialogues. These relationships offer the possibility of cooperative ministry at home and overseas.

Seven Key Initiatives

The opportunities are limitless. We must select those critical areas where action now will make the most difference for the future. Here are seven initiatives that will focus our existing programs and seize the new opportunities that God has given us. These are not the only important areas where our church is in ministry. But I believe these are the critical ones that warrant our special attention between now and the year 2001. The purpose of these initiatives is to strengthen the whole ministry of our church in preparation for the challenges of the 21st century.

In order to stimulate specific activities in support of these initiatives, a sample list of “We will’s” is included in each category. Many other activities, already in place or yet to be defined, could also be added.

1. Deepen Our Worship Life

Worship is the heart of the Church’s life—the source of strength and will for evangelism, stewardship, service, and all other aspects of our life in Christ. There we encounter the living God, who touches hearts and minds, lives and spirits. We discover the ways in which God is present in and through our daily activities. And we are empowered to carry out our baptismal call: to both bear Christ to the world and issue the invitation, “Come and see Jesus.” Our goal is to become a church united by a common theological and liturgical core with diverse expressions of worship.

We will seek every opportunity to talk with each other about the ways we encounter the living God in worship.

We will talk in our congregations, in synods and across synodical boundaries, in campus ministries and other worshipping communities, in seminaries, and in groups where persons have deep differences in culture and worship style. We will discuss why we worship and how we worship. We will reflect on basic questions of purpose relating to preaching, hospitality, spiritual formation, and other elements. We will explore the diversity that arises from culture, context, tradition, and perspective. We will learn from each other.

We will strengthen skills that enhance worship—and will be open to sharing our gifts with others.

We will link congregations noted for lively and inviting worship with those that want to discover new depth in worship, using both established methods (meetings and videos) and new technologies (video conferencing).

We will develop language and culture specific resources for worship, in a variety of styles that are welcoming.

We will stimulate creativity in music and the visual and performing arts, and develop new ways of using art and the media.

We will develop an appreciation for worship forms and music from a wide variety of cultures within the global Christian community.

2. Teach the Faith

Our Lord commands us to make disciples of all nations. As we reach out to new communities and to the unchurched, we need to ground our members in the Bible and in the most basic truths of our Lutheran heritage. In doing so we can energize all of our members to share the news of Jesus Christ with neighbors and to live out their Christian calling in the world. We will seek to be energized by a prayerful openness to the leading of the Holy Spirit. And we will use the insights of Lutheran theology as powerful tools for understanding and addressing the needs of society.

We will participate in an ELCA-wide “Call to Discipleship,” linked to the year 2000 (with appropriate liturgical rites within the cycle of the church year).

We will ask our most creative congregations and their leaders, our teaching theologians, our bishops, and others to design this call and to help our church move toward a model of life-long growth in discipleship.

We will develop a one- to two-year program where individuals will publicly commit to learning the faith. This school of discipleship will involve a wide range of resources and teaching opportunities, including family video devotional sessions and worship resources.

We will develop or share congregationally developed resources and curricula:
! for teaching persons with no previous knowledge of the Christian faith;
! for teaching our adult members, so that they are invited and equipped to “live and witness in the power of the Word”; and

! for communities where language- and culture-specific resources are needed.

We will learn about our faith and our Lutheran understanding of Scripture by exploring both our differences and our similarities with other faith traditions. From the perspective of the Eighth Commandment we will ask, “What does it mean to put the best construction on another’s faith experience?”

3. Witness to God’s Action in the World

We are called to proclaim God’s good news boldly. We are called to witness to God’s life-giving love for a creation marred by sin and evil. More than ever before, it is now urgent for us to turn outward in witness and in service. We draw upon our rich theological and pastoral heritage, on the insights of ethnic and cultural traditions, and on our strong history of participating in society. These resources offer us the possibility of both modeling and sharing with the world a new vision of life in community.

We will strengthen those skills that help congregations “turn inside out” in witness and service.

We will link congregations that have specific gifts and experiences with those that want to deepen their commitment to effective witness and service.

We will use creatively the tools of the new technology. By the end of 1998 our church will have a strong Internet presence—in evangelism—that will complement and support the work of congregations, campus ministries, and other worshipping communities.

By 1999 we will pilot a model that can be used in all nine regions of the ELCA to help congregations that are ready for transformation to mission and outreach to make that change.

We will encourage congregations to model life in community by assisting them:

! to address and deliberate on pressing social and ethical questions in a spirit of civility, drawing upon Scripture, our theological tradition, contemporary knowledge, and our varying experiences; and

! in their cooperative efforts with civic and private agencies for community renewal through economic development, housing rehabilitation, jobs, and business development.

4. Strengthen One Another in Mission

The opportunities are so vast and the needs of the world so great that we must find ways to share the mission. We need to increase our ability to work together through all the expressions of the church, through the daily lives of our members, through other Christian bodies, and through our partner churches in other countries.

We will design a process and methods to assess the resources and talents that the baptized bring to the mission and ministry of the church.

We will create and strengthen networks linking congregations, synods, institutions, agencies, the churchwide organization, and our ecumenical and global partners.

We will use the new technologies to link our congregations and agencies and will encourage all congregations to be connected by computer by the year 2000; we will ask the youth of our church to help make this vision become a reality.

We will expand global and domestic people-to-people mission opportunities (through mission partners, global mission, and other means).

We will strengthen the networks by which financial resources are linked with mission needs.

5. Help the Children

The social upheavals of our time and the growing gap between rich and poor have been especially damaging to the lives of children and families. As we prepare for the new millennium, we must assure the youngest and most vulnerable members of our world that they have a future.

We will call on every congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to declare itself to be a “safe haven” for children and youth by the end of 1998.

We will ask these 11,000 “safe havens” to build upon their assets and resources, within the context of their local communities, as they provide support and nurture to children and their families or care givers.

We will establish an ELCA “Safe Haven Network” and use both church media and existing networks to share stories and models from congregations.

We will encourage partnership in this effort with Lutheran colleges and social ministry organizations.

We will expand by at least 50 per year our network of preschools and day schools, which often serve as “islands of hope.”

We will create an ELCA Children’s Council and, where appropriate, synodical Children’s Councils, to promote the well-being of children and to provide a clear and unified voice for children.

We will redouble our efforts to aid children, youth, and young adults at risk from racism, hunger, violence and poverty, both at home and throughout the world.

We will strengthen the ELCA-wide strategy relating to women and children living in poverty (an emphasis adopted by the 1993 Churchwide Assembly for the decade of the 1990s).

We will advocate with the government for public measures that support the well-being of children.

We will advocate for and support our church’s efforts to meet the basic needs of children through Lutheran social ministry organizations, as they provide adoption, counseling, and caring services for children, and through the ELCA World Hunger Program, which carries our concerns for children throughout the world.

6. Connect with Youth and Young Adults

Our church needs to renew its commitment to Gospel-centered, relational ministry with youth and young adults: to intersect with them in challenging ways on their journey toward adulthood; to provide an “oasis” for them on that journey where they can be safe and nourished in the faith; and to provide the “keys” to meaningful participation in the life of the church. We have many things going for us in our work with youth and young adults—a catechetical tradition that provides personal contact with pastors and congregational leaders, a well-organized Lutheran youth organization, the largest youth gatherings in the country, excellent camps and retreat centers, and a network of church colleges and campus ministry programs.

We will create greater synergy among our existing assets for youth and young adults.

We will call a “summit meeting” in 1998 of youth and young adults, representatives from our youth-related programs, and other experts on “Generation X or Post-Modern” youth in order to map out a comprehensive strategy of congregational ministry in the post-confirmation years. Special attention will be given to reaching youth who are currently “under-served” by this church.

We will provide means for congregations with youth and young adult ministry, as well as our Lutheran colleges and campus ministries, to share their gifts with congregations seeking to enhance their connection with youth and young adults.

We will develop and provide ready access to challenging ministry and service activities for youth and young adults, including:

- ! “summer service teams” of youth, perhaps in partnership with ELCA outdoor ministries;

- ! a churchwide “clearinghouse” for summer and full-year church service internships in synods, social ministry organizations, schools, congregations, the churchwide offices, and related organizations (e.g., Bread for the World, Lutheran Volunteer Corps);

- ! a youth and young adult volunteer opportunity system using the World Wide Web;

- ! a periodical (on- or off-line) for and by young adults about service opportunities;

- ! invitations to the youth and young adults of our church to develop programs for the whole church (e.g., creating a healthier planet).

We will provide special assistance to new ministries that have a primary focus on youth and young adults—especially those at risk from racism, sexism, hunger, violence, drugs, and poverty, including those who are in prison.

7. Develop Leaders for the next Century

The challenges of the next century cannot be foreseen, but we can identify, prepare, and support persons who have the commitment and good judgment that the future will require. We need to begin now to identify members of our congregations, including young people, who have the potential to become the leaders in our congregations and institutions. While the need to develop indigenous

leadership is especially critical among our ethnic communities, our whole church needs leaders who can respond to the multicultural realities of the next century—and who have the ability to minister in an increasingly complex and rapidly changing society.

We will take every opportunity to encourage and support pastors and lay leaders in their service in the church and in their ministry in daily life.

We will make life-long learning an expectation for all leaders in mission.

We will continue to explore the use of electronic networking to provide resources and opportunities to exchange ideas.

We will seek to understand what leadership will require in the 21st century and identify and develop leaders for the future who have the necessary gifts.

Beginning in 1998, we will design a leadership development pilot project that could include the following elements:

- ! We will identify and gather persons—lay and clergy—who are currently exercising faithful and creative leadership in the church and in daily vocations, and ask them to reflect on leadership qualities: what gifts leaders will need in the new century.

- ! Potential leaders could be identified by synods, using these findings and the synods’ own experience. These emerging leaders could be invited to participate in a multi-year process of servant leadership development, through distance learning, small group work, and immersion sessions focusing on Biblical studies, spiritual formation, global awareness, and learning through service.

We will develop strategies for identifying, supporting, and preparing leaders in ethnic-specific communities and strategies for enhancing the ability of church leaders to minister in an increasingly multicultural context for ministry by 1999.

We will provide guidance, educational opportunities, and financial support for those who are preparing to be leaders in mission. In the coming biennium, we will launch the Fund for Leaders in Mission to provide the financial base for this endeavor.

Three themes thread through and connect these seven initiatives:

- ! **Discipleship**—the need to “continue in Christ’s Word” (John 8:31) throughout all of life. We know that, in its members our church has gifts, resources, and commitment in abundance. What is needed is direction, encouragement, and certain skills or tools that can encourage life-long growth in faithfulness, in witness, and in service.

- ! **Leadership**—the acknowledgment that a church with strong clergy and lay leadership will be a church that is strong in mission. We know that our church has many persons with the gifts for leadership—those described in 2 Timothy 2:2 as “faithful people who will be able to teach others.” Some of them are already serving as leaders. The job before us is to identify them, to learn from their experiences, and

help them to equip themselves and others to be even more effective in their leadership.

! **Partnership**—the acknowledgment that no part of the Church stands alone, that we need each other if we are to be faithful to the mission God has entrusted to us. We have a great need to listen to each other, to talk with each other about what is at the core of our faith and our hope. And we need to learn from each other. The biblical image of a body with many members (Romans 12) envisions a flow of action that is neither “top down” nor “bottom up.” It is truly among the parts. Individuals and congregations can work with and help one another. The churchwide organization and synods can assist in that communication, filling in wherever needed. All parts of the church can constantly learn from one another.

In short, these initiatives are not a one-size-fits-all national program, a sleek churchwide “silver bullet.” The specific activities described here are just a beginning, a preliminary list of things we can do together to become a stronger people of God. Unless these activities are understood as a beginning, the seven initiatives will never achieve their full potential. It is my dream that individuals, congregations, synods, churchwide units, and our Lutheran agencies, ministries, and institutions will not only participate in the activities described above, but will also bring these initiatives to life in their own context, using their own gifts and insights, launching additional activities that reflect the hopes and the needs of their communities.

Should you, as voting members of the 1997 Churchwide Assembly, affirm these initiatives, they can become a framework for future conversations throughout this church. In the coming years, I hope we will take every opportunity to ask each other: “How are you bringing these initiatives to life where you live?” No one can do it alone; we will need to join with others to focus with renewed energy in these critical areas. As the conversations continue, I hope that you will add your own “we wills” in new or renewed activities. And I hope you will join me in praying for the Spirit’s guidance in the renewal of our church as we approach the 21st century.

These are crucial times. The tasks are immense, but we are not alone. We recall Paul’s words to the Corinthians: “Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God. Not that we are competent of ourselves to claim anything as coming from us; our competence is from God, who has made us competent to be ministers of a new covenant, not of letter but of spirit. . .” (2 Cor. 3:4-6).

It is God’s mission, and we pray that our efforts may be used in that life-giving cause.

H. George Anderson
Presiding Bishop
August 1997

Following the report of the presiding bishop, Vice President Magnus indicated that the Report of the Bishop was accepted and referred to the Committee of Reference and Counsel without further action by the assembly in accordance with the Rules of Organization and Procedure. Bishop Anderson resumed the chair.

Proposals on Full Communion

References: 1997 Pre-Assembly Report, Section IV, pages 35-48, 49-64; Section V, pages 1-23; Section VI, pages 9-26; continued on *Minutes*, pages 125, 381, 432, 600, 605, 621, 659.

BACKGROUND

The following narrative provides background information on the 34 years of official dialogues and conversations that have now resulted in the proposal for full communion between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the three Reformed churches.

a. *Early Dialogues.* Representatives of Reformed and Lutheran churches in the USA have held official conversations since 1962. The first round (1962-1966) produced *Marburg Revisited*. The representatives concluded that there are “. . . no insuperable obstacles to pulpit and altar fellowship.” They encouraged the churches to look forward to intercommunion and the full recognition of one another’s ministries. The second round of dialogues (1972-1974) concluded that declarations of church fellowship should be dealt with on a church-to-church body basis.

The third round (1981-1983) issued joint statements on justification, the Lord’s Supper, and ministry in *Invitation to Action*, which was published in 1984. In 1986, representatives concluded that the Reformed and Lutheran churches should recognize each other as churches in which the Gospel is proclaimed and sacraments administered according to the ordinance of Christ. They recommended mutual recognition of ministries and Eucharist and a detailed process of reception.

b. *A Divergence of Views Among the Lutheran Churches in 1986.* The recommendations contained in *Invitation to Action* were adopted by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Reformed Church in America, The Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches, and The American Lutheran Church in 1986, and the United Church of Christ in 1989. At the same time, however, the Lutheran Church in America offered a more guarded response, calling for a “new series of Lutheran-Reformed dialogues.” The Lutheran Church in America requested further exploration of (1) the relationship between dialogue and the governing and liturgical documents of the churches; and (2) the confessional nature of the Reformed churches.

c. *Discussions Continue in the Early Years of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.* Because of the difference between the Lutheran Church in America position and that of The American Lutheran Church and The Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches on this issue, the newly created Evangelical Lutheran Church in America decided to engage in further discussions with the Reformed churches rather than to declare itself in full communion with them.

ELCA leaders and representatives of the three Reformed churches agreed to address the doctrinal condemnations found in the Formula of Concord (1577) concerning the Lord's Supper, Christology, and predestination.

The Lutheran-Reformed Committee for Theological Conversations met from 1988 to 1992. Its mandate was to explore the key doctrinal issues listed above and to determine what steps needed to be taken on the road to full communion. The committee's report, *A Common Calling: The Witness of Our Reformation Churches in North America Today*, was released in March 1992. In it, the committee reported that, on the basis of their theological discussion, participants found no "church-dividing differences" and made the following unanimous recommendation:

That the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Reformed Church in America (RCA), and the United Church of Christ (UCC) declare that they are in full communion with one another. In the specific terms of full communion as they are developed in our study, this recommendation also requires:

- (1) that they recognize each other as churches in which the Gospel is rightly preached and the sacraments rightly administered according to the Word of God;
- (2) that they withdraw any historic condemnation by one side or the other as inappropriate for the faith and life of our churches today;
- (3) that they continue to recognize each other's Baptism and authorize and encourage the sharing of the Lord's Supper among their members;
- (4) that they recognize each others' various ministries and make provision for the orderly exchange of ordained ministers of Word and Sacrament;
- (5) that they establish appropriate channels of consultation and decision-making within the existing structures of the churches;
- (6) that they commit themselves to an ongoing process of theological dialogue in order to clarify further the common understanding of the faith and foster its common expression in evangelism, witness, and service;
- (7) that they pledge themselves to living together under the Gospel in such a way that the principle of mutual affirmation and admonition becomes the basis of a trusting relationship in which respect and love for the other will have a chance to grow.

d. *Churchwide Study of the Proposal for Full Communion.* A Lutheran-Reformed Coordinating Committee, whose mandate was to facilitate the reception of *A Common Calling*, was appointed by the Church Council in 1992. It produced *A Formula of Agreement*, in which it recommended:

"That the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Reformed Church in America, and the United Church of Christ declare on the basis of *A Common Calling* and their adoption of this *A Formula of Agreement* that they are in full communion with one another. Thus, each church is entering into or affirming full communion with three other churches."

The 1993 Churchwide Assembly voted to affirm that the recommendations for full communion between the ELCA, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Reformed Church in America, and the United Church of Christ be voted on by the respective church bodies in the same year—not earlier than 1995 and not later than 1997. Because of the need for adequate time for churchwide discussion of this matter, the proposal for full communion with the Reformed churches was finally scheduled for the 1997 Churchwide Assembly, along with the proposal for full communion with The Episcopal Church.

As part of this churchwide discussion, and in coordination with the work of the Lutheran-Reformed Coordinating Committee, the ELCA conducted a churchwide study of the full communion proposal. Completed in February 1996, this study and other discussions held throughout the ELCA identified the following areas of concern: agreement on the Lord's Supper and the "real presence"; faithfulness to Scripture and confessional clarity; problems with exchange of clergy; and the nature of the polity of the United Church of Christ and the degree of binding commitment it allows.

The Lutheran-Reformed Coordinating Committee and the ELCA's Department for Ecumenical Affairs have sought to address the many issues and concerns that have surfaced as the full communion proposals were discussed throughout the five church bodies involved. Consultations on key issues and the publication of new resources were among the ways of responding to the questions that were raised.

Throughout the past biennium, extensive discussions have transpired with key leadership groups within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, including the Conference of Bishops and the ELCA Church Council.

The 1993 Churchwide Assembly actions mandated that action on the proposal for full communion with the Reformed churches would occur no later than the 1997 Churchwide Assembly. In accordance with that action, the Lutheran-Reformed Coordinating Committee developed the following resolution and requested that the identical text be placed before the ELCA's 1997 Churchwide Assembly and the 1997 assemblies or conventions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Reformed Church in America, and the United Church of Christ.

Presiding Bishop H. George Anderson, as the ELCA's chief ecumenical officer, requested that the Church Council act to transmit this joint resolution to the 1997 Churchwide Assembly. This action made it possible for synods to receive the final wording of the full communion resolutions prior to their 1997 synodical assemblies.

At its November 9-11, 1996, meeting, the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America took the following action:

To receive the request made by the Lutheran-Reformed Coordinating Committee that the following resolution on full communion be considered in this form by the 1997 churchwide assemblies or conventions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Presbyterian Church

(U.S.A.), the Reformed Church in America, and the United Church of Christ; and

To transmit the following resolution to the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for action:

Resolution for Assembly Action

WHEREAS, the prayer of our Lord, the intent of our ecumenical vision, and the opportunities for mission that God is offering to us all demand that we express more fully the visible unity of the Church of Jesus Christ; and

WHEREAS, the witness of the Reformed and Lutheran Churches in Europe has resulted in over two decades of full communion within the framework of the *Leuenberg Agreement*; and

WHEREAS, the four churches represented in the Lutheran-Reformed Committee for Theological Conversations (1988-1992)—the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Reformed Church in America, and the United Church of Christ—have their historical roots in the Reformation and, in part, have understood themselves in the context of their relationship to one another; and

WHEREAS, these four churches rejoice in nearly four decades of dialogue during which the doctrines and confessional commitments of the respective churches have been thoroughly discussed in an atmosphere of mutual respect and a growing sense of common mission and understanding; and

WHEREAS, *A Common Calling*, the report of the Lutheran-Reformed Committee for Theological Conversations, reaffirmed a consensus reported in previous dialogues that there are no “church-dividing differences” precluding full communion among these four churches; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America adopt *A Formula of Agreement* on the basis of *A Common Calling* and declare that it is in full communion with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Reformed Church in America, and the United Church of Christ; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this full-communion agreement will take effect when all four churches act affirmatively on this resolution in accordance with their respective governing procedures; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America appoint representatives to a Lutheran-Reformed Joint Committee, which will coordinate implementation of full communion in the four churches; and be it further

RESOLVED, that Presiding Bishop H. George Anderson present a progress report on the work of the committee to the next Churchwide Assembly (1999).

The following narrative describes a number of important events in the discussions that have resulted in the proposal for full communion with The Episcopal Church.

a. *Lutheran-Episcopal Dialogue I (1969-1972)*. The Lutheran-Episcopal Dialogue I began in the U.S. in 1969, prior to the International Lutheran-Anglican Dialogue. It resulted in *Lutheran-Episcopal Dialogue: A Progress Report*, which

recommended “continuing joint theological study and conversations” and offered specific proposals for limited inter-communion and mutual ecclesial recognition.

b. *Lutheran-Episcopal Dialogue II (1976-80)*. The Lutheran and Episcopal churches then authorized the Lutheran-Episcopal Dialogue II. This dialogue issued *Lutheran-Episcopal Dialogue: Reports and Recommendations* and joint statements on justification, the Gospel, eucharistic presence, the authority of Scripture, and apostolicity.

c. *Interim Eucharistic Sharing*. In 1982, The Episcopal Church, The American Lutheran Church, The Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches, and the Lutheran Church in America took official action to enter into an Agreement on Interim Eucharistic Sharing. This meant among other things that the churches recognized each other as churches “in which the Gospel is preached and taught” and encouraged the development of common Christian life throughout their respective churches. The churches also called for a third series of dialogues to resolve other outstanding questions before they could enter into full communion (*communio in sacris* or pulpit and altar fellowship), which was the goal of the 1982 agreement. The topics for the third series were: the implications of the Gospel; historic episcopate; and ordering of ministry (bishops, priests, and deacons) in the total context of apostolicity. The Episcopalian participants wanted greater agreement on the ordering of the church as the community of faith.

d. *Lutheran-Episcopal Dialogue III (1983-1991)*. The Lutheran-Episcopal Dialogue III produced two major reports.

- (1) *Implications of the Gospel* (with a study guide) discusses the implications of the Gospel for the faith and life of the two churches in terms of what God has done in history. It describes how Lutherans and Episcopalians can faithfully articulate the Gospel together in contemporary society. Recommendations for action, not dependent on full communion, in the areas of worship, ecumenism, evangelism, and ethics were offered to the churches.
- (2) *Toward Full Communion* and the *Concordat of Agreement* address the implications of the proposal for full communion. The preface to the Concordat defines full communion as it appeared in the international Lutheran-Episcopal Working Group in 1983. This definition is in accord with *Ecumenism: The Vision of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* (1991) and the *Declaration of Unity* of The Episcopal Church (1979). The preface begins as follows:

“The Lutheran-Episcopal Dialogue, Series III, proposes this *Concordat of Agreement* to its sponsoring bodies for consideration and action by the General Convention of The Episcopal Church and the Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in implementation of the goal mandated by the Lutheran-Episcopal Agreement of 1982. That agreement identified the goal as ‘full communion (*communio in sacris*/altar and pulpit fellowship).’”

e. *ELCA Study of the Lutheran-Episcopal Proposals: 1991-1996.* The 1991 Churchwide Assembly determined that the time line for a churchwide study process would not begin until 1993, after action by the ELCA Churchwide Assembly on the Study of Ministry. In 1993, the Church Council decided to schedule the decision on full communion with The Episcopal Church at the 1997 Churchwide Assembly, the same assembly that is to consider a proposal for full communion with churches of the Reformed tradition.

During this period, a Lutheran-Episcopal Coordinating Committee received the mandate from their church bodies:

- (1) To assist the two churches in understanding and moving towards full communion, and in the reception of the *Concordat of Agreement* and its accompanying theological document, *Toward Full Communion*;
- (2) To continue to explore and recommend ways of implementing the 1982 Joint Agreement, including reception of *Implications of the Gospel*;
- (3) To assist in developing processes and resources for a study of the above mentioned documents;
- (4) To interpret the relationship between full communion and mission, as set forth in the above mentioned documents;
- (5) To facilitate communication among all expressions of the two churches (national, synodical, diocesan, local) regarding proposals put forth by Lutheran-Episcopal Dialogue III, responses to the proposals, and implications of the proposals; and,
- (6) To interpret the proposals put forth by the Lutheran-Episcopal Dialogue III within the wider ecumenical context, seeking comments and response from other ecumenical partners; comments and response from inter-Anglican bodies (e.g., Anglican Consultative Council) and inter-Lutheran bodies (e.g., Lutheran World Federation); and to be sensitive to the areas of dissent and concern within our two churches (CC93.3.16).

As part of the ELCA reception process, a churchwide study was conducted throughout the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the results of which were made available in February 1996. This study and other related discussions throughout this church revealed areas of concern, including the following: interchangeability and reciprocity of ministries, the historic episcopate, and role and status of bishops. The Lutheran-Episcopal Coordinating Committee and the ELCA's Department for Ecumenical Affairs have addressed these issues through publication of resources and numerous consultations throughout this church. There also have been extensive discussions with key leadership groups within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, including the Conference of Bishops and the ELCA Church Council. Additional resources are under development to provide answers to key questions about the Concordat and the ecumenical decisions facing the 1997 Churchwide Assembly.

f. *Joint Meeting of the ELCA Conference of Bishops and the House of Bishops of The Episcopal Church.* In October 1996, the ELCA's Conference of

Bishops met jointly with the Episcopal House of Bishops to discuss the proposal for full communion. During the course of the in-depth discussion of both issues and opportunities related to this decision, the ELCA Conference of Bishops developed a list of issues that it requested the Lutheran-Episcopal Coordinating Committee to address at its October 31-November 3, 1996, meeting. The positive and extensive response of the Lutheran-Episcopal Coordinating Committee to this communication from the ELCA bishops was noted in a document presented to the council.

g. *Revised text considered.* The final text of the Concordat (which was revised by the Lutheran-Episcopal Coordinating Committee at its October 31-November 3, 1996, meeting) was presented. The Coordinating Committee also recommended that the following joint resolution be placed before the ELCA's 1997 Churchwide Assembly and the 1997 General Convention of The Episcopal Church. As is the case with the Reformed proposal, Church Council action to transmit this resolution to the 1997 Churchwide Assembly was recommended by Presiding Bishop H. George Anderson at the council's November 1996 meeting.

At its November 9-11, 1996, meeting, the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America took the following action:

To receive the request made by the Lutheran-Episcopal Coordinating Committee that the following common resolution on full communion be considered by the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the General Convention of The Episcopal Church; and

To transmit the following resolution to the 1997 ELCA Churchwide Assembly for action:

**RECOMMENDATION OF
THE CHURCH COUNCIL**

RESOLVED, that this Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America accepts, as a matter of verbal content as well as in principle, the *Concordat of Agreement*, as set forth below; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America agrees to make those legislative, constitutional, and liturgical changes necessary to implement full communion between the two churches, as envisioned in the *Concordat of Agreement*.

Official Text

**CONCORDAT OF AGREEMENT
between
The Episcopal Church
and the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

**Notes on the Official Text
Concordat of Agreement**

These notes were NOT part of the text considered by the 1997 Churchwide Assembly. Only the Official Text, including both the regular text and the footnotes of the Concordat of Agreement, was presented with the recommendation of the Church Council for a vote at the Churchwide Assembly.

These notes were provided as an interpretation resource, in response to the direction of the Church Council that staff persons prepare various resources to assist in the study, consideration, and discussion of the ecumenical proposals on the agenda of the 1997 Churchwide Assembly.

Preface

The Standing Commission on Ecumenical Relations of The Episcopal Church and the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America propose this *Concordat of Agreement* to their respective churches for consideration and action by the General Convention of The Episcopal Church and the Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, in implementation of the goal mandated by The Lutheran-Episcopal Agreement of 1982. That agreement identified the goal as “full communion (*communio in sacris*/altar and pulpit fellowship).”¹ As the meaning of full communion for purposes of this *Concordat of Agreement*, both churches endorse in principle the definitions agreed to by the (international) Anglican-Lutheran Joint Working Group at Cold Ash, Berkshire, England, in 1983,² which they deem to be in full accord with their own definitions given in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America’s document, “Ecumenism: The Vision of the ELCA” (1991), and given in the “Declaration on Unity” of The Episcopal Church (1979).³

Text

1. The Episcopal Church hereby agrees that in its General Convention, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America hereby agrees that in its Churchwide Assembly, there shall be one binding vote to accept or reject, as a matter of verbal content as well as in principle, and without separate amendment, the full set of agreements to follow. If they are adopted by both churches, each church agrees to make those legislative, canonical, constitutional, and liturgical changes that are necessary and appropriate for the full communion between the churches which these agreements are designed to implement without

Preface

This document does not propose a merger of the ELCA and The Episcopal Church, but full communion. According to “Ecumenism: The Vision of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,” approved by the 1991 Churchwide Assembly, full communion may exist when two church bodies share: (1) a common confession of the Christian faith; (2) a mutual recognition of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, allowing for joint worship and an exchangeability of members; (3) a mutual recognition and availability of ministers; (4) a common commitment to evangelism, witness, and service; (5) a means of common decision making on critical common issues of faith and life; (6) a mutual lifting of any condemnations that exist between the churches.

Text

1. “One binding vote to accept or reject” the *Concordat of Agreement* is proposed because the two church bodies will be meeting at different times, thus making it impossible to amend the document. The vote is considered “binding” in the sense that a new relationship between the churches will begin if the *Concordat* is approved, marking a commitment of each church to support the life and witness of the other.

Once approved, each church body agrees that it will not

further vote on the *Concordat of Agreement* by either the General Convention or the Churchwide Assembly.

As churches consisting of baptized Christians who are diverse but one in Christ, The Episcopal Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America are committed to increasing partnership in the mission of witness and service through all their members. Toward that end, these churches declare their intent to continue in sacramental sharing and to move toward the realization of full communion through the following actions.

A. Actions of Both Churches

Agreement in the Doctrine of the Faith

2. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and The Episcopal Church hereby recognize in each other the essentials of the one catholic and apostolic faith as it is witnessed in the unaltered Augsburg Confession, the Small Catechism, and The Book of Common Prayer of 1979 (including “Ordination Rites” and “An Outline of the Faith”), and also as it is summarized in part in *Implications of the Gospel* and *Toward Full Communion between The Episcopal Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, the reports of Lutheran-Episcopal Dialogue III, and as it has been examined in the papers and fourteen official conversations of Series III.⁴ Each church also promises to require its ordination candidates to study each other’s basic documents.

We hereby endorse the international Anglican-Lutheran doctrinal consensus which has been summarized as follows:

abandon the other by voting to rescind its action. Instead, the churches will work together to solve difficulties encountered in the relationship of full communion. Each church agrees also to make the necessary changes to its governing documents in order to reflect this new relationship of full communion.

The reason for working with other church bodies is to give visible expression to the unity all Christians share through Baptism into Jesus Christ. In approving the 1991 statement on ecumenism, this Church committed itself to working with other churches in order “to advance the proclamation of the Gospel for the blessing of humankind.” The goal of every ecumenical endeavor is to advance the mission of the Church which was given by Jesus to his disciples when he said, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you” (Matthew 28: 19-20).

A. Actions of Both Churches Agreement in the Doctrine of the Faith

2. Any declaration of full communion is based upon an agreement between two church bodies on the essential teachings of the Christian faith. Lutherans express their understanding of these teachings principally through documents prepared at the time of the Reformation, particularly the Augsburg Confession and Luther’s Small Catechism. Episcopalians express their understanding of these teachings principally in the worship services of the *Book of Common Prayer* which was first prepared at the time of the Reformation. From the earliest days of the Church, Christians have acknowledged that prayer and doctrine are intimately connected, each dependent on the other to give full expression to Christian teaching. Between 1983 and 1991 the teachings of the two

churches have been studied by the Lutheran-Episcopal dialogue committees both in North America and in Europe. A summary of the common teaching of the two church bodies follows.

Authority of the Scriptures

Acceptance of the ancient creeds which express the Church's teaching about the Holy Trinity and about Jesus Christ.

We accept the authority of the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. We read the Scriptures liturgically in the course of the church's year.

We accept the Niceno-Constantinopolitan and Apostles' Creeds and confess the basic Trinitarian and Christological Dogmas to which these creeds testify. That is, we believe that Jesus of Nazareth is true God and true Man, and that God is authentically identified as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Anglicans and Lutherans use very similar orders of service for the Eucharist, for the Prayer Offices, for the administration of Baptism, for the rites of Marriage, Burial, and Confession and Absolution. We acknowledge in the liturgy both a celebration of salvation through Christ and a significant factor in forming the *consensus fidelium*. We have many hymns, canticles, and collects in common.

We believe that baptism with water in the name of the Triune God unites the one baptized with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, initiates into the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church, and confers the gracious gift of new life.

We believe that the Body and Blood of Christ are truly present, distributed, and received under the forms of bread and wine in the Lord's Supper. We also believe that the grace of divine forgiveness offered in the sacrament is received

Acknowledgment that the worship services of the two churches are very similar and express the *consensus fidelium* (consensus of the faithful throughout the centuries).

Agreement on Holy Baptism.

Agreement on the Lord's Supper.

with the thankful offering of ourselves for God's service.

We believe and proclaim the gospel, that in Jesus Christ God loves and redeems the world. We share a common understanding of God's justifying grace, i.e. that we are accounted righteous and are made righteous before God only by grace through faith because of the merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and not on account of our works or merit. Both our traditions affirm that justification leads and must lead to "good works"; authentic faith issues in love.

Anglicans and Lutherans believe that the church is not the creation of individual believers, but that it is constituted and sustained by the Triune God through God's saving action in Word and Sacraments. We believe that the church is sent into the world as sign, instrument, and foretaste of the kingdom of God. But we also recognize that the church stands in constant need of reform and renewal.

We believe that all members of the church are called to participate in its apostolic mission. They are therefore given various ministries by the Holy Spirit. Within the community of the church the ordained ministry exists to serve the ministry of the whole people of God. We hold the ordained ministry of Word and Sacrament to be a gift of God to his church and therefore an office of divine institution.

We believe that a ministry of pastoral oversight (*episkope*), exercised in personal, collegial, and communal ways, is necessary to witness to and safeguard the unity and apostolicity of the church.

We share a common hope in the final consummation of the kingdom of God and believe that we are compelled to work for the establishment of justice and peace. The obligations of the kingdom are to govern our life in the church and our concern for the world. The Christian faith is that God has made peace

Agreement on the doctrine of justification by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

Agreement on the nature of the Church as a community of people gathered around the preaching of God's Word and the celebration of the Sacraments in order to receive the gifts of forgiveness, life, and salvation, and to be empowered for service in the world.

Agreement on the ministry of all baptized Christians, and on the fact that the pastoral ministry of Word and Sacrament was established by God.

Agreement on the ministry of bishops.

Agreement that the ministry of all the baptized serves as a witness to the coming of God's kingdom and the promise of justice and peace for all people.

through Jesus “by the blood of his cross” (Col. 1:20) so establishing the one valid center for the unity of the whole human family.⁵

Joint Participation in the Ordination/Installation of Bishops with Prayer and the Laying-on-of-Hands⁶

3. We acknowledge that one another’s ordained ministries are given by God to be instruments of God’s grace, and possess not only the inward call of the Spirit, but also Christ’s commission through his body, the church. We agree that the threefold ministry of bishops, presbyters, and deacons in historic succession will be the future pattern of the one ordained ministry of Word and Sacrament shared corporately within the two churches as they begin to live in full communion.⁷

Joint Participation in the Ordination/Installation of Bishops with Prayer and the Laying-on-of-Hands

Episcopalians use the term “ordination” as the title for the worship rite in which bishops are set apart for service in the church. Lutherans will continue to use the term “installation” to describe this worship rite, but agree to change the service to include the laying-on-of-hands with prayer by other bishops, which is the traditional means by which the historic succession of bishops has been continued throughout history.

3. The *Concordat of Agreement* states here that in a life of full communion shared corporately by two church bodies, a single ordained ministry eventually will be exercised. The general, historic pattern of three forms of such ministry—bishops, pastors, and deacons—is acknowledged. The ELCA, however, is not required by the *Concordat of Agreement* to ordain its diaconal ministers, who will remain lay ministers within this church, even though The Episcopal Church will continue to ordain its deacons. Consequently the *Concordat of Agreement* does not contradict the results of the ELCA’s 1993 Study of Ministry.

After approval of the *Concordat of Agreement*, pastors elected as bishops will be set apart for life as bishops. In the ELCA, however, they will continue to serve a six-year term and must be re-elected as is presently the case. At the conclusion of their terms, ELCA bishops will be invited to attend meetings of the Conference of Bishops. In the future, bishops of each church body agree to attend the ordination/installation of

and Sacrament. As a result of their agreement in faith, both churches hereby pledge themselves, beginning at the time that this agreement is accepted by the General Convention of The Episcopal Church and the Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, to the common joint ordinations/installations of all future bishops as apostolic missionaries in the historic episcopate for the sake of common mission.⁸

Each church hereby promises to invite and include on an invariable basis at least three bishops of the other church, as well as three of its own, to participate in the laying-on-of-hands at the ordinations/installations of its own bishops as a sign of the unity and apostolic continuity of the whole church.⁹ Such participation is the liturgical form by which the church recognizes that the bishop serves the local or regional church through ties of collegiality and consultation, the purpose of which is to provide links with the universal church.¹⁰ Inasmuch as both churches agree that a ministry of *episkope* is necessary to witness to, promote, and safeguard the unity and apostolicity of the church and its continuity in doctrine and mission across time and space,¹¹ this participation is understood as a call in each place for mutual planning, consultation, and interaction in *episkope*, mission, teaching, and pastoral care as well as a liturgical expression of the full communion that is being initiated by this *Concordat of Agreement*. Each church understands that the bishops in this action are representatives of their own churches in fidelity to the teaching and mission of the apostles. Their participation in this way embodies the historical continuity of each bishop and the diocese or synod with the apostolic church and ministry through the ages.¹²

B. Actions of The Episcopal Church

4. The Episcopal Church hereby recognizes now the full authenticity of the ordained ministries presently existing within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The Episcopal Church acknowledges the pastors and bishops of the Evangelical

bishops of the other church body in order to demonstrate unity in the faith.

From the fourth century it has been customary to invite at least three bishops to participate in the laying-on-of-hands in the setting apart of a bishop. In order to demonstrate the full participation of both church bodies in this action, each church promises that at least three of its own bishops will participate in the laying-on-of-hands in services at which bishops are ordained/installed. Such participation demonstrates a bishop’s connection not only with the local church, but with the church throughout the world. The word “episkope” means oversight, and refers to the ministry of a bishop who serves as the pastor of pastors and congregations in a synod or diocese. The paragraph continues by describing the many dimensions of a bishop’s ministry, which has developed over many centuries, and is also reflected in the ELCA’s constitutional provision 10.31.a.

Actions of The Episcopal Church

4. Among the actions to be taken by The Episcopal Church with approval of the *Concordat of Agreement* is the declaration that the ministries of the pastors and bishops of the ELCA are fully

Lutheran Church in America as priests within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as chief pastors exercising a ministry of *episkope* over the jurisdictional areas of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in which they preside.¹³

5. To enable the full communion that is coming into being by means of this *Concordat of Agreement*, The Episcopal Church hereby pledges, at the same time that this *Concordat of Agreement* is accepted by its General Convention and by the Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, to begin the process for enacting a temporary suspension, in this case only, of the seventeenth century restriction that “no persons are allowed to exercise the offices of bishop, priest, or deacon in this Church unless they are so ordained, or have already received such ordination with the laying on of hands by bishops who are themselves duly qualified to confer Holy Orders.”¹⁴ The purpose of this action, to declare this restriction inapplicable to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, will be to permit the full interchangeability and reciprocity of all its pastors as priests or presbyters, and all its deacons as may be determined, without any further ordination or re-ordination or supplemental ordination whatsoever, subject always to canonically or constitutionally approved invitation (see Pars. 14, 15, and 16 below). The purpose of temporarily suspending this restriction, which has been a constant requirement in Anglican polity since the Ordinal of 1662,¹⁵ is precisely in order to secure the future implementation of the ordinals’ same principle within the eventually fully integrated ministries. It is for this reason that The Episcopal Church can feel confident in taking this unprecedented step with regard to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

6. The Episcopal Church hereby endorses the Lutheran affirmation that the historic catholic episcopate under the Word of God must always serve the gospel,¹⁶ and that the ultimate authority under

authentic now. ELCA pastors will not be re-ordained nor would they receive some kind of supplemental ordination in order for them to serve in parishes of The Episcopal Church, if invited to do so.

5. In order to accomplish the above, The Episcopal Church must change its constitution and rules of organization and procedure (the canons) that insist that only deacons and priests ordained by a bishop in the historic succession may serve parishes of The Episcopal Church. This rule, in effect since 1662, will be suspended for clergy of the ELCA only, and will be enacted in order to make possible now the service of ELCA clergy in parishes of The Episcopal Church, when invited and approved to do so.

6. If approved, the church bodies agree to establish procedures for reviewing the

which bishops preach and teach is the gospel itself.¹⁷ In testimony and implementation thereof, The Episcopal Church agrees to establish and welcome, either by itself or jointly with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, structures for collegial and periodic review of its episcopal ministry, as well as that of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, with a view to evaluation, adaptation, improvement, and continual reform in the service of the gospel.¹⁸

C. Actions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

7. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America agrees that all its bishops will be understood as ordained, like other pastors, for life service of the gospel in the pastoral ministry of the historic episcopate,¹⁹ even though tenure in office of the Presiding Bishop²⁰ and synodical bishops may be terminated by retirement, resignation, or conclusion of term however constitutionally ordered. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America further agrees to revise its rite for the “Installation of a Bishop”²¹ to reflect this understanding. In keeping with these principles the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America also agrees to revise its constitution so that all bishops, including those no longer active, may attend the meetings of the Conference of Bishops.

8. As regards ordained ministry, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America affirms, in the context of its confessional heritage, the teaching of the Augsburg Confession that Lutherans do not intend to depart from the historic faith and practice of catholic Christianity.²² The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America agrees to revise its rite for the “Installation of a Bishop” to incorporate the participation of Lutheran and Episcopal bishops in prayer and the laying-on-of-hands. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America also agrees to make constitutional and liturgical provision that only bishops shall ordain all clergy. Pastors/Priests shall continue to participate in the laying-on- of-hands at all

ministry of bishops, possibly in conjunction with the other. The purpose of this review process is to further enhance the Gospel-centered ministry of the office of bishop, and to foster the mission of the Church.

Actions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

7. If the *Concordat of Agreement* is approved, this church agrees that bishops will continue to be considered bishops even though tenure in office may end by retirement, resignation, or completion of term. This church agrees to change its constitution to reflect this agreement, specifically by making it possible for all bishops to attend meetings of the Conference of Bishops, and by making this commitment clear in the rite for the Installation of a Bishop.

8. By accepting the *Concordat of Agreement*, this church will demonstrate its concurrence with the Augsburg Confession that the office and ministry of bishops is by divine institution, when it says in Article 28, “According to divine right, therefore, it is the office of the bishop to preach the Gospel, forgive sins, judge doctrine and condemn doctrine that is contrary to the Gospel, and exclude from the Christian community the ungodly whose wicked conduct is manifest.” Acceptance of the *Concordat* likewise recognizes that the interruption of the historic

ordinations of pastors/priests. It is further understood that episcopal and pastoral/priestly office in the church is to be understood and exercised as servant ministry, and not for domination or arbitrary control.²³ Appropriate liturgical expression of these understandings will be made.²⁴ Both churches acknowledge that the diaconate, including its place within the threefold ministerial office and its relationship with other ministries, is in need of continued study and reform, which they pledge themselves to undertake in consultation with one another.²⁵

9. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America hereby recognizes now the full authenticity of the ordained ministries presently existing within The Episcopal Church, acknowledging the bishops, priests, and deacons of The Episcopal Church all as pastors in their respective orders within The Episcopal Church and the bishops of The Episcopal Church as chief pastors in the historic succession exercising a ministry of *episkope* over the jurisdictional areas of The Episcopal Church in which they preside. In preparation for the full communion that is coming into being by means of this *Concordat of Agreement*, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America also pledges, at the time that this *Concordat of Agreement* is accepted by the Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the General Convention of The Episcopal Church, to begin the process for enacting a dispensation for ordained ministers of The Episcopal Church from its ordination requirement of acceptance of the unaltered Augsburg Confession and the other confessional writings in the *Book of Concord (Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America 2.05., 2.06., 2.07., and 7.22.)* in order to permit the full interchangeability and reciprocity of all Episcopal Church bishops as bishops, of all Episcopal Church priests as pastors, and of all Episcopal Church deacons as may be determined (see

episcopate among some Lutherans was necessitated by events of history rather than by doctrinal decisions. As noted above, this commitment will be demonstrated by the participation of at least three bishops from each church body in the laying-on-of-hands at the ordination/installation service of bishops. This church also agrees to change its constitution so that only bishops (who presently must ordain or provide for the ordination of pastors) will preside at the ordination of pastors. Other pastors also may participate in ordination services with the bishop. Both churches agree that the ministry of diaconal ministers is not fully understood at this time in the Church's history, and agree to continue studying the appropriate role of this ministry of service in the life of the Church.

9. To parallel the actions of The Episcopal Church, this church agrees to recognize now the full authenticity of the ministries of bishops, priests, and deacons in The Episcopal Church. On the basis of the agreement in matters of faith and doctrine outlined above, this church will change its constitutional requirement that only pastors who accept and adhere to the Augsburg Confession will be allowed to serve in a congregation of this church. Priests of The Episcopal Church who wish to serve an ELCA congregation for a short period of time must be approved by the synodical bishop for such service. No re-ordination or supplemental ordination will be required for such persons. Pastors or priests who wish to serve a parish of the other church body on a permanent basis will be required to seek approval and be rostered in that church body. Any service by a pastor or priest in a congregation of the other church body will be by invitation, outlined in specific constitutional provisions governing such actions.

Par. 8 above), within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America without any supplemental vow or declaration, subject always to canonically or constitutionally approved invitation (see Pars. 14, 15 and 16 below). The purpose of this dispensation, which heretofore has not been made by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for the clergy of any other church, is precisely in order to serve the future implementation, in the full communion that will follow, of the agreement in the doctrine of the faith identified in Paragraph 2 (above) of this *Concordat of Agreement*.²⁶

D. Actions of Both Churches

Joint Commission

10. To assist in joint planning for mission, both churches hereby authorize the establishment of a joint ecumenical/doctrinal/liturgical commission, accountable to the two churches in a manner to be determined by each church. Its purpose will also be to moderate the details of these changes, to facilitate consultation and common decision making through appropriate channels in fundamental matters that the churches may face together in the future, to enable the process of new ordinations/installations of bishops in both churches as they occur, and to issue guidelines as requested and as may seem appropriate. It will prepare a national service that will celebrate the inauguration of this *Concordat of Agreement* as a common obedience to Christ in mission. At this service the mutual recognition of faith will be celebrated and, if possible, new bishops from each church will be ordained/installed for the dioceses or synods that have elected them, initiating the provisions hereby agreed upon.

Wider Context

11. In thus moving to establish, in geographically overlapping episcopates in collegial consultation, one ordained ministry open to women as well as to men, to married persons as well as to single persons, both churches agree that the historic catholic episcopate, which they have embraced, either by historical practice or confessional writings, can be locally

D. Actions of Both Churches

Joint Commission

10. What is envisioned is a small joint committee to identify and define specific issues that would need to be referred to the appropriate decision-making bodies in each of the churches. In the ELCA, that would be the Church Council and, in certain instances, the Churchwide Assembly. Decision-making authority would remain within the existing governing patterns of the respective churches. The first task of this committee will be planning a worship service to celebrate the approval of the *Concordat of Agreement*.

Wider Context

11. If approved, the *Concordat of Agreement* will be shared with other church bodies as an example of how churches may

adapted and reformed in the service of the gospel. In this spirit they offer this *Concordat of Agreement* and growth toward full communion for serious consideration among the churches of the Reformation as well as among the Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches. They pledge widespread consultation during the process at all stages. Each church promises to issue no official commentary on this text that has not been approved by the Joint Commission as a legitimate interpretation thereof.

Existing Relationships

12. Each church agrees that the other church will continue to live in communion with all the churches with whom the latter is now in communion. Each church also pledges continuing consultation about this *Concordat of Agreement* with those churches. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America continues to be in full communion (pulpit and altar fellowship) with all member churches of the Lutheran World Federation. This *Concordat of Agreement* with The Episcopal Church does not imply or inaugurate any automatic communion between The Episcopal Church and the other member churches of the Lutheran World Federation. The Episcopal Church continues to be in full communion with all of the Provinces of the Anglican Communion, and with Old Catholic Churches of Europe, with the united churches of the Indian sub-continent, with the Mar Thoma Church, and with the Philippine Independent Church. This *Concordat of Agreement* with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America does not imply or inaugurate any automatic communion between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the other Provinces of the Anglican Communion or any other churches with whom The Episcopal Church is in full communion.

Other Dialogues

13. Both churches agree that each will continue to engage in dialogue with other churches and traditions. Both churches agree to take each other and this *Concordat of Agreement* into account at

cooperate with one another in their efforts to further the mission of the Gospel. In this spirit, this ecumenical endeavor is viewed as a potential gift to the entire Church of Jesus Christ.

Existing Relationships

12. Approval of the *Concordat of Agreement* will not alter the present ecumenical commitments made either by the ELCA or The Episcopal Church. The two church bodies do promise to be in consultation as new ecumenical efforts are made (see below), but each church retains the authority to act on its own behalf, reflecting its unique commitments to ecumenical relationships. Furthermore, approval of the *Concordat of Agreement* does not obligate either church body to declare full communion with the churches with whom the other church shares a relationship of full communion.

every stage in their dialogues with other churches and traditions. Where appropriate, both churches will seek to engage in joint dialogues. On the basis of this *Concordat of Agreement*, both churches pledge that they will not enter into formal agreements with other churches and traditions without prior consultation with each other. At the same time both churches pledge that they will not impede the development of relationships and agreements with other churches and traditions with whom they have been in dialogue.

E. Full Communion

14. Of all the historical processes involved in realizing full communion between The Episcopal Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the achieving of full interchangeability of ordained episcopal ministries will probably take longest. While the two churches will fully acknowledge the authenticity of each other's ordained ministries from the beginning of the process, the creation of a common, and therefore fully interchangeable, episcopal ministry will occur with the full incorporation of all active bishops in the historic episcopate by common joint ordinations/installations and the continuing process of collegial consultation in matters of Christian faith and life. Full communion will also include the activities of the Joint Commission (Par. 10 above), as well as the establishment locally and nationally of "recognized organs of regular consultation and communication, including episcopal collegiality, to express and strengthen the fellowship and enable common witness, life and service."²⁷ Thereby the churches are permanently committed to common mission and ministry on the basis of agreement in faith, recognizing each other fully as churches in which the gospel is preached and the holy sacraments administered. All provisions specified above will continue in effect.

15. On the basis of this *Concordat of Agreement*, at a given date recommended by the Joint Commission, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and The

Other Dialogues

13. As each church acts on its ecumenical commitments, it will engage in joint dialogues as appropriate. Mutual consultation will characterize all future ecumenical conversations conducted by each church body, but each also retains the authority to act on the basis of its present commitments to other church bodies.

E. Full Communion

14. Full communion as it is understood in the *Concordat of Agreement* must be seen as an evolving process rather than a moment in time, a process that will be completed only when the active bishops of the two church bodies share in the historic episcopate through joint services of ordination/installation. This does not imply that present ministries are not fully authentic now, however. The process of full communion also will develop as localized ministries of cooperation and mission emerge for service to the Church and the world. In the meantime, each church body recognizes in the other the pure proclamation of the Gospel and the correct celebration of the sacraments.

Episcopal Church will announce the completion of the process by which they enjoy full communion with each other. They will share one ordained ministry in two churches that are in full communion, still autonomous in structure yet interdependent in doctrine, mission, and ministry.

16. Consequent to the acknowledgment of full communion and respecting always the internal discipline of each church, both churches now accept in principle the full interchangeability and reciprocity of their ordained ministries, recognizing bishops as bishops, pastors as priests and presbyters and vice versa, and deacons as may be determined. In consequence of our mutual pledge to a future already anticipated in Christ and the church of the early centuries,²⁸ each church will make such necessary revisions of canons and constitutions so that all ordained clergy in good standing can, upon canonically or constitutionally approved invitation, function as clergy in corresponding situations within either church. The churches will authorize such celebrations of the Eucharist as will accord full recognition to each other's episcopal ministries and sacramental services. All further necessary legislative, canonical, constitutional, and liturgical changes will be coordinated by the joint ecumenical/doctrinal/liturgical commission hereby established.

Conclusion

We receive with thanksgiving the gift of unity which is already given in Christ.

He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to

15. When the process leading to full communion is complete, the two church bodies, still autonomous in structure, will nonetheless share a common ministry.

16. As the process of full communion unfolds, the two church bodies, having agreed to recognize the full authenticity of the ministries of the other now, will engage in the full interchangeability and reciprocity of ministries in order to serve the mission of the Gospel and within constitutional and canonical guidelines. The promise to make constitutional and liturgical changes to reflect this agreement is reaffirmed, as is the commitment to achieve full communion in order to empower the churches to engage "more fully and more faithfully the mission of God in the world."

dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross (Col. 1:15-20).

Repeatedly Christians have confessed that the unity of the church is given, not achieved. The church can only be one because it is constituted by the gospel in Word and Sacrament, and there is but one gospel. What Christians are seeking when they engage in the tasks and efforts associated with ecumenism is to discover how the unity they have already been given by the gospel can be manifested faithfully in terms of the church's mission.²⁹

We do not know to what new, recovered, or continuing tasks of mission this *Concordat of Agreement* will lead our churches, but we give thanks to God for leading us to this point. We entrust ourselves to that leading in the future, confident that our full communion will be a witness to the gift and goal already present in Christ, "so that God may be all in all" (1 Cor. 15:28). It is the gift of Christ that we are sent as he has been sent (John 17:17-26), that our unity will be received and perceived as we participate together in the mission of the Son in obedience to the Father through the power and presence of the Holy Spirit.³⁰

Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all that we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, for ever and ever. Amen (Eph. 3:20-21).

End Notes

¹ Cf., the complete text of the 1982 Agreement in paragraph 1 of the report, "*Toward Full Communion*" and "*Concordat of Agreement*" (Minneapolis: Augsburg, and Cincinnati: Forward Movement Publications, 1991).

² *Anglican-Lutheran Relations: Report of the Anglican-Lutheran Joint Working Group, Cold Ash, Berkshire, England--1983*, in William A. Norgren, editor, *What Can We Share?* (Cincinnati: Forward Movement Publications, 1985), pp. 90-92. The relevant portion of the report reads as follows:

By full communion we here understand a relationship between two distinct churches or communions. Each maintains its own autonomy and recognizes the catholicity and apostolicity of the other, and each believes the other to hold the essentials of the Christian faith:

- a) subject to such safeguards as ecclesial discipline may properly require, members of one body may receive the sacraments of the other;
- b) subject to local invitation, bishops of one church may take part in the consecration of the bishops of the other, thus acknowledging the duty of mutual care and concern;
- c) subject to church regulation, a bishop, pastor/priest or deacon of one ecclesial body may exercise liturgical functions in a congregation of the other body if invited to do so and also, when requested, pastoral care of the other's members;
- d) it is also a necessary addition and complement that there should be recognized organs of regular consultation and communication, including episcopal collegiality, to express and strengthen the fellowship and enable common witness, life and service.

To be in full communion means that churches become interdependent while remaining autonomous. One is not elevated to be the judge of the other nor can it remain insensitive to the other; neither is each body committed to every secondary feature of the tradition of the other. Thus the corporate strength of the churches is enhanced in love, and an isolated independence is restrained. Full communion . . . should not imply the suppressing of ethnic, cultural or ecclesial characteristics of traditions which may in fact be maintained and developed by diverse institutions within one communion.

³ "A Declaration of Ecumenical Commitment: A Policy Statement of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America" in "Ecumenism: The Vision of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America," adopted by the 1991 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and the "Declaration on Unity" adopted by the 1979 General Convention of The Episcopal Church.

⁴ Lutheran-Episcopal Dialogue III held fourteen meetings between 1983 and 1991 at which some 43 papers were presented and discussed. A full list is found in "Toward Full Communion" and "Concordat of Agreement," pp. 107-109. Many papers appear in Daniel F. Martensen, *Concordat of Agreement: Supporting Essays* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, and Cincinnati: Forward Movement Publications, 1995). Also see James E. Griffiss, and Daniel F. Martensen, editors, *A Commentary on "Concordat of Agreement"* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, and Cincinnati: Forward Movement Publications, 1994).

⁵ "Toward Full Communion" and "Concordat of Agreement," pp. 26-27. Cf. *The Niagara Report* (London: Church House Publishing, 1988), Pars. 61-70; *The Meissen Common Statement. On the Way to Visible Unity*. Meissen, 18 March 1988 (in *The Meissen Agreement: Texts* - CCU Occasional Paper No. 2, 1992), pp. 16-19; and *The Porvoo Common Statement* - 1993) - CCU Occasional Paper No. 3, 1993), p. 18-21.

⁶ This Concordat employs the term "installation of bishops" from the usage of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as having the same meaning as the term "ordination of bishops" from the usage of The Episcopal Church. In both cases the ministry of bishop is conferred in a liturgical rite that includes the setting apart with prayer and the laying-on-of-hands by other bishops.

⁷ Cf. Apology, Article 14, 1, which reads: "On this matter we have given frequent testimony in the assembly to our deep desire to maintain the church polity and various ranks of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, although they were created by human authority. We know that the Fathers had good and useful reasons for instituting ecclesiastical discipline in the manner described by the ancient canons." Also cf. Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral 4, and "Toward Full Communion" and "Concordat of Agreement," Par. 81, p. 78. While the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America recognizes the ministries of ordained deacons in The Episcopal Church, the Concordat does not require the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to ordain its diaconal ministers.

⁸ Cf. Richard Grein, "The Bishop as Chief Missionary," in Charles R. Henery, editor, *Beyond the Horizon: Frontiers for Mission* (Cincinnati: Forward Movement Publications, 1986), pp. 64-80.

⁹ *The Niagara Report* (London: Church House Publishing, 1988), Pars. 91 and 96; The Council of Nicaea, Canon 4. The Concordat's intention here is to express liturgically the full communion between the neighboring churches and their mutual recognition as catholic and apostolic. Its Constitution and Book of Common Prayer require The Episcopal Church to have three bishops participate in the laying-on-of-hands. Simple parity and the recognition of the authenticity of the

presently ordained ministries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America means that it too will agree to have three of its bishops participate in the laying-on-of-hands, in conformity with its own confessional commitment to the historic polity of the Church, Apology, Article 14, 1-5 and Treatise on the Power and the Primacy of the Pope, Par. 13.

¹⁰ Michael Root, "Full Communion Between Episcopalians and Lutherans in North America: What Would It Look Like?" in *Concordat of Agreement: Supporting Essays*, pp. 165-190. Cf. Michael Root, "Bishops as Points of Unity and Continuity," in *Episcopacy: Lutheran-United Methodist Dialogue II*, edited by Jack M. Tuell and Roger W. Fjeld (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1991), pp. 118-125.

¹¹ The description of *episkope* as "necessary" is taken from The Lutheran-United Methodist Common Statement on Episcopacy, Par. 28, and from *The Niagara Report*, Par. 69, cited earlier in this Concordat in Par. 2. Cf. Titus 1:7-9, 1 Tim. 3:1, 4:14-16, John 21:15-17, 2 Cor. 11:28, and Phil. 1:1. Cf. also "Toward Full Communion" and "Concordat of Agreement," Par. 25, pp. 32-33.

¹² Cf. Resolutions of the 1979 and 1985 General Conventions of The Episcopal Church; The Canterbury Statement, Par. 16, of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission; and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's statement, "Ecumenism: The Vision of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America," 1991.

¹³ *The Niagara Report*, Par. 94. Cf. Raymond E. Brown, *Priest and Bishop: Biblical Reflections* (New York: Paulist Press, 1970), pp. 83-85. Cf. "Toward Full Communion" and "Concordat of Agreement," Par. 78, pp. 76-77: "Both churches agree to recognize the full authenticity of existing ministries. Nothing will be done which calls into question the authenticity of present ordinations and ministries and sacraments. Lutherans also need to understand that the future joint consecrations do not mean that Lutheran bishops will have greater authority, for the gospel of God's promise confers all the authority which the church and its ministers have or need. Nor will future Lutheran bishops have powers which they do not now have. They will continue to exercise *episkope* on the basis of the framework of constitutional accountability which currently obtains in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Canon law in The Episcopal Church and synodical constitutions in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America will continue to set terms of office and procedures for the election of bishops."

¹⁴ Preface to the Ordination Rites," The Book of Common Prayer, p. 510.

¹⁵ Cf. *The Study of Anglicanism*, edited by Stephen Sykes and John Booty (London: SPCK, and Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988), pp. 149, 151, 238, 290, 304-305; Paul F. Bradshaw, *The Anglican Ordinal* (London: SPCK, 1971), Chapter 6.

¹⁶ *The Niagara Report*, Par. 91; Augsburg Confession Article 7, Article 28.

¹⁷ Joseph A. Burgess, "An Evangelical Episcopate," in Todd Nichol and Marc Kolden, editors, *Called and Ordained* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 1990), p. 147.

¹⁸ Cf. *The Niagara Report*, Pars. 90, 95, and especially 100-110 as examples of the questions and concerns involved in such evaluation. Cf. also *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, Ministry Par. 38.

¹⁹ Cf. *The Niagara Report*, Par. 90.

²⁰ The term "Presiding Bishop" here in reference to the churchwide bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is contingent upon approval by the 1997 Churchwide Assembly.

²¹ *Occasional Services* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1982), pp. 218-223.

²² Augsburg Confession, Article 21, 1 (Tappert, p. 47); cf. Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope, Par. 66.

²³ Cf. 2 Cor. 10:8; also *Anglican-Orthodox Dialogue: The Dublin Agreed Statement 1984* (New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985), pp. 13-14; and Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission, *The Final Report* (London: SPCK and Catholic Truth Society, 1982), pp. 83 and 89.

²⁴ Cf. *The Niagara Report*, Par. 92.

- ²⁵ *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, Ministry Par. 24; and *The Diaconate as Ecumenical Opportunity*, report of the Anglican-Lutheran International Commission, 1996. Cf. James M. Barnett, *The Diaconate: A Full and Equal Order* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1981), pp. 133-197; John E. Booty, *The Servant Church: Diaconal Ministry and the Episcopal Church* (Wilton, CT: Morehouse-Barlow, 1982); and J. Robert Wright, "The Emergence of the Diaconate: Biblical and Patristic Sources," *Liturgy*, Vol. 2, No. 4 (Fall, 1982), pp. 17-23, 67-71. Cf. also "Together for Ministry: Final Report and Recommendations," Task Force on the Study of Ministry, 1988-1993, and subsequent actions of the 1993 and 1995 ELCA Churchwide Assemblies.
- ²⁶ A member of the clergy serving temporarily in the ministry of the other church would be expected to undergo the acceptance procedures of that church, "respecting always the internal discipline of each church" (Par. 16). A member of the clergy seeking long-term ministry with primary responsibility in the other church would be expected to apply for clergy transfer and would agree to the ordination vow or declaration in the church to which she or he would be applying to minister permanently.
- ²⁷ The Cold Ash report, paragraph d. See footnote 2, above.
- ²⁸ Cf. John D. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion* (New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985), pp. 171-208.
- ²⁹ *Implications of the Gospel* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, and Cincinnati: Forward Movement Publications, 1988), edited by William A. Norgren and William G. Rusch, with a Study Guide by Darlis J. Swan and Elizabeth Z. Turner, Par. 98, p.74.
- ³⁰ *The Niagara Report*, Pars. 25-26.

Dialogue with the Reformed Representatives

Reference: *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section IV, pages 35-48.

Bishop Anderson introduced the Rev. Eugene G. Turner, associate stated clerk, and the Rev. Aurelia Takacs Fule, ecumenical consultant, both of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). He then introduced the Rev. John H. Thomas of the United Church of Christ, assistant to the president for ecumenical concerns. He indicated that the Rev. Douglas W. Fromm and the Rev. Lynn Japinga of the Reformed Church in America had not yet arrived. Bishop Anderson then invited Bishop Guy S. Edmiston [Lower Susquehanna Synod], who had served as co-chair of the Lutheran-Reformed Coordinating Committee, to lead the assembly into the discussion of *A Formula of Agreement*.

Bishop Edmiston introduced the topic by saying, "With my colleague, the Rev. John Thomas [co-chair with Bishop Edmiston of the Lutheran-Reformed Coordinating Committee], it is a privilege to introduce to this assembly for discussion, debate, and action the ecumenical proposal that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America adopt *A Formula of Agreement* and declare that it is in full communion with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Reformed Church in America, and the United Church of Christ. In one sense this proposal is the culmination of a long history of Lutheran-Reformed relationships. While formal dialogues have been held for 35 years, beginning in 1962, the decision on how the insights and recommendations of the dialogues are to be received by this church

come to it as unfinished business. While these dialogues certainly have been a significant time of learning in our churches, we need also to recognize that congregational and synodical relationships go back over two centuries as Lutheran and Reformed people shared church buildings, Sunday School classes, worship services, and in many cases, pastoral leadership. As our ancestors came to this country, they brought with them a common awareness of their histories grounded in the Reformation understanding of the Gospel which motivated them to a common concern for witnessing to Jesus Christ and serving a growing number of people in their communities. As the theme of this assembly calls us to reflect on our heritage, we also need to remember that it is a heritage that we have in many ways shared and continue to share with Reformed sisters and brothers. In a real sense, this proposal can be the beginning of a new era in Lutheran-Reformed relationships as our hope for deeper signs of unity in Christ are operative. The *Formula* calls us to continued theological dialogue, to clarify our common understanding of the faith. It also recognizes that as we live together under the Gospel in such a way that the principle of mutual affirmation and admonition becomes the basis of a trusting relationship, our witness to our communities will be increasingly credible. The Lutheran-Reformed proposal for full communion is, for me, an excellent means for reflection on our theme, 'Making Christ Known—Alive in Our Heritage and Hope!'

"I would like to express on behalf of the Lutheran-Reformed Coordinating Committee gratitude: To those persons who have assisted us in our mandate to aid this church in its reception of *A Common Calling* [the report of the Lutheran-Reformed Committee for Theological Conversations released in March 1992]; to the teaching theologians who have done the hard work of theological reflection in dialogues over the decades; to my colleague bishops and ecumenical leaders in our synods, and the many laypersons who have been involved in workshops, seminars, and study opportunities of the documents that have come before us; to our seminary faculties for their hard work in discerning the teachings of the dialogues and the opportunities presented therein and for their statements; to the journals of the church, such as *The Lutheran* and others, both official institutional journals and independent journals, who have certainly helped this committee in its work to bring the document and the proposal to this assembly and aid in its reception."

Bishop Edmiston introduced the Rev. John H. Thomas. Bishop Anderson stated, "The Rev. John H. Thomas, assistant to the president for ecumenical concerns of the United Church of Christ, will be presenting on behalf of all three of the churches involved in this proposal. Then we are going to have time for [voting members'] questions of Pastor Thomas and the other representatives."

Pastor Thomas addressed the assembly saying, "It is my privilege to formally and officially report to you what you already know, that the Reformed Church in America, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and the United Church of Christ this summer have adopted *A Formula of Agreement* and voted to enter into full

communion with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. They have done so overwhelmingly and they have done so with enthusiasm. Indeed, your Reformed sisters and brothers are here with you with their hopes and with their prayers, even as they were with The Episcopal Church. I express gratitude for the rich experiences that I have had in these past years as one of the interpreters of *A Formula of Agreement*. As I have traveled through many of your synods, met many of your lay leaders, your pastors, your bishops, your theologians, as I have enjoyed a growing and rich friendship with Guy Edmiston, as I have appreciated my colleagues Daniel Martensen, Darlis Swan, William Rusch [staff members of the ELCA Department for Ecumenical Affairs], it has been enriching to me to be surrounded and to be shaped by your warm hospitality, your generous spirit, and your many gifts to me. This rich communion in friendship and faith is something which votes cannot give. It is something which votes certainly cannot take away. I have been blessed. Even your questions about the United Church of Christ, always challenging, sometimes a bit strident, have become occasions for me to reflect deeply on the faith, the life, and the witness of the church of my baptism—the church that has shaped me. It has become an occasion for me to be renewed in my conviction that the United Church of Christ is indeed a community of grace and, I believe, a gift to the larger body of Christ. So thank you for helping me rediscover the precious gifts of my own heritage and my own tradition even as I have learned to value, to cherish, and to appreciate the treasures of yours. I have received a mantle of joy and praise in these years.

“Much has been written and said about these proposals—some of you, no doubt, are thinking, ‘too much.’ So let me ask of you only one simple thing and that is, remember. Remember. That is a word, I suspect, that may seem like a dangerous word for someone from the Reformed tradition to be using in this context but let me use it nevertheless, not as Zwingli might have used it, but rather as all of us in our rich ecumenical conversations in Faith and Order over the past years have come to use it with all its profound meaning. Remember first the saints—the mothers and fathers who have gone before us who have lived for many centuries with the hope and the promise of unity, but who have also lived with the pain of separation. I think in particular of one person already named here by Bishop Almqvist, Henry Mühlberg who traversed this beautiful landscape of Pennsylvania 250 years ago. At one point traveling to a small town not far from here where, as he wrote in his journal, ‘German Lutherans and German Reforms have made a trial of building a common church’ and where, as he reported, they were in controversy with one another. Mühlberg’s journal is filled with the pathos of communities and congregations divided but even more of the division that had taken place in his words, ‘between families, husbands and wives, neighbors and friends.’ So as he met with those separated Christians to divide their property, he expressed the hope that God at some future point have further opportunity to aid them. Friends, could this be such a time? Remember the saints.

“And then remember your baptism. So much of our attention has been drawn in these dialogues, indeed for these many centuries since the Reformation, to the question of the [Lord’s] Table. So much so that I fear we have sometimes forgotten the important place of the baptismal font in our life. For after all it is the font that is the basis, the foundation, of our essential unity and it is because we have come to the font together that we have found ourselves at the Table with our questions and our concerns and even with our suspicions. At the Table where, at our best, we have sought to discern more faithfully, more adequately, more deeply the meaning of Christ’s presence and that mystery and where, at our worst, we have sought to overly define it. My personal hope is that our full communion will help us move beyond these questions at the Table, as important as they are, so that together we can take up the questions of our baptism which is our common calling. Do you renounce the devil and evil? Will you confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior? Will you do justice? Will you grow in discipleship? Where we came to know ourselves, not as Lutherans or UCC or Presbyterian or Reformed, but rather to use the words of our liturgy, to know yourselves as children of God, disciples of Christ, members together of the church. Remember the saints, remember your baptism.

“One of the gifts of our coordinating committee’s life was the opportunity to come to know the Rev. Gail Reynolds who with me represented the United Church of Christ. Members of the Conference of Bishops will recall getting to know Gail at one of their meetings about a year ago when she came to help respond to questions from that group. Shortly after that meeting in Orlando, Gail discovered that she had liver cancer and she died just this past spring. In the final years of her ministry, Gail served as chaplain at Emmaus Homes in St. Charles, Missouri. Emmaus Homes is one of the diaconal institutions of the United Church of Christ and serves as a home and a residence and a support community for mentally retarded adults. One of Gail’s last projects before she died was to write and compile a set of stories about her parishioners who, though mentally retarded, were also remarkable Christians. Gail tells one marvelous story about Irene, who served as a tour guide for many of the church groups who came to visit Emmaus Homes. One day Gail was nearby as Irene took a group through the lobby. In the lobby are several paintings of the biblical scene that gives Emmaus its name. Gail heard Irene point to that picture and say, ‘And this shows when Jesus came to Emmaus in St. Charles, Missouri.’

“Brothers and sisters, regardless of our votes on *A Formula of Agreement*, yea or nay, may you and I be given the gift of Irene’s insight. That we may not only have our eyes opened to perceive the risen Christ at the Table where so much of our lives are centered, but also have our eyes opened to perceive the risen Christ among those like Irene who live at the edges and the margins and the peripheries of our world where so much of God’s life is centered and where our common calling is to be heard, is to be cherished, is to be found, and by God’s grace is, together, to be claimed.”

Bishop Anderson invited questions from voting members to be directed to any of the representatives of the Reformed churches.

The Rev. Mark A. Graham [Virginia Synod] described an experience in which a UCC pastor had been invited to co-author devotionals with him for use on personal computers. After Pastor Graham had submitted his sample devotions to the UCC pastor and he received hers, the UCC pastor responded and “basically she said she would not be able to work with me on this devotional project. She raised two major concerns in terms of disagreement. One, she said that most UCC pastors do not use the Trinitarian formula (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), that they would consider that [Trinitarian formula] too sexist so they would use other words such as Creator, Savior, Sustainer, etc. and so she thought that we would not be compatible in that regards, since I did use those particular words in one of my devotions. Secondly, she had a concern where I had written in a devotion that Christ has died for our sins, as an atonement for our sins, as God’s gift to us to take care of what we cannot do for ourselves in terms of eternal forgiveness. She said that most UCC pastors would have trouble with that. That Jesus certainly died at the hands of evil but that it was not necessarily God’s intention for that to happen and so most UCC leaders would move away from that position.” Pastor Graham asked whether that pastor represents the majority of the clergy in the UCC on these theological issues or is she a voice that would be in the minority?

Pastor Thomas responded that the Trinitarian language is a “lively issue” in the United Church of Christ as it is in other churches. He said, “There are many in our church who yearn for and seek language that is more fully expressive of the whole people of God when referring to the Trinity. There is also a recognition that that is a very problematic kind of question and that as we seek that kind of language, we need to protect both for historical understandings as well, and in particular, as that understanding of the Trinity as a community which is very important in ecumenical conversations these days. So to reject the sort of personal language in favor of purely economic language is perceived and understood to be a difficult one. While we are exploring and experimenting, if you will, with other kinds of language, it is the case that our Book of Worship, our new hymnal, and our agreements on the Consultation on Churches Uniting which we adopted two years ago, both affirm the traditional baptismal formula using language of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. So, in a sense, the official position of the General Synod of the United Church of Christ, and as it is expressed and used in our liturgical life, continues to honor the traditional baptismal formula even as in other ways we might seek to explore a broader language which continues to probe the depth and the meaning of the biblical and the traditional understanding of the Trinity and as it has power and more social context today.

“For the United Church of Christ, the cross remains a central symbol, in fact the emblem of the United Church of Christ contains the cross as the centerpiece.” He referred to a picture of the crucified and risen Christ displayed at the worship

space the evening before saying, “I found it to be a profound portrait into the meaning of God coming and taking our ‘common lot’ as we say in our statement of faith, to conquer sin and death and reconcile the world to himself. I would not say in any way that we shy away from an understanding of the significance of Christ’s death and Christ’s resurrection. That is at the center of our understanding of the Sacrament of Holy Communion as we have grown into an ecumenical understanding of that and that God’s descent to suffer with us is a profound and important part of who we see ourselves to be and part of the pilgrimage that we are called to follow.”

Bishop Anderson announced that Pastor Japinga of the Reformed Church in America had arrived.

The Rev. Joseph M. Vought [Virginia Synod] asked how the three church bodies from the Reformed tradition currently relate to each other. He said, “It could be said that there is a great diversity of opinion in any one denomination, but we are being asked to consider a relationship with three denominations in a Reformed family. Would you comment on what conflicts or complementarity or wonderful works of the Spirit this has created within the Reformed family?” Pastor Thomas responded that the “affirmation and adoption of *A Formula of Agreement* means that we not only enter into full communion with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, but we affirm our existing communion among the three Reformed churches. In a sense, what our votes have done is to make explicit, and formal, and official what we have already and always understood more informally and more unofficially to be the case—and that is that we are in communion, that we recognize one another’s faith, sacraments, ministries, and that we share together in a common mission.” He continued, “One of the great challenges for the ELCA and one of the great opportunities is, in a sense, this test. Can you enter into full communion with three churches that claim the Reformed heritage, yet which look to you and are in fact, rather different from one another? That is one of the challenges before you.”

Bishop Anderson invited the Rev. Eugene G. Turner to share with the assembly some reflections from the General Council of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches which had just met in Hungary. Pastor Turner brought greetings from the General Council and stated that “they are in prayer for you as you meditate and contemplate on these proposals [the *Concordat of Agreement* and *A Formula of Agreement*] because before you is this noble opportunity to give a message to the whole ecumenical world about how we might relate to one another in a different way and therefore they, with the churches from around the world, are watching prayerfully the result of your meeting and your vote on these significant aspects in the life of the ecumenical movement.”

The Rev. Robert S. Jones [South Dakota Synod] asked about the stages of reception of *A Formula of Agreement* in the three Reformed church bodies: “Are there additional votes needed in the judicatories?” Pastor Thomas said that the actions of the General Synods of the Reformed Church in America and the United

Church of Christ are the final and definitive actions of those two churches. He explained, “The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has taken its definitive action and the action now goes to the presbyteries for ratification. That ratification by the majority of the presbyteries will take place in the coming months and when that ratification is accomplished, then the action of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) will become definitive. Having said that at the official level, I would say that informally all of our churches will need to begin to take implementing actions at national, regional, and local levels for this proposal to be received. I see that as taking months and years to occur and it will be somewhat uneven in different places.”

Ms. Krestie Utech [Upstate New York Synod] asked about the essence of confessional unity within the United Church of Christ and about the relationship of individual congregations with the General Synod, especially as it relates to the independence of the congregations. Pastor Thomas responded, “One of the most powerful and significant portions of *A Common Calling*, the report of the theological conversations, was a section titled, ‘Confessional Commitments,’ in which it described the confessionalism of each of our churches but the differing ways in which those confessions function in our life. The United Church of Christ honors creeds and confessions as central testimonies though not tests of faith. The confessional unity of the United Church of Christ can be expressed perhaps best by the preamble to our constitution which is also embodied in the service of ordination that is used with all ministers that are being ordained in the United Church of Christ. It looks to the Word of God in the Scriptures, to the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, to the ancient creeds, the basic insights of the Protestant reformers. We see that, as a church, as the confessional foundation of our life together. Also, as *A Common Calling* points out very clearly in our life, we see the responsibility of the church in each generation to make this faith, namely the faith of the ancient church, the faith of the church through the ages, our own in integrity of thought, honesty of worship, and in purity of heart before God. This means that we also use new statements of faith, most prominently the United Church of Christ statement of faith which is used in many of our local churches. Many of our local churches would use the Apostles’ Creed on a regular basis.”

Pastor Thomas continued, “We do have the opportunity to discipline one another through our associations, particularly pastors through committees on ministry of the associations. . . . [As to] the relationship of local churches to the General Synod, in our constitution there are three paragraphs which refer to this and they are an interesting interplay. The first paragraph speaks of the autonomy of the local church, which is not an autonomy to do anything it pleases but an autonomy which places responsibility for many things in the life and the community of the local church. It then speaks of the responsibility of the General Synod to speak to, but not for, the church. Then it speaks using covenantal language, which is important in the United Church of Christ, which speaks of the need for the General Synod to honor the faith, the life, the witness, the commitments, the word, the

voice, the convictions of the local churches even as the local churches are called to honor, to hear, to be responsive to the word, the conviction, the challenge of the General Synod.”

The Rev. Frederick J. Schumacher [Metropolitan New York Synod] expressed concern over the ordination of openly homosexual pastors in the United Church of Christ, saying he viewed this as a matter not just of theology, but of “morals and ethics.” He asked whether Pastor Thomas could say something to “perhaps change my position or feelings on this.” Pastor Thomas termed that a “tall order.” He said, “The position that the [UCC] General Synod has come to on this matter is one that it did not come to quickly or cavalierly. In fact, it has been a decision that we have moved in incremental steps toward over the past 25 years beginning with a recognition of the concern for human civil rights for gay and lesbian persons, then extending to what one might refer to as the baptismal rights of gay and lesbian persons in the life of the church. It came in part out of biblical reflection, it came in part out of the testimony of Christians, men and women in the United Church of Christ who have come to understand themselves to be homosexual persons and have tried to understand what it means to be gay or lesbian and to be baptized and who have asked the General Synod with grace, with persistence, and with dignity to reflect with them on that issue. Over the years, the General Synod has come to the position that it supports what we call an open and affirming position that openly affirms the full membership of gay and lesbian persons in the life of the church and then some years later, recognized the action of some of our associations (and encouraged others to consider receiving it as well) that would allow persons to be considered for ordination without sexual orientation being a single or sole barrier to that ordination. This has been a dialogical process between Scripture and tradition as we have come to discern it and the witness and presence of faithful gay and lesbian persons in our midst. It has not been an easy discussion in the United Church of Christ. I know it has not been an easy discussion in the ELCA. We have moved to our decision with some fear and trembling, we have moved to it with a recognition that not all the members of the UCC agree with our position and not all the associations of our church are prepared at this point to ordain openly gay and lesbian persons. Having done so, we have discovered that we have been able to ordain persons who bring gifts and graces to the church, who have enriched our life, and whose absence from our midst would greatly diminish us. I suspect that it has confirmed for many the sense that this decision, while difficult, painful, and controversial has been a decision to which we have been led by the Holy Spirit. It is our hope, certainly not that we would impose this decision on anyone else, certainly not that we would arrogantly assume others must come to it or be considered faithless, but our hope that others would listen and learn from our experience and that in their own discernments and by their own guidance of the Holy Spirit would understand what it has been for us—a gift—and that indeed it may in some way be a gift for others. But that’s a decision that is left to you. In our full communion proposal, our ministries are reconciled, our ministries are recognized,

but not all our ministers would be invited to serve in the ELCA, just as I suspect not all ELCA ministers would be invited to serve in the United Church of Christ.”

The Rev. Heather Schaffer Lubold [Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod] asked, “What have been the concerns and struggles that your church bodies have faced in considering agreement with the ELCA?” Pastor Turner of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) responded with humor that the question was “dangerous because,” he said, “we do not want to do anything to make you dislike us in the process of doing this. I have noticed one thing about the Lutherans that I appreciate (but it is different) is that you like to know the outcome before the Spirit is finished dealing with it.”

Pastor Japinga responded to the same concern, noting that the Reformed Church in America at its national meeting had struggled through the issues and the questions of Lutherans and the Reformed churches. She added, “I think one of the most helpful things that came out of that was the clear recognition that our own church standards remain our own church standards, regardless of what happens in the *Formula*. For us the classis [a regional judicatory corresponding to ELCA synods] is still the gatekeeper, the classis is still the one who determines the standards for ministry. . . . The other important thing that happened at the Reformed Church Synod was the sense of the awareness of diversity. That within our own very small, still quite Dutch and ethnically sort of narrow denomination, there is incredible diversity and we have to live with that ourselves. But similarly the body of Christ has to live with its diversity too.”

Bishop Curtis H. Miller [Western Iowa Synod] stated that he hoped the document could serve as a resource and a foundation for ecumenical work in local communities that is not based simply on the friendship of two pastors or some other transitory situation. He asked for a response as to “how *A Formula of Agreement* can contribute to growing ecumenical cooperation in local communities.” Pastor Thomas of the United Church of Christ said, “It creates a framework, a structure, that undergirds a relationship which can be sustained through the ebb and flow of personal relationships. It gives encouragement, permission, and sustaining support to relationships that always ebb and flow because of relationships, personalities, preoccupations, and our almost innate tendency toward self-sufficiency and isolation. It gives encouragement to express this [relationship] not simply through deeds but also through sacramental actions. We have tended to see our cooperation in important deeds of justice and mercy but we have not seen them being strengthened and supported and nourished in an ongoing way in the sacramental life of the Church. This agreement, as all full communion agreements do, is to provide the sacramental dimension to those deeds of justice and mercy and peace. It challenges our churches to gather people together to celebrate baptism and to celebrate the Lord’s Supper not in splendid isolation but in the grace of community. That grace and that community will sustain the other deeds of love and mercy that also tend to ebb and flow in our life.”

Bishop Anderson thanked the ecumenical guests and presented a gift to each. He then invited the assembly to stand and sing the hymn, “Alabaré,” printed in the Daily Worship Book.

Dialogue with Episcopal Representatives

Reference: *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section IV, pages 49-64; Section V, pages 10-23; Section VI, pages 11-26.

Bishop Anderson introduced the Rt. Rev. Edward W. Jones, bishop of the Diocese of Indianapolis and co-chair of the Lutheran-Episcopal Joint Coordinating Committee; the Rev. Canon David W. Perry, ecumenical officer in The Episcopal Church; Ms. Midge Roof, president of the Episcopal Diocesan Officers; the Rev. Canon J. Robert Wright and the Rev. William A. Norgren, ecumenical consultants from The Episcopal Church. He called upon Bishop Paul J. Blom [Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod], a member of the Lutheran-Episcopal Joint Coordinating Committee, to lead the discussion.

Bishop Blom addressed the assembly saying, “Brothers and sisters in Christ, we have come to an historic moment in the life of Lutheran mission and ministry in the United States and around the world. As voting members of this assembly, we are now being invited into a conversation that in formal dialogues has been going on for over 30 years and for many more years informally dating back to the last century. The invitation to join in these conversations has significant implications because we are also being asked to make some definitive decisions about our future relationship with our partners, The Episcopal Church. Further, it is important to recognize that our dialogues in the United States, as has already been noted by previous speakers this morning, are among several conversations that are moving forward in different places around the globe.

“When I was asked by Bishop [Herbert W.] Chilstrom in 1992 to serve on the Lutheran-Episcopal Coordinating Committee, I accepted with considerable reluctance. I did not have much experience in the ecumenical arena beyond the local setting of a congregation. I had been involved over the years in each of the parishes I served with local ministeriums and ministry groups in the community, but I had never participated on the broader level that the [Lutheran-Episcopal] Coordinating Committee was engaged in. My first experiences with the committee reinforced my lack of confidence because I discovered that there was a steep learning curve at the outset. The language of the ecumenical discipline, for example, has its own unique expression and meaning, quite often, and there are implications that go beyond the local setting to the global setting. There are often differences in perception and understanding at all these levels. After working hard to both understand and contribute to the task of the committee, an important ingredient in the process began to unfold for me. I began to sense that I was able to trust my partners on the committee as we sought to assist the process of reception

into both of our church bodies. Now I have come to a place where I believe we have an opportunity to move forward with a partner with whom we share a common faith and a common mission. I have imaged this like two railroad tracks running parallel and now it is time to put the ties between them so that they will be secured to one another in such a way that those who travel over these tracks will travel a Gospel and grace path with us and with our partners.

“The heart of the full communion proposal rests on some beliefs that I discovered as I worked with this coordinating committee. It became abundantly clear to me that we are already one in Christ because we are baptized into the body of Christ and this has been affirmed in earlier discussions today as well. We share a common faith. We have never in our histories issued any condemnations toward each other. We are not only brought into the body of Christ through baptism, but we are named and sent together to be ambassadors of reconciliation. We are sent to tell the world the good news story of Jesus and his love. But we are not sent alone, we are sent together. Not just as a Lutheran expression but with our Episcopalian partners at the very least. Each time we declare our faith in the words of the great creeds of the Church, we confess we believe in the holy–catholic or universal–church. Our confessions support this understanding of being in Christ together and indeed the confessions themselves call for this relationship in every possible way. Our unity must be made visible to the world so that the world might believe. To reference the high priestly prayer of Jesus in John 17, it must be visible to others. We must allow our diversity to become our strength because we will continue to have differences in how we structure our respective church bodies, how we determine our governance, and how we order our ministers. As you well know, this is a proposal that is not about merger of our organizations. Lutherans will remain Lutherans, Episcopalians will remain Episcopalians. We will continue to determine our own systems of governance and organizational structure. What we are agreeing to do together is to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ to our society and to our world in the most effective ways that we can—together. The matters of governance and structure are secondary matters and both Episcopalians and the ELCA have agreed this is so. We have agreed to respect and honor how each chooses to govern and order ourselves but we are not asking our partner to adopt a new polity.

“Since 1982, we have shared an interim agreement with The Episcopal Church which has allowed us to engage in mission and ministry from congregation to congregation. There have been numerous events and experiences where neighbors in local communities have lived out the Gospel in social action ministries to the community in which they live. There have been regular worship services when people from both communities of faith have come together to offer thanks and praise to God. There have been many examples where leadership has already been shared in neighboring congregations where one pastor from one tradition serves a congregation from the other tradition, where youth groups have been served by one youth director, etc., etc. This proposal would provide an opportunity for us not only

to affirm those relationships congregation–to–congregation but would enable us to enhance them on a wider and deeper basis, synods to dioceses, and churchwide to national. It is important to assert, I believe, that based on our confessions we not only have the freedom to move in this direction but the clear directive of the great commission to do so. As you converse these days about the proposal, I want to encourage you to share stories of your experiences at home with your Episcopalian neighbors and the ministries you have already done together. Share what this has meant for the mission of the church in that setting and how it has enhanced and affirmed you and your church. I have been reflecting recently on the message found in Romans 6:1-4. That’s the place where Saint Paul speaks about being buried in the waters of baptism with Christ so that we can be raised to new life with him. I have been asking myself what is the new life we are being raised to in our relationship with our Episcopalian partners? What barriers and old ways must be drowned in the baptismal waters so that new life can come forth? I invite you to join in that reflection and to pray God’s guidance as we proceed to make decisions on the matters before us.

“I close with two quotes from two leading churchmen of our century. The first is from Sir Henry Chadwick, the renowned professor of history at Oxford University. Speaking to an ecumenical body of people in Geneva, Switzerland, he said, ‘We need our partners because if we go it alone we’ll get it wrong.’ The sentence brings to mind the language of Saint Paul in Ephesians 4 which declares ‘we have one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all’ and then calls for living out our relationship in love so we grow up in every way into Him who is the head, into Christ. The second quote is from the Archbishop of Canterbury, Bishop [George] Carey, who asked this question, ‘Do our divisions provide the best possible witness to our Lord?’ This proposal that we will act on asks us to respond to the question in a way which allows a world full of brokenness and divisions to see two church bodies of Christian people moving toward each other in a way that speaks a loud, clear word of hope and grace, showing that reconciliation is what we believe is our destiny and journey of people of God.

“Those are some of the things I learned as I worked with the [Lutheran-Episcopal] Coordinating Committee and have come now to affirm. As you know, our partners in The Episcopal Church voted overwhelmingly to adopt the *Concordat* in this very building just a month ago. It was my privilege to be present at that event representing our church and it was certainly a delight to be welcomed hospitably and also to watch them as they moved forward with their debate, discussion, and action. I am grateful for the opportunity that I had to serve in this way and I thank Bishop Chilstrom for the appointment and for the continuing support of the Conference of Bishops and other people.”

Bishop Blom then introduced the Episcopal co-chair of the Lutheran-Episcopal Coordinating Committee, the Rt. Rev. Edward (“Ted”) Jones, bishop of the Diocese of Indianapolis.

Bishop Jones said, “I am deeply honored by your invitation to be here and to represent, along with my colleagues, The Episcopal Church. As an Episcopalian, I want to say to you that no one understands and proclaims the spirit of the ecumenical movement more effectively and more intelligently than your church bishop, Bishop Anderson.” Bishop Jones expressed appreciation for his experience of working and serving the past six years with the co-chair of the Lutheran-Episcopal Coordinating Committee, the Rev. Richard L. Jeske [Saratoga, Calif.]; and with Bishop Paul J. Blom [Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod]; the Rev. Susan L. Gamelin [Atlanta, Ga.]; the Rev. Daniel F. Martensen and the Rev. Darlis J. Swan [ELCA staff], and other members of the [Lutheran-Episcopal] Coordinating Committee. Bishop Jones continued, “What I want to say to you is that my faith and my spirituality as a Christian has been deepened immensely by our life together. For this I thank God and I thank the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

“As Bishop Blom mentioned, and as many of you know, just one month ago the Episcopalians met in this very place, indeed, I am beginning to feel as if I have lived in Philadelphia for a long, long time. . . . Twenty-eight years ago, Episcopalians and Lutherans formally began a series of dialogues—there have been three dialogue series—which have now brought our two churches to this moment of momentous decisions, certainly momentous for us but also momentous for the ecumenical movement as a whole and even beyond the church for a world—our twentieth century world—where history has too often been a story of division. There are five points I want to make by way of an Episcopal Church statement.

“First, I want to share with you two memories, one that is 15 years old, from 1982 when in the aftermath of affirming decisions by the then three Lutheran predecessor bodies to the ELCA and by The Episcopal Church, we gathered in Indiana for services to celebrate inter-Eucharistic sharing, to celebrate our recognition of each other as churches in which the Gospel is truly preached and taught. I can remember those services as if they were yesterday because they were moved with a kind of spirit I had not seen often in my life in the church. The other memory is that of one month ago in this very place, at least across the street in the Marriott Hotel, presiding over an ecumenical forum wondering how many people today would care enough to come out for an ecumenical forum—for this is not a day when ecumenism is on the front page of the newspaper often—and 700 people came and I looked out and I thought to myself, for a number of reasons the ecumenical movement is alive and interesting and exciting to people in the church. It was as if the *Concordat* had breathed new life into the ecumenical spirit of Episcopalians. After the overwhelming legislative support for the *Concordat* one observer described it as a sign of a new ecumenism, one not of political negotiation and triumphalism, but of theological humility, of approaching one another with dignity and confidence. So, because of 28 years of Lutheran-Episcopal dialogue, because of the many ways our two churches, born out of a great reformation in the life of the church, had begun to live together. But I want to say to you that The Episcopal

Church has become, more truly than it could have become otherwise, the church of Jesus Christ.

“Second, full communion and the *Concordat of Agreement* are about the giving and receiving of gifts. It is not about what Episcopalians must give up for the sake of unity. That is a point which had to be made strongly with your sister and brother Episcopalians a month ago. It is about giving and receiving, it is not abandoning or forsaking a heritage. It is about a spirit and a faith to be shared with each other and in a life together in mission. I say again to you, we Episcopalians need you, we need your vision of Gospel and we need your strong catechetical and confessional tradition to go with our historic episcopate.

“Third, I believe that what you are about to do in this churchwide assembly will be watched with great interest by [Roman] Catholics, Methodists, Presbyterians, Reformed Church, United Church of Christ, and many other churches which will be watching what we do in these historic decisions. They will be watching because full communion as envisioned in the *Concordat*, or as also understood in the conversations with the Reformed churches, has come to represent a way ahead, an effecting sign of reconciliation and what it means to be reconciled. I believe the world, even the unchurched world, is hungry for signs of reconciliation which is what we are about.

“Fourth, to quote Dr. Martin Marty speaking last October to the joint assembly of the bishops of our two churches, he said, ‘It’s the mission.’ And then he said, ‘You can add “stupid” if you wish—it’s the mission, stupid.’ He said that to Episcopalians. It is the mission because mission outreach is at the very heart of what is being proposed in the *Concordat of Agreement*. Our mission to each other, perhaps more important, our mission to the world.

“Finally, what I want to say to you from the very depth of my Episcopal heart is that all ministry, even the historic episcopate, is rooted in and effected by baptism. It is baptism which is the primary ordination. It is baptism which equips and calls all of us—laity and clergy, bishops, deacons, priests—to lives of ministry and service in the name and the cause of the one Lord Jesus Christ whom we seek to serve in our churches and in our life together in the full communion which is proposed.”

Bishop Anderson called for questions to be directed to the Episcopal representatives.

Ms. Marilyn Bloom [Northwestern Ohio Synod] said, “The article which appeared in the Toledo, Ohio, *Blade* obtained through the news service wire following Bishop Griswold’s election [The Rt. Rev. Frank T. Griswold as presiding bishop of The Episcopal Church] and I am quoting, ‘who supports the ordination of non-celibate gays and lesbians, one of the most controversial issues facing Protestant denominations in America. Although he did not take a public position, Bishop Griswold said that discussions should continue about establishing a commitment ceremony for gays and lesbians.’ Remembering back to previous

years in the Sierra Pacific Synod where two Lutheran churches were suspended for calling an openly lesbian couple and an openly gay man to serve as pastors of their congregations, makes the Episcopal homosexual ordination and the ELCA vote an important issue.”

Bishop Jones responded, “It is an issue which for Episcopalians, as I think for Lutherans also, has been with us for some time. It is an issue which has very strong feelings on both sides. It is an issue which I suspect will be with us for a long time to come. Let me say first about the official position of the church on this matter. About two years ago there were charges brought against a retired bishop from Iowa who had ordained knowingly a non-celibate homosexual person as a deacon. [The retired bishop] was brought to trial allegedly for having acted contrary to the doctrine of the church. The court met and, briefly, the decision of the court was not to suggest that what Bishop Righter had done was in the best interests of the church or wise—whether or not it was—but that it was not a matter addressed by doctrine, as doctrine is understood in The Episcopal Church. That gets into a whole other area of how The Episcopal Church defines doctrine. We are not a confessional church, though we take seriously the confessional bodies with whom we are in dialogue and particularly the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. We understand the importance of this issue in the life of the church. I suspect the second point is that if you were to survey opinions within The Episcopal Church you would find that there is a great division of opinion about this matter. There is no division of opinion about the matter of ordaining anyone, homosexual or heterosexual, who has behaved sexually in a predatory or promiscuous way. You will not find an Episcopalian, I dare say, anywhere who would defend ordaining anyone who behaves in a promiscuous or predatory fashion. It is only in the limited number of cases where you have a gay person who is trying to live a responsible life with a partner, sometimes over many years time, who seeks ordination in the limited sphere we are talking about. It does not happen very often but it has happened and there you will find that some bishops in some dioceses will deal with that question in different ways. I have to say to you that Bishop Griswold is correct. The conversation continues and in some dioceses, perhaps in his own, there had been ordinations of persons who are gay persons who may be living with someone else or have lived with someone else for a good many years, in an attempt to be responsible with their relationship and to be faithful to one another. I do not know that that’s true in Chicago. It might be. It is not something which one is very public about, nor do we think it is a matter that the press needs to write about.”

Mr. William E. Diehl [Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod] commented, “One of the difficulties I have had with the document is that there are places where people disagree about what the document says or what it means. There is one particular place that I would like response from the Episcopal partners. We say at one point that we agree that the three-fold ministry—bishops, presbyters, and deacons in historic succession—will be the future pattern of the one ordained ministry of Word and Sacrament shared corporately within the two churches as they

begin to live in full communion. There is a footnote, number seven, to that which says that it does not mean that the ELCA will have to ordain diaconal ministers. I think that is a little misleading because we have never said that diaconal ministers are the same as deacons. So that leaves us with the statement itself saying that in the future we will move toward a threefold ministry of ordained deacons, ordained presbyters, and ordained bishops. I am wondering if I am interpreting that correctly as far as the Episcopal partners are concerned.”

The Rev. Canon J. Robert Wright responded to the inquiry saying, “The document as you have read it in the *Concordat of Agreement* is exactly as it is being proposed to both churches and I would point out that the footnote has the same status as the document itself. In other words, the footnote is not something that is intended to be somehow subordinate or secondary. If I may make reference to a Lutheran opinion that is being circulated . . . a position paper circulated by Michael Root [alluding to an occasional paper, ‘Does the *Concordat* Commit the ELCA to an Ordained Diaconate? An Opinion,’ by Michael Root (Institute for Ecumenical Research, Strasbourg, France; and Trinity Lutheran Seminary, Columbus, Ohio)] . . . I would say that this position that he has outlined explains exactly the position that The Episcopal Church would also understand in the *Concordat* itself. Just to quote from that particular document, he says, ‘The ordained ministry shared corporately within the two churches, i.e., the ordained ministry of the two churches seen together rather than individually, will take the classical threefold form even though only two forms, bishop and pastor/priest, might be present in the ELCA.’ I think it is fair to say that as I understand the *Concordat* and certainly the understanding of The Episcopal Church, the *Concordat* does not commit the ELCA to ordain deacons in the future.”

Mr. Diehl stated in a follow-up comment, “It is our understanding in the ELCA that a diaconal minister is not the same as a deacon. We established that back when we went through the whole Study of Ministry, so I am a little concerned that that footnote does not refer to a future pattern of having ordained deacons—not diaconal ministers—but deacons in the ELCA.” Canon Wright responded, “I think the thrust of the *Concordat* would be that the unordained diaconate in the ELCA would not be recognized as an ordained diaconate in The Episcopal Church. In other words, there would not be any confusion between the two. We would recognize your diaconal ministries for what you say they are. You do not say they are ordained and we would not recognize them as being ordained, but we would recognize them for what you say they are.”

The Rev. Keith A. Hunsinger [Northwestern Ohio Synod] stated, “I believe that Lutherans have held that any *charimos* or any gift is attached to an office and not to an individual. It is my understanding that the office of bishop is that which conveys any authority, not necessarily the person of the bishop. My reading has suggested that Episcopalians have, through their ordination of bishops, more likely looked to the power of the individual who serves in that office. Two questions:

First, is this distinction accurate? And second, does the *Concordat* allow each of us to retain our traditional views?”

Canon Wright commented, “I think it would be true generally that in The Episcopal Church we understand that whatever authority there is in an ordained office. I would add that there is much less authority in our ordained episcopate than some Lutherans seem to think. I would say that from our understanding the authority is in the office and it is exercised in various ways by various individuals, some of whom may seem more authoritative or powerful because of personal charisma or one thing and another. But the authority as such, and as it is understood in the church, comes through the actual office itself and not because of some particular magic that is suddenly attached to the individual person who has been ordained. We would go on to say that we believe there is a certain grace that comes by ordination by which hopefully God enables that particular person to carry out their ordained ministry.”

Bishop Anderson referred to a second part of the question raised by Pastor Hunsinger, “whether the *Concordat* envisioned any change or expectation that there would be a single theology of the office.”

“I do not think the *Concordat* envisions any single definition of any particular office in the church, ordained or unordained,” Canon Wright stated. “On the question of the diaconate or diaconal ministry, the *Concordat* is written in such a way that it allows The Episcopal Church’s understanding of the diaconate as an order, it also allows the Lutheran Church’s understanding of diaconal ministry. On the question of the office of bishop, there are some things said about what a bishop would be like in paragraph three of the *Concordat* that we would be agreeing upon. Most of these are drawn out of various other ecumenical dialogues that have been going on for the last several years, but certainly my reading of the *Concordat* is that the general Lutheran understanding of the way bishops function on the whole would continue and the general way that The Episcopal Church understands its bishops’ functions would continue. I would say that insofar as there is anything particular in the *Concordat* about the understanding of the bishops, it is in paragraph three and presumably all of you have read that paragraph in the *Concordat*,” he said.

The Rev. John K. Stendahl [New England Synod] said, “I would like to return again to this question of the threefold description of the one ministry of Word and Sacrament, and ask for a little bit more description of the Episcopal understanding and practice of diaconal orders. It has been observed that what we as Lutherans have spoken of as diaconal ministers is not at all what The Episcopal Church understands in its ordained diaconate. Much of the practice of the ordained diaconate at this point appears to be transitional and as a step in the preparation of priests for the ministry of the priesthood. This would be to say that Episcopalians have made a decision consistent with the traditional language of orders that would, to use an analogy from our Lutheran tradition, give an ordained empowerment installation to those who are, as our interns often are, in function, and who are often

serving in the ministry of Word and handling the sacramental means of grace but who are not empowered as full pastors of the church. If that is the case, it seems to me that the sentence that Mr. Diehl brings up is an assurance that the decision to give that kind of recognition to those who are serving in the ministry of Word, as part of the description of the ministry of Word and Sacrament, is a decision of practice which the *Concordat* binds us to respect, but not necessarily to adopt as Lutherans. I would like a further comment and description of that.”

Bishop Jones responded, “Let me say one or two things about the diaconal part One of the things at The Episcopal Church General Convention a month ago was the same question about the diaconal ministers and deacons as understood in the two churches. One of the responses quite accurately was that the whole understanding of the diaconate in The Episcopal Church is right now in a process of review. First, there is not a common understanding of the role and function of deacons in the life of the church. Second, it is not going to happen soon, but there is in The Episcopal Church even some consideration being proposed by some people for direct ordination rather than to have the transitional diaconate which now we have on the way to being ordained as a priest. That would then enable deacons to have a kind of standing of their own as deacons, as I suspect may well have been true in some parts of the early church. The only point I would make is that I think we have much to learn from each other about the meaning of diaconal ministry and about the understanding of the deacons in the life of the church. It may be one of those areas where we need to put our heads and hearts together to begin to try to understand what this ministry can mean for those who are deacons or diaconal ministers and what it can mean also for the church as a whole.”

The Rev. David B. Zellmer [South Dakota Synod] commented, “I am blessed to serve in a synod that is gifted with a woman bishop and I am concerned that there are four Episcopal bishops—at least that is my understanding—who still after 20 years do not recognize the ordination of women. What is to prevent, even after the vote by The Episcopal Church, these four bishops to not recognize the ordination of women clergy of the ELCA or other bishops refusing to recognize the ordination of ELCA clergy?”

Bishop Jones stated, “The first part [of the question] had to do with the four bishops who have so far said they will not obey the canons of the church with regard to the ordination of women as priests. At the [Episcopal] General Convention here a month ago, a resolution was passed that would make mandatory the canon about the ordination and licensing of women to serve in those dioceses. It did give them three years to find a way to implement that canon, to be reviewed by the House of Bishops. I think that’s where that matter is. As far as recognition of Lutheran clergy, I have not heard anywhere in The Episcopal Church of anyone who has stood there and said, ‘I do not care what the church does, I will not accept the legitimate ordination of Lutheran pastors.’ I have yet to hear anyone seriously state that position. In fact, at the General Convention there was a clear kind of sense of the authenticity of existing ministries in the Evangelical Lutheran Church

in America. So if there are Episcopalians out there, and I suppose there are some, who simply say that Lutherans are not properly ordained and therefore cannot be priests, there are probably Lutherans who say Episcopalians have beliefs that are contrary to the Gospel and therefore cannot be legitimate pastors. I suspect you will find a little of that. I do not really expect much of it in The Episcopal Church though.”

The Rev. Steven J. Solberg [Northeastern Iowa Synod] said, “My question is not one of whether or not the Episcopalians see the authenticity of our ordained ministry, but one of the timing of the interchangeability [of clergy between the two traditions]. I was slightly confused as I read Section 14 of the *Concordat* under Section E that says, ‘While the two churches will fully acknowledge the authenticity of each other’s ordained ministries from the beginning of the process, the creation of a common and therefore fully interchangeable episcopal ministry will occur with the full incorporation of all active bishops in the historic episcopate by common joint ordinations/installations and the continuing process of collegial consultation in matters of Christian faith and life.’ In other words, is the interchangeability something of a fact from the very beginning or only following the process of incorporating into the historic episcopate?”

Father Norgren responded, “The recognition of full authenticity of ELCA pastors is from the beginning once both churches have approved the *Concordat*. I have to add to that that according to the constitution of The Episcopal Church, which we have to respect (this requires a constitutional change), it also requires a change in the doctrinal affirmation which at present requires all clergy who function in The Episcopal Church to agree to the doctrine and discipline and worship of The Episcopal Church. The General Convention here last month set in motion the two constitutional changes that are required. First, to recognize the full authenticity of Lutheran pastors; and second, to make an exception in that doctrinal requirement. In other words, allowing in the constitution the doctrinal definitions of the ELCA to function in place of those in The Episcopal Church. These are both important matters requiring constitutional change. The convention approved both. The next convention in the year 2000 is required by the constitutional process to reaffirm those statements that we have made. We have made it very clear in the report of the Standing Commission on Ecumenical Relations to The Episcopal Church that if persons intend to follow through on this they should vote for the *Concordat*; if they have a problem in either of these matters, they should vote the *Concordat* down. They voted the *Concordat* up with a very large majority and therefore the process is on the way but it will take several years to implement this. I do not know what regulations will have to be put in place in the ELCA if the *Concordat* is approved in order for you to implement this.”

Bishop Anderson reviewed the question from Pastor Solberg and said, “I think the second part had to do with the provision in the *Concordat* about the full integration of episcopal ministries. The concern was about a statement that said the

ministries would not be fully shared until this integration occurred. I think there was a question about what that may have meant.”

Upon invitation by Bishop Anderson, Pastor Solberg restated the second part of his question saying, “Basically, the question had to do with whether or not people like me who are not a part of the historic episcopate would have the possibility of interchangeability with the Episcopalians or was this something that was a far distant future thing after all Lutheran pastors were a part of that historic episcopate?” Bishop Anderson inquired if Pastor Solberg felt his question had been answered, to which his answer was, “Yes.”

The Rev. David A. Weeks [Southwestern Minnesota Synod] inquired, “In the previous discussion with the Reformed representatives, the question was asked, ‘What were the concerns in the Reformed Churches about us?’ . . . What are the concerns in The Episcopal Church about the *Concordat* with us? The second part of that question, which I would think overlaps, is in the presentation by Bishop Jones earlier, he made a comment that at their General Convention, the point had to be made repeatedly that it was about gifts and not about giving up. What is it in The Episcopal Church that people are seeing that they are giving up?”

Bishop Jones responded, “The second part about gifts or giving up, I do not think there is a sense of giving anything up in The Episcopal Church. There may be some concerns about how comfortably we can live at first with a confessional church in full communion. There are differences and obviously those will turn up from time to time in conversations and in actions. I suppose there is a kind of ‘what’s it going to be like in full communion?’ There is a lot of reception that has to go on in the years ahead. A lot has already happened but a lot of reception will continue to go on. Where we are now, in my judgement, is at a point of deciding . . . do we want to enter into a marriage covenant where we retain our separateness. We never quite give it up as in merger, but we live together in a kind of way in which we will rub shoulders in all kinds of situations and that means there will be differences to be looked at. We will find out we are not quite the same, we have already found that out to some degree, but I believe that over the years we will not find out we have given anything up so much as we have, in fact, received from each other gifts that have been important to our integrity as churches.”

The Rev. Paul N. Hanson [South Dakota Synod] asked, “My question is about the [*Chicago-Lambeth*] *Quadrilateral* [a key Episcopal ecumenical document]. As I understand that document of your church, it seems to say that the historic episcopate is a necessary condition to unity between your church and any potential ecumenical partner. Can you clear up what the *Quadrilateral* is, what it says, what weight it has, and if indeed the historic episcopate is a necessary condition to unity between your church and our church?”

Father Wright answered, “The *Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral* came first from The Episcopal Church from our House of Bishops in 1886 and was then adopted by the worldwide Conference of Anglican Bishops, the Lambeth Conference, in

1888 and since has been widely received throughout the Anglican Communion as our standard for ecumenical discussions with other churches. The *Quadrilateral* has four points to it. It emphasizes agreement must be reached on the Scriptures; on the Sacraments, Baptism and the Eucharist; on the creeds, the Apostles' and Nicene; and on the historic episcopate. It does not use the word 'necessary' to describe our position about the historic episcopate. What it does say is that the historic episcopate may be locally adapted to the particular callings that are perceived by God in a given area. This is why, for example, The Episcopal Church generally is now proposing officially this *Concordat* in spite of some conservative Anglican concerns from elsewhere in the world, that we have too much adapted the historic episcopate in the proposed *Concordat* with the ELCA. But what we would say is that we are, in fact, being faithful to the *Quadrilateral* in the kind of adaptation to meet the understandings of the Lutheran church and yet produce something which in the end could do justice both to Lutheran concerns and also to Anglican concerns. The word 'necessary' is not used though in the *Quadrilateral* to describe this."

The Rev. Robert S. Jones [South Dakota Synod] said, "I have two questions. First, I had heard or read on the Internet that the national [convention] of The Episcopal Church did take other actions in reference to the Augsburg Confession and Luther's Small Catechism and I am wondering if there is any kind of authoritative word on that? The other question is quite unrelated but has to do with how our Episcopalian representatives here would compare the relationship of the *Porvoo Declaration* and its signers in Northern Europe among the Anglican Communion with the relationship envisioned in the *Concordat* especially in reference to the historic episcopate?"

Father Perry responded, "I'll say just a word about the Augsburg Confession since my office had a direct result of that conversation. As the ecumenical officer, the President of the House of Deputies announced my telephone number and my address and said that I would be happy to send a copy of the Augsburg Confession to any of the 6,000 people gathered in this hall or nearby. I must say there have not been 6,000 calls yet but there have been many. I think one of the important pieces in the agreements that we made in the *Concordat* itself was that our seminarians and our seminary students would study the *Concordat* and I think that this is going to be a very important element as we continue the process of reception, the coming to grow together. As far as the second question, let me yield to one of my theological experts."

Father Wright added, "The requirement in the *Concordat* and which we endorsed in our convention is for our seminary students to study not only the *Concordat* but also to study the Augsburg Confession. Each church also promises to require its ordination candidates to study each other's basic documents, and certainly for you the most basic is the Augsburg Confession. Furthermore, I would point out in paragraph two of the *Concordat* that this action by The Episcopal

Church, in effect, constitutes a recognition of the Augsburg Confession by The Episcopal Church. Not in the sense that every Episcopal bishop and priest is signing it on the line, nonetheless there is a very clear, although indirect, recognition in the *Concordat* when it is proposed in paragraph two of the *Concordat* that we recognize in each other, the two churches, the essentials of the one catholic and apostolic faith as it is witnessed in the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, the Small Catechism, and the Book of Common Prayer. This was not taken lightly by The Episcopal Church. It was only after serious study of the Augsburg Confession and presentation of it by the Lutheran representatives in the dialogue that the Episcopalians felt that we could move in a responsible way on making this kind of recognition. With regard to the *Porvoo Declaration* established between the Church of England and the Nordic and Baltic Lutheran Churches, it is a little bit different. It does not use the term 'full communion' and furthermore what it establishes is, to use their own words, a portrait of visible unity between these churches which are thousands of miles apart. It is therefore a rather different sort of animal, as it were. Nonetheless, the *Concordat* adopted the term full communion since this was the term that was recommended by the international meeting of Anglican and Lutheran ecumenical officers and representatives from all over the world held at a place called Cold Ash in England. They came up with this term, which was not original with them at all but which, in fact, is used in most basic ecumenical discussions and documents throughout the world today in most places as the term and definition that should be followed. That is the term and the definition that we followed in the *Concordat*."

The Rev. D. Craig Landis [Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod] requested clarification, "In paragraph five, it says that The Episcopal Church is enacting a temporary suspension of the requirement of the historic episcopate. In paragraph nine, it says that we are going to enact a dispensation. Is that dispensation going to be temporary or permanent? What implications does this have for any future ordination of Episcopal clergy? Will they ever subscribe to the Augsburg Confession or any part of our confessions?" Pastor Landis was asked to repeat his question and said, "In paragraph nine, the dispensation that we would enact that would not require Episcopal clergy to subscribe to the Augsburg Confession or any of our confessions, is that a temporary dispensation or a permanent one?"

Bishop Blom responded that "it would be permanent to the degree that we would not be asking an Episcopal priest or pastor to become a Lutheran and thereby in that sense subscribe to our confessions which is what I believe the word 'subscription' is related to in this particular case."

The Rev. Rolf A. Jacobson [Saint Paul Area Synod] commented, "Paragraph eight includes the sentence that says, 'The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America also agrees to make constitutional and liturgical provision that only bishops shall ordain all clergy.' My question is why is this provision necessary for the office of *episcopé*? A year ago my brother was ordained as a Lutheran pastor and another

Lutheran pastor ordained him. The bishop exercised *episcopé* by licensing that other pastor to perform the ordination. . . . What was wrong with that ordination? And if nothing was wrong with the ordination, then why do we need this provision in the *Concordat*?”

Bishop Jones said, “Let me try two responses. The question of the role of the bishop in the ordination has always been a very important thing for Episcopalians. I think while one wants to, when entering into full communion, not to be too heavy about it, it is important. The other thing that I want to say is that all ordinations are not done by the bishop alone; ordinations are collegial and they involve in the case of presbyters, or priests, or pastors, other pastors joining in the laying on of hands, hopefully Lutheran as well as Episcopal pastors and bishops. They are collegial. It is not as if one bishop can do this all by himself. One bishop can ordain by himself or herself, but normally it would be the case where you would have all of the persons gathered around. The question of the participation of the laity [in the laying on of hands] is, of course, another question and is not covered in the *Concordat* and is certainly something which has not yet been approved in The Episcopal Church.”

Bishop Blom added, “In our tradition, the authority to ordain has always rested in the office of the bishop. The exception that we have from the Episcopal tradition has been that we can authorize another pastor on our behalf. But the authority rests with the bishop to move that forward.”

Pastor Jacobson added in follow-up, “What I want to know then is why the traditional Lutheran understanding could not continue? Understanding and granting that the authority for ordination properly rests in the office of the bishop, why could not a pastor be licensed by the bishop to ordain?”

Father Norgren answered, “I think it was generally understood and felt in the dialogue that this was one of the things that the churches that do have the historic episcopate regard as something only bishops should do. The dialogue, and especially the Episcopalian members of the dialogue, I must admit had great difficulty in trying to decide what sort of things—if we say we have the historic episcopate and we think the Lutherans ought to have it—what sort of things do we regard as basic to us and what sort of things do we regard as *adiaphora*. So without too much discussion, except a few jokes for example, we ruled out that bishops must wear large rings with stones in them or they should wear miters, that they should sit on the highest podium, or they should have the largest salary of any clergy in the diocese, or whatever. Things of that sort we felt—although in many cases this is the case in The Episcopal Church—that these were not in any sense basic to the historic episcopate. So we ruled out those sort of things. We also ruled out after careful consideration, because we ourselves have ruled it out also in The Episcopal Church, the stipulation in the Roman Catholic and the Eastern Orthodox traditions that the bishop must be a celibate male. We did not do this lightly because there is a lot of the wider part of Christianity that still officially holds to

that. But we have felt, and we in our tradition feel, that the historic episcopate could be adapted in that way. Nonetheless, it was decided that the bishop as the ordainer is something that is fairly basic and could not be changed anymore than it has been changed, although like anything else, it could be discussed in the future. I think that is the basic understanding and it seems to me that you already are close to that understanding in your own ELCA provisions about bishops as being the ordaining agent or authorizer. That is why we felt that we could not move any further on that particular point, although as I said on the question of rings, salaries, and celibate males, we felt that we could.”

Bishop Anderson stated that he would recognize the speakers who were at that time at microphones. He said, “You can continue this dialogue in the afternoon in the hearings. Representatives of the church bodies will be present at each of the hearings.”

The Rev. Sharon A. Worthington [Western Iowa Synod] stated, “Earlier Bishop Jones explained that the Episcopal understanding is that the authority is attached to the office of the bishop rather than the individual. I am wondering, then, if he could explain the Episcopal understanding of the individual continuing as bishop for the rest of their life even after they leave office?”

Bishop Jones explained, “The understanding is that the office of bishop continues once one has it, as we would understand the office of priest continues. It does not mean functionally, that bishops continue to function. There is some debate going on that does not affect the *Concordat* (it is a constitutional matter) on whether retired bishops should vote in any way in the life of the church. A lot of us think that when you retire you probably ought not to vote, but we do continue to hold the office of bishop and I suppose that means that we can functionally move in when there is a need for a retired bishop to assist in the event the local bishop is ill or something like that. The office continues but the job continues only when there is need on an emergency basis or something like that for a bishop functionally.”

The Rev. Luther H. Route [Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod] said, “I would like to ask a question concerning the priesthood of all believers, that conceptual understanding. My father was a pastor. As he was dying I asked the question of him, ‘Why Lutheran? Why not be a Baptist, Pentecostal? We’re black?’ He told me, ‘I want you to go and find this, but the Lutheran Church is it.’ I went to find out. I went to seminary and I found out three things, grace, justification by faith, and the priesthood of all believers. I do not hear this language in this *Concordat*. Partially from the Rt. Rev. Jones who has said that we are baptized and therefore we have authority through our baptism. But I hear a hierarchy in the place of the gathered and the priesthood of all believers. Rev. Jones, could you comment on that? I’d like Rev. Jones as I think he would be more sensitive to what I am saying.”

Bishop Jones responded, “I agree with you that the priesthood of all believers is terribly important. Priesthood is something exercised in the life of the community and it must involve the ministry of the laity. I want to ask my friend, Ms. Roof, if she will comment on that because she is a lay person.” Ms. Roof commented, “When I grew up in The Episcopal Church . . . there was a great deal of discussion about the ministry of all the baptized, which I would take to be very similar to [what you call] the priesthood of all believers. . . . At the moment, it is a wonderful thing to be a lay person in The Episcopal Church; we have been empowered in so many ways and I am a witness to that. We are not a clergy-ridden church as we were even 50 years ago. Let me just assure you that although we do not use the same language you are seeing a practice of the empowerment of laity that I think you would be very comfortable with.”

Bishop Stephen P. Bouman [Metropolitan New York Synod] asked, “How does the historic episcopate function in the life, and piety, and faith of the person in the pew in the Anglican Church?” Ms. Roof said, “I floated an answer to a similar question on the *Concordat* meeting on Ecunet and it dropped into a dead silence so I will try to answer that. Our language may be different, but when I was growing up in The Episcopal Church there was always a chart . . . a river which was pasted up on a wall of every basement of every Episcopal church which is where Sunday School was held. It was a river that started with Jesus and it ended up with our bishop, whoever that may have been. I think we sort of abandoned that literalistic notion, most of us. But to me, the connection between our bishop, through the historic succession, and the apostles and Jesus is a very strong, powerful image to me. When Bishop Jones, for example, visits our parish it puts us in continuity with the larger church, not only in space but in time, the larger church back to the apostles. To me it is a very powerful image of our connectedness.”

The Rev. Steven D. Olson [East-Central Synod of Wisconsin] asked for clarification, “It was mentioned earlier that The Episcopal Church has to consider two constitutional amendments. Could you clarify the second one as far as how that affects The Episcopal Church? I think it has something to do with statements of faith.”

Father Norgren said, “There is a requirement in the constitution that all persons who are ordained must take an oath of conformity. That includes faithfulness to the doctrine, discipline, and worship of The Episcopal Church. Doctrine would be found, of course, in Scripture, in the creeds, in the ancient writings and conciliar actions of the church, and in our present reception of those, and our present understandings and whatever we can learn in that respect. Discipline is to be found primarily in the *Book of Canons*. Clergy are expected to follow those. Worship is to be found in its formulations in the *Book of Common Prayer*. I could make a little addition to that. Someone earlier asked the question whether the dispensation on the Augsburg Confession and the Small Catechism is permanent or temporary. The

answer, of course, was permanent, but also this change in our constitution will be just as permanent.”

The Rev. Susan R. Carloss [Western Iowa Synod] stated that she had a follow-up question to the question about the *Quadrilateral*. “I think that I understand the answer that was given in terms of the historic episcopate being locally adapted, but my question is follow-up in the sense that I heard it said that the historic episcopate is not—at least the wording—is not necessary in the *Quadrilateral*. In the copy that I have, the reading is ‘that it [the historic episcopate] is essential to the restoration of unity’ and earlier [in the text] ‘incapable of compromise or surrender.’ I need a clarification of that, as to how the historic episcopate is seen. I had understood it in this way from the *Quadrilateral* but the answer that was given seemed to indicate that necessity was not part of this.”

Father Wright responded by stating, “The phrases that you were quoting about ‘incapable,’ ‘surrender,’ and various things came from our House of Bishops at Chicago in 1886, but they are not part of the final version of the [*Chicago-*] *Lambeth Quadrilateral* which came from Chicago and then went to the international scene at Lambeth in 1888. They are not part of the final version. You may have been reading this in our *Book of Common Prayer* where both versions are given. The earlier version [is printed] simply because we are somewhat proud of the fact that the *Lambeth Quadrilateral* originated in Chicago with The Episcopal Church but the rather triumphalist wording that was used in Chicago in 1886 was not, in fact, carried on at the Lambeth Conference in 1888 and most of the triumphalist language, including the phrases you used, were removed when they got to Lambeth in 1888. That is the reason why, on the question of the historic episcopate, it sounds more triumphalist from 1886.”

Pastor Carloss asked in follow-up, “Does it include the word ‘essential?’ That’s what I was wondering?”

Father Wright said, “I am pretty sure that the 1888 version does not. The wording that you were using, certainly the phrase about ‘incapable of surrender,’ is not in the final version and is only in the 1886 version which leads me to believe that you were quoting from the 1886 version where that word may have been used but not in 1888.”

Bishop Anderson thanked the representatives of The Episcopal Church and presented each with a gift. He also thanked the assembly for the focus on good questions.

Report of the Nominating Committee

Reference: 1997 Pre-Assembly Report, Section VII; Section I, pages 7-8.

Bishop Anderson introduced Ms. Marlene Engstrom, chair of the Nominating Committee, and asked for the report of that committee. During her report, she noted the process used by the Nominating Committee and that the committee did their work with great diligence and care. Ms. Engstrom reminded the assembly that nominations from the floor were permitted and must be submitted on the approved form and in accordance with the provisions printed in the *Rules of Organization and Procedure* and that floor nominations must be submitted to the Nominations Desk at the Assembly Office before 2:25 P.M. on Saturday, August 16, 1997.

Bishop Anderson called upon Secretary Lowell G. Almen, who announced that 90 years of Lutheran Campus Ministry was to be observed and celebrated in the Heritage and Hope Village at 1:30 P.M.

Bishop Anderson then introduced Ms. Ramona Soto Rank, a member of the Church Council, who led the assembly members in prayer and the closing hymn, "Holy Spirit, Ever Dwelling."

Plenary Session One recessed at 12:39 P.M., Friday, August 15, 1997.

Plenary Session Two

Friday, August 15, 1997

2:00 P.M.—3:00 P.M.

The Rev. H. George Anderson, presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, called Plenary Session Two to order at 2:04 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time.

Reflections on the Assembly Theme

Bishop Anderson called upon the Rev. Lowell G. Almen, secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, to share some reflections on this church's heritage in keeping with the assembly theme, "Making Christ Known: Alive in our Heritage and Hope." Secretary Almen noted that it was a coincidence of calendars that 249 years ago on August 15, 1748, the first Lutheran Synod in North America, eventually known as the Ministerium of Pennsylvania, was organized at St. Michael's Lutheran Church in Philadelphia by the Rev. Henry Melchior Mühlenthal.

Report of the Credentials Committee

Bishop Anderson called upon Secretary Lowell G. Almen, who, as *ex officio* chair of the Credentials Committee, provided the following report of voter registration as of 12:00 Noon, August 15, 1997.

Voting Members:

Lay Members	Female	302	
	Male	<u>292</u>	
	<i>TOTAL</i>		594
Ordained Ministers	Female	124	
	Male	<u>310</u>	
	<i>TOTAL</i>		434
<i>ELCA Officers:</i>			<u>4</u>
<i>TOTAL VOTING MEMBERSHIP</i>			1,032

Of the 1,032 registered voting members, 103 had identified themselves as persons of color or whose primary language was other than English.

Report of the Vice President and of the Church Council

Reference: *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section VIII and Section IV

Because time did not allow during Plenary Session One, Presiding Bishop Anderson at this time introduced Ms. Kathy J. Magnus, vice president of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. He said, “I now recognize a colleague, a friend, a person who has been a great gift to this church” and then called upon Vice President Magnus, who, as chair of the Church Council, presented the council’s report. A summary of the vice president’s spoken comments follows.

Vice President Magnus spoke of her grandfather’s rocking chair, which she recently received as a gift from her father. She shared the history of the rocker saying, “In 1840, it traveled by covered wagon with my great-great grandmother from Lancaster, Pennsylvania, to Missouri and then over the years to Iowa, and then to Minnesota, and now to my home. For a century and a half, babies have been comforted, books have been read, daydreams have been spun and ideas spawned, and the stories of the family have been told in that rocking chair. It is part of my heritage, a precious reminder of my roots, and a place where now I will spin dreams, rock grandbabies, read, and tell stories. Rockers are the place where the stories are told. They harken us back to the richness of our past while at the same time providing us a place in which to read, ponder, and marvel at the incredible possibilities of the future. A rocker is always moving—sometimes it moves backwards and sometimes it moves forward. Sometimes gifting us with the strong stories of the struggles and celebrations of the past and sometimes propelling us into the future. I believe the church is called to do the same: To be a place of comfort for the people, to remind us of the rich heritage we have, to honor the stories and the people who have gone before us and at the same time propelling us to new stories, new places, and new visions with the Good News of Jesus Christ, a church alive in its heritage and hope.”

She commended the Church Council for “holding the tension of remembering, celebrating, and honoring our heritage, and at the same time looking to the future with great hope and excitement and energy.” She characterized council members as “persons who love this church, who love their Lord, people who can dream, and plan, and make policy while ever holding tightly to the rich heritage of the past and the foundation laid for us by those who have walked before us.” She named the persons completing their term on the Church Council: Charles A. Adamson, the Rev. David A. Andert, Lorrie G. Bergquist, William T. Billings, the Rev. Rick Deines, William H. Engelbrecht, Cynthia P. Johnson, Ramona S. Rank, the Rev. Nelson T. Strobert, Deborah S. Yandala, and the Rev. Stephen M. Youngdahl.

Vice President Magnus reviewed briefly the issues acted upon by the Church Council during this biennium that were transmitted to the Churchwide Assembly. She referred to the statement on sacramental practices; urban strategies developed by the Division for Outreach; the multicultural mission strategy; the American Indian and Alaska Native Strategic Plan; the call to action—ministry in daily life; life-long learning and development for faithful leaders; policies and procedures for addressing social concerns; budget proposals; Board of Pension Plan amendments; the review of the Division for Ministry and the Division for Higher Education and Schools; initiatives; sexuality—some common convictions; Lutheran Services in America; and ecumenical proposals. She noted that finances are no longer the difficult struggle they were during the early years of this church; that there is a growing sense of partnership between the churchwide organization, synods, and congregations; and that there is healthy excitement and energy for the programs coming before this assembly for its authorization.

She stated, “In these agenda-filled days, I pray that we will clearly focus on the tasks before us remembering once again those powerful words of our constitution’s Statement of Purpose, ‘The Church is a people created by God in Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, called and sent to bear witness to God’s creative, redeeming, and sanctifying action in the world.’”

Vice President Magnus closed upon a personal note. She announced her resignation as vice president of this church, effective at the close of this assembly, because of the election of her spouse, the Rev. Richard A. Magnus, as executive director of the Division for Outreach. Serving this church as a member of the Church Council and then as vice president “has been one of the most rewarding and challenging experiences of my life. . . . I am deeply, deeply grateful for the opportunity that you gave me to serve.”

Vice President Magnus was given a standing ovation and extended applause.

Presiding Bishop Anderson said, “We cannot say enough, but that [the standing ovation and applause] is some evidence of the gratitude we have for your terrific ministry with us.”

Statement on Sacramental Practices

Reference: *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section IV, pages 1-34; continued on *Minutes*, pages 631, 714.

BACKGROUND

This is a proposed statement on sacramental practices in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. It consists of “*principles*” together with “*background*” material and “*application*” of the principles to specific practices.

The purpose of this statement is to encourage common practice among the expressions of this church) congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization) regarding the sacraments, practice which is consistent with Lutheran theology.

This statement was developed in response to a request from the Conference of Bishops to the 1989 Churchwide Assembly that “a statement on sacramental practices be prepared as a guide to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.” That same year, several synod memorials on sacramental practices also were referred to the Conference of Bishops “for use in the development of a study on sacramental practices” [CA89.8.119].

In 1992 the Church Council (CC92.11.108) designated the Division for Congregational Ministries as the lead unit in the development of the statement, in cooperation with the Conference of Bishops (and the budget and finance committee of the Church Council). The plans for this project were reported to the 1993 Churchwide Assembly (CA93, Vol. 1, part 2, pages 259-263).

The Division for Congregational Ministries and the Office of the Bishop named a task force to draft the document. Persons named to the task force were: Pr. Nancy I. Amacher, Rothschild, Wisconsin; Bishop Richard F. Bansemer, Virginia Synod; Pr. Karen G. Bockelman (chair), Circle Pines, Minnesota, Ms. Judith Ann Cobb, Norfolk, Virginia; Ms. Marilyn Comer, Littleton, Colorado; Pr. Joseph A. Donnella, Howard University, Washington, D.C.; Ms. Mavis Hamre, Mesa, Arizona; Dr. Robert D. Hawkins, Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary, Columbia, South Carolina; Pr. Sarah Henrich, Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota; Pr. Richard P. Hermstad, Couer d’Alene, Idaho; Pr. Craig R. Johnson, Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, Minnesota; Pr. Ivis J. LaRiviera-Mestre, Allentown, Pennsylvania; Pr. Gordon W. Lathrop, Lutheran Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Bishop Charles H. Maahs, Central States Synod; Ms. Marilyn Miller, Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Pr. Paul H. Rohde, New Ulm, Minnesota. Other contributors included: Pr. Julie A. Ebbesen (Division for Congregational Ministries board member, 1993-1995) and Pr. Ralph F. Smith (task force member, 1993-1994).

In June 1994 the original time line was lengthened to allow for more widespread review and response by congregations to the task force’s draft. Action by the Churchwide Assembly was then scheduled for 1997 (rather than 1995, as in the original proposal). This action was taken by the Division for Congregational Ministries (DC94.10.22), as the lead unit, with the concurrence of the Office of the Bishop and the Conference of Bishops. Staff who worked with the task force were: Pr. M. Wyvetta Bullock (1995-1996); Pr. Mary Ann Moller-Gunderson (1993-1995); Pr. Paul R. Nelson (1993-1994 and 1995-1996); Pr. Michael R. Rothaar (1994-1995); and Ms. Ruth A. Allin (1993-1996).

This statement reflects the task force’s careful efforts to hear the critique and advice from this church which followed churchwide distribution of its earlier draft

in 1995. Responses from bishops, pastors, associates in ministry, deaconesses, diaconal ministers, laity, congregational study groups, theologians and theological faculties of this church, ecumenical partners, as well as elected boards of this church were received with gratitude. It has attempted to honor these responses in the changes now made to the earlier draft.

These responses reported concern for common practice among the expressions of this church, as well as freedom for appropriate diversity. Like the original bishops’ request, these responses reflect real pastoral needs in the life of a church where persons move from congregation to congregation and encounter a wide range of sacramental practices.

This statement should be carefully compared to this church’s current policy, *A Statement on Communion Practices* [CA89.4.23]. Its scope is broader, as was requested by the Conference of Bishops. It addresses “sacramental practices” and not “communion practices” only.

Where this statement cites documents it seeks to do so in ways that are consistent with this church’s Confession of Faith (ELCA 2.01.ff).

This statement seeks to root common sacramental practice in the Lutheran Confessions within the context of our contemporary situation. It also seeks to encourage study and discussion of the sacraments in the congregations of this church and increased teaching about the sacraments by the bishops and pastors of this church.

It is not a comprehensive doctrine of the means of grace and is not intended to be. Preparing such theology for the Church is an important task appropriately done by the teaching theologians of this church in an academic context.

The Conference of Bishops, at their meeting in White Haven, Pennsylvania, October 7, 1996, took the following action on the document: “To affirm the work of the task force on sacramental practices and to commend to the ELCA Church Council the document, *The Use of the Means of Grace—A Proposed Statement on the Practice of Word and Sacrament*, for action at the 1997 Churchwide Assembly.”

The board of the Division for Congregational Ministries recommends the following action: “The board of the Division for Congregational Ministries recommends to the 1997 Churchwide Assembly adoption of the (amended) document, *The Use of the Means of Grace—A Proposed Statement on the Practice of Word and Sacrament* as a replacement for *A Statement on Communion Practices* (1978 and 1989).

The Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America voted on November 10, 1996: “To receive with appreciation *A Proposed Statement on the Practice of Word and Sacrament—The Use of the Means of Grace*.” The council, at the same time, recommended that the 1997 Churchwide Assembly take the following action:

**RECOMMENDATION OF
THE CHURCH COUNCIL**

To amend *A Proposed Statement on the Practice of Word and Sacrament—The Use of the Means of Grace* by deleting the word, “Sunday,” from principle number seven; and

To adopt *A Statement on the Practice of Word and Sacrament—The Use of the Means of Grace* for guidance and practice in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

**The Use of
the Means of Grace
A Statement on the
Practice of Word And Sacrament
Adopted for Guidance and Practice**

Preface

The Triune God and the Means of Grace

The Triune God Acts in the Means of Grace

Principle

1 Jesus Christ is the living and abiding Word of God. By the power of the Spirit, this very Word of God, which is Jesus Christ, is read in the Scriptures, proclaimed in preaching, announced in the forgiveness of sins, eaten and drunk in the Holy Communion, and encountered in the bodily presence of the Christian community. By the power of the Spirit active in Holy Baptism, this Word washes a people to be Christ’s own Body in the world. We have called this gift of Word and Sacrament by the name “the means of grace.” The living heart of all these means is the presence of Jesus Christ through the power of the Spirit as the gift of the Father.

Background

1a “We believe we have the duty not to neglect any of the rites and ceremonies instituted in Scripture, whatever their number. We do not think it makes much difference if, for purposes of teaching, the enumeration varies, provided what is handed down in Scripture is preserved. For that matter, the Fathers did not always use the same enumeration.”¹

Background

¹ Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article XIII. Note: all citations of confessional material are from the *Book of Concord*, translated and edited by Theodore G. Tappert (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959).

1b In Christ’s flesh, in his death and resurrection, all people are invited to behold and to receive the fullness of God’s grace and truth.²

The Triune God Creates the Church

Principle

2 God gives the Word and the sacraments to the Church and by the power of the Spirit thereby creates and sustains the Church among us. ³ God establishes the sacraments “to awaken and confirm faith.”⁴ God calls the Church to exercise care and fidelity in its use of the means of grace, so that all people may hear and believe the Gospel of Jesus Christ and be gathered into God’s own mission for the life of the world.

Background

2a In a world of yearning, brokenness, and sin, the Church’s clarity about the Gospel of Jesus Christ is vital. God has promised to come to all through the means of grace: the Word and the sacraments of Christ’s institution. While the Church defines for itself customary practices that reflect care and fidelity, it is these means of grace that define the Church.

Background

2b Yet even the Church itself is threatened should it fail to claim the great treasures of the Gospel. Either careless practice or rigid uniformity may distort the power of the gift. This statement is one way in which we, in the Church, can give counsel to one another, supporting and sustaining one another in our common mission.

Background

2c We are people whose lives are degraded by sin. This estrangement from God manifests itself in many ways, including false values and a sense of emptiness. Many in our time are deprived or depriving, abusing or abused. All humanity, indeed all creation is threatened by sin that erupts in greed, violence, and war. In the midst of isolation, lovelessness, and self-absorption, the Church is tempted to turn in on itself, its own needs, and preferences. As a church in this time, we seek to give and receive God’s Word and sacraments as full and reliable signs of Christ.

What is the Church?

Principle

3 “It is also taught among us that one holy Christian church will be and remain forever. This is the assembly of all believers among whom the Gospel is preached in its purity and the holy sacraments are administered according to the Gospel.”⁵

Background

3a The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is committed by its statement of purpose to “worship God in proclamation of the Word and administration of the sacraments and through

² John 1:14-16.

³ The Small Catechism, The Creed, The Third Article.

⁴ Augsburg Confession, Article XIII.

⁵ Augsburg Confession, Article VII.

lives of prayer, praise, thanksgiving, witness, and service.”⁶ The Scriptures and our Confessions establish this purpose. We believe that “through the Word and the sacraments, as through means, the Holy Spirit is given, and the Holy Spirit produces faith, where and when it pleases God, in those who hear the Gospel.”⁷

This Statement Encourages Church Unity Amid Diversity

Principle

- 4 The gift of Word and Sacrament is from God. This statement on sacramental practices seeks to encourage unity among us in the administration of the means of grace and to foster common understanding and practice. It does not seek to impose uniformity among us.**

Background

- 4a This statement grows out of this church’s concern for healthy pastoral action and strong congregational mission. It does not address our practice of Word and Sacrament out of antiquarian or legalistic interests but rather to ground the practice of our church in the Gospel and to encourage good order within our church.

Application

- 4b Our congregations receive and administer the means of grace in richly diverse ways. This diversity in practice is well grounded in the Confessions. “It is not necessary for the true unity of the Christian church that ceremonies of human institution should be observed uniformly in all places.”⁸ We are united in one common center: Jesus Christ proclaimed in Word and sacraments amidst participating assemblies of singing, serving, and praying people.

Part One

The Proclamation of the Word and the Christian Assembly

What is the Word of God?

Principle

- 5 Jesus Christ is the Word of God incarnate. The proclamation of God’s message to us is both Law and Gospel. The canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the written Word of God.⁹ Through this Word in these forms, as through the sacraments, God gives faith, forgiveness of sins, and new life.**

Application

- 5a Proclamation of the Word includes the public reading of Scripture, preaching, teaching, the celebration of the sacraments, confession and absolution, music, arts, prayers, Christian witness and service. The congregation’s entire educational ministry participates in the proclamation of the Word.

⁶ *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, 1995, 4.02.

⁷ Augsburg Confession, Article V.

⁸ Augsburg Confession, Article VII.

⁹ *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, 2.02.

Sunday Provides a Day for Assembly Around Word and Sacrament

Principle

- 6 Sunday, the day of Christ’s resurrection and of the appearances to the disciples by the crucified and risen Christ, is the primary day on which Christians gather to worship. Within this assembly, the Word is read and preached and the sacraments are celebrated.**

Application

- 6a Sunday is the principal festival day of Christians. “The Holy Communion” is one name for the Sunday service of Word and Sacrament in which the congregation assembles in God’s presence, hears the word of life, baptizes and remembers Baptism, and celebrates the Holy Supper. The service of Word and Sacrament is also celebrated on other great festivals of the year, according to the common Christian calendar received in our churches. The Christian community may gather for proclamation and the Lord’s Supper at other times as well, as, for example, on other days of the week, and when the services of marriage or of the burial of the dead are placed within the context of the Holy Communion.¹⁰

The Scriptures Are Read Aloud

Principle

- 7 The public reading of the Holy Scriptures is an indispensable part of Sunday worship, constituting the basis for the public proclamation of the Gospel.**

Application

- 7a The use of ELCA-approved lectionaries serves the unity of the Church, the hearing of the breadth of the Scriptures, and the evangelical meaning of the church year. The Revised Common Lectionary and the lectionaries in *Lutheran Book of Worship* make three readings and a psalm available for every Sunday and festival.

Application

- 7b The use of a Bible or lectionary of appropriate size and dignity by those who read the Scriptures aloud, the use of this book in liturgical processions, and its placement on the reading desk or pulpit may bring the centrality of the Word to visible expression.

The Baptized People Proclaim God’s Word

Principle

- 8 All the baptized share responsibility for the proclamation of the Word and the formation of the Christian assembly.**

Application

- 8a One of the ways lay people exercise the public proclamation of the Word is as assisting ministers. Among these assisting ministers will be readers of Scripture and also cantors and leaders of prayer.¹¹

¹⁰ *Lutheran Book of Worship*, Ministers Edition (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, and Philadelphia: Board of Publication, Lutheran Church in America, 1978), 36-37.

¹¹ *Lutheran Book of Worship*, Ministers Edition, 25. See also *Principle* 41.

Application

8b Musicians serve the assembly by illuminating the readings and the sacraments, by the congregation's participation in song.

Application

8c There are varieties of ways beyond the assembly in which the public ministry of the Word is exercised. Some of these include the work of catechists, evangelists, and teachers.

God's Word is Preached

Principle

9 The preaching of the Gospel of the crucified and risen Christ is rooted in the readings of the Scriptures in the assemblies for worship. Called and ordained ministers bear responsibility for the preached Word in the Church gathered for public worship.¹²

Application

9a Preaching is the living and contemporary voice of one who interprets in all the Scriptures the things concerning Jesus Christ.¹³ In fidelity to the readings appointed for the day, the preacher proclaims our need of God's grace and freely offers that grace, equipping the community for mission and service in daily life. "Only under extraordinary circumstances would the sermon be omitted" from the Sunday and festival service of Holy Communion.¹⁴

Application

9b While other persons may sometimes preach, the called pastor of a congregation has responsibility for this preaching, ordinarily preparing and delivering the sermon and overseeing all public ministry of the Word in the congregation. In congregations without a called pastor, the synodical bishop assumes this responsibility, often by providing an interim pastor. All Christians, however, bear responsibility to speak and teach the Gospel in daily life.

The Common Voice of the Assembly Speaks the Word

Principle

10 The assembled congregation participates in proclaiming the Word of God with a common voice. It sings hymns and the texts of the liturgy. It confesses the Nicene or Apostles' Creed.¹⁵

Application

10a Hymns, the liturgy, and the creeds are means for the community itself to proclaim and respond to the Word of God.¹⁶ This witness should be valued, taught, and taken to heart. The treasury of music is ever-expanding with new compositions and with songs from the churches of the world.

The Arts Serve the Word

¹² See *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry. Faith and Order Paper No. 111*, (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1982), Ministry, 8; Augsburg Confession, Article XIV; also *The Study of Ministry Report to the 1991 Assembly: Study Edition* (Chicago: Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Division for Ministry, 1991).

¹³ Luke 24:27.

¹⁴ *Lutheran Book of Worship*, Ministers Edition, 27.

¹⁵ The Athanasian Creed is also a confession of the Church, but is rarely used in public worship.

¹⁶ Colossians 3:16.

Principle

11 Music, the visual arts, and the environment of our worship spaces embody the proclamation of the Word in Lutheran churches.

Application

11a Music is a servant of the Gospel and a principal means of worshiping God in Lutheran churches. Congregational song gathers the whole people to proclaim God's mercy, to worship God and to pray, in response to the readings of the day and in preparation for the Lord's Supper.

Application

11b In similar ways the other arts also are called to serve the purposes of the Christian assembly. The visual arts and the spaces for worship assist the congregation to participate in worship, to focus on the essentials, and to embody the Gospel.

Application

11c In these times of deeper contact among cultures, our congregations do well to make respectful and hospitable use of the music, arts, and furnishings of many peoples. The Spirit of God calls people from every nation, all tribes, peoples, and languages to gather around the Gospel of Jesus Christ.¹⁷

Confession and Absolution Proclaim the Word

Principle

12 The Gospel also is proclaimed in Confession and Absolution (the Office of the Keys and in the mutual conversation and consolation of the brothers and sisters).¹⁸ Our congregations are called to make faithful use of corporate and individual confession of sins and holy absolution.

Application

12a Absolution is a speaking and hearing of the Word of God and a return to Baptism. The most important part of confession and forgiveness is the "work which God does, when he absolves me of my sins through a word placed in the mouth" of a human being.¹⁹ Liturgical patterns for corporate and individual confession and forgiveness are given in Lutheran worship books.

On Other Occasions Christians Assemble Around the Word

Principle

13 Assemblies for worship are not limited to Sunday or to celebrations of Word and Sacrament. Christians gather for worship on other days of the week, for morning or evening prayer, for services of the Word or devotions, to mark local and national festivals, and for important life occasions such as weddings and funerals. Christians also gather in their own homes for prayer, Bible reading, and devotions.

Application

¹⁷ Revelation 7:9.

¹⁸ Smalcald Articles, III., 4.

¹⁹ The Large Catechism, A Brief Exhortation to Confession, 15.

13a Every opportunity for worship is valued and encouraged. The communal observance of morning and evening prayer and the celebration of weddings and funerals within services of Word and Sacrament in the congregation are appropriate traditions. Morning and evening prayers and mealtime blessings in the household are also an extension of corporate worship.

Part Two

Holy Baptism and the Christian Assembly

What is Baptism?

Principle

14 In Holy Baptism the Triune God delivers us from the forces of evil, puts our sinful self to death, gives us new birth, adopts us as children, and makes us members of the body of Christ, the Church. Holy Baptism is received by faith alone.

Background

14a By water and the Word in Baptism, we are liberated from sin and death by being joined to the death and resurrection of Jesus. In Baptism God seals us by the Holy Spirit and marks us with the cross of Christ forever.²⁰ Baptism inaugurates a life of discipleship in the death and resurrection of Christ. Baptism conforms us to the death and resurrection of Christ precisely so that we repent and receive forgiveness, love our neighbors, suffer for the sake of the Gospel, and witness to Christ.

Application

14b Baptism is for the sake of life in Christ and in the body of Christ, the Church. It also may be given to those who are close to death, and is a strong word of promise in spite of death. Individuals are baptized, yet this Baptism forms a community. It is for children. It is for adults. It is done once, yet it is for all of our life.

Jesus Christ Has Given Holy Baptism

Principle

15 Baptism was given to the Church by Jesus Christ in the “great commission,” but also in his own baptism by John and in the baptism of the cross.

Background

15a One great source of the teaching and practice of the Church regarding Baptism is the “great commission”: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”²¹

Background

²⁰ Cf. *Lutheran Book of Worship* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, and Philadelphia: Board of Publication, Lutheran Church in America, 1978), 121, 124.

²¹ Matthew 28:19-20.

15b Other passages are also part of the biblical tradition of the origin and meaning of Baptism. Another source is the account of Jesus’ own baptism at the River Jordan. While Jesus is the eternal Son of God, all who are baptized into him are adopted as beloved children of God. With Jesus all the baptized are anointed by the outpoured Spirit. Because of Jesus we are, through Baptism, gathered and included in the life of the Triune God.

Background

15c In two places in the New Testament where Jesus speaks of his own baptism,²² he refers not to his being washed in the Jordan River, but to his impending death.²³ It is that death to which we are joined in Baptism, according to the witness of Paul.²⁴

Baptism is Once for All

Principle

16 A person is baptized once. Because of the unfailing nature of God’s promise, and because of God’s once-for-all action in Christ, Baptism is not repeated.

Background

16a Baptism is a sign and testimony of God’s grace, awakening and creating faith. The faith of the one being baptized “does not constitute Baptism but receives it....” “Everything depends upon the Word and commandment of God....”²⁵

Application

16b “Re-baptism” is to be avoided²⁶ since it causes doubt, focusing attention on the always-failing adequacy of our action or our faith. Baptized persons who come to new depth of conviction in faith are invited to an Affirmation of Baptism in the life of the congregation.²⁷

Application

16c There may be occasions when people are uncertain about whether or not they have been baptized. Pastors, after supportive conversation and pastoral discernment, may choose to proceed with the baptism. The practice of this church and its congregations needs to incorporate the person into the community and its ongoing catechesis and to proclaim the sure grace of God in Christ, avoiding any sense of Baptism being repeated.

Baptism Involves Daily Dying and Rising

Principle

17 By God’s gift and call, all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus are daily put to death so that we might be raised daily to newness of life.²⁸

Background

²² Luke 12:50; Mark 10:38.

²³ *The Confirmation Ministry Task Force Report*, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 1993, 4.

²⁴ Romans 6:3.

²⁵ The Large Catechism, Baptism, 53.

²⁶ *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, Baptism, 13.

²⁷ The Large Catechism, Baptism, 47-63.

²⁸ The Small Catechism, The Sacrament of Holy Baptism, part four, 12. See also Romans 6.

17a Believers are at the same time sinners and justified. We experience bondage to sin from which we cannot free ourselves and, at the same time, “rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.”²⁹ The baptismal life is expressed each time the baptized confess their sins and receive forgiveness. “Repentance, therefore, is nothing else than a return and approach to Baptism....”³⁰

Application

17b There are many ways to encourage this daily dying to sin and being raised to live before God. They include confession and absolution, the reading of the Scriptures, preaching, the mutual comfort and consolation of the sisters and brothers,³¹ daily prayer and the sign of the cross, the remembrance of the catechism, and the profession of the creed.

Application

17c Christians continue in the covenant God made with them in Baptism by participation in the community of faith, by hearing the Word and receiving Christ’s Supper, by proclaiming the good news in word and deed, and by striving for justice and peace in all the world.³²

Baptism is for All Ages

Principle

18 God, whose grace is for all, is the one who acts in Baptism. Therefore candidates for Baptism are of all ages. Some are adults and older children who have heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ, declare their faith, and desire Holy Baptism. Others are the young or infant children of active members of the congregation or those children for whom members of the congregation assume sponsorship.

Application

18a Since ancient times, the Christian Church has baptized both infants and adults.³³ Our times require great seriousness about evangelization and readiness to welcome unbaptized adults to the reception of the faith and to Baptism into Christ. Our children also need this sign and means of grace and its continued power in their lives. In either case, Baptism is God’s gift of overwhelming grace. We baptize infants as if they were adults, addressing them with questions, words, and promises that their parents, sponsors, and congregation are to help them know and believe as they grow in years. We baptize adults as if they were infants, washing them and clothing them with God’s love in Christ.

Baptism Includes Catechesis

Principle

19 Baptism includes instruction and nurture in the faith for a life of discipleship.

Application

²⁹ Titus 3:5.

³⁰ The Large Catechism, Baptism, 75-90.

³¹ Smalcald Articles, III., 4.

³² *Lutheran Book of Worship*, p.201.

³³ *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, Baptism, 11-12.

19a When infants and young children are baptized, the parents and sponsors receive instruction and the children are taught throughout their development. With adults and older children, the baptismal candidates themselves are given instruction and formation for faith and ministry in the world both prior to and following their baptism. The instruction and formation of sponsors, parents, and candidates prior to Baptism deals especially with faith in the triune God and with prayer. In the case of adults and older children this period of instruction and formation is called “the catechumenate.” Occasional Services includes an order for the enrollment of candidates for Baptism.³⁴

Application

19b The parish education of the congregation is part of its baptismal ministry. Indeed, all of the baptized require life-long learning, the daily re-appropriation of the wonderful gifts given in Baptism.

Sponsors Assist Those Being Baptized

Principle

20 Both adults and infants benefit from having baptismal sponsors. The primary role of the sponsors is to guide and accompany the candidates and/or their family in the process of instruction and Baptism. They help the baptized join in the life and work of the community of believers for the sake of the world.

Application

20a Congregations are encouraged to select at least one sponsor from among the congregational members for each candidate for Baptism.³⁵ Additional sponsors who are involved in the faith and life of a Christian community may also be selected by parents of the candidate or by the candidate. Choosing and preparing sponsors requires thoughtful consideration and includes participation by pastors or other congregational leaders.

Background

20b The sponsors of children are often called “godparents.” They may fulfill a variety of social roles in certain cultures. These roles may be regarded as an elaboration of the central baptismal role they have undertaken. Such sponsors take on a lifelong task to recall the gifts of Baptism in the life of their godchild.

Background

20c The sponsor provided by the congregation is, in the case of the baptism of an infant, especially concerned to accompany the family as it prepares for Baptism and, as a mentor, to assist the integration of the child into the community of faith as it grows in years. In the case of the baptism of an adult, this sponsor accompanies the candidate throughout the catechumenate, in prayer and in mutual learning, assisting the newly baptized adult to join in the ministry and mission of this community.

Application

20d The entire congregation prays for those preparing for Baptism, welcomes the newly baptized, and provides assistance to sponsors.

Baptism Takes Place in the Assembly

³⁴ *Occasional Services: A Companion to Lutheran Book of Worship* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House and Philadelphia: Board of Publication, Lutheran Church in America, 1982), 13-15.

³⁵ *Statement on Sacramental Practices*, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, 1991.

Principle

21 Candidates for Holy Baptism, sponsors, and an ordained minister called by the Church gather together with the congregation for the celebration of Baptism within the corporate worship of the Church.

Application

21a When pastoral considerations require Baptism to take place outside of corporate worship, if at all possible representatives of the congregation gather for Baptism. In such a case a public announcement of the baptism is made at the service the following Sunday.

Application

21b Baptism may take place at varying points in the worship service. When the Baptism follows the Liturgy of the Word, it helps to emphasize Baptism's connection to the promise of the Gospel and faith in that promise and leads the baptized to the altar. When infants are baptized in a service where adults are not, the Baptism may be part of the entrance rite. This emphasizes that their instruction is to follow and reminds the whole congregation of the baptismal nature of the order for Confession and Forgiveness. At the Vigil of Easter, baptisms are placed between the Service of Readings and the proclamation of the Easter texts. This helps Christians to remember their burial with Christ into death, and rising with him to new life.

A Pastor Presides at Baptism

Principle

22 An ordained minister presides at Holy Baptism.³⁶

Application

22a God is the one who acts in Baptism. The pastor, congregation, candidates, and sponsors gather around the font to administer the sacrament. The pastor presides in the midst of a participating community. Ordinarily this presider is the pastor of the congregation where the Baptism is being celebrated. The pastor acts as baptizer, but does so within a congregation of the Church which actively assents and responds.

Baptism May Occur Before an Imminent Death

Principle

23 In cases of imminent death, a person may be baptized by any Christian. Should sudden death prevent Baptism, we commend the person to God with prayer, trusting in God's grace.

Application

23a Counsel for such a baptism at the time of imminent death may be found in *Occasional Services* and should be widely known in the Christian community.³⁷ A dead person, child or adult, is not baptized. Prayers at such a death may include naming, signing with the cross, anointing for burial, and commendation to God. Prayers and commendations may be offered in the event of a stillbirth or of the early loss of a pregnancy.

Application

³⁶ *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, Baptism, 22.

³⁷ *Occasional Services* (1982), 16-22.

23b When a person who was baptized in imminent danger of death survives, *Occasional Services* provides for a Public Recognition of the Baptism at corporate worship.³⁸

We Baptize in the Name of the Triune God

Principle

24 Holy Baptism is administered with water in the name of the triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Baptism into the name of the triune God involves confessing and teaching the doctrine and meaning of the Trinity. The baptized are welcomed into the body of Christ. This is the community which lives from “the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit”³⁹

Background

24a The Church seeks to maintain trinitarian orthodoxy while speaking in appropriate modern language and contexts. While a worldwide ecumenical discussion is now under-way about such language, we have no other name in which to baptize than the historic and ecumenically received name.⁴⁰

Background

24b It is in the crucified Jesus that we meet the God to whom he entrusted all, who raised him from the dead for us, and who poured out the Spirit from his death and resurrection. Washing with water in this name is much more than the use of a “formula.” The name is a summary of the power and presence of the triune God and of that teaching which must accompany every Baptism. Without this teaching and without the encounter with the grace, love, and communion of the triune God, the words may be misunderstood as a magic formula or as a misrepresentation of the one God in three persons, “equal in glory, coeternal in majesty.”⁴¹ What “Father” and “Son” mean, in biblical and creedal perspective, must also be continually reexamined. The doctrine of God teaches us the surprising theology of the cross and counters “any alleged Trinitarian sanction for sinful inequality or oppression of women in church and society.”⁴²

Application

24c Some Christians, however, are received into our congregations from other churches in which they were baptized “in the name of Jesus Christ.”⁴³ There are some whose Baptisms were accompanied by trinitarian examination and confession of faith,⁴⁴ and whose Baptisms have occurred within the context of trinitarian life and teaching. We will do well to avoid quarrels over the validity of these Baptisms.

Application

24d Outside the context of trinitarian life and teaching no Christian Baptism takes place, whatever liturgical formula may be used.

Baptism is a Public Sign

³⁸ *Occasional Services* (1982), 17-22.

³⁹ 2 Corinthians 13:13.

⁴⁰ *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, Baptism, 17.

⁴¹ Athanasian Creed.

⁴² Action of the Conference of Bishops, March 8-11, 1991, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

⁴³ Acts 2:38.

⁴⁴ Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus, 21.

Principle

- 25 We seek to celebrate Baptism in such a way that the celebration is a true and complete sign of the things which Baptism signifies.⁴⁵**

Background

25a “The pedagogical force of practice is considerable.”⁴⁶ A strong baptismal theology calls for a strong baptismal practice, teaching and showing forth the meaning of Baptism and inviting Christians to discover continually its importance for their daily lives. Those who plan baptisms attend to the use of faithful words and gracious actions, to including the event within the Sunday service, to the architectural or natural setting, to the regular preparation of candidates, sponsors, parents, and congregation for Baptism, to post-baptismal teaching that strengthens us for mission, and to the possibility of great festivals as times for Baptism.

Application

25b “It is appropriate to designate such occasions as the Vigil of Easter, the Day of Pentecost, All Saints’ Day, and the Baptism of Our Lord for the celebration of Holy Baptism. Baptismal celebrations on these occasions keep Baptism integrated into the unfolding of the story of salvation provided by the church year.”⁴⁷ The Vigil of Easter is an especially ancient and appropriate time for Baptism, emphasizing the origin of all baptism in Christ’s death and resurrection.

Water is Used Generously

Principle

- 26 Water is a sign of cleansing, dying, and new birth.⁴⁸ It is used generously in Holy Baptism to symbolize God’s power over sin and death.**

Application

26a A variety of modes may be used; for example, both immersion and pouring show forth God’s power in Baptism. Immersion helps to communicate the dying and rising with Christ. Pouring suggests cleansing from sin. We have taught that it is not the water which does such great things, but the Word of God connected with the water.⁴⁹ God can use whatever water we have. Yet, with Martin Luther, we wish to make full use of water, when it is possible. “For baptism . . . signifies that the old man [self] and the sinful birth of flesh and blood are to be wholly drowned by the grace of God. We should therefore do justice to its meaning and make baptism a true and complete sign of the thing it signifies.”⁵⁰

A Font is Located in the Assembly

Principle

⁴⁵ Martin Luther, “The Holy and Blessed Sacrament of Baptism,” 1, in *Luther’s Works* 35:29.

⁴⁶ *The Sacrament of the Altar and Its Implications*, United Lutheran Church in America, 1960, C.5.

⁴⁷ *Lutheran Book of Worship*, Ministers Edition, 30; cf. *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, Baptism, 23.

⁴⁸ *Lutheran Book of Worship*, p.122.

⁴⁹ The Small Catechism, part four.

⁵⁰ Martin Luther, “The Holy and Blessed Sacrament of Baptism,” 1, *Luther’s Works*, 35:29.

- 27 A baptismal font filled with water, placed in the assembly’s worship space, symbolizes the centrality of this sacrament for faith and life.**

Application

27a As congregations are able, they may consider the creation of fonts of ample proportions filled with flowing water, or baptismal pools which could allow immersion. “The location of the font within the church building should express the idea of entrance into the community of faith, and should allow ample space for people to gather around.”⁵¹

Other Signs Proclaim the Meanings of Baptism

Principle

- 28 The laying on of hands and prayer for the Holy Spirit’s gifts, the signing with the cross, and the anointing with oil help to appropriate the breadth of meanings in Baptism. Other symbolic acts also are appropriate such as the clothing with a baptismal garment and the giving of a lighted candle.**

Background

28a These interpretive signs proclaim the gifts that are given by the promise of God in Baptism itself. Some keys to their interpretation are given in the Holy Scriptures. The laying on of both hands with the prayer for the gifts of the Holy Spirit is a sign of the pouring out of the Spirit of God to empower the people of God for mission. The sign of the cross marks the Christian as united with the Crucified. The use of oil is a sign of anointing with the Spirit and of union with Jesus Christ, the anointed one of God.

Baptism Incorporates into the Church

Principle

- 29 In Baptism people become members not only of the Church universal but of a particular congregation. Therefore all baptisms are entered into the permanent records of the congregation and certificates are issued at the time of the administration of the sacrament.**

Application

29a The time of the presentation of this certificate may be at the Baptism itself or at a post-baptismal visit or during post-baptismal formation. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America keeps a roster from the baptismal ministry of its military chaplains.

Baptism is Repeatedly Affirmed

Principle

- 30 The public rite for Affirmation of Baptism may be used at many times in the life of a baptized Christian. It is especially appropriate at Confirmation and at times of reception or restoration into membership.**

Application

⁵¹ *Lutheran Book of Worship*, Ministers Edition, 30.

30a “When there are changes in a Christian’s life, rites of affirmation of Baptism and intercessory prayer could mark the passage.”⁵² “Moving into a nursing home, beginning parenthood or grandparenthood, choosing or changing an occupation, moving out of the parental home, the diagnosis of a chronic illness, the end of one’s first year of mourning, the ending of a relationship, and retirement are all examples of life’s transitions that could be acknowledged by these rites.”⁵³ Other examples include adoption and the naming of an already baptized child, release from prison, reunion of an immigrant family, and new life after abuse or addiction.

Application

30b Every Baptism celebrated in the assembly is an occasion for the remembrance and renewal of baptism on the part of all the baptized. The Easter Vigil especially provides for a renewal of baptism.⁵⁴

Part Three **Holy Communion and the Christian Assembly**

What is Holy Communion?

Principle

31 At the table of our Lord Jesus Christ, God nourishes faith, forgives sin, and calls us to be witnesses to the Gospel.

Background

31a Here we receive Christ’s body and blood and God’s gifts of forgiveness of sin, life, and salvation to be received by faith for the strengthening of faith.⁵⁵

Jesus Christ Has Given the Holy Communion

Principle

32 The Lord’s Supper was instituted by Jesus Christ on the night of his betrayal.⁵⁶

Background

32a In numerous places in the Gospels, the early Church also recognized the eucharistic significance of other meals during Christ’s ministry and after his resurrection.⁵⁷

Jesus Christ is Truly Present in this Sacrament

Principle

33 In this sacrament the crucified and risen Christ is present, giving his true body and blood as food and drink. This real presence is a mystery.

Background

⁵² *The Confirmation Ministry Task Force Report*, 9-10.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Lutheran Book of Worship*, Ministers Edition, 152.

⁵⁵ *The Small Catechism*, and Augsburg Confession XIII.2.

⁵⁶ Matthew 26:26-29 and parallels; 1 Corinthians 11:23-24.

⁵⁷ See, for example, Mark 6:30-52 and parallels, Luke 24:13-35.

33a The Augsburg Confession states: “It is taught among us that the true body and blood of Christ are really present in the Supper of our Lord under the form of bread and wine and are there distributed and received.”⁵⁸ The Apology of the Augsburg Confession adds: “We are talking about the presence of the living Christ, knowing that ‘death no longer has dominion over him.’”⁵⁹

Background

33b “The ‘how’ of Christ’s presence remains as inexplicable in the sacrament as elsewhere. It is a presence that remains ‘hidden’ even though visible media are used in the sacrament. The earthly element is... a fit vehicle of the divine presence and it, too, the common stuff of our daily life, participates in the new creation which has already begun.”⁶⁰

The Celebration of Holy Communion Includes both Word and Sacramental Meal

Principle

34 The two principal parts of the liturgy of Holy Communion, the proclamation of the Word of God and the celebration of the sacramental meal, are so intimately connected as to form one act of worship.

Application

34a Our congregations are encouraged to hold these two parts together, avoiding either a celebration of the Supper without the preceding reading of the Scriptures, preaching, and intercessory prayers or a celebration of the Supper for a few people who remain after the dismissal of the congregation from a Service of the Word. The Holy Communion is not simply appended to the offices of Morning or Evening Prayer.

Application

34b The simple order of our liturgy of Holy Communion, represented in the worship books of our church, is that which has been used by generations of Christians. We gather in song and prayer, confessing our need of God. We read the Scriptures and hear them preached. We profess our faith and pray for the world, sealing our prayers with a sign of peace. We gather an offering for the poor and for the mission of the Church. We set our table with bread and wine, give thanks and praise to God, proclaiming Jesus Christ, and eat and drink. We hear the blessing of God and are sent out in mission to the world.

The Holy Communion is Celebrated Weekly

Principle

35 According to the Apology of the Augsburg Confession,⁶¹ Lutheran congregations celebrate the Holy Communion every Sunday and festival. This confession remains the norm for our practice.

Background

35a The Church celebrates the Holy Communion frequently because the Church needs the sacrament, the means by which the Church’s fellowship is established and its mission as the

⁵⁸ Augsburg Confession, Article X.

⁵⁹ Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article XXIV.

⁶⁰ *The Sacrament of the Altar and Its Implications*, United Lutheran Church in America, 1960.

⁶¹ Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article XXIV.

baptized people of God is nourished and sustained.⁶² This practice was reaffirmed in 1989 by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. We continue to need “consistent pastoral encouragement and instruction relating to Holy Communion...pointing up Christ’s command, his promise, and our deep need.”⁶³ For a variety of historical reasons, Lutherans in various places moved away from the weekly celebration of the sacrament.

Application

35b All of our congregations are encouraged to celebrate the Lord’s Supper weekly.

Application

35c Participation in the sacramental meal is by invitation, not demand. The members of this church are encouraged to make the sacrament a frequent rather than an occasional part of their lives.

The Holy Communion Has a Variety of Names

Principle

36 A variety of names demonstrate the richness of Holy Communion. Those names include: Lord’s Supper, Holy Communion, Eucharist, Mass, the Sacrament of the Altar, the Divine Liturgy, the Divine Service.

Background

36a Each name has come to emphasize certain aspects of the sacrament. The “Lord’s Supper” speaks of the meal which the risen Lord holds with the Church, the meal of the Lord’s Day, a foretaste of the heavenly feast to come. “Holy Communion” accentuates the holy *koinonia* (community established by the Holy Spirit as we encounter Christ and are formed into one body with him and so with each other. “Eucharist” calls us to see that the whole meal is a great thanksgiving for creation and for creation’s redemption in Jesus Christ. “Divine Liturgy” says the celebration is a public action, carried out by a community of people. Yet, “Divine Service” helps us to see that the primary action of our gathering is God’s astonishing service to us; we are called to respond in praise and in service to our neighbor. The term “Mass” is probably derived from the old dismissal of the participants at the end of the service and the sending away of the bread and the cup to the absent: it invites us into mission. “Sacrament of the Altar” invites each one to eat and drink from the true altar of God, the body and blood of Christ given and shed “for you.”⁶⁴

The Holy Communion is Given to the Baptized

Principle

37 Admission to the Sacrament is by invitation of the Lord, presented through the Church to those who are baptized.⁶⁵

Application

37a When adults and older children are baptized, they may be communed for the first time in the service in which they are baptized. Baptismal preparation and continuing catechesis include instruction for Holy Communion.

Background

⁶² The Grace-full Use of the Means of Grace: Theses on Worship and Worship Practices,” Lutheran members of the North American Academy of Liturgy, 1994, 28.

⁶³ *A Statement on Communion Practices*, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 1989, II.B.2. (Identical to 1978 statement of predecessor church bodies.)

⁶⁴ “The Grace-full Use of the Means of Grace: Theses on Worship and Worship Practices, 27.

⁶⁵ *A Statement on Communion Practices*, 1989, II.A.2.

37b Customs vary on the age and circumstances for admission to the Lord’s Supper. The age for communing children continues to be discussed and reviewed in our congregations. When “A Report on the Study of Confirmation and First Communion”⁶⁶ was adopted, a majority of congregations now in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America separated confirmation and reception of Holy Communion and began inviting children to commune in the fifth grade. Since that time a number of congregations have continued to lower the age of communion, especially for school age children. Although *A Statement on Communion Practices*⁶⁷ precluded the communion of infants, members and congregations have become aware of this practice in some congregations of this church, in historical studies of the early centuries of the Church, in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, and in broader ecumenical discussion.

Application

37c Baptized children begin to commune on a regular basis at a time determined through mutual conversation that includes the pastor, the child, and the parents or sponsors involved, within the accepted practices of the congregation. Ordinarily this beginning will occur only when children can eat and drink, and can start to respond to the gift of Christ in the Supper.

Application

37d Infants and children may be communed for the first time during the service in which they are baptized or they may be brought to the altar during communion to receive a blessing.

Application

37e In all cases, participation in Holy Communion is accompanied by catechesis appropriate to the age of the communicant. When infants and young children are communed, the parents and sponsors receive instruction and the children are taught throughout their development.

Background

37f Catechesis, continuing throughout the life of the believer, emphasizes the sacrament as gift, given to faith by and for participation in the community. Such faith is not simply knowledge or intellectual understanding but trust in God’s promises given in the Lord’s Supper (“for you” and “for the forgiveness of sin” for the support of the baptized).

Application

37g When an unbaptized person comes to the table seeking Christ’s presence and is inadvertently communed, neither that person nor the ministers of Communion need be ashamed. Rather, Christ’s gift of love and mercy to all is praised. That person is invited to learn the faith of the Church and to receive the gift of Baptism.

The Age of First Communion May Vary

Principle

38 Common mission among the congregations of this church depends on mutual respect for varied practice in many areas of church life including the ages of first Communion.

Background

38a “In faithful participation in the mission of God in and through this church, congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization--as interdependent expressions of this church--shall

⁶⁶ “A Report on the Study of Confirmation and First Communion by Lutheran Congregations,” Joint Lutheran Commission on the Theology and Practice of Confirmation. (Philadelphia: Lutheran Church in America, 1969).

⁶⁷ *A Statement on Communion Practices*, 1989, II.A.2.

be guided by the biblical and confessional commitments of this church. Each shall recognize that mission efforts must be shaped by both local needs and global awareness, by both individual witness and corporate endeavor, and by both distinctly Lutheran emphases and growing ecumenical cooperation.”⁶⁸

Background

38b There is no command from our Lord regarding the age at which people should be baptized or first communed. Our practice is defined by Christ’s command (“Do this”, Christ’s twin promises of his presence for us and for our need, and the importance of good order in the Church. In all communion practices congregations strive to avoid both reducing the Lord’s Supper to an act effective by its mere performance without faith and narrowing faith to intellectual understanding of Christ’s presence and gifts. Congregations continually check their own practices and statements against these biblical and confessional guides.

Application

38c Congregations of this church may establish policies regarding the age of admission to Holy Communion. They also may grant pastoral exceptions to those policies in individual cases which honor and serve the interdependence (*koinonia*) of congregations of this church.

Application

38d Out of mutual respect among congregations, children who are communing members of a congregation of this church who move to a congregation with a different practice should be received as communing members (perhaps as a pastoral exception to the congregation’s general policy). They and their parents also should be respectful of the traditions and practices of their new congregation. Even if transferring children have received education appropriate to their age in a former parish, the new congregation’s program of instruction is also to be followed.

The Holy Communion Takes Place in the Assembly

Principle

39 The gathered people of God celebrate the sacrament. Holy Communion, usually celebrated within a congregation, also may be celebrated in synodical, churchwide, and other settings where the baptized gather.

Application

39a Authorization for all celebrations of Communion in a parish setting where there is a called and ordained minister of Word and Sacrament is the responsibility of the pastor in consultation with the Congregation Council.

Application

39b In established centers of this church—e.g., seminaries, colleges, retreat centers, charitable institutions, and administrative centers—authorization for the celebration of Holy Communion shall be given, either for a limited or unlimited time, by the presiding bishop of this church or, where only one synod is concerned, by the bishop of that synod.

Application

⁶⁸ Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 8.16.

39c In institutions not formally associated with this church e.g., hospitals, retirement homes, colleges and universities, or military bases, where there is a called pastor or chaplain authorization for the celebration of Holy Communion rests with the pastor in consultation with the appropriate calling-sending expression of this church.⁶⁹

Background

39d The authorizing role of bishops is a sign of our interconnectedness. This church provides for ministry in many settings. Chaplains, for example, bring the means of grace to people in institutions on behalf of the whole Church.

A Pastor Presides at the Holy Communion

Principle

40 In witness that this sacrament is a celebration of the Church, serving its unity, an ordained minister presides in the service of Holy Communion and proclaims the Great Thanksgiving. Where it is not possible for an extended period of time to provide ordained pastoral leadership, a synodical bishop may authorize a properly trained lay person to preside for a specified period of time and in a given location only.⁷⁰

Background

40a “In the celebration of the eucharist, Christ gathers, teaches and nourishes the church. It is Christ who invites to the meal and who presides at it. He is the shepherd who leads the people of God, the prophet who announces the Word of God, the priest who celebrates the mystery of God. In most churches, this presidency is signified by an ordained minister. The one who presides at the eucharistic celebration in the name of Christ makes clear that the rite is not the assembly’s own creation or possession; the eucharist is received as a gift from Christ living in his church. The minister of the eucharist is the ambassador who represents the divine initiative and expresses the connection of the local community with other local communities in the universal Church.”⁷¹

Lay Assisting Ministers Serve in Many Roles

Principle

41 Designated and trained lay persons serve in a variety of leadership roles in the Eucharist. Among these assisting ministers will be readers, interpreters, cantors, musicians and choir members, servers of communion, acolytes, leaders of prayer, those who prepare for the meal, and those who offer hospitality.⁷²

Background

41a “The liturgy is the celebration of all who gather. Together with the pastor who presides, the entire congregation is involved. It is important, therefore, that lay persons fulfill appropriate ministries within the service.”⁷³

Preparation is Recommended

Principle

42 Forms of preparation for Holy Communion focus the community of faith both on the breadth of creation’s need for redemption and the depth of God’s redemptive actions. Such

⁶⁹ A Statement on Communion Practices, 1989, II.A.6. See also churchwide continuing resolution 7.44.A96. on the “Table of Sources of Calls for Ordained Ministers.”

⁷⁰ Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 7.61.01.

⁷¹ Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry, Eucharist, 29.

⁷² See also Application 8a

⁷³ Lutheran Book of Worship, Ministers Edition, 25.

forms of preparation are recommended, but not required, for that person “is worthy and well prepared who believes these words, ‘for you’ and ‘for the forgiveness of sins.’”⁷⁴

Application

42a Opportunities for corporate and individual confession and absolution, including the use of the Brief Order for Confession and Forgiveness, are especially appropriate. Helpful forms of personal preparation may include self-examination, prayer, fasting, meditation, and reconciliation with others through the exchange of peace.

Background

42b In considering preparation for Holy Communion many people in our congregations have turned for counsel to Paul’s admonition to the Corinthians: “Examine yourselves, and only then eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For all who eat and drink without discerning the body eat and drink judgment against themselves.”⁷⁵ Paul’s words are addressed to those in the community who are eating and drinking while excluding from the meal others who belong to Christ. “Do you show contempt for the church of God,” he says, “and humiliate those who have nothing?”⁷⁶ The body that Christians need to discern is the body of Christ which is the Church⁷⁷ and that is the body which is being ignored by the exclusions in Corinth.

The Holy Communion is Consecrated by the Word of God and Prayer

Principle

43 The biblical words of institution declare God’s action and invitation. They are set within the context of the Great Thanksgiving. This eucharistic prayer proclaims and celebrates the gracious work of God in creation, redemption, and sanctification.

Application

43a Our worship books provide several options for giving thanks at the table of the Lord. All of them begin with the dialogue of invitation to thanksgiving and conclude with the Lord’s Prayer. Most of them include the preface and the *Sanctus* after the dialogue. Many continue with an evangelical form of the historic prayer after the *Sanctus*. The full action, from dialogue through the Lord’s Prayer, including the proclamation of the words of institution, is called the “Great Thanksgiving.” Our congregations, synods, and churchwide organization are encouraged to use these patterns of thanksgiving.⁷⁸

Bread and Wine are Used

Principle

44 In accordance with the words of institution, this church uses bread and wine in the celebration of the Lord’s Supper. Communicants normally receive both elements, bread and wine, in the Holy Communion.

Application

44a A loaf of bread and a chalice are encouraged since they signify the unity which the sacrament bestows. The bread may be leavened or unleavened. The wine may be white or red.

Background

44b The use of leavened bread is the most ancient attested practice of the Church and gives witness to the connection between the Eucharist and ordinary life. Unleavened bread underscores the Passover themes which are present in the biblical accounts of the Last Supper.

Application

44c For pressing reasons of health, individuals may commune under one element. In certain circumstances, congregations might decide to place small amounts of non-wheat bread or non-alcoholic wine or grape juice on the altar. Such pastoral and congregational decisions are delicate, and must honor both the tradition of the Church and the people of each local assembly.

Background

44d Some communicants suffer from allergic reactions or are recovering from alcoholism. As suggested by the 1989 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America *A Statement on Communion Practices*,⁷⁹ it is appropriate for them to receive only one of the elements. Their pastor may assure them that the crucified and risen Christ is fully present for them in, with, and under this one element. While our confessions speak against Communion “in one form,”⁸⁰ their intent is to protest the practice of withholding the cup from the whole assembly. The confessional concern is to make both the bread and the wine of the sacrament available to the faithful, and not to inhibit them.

Communion Practices Reflect Unity and Dignity

Principle

45 Practices of distributing and receiving Holy Communion reflect the unity of the Body of Christ and the dignity and new life of the baptized.

Application

45a The promise of Christ is spoken to each communicant by those distributing the Sacrament: “The Body of Christ given for you;” “The Blood of Christ shed for you.” Ordinarily the bread is placed in the communicant’s hand and the chalice is guided by the communicant or carefully poured by the minister of communion.

Application

45b Continuous communion of the whole congregation, with the post-communion blessing given after all have communed, underscores the aspects of fellowship and unity in the sacrament. Either standing or kneeling is appropriate when receiving Communion.⁸¹ Ministers of Communion will need to facilitate the communion of those who have difficulty moving, kneeling, standing, holding the bread, or guiding the chalice.

Application

⁷⁴ The Small Catechism, Article VI. Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration VII.68-69.

⁷⁵ 1 Corinthians 11:28-29.

⁷⁶ 1 Corinthians 11:22.

⁷⁷ 1 Corinthians 12.

⁷⁸ Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article XXIV., 76.

⁷⁹ *A Statement on Communion Practices*, 1989, ILC.3.

⁸⁰ See Smalcald Articles, III., 6.

⁸¹ *A Statement on Communion Practices*, 1989, ILC.3.

45c Common devotion during the distribution of Communion is served both by music and by silence.

Leaders Commune at Each Service

Principle

46 As a sign of unity, and out of their own need for grace, the presiding minister and assisting ministers may commune at each Eucharist.

Application

46a "It is appropriate within the Lutheran tradition that the presiding minister commune himself/herself or receive the Sacrament from an assistant."⁸² This reception may be before or after the congregation communes.

The Bread and Wine are Handled with Reverence

Principle

47 The bread and wine of Communion are handled with care and reverence, out of a sense of the value both of what has been set apart by the Word as a bearer of the presence of Christ and of God's good creation.

Application

47a The food needed for the sacramental meal is placed on the table before the Great Thanksgiving. This is done so that the gathered assembly may see the full sign of the food it is to share, and so that we may give thanks and proclaim God's promise in conjunction with the use of this very bread and wine. Nonetheless, in the rare event that more of either element is needed during distribution, it is not necessary to repeat the words of institution.⁸³

Application

47b Any food that remains is best consumed by the presiding and assisting ministers and by others present following the service. Other traditional means for the handling of the bread and wine that remain following Holy Communion include giving the bread to the hungry and pouring the cup into the earth.

Congregations Provide Communion for the Absent

Principle

48 Congregations provide for communion of the sick, homebound, and imprisoned.

Application

48a *Occasional Services* provides an order for the Distribution of Communion to Those in Special Circumstances. As an extension of the Sunday worship, the servers of Communion take the elements to those unable to attend.⁸⁴

Application

48b When pastors celebrate a service of Word and Sacrament in a home, hospital, or other institution, the corporate nature of the gift is strengthened by including others from the congregation. *Occasional Services* provides an order for the Celebration of Holy Communion with Those in Special Circumstances.⁸⁵

We Practice Eucharistic Hospitality

Principle

49 Believing in the real presence of Christ, this church practices eucharistic hospitality. All baptized persons are welcomed to Communion when they are visiting in the congregations of this church.

Application

49a Admission to the sacrament is by invitation of the Lord, presented through the Church to those who are baptized.⁸⁶ It is a sign of hospitality to provide a brief written or oral statement in worship which teaches Christ's presence in the sacrament. This assists guests to decide whether they wish to accept the Lord's invitation. In the exercise of this hospitality, it is wise for our congregations to be sensitive to the eucharistic practices of the churches from which visitors may come.

Application

49b When a wedding or a funeral occurs during a service of Holy Communion, Communion is offered to all baptized persons.

Lutherans Long for Unity at Christ's Table

Principle

50 Because of the universal nature of the Church, Lutherans may participate in the eucharistic services of other Christian churches.

Background

50a This church's ongoing ecumenical dialogues continue to seek full communion with other Christian churches.

Application

50b When visiting other churches Lutherans should respect the practices of the host congregation. A conscientious decision whether or not to commune in another church is informed by the Lutheran understanding of the Gospel preached and the sacraments administered as Christ's gift.

Application

⁸² *A Statement on Communion Practices*, 1989, II.C.3.

⁸³ *A Statement on Communion Practices*, 1989, II.C.2.

⁸⁴ *Occasional Services* (1982), 76-82.

⁸⁵ *Occasional Services* (1982), 83-88.

⁸⁶ *A Statement on Communion Practices*, 1989, II.A.2.

50c For Lutheran clergy to be involved as presiding or assisting ministers in the celebration of Holy Communion in other churches, a reciprocal relationship between the denominations involved should prevail.⁸⁷

Part Four

The Means of Grace and Christian Mission

The Means of Grace Lead the Church to Mission

Principle

51 In every celebration of the means of grace, God acts to show forth both the need of the world and the truth of the Gospel. In every gathering of Christians around the proclaimed Word and the holy sacraments, God acts to empower the Church for mission. Jesus Christ, who is God's living bread come down from heaven, has given his flesh to be the life of the world.⁸⁸ This very flesh, given for the life of all, is encountered in the Word and sacraments.

Background

51a Baptism and baptismal catechesis join the baptized to the mission of Christ. Confession and absolution continually reconcile the baptized to the mission of Christ. Assembly itself, when that assembly is an open invitation to all peoples to gather around the truth and presence of Jesus Christ, is a witness in the world. The regular proclamation of both Law and Gospel, in Scripture reading and in preaching, tells the truth about life and death in all the world, calls us to faith in the life-giving God, and equips the believers for witness and service. Intercessory prayer makes mention of the needs of all the world and of all the Church in mission. When a collection is taken, it is intended for the support of mission and for the concrete needs of our neighbors who are sick, hurt, and hungry. The holy Supper both feeds us with the body and blood of Christ and awakens our care for the hungry ones of the earth. The dismissal from the service sends us in thanksgiving from what we have seen in God's holy gifts to service in God's beloved world.

Application

51b In the teaching and practice of congregations, the missional intention for the means of grace needs to be recalled. By God's gift, the Word and the sacraments are set in the midst of the world, for the life of the world.⁸⁹

Baptism Comes to Expression in Christian Vocation

Principle

52 Christians profess baptismal faith as they engage in discipleship in the world. God calls Christians to use their various vocations and ministries to witness to the Gospel of Christ wherever they serve or work.

Background

52a "As baptized people, we see our daily life as a place to carry out our vocation, our calling. All aspects of life, home and school, community and nation, daily work and leisure,

citizenship and friendship, belong to God. All are places where God calls us to serve. God's Word and the church help us to discover ways to carry out our calling."⁹⁰

Application

52b Teaching about vocation and opportunities for witness and service play an important role in the preparation of adults for Baptism and in post-baptismal catechesis for both adults and children.

The Word of God Leads Christians to Lived Prayer

Principle

53 Because of the living Word of God, Christian assemblies for worship are occasions for intercessory prayer. On the grounds of the Word and promise of God the Church prays, in the power of the Spirit and in the name of Jesus Christ, for all the great needs of the world.

Application

53a Intercessory prayer is one of the ways that Christians exercise the priesthood of all the baptized. In the Sunday service, such prayer is appropriately led by a lay assisting minister. This prayer is also lived. Christians are called and empowered by the triune God to be a presence of faith, hope, and love in the midst of the needs of the community and the world.

The Holy Communion Strengthens Us to Witness and to Work for Justice

Principle

54 As a means of grace Holy Communion is that messianic banquet at which God bestows mercy and forgiveness, creates and strengthens faith for our daily work and ministry in the world, draws us to long for the day of God's manifest justice in all the world, and provides a sure and certain hope of the coming resurrection to eternal life.

Background

54a Christian eschatology, the teaching that God has an intention and a goal for all the beloved created universe, belongs to the celebration of Holy Communion and to the catechesis of all communicants. This Supper forms the Church, as a community, to bear witness in the world. Our need to be nourished and sustained in this mission is one principal reason for the frequent celebration of the sacrament.

Application

54b "When you have partaken of this sacrament, therefore, or desire to partake of it, you must in turn share the misfortunes of the fellowship.... Here your heart must go out in love and learn that this is a sacrament of love. As love and support are given to you, you in turn must render love and support to Christ in his needy ones. You must feel with sorrow all the dishonor done to Christ in his holy Word, all the misery of Christendom, all the unjust suffering of the innocent, with which the world is everywhere filled to overflowing. You must fight, work, pray, and—if you cannot do more—have heartfelt sympathy.... It is Christ's

⁸⁷ A Statement on Communion Practices, 1989, II.A.7.

⁸⁸ John 6:51.

⁸⁹ John 1:14; Matthew 28:19; John 10:10.

⁹⁰ The Confirmation Ministry Task Force Report, 5; Together for Ministry: Final Report and Recommendations of the Task Force on the Study of Ministry, 1993, 15-16.

will, then, that we partake of it frequently, in order that we may remember him and exercise ourselves in this fellowship according to his example.”⁹¹

Presiding Bishop Anderson called upon the Rev. M. Wyvetta Bullock, executive director of the Division for Congregational Ministries, the Rev. Nancy I. Amacher, a member of the board of the Division for Congregational Ministries and of the task force that developed the statement on sacramental practices, and the Rev. Paul R. Nelson, director for worship in the Division for Congregational Ministries, to introduce the statement.

Pastor Bullock reviewed the history that led to the development of *A Proposed Statement on the Practice of Word and Sacrament—The Use of the Means of Grace*. She said, “This statement strives to understand Word and Sacrament as the Lutheran confessions do—as gifts of God that awaken and confirm faith. The purpose of this statement is to encourage church unity amid diversity. . . . This statement on sacramental practices seeks to encourage unity among us in the administration of the means of grace and to foster a common understanding and practice. It does not seek to impose uniformity among us.” Pastor Bullock stated that the statement came to the assembly with the support of the board of the Division for Congregational Ministries, the Conference of Bishops, and the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Pastor Nelson introduced Part 1, *The Proclamation of the Word and the Christian Assembly*, by saying, “The statement before you begins with the fundamental affirmation that Jesus Christ is the incarnate Word of God. This Word is proclaimed in both Law and Gospel. The statement affirms, with the ELCA constitution, that the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the written Word of God. All baptized people share responsibility for the proclamation of the Word and the formation of the Christian assembly. Lay assisting ministers in worship are an important expression of this responsibility. Preachers have special responsibility for the proclamation of the Word in the assembly. Music and musicians, and visual artists also help to proclaim God’s Word. The Gospel also is proclaimed in confession and absolution—the office of the keys—and in the mutual conversation and consolation of the brothers and sisters. This statement calls on our congregations to make faithful use of corporate and individual confession of sin and holy absolution.”

Pastor Amacher commented on Part 2, *Holy Baptism and the Christian Assembly*. “In Holy Baptism, the Triune God delivers us from the forces of evil, puts our sinful self to death, gives us new birth, adopts us as children, and makes us members of the body of Christ, the Church. Holy Baptism is received by faith

alone. Because of God’s unwavering faithfulness of what God has done in Jesus Christ, this statement urges that our practice proclaim this by celebrating Christian baptism only once in each individual’s life. Yet while the event of baptism happens only once, there is a daily reality to baptism for each Christian. By God’s gift and call, all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus are daily put to death so that we may be raised daily to newness of life. While the experience of many in our church is almost exclusively of the baptism of infants, this statement affirms that baptism is for all ages. Our times require great seriousness about evangelization and readiness to welcome unbaptized adults to the reception of faith and to baptism into Christ. Baptism includes, by its very nature, instruction and nurture in the faith for a life of discipleship. Our strong tradition of using Luther’s Small and Large Catechisms is one way Lutherans have honored this connection. This statement also affirms congregations who employ the catechumenate as a way to instruct and encourage adults preparing for baptism. The parish education of the congregation is part of its baptismal ministry. Indeed, all of the baptized require life-long learning, the daily reappropriation of the wonderful gift given in baptism. The ministry of baptismal sponsors (or godparents) is affirmed by this statement for both infants and adults. This is seen not only as a family obligation but an opportunity for the congregation to support the newly baptized from the very day of their baptism throughout their whole life. Holy Baptism is administered with water in the name of the Triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Baptism into the name of the Triune God involves confessing and teaching the doctrine and the meaning of the Trinity. This statement encourages the mutual recognition of baptism among Trinitarian Christians. It urges that the faith and life of a community be the basic standard for evaluating baptism, not the liturgical details of the baptismal celebration.”

Pastor Nelson spoke of Part 3, *Holy Communion and the Christian Assembly*. “The statement affirms traditional Lutheran teaching and understanding of the meaning of the sacrament of Holy Communion. In this sacrament, the crucified and risen Christ is present, giving his true body and blood as food and drink. This real presence is a mystery. Affirming what was said in the 1978 statement on communion practices and building on the experience of growing numbers of our congregations, this statement encourages congregations to celebrate the Lord’s Supper weekly on each Sunday. This proposed statement also affirms the principle established in 1978 that admission to the sacrament is by invitation of the Lord presented through this church to those who are baptized. Our congregations display a variety of practice regarding when individuals are welcomed to participate in receiving the body and the blood of Christ in this sacrament. There is no command from our Lord regarding a precise age at which people should be baptized or first communed. Our practice is defined by Christ’s command, ‘Do this,’ and Christ’s twin promises of his presence for us and for our need and the importance of good order in this church. Though catechesis is not a prerequisite to participation, it is an indispensable aspect of this sacrament. In all cases, participation in Holy

⁹¹ Martin Luther, “The Blessed Sacrament of the Holy and True Body of Christ, and the Brotherhoods,” 9, 12. *Luther’s Works*, 35:54, 56-57.

Communion is accompanied by catechesis, appropriate to the age of the communicant. When infants and young children are communed, the parents and sponsors receive instruction and the children are taught throughout their development. When adults and older children are baptized, they may be communed for the first time in the service in which they are baptized. Baptismal preparation and continuing catechesis include instruction for Holy Communion. It is important to note the difference between this proposed statement and the 1978 statement on communion practices on this point. The earlier statement said, ‘There may be special concern for the admission of children. The findings of the Joint Commission on Theology and Practice of Confirmation indicate that readiness to participate normally occurs at age ten or the level of the fifth grade but it may occur earlier or later. The responsibility for deciding when to admit a child is shared by the pastor, the child, the family or sponsoring persons, and the congregation. Thus infant communion is precluded.’ The proposed statement affirms the principle of shared responsibility for admission. However, it does not use developmental level such as ten years of age or the level of the fifth grade as guidelines for practice. Baptized children begin to commune on a regular basis at a time determined through mutual conversation that includes the pastor, the child, and the parents or sponsors involved within the accepted practices of the congregation. Ordinarily this beginning will occur only when children can eat and drink and can start to respond to the gift of Christ in the Supper. Unlike the earlier statement, it does not include the statement, ‘Infant communion is precluded;’ rather it allows for the communion of infants at their baptism even if they do not become regular communicants until a later time in their childhood. Infants and children may be communed for the first time during the service in which they are baptized or they may be brought to the altar during communion to receive a blessing. Rather than urging a uniform age as the standard for common practice on this issue, the proposed statement has tried to learn from this church’s congregations which are moving to more diverse practice. The common feature is the element of shared responsibility for a pastoral decision which is made on an individualized basis for each communicant. This, you will note, is somewhat different from what the 1978 statement said. For the sake of good order, the proposed statement asks congregations of this church to honor and respect decisions made by other congregations on the matter of admitting individuals to Holy Communion. This proposed statement affirms the practice of eucharistic hospitality. Believing in the real presence of Christ, this church practices eucharistic hospitality. All baptized persons are welcomed to communion when they are visiting in the congregations of this church. Lutheran communicants are also permitted to receive communion in other churches where the Gospel is preached and the sacraments are administered as Christ’s gifts. The goal of full communion with other churches is affirmed.”

Pastor Amacher discussed Part 4, *The Means of Grace and Christian Mission*, saying, “The means of grace are used properly not only for pastoral care of Christians and their congregations, but as the foundation and source of this church’s

mission in the world. In every gathering of Christians around the proclaimed Word and the Holy Sacraments, God acts to empower the Church for mission. Jesus Christ, who is God’s living bread come down from heaven, has given his flesh to be the life of the world. Baptism comes through expression in Christian vocation. Christians profess baptismal faith as they engage in discipleship in the world. God calls Christians to use their various vocations and ministries to witness to the Gospel of Christ wherever they serve or work. The means of grace, and Holy Communion in particular, strengthen us to witness and work for justice. As Martin Luther reminds us, ‘When you have partaken of this sacrament, therefore, or desire to partake of it, you must in turn share the misfortunes of the fellowship. Here your heart must go out in love and learn that this is a sacrament of love. As love and support are given to you, you in turn must render love and support to Christ and his needy ones.’”

Pastor Bullock noted that the statement as it is approved by the 1997 Churchwide Assembly will set the course for the production of churchwide resources and for study materials in the immediate future. She urged congregations to study and to reflect on how best to honor the statement adopted by the assembly in the congregation’s own ministry setting.

Parliamentary Procedure

Before commenting on several inquiries about parliamentary procedure, Bishop Anderson encouraged voting members to be on time for the plenary sessions because of the extent of business requiring action.

In response to inquiries about constitutional changes and bylaw amendments required by the ecumenical proposals, Bishop Anderson referred voting members to the *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section V, pages 6 and 7.

Regarding the role of abstentions, he noted that *Robert’s Rules of Order* “is very clear about abstentions. It says that they ‘fall out,’ they do not count in [the] total of votes. Specifically in speaking about a two-thirds vote, Robert’s Rules says, ‘a two-thirds vote, when the term is unqualified, means at least two-thirds of the votes cast by persons legally entitled to vote excluding blanks or abstentions.’ Now the qualifier there is this phrase, ‘when the term is unqualified’ and I am guessing that some people are reading our rule or bylaw as assuming that that qualifies the two-thirds vote. Robert’s Rules discusses what qualified means, and gives examples. Things like saying “two-thirds of the registered voting members of the Churchwide Assembly,” or “two-thirds of the eligible voting members of the Churchwide Assembly” would be words of qualification within Robert’s Rules. Our rule says two-thirds of the voting members of the Churchwide Assembly. There is a possible thought that the phrase ‘voting members’ is itself a qualifier. I would simply point out that would mean that we would need a two-thirds vote of

a higher nature than we require for an amendment of our constitution or that we require for the passage of social statements or any other action we take. . . . It is my parliamentary interpretation that the phrase ‘two-thirds vote’ means two-thirds of the votes cast excluding blanks and abstentions.”

Overview of Open Hearings

Bishop Anderson stated that there would be three sets of open hearings on various actions on the agenda. He said, “These hearings have two main purposes. First, to help [voting members] get oriented to the specific legislative items that are going to be considered and an opportunity to get specific answers to questions. Second, to give a smaller group setting in which [voting members] can share their own thinking about any of the proposals that are coming before the body and learn what other voting members are thinking about—free and open discussion and opinions.”

Bishop Richard J. Foss [Eastern North Dakota Synod] requested clarification about Bishop Anderson’s comments about the tally of votes cast as abstentions. He asked about the proper time to challenge the presiding bishop’s interpretation, observing “This is an interpretation. The ruling must come after the vote, right?” Bishop Anderson concurred.

Recess

Secretary Lowell G. Almen announced the location of the hearings and made several logistical announcements.

In response to concerns expressed by voting members, he asked voting members to refrain from talking when leaving or entering the hall while business was being conducted.

Bishop Anderson, responding to an inquiry of Bishop Lee M. Miller [Upstate New York Synod], confirmed that visitors were welcome to attend the hearings as space permitted.

At 2:59 P.M., Bishop Anderson declared the assembly in recess until 8:00 A.M., Saturday, August 16, 1997.

Plenary Session Three

Saturday, August 16, 1997

8:00 A.M.—12:30 P.M.

The Rev. H. George Anderson, presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, called Plenary Session Three to order on Saturday, August 16, 1997, at 8:01 A.M. He called upon the Rev. Stephen M. Youngdahl, a member of the Church Council, to lead the assembly in Morning Prayer and the hymn, “Cantemos al Señor.”

Bishop Anderson stated that there would be a change in the agenda to bring the Report of the Treasurer and the related report of the Mission Investment Fund into this morning’s session as a special order at 11:55 A.M. There was no objection to the change in the agenda schedule.

Reflections on the Assembly Theme

Bishop Anderson called upon the Rev. Lowell G. Almen, secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, to share some reflections on this church’s heritage in keeping with the assembly theme, “Making Christ Known: Alive in our Heritage and Hope.” Secretary Almen recalled that the official memorial service of the U.S. Congress for President George Washington was held in Zion Lutheran Church at Philadelphia on December 26, 1799, and that the auditorium, the largest auditorium in Colonial America, held 3,000 people. He then presented a video highlighting the history of Augustus Lutheran Church, Trappe, Pa., started in 1743 and dedicated in 1745; and of the three oldest ELCA parishes, New Hanover Lutheran Church, New Hanover, Pa., established in 1700 with its cornerstone laying in 1767; and First Lutheran Church in Albany, N.Y., the oldest congregation in the ELCA, formed in 1649; and Frederick Lutheran Church, St. Thomas, the Virgin Islands, established in 1666.

Report of the Credentials Committee

Bishop Anderson called upon Secretary Lowell G. Almen to provide the report of the credentials committee. He reported that as of 7:00 A.M. on Saturday, August 16, there were 1,039 voting members present.

Elections: First Ballot for Vice President

Bishop H. George Anderson reported that the person elected to the ELCA office of vice president must be a layperson. He stated that “the major responsibility of the vice president is to chair the Church Council. That entails a tremendous amount of care and work, for the Church Council oversees and guides the work of our whole church between meetings of the Churchwide Assembly. The position of vice president is not a paid position but to do this job well requires both time and tremendous dedication on the part of the person elected. The vice president is also part of the leadership team whose counsel and advice helps to shape this church’s actions between assemblies. The vice president is often asked to represent our church in various settings from international and ecumenical to local. The term [of office] for the vice president is six years.” Bishop Anderson then explained the election procedure as found in the Rules of Procedure. Subsequently, he led the assembly in prayer and asked voting members to cast their ballots. Ballots were collected, and Bishop Anderson declared the first ballot for vice president to be closed.

Proposals on Full Communion: Reformed Churches (continued)

Reference: 1997 Pre-Assembly Report, Section IV, pages 35-48; Section VI, pages 9-11 and pages 21-26; Section V, pages 1-23; continued on *Minutes*, pages 37, 381, 432, 600, 605, 621, 659.

Bishop H. George Anderson reported that the Rev. Douglas W. Fromm from the Reformed Church in America had arrived; he was welcomed to the assembly.

Bishop Anderson noted that the assembly would now hear from two theologians for 15 minutes each, presenting opposing viewpoints on *A Formula of Agreement* with the Reformed churches. He indicated that the assembly would then become a “committee of the whole” to have a more informal discussion for 45 minutes. He said about the use of the committee of the whole, “We’ve never tried this before at an ELCA Churchwide Assembly. I hope that it is going to serve as a means for us to listen respectfully to one another, to seek to understand the issues and the concerns that are shaping our views on them, and to seek to discern what God wills for our church in this time.” Any decisions by the committee of the whole would then be reported back to the plenary session of the assembly, he said.

Bishop Anderson introduced the Rev. William H. Lazareth, bishop emeritus of the Metropolitan New York Synod, and the Rev. Timothy F. Lull, president of Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, Berkeley, Calif. He said, “Both of them bring years of experience, a depth of knowledge and study, and a deep and abiding commitment to this church and the whole Church of Jesus Christ.” Bishop Anderson then invited Pastor Lazareth to begin his presentation.

Pastor Lazareth said, “At the end of his earthly ministry, our Lord prayed that the members of his church may all be one, ‘As you, Father, are in me, and I in you,

may they also be in us.’ And why? ‘So that the world may believe that you sent me.’ In brief, evangelical church unity is meant to support God’s Trinitarian mission here on earth. But, whenever confessing the truth of this Trinitarian Gospel is endangered or compromised, as in the 16th century reformation, maintaining the institutional unity of this church at the doctrinal expense of the proclamation of the body of Christ, may rightly at times be considered too high a price to pay. It is in this realistic spirit that I appear before you this morning for it is my specific ecumenical assignment to develop the five areas of concern that were identified nationally throughout the ELCA and are now listed in your booklet text, *A Formula of Agreement*. These five doubts taken together summarize why many believe that this particular ecumenical proposal should be rejected by you in its present form.

“First, sacramental fidelity. As we live now after almost 500 years of church-dividing disputes and mutual condemnations between and among different reformation churches that have officially confessed the different biblical interpretations of Luther, Melancthon, and Chemnitz *vis-a-vis* Calvin, Bullinger, Bucer, and Zwingli, on the closely interrelated doctrines of Christology, the Lord’s Supper, and election or predestination. The critical question before you now is, ‘does the proposed *Formula of Agreement* demonstrate sufficient doctrinal accord for our declaring full communion?’ most especially with regard to our Lord’s real presence in Holy Communion. That is, the real and substantial presence of the true body and blood of Christ, the sacramental union in, with, and under the elements of bread and wine and the eating and drinking of both substances, both by the unbelieving as well as believing communicants, either for their condemnation or their forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation, all effected by the gracious majesty of our Lord and his divinely instituted means of grace, the sacrament of the altar.

“Second, confessional orthodoxy. For Lutheran churches of the reformation, church communion is always church communion in the apostolic faith. Therefore, do these ecumenical proposals now meet the normative standards of the Christian faith, as we already believe, teach, and confess in this church on the basis of the authoritative holy scriptures, as validly interpreted by the Lutheran confessional writings of the *Book of Concord*? And reciprocally, what are the binding churchwide doctrinal standards of our negotiating counterparts at the ecumenical table?

“Third, congregational autonomy. What is the precise nature of the polity or church structure and governance and binding teaching authority of all our ecumenical partners? Most especially, with regard to the resultant degree of doctrinal freedom and potential heterodoxy that their local congregations may now exercise.

“Fourth, pastoral exchangeability. That is, can we be assured that the so-called regularly exchanged Reformed pastors who may be called to serve in the ELCA would continue to believe, teach, minister, and model a piety that are all consistent with the official, constitutional, doctrinal, liturgical, and moral standards that are

now solemnly vowed publicly in the ELCA's rites of ordination and installation by both our pastors and our congregations already within this church?

"Fifth, ecumenical coherence. Just what is the ELCA's ecclesiological or churchly understanding of biblical communion or *koinonia* that will coherently integrate our various full communion declarations? For example, here on the one hand with a few of the many Reformed churches on a minimalist substitution of theological and traditional complementarity for solid doctrinal consensus consentingly in the apostolic faith. And on the other hand, with the more maximalist demand of some other Christian church bodies with whom we are now also simultaneously involved. That is, in parallel processes of regularizing ordained ministries and readdressing doctrinal condemnation.

"Now just as each of you must search your heart and pray for the Spirit's guidance in response to these five challenges, I have also arrived at my own carefully nuanced rejection of the proposal before us in its present form. It is obvious here that the apostolic imperative to speak the truth in love becomes essential for all of us beginning with me. Nevertheless, my own conditioned rejection contains three closely coordinated elements.

"First, I strongly endorse the so-called interim Eucharist hospitality for pulpit and altar fellowship rather than full communion with both the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Reformed Church in America, but not also with the now 'inseparably coupled' United Church of Christ. Therefore, secondly, I must respectfully oppose the present proposal before the ELCA which does support both declaring full communion at once and full communion at once with all three Reformed churches, including the United Church of Christ. But also, thirdly, subsequently however if the proposed *Formula of Agreement* in its present form were to be decisively rejected by at least a third of the [voting members] of this assembly, I would then encourage brief new talks to renegotiate new interim relations on the same doctrinal basis with both the Presbyterians and the Reformed Church in America as deemed mutually acceptable.

"Now I trust that my resultant prudently nuanced 'yes and no' stance is based on a too-old doctrinal conviction that is both at once confessional and ecumenical. First, yes. That while the PCUSA and the RCA do not have identical or even equivalent doctrinal positions to justify any present Lutheran-Reformed merger in any organic union with us, nevertheless, we do have in my judgement sufficiently complimentary doctrinal positions both to mutually affirm and admonish each other and thereby also to justify a limited period of mutual testing to a mutual declaration of interim Eucharistic fellowship together, comparable to the decades-long process engaged in recently between ELCA Lutherans and the Episcopalians. I would submit that these complimentary doctrinal positions of the classical Reformed churches are not church-divisive and may be found diversely reconciled especially now for the first time in the official endorsement of both Reformed and Lutheran churches in North America in the Eucharistic section of the final edition of *A*

Formula of Agreement. The sacramental affirmations of faith are intentionally quoted, literally and completely, from the mediating formulations of the German Lutheran-Reformed *Leuenberg Agreement* of 1973 and could have been endorsed a long time ago together had there not been division preeminently on the Lutheran side of the table. I speak as a member of a former member of a round of negotiations. We can review these together if you like during the discussion period.

"But also, no. For the United Church of Christ, please, meant descriptively and not in any way pejoratively, is constitutionally a non-creedal, non-confessional whether doctrinally or liturgically, non-judicial, united and uniting ecclesial body that combines local congregations, associations, and conferences which are all doctrinally autonomous. The UCC General Assembly, our proposed partner signatory to *A Formula of Agreement*, not only has no national tests of doctrinal orthodoxy for itself but also consistently has no constitutional power to bind any member, minister, or congregation at the local level either to any of the doctrinal essentials of the Christian faith to which it has externally agreed. For example, now with us whether the degree of 'high regard' and 'mutual Christian concern' for the Church at large that is rightly expected from the local congregation in UCC mixed polity, the bottom line remains constitutionally 'the autonomy of the local church is inherent and modifiable only by its own action. The General Synod does not have the power to abridge or impair the autonomy of any local church in the management of its own affairs including the right to formulate its own covenants and confessions of faith' (Article IV.15). I am therefore personally compelled to conclude, again respectfully to my sisters and brothers in the United Church of Christ, that for our deeply wished-for agreement in the Gospel, how can a church credibly declare full communion nationally when there is always possible within it no confession of Holy Communion locally either in the Holy Trinity or in the Sacrament of Holy Communion? How can that communion, if it is truly *koinonia*, be truly full if it is not grounded in that entire church's solemn affirmation both nationally and locally as both doctrinal test as well as doxological testimony in both Christ's full communion with the other two divine persons of the Holy Trinity as well as Christ's full communion with us personally in the Sacrament of Holy Communion?

"We recall that our Lord, in Caesaria Philippi, did not pragmatically ask his disciples, 'What do the latest polls show from the Jesus Seminar?' but rather, 'Who do you say that I am?' And to the apostle who faithfully confessed, 'You are the Messiah, the Son of the Living God,' our Lord responded, 'Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven.' A clearly confessed Trinitarian foundation is necessary for authentic evangelical ecumenism."

Bishop Anderson then invited Pastor Lull to address the assembly who said, "Let me begin with a parable. Two churches went out into the public square to pray. One said, 'We thank you, Lord, that we are not like these other churches. You have blessed us with the correct interpretation of Scripture, the correct

theology and practice of the sacraments, the glories of our confessions and the right approach to all social and political questions. We have never bowed too low before bishops, we have never embraced the folly of Congregationalism. For all of this we are deeply thankful.’ And the other said, ‘Lord, we have indeed been blessed by you but at times we have hidden our talents in the ground, we have sometimes thought too highly of ourselves and been too quick to disdain and dismiss others. On many questions we have pretended to be strong where we are, in fact, struggling. For we are beggars, this is true. Though we speak a lot about reformation, we ourselves need reforming. Lord, have mercy.’ I ask you, which of these churches went home justified?

“I begin in this way with the clear conviction that both of these churches are us—a Lutheran church which is corporately saint and sinner at the same time. We are a confessional church and that is a heritage that I love and spend my days in teaching and interpreting. It involves commitments and freedoms that were won with great struggle and are still worth fighting for. It involves taking care with details and sometimes the willingness to seem picky or stubborn or self-important for the sake of important truths. Yes, indeed, that is one part of being a confessional church. But there is another side that has too often been missing in our long Lutheran history, though it is at the heart of reformation experience itself. For a confessional church is one also that confesses its sin, that it is not God, but in need of forgiveness. Perhaps especially a confessional church, to which rich gifts have been given, has a special responsibility to remember its own continuing need for grace, for hearing the Word of God from the outside, the need for stirring and shaking and even at times, for reformation. So I approach these ecumenical decisions in a way that precludes looking at others to see how well they measure up to the perfect standard which is us and the way we do things.

“In that context, I am delighted to speak in behalf of *A Formula of Agreement*. I believe there are compelling and mutually reinforcing reasons to accept this proposal as a step toward a new relationship with neighbors from whom we have been estranged and toward whom we have too often been condescending in our long Lutheran history. Of course, the *Formula* is not a perfect proposal and if it had been left up to me alone, a lot of things might be different but that’s never the situation to which God calls us. For ecumenical dialogue is a team sport in which any success involves compromise and flexibility and listening. I suppose we have to admit that compromise and flexibility and listening have not always been Lutheran strengths, but I think we may not be too old to learn.

“Now on to reasons that I support the approval of this *Formula*. First, this proposal is based on a fine and thorough set of theological conversations that provide a persuasive basis for mutual recognition. They have built cumulatively upon each other beginning with the wonderful surprise of *Marburg Revisited* in 1966 which sent the amazing shock wave through our churches by its suggestion that the 16th century stalemate between Lutherans and the Reformed need not be

the last word. *An Invitation to Action* deepened the argument and provided a crucial list of fundamental theological convictions held in common, one that now stands as part of the preface of *A Formula of Agreement* on page 39 [1997 *Pre-Assembly Report*, Section IV] of the document. *A Common Calling* explored continuing differences on predestination and the presence of Christ in the Supper and we found in that dialogue, of which I was a part, not total agreement, of course, but sufficient commonality to propose a new relationship with mutual affirmation and admonition. Now in this assembly we receive *A Formula of Agreement* which synthesizes the most important insights of these many, many years of dialogue and of the European *Leuenberg Agreement* as well.

“Who could ask for anything more? Well, some do even at this assembly. Some suggest here and in written responses that the Scriptural basis is not up to our standards. Some want a more detailed discussion of bodily eating and drinking in the Supper. Some insist that the Reformed prove that they really believe what they now say. Lutherans can go on and on, of course, like this—just like the Energizer Bunny—but on behalf of our Reformed partners, I think it is now time to decide whether this is enough. For if the *Formula* is adopted, we will continue dialogue on these and other important matters and I hope to continue to participate in that, for there are a lot of things I would still like to say and clarify from our Lutheran confessional perspective. But it seems to me to ask these [Reformed] churches once again to go back and do it over to accommodate our needs, well, we’ve done that about as many times as Christian charity and common decency can demand. They would wonder, and I would wonder if the proposal were sent back, whether any standard would finally be adequate—whether we were really serious in the end about an agreement at all.

“Second, through these long years of getting acquainted, an imaginative proposal has emerged that these great churches would benefit from a relationship of mutual affirmation and admonition. Full communion in reality is a more modest step than is sometimes presented, though it is a very important step and not to be entered into lightly. Full communion suggests that these churches have found enough agreement in the Gospel and about the sacraments to share the Supper openly and mutually chastened respect for that mysterious presence of Christ that surpasses all of the best formulations on both sides. Full communion proposes, and even demands, ongoing theological conversation but not of the self-justifying type that often ensues when the assigned question is ‘Can we prove that we are enough like you for you to finally recognize us?’ Full communion permits us to walk firmly together into a future which is God’s future, which none of us can see, but a future in which we intend to build a common mission and a common life under God’s blessing on the far side of these old polemics. The *Formula* is not a merger proposal. It is a non-homogenizing proposal. In that way it is something new and fresh and exciting for it anticipates and even celebrates the continuing of these separate churches using each of their own gifts to the glory of God. But it does say there is a new road that we may walk together.

“Third, I believe that this proposal fits well with our current practice at the local and synodical levels. In centering on mutually authorized sharing of the Supper, this proposal would make official and formal what has emerged as the local practice almost everywhere in our church. Few indeed of us these days close our Tables to these Christian neighbors, but our ratification of full communion is an opportunity to celebrate that change and to connect such growing ties to better teaching about one another and to missional cooperation wherever the churches can benefit from this step. Sisters and brothers, I do not see this *Formula* as some alien scheme being imposed from on high, but rather as a ratification and extension of what has bubbled up from ventures in local ecumenism. Yet this proposal makes no demand at the local level beyond this basic recognition and the possibility for cooperation because we know, frankly, that there is tremendous local variance among the three Reformed churches as there is among us Lutherans. There is an open door to work closely with different partners in different localities in different parts of the country where this can be done with integrity and we will then do so in an officially authorized way. Where the local conditions are not good, the cooperation may be more minimal. But synods and even local communities will have to shape for themselves what full communion will mean for their life and I think that is an exciting and positive part of this proposal.

“Now it is indeed the case that this proposal includes not just the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Reformed Church in America, but also the United Church of Christ and let us all acknowledge that that is a stretch for some Lutherans. That’s how it was for those of us who were involved in the dialogue team from 1988 to 1992, but in that process of working together I believe we moved beyond stereotypes, beyond newspaper headlines, beyond old things learned long ago with slogans with which to pin each other down. We learned in that dialogue much more about the United Church of Christ, its history, its rich theological traditions, its able theologians, and the underpublicized but well established movements of renewal of the scriptural and reformed heritage in that church. As we learned more we began to change our minds. In the end, it is crucial for me that the other Reformed churches see the United Church of Christ as one of them and, in fact, they were willing to proceed in dialogue with us after the disappointments of the past only if all three churches were included. We’ve known this for a long time, folks, we knew that was the game plan back in 1988 when the last team was formed and we knew that when the proposal came before us in 1992 and we’ve known that in many publications since. It is late in the day to be raising this question of inclusion as if it were a surprise development and, frankly, I see nothing sinister in it, for all of these churches work together closely in the World Alliance of Reformed Churches.

“Because time is limited, let me pass on to conclusions. I think, finally, this proposal fits well with the emerging world patterns of agreement between Lutherans, Reformed, and Union Churches. We are coming into a new future where our church style must be missional and I think that future is well-served by being based together by these careful and thoughtful agreements. I have spent most of my adult life as a Lutheran pastor and professor teaching about the Reformation

and about our confessions. I love these themes and I consider them the best possible place to stand as a Christian at century’s end. I want to go into that new century with [Martin] Luther and [Philipp] Melancthon, with [Johann Sebastian] Bach and [Heinrich] Schütz, with [Søren] Kierkegaard and [Dietrich] Bonhöffer, with my own parents, and many others who form that powerful cloud of Lutheran witnesses to the Gospel. But I should like also to travel with [John] Calvin and [Martin] Bucer, with Isaac Watts and Jonathan Edwards, with Karl Barth and Reinhold Niebuhr, with those brave South African Reformed Christians I know who were some of the most fierce opponents of apartheid and helped to bring it down in that country. I think these witnesses are complimentary. If I have learned one thing in 25 years as a Lutheran pastor and teacher it is this: our Lutheran heritage is a gift and not our possession. That is precisely because our heritage is first and finally the Gospel itself. When we treasure this gift character, then the Gospel flows through us with remarkable power. We are in awe that such mercies could have been entrusted to folks like us. But whenever we hoard this gift, when we turn it into something that belongs to us, when we use it as a weapon against others rather than a pastoral tool for struggling men and women, then something ugly happens. I cannot imagine a worse possibility than another decade of fighting among ourselves about who is most Lutheran of us all. We have been given these treasures not to hide in the ground, but to take out together in the world that still hears too little of grace, of priceless gifts, and his real presence in the Supper.”

Committee of the Whole

Presiding Bishop H. George Anderson called upon Secretary Lowell G. Almen to offer a motion for the assembly to go into a committee of the whole for 45 minutes in accordance with the assembly’s order of business.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

Voice Vote

CARRIED: **To recess into a “committee of the whole” for 45 minutes for the purpose of discussing the proposal for establishment of full communion with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Reformed Church in America, and the United Church of Christ.**

Vice President Kathy J. Magnus assumed the chair for the time the assembly was recessed into a committee of the whole. She reminded voting members of a limit of three minutes for each speaker.

Ms. Carole M. Silvoy [Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod] said that reasons for opposing the proposal are all “post-Christ.” She said, “I am a Lutheran because I was born one, but also because I found in Luther and the confessions of this church an expression that fits my relationship with God in Christ. Another persons’

denominational expression fits their relationship with God. This does not diminish who I am, how I believe in God or God in me. What diminishes us is division as Christians.” She recounted giving a young person as a confirmation gift a bracelet with the letters “WWJD?” on it and said that the question it represented was, “What would Jesus do?” and suggested that this should be the question that voting members should ask themselves.

Bishop Paull E. Spring [Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod] noted that he formerly opposed *A Formula of Agreement* but had since changed his mind. He asked whether there could be a process by which the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America could engage in conversation on the basis of the *Leuenberg Concord*, which is the basis for Lutheran-Reformed fellowship in Europe and how he could introduce the matter to the assembly. The Rev. Daniel F. Martensen, director of the Department for Ecumenical Affairs, asked Mr. Michael J. Root of the Ecumenical Institute, Strasbourg, France, to comment. Mr. Root said, “If I correctly understood the question, it is whether there is a structure by which the ELCA could engage in discussion with the Leuenberg Fellowship. The answer is yes. There is a Leuenberg Church Secretariat with headquarters in Berlin, Germany, which would be the people with which one would make that contact. There is a Leuenberg Presidium and Executive Committee and they would be the people one would get in touch with. So there is a structure by which the ELCA could engage in a discussion with the Leuenberg Church Fellowship.” Vice President Magnus also responded to Bishop Spring, saying, “I believe the further answer to your question would be that once we are back in plenary, it would be appropriate to entertain a motion requesting that our [ELCA] Department for Ecumenical Affairs begin those conversations.”

The Rev. John H. P. Reumann [Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod] described what he termed a “crucial matter” of the method used to solve three classic issues described in the *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section IV, pages 44-45. He commented, “It was impossible to achieve consensus on these issues, such as is found on pages 41-43. It was impossible apparently to find convergence. So the principle of complementarity of diverse witness arose. It is to complementarity, leading to mutual admonition and admiration and support that, I want to address myself. It has been called the break-through in this dialogue. I have two concerns. First, what limits are there to complementarity? Could not all contrasting views be so reconciled? Pentecostals and Roman Catholics, Jews and Christians, Lutheran ‘yin’ and Reformed ‘yang?’ My concern is that it may relativize the truth issue when it is confirmed that two sides are each mutually valid and corrective. I shall illustrate this in my second concern by turning not to the Lord’s Supper, where issues of real presence and real absence might be the comparative terms, but predestination. Does it work this way? Page 45, ‘God’s Will to Save’ [which was] spelled out in much greater detail in *A Common Calling*, pages 50-55. The fact is that the heirs of Calvin went on to speak not only of God’s will to save but of eternal damnation for some—predestined. Not Calvin, but confessions like Dort and

Westminster, hence condemnations arose and here it gets complicated. Presbyterian churches in the U.S. disavowed this confessional statement in 1903. To the best of my knowledge, the Dutch Reformed Church groups have not taken such an action and it is very hard to tell where the United Church of Christ is. I submit the method is not complementarity but repudiation or disavowal in some cases, ignoring it by others, and yet a living tradition for some. To this extent, a basic underlying method called complementarity may be flawed. Rather than seek a unique U.S. approach, something along the lines of *Leuenberg [Agreement]* affirmation might be needed. My concern is then that complementarity relativizes doctrine and that for the future, this would presumably be the way of working. I think both Lutheran and Reformed dialogue deserves better than this sort of complementarity.”

The Rev. Harlan R. Kaden [Central States Synod] spoke in favor of *A Formula of Agreement*, recalling a time when he was president of the Walther League (youth group) in his Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod congregation and he had entered into conversations with youth leaders from churches of other denominations in his home town. His pastor, upon learning this, had told him to discontinue the contact because “it’s not safe for you to visit with those youth groups since they are riddled with errors. . . . Unfortunately he set back my spiritual development and my ecumenical development by twenty years.” He said, “I realize that there are some doctrinal issues which are still important to me that are not fully resolved but I cannot in good conscience turn down *A Formula of Agreement*. They [the Reformed churches] are our brothers and sisters in Christ. No one is disputing that of course, but we need to continue to work together and *A Formula of Agreement* presents a good way for us to do that.”

The Rev. Robert L. Munneke [Northeastern Minnesota Synod] spoke of a long family history of involvement in Reformed and Episcopal churches. “It has been my experience in the ministries of these churches that these are good churches,” he said. “I have been blessed and graced by the ministry I received through these churches. I do not think we have to be afraid to walk with these folks. We can learn from each other, these are good churches.”

Ms. Meredith Lovell [Delaware-Maryland Synod] stated that she had attended the Lutheran Youth Organization (LYO) convention where a resolution was adopted by an over 70 percent majority in favor of the *Formula* and the two other ecumenical proposals. She stated, “It is important to know that this full communion is not going to happen overnight. The youth of this church are going to be the ones who are responsible for implementing this. We are going to be your pastors who may be serving in your congregation, who may be having to deal with all of these issues. Our eyes are upon you and we [this assembly] need to understand that. It is important that we have the opportunity to work with these other churches. I do not understand all the theological issues behind this; they did not teach me that in confirmation class. But what they did teach me is that we are one body in Christ

and I know from going to a public school and sitting in a classroom where the people sitting on either side of me did not know what faith was, did not know how I could go to school and have faith and have a ministry. We need to be able to come together, the few youth who are there with Christian ideals, and join together so that we have strength because there is strength in numbers.”

Mr. John Prabhakar [Northern Illinois Synod] said that he had “grown spiritually” from his and his family’s association with Anglican, Presbyterian, United Church of Christ, and Lutheran churches. He commented, “From reading *A Formula of Agreement* and the *Concordat*, I have found that we have a lot more things in common among ourselves than those that divide us. I do have some problems with some of the practices of some of the people, for example, ordaining gay ministers in the United Church of Christ. But permit me to give an analogy of a body—there are some parts of my body that I do not like. I would like to have thick black hair but I love my scalp the same as the rest of me. I am strongly in favor of this agreement.”

The Rev. Phillip E. Vender [Upstate New York Synod] spoke in favor of the agreement. He said, “As a point of information, there are 18 different Lutheran churches or denominations in the United States alone and three in Canada, so we cannot even get together ourselves. Here is why I am in favor of the *Formula*. As God’s people we have everything to gain.” He spoke of his daughter, a Presbyterian missionary in Manila, who works at a shelter for abused women. “We need to approve these agreements as soon as possible and get on with the real work of giving a cup of water to the thirsty and working to bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ and his message of justice and peace to all the world. This [the agreement] is a good way to begin to bring our churches closer together, to work for that kingdom of God that we all pray for when we say ‘Thy kingdom come.’”

The Rev. Dale I. Gregoriew [Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod] questioned how Protestant churches in this country can learn from the model of the Church of South India, a merger of several Protestant churches. Pastor Lazareth responded that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America could learn a lot from the merger cited. He said, “Here was a case in which different Christian communions coordinated the riches of their respective traditions. But it is not applicable in my judgement to this situation in that there all of the proposed coordinated elements were able to make churchwide locally binding commitments on behalf of their own constituencies and therefore the prototype which has been suggested may be more applicable to some of the other ecumenical items coming before us at this assembly.”

Bishop Howard E. Wennes [Grand Canyon Synod] referred to a church convention in Minneapolis in 1986 when a part of this church entered into altar and pulpit fellowship with Reformed churches. He said that action stated that “we trust your teaching to proclaim faithfully the Gospel of Christ and we welcome your members at our altars, sinners in need of God’s grace just like us. It is true that we

may not quite explain the presence of Christ in the Lord’s Supper in exactly the same way, but I would guess that we might also be a bit surprised by the variety that’s in this hall right now. I think we do agree that there is a sacramental presence that Jesus is there however he chooses to be and we believe it and we proclaim and then share the mystery of Christ’s presence.” He used as an analogy the recurring theme in the “Peanuts” cartoon strip, in which Lucy invariably promises to hold the football for Charlie Brown to kick it and then pulls it away. “Lucy is a Lutheran,” he said. “Let’s not do it again.”

The Rev. Muriel Lippert Schauer [Western North Dakota Synod] commented on the cooperation that now exists between Lutheran and Reformed congregations and asked for clarity on the beliefs of the United Church of Christ and on what would change in that church if the *Formula* were adopted. The Rev. Daniel F. Martensen, director of the Department for Ecumenical Affairs, deferred to the Rev. John H. Thomas from the United Church of Christ. Pastor Thomas responded, “The first question was what would be possible in addition to the marvelous cooperation that already exists. I think two things. The first would be that we would see our life [in the UCC] grounded more fully in the sacramental life of the Church and that our cooperative ministries would be nurtured and strengthened by our awareness more deeply of our common baptism and the common calling we receive in that baptism which would be nurtured by opportunities to gather together at the Table. Our cooperative efforts offer a rich though partial communion that would be deepened and made more profound and more sustainable by our sacramental sharing together. The second thing is that this would allow for ministers of one tradition to be of service, when invited, in the partner church. There are communities all across this country where pastoral leadership is difficult to obtain or support. This would provide bishops, associations, conference ministers, presbytery executives, and local congregations more flexibility in responding to the mission needs of their churches. Always, again at the invitation and at the discipline of the inviting church, and not simply in long-term calls but in short-term or occasional opportunities.”

Pastor Thomas moved to the second question, about what the United Church of Christ believes, and said, “Someone yesterday in the hearing asked me if we still used the Heidelberg Catechism. My response to that question was this question, ‘What is your only comfort in life and in death?’ which is the first question of the Heidelberg Catechism. Now I cannot claim that all members of the United Church of Christ know, believe, or recite the Heidelberg Catechism, but I do believe that its response speaks rather eloquently to the faith that I experience through the United Church of Christ. That is not a set of propositions but rather a confession and a profession of our relationship with Jesus Christ. ‘I belong body and soul, in life and in death, not to myself but to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ.’ That confession I find consistent with the faith, life, and witness of my brothers and sisters in the United Church of Christ who, while they prize their freedom as a pilgrim people, a freedom that has enabled us to take great risks for the sake of the

Gospel, also understand themselves to be a united and a uniting church accountable to one another and accountable to our ecumenical colleagues and accountable in deep ways to the faith of the Church through the ages. We experience that sense of belonging that comes to us in our baptism as we are claimed by that trinity of possessives—children of God, disciples of Christ, members of the Church—we come to know that sense of belonging in the sacrament around the Table, belonging to Christ and to one another, and in very rich ways in which we come to understand that sense of belonging to Christ in service in the world. We are redeemed and saved not only from our sin but also from the multitude of idolatries that afflict our culture, that tempt our churches, and indeed I dare say tempt your church.”

Ms. Krestie Utech [Upstate New York Synod] pointed to a divergence of opinions on confessional issues within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and referred to the five issues raised in the presentation by Pastor William Lazareth. She said, “The first area was sacrament fidelity. If we were to ask the pastors gathered in this assembly for a definition of the real presence of Christ in communion, how many definitions would we have? And if we were to go back to our congregations and ask the people in our pews for a definition of the real presence, how would that multiple that number of definitions? Second, there was a concern for binding confessional orthodoxy. If we were to test our own several thousand Lutheran pastors for detailed, confessional statements, how many would fail the very test that we are asking our Reformed brothers and sisters to take? Third, there was a concern for binding congregations to national and synodical decisions. Is not there already great and refreshing diversity among our own congregations now? Have not I as a . . . [voting member] in fact received a page from a particular congregation that said that if there were a national synodical decision for these ecumenical agreements, that congregation would not adhere to that agreement? The fourth area of concern was binding pastors to ordination vows. At this assembly I have heard pastors speak from such varying confessional stances that I wonder and marvel and rejoice at such wonderful diversity under the Lutheran roof right now. Is this not already a very broad group and is it not broad enough so that there is room for more? The fifth area of concern was ecumenical coherence. Our own 1991 statement on ecumenism says our confessional character necessitates ecumenical commitment. It says we should be ready to sacrifice nonessentials and says we express our oneness in Christ in diverse models of unity consistent with the Gospel and the Church’s mission. This is a wonderful statement that was passed at the Churchwide Assembly in 1991. I urge people to review it if they have not and I urge us even to do as is encouraged in this statement at the end to reach out boldly, to take the hand of our Reformed brothers and sisters and to vote yes on the *Formula*.

The Rev. Janice A. Campbell [Southern Ohio Synod] spoke in opposition, stating that she favored cooperative mission endeavors and recognized the unity that already exists. The issue, however, is not “whether the people in these three churches are nice people. Lots of Christians and non-Christians alike are indeed

nice people, but that’s beside the point. Also, we indicated in some of the writings that we would not refer to anecdotes and to emotional appeals in consideration of this statement, and yet I have heard several of those this morning. I am concerned that this agreement cannot be binding on individual congregations of the United Church of Christ per their own constitution and yet we would be bound. I also have a deeper concern for this church [the ELCA] and the fact that we have not come together yet to talk about how we will live together, with or without these agreements. There is a lot of division in the ELCA and that concerns me, whether or not we pass these agreements. I’m not sure that we would be fair to our ecumenical partners or to our own people were we to rush this decision at this time and move so quickly without having thought among ourselves about how we will live together.”

The Rev. Karen L. Soli [Northeastern Minnesota Synod] spoke in favor of the agreement, stating that she was “concerned that at least some expressions in this assembly sound as if we will lose who we are by entering into this partnership with the Reformed churches or somehow be less Lutheran or that our identity is not strong enough. For the last 19 years I have been married to a Presbyterian pastor. I guess I have been in full communion without the permission of this church. But it has not made me a Presbyterian and it never will. What I have found is that I have become a much better Lutheran and indeed it has enhanced my identity.”

The Rev. Thomas L. Robison [Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod] asked for clarification on the permissible limits of anecdotal comments. Vice President Magnus responded that the reference to the use of anecdotal comments or stories would be researched before the afternoon session as a committee of the whole.

Ms. Mary B. Heller [Metropolitan New York Synod] called attention to a series of articles in *The New York Times* that reminded Christians that they are a minority worldwide and are being persecuted in at least a dozen countries. She said, “I feel there is strength in unity and it is in working in concert with our Christian sisters and brothers that we can achieve strength and become more effective in our common calling which is to make Christ known.”

The Rev. Philip M. Larsen [Eastern North Dakota Synod] asked why some United Church of Christ congregations might choose not to use the Nicene or Apostolic Creeds in their worship services. He said he had asked this question in the open hearing and that Pastor Thomas had responded that they may believe that the creeds do not speak to the current generation or the contemporary situation of God’s people. Pastor Larsen asked, “What in our creeds do not speak to our contemporary situations?” He also commented on the years that congregations have worked together within ministerial associations without formal church-to-church relationships.

Vice President Magnus declared that the meeting of the committee of the whole had completed its appointed time and returned the chair to Bishop Anderson.

Bishop Anderson then welcomed a group of high school musicians who had taken part in this summer's Lutheran Music Program at Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, Ind. He noted that Lutheran Music Program is a pan-Lutheran program in which talented young musicians take part in a month-long camp experience on the campus of a Lutheran college. He stated that the presence of this group at this assembly was made possible by a grant from Aid Association for Lutherans (AAL).

After a brief interlude, Bishop Anderson called the assembly back to order.

Report of the Memorials Committee

Reference: 1997 Pre-Assembly Report, Section VI; continued on *Minutes*, pages 394, 490.

Bishop Anderson called upon Ms. Sandra G. Gustavson, chair of the Memorials Committee, to present a number of the 98 memorials forwarded from the 1996 and 1997 synodical assemblies and to note the order in which they would be presented. She said that the Memorials Committee had grouped similar memorials into categories. Calling the assembly's attention to 1997 Pre-Assembly Report, Section VI, page 1, she stated which categories would be considered separately, not *en bloc*, as well as the five memorials, 1.C, 10.B, 15, 21, and 23, that members of the assembly had requested to be removed from *en bloc* status. She announced that categories 4, 23, 21, 10, 27 would be considered during this plenary session.

Category 4: Landmines

A. Upstate New York (7D) [1997 Memorial]

WHEREAS, at least 100 million anti-personnel landmines have been laid in more than 60 countries, killing or maiming someone, somewhere, every twenty minutes; and

WHEREAS, the principal casualties of landmines are civilians—women going to market, farmers in their fields, and children playing; and

WHEREAS, the Church is accountable to the saving grace of God it embodies by serving life at all costs, offering hope and healing in the midst of brokenness, and freeing captives from bondage; and

WHEREAS, 24 synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), along with the ELCA Church Council, Women of the ELCA, Lutheran World Relief, Lutheran World Federation, Church World Service, Lutheran Peace Fellowship, ELCA Southern Africa Network and many other church, development and veterans' organizations have called for an international effort to ban landmines; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Upstate New York Synod of the ELCA gathered in assembly at Oswego, New York, June 1-3, 1997, adds its voice to the global outcry against the injustice of landmines; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this synod call upon its constituent congregations to:

PRAY for victims of landmines;

EDUCATE themselves about the landmine crisis;

OFFER ASSISTANCE for landmine victims through the ELCA World Hunger Appeal, and support the immediate removal or disarming of deployed landmines;

PETITION ELECTED OFFICIALS to support a U.S. ban on the production, transfer, stockpiling, or use of landmines, as a step toward a global ban; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this synod memorialize the ELCA, as it gathers in assembly at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in August 1997, to strengthen its global witness to God's saving power, using every means available to advocate for and alleviate the suffering of victims of landmine disasters

BACKGROUND

An estimated 110 million anti-personnel mines are scattered in at least 64 countries. According to United Nations estimates, between two and five million new landmines are laid each year. Such anti-personnel landmines cause the destruction of human and natural resources and livestock; they recognize no cease-fires and, long after the fighting has stopped, continue to maim, kill, and make agricultural land unusable, wreaking environmental and economic devastation. They indiscriminately kill over 800 innocent women, children, and men, and maim hundreds more, every month.

In 1994, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, through the Division for Church in Society, joined the International Campaign to Ban Landmines. In 1995, the ELCA's fourth Churchwide Assembly adopted a social statement, *For Peace in God's World*, which specifically encouraged the ELCA to give priority attention to efforts to ban the production, sale, and use of landmines. The Lutheran World Federation, the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., and the World Council of Churches also have endorsed the ban.

At its April 1996, meeting, the ELCA Church Council addressed this matter, responding to the request of the Division for Church in Society and the Division for Global Mission. The council adopted the following resolution:

To support the call for an international ban on the use, production, stockpile and sale, transfer or export of anti-personnel landmines;

To call on individuals and congregations to write letters to the President of the United States and members of Congress in support of such a ban and in support of U.S. government contributions to United Nations' voluntary trust funds for mine clearance and mine victims assistance programs, in keeping with the ELCA social statement, *For Peace in God's World*; and

To encourage the Division for Global Mission and the Division for Church in Society to continue to support these and related advocacy and education efforts that seek the elimination of landmines.

In October 1996, several dozen nations gathered in Ottawa, Canada, and agreed upon an Agenda for Action meant to lead the world toward a ban on anti-personnel landmines. The “Ottawa Conference” began a process toward an international treaty banning the use, export, production, and stockpiling of anti-personnel landmines. The treaty is to be signed again in Ottawa in December, 1997. Over 70 nations have indicated support for this process.

Led by Congressman Lane Evans (D-Ill.), over 160 members of the U.S. House of Representatives signed a letter dated June 12, 1997, to President Clinton urging him to support the Canadian initiative to negotiate promptly a treaty to ban anti-personnel landmines. The House letter to President Clinton expresses support for the President’s decision to seek an international ban on the production, transfer, stockpiling and use of anti-personnel landmines, but raises concerns about his decision to pursue a ban treaty in the U.N. Conference on Disarmament. The U.N. conference is notoriously slow; agreements on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and the Chemical Weapons Convention were reached only after decades of negotiation. The Canadian initiative would conclude a ban treaty by the end of this year.

A bill which would ban U.S. use of anti-personnel landmines by the year 2000 was introduced in the U.S. Senate on June 12 by Senator Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.). There are currently 57 Senate co-sponsors. A ban on landmines is a goal shared by President Clinton and 156 nations. This legislation would give current U.S. policy the time frame it lacks and would be consistent with what many other nations have already done.

The Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs, an active steering committee member of the U.S. Campaign to Ban Landmines, encourages ELCA members:

- to urge their senators to cosponsor the legislation to ban landmines introduced by Senator Leahy and to support the legislation when it comes to a vote in the Senate; and
- to ask ELCA members to encourage their U.S. Representatives to urge President Clinton to support fully the Ottawa process and to sign the ban treaty in December.

Lutheran World Relief, working with the National Council of Churches unit, Church World Service, and Witness have collected over 70,000 signatures on a petition to ban landmines. Collection of signatures continues. Women of the ELCA, through its national convention and through the work of members throughout the country, has actively participated in the signature gathering campaign.

Ms. Gustavson directed assembly members to *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section VI, pages 29-31: Category 4, Landmines, a memorial from the Upstate New York Synod. The Memorials Committee offered the following recommendation:

MOVED;

SECONDED: To support the call for an international ban on the use, production, stockpile, and sale, transfer, or export of anti-personnel landmines;

To call on the government of the United States to sign as soon as possible an international treaty that bans anti-personnel land mines immediately and to increase support for international and bilateral programs for humanitarian mine clearance and mine victim assistance;

To encourage members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to:

- ! Learn about the landmines issue;
- ! Join the Lutheran World Relief and Church World Service petition to ban anti-personnel land mines;
- ! Contact the President of the United States and their U.S. Senators and Representatives in support of an international treaty, which bans land mines immediately;
- ! Support the ELCA World Hunger Appeal, so that increased attention can be given to humanitarian mine-clearance efforts and mine-victim assistance, through Lutheran World Relief and other international partners;
- ! Pray for victims of land mines; and
- ! To encourage the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America—its churchwide organization, synods, congregations, and church-related organizations—to advocate for a global ban on land mines, for mine clearance, and for mine-victim assistance.

Ms. Bonnie Block [South-Central Synod of Wisconsin] spoke in support of the motion. She encouraged assembly members to visit the Heritage and Hope Village for printed materials on land mines, and to contact President Clinton to express their beliefs on this issue.

Mr. Robert Bartholomew [Northwestern Ohio Synod], who identified himself as a former flight surgeon, spoke against the motion. He said, “All war is hell. When diplomacy fails to the point of resorting to war, the object of war is to win. The winning involves killing people and destroying property and to pass rules that

restrict the generals in the accomplishment of their mission can be devastating as we learned in the Korean War which is not yet over, the Vietnam War which we lost, the Persian Gulf which when given a free hand we won, and in Somalia where lives were lost for lack of support.”

Bishop Theodore F. Schneider [Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod], speaking in support, said that he had presented 116,000 signatures on petitions against land mines on behalf of the Lutheran World Federation and the ELCA to Senator Patrick Leahy, and commented that the concern was urgent, because land mines continue to maim even after war is over.

Bishop Howard E. Wennes [Grand Canyon Synod] commended Lutheran World Relief and the Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for their leadership on this issue. He noted that the Grand Canyon Synod has supported a ban on land mines and urged the assembly to take favorable action on this motion.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

Yes—773; No—37

CA97.2.3 To support the call for an international ban on the use, production, stockpile, and sale, transfer, or export of anti-personnel land mines;

To call on the government of the United States to sign as soon as possible an international treaty that bans anti-personnel landmines immediately and to increase support for international and bilateral programs for humanitarian mine clearance and mine victim assistance;

To encourage members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to:

- ! Learn about the landmines issue;**
- ! Join the Lutheran World Relief and Church World Service petition to ban anti-personnel land mines;**
- ! Contact the President of the United States and their U.S. Senators and Representatives in support of an international treaty, which bans land mines immediately;**
- ! Support the ELCA World Hunger Appeal, so that increased attention can be given to humanitarian mine-**

clearance efforts and mine-victim assistance, through Lutheran World Relief and other international partners;

! Pray for victims of land mines; and

! To encourage the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America—its churchwide organization, synods, congregations, and church-related organizations—to advocate for a global ban on land mines, for mine clearance, and for mine-victim assistance.

Category 23: Theological Students from Latvia

A. New England Synod (7B) [1997 Memorial]

RESOLVED, that this New England Synod Assembly, in the spirit of membership in the Lutheran World Federation, memorialize the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America’s Churchwide Assembly to advance collegiality between the ELCA and the Lutheran Church in Latvia by:

1. encouraging and enabling the placement of theological students from Latvia as interns in ELCA congregations according to procedures in place for this purpose;
2. initiating programs for theological students of the Lutheran church in Latvia for short-term visits or study programs to help them get acquainted with the ELCA’s theology, life, and ministry;
3. encouraging the Division for Ministry and the seminaries of the ELCA to explore the possibilities of extending international scholarships to theological students of the Lutheran Church of Latvia for study and research.

BACKGROUND

This memorial relates to several policies and programs already in place in the ELCA. At several points, however, there are implications for additional expenditures of funds which are not available to the Division for Ministry at this time.

Regarding the placement of theological students from Latvia as interns in ELCA congregations—such international placements already occur on a small scale through the Division for Global Mission. The division sponsors international internships through the Horizon Internship program of the ELCA, providing for

approximately four or five such internships each year. It would be possible for a few students from Latvia to be included in this program, in cooperation with the Division for Global Mission.

While initiating programs for theological students in Latvia for short-term visits or study programs is an excellent idea, it would require funding which is not presently available. Past experience would indicate that ELCA seminaries would be open and hospitable toward such visits, but short-term visits are quite expensive because of high travel costs and the need to develop temporary and short-term housing and hosting arrangement.

For both of these possibilities, the needs and gifts of Latvian students would need to be evaluated within the broader context of the needs and gifts of students from various parts of the world.

Ms. Gustavson referred assembly members to *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section VI, pages 66-67, Category 23: Theological Students from Latvia, a memorial from the New England Synod, and presented the recommendation of the Memorials Committee.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To refer jointly to the Division for Ministry and the Division for Global Mission the memorial of the New England Synod; and
To request that the two divisions consult with the synod regarding possibilities of study programs for theological students from Latvia in the context of the existing international scholarship programs of the Division for Global Mission.

Bishop Juan Cobrda [Slovak Zion Synod] said that the Slovak Zion Synod had brought 13 interns from Latvia to serve in different congregations and that the synod had received very favorable feedback about the students. He strongly recommended adoption.

The Rev. Donna M. Wright [Nebraska Synod] spoke against the resolution, because the Latvian Church no longer ordains women. She commented that women pastors in that church have been defrocked; thus, to pass this resolution would be to reward the Latvian church, which does not deserve to be rewarded.

Bishop George P. Mocko [Delaware-Maryland Synod] asked, "Why in particular are we singling out Latvia here? Is it precisely because of the ordination of women that was just referred to?"

The Rev. John K. Stendahl [New England Synod], speaking in support of the motion, said that he was grateful to Pastor Wright for raising the issue which lies behind this resolution. He said, "The present leadership of the church in Latvia has

been receiving a great deal of moral and financial support from our sister church, The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. It is perceived by some that the reversal of direction in that church is a return to a style of Lutheran confessionalism which some of our sister churches would welcome and support. One of the reasons we seek particular attention to theological education and continuing education for the church people of Latvia is that they might know another model of church and that they might receive from American Lutheranism another vision of what might be possible. It is in a desire that we should not be silent and without influence in Latvia that we make this particular resolution and ask that theological education in Latvia be supported in this way."

The Rev. Susan E. Nagle [New Jersey Synod] said that this memorial was in keeping with the Lutheran World Federation resolution on the withholding of LWF funding from seminaries that do not provide theological education and equal opportunity to both men and women.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

Yes-596; No-271

CA97.2.4 To refer jointly to the Division for Ministry and the Division for Global Mission the memorial of the New England Synod; and

To request that the two divisions consult with the synod regarding possibilities of study programs for theological students from Latvia in the context of the existing international scholarship programs of the Division for Global Mission.

Bishop Anderson expressed appreciation to the Rev. Susan L. Gamelin for assistance in discerning the colors of the timing lights for speeches because he has a color deficiency to red and green in the color tones used in the timing lights. He quipped, "I assure you that I can tell green lights from stop lights however."

Category 21: Committee on Appeals

A. Metropolitan New York Synod (7C) [1997 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* provide that the process of discipline governing ordained ministers, persons on other official rosters, and congregations shall assure due process and due protection for the accused, other parties and this church;

WHEREAS, “due process” is defined in these documents to include the right to be treated with fundamental procedural fairness and “fundamental procedural fairness” is defined in these documents to include “impartiality of the committee which considers the charges” and “the right to be treated in conformity with the governing documents of the ELCA”;

WHEREAS, the Metropolitan New York Synod Assembly duly elected its six members of the Committee on Discipline in accordance with the constitution and bylaws of this church;

WHEREAS, the Churchwide Assembly duly elected its 36 members of the churchwide Committee on Discipline in accordance with the constitution and bylaws of this church;

WHEREAS, the Discipline Hearing Committee in the Matter of the Disciplinary Proceedings Against the Reverend Aubrey N. Bougher was convened in the Metropolitan New York Synod and carried out its deliberations in accordance with the constitution and bylaws of this church;

WHEREAS, this duly constituted and conducted Discipline Hearing Committee was unanimous in its determination that Pastor Bougher should not be removed from the clergy roster of the ELCA;

WHEREAS, the constitution and bylaws of the ELCA provide, concerning the appeal of a discipline hearing committee’s decision, that “the discipline hearing committee’s Determination must be sustained if reasonable people can disagree as to its propriety, and further specifically state that “the committee’s Determination may not be reversed simply because the Committee on Appeals, had it been the discipline hearing committee, would have reached a different conclusion”; and

WHEREAS, on appeal the Committee on Appeals found that “the Discipline Hearing Committee’s Determination in the matter of the Reverend Aubrey Bougher was one with which no reasonable person, acting objectively, could agree”; and

WHEREAS, the nine persons, four men and five women, serving on the Discipline Hearing Committee were six churchwide elected members and three elected from this synod; and included among their numbers four pastors, two of whom were women and another who is an eminent teacher and theologian of the church, also several persons presently on or retired from the staffs of their synods and others in or retired from responsible professional secular employment, all nine of whom could not fairly be presumed to be unreasonable, biased or lacking objectivity in the absence of convincing specific evidence;

WHEREAS, the Committee on Appeals has reversed the decision of the discipline hearing committee and removed Pastor Bougher from the clergy roster of the ELCA without providing convincing evidence of how and why the nine duly elected and selected members of this committee acted unreasonably;

WHEREAS, the Committee on Appeals bases its decision almost completely on its own unique definition of “reasonable” and on its own identification of the purpose of the Committee on Appeals, neither of which can be found in any of the governing documents of the ELCA;

WHEREAS, many reasonable people familiar with the facts of this case, in addition to all nine of the members of the discipline hearing committee and two members of the 11 member Committee on Appeals itself, do in fact agree with the determination that Pastor Bougher should not be removed from the clergy roster of the ELCA;

WHEREAS, the decision of the Committee on Appeals represents an abuse of its discretion and undermines the confidence of ordained ministers, persons on other official rosters, and congregations in the fundamental procedural fairness of the disciplinary processes of this church;

WHEREAS, the Office of the Secretary of the ELCA says that the decision of the Committee on Appeals is always final and that nothing further can be done about its decision; therefore be it

RESOLVED, the Metropolitan New York Synod memorialize the ELCA Churchwide Assembly to request that a task force be formed to review the function of the ELCA Committee on Appeals and its “due process” and that a report be made to the Church Council with recommendations, if any, for procedural and constitutional reform.

BACKGROUND

The Memorials Committee chose not to make any determination on the particular case to which the memorial of the Metropolitan New York Synod refers. The committee notes that the Churchwide Assembly has received the report of the Committee on Appeals on this case (*1997 Pre-Assembly Report, Section II, pages 35-39*).

The RESOLVED clause of the memorial, however, urges the review of the function of the Committee on Appeals, with report to be made to the Church Council with recommendations, if any, for procedural or constitutional reform. Because this RESOLVED clause can be considered apart from the WHEREAS clauses without either endorsing or adopting those clauses or without attempting to detail inaccuracies, if any, in the WHEREAS clauses, the Memorials Committee chose to address this alone.

The following information helped to shape the recommendation of the Memorials Committee. At every one of the Churchwide Assemblies of the ELCA, significant revisions in some aspect of the disciplinary process have been considered and adopted. In 1989 Rules for the Committee on Appeals and the process for removal of synodical officers were approved. In 1991 major revisions were made clarifying the role and function of the consultation committee, providing for the hearing officers, clarifying the hearing process, extending the right of appeal to accusers, and providing for appellate review of substance as well as procedural aspects of Discipline Hearing Committee decisions. In 1993 the discipline process for ordained ministers was extended to associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers, consistent with the Study for Ministry recommendations. In

1995 an alternative process for lesser offenses was introduced and provisions for stays of Discipline Hearing Committee decisions pending appeal was approved.

In addition, other aspects of the disciplinary process have been reviewed by the Church Council following action by the Churchwide Assembly requesting review [see review of burden of proof [CA93.8.109] and (CC 94.4.11)].

The discipline process is continually under review. The issue is not whether, but how, the continuing review of the church's disciplinary process should be undertaken, specifically with regard to the appellate function. In this regard, it should be noted that all prior revisions in the disciplinary process made or recommended by the Church Council have been based upon recommendations of its Legal and Constitutional Review Committee. In formulating recommendations, this committee has always first sought the advice and counsel of the Conference of Bishops.

Ms. Gustavson referred the assembly to *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section VI, pages 63-65, Category 21: Committee on Appeals, a memorial from the Metropolitan New York Synod. She introduced the following recommendation of the Memorials Committee:

MOVED;

SECONDED: To request that, in accordance with its continuing review of the discipline process, the Church Council review, without prejudice, the appellate function in this church's disciplinary process either by its Legal and Constitutional Review Committee or by a process designed by such committee and approved by the Church Council;

To request that such review include consultation with the Conference of Bishops and the Committee on Appeals;

To authorize the Church Council to act on recommendations resulting from this review, if any, by amending the Rules of the Committee on Appeals (ELCA 20.61.) and Rules Governing Disciplinary Proceedings (ELCA 20.21.16.) or by making recommendations for constitutional or bylaw revisions to the Churchwide Assembly; and

To request the secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to convey to the Metropolitan New York Synod the outcome of this review.

The Rev. Frederick J. Schumacher [Metropolitan New York Synod] sought to offer the following substitute motion:

MOVED: To substitute the following for the recommendation of the Memorials Committee:

WHEREAS, the report of the Committee on Appeals itself (*1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section II, pages 35-39) plainly documents that this committee assumed for itself many functions not mentioned in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions* of this church, apparently misunderstood its constitutionally provided function, and, contrary to the clear and specific provisions of the bylaws, came to its own conclusion about the appropriate discipline in this case and substituted its own judgment for that of the original Discipline Hearing Committee, going so far as to come up with its own unique definition of "reasonable person" in its attempt to get around the actual requirements of the bylaws;

WHEREAS, the action of the Committee on Appeals in this matter represents a clear violation of the constitutional provision 20.62. that "the [only] circumstances for which the Committee on Appeals may reverse or set aside the decision of a discipline hearing committee and the consequences of such action shall be set forth in the bylaws;"

WHEREAS, our church's willingness to overlook this committee's clearly unauthorized action in making its own decision in this matter, and its effect on this one pastor, however well-intentioned, would show its constitutional guarantees of the rights of the accused to be wholly without force and would rightly undermine the confidence of ordained ministers, persons on other official rosters, and congregations in the fundamental procedural fairness of the disciplinary processes of this church; therefore, be it

RESOLVED that this assembly declare that the determination of the Committee on Appeals in the matter of Aubrey N. Bougher was not one it was constitutionally empowered to make and that it thus be set aside and the determination of the original discipline hearing committee in this case be reinstated.

Bishop Anderson ruled the substitute motion out of order because "it demands of this assembly an action which it cannot take. It cannot act in violation of the constitution which says that the Committee on Appeals is the final authority in such

cases.” Pastor Schumacher responded, “I would like to challenge the chair and be able to speak regarding that very issue.”

Pastor Schumacher moved:

MOVED;

SECONDED: To challenge the ruling of the chair.

Bishop Anderson noted that the motion had been seconded and was debatable. Pastor Schumacher spoke to the issue saying, “The chair of this assembly and, previous to this, the secretary of our church has ruled that any resolution of this nature would be considered out of order. But, on appeal, I believe that the constitution provides that the decisions of the Committee on Appeals shall be final. I agree with that. But it is my position that the constitution, of course, here intends that any constitutionally made decision of the Committee on Appeals shall be final. It would be strange indeed if the intention of the constitution was that the decision which the Committee on Appeals was never constitutionally authorized to make would nevertheless be final. The constitution guarantees those subject to the disciplinary process of this church fundamental procedural fairness. That includes among other things impartiality of the committee that considers the charges against the individual. Should we hypothetically, and contrary to fact, be faced with clear convincing evidence that certain Committee on Appeals members had been bribed, would anyone here suggest that the constitution intended that the decision made by that plainly unconstitutional committee must nevertheless be final? The circumstances under which the Committee on Appeals may reverse or set aside the decision of the Discipline Hearing Committees are plainly set forth in the bylaws that are provided by the constitution. Those circumstances did not exist in this case. Read the report of the Committee on Appeals itself and you will see those circumstances did not exist in this case. I am asking that this assembly be permitted to consider if one of its reporting committees acted within its constitutionally intended jurisdiction. The secretary’s office and others’ position, yours perhaps, is also equivalent to saying that the Committee on Appeals is the sole judge even of its jurisdiction and accountable to absolutely no one except itself.”

Bishop Peter Rogness [Greater Milwaukee Synod] said that he strongly supported the ruling of chair and urged the assembly “to resist entering into a constitutional review quagmire of calling into question decisions that have been made with regard to really highly difficult and anguishing matters such as discipline and appeals. If there were serious constitutional misadventures by that committee, people are going to spot that and flag it. I have read the decision of the Committee on Appeals. Other bishops have. I am sure members of the Church Council have. For this body to get into those matters is a quagmire we would be ill-advised to do.”

Bishop Stephen P. Bouman [Metropolitan New York Synod] said, “As the bishop of the synod and who chaired the assembly at which the memorial was approved and noting how painful it has been for everyone there, we did not go through the particulars of the case there and probably [it] would not be appropriate to do that here. I believe the only way to be true to the wishes of the assembly which brought the memorial is to ask that the memorial be approved and voted upon without alteration.”

Subsequently, as votes were cast with respect to the ruling of the chair, Bishop Stanley N. Olson [Southwestern Minnesota Synod] reported that a number of voting machines appeared not to be operational. Bishop Anderson indicated, therefore, that the vote would be taken by hand, utilizing the voting cards.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

Hand Vote

CARRIED: To uphold the decision of the chair.

Since there were no more voting members seeking to speak to this motion, Bishop Anderson called for the vote.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

Hand Vote

CA97.2.5 To request that, in accordance with its continuing review of the discipline process, the Church Council review, without prejudice, the appellate function in this church’s disciplinary process either by its Legal and Constitutional Review Committee or by a process designed by such committee and approved by the Church Council;

To request that such review include consultation with the Conference of Bishops and the Committee on Appeals;

To authorize the Church Council to act on recommendations resulting from this review, if any, by amending the Rules of the Committee on Appeals (ELCA 20.61.) and Rules Governing Disciplinary Proceedings (ELCA 20.21.16.) or by making recommendations for

constitutional or bylaw revisions to the Churchwide Assembly; and

To request the secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to convey to the Metropolitan New York Synod the outcome of this review.

Category 10b: Fair Labor Practices

Reference: *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section VI, pages 44-45; continued on *Minutes*, page 774.

A. Southeastern Synod (9D)

WHEREAS, we are called by the Gospel to promote justice among all people; and

WHEREAS, the 1993 ELCA Churchwide Assembly declared “support for the civil rights of all persons regardless of their sexual orientation;” and

WHEREAS, there are 41 states of the United States where it is legal to be refused employment or to be fired simply because a person is perceived to be gay or lesbian; and

WHEREAS, the four states of the Southeastern Synod ELCA are among those 41 states which offer no legal protection in employment for gay and lesbian people; and

WHEREAS, the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) would prohibit such discrimination; and

WHEREAS, ENDA was only one vote away from passage when voted on by the U.S. Senate in 1996; and

WHEREAS, this legislation does not require employers to provide benefits to partners of gay employees and prohibits hiring quotas based on sexual orientation; and

WHEREAS, the legislation exempts small businesses, the armed forces, and religious institutions; and

WHEREAS, the voice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America calling for justice for all people could help make a difference in the passage of this legislation when it is voted on again; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Synod ELCA memorialize the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to endorse passage of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act by the Congress of the United States. Such endorsement shall be in effect as long as it takes to secure passage of legislation to secure the employment rights of all people regardless of their sexual orientation.

BACKGROUND

The proposed Employment Non-Discrimination Act would prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in employment. The legislation exempts small businesses and does not require an employer to provide benefits for the same-sex partner of an employee; it prohibits quotas and preferential treatment, provides for a broad religious exemption, and would not apply to members of the Armed Forces.

The ELCA and its predecessor church bodies have gone on record affirming the civil rights of homosexual persons. The 1993 Churchwide Assembly voted to “commend the Church Council for its action in adopting the resolution, ‘Harassment, Assault, and Discrimination Due to Sexual Orientation,’ and, as the assembly of this church, to affirm that action . . .” [CA93.3.4]. That resolution stated that:

“ . . . the historical position of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is:

1. Strong opposition to all forms of verbal or physical harassment or assault of persons because of their sexual orientation; and
2. Support for legislation, referendums, and policies to protect the civil rights of all persons, regardless of their sexual orientation, and to prohibit discrimination in housing, employment, and public services and accommodations”

On the basis of this action, the Division for Church in Society has actively advocated for the passage of the proposed Employment Non-Discrimination Act.

Ms. Gustavson referred assembly members to *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section VI, pages 44-45, Category 10b: Fair Labor Practices—Employment Non-Discrimination Act, a memorial from the Southeastern Synod. She introduced the following recommendation of the Memorials Committee:

MOVED;

SECONDED: To respond to the memorial of the Southeastern Synod by expressing support for the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, while acknowledging that the act provides for a broad religious exemption; and

To affirm the advocacy of synods and the Division for Church in Society in support of laws barring discrimination against individuals on the basis of their sexual orientation.

Ms. Martha Stott [Indiana-Kentucky Synod] spoke against the motion, saying, “I believe that sets the stage for enormous expansion of the federal power over employers. This violates the principle of federalism embodied in the Tenth

Amendment [to the Constitution of the United States]. It defines sexual orientation so broadly that all sexual proclivities from pedophilia to bisexuality are getting special protection and therefore moral status on par with sex within marriage. The bill would also create a broad cultural force that rewards and protects sexual dysfunction at the expense of traditional marriage and family. It also poses the serious threat to employers' and employees' freedom of religion, speech, and association. The law would insure that employers could no longer take their most deeply held belief into account when making hiring, management, and promotion decisions."

The Rev. Frederick E. Wiechers [Northwestern Ohio Synod] asked how this act [Employment Non-Discrimination Act] "would affect churches that sponsor Boy Scout and Girl Scout Troops where sexual orientation is a preference in terms of how counselors are hired?"

The Rev. Deborah Taylor [Minneapolis Area Synod] said "that endorsement of this memorial is not a statement endorsing gay and lesbian sexuality. It is an endorsement of basic human and civil rights and I would ask the assembly to vote on that issue, on the affirmation of basic human and civil rights in the area of employment practices."

Bishop Anderson asked whether anyone wished to address the scouting question? The Rev. Charles S. Miller, executive director of the Division for Church in Society, said that it was his understanding that the act would exempt such organizations as Boy Scout and Girl Scout Troops.

Mr. Ronald Zenke [East-Central Synod of Wisconsin] spoke against the motion, observing that it would have implications beyond this particular organization and cited as an example an organization in his area.

Ms. Nancy C. Fricke [Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod] spoke against the motion, stating that "I really have great hesitancy to advocate for a piece of legislation which I have not read or have not read a synopsis of. . . . I do not think we have enough information on what the substance of this act is to make any kind of decision."

The Rev. Bruce H. Davidson [New Jersey Synod] spoke in support of the motion. He said that the act gives broad religious exemptions and that it is responsible legislation protecting the civil rights of gay and lesbian people. Similar legislation in effect in New Jersey, he added, has not been abused nor has it been an unnecessary or unreasonable restriction against employers.

Mr. Jeffrey L. Kane [New England Synod] said that he was an Eagle Scout who worked with several scouting councils. He observed that troops that work with volunteer leaders would not be covered under this act. He understood, however, that scouting councils that employ staff would be required to follow the provisions of this law.

The Rev. Judith L. McCall [South-Central Synod of Wisconsin] noted that pedophilia is not a sexual orientation but an act of violence.

The Rev. Donald W. Pletcher [Northwestern Ohio Synod] asked whether the matter could be referred to the ELCA legal counsel for analysis. Bishop Anderson noted that an attorney sits on the Memorials Committee.

Pastor Pletcher moved to refer the motion back to committee for reflection from legal counsel.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To refer the memorial back to the Memorials Committee for review by legal counsel.

Pastor Charles S. Miller, executive director of the Division for Church in Society, noted that the division had sought the advice of legal counsel when the memorial was first considered; therefore, the intent of the motion to refer in effect had been fulfilled. In addition, he stated, if requested he would provide for assembly members a brief description of the content of the [Employment Non-Discrimination] act.

Ms. Melissa R. O'Rourke [South Dakota Synod] indicated that she is an attorney and favored referral. She also said that "there certainly have been many court cases dealing with Boy Scout Troops, Girl Scout Troops, day-care centers, and church camps as to whether those are in fact religious organizations and would be allowed to have all kinds of religious exemptions that are currently available under the law. So I think it is an open question that should be referred to legal counsel."

The Rev. Franklin D. Fry [New Jersey Synod] stated that he so strongly supports the civil rights of all persons that he would wish the assembly's action to be stated as strongly as possible. Therefore, he supported referral.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

Yes—690; No—305

CARRIED: To refer the memorial back to the Memorials Committee for review by legal counsel.

Study of Theological Education

Reference: 1997 *Pre-Assembly Report*, Section IV, pages 109-117, 181-201; Section V, pages 31-44.

Bishop Anderson introduced a progress report on the Study of Theological Education adopted by the 1993 Churchwide Assembly. He acknowledged the high esteem in which others hold this church's system of theological education, "not just because we have excellent and committed theologians in our seminaries, which we do, but also because those seminaries are committed to being an integral part of our church, of serving this church, of being a system of theological education and not just eight institutions scrambling for money and students, competing with each other, and looking solely to institutional interests. Rather, we have one theological education system with eight seminaries with different gifts and histories serving this church, working together for the common good. That cooperation has deepened and matured in recent years supported by the Study of Theological Education." He then called the assembly's attention to the reports in *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section V, pages 31-44, and to an action item to establish a Fund for Leaders in Mission in Section IV, page 181.

Prior to turning to that action item, he recognized the presidents of the eight ELCA seminaries: the Rev. Dennis A. Anderson, Trinity Lutheran Seminary, Columbus, Ohio; the Rev. Darold H. Beekmann, Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, Gettysburg, Pa.; the Rev. James K. Echols, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, Chicago, Ill.; the Rev. Roger W. Fjeld, Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, Iowa; the Rev. Robert G. Hughes, Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, Philadelphia, Pa.; the Rev. Timothy F. Lull, Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, Berkeley, Calif.; the Rev. Frederick H. Reisz Jr., Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary, Columbia, S.C.; and the Rev. David L. Tiede, Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minn. The seminary presidents were greeted with applause. Bishop Anderson expressed heartfelt thanks to these leaders of this church.

Bishop Anderson also acknowledged the presence on the platform of Mr. Nelvin Vos, chair of the board of the Division for Ministry; the Rev. Joseph M. Wagner, executive director of that division; the Rev. Phyllis B. Anderson, director for theological education; the Rev. William C. Behrens, director for leadership support, and Bishop John C. Beem [East-Central Synod of Wisconsin].

Bishop Anderson then called upon Pastor Wagner to introduce the discussion of matters related to theological education. Pastor Wagner referred assembly members to the booklet entitled, *Equipping Leaders for Mission: ELCA Theological Education Network*; Section IV, pages 183-201 in the *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, which contained background material for the presentation, discussion, and action regarding the case studies and strategies for financial support of the ELCA theological education system; and status reports on progress being made in theological education as a result of a request made by the 1995 Churchwide Assembly in the *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section V, pages 31-44.

Pastor Wagner in his comments said, "Bishop Anderson in Initiative Seven has raised up the need for leaders prepared to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

We are looking ahead to a very different world than most of us grew up in—more ethnically, racially, and religiously diverse; more secular; more technologically sophisticated; more fragmented; and more spiritually hungry. The Church's place in this society is shifting. In the past we have been called a Christian, sometimes even a Protestant, nation. Our churches have been a major force in defining American values and cultural patterns. But these days we more often find ourselves in the place of servant, helper, conscience, prophet, teacher, missionary in a society where many do not know Jesus and many more do not accept the authority of Christ, the teachings of his church or of its leaders. . . . Lutheran Christians are called to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ with fresh and persuasive conviction as we enter the world of the new century." He stated that the Study of Ministry had built new flexibility into ministry forms. Pastor Wagner then referred to the subsequent Study of Theological Education in order to develop a system of theological education "that would prepare this new variety of leaders for the mission challenges of the ELCA, to be sustained financially by the ELCA through a combination of gifts, church grants and individual gifts, and to be appropriately accountable to the ELCA. The ELCA theological network," Pastor Wagner said, "is up and running and now you will hear about some of the fresh benefits this system brings and about ways that you can be supportive, including the announcement of the Fund for Leaders in Mission."

He identified the Fund for Leaders in Mission as a cooperative initiative of the ELCA churchwide units and the seminaries to increase scholarship support for seminarians.

Pastor Wagner introduced Pastor Phyllis B. Anderson, who noted the many ways in which seminaries have strengthened their programs to help to equip leaders and how seminaries are working on commonly agreed-upon goals together through clusters established in 1994 and through system-wide collaborative planning. She added that the clusters will decide on administrative and governance structures by 1999. She commended the booklet, *Equipping Leaders for Mission*, to voting members as a source of information regarding the work of the seminaries of this church.

Fund for Leaders in Mission

Reference: *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section IV, pages 181-201.

BACKGROUND

As part of its response to the final report on the Study of Theological Education, the 1995 Churchwide Assembly took the following action:

To affirm the decision of the Division for Ministry and the seminaries regarding the expansion of the Study of Theological Education to include

programmatic and financial planning for an ELCA system of theological education; and to request that the Division for Ministry prepare by 1997 a case and strategies for this church's increased financial support of a system of theological education;

To urge congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to support the efforts of the seminary clusters to increase financial support by granting access to seminary representatives and commending the cause of theological education to potential donors . . .

Appendix One contains "*The Case Statement for Theological Education: Equipping Leaders for Mission*," which was prepared by the Division for Ministry at the request of the 1995 Churchwide Assembly. As an outgrowth of the 1995 assembly action, the Division for Ministry also explored various ways by which financial support for theological education could be strengthened, in consultation with the seminaries, the Office of the Presiding Bishop, the ELCA Foundation, synodical bishops and others. One outcome of these conversations is the proposed ELCA Fund for Leaders in Mission, which is described in Appendix A. At its April 1997 meeting, the ELCA Church Council reviewed this proposal and recommended that the 1997 Churchwide Assembly adopt the following resolution.

**RECOMMENDATION OF
THE CHURCH COUNCIL**

To establish the ELCA Fund for Leaders in Mission, as it is outlined in the following "Outline Proposal for the Establishment of The ELCA Fund for Leaders in Mission."

The Rev. Donald M. Hallberg, executive director of the ELCA Foundation, recounted the need for a financial base to support seminary clusters. "The ELCA budget, before this assembly for adoption, includes only a two-percent increase for seminary clusters," he said. "The fund will have the long-range objective of raising significant dollars and the development of an endowment to provide financial support for candidates for rostered ministry within the ELCA and to theological graduate students preparing for service in this church," he explained. This fund would be coordinated and managed through the ELCA Foundation in cooperation with the Division for Ministry and all of the seminaries. Pastor Hallberg suggested that "the short-term three- to five-year goal of \$5,500,000 combined with financial aid resources from seminaries, synods, and congregations could pay half of the tuition costs of ministry candidates. In subsequent years, the achievement of very substantial scholarship grants—perhaps even full tuition for ELCA ministry candidates—will be the ultimate goal." He encouraged passage of the action to

establish the Fund for Leaders in Mission and then challenged voting members to participate with their own gifts and through estate planning.

Seeing no one at the microphones, Bishop Anderson called for the vote to be taken. The following recommendation of the Church Council was adopted without discussion:

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

Yes—837; No—27

CA97.2.6 To establish the ELCA Fund for Leaders in Mission, as it is outlined in the "Outline Proposal for the Establishment of the ELCA Fund for Leaders in Mission."

Outline Proposal for the Establishment of the ELCA Fund for Leaders in Mission

A Compelling Need

Since the organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in 1988 there has been a consistent effort to build and strengthen the resources which this church brings to extending the Gospel of Jesus Christ in a world marked by swift, unsettling change. The Study of Ministry opened new possibilities for flexibility in deploying leadership for ministry. The Study of Theological Education has challenged and guided the theological education enterprise of the ELCA to higher levels of cooperation and creativity in developing leadership for mission. Congregations and individuals have given substantially for the sake of new mission outreach at home and abroad.

As these exciting advances have taken place it has become clear that the financial base for developing leaders for mission is not as strong as it must become. Seminarians and others preparing for church leadership often begin their first ministries with significant debt. Despite the best efforts of our seminaries to economize, large college debt loads, family expenses, and increasing costs of all higher education continue. Churchwide and synodical financial support for theological education, while much stronger than in most denominations, is nevertheless not keeping pace with the costs of leadership education. If this church is to attract and hold strong candidates for leadership, we must address this financial challenge. Market research has indicated that there is a significant base of potential donors who will respond to a churchwide fund to support the development of future leaders for the mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

The Division for Ministry therefore proposes: That in cooperation with the development offices of the seminaries, under the overall guidance of the ELCA Foundation, in partnership with synodical and church wide leadership, and with the strong support of the Office of the Presiding Bishop, the ELCA Fund for Leaders in Mission be established.

The Vision in Outline

- a. A churchwide fund will be established to build a substantial endowment over time, and to gather current financial gifts in order to provide scholarship grants to students preparing for ordained and lay leadership to advance God's mission through the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- b. Scholarship grants will be made to students, not to institutions, although grants will be made in coordination with the scholarship programs of the seminaries.
- c. Gifts to The Fund for Leaders in Mission will be sought from individual donors for both major current gifts and deferred gifts.

- d. A substantial endowment fund will be built, the income from which will underwrite a significant portion of the tuition needs of those preparing for rostered ministry and other specified leadership needs of this church. Current gifts may also be made for more immediate application to scholarship needs.
- e. Allocation of grants from this fund will be both from current gifts and from endowment income.

The Right Time

Now is the right time to establish the fund:

- a. The 1995 Churchwide Assembly directed the Division for Ministry to propose a plan for the increased support of theological education in the life of this church.
- b. The initiatives envisioned by Presiding Bishop Anderson include a strong focus upon leadership development, including the establishment of such a Fund for Leaders in Mission.
- c. Key leaders in related churchwide units have been informed of the plans for The Fund for Leaders in Mission, are cooperating in supporting the development of the fund, and are working through the details of how this effort relates to other churchwide funding efforts such as Vision for Mission.
- d. Leadership of the ELCA Foundation has indicated its support for the key role of the Foundation in the development and management of The Fund for Leaders in Mission.

Some Further Details

- a. The Fund for Leaders in Mission is not a short term, intense campaign. It is the beginning of a fund to be developed for the long term. With careful interpretation and with the receipt of significant major gifts, this fund can become a foundational source for the funding of leadership development in the ELCA.
- b. Recipients of scholarships from the fund will be ELCA seminary students preparing for rostered ministries, and ELCA students preparing to become teachers of the church in the U.S. and abroad. Other leaders for mission who may receive grants will be determined by the emerging leadership needs of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- c. The fund will be built by gifts from individual donors and from charitable groups. It will not be an appeal to congregations, but to those persons who are able to make current or deferred gifts above and beyond their regular contributions to congregational and churchwide causes.

- d. Budget development and funding will be under the primary leadership of the ELCA Foundation, with close support from the Division for Ministry, the Office of the Treasurer, the Office of the Presiding Bishop, and other appropriate units. Initial startup funding will be sought through the Expanded Ministries Fund of the ELCA, and other available sources.
- e. Financial Management, Program Development, Interpretation, etc.: The ongoing management of the fund will be through the ELCA Foundation with close support from the Division for Ministry, seminary development offices, Division for Global Mission, Division for Outreach, Division for Congregational Ministries, Office of the Presiding Bishop, and other related units. A management team will be appointed to plan and manage these activities.
- f. Grants Management: The allocation of grants will be organized and administered through a committee led by the Division for Ministry, including the ELCA Foundation, seminaries, synods, other churchwide units, and others appropriate to the task.

Time Line for Introduction and Start Up

- Spring 1997: The board of the Division for Ministry will propose the establishment of The ELCA Fund for Leaders in Mission to the Church Council for its action.
- Spring 1997: The Church Council will recommend the establishment of The Fund for Leaders in Mission to the 1997 Churchwide Assembly.
- August 1997: The Churchwide Assembly, in connection with the report of the Presiding Bishop's "Initiatives" for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, will approve the establishment of The Fund for Leaders in Mission.
- Fall 1997: Appropriate committees will be appointed to accomplish detailed planning to formally begin the fund in 1998.
- Fall 1998: Planning and staffing will be completed and the fund will be initiated in pilot areas, then introduced broadly across this church.

Bishop Anderson, in announcing the vote, affirmed that it was a testimony to those involved in theological education of the commitment of this church to its future leaders.

Life-Long Learning and Development for Faithful Leaders

Reference: *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section IV, pages 109-117.

BACKGROUND

In response to recommendations presented in the report of the Study of Theological Education to the 1993 Churchwide Assembly, the assembly adopted "Life-Long Learning" as one of "eleven imperatives for theological education . . . as the planning and guiding focus for preparation of leaders for this church into the 21st century" [CA93.6.19]. The 1995 Churchwide Assembly received the final report of the Study of Theological Education and adopted a recommendation that included the following directive:

To direct the Division for Ministry to assess the state and current practices of continuing education among all our rostered persons, and to bring to the 1997 Churchwide Assembly recommendations that serve both this church and rostered persons' needs for ongoing spiritual formation, theological growth, and leadership beyond the first three years under call" [CA95.6.55].

A report was prepared by the Division for Ministry on expectations in regard to life-long learning for ordained ministers, associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers. The Church Council received that report at the council's April 1997 meeting. The council voted:

To transmit to the 1997 Churchwide Assembly the report on "Life-Long Learning and Development for Faithful Leaders" (CC97.4.9).

The Church Council recommends adoption of the following resolution.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE CHURCH COUNCIL

To adopt the following recommendations contained in the document, "Life-Long Learning and Development for Faithful Leaders":

1. To encourage all rostered persons in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to engage in a holistic and systematic approach to life-long learning and development.
 - a. For rostered persons, this includes:
 - (1) Specific expectations:
 - (a) a minimum of 50 contact hours per year of intentional continuing education, or 150 contact hours each three-year period;
 - (b) spiritual disciplines;
 - (c) habits of personal study;
 - (d) regular worship;
 - (e) self-care;

- (f) involvement in the wider community;
 - (g) participation in intentional colleague groups; and
 - (h) peer review as appropriate for personal and vocational development (see “Life-Long Learning and Development for Faithful Leaders,” Appendix D).
- (2) Extended study and renewal of a minimum of one to three months every three to five years in present call. For rostered persons involved in the First-Call Theological Education program, this three- to five-year period begins upon completion of that program (see “Life-Long Learning and Development for Faithful Leaders,” Appendix C).
 - (3) An annual review of continuing education needs and plans with an appropriate group within the congregation or agency and the synod.
- b. For congregations and agencies, this means:
- (1) Being in partnership with the rostered person in continuing learning and development;
 - (2) Utilizing a mutual ministry committee or an appropriate group to review continuing education needs and plans;
 - (3) Providing an appropriate share of the funding for continuing education and programs of extended study and renewal (growing to a minimum of \$1,000) \$700 from the congregation or agency and \$300 from the rostered person) by the year A.D. 2000); and
 - (4) Respecting rostered persons’ needs for appropriate self-care.
- c. For synods, this means:
- (1) Communicating expectations regarding intentional learning and development by rostered persons;
 - (2) Promoting health and wellness among rostered persons and their families;
 - (3) Fostering a supportive climate for life-long learning and development; and
 - (4) Reviewing and recording continuing education plans of rostered persons.

Pastor Wagner called the assembly’s attention to another outcome of the Study of Theological Education, which was requested by the 1995 Churchwide Assembly, that relates to life-long learning and the development for faithful leaders. Pastor

Behrens then introduced and reviewed the following recommendation of the Church Council:

MOVED;

SECONDED: To encourage all rostered persons in the Evangelical Lutheran Church to engage in a holistic and systematic approach to life-long learning and development.

- a. For rostered persons, this includes;
- (1) Specifications:
 - (a) a minimum of 50 contact hours per year of intentional continuing education, or 150 contact hours each three-year period;
 - (b) spiritual disciplines;
 - (c) habits of personal study;
 - (d) regular worship;
 - (e) self-care;
 - (f) involvement in the wider community;
 - (g) participation in intentional colleague groups; and
 - (h) peer review as appropriate for personal and vocational development (see “Life-Long Learning and Development for Faithful Leaders,” Appendix D [*Pre-Assembly Report*, Section IV]).
 - (2) Extended study and renewal of a minimum of one to three months every three to five years in present call. For rostered persons involved in the First-Call Theological Education program, this three- to five-year period begins upon completion of that program (see “Life-Long Learning and Development for Faithful Leaders,” Appendix C [*Pre-Assembly Report*, Section IV]).
 - (3) An annual review of continuing education needs and plans with an appropriate group within the congregation or agency and the synod.
- b. For congregations and agencies, this means:
- (1) Being in partnership with rostered persons in continuing learning and development;
 - (2) Utilizing a mutual ministry committee or an appropriate group to review continuing education needs and plans;

- (3) Providing an appropriate share of the funding for continuing education and programs of extended study and renewal (growing to a minimum of \$1,000—\$700 from the congregation or agency and \$300 from the rostered person—by the year A.D. 2000); and
 - (4) Respecting the rostered person’s needs for appropriate self-care.
- c. For synods, this means:
- (1) Communicating expectations regarding intentional learning and development by rostered persons;
 - (2) Promoting health and wellness among rostered persons and their families;
 - (3) Fostering a supportive climate for life-long learning and development; and
 - (4) Reviewing and recording continuing education plans of rostered persons.

Mr. John D. Litke [Metropolitan New York Synod] moved:

MOVED;

SECONDED: To amend the recommendation by striking the word, “rostered,” from the first sentence.

Mr. Litke observed that everyone should be encouraged to engage in life-long learning. He said, “I think it is inconsistent that the one and only fundamental premise out of which the plan grows assumes that only rostered persons will be expected to engage in life-long and systematic learning and development. That should be expected of all of us as leaders—lay or ordained, rostered or not rostered.” Pastor Behrens indicated that the amendment was “very much in spirit” with the overall mission and purpose of the resolution.

The Rev. Ray J. Miller [Western Iowa Synod] asked how much of the resolution would be obligatory? Bishop Anderson indicated that the question was directed to the whole motion and that present discussion was limited to the amendment.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

Yes—743; No—143

CARRIED: To amend the recommendation by striking the word, “rostered,” from the first sentence.

Pastor Miller then reiterated his inquiry, asking, “How much of this is obligatory? How much of it is the person’s own desire to do? If it is obligatory, is there a kind of a provisional ordination if they do not comply? Is there a partial call if they are not in compliance? Would this also apply to anyone who comes into the Lutheran church ministry from other theological seminaries?” Pastor Behrens responded that the provisions only are guidelines and “we then expect the synods and churchwide [organization] and other corporate agencies to provide a climate that will bring this to fruition.” He responded to the final question by saying it would apply.

The Rev. Steven J. Solberg [Northeastern Iowa Synod] spoke in support of the recommendation, but raised a concern that the number of contact hours expected (50 per year) would create problems with respect to family situations and finances, as well as employing agencies. He cited as an example that both he and his wife are rostered, although his wife is now on leave and therefore without call and asked whether thought had been given to people in such situations. Pastor Behrens replied that the assumption of the report was that the guidelines are for people “under call” and that this is not a requirement for those rostered but without call.

The Rev. Donald L. Hunzeker [Nebraska Synod] spoke against the resolution because it would place a hardship on congregations and pastors who live far from centers of education. He noted that much of his continuing education is centered around the needs of the congregation. He also addressed the issue of cost and said, “Congregations are striving more and more to develop their resources just to help their pastors. Pastors in some congregations are having a harder and harder time getting by and I do not think churchwide has that much money yet. I find this is an undue burden on pastors.”

Bishop Robert D. Berg [Northwest Synod of Wisconsin] spoke in favor, saying, “We need to do all we can to encourage continuing education for both clergy and [other] rostered persons and laity.” He noted that the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin has covenanted with neighboring synods regarding first call theological education and that they also have a lay school for ministry. “We are seeing the health and well-being of first-call pastors improving, that those pastors involved in continuing education are being strengthened and renewed in their ministries, and that their lay school graduates come out better equipped to serve along with clergy,” he said.

Ms. Linda K. Walker [New Jersey Synod], an associate in ministry, has served on a synod committee working with Growth in Excellence in Ministry (GEM) funds and said she has been very encouraged with the increased participation in the pastoral and rostered leadership in her synod through the availability of this funding. She asked, “Will there be GEM money available from 1998 to 2000?”

Pastor Behrens replied that the GEM was a ten-year program that will conclude in the year 2000, but that it will be more limited in these final two years of the grant's life. He added that \$11.4 million will have been received by the end of this decade.

Ms. Faith Ashton [North Carolina Synod] spoke in support of the recommendation, stating that she was surprised that pastors are not required to complete continuing education, "because many of us are so required to continue in our jobs." She added that with the communications of today one can find the means, even in rural areas, to find alternate routes to continuing education.

Mr. Phillip Schmidt [Northeastern Ohio Synod] spoke in support of the recommendation, noting that he was sensitive to the need for continuing education for ELCA pastors. He added that Trinity Lutheran Seminary has a program of interactive education "and I would like to encourage all of the seminaries to look into the opportunities that [the] World Wide Web and the Internet provide for this kind of education to our rostered people."

The Rev. Robert S. Jones [South Dakota Synod] spoke in support of the recommendation. He said that he was granted a sabbatical in summer 1996 and that guidelines provided by the synod were invaluable in developing a partnership between him as pastor and the congregational leadership. He said that it would be helpful now to have the guidelines in this action before the assembly distributed throughout this church.

Ms. Carole M. Silvoy [Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod] identified herself as an associate in ministry and inquired about who will oversee the institutions and agencies of this church and encourage the use of such guidelines. Pastor Wagner responded that staff members of the Division for Ministry "work with the Division for Church in Society [regarding other institutions] which has a staff person who works directly on the institutional side of supporting ministries and so we do have access We try to inform them and to work with their good will around these kinds of issues."

Ms. Annette C. Crickenberger [Eastern North Dakota Synod] asked for clarification about extended study and funds. Pastor Behrens explained that the recommendation called for a one- to three-month sabbatical every three to five years, whereas the old guideline was every five to seven years. He also noted that the recommendation calls for 50 contact hours but that the definition of contact hours has been modified.

The Rev. Waldemar E. Meyer Jr. [Florida-Bahamas Synod] suggested that congregations will need to consider the tax ramifications while implementing these guidelines.

The Rev. Synde Manion [Southern California (West) Synod] moved:

MOVED;

SECONDED: To amend the last line [c.(4),] by deleting the words, "reviewing and," and inserting the words, "the receipt of," after the word, "Recording," so that the sentence would read, "Recording the receipt of continuing education plans of rostered persons."

Pastor Manion indicated that she serves as chair of her synod's board for rostered personnel and commented, "There is discussion in here about encouraging conversation with colleagues as well as having conversations with mutual ministry committees. I do not think we have to have our synod staffs reviewing all the continuing education plans of all the rostered leaders of this church . . . ; it is another level of bureaucracy that we do not need." Bishop John Beem spoke against the proposed amendment and in support of retaining the word, "reviewing," because he felt obligation for "some oversight instead of just receiving a report and recording it."

The Rev. Alan K. Hanson [Nebraska Synod] spoke in support of the amendment, noting that to have the rostered persons submit a plan to their synod in writing for recording and filing rather than to have synod staff review each one would be adequate.

The Rev. Adrian J. Shearer [Upper Susquehanna Synod] clarified that the proposed amendment pertained to section c.(4) of the resolution.

Bishop Lee M. Miller [Upstate New York] spoke against the amendment, affirming that the review is particularly important and that such review already is done in his synod, so that synodical bishops may help to identify funding sources and participate in decisions about continuing education.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

Yes—370; No—574

DEFEATED: To amend the last line [c.(4)] by deleting the words, "reviewing and," and inserting the words, "the receipt of," after the word, "Recording," so that the sentence would read, "Recording the receipt of continuing education plans of rostered persons."

Mr. Larry D. Moeller [Sierra Pacific Synod] spoke in support of the original resolution and encouraged promotion of its provisions in "Seeds for the Parish" so the lay leaders and mutual ministry committees in congregations are made aware of continuing education possibilities that may be helpful for the congregational needs and could be suggested to the rostered leadership of the congregation.

Ms. Dorothy Norman [Southeastern Minnesota Synod] endorsed the concept of life-long learning, but wondered whether an extended sabbatical every three to

five years would be possible for many congregations. She suggested the following amendment:

MOVED;

SECONDED: To amend the recommendation of the Church Council by replacing in line three of section a.(2), the words, “three to five years” with the words, “five to seven years.”

Bishop Beem indicated that it was because of the mobility of rostered staff, who move on an average of between every four and five years, that the Division for Ministry recommended the change from five to seven years to “an extended study of from one to three months” after three to five years. He also said that denominations that have been in the business of sabbatical leaves or extended study leaves for 15 to 20 years have found that the tenure of pastors in their congregations has lengthened.

MOVED;

SECONDED; Yes—356; No—573

DEFEATED: To amend the recommendation of the Church Council by replacing in line three of section a.(2), the words, “three to five years” with the words, “five to seven years.”

The Rev. Raymond C. Hittinger [Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod] stated that he serves fulltime in interim ministries and said, “I am never in one place more than about 18 to 20 months. By that [requirement of the guidelines], I would never get enough time to ever get released time for education.” He said he only asked that situations such as his be considered as the plans for continuing education are developed.

The Rev. Herbert C. Spomer [Lower Susquehanna Synod] observed that it may not always be obstacles of finances or time constraints but “it could be a lack of focus . . . and some could very well benefit from mentoring.” He observed that “there are glimmers of this [idea] here [in the resolution] but it is not spelled out too well. Perhaps that part of it could be ‘beefed up.’”

Mr. William E. Diehl [Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod] inquired about the implications of moving to service in a different denomination. Pastor Wagner responded, “We have just begun to have some conversations around those sorts of issues with representatives of other denominations, but all of that is on hold pending the action of this assembly. The general principle we have talked about is that if a person on the roster of one church is approved by the second church to provide ministerial services in that second denomination, according to the standards of that

denomination the pastor or lay worker would be bound by the policies that are extant in that denomination, that is, the second denomination.”

The Rev. Thomas J. Wagner [South-Central Synod of Wisconsin] called the question.

MOVED;

Two-Thirds Vote Required

SECONDED;

Yes—853; No—66

CARRIED: To move the previous question.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

Yes—864; No—91

CA97.2.7 To encourage all persons in the Evangelical Lutheran Church to engage in a holistic and systematic approach to life-long learning and development.

a. For rostered persons, this includes;

(1) Specifications:

(a) a minimum of 50 contact hours per year of intentional continuing education, or 150 contact hours each three-year period;

(b) spiritual disciplines;

(c) habits of personal study;

(d) regular worship;

(e) self-care;

(f) involvement in the wider community;

(g) participation in intentional colleague groups; and

(h) peer review as appropriate for personal and vocational development (see “Life-Long Learning and Development for Faithful Leaders,” Appendix D [*Pre-Assembly Report*, Section IV]).

(2) Extended study and renewal of a minimum of one to three months every three to five years in present call. For rostered persons involved in the First-Call Theological Education program, this three- to five-

year period begins upon completion of that program (see “Life-Long Learning and Development for Faithful Leaders,” Appendix C [Pre-Assembly Report, Section IV]).

- (3) An annual review of continuing education needs and plans with an appropriate group within the congregation or agency and the synod.**

b. For congregations and agencies, this means:

- (1) Being in partnership with rostered persons in continuing learning and development;**
- (2) Utilizing a mutual ministry committee or an appropriate group to review continuing education needs and plans;**
- (3) Providing an appropriate share of the funding for continuing education and programs of extended study and renewal (growing to a minimum of \$1,000—\$700 from the congregation or agency and \$300 from the rostered person—by the year A.D. 2000); and**
- (4) Respecting the rostered person’s needs for appropriate self-care.**

c. For synods, this means:

- (1) Communicating expectations regarding intentional learning and development by rostered persons;**
- (2) Promoting health and wellness among rostered persons and their families;**
- (3) Fostering a supportive climate for life-long learning and development; and**
- (4) Reviewing and recording continuing education plans of rostered persons.**

**Life-Long Learning and
Development for Faithful Leaders**

Introduction

The 1995 Churchwide Assembly voted “to direct the Division for Ministry to assess the state and current practices of continuing education among all our rostered

persons, and to bring to the 1997 Churchwide Assembly recommendations that serve both the church and rostered persons’ needs for ongoing spiritual formation, theological growth, and leadership development beyond the first three years under call” [CA95.6.55].

The Beyond First-Call Theological Education Task Force, appointed by the Division for Ministry Board, reviewed the current ELCA policy statements and documents. These documents reveal a consistent commitment to a vision of rostered leaders (i.e., ordained ministers, associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers) who continue to grow, while practicing appropriate self-care and providing leadership for the sake of God’s mission. Using current data from the ELCA Department of Research and Evaluation, the task force assessed the state and current practices of continuing education (Appendix A).

This report is intended for study and use with all leaders in all expressions of this church. It builds upon and is congruent with current ELCA vision and strategy for continuing education. It especially seeks to address concerns that prompted the 1995 resolution, including:

1. clergy morale and well-being, amid reports of burn-out, sexual abuse, substance abuse, incompetence;
2. median length of call only five years;
3. insecure status and financial constraints of our continuing education providers, both seminaries and continuing education centers;
4. failure of rostered persons to use all the time now being provided for continuing education, even though funding provided by rostered leaders and congregations has increased dramatically;
5. lack of documented partnership of clergy and other rostered persons with congregation or agency leaders in planning continuing education (37 percent of clergy filing a Continuing Education Covenant);
6. climate (i.e., orientation more to past than to future) and/or financial stress of congregation as barriers to open and positive consideration of continuing education for church staff;
7. congregations and rostered leaders who look inward with survival goals rather than looking outward with mission goals;
8. rostered persons who feel ill-equipped to lead in our rapidly changing cultural milieu.

The task force concluded that any recommendations for change in continuing education must be *systemic* (implemented through an interdependent network of rostered leaders, congregations and agencies, synods, and churchwide organization) and *holistic* (affecting the spiritual, physical, emotional, social, interpersonal, vocational, and intellectual well-being of rostered leaders).

An Envisioning Statement

The report of the Division for Ministry to the 1995 Churchwide Assembly on The Study of Theological Education (*Faithful Leaders for a Changing World: Theological Education for Mission in the ELCA*) identified *life-long learning* as the seventh of eleven theological education imperatives. The report concluded its remarks on this imperative: “. . . this church must encourage and provide resources for its lay and ordained leaders to continually develop and renew their gifts for ministry through disciplined patterns of life-long learning.” Therefore, in order for this church to be faithful to its call to mission in our complex cultural milieu, it must seek out and support pastors, associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers who actively seek to live as persons under the Gospel and who are prepared to engage in a lifetime of biblically grounded and confessionally based theological reflection and discourse.

This church must expect, encourage, and make it possible for those it calls to develop healthy and intentional habits that continually work to deepen faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, nurture spiritual formation, attend to physical and emotional health, strengthen theological capacity and articulation of the Gospel, enhance leadership gifts, and expand both interpersonal skills and practical skills for ministry. Therefore, this church envisions:

1. The engagement of all the baptized in learning and growing together in mission and ministry;
2. An ethic that values the personhood, health, and continuing growth of both the rostered leaders and laity;
3. An environment in which intentional continued learning and development are valued and expected, and the rostered leaders enjoy supportive partnerships with their congregations or agencies, colleagues, and the synodical and churchwide expressions of this church;
4. An awareness of the variety of ways through which persons learn and grow; and
5. An abundance of synodical and churchwide resources as well as adequate funding committed to life-long theological education.

Statement of Expectations

1. All rostered leaders of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America are expected to provide for their own health and growth, and to be accountable to the congregations and synods of this church and to their colleagues in ministry for their life-long learning and development.
2. Holistic life-long learning and development includes:
 - a. a minimum of 50 contact hours per year of intentional continuing education, or 150 hours each three year period. This time is neither to be

understood as vacation by the rostered person or by the congregation/-agency, nor is it to be used for training for synodical, congregational, or agency programs. It may include guided independent study and reading;

- b. spiritual disciplines, including prayer, meditation, and devotion;
 - c. habits of personal study that are enriched through reading, reflection, and dialogue with colleagues;
 - d. regular worship, including frequent participation in worship in non-leadership roles;
 - e. physical exercise, rest, and attention to emotional and interpersonal health (see Appendix B); and
 - f. involvement beyond the congregation, agency, or other employing entity in pursuit of a more just and compassionate society.
3. Rostered persons will plan an extended study and renewal period of a minimum of one to three months every three to five years in the present call, beyond the First-Call Theological Education program, consulting with peers and synod staff, as well as representatives of the congregation or agency (see Appendix C and D).
 4. All rostered persons are expected to initiate an annual review of their continuing education needs and plans with an appropriate group within their congregation or agency. Goals for the coming year are to be established which take into consideration the needs of the congregation or agency as well as those of the rostered person. A brief report of this review is to be made to the synod for inclusion in the rostered person's file.
 5. The process for promoting participation in these expectations shall be established by the synods, which have primary responsibility for the oversight of rostered persons. This process may include meeting periodically with the bishop or synod staff for consultation, review, and encouragement with regard to continuing growth and development.
 6. Funding is according to Division for Ministry guidelines, but synods may set higher guidelines. Synods are encouraged to develop a special fund designated for continuing theological education of their rostered leaders. Congregations might contribute to this fund through offerings taken at services of ordination, consecration, and installation. Grants might also be sought for such a fund.

A Systemic Approach to Carry Out the Vision

The primary responsibility for the continuing theological education of the rostered person lies with the rostered person. The rostered person exists, however, within a network of relationships, and therefore, continuing theological education must be considered systemically. The classic image of the Church as the Body of Christ provides guidance in thinking systemically. For the body has many

members, with quite different functions and characteristics. They function well together when they are animated by the same Spirit, and when they respect each other's functions, and keep ever before them the larger mission which is their common work.

The system here proposed includes most directly the rostered person, the congregation, agency, or other entity being served, and the synod. Less directly involved are other partners: seminaries, centers of continuing theological education, and churchwide offices. Each of the partners in the system has particular responsibilities, is accountable to others in the system, and is expected to support the others. Responsibilities that relate most directly to rostered persons are listed below.

Rostered Leader

1. Commits to life-long learning and growth through intentional participation in continuing education. Such education is planned collegially and involves partners in ministry in the congregation or agency and/or peers and synod leaders.
2. Takes seriously the total stewardship of life: spiritual, physical, vocational, social, interpersonal, emotional, and intellectual well-being.
3. Communicates regularly with the synod, filing learning covenants and reporting continuing education and personal issues.
4. Plans extended study every three to five years in the present call, including mutual ministry assessment with synod, congregation/agency, and peers.
5. Participates in an intentional colleague group.

Congregation, Agency, or Other Entity

1. Calls rostered leaders with the expectation that both congregation, agency or other entity, and the leader will continue to learn and grow through intentional participation in continuing education.
2. Establishes an appropriate congregational or peer group to maintain regular assessment of educational needs, learning goals, and continuing education options for the rostered leader.
3. Provides an appropriate share of the funding and all the time needed for intentional continuing education programs for both rostered and congregational or agency leaders.
4. Respects rostered persons' needs for appropriate self-care.
5. Advocates partnership in learning between rostered persons and congregation or agency leaders.

Synod (in partnership with region and churchwide organization)

1. Expects that its rostered leaders continue to learn, grow, and develop through intentional participation in continuing education and leadership development, and that congregations and agencies fully support such expectations, especially when Letters of Call are negotiated.
2. Promotes health and wellness among rostered persons and their families.
3. Fosters a supportive climate for growth through advocacy, modeling by synodical leaders, and direct educational and programmatic offerings.
4. Establishes the process for promoting participation in this system of life-long learning.
5. Reviews, keeps records of rostered leaders' learning covenants, and utilizes them in making synodical programmatic decisions and recommendations within the call process.

In Regard to Recommendations to the 1997 Churchwide Assembly

Current guidelines and expectations concerning continuing education in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America include the following:

1. Theological education prepares and equips faithful leaders to fulfill God's mission.
2. This church encourages rostered leaders continually to develop and renew their gifts for ministry through disciplined patterns of life-long learning.
3. All newly rostered leaders participate in First-Call Theological Education, including colleague groups or mentoring pairs.
4. For rostered leaders beyond first call, this church expects:
 - a. an annual or updated learning agreement developed in partnership with congregation or agency leaders and reported to the synod;
 - b. twenty-five contact hours per year for continuing theological education;
 - c. an \$800 minimum annual financial support (\$550 from congregation or agency, \$250 from rostered leader); and
 - d. extended study of one to three months after five to seven years in the present call.

Continuing education includes ongoing spiritual formation, theological growth, and leadership development. The following recommendations address these issues, but expand "continuing education" to include rostered leaders' needs for support, healthy lifestyle, and candid feedback. Expansion of current expectations must also take into account the systemic and holistic vision called for by "recommendations that serve both the church and rostered persons' needs. . . ."

The following persons served on the Beyond First-Call Theological Education Task Force: William C. Behrens, chair, Robert C. Barger, John C. Beem, Richard P. Carlson, John Davis, Joan M. Duke, Marilyn Hetzler, Arland D. Jacobson, Jill E. James, Bruce D. Johnston, Connie Leean-Seraphine, Neva A. Warren.

Appendix A

State and Current Practices of Continuing Education

The task force reviewed data on continuing education, particularly the 1995 continuing education survey from the ELCA Department of Research and Evaluation. After a review and assessment of continuing education practices in the ELCA, the task force concluded that (1) continuing education needs to be understood more holistically and systemically, and (2) some components need to be added to complement existing strengths.

In attempting systemically to be aware and holistic, the task force considered many concepts of continuing education (leadership education, leadership development, theological reflection, skill training, critical thinking, systems thinking, and other combinations. While the task force affirms the vision of life-long learning and development, it was assigned the task of assessing *continuing education*, which is defined by the Division for Ministry as “an intentional activity with colleagues, building on previous learning, which strengthens current ministry and empowers one for future service.” Its components are (1) biblical and systematic theology, (2) personal and spiritual growth, (3) ministry skills, (4) church and society issues, (5) ministry assessment and development. A continuing education contact hour is defined as 50 minutes of educational activity to meet the goals of a program.

The data from the 1995 survey of continuing education in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America reveals both strengths and weaknesses. On the one hand, there seems to be growth in rostered leaders’ use of time and money for continuing education. On the other hand, there are needs of this church and rostered leaders that are not being adequately addressed. The “state and current practices of continuing education” is neither clear nor uniform across the church. There are many apparent contradictions. Consider the following data:

1. From 1990 to 1995, clergy on average used almost one day more per year (total of nearly seven days) for continuing education; yet they used about three days fewer than the congregation provided (9.5 days). Associates in ministry recorded very little change, but tended to use six of the seven days provided.
2. The “Definition” document related to the Letter of Call expects two weeks of continuing education beyond vacation time; yet a 1989 Division for Ministry strategy statement suggested an annual minimum of 25 contact hours.

3. Shared planning of continuing education (pastor and congregational leaders) was estimated to be done by 15 percent of our pastors in 1988; by 1993 some 37.2 percent had filed a Continuing Education Covenant (introduced by the Growth in Excellence in Ministry project for shared planning by rostered leader/congregation/synod), although 72.5 percent were doing regular continuing education.
4. This church has eight seminaries and 18 continuing education center programs. Many continuing education centers are experiencing severe financial stress; some need to reorganize. Churchwide funding for continuing education programs at centers and seminaries has decreased from \$320,000 in 1988 to \$35,000 in 1996.
5. While participation in biblical and systematic theological studies continues as a primary focus, a marked increase is noted in the use of continuing education for ministry skills, particularly worship and evangelism.
6. In 1994, more than \$8,000,000 was provided for continuing education by pastors, associates in ministry, and congregations) an increase of 111 percent over the \$3,800,800 reported in 1988. This is an increase of \$4,221,200. In this same period, pastoral compensation (salary and housing) increased only 23 percent.
7. Pastors who serve with congregations that plan for and are oriented more to the future than to the past (a vital sign of growing congregations) tend to enjoy supportive lay partnership in continuing education.
8. Some 5,300 of nearly 11,000 ELCA congregations have worship attendance of less than 100 per week and can hardly provide for full-time pastoral ministry, much less, expanded continuing education.
9. About 57 percent of all pastors now make use of the eight seminaries and 18 continuing education centers, whose leaders and faculty are a major resource of this church. Yet, most pastors and other rostered leaders name the synod and churchwide events as the primary setting for their continuing education.

The report of the 1995 survey concludes with some sobering thoughts: “The tension between personal and congregational needs highlights some vital questions for continuing education in the future. Should rostered leaders be encouraged to develop their educational goals primarily in response to congregational or agency goals and needs? Should synod or churchwide agenda also be considered a vital factor in developing goals for continuing education in ministry? Or should continuing education continue to be governed by personal goals for enrichment and growth in ministry? What influence will First-Call Theological Education (as mandated by the 1995 Churchwide Assembly) have on the practice of continuing education?”

Three major churchwide initiatives must be included in any assessment of the state and practices of continuing education. These initiatives are designed to impact

the systems of continuing education in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for years to come.

1990-2000 Growth in Excellence in Ministry

The heart of Growth in Excellence in Ministry (GEM) is shared planning of continuing education. Financial awards promoted this planning process. Focus resources have been developed to address key congregational ministry needs of this church) multicultural education, rostered leaders mutual support groups, evangelism and stewardship leadership, transition from one call to another, and ministry in daily life. Reports indicate that 10,266 participants used one or more GEM resources in 1995; this is a high proportion of our total leadership roster (active clergy, associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal) of 13,512.

1994) First-Call Theological Education

The first mandated continuing education in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (1995) seeks to assist every newly rostered person with a structured program of continuing theological education during the first three years of public ministry. Newly rostered leaders are helped in three key dimensions: Ministerial Identity (especially religious leadership roles), Ministry Skills, and Context of Ministry. More than 900 newly rostered leaders are presently involved in programs developed by synods, multi-synodical committees, and regions. A baseline study has begun that will measure the impact of First-Call Theological Education on ministerial leadership in relation to two of the theological education imperatives: mission outreach and ministry in daily life.

1996—Healthy Leaders and Healthy Church

Healthy Leaders and Healthy Church is a shared project of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and The Lutheran Church) Missouri Synod, which promotes the physical, spiritual, emotional, interpersonal, vocational, and intellectual health, well-being, and wholeness of candidates, rostered leaders, and professional church workers, their spouse and families. Healthy Leaders and Healthy Church has several educational components, including a seminar “Ministerial Health and Wellness,” which emphasizes “Life-Long Learning and Development.”

These three initiatives are now being evaluated, but it is too soon to determine how they will affect “the state and current practices of continuing education.” They do address the issue of continuing education designed to serve both the needs of the church and of rostered persons.

This church places a high value on continuing education for its rostered leaders. This continuing education is not merely a private matter for personal and

professional growth, but is planned and carried out collaboratively, for the sake of God’s mission. At the same time, continuing education which “serves both the church and rostered persons’ needs” is part of a larger concern that includes the health and well-being of all our rostered leaders.

Appendix B

Healthy Leaders and Healthy Church

Healthy Leaders and Healthy Church is a shared project of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and The Lutheran Church) Missouri Synod, which promotes the physical, spiritual, emotional, interpersonal, vocational, and intellectual health, well-being, and wholeness of candidates, rostered leaders, and professional church workers, their spouses and families.

There are six program components:

1. Biblical and theological foundations;
2. Health promotion;
3. Remedial care;
4. Communications and networking;
5. Research; and
6. Resource development.

A “Ministerial Health and Wellness” seminar has been developed that seeks to strengthen and support healthy attitudes and behaviors and change unhealthy attitudes and behaviors. It is a five-hour event that utilizes the “Life-style Assessment Questionnaire” and helps rostered leaders and their families to identify, explore, and act on those life choices that will enhance and strengthen their individual and interpersonal well-being.

Appendix C

Extended Study and Renewal Period

An extended study and renewal period serves to equip both the rostered leader and the congregation or agency for future mission and ministry. It is not a reward for past service. The goals of this period include:

1. The rostered leader pursuing more extensive learning objectives, than would otherwise be possible, that serve both the leader’s and the congregation or agency’s assessed needs.
2. The rostered leader experiencing renewal and regeneration of vision and vitality.

3. The congregation or agency growing in more fully owning the ministry to which God is calling them.
4. The process providing clarity of goals and mutual roles which may lead to a longer and more fruitful partnership between rostered leader and congregation or agency in mission and ministry.

We recommend an extended study and renewal period of a minimum of one to three months every three to five years in present call. For rostered persons involved in the First-Call Theological Education program, this three- to five-year period begins upon completion of that program. The length and frequency of this period should reflect the ongoing demands placed on the rostered leader, the mutual needs of the leader and congregation or agency, and the available resources. Time during this period shall be used for learning, personal rest and renewal, including attention to health and wellness issues, and preparing for reentry. The rostered person's compensation and benefits, as budgeted, shall continue while she or he is away. The framework for an extended study and renewal period shall adhere to the following:

1. Rostered persons and congregations or agencies contemplating extended study should consult with the synodical bishop and synodical guidelines early in the process. [We recommend Bullock, *Sabbatical Planning* (The Alban Institute, No. AL98) as a helpful planning resource.]
2. The plan shall be developed in the year prior to its beginning and involve the congregation or agency and colleague group. Proposals for the period are presented to the congregation council or supervisor six months before commencement. The rostered leader agrees to serve with the congregation or agency for at least one year following completion of the period. The congregation or agency assumes essential leadership roles or provides for interim leadership while the rostered person is away.
3. When the period begins, the rostered leader discontinues all leadership roles and personal interaction with members or constituents.
4. Within 90 days after the conclusion of the period, the rostered leader reports to the congregation, synodical bishop, and colleague group.
5. It is understood that the extended study and renewal period serves as all the continuing education time for that year.

We offer the following examples of possible extended study and renewal periods:

Example A

1. Length—One month;
2. Eligibility—Continuous service of three years in the present call.

For rostered persons involved in the First-Call Theological Education program, this three- to five-year period begins upon completion of that program.

Example B

1. Length—Three months;
2. Eligibility—Continuous service of three or more years in the present call.

For rostered persons involved in the First-Call Theological Education program, this three- to five-year period begins upon completion of that program.

Appendix D

Peer Review

“As a church engaged in mission, we believe that life-long learning will best serve the needs of . . . rostered leaders when there exists an environment in which . . . the rostered leaders enjoy supportive partnership with their . . . colleagues (“Envisioning Statement”).

Purpose and Rationale

Peer review offers rich opportunity for disciplined reflection to take place among rostered leaders as they move toward the next stage in their personal and vocational development. Participation in this process assumes that these objectives are operative:

1. the circle of accountability for the continuing development of rostered leaders is widened to include colleagues in ministry;
2. the premise of peers serving as learning partners within the context of dialogue, collaboration, and support is accented; and
3. a gathering designed to identify needs and goals for continuing development is held.

Potential Participants

The peer review team consists of three to five rostered leaders chosen by the person being reviewed. Ordinarily, these people have had occasions to interact spiritually and personally with one another as well as to observe each other in ministries.

Roles of Conversational Coordinator

This person, selected by the rostered leader, is asked to guide the peer review and thereby enable the rostered leader to concentrate more on the feedback given by peers than on group process. The conversational coordinator will be expected to serve as the convener of the session, set the tone for candid dialogue, keep the discussion focused, ensure that the group adheres to the agenda, and bring the session to closure.

Recommended Process

As the rostered leader and conversational coordinator plan the session, they will want to outline a proposed agenda for the two hour session. Balanced time should be reserved for focusing on concerns of personhood and leadership. Pertinent materials, including the agenda, can be distributed prior to the session.

A more structured approach could follow a well defined format that incorporates these items: comprehensive overview of past personal and professional activities, on-site observations made by parishioners or constituents, findings gleaned from evaluative surveys and questionnaires, and a proposal for future growth. A less structured approach could follow an informal format characterized by self reporting, low- key probing, and open ended suggestions. Regardless of the approach used, the session normally begins with worship and ends with fellowship.

Following the gathering, a summary is prepared by the rostered leader, with copies being mailed to participants and synodical representatives. Entries to be noted include: date, location, agenda, names of participants, climate of the review process, and steps to be undertaken.

Report of the Treasurer (and Mission Investment Fund)

Reference: *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section II, pages 41-81.

Bishop Anderson called on Mr. Richard L. McAuliffe, treasurer of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, to present his report. Using figures projected on the video screens, Mr. McAuliffe noted that there was an excess of revenue over expense in both the 1995 and 1996 fiscal years, saying that this excess has provided modest cash reserves which “give us the flexibility to support new mission opportunities and to deal with emergencies without reducing other programs. In addition, modest reserves allow us to continue to avoid paying interest on borrowed funds during seasonal declines in income.” He also reported, “Because of the increased revenue in 1996, including support from individuals, congregations, and synods, additional funds were provided for projects not included in the operating budget. Projects include a new congregation start and a redevelopment in Florida, resources for training in Christian education, a contemporary worship guide, a growing congregation grant, and special projects in Ethiopia, Namibia, Cameroon, Chile, Ghana, Nigeria, India, and Russia.”

Mr. McAuliffe pointed out that of the \$35 million increase in giving by individuals to congregations last year, \$33.5 million was utilized by congregations for operations, building repairs, improvements, local benevolence, and other miscellaneous expense; \$1.5 million of those dollars were passed on to the 65

ELCA synods and the churchwide organization. He commented, “Contributions to the ELCA World Hunger Appeal totaled \$11.8 million in 1996, a modest decrease of some \$200,000 from 1995. In addition, \$1.2 million was received in disaster relief funds in 1996.”

He asked, “How are we doing in fiscal 1997?” and answered that in the first five months of the 1997 fiscal year revenue has been about the same as forecast. Even though mission support has increased by about \$266,000 since the 1996 five-month period, total revenue was down mostly because of a decrease in bequests received. Expenditures have been within budget. World Hunger Program receipts so far in 1997 have been \$3.1 million, up \$100,000 from 1996. Receipts for ELCA Disaster Relief for 1997 now approximates \$1.9 million with Upper-Midwest flood relief being the major designee. In conclusion, Mr. McAuliffe observed, “If I were asked to summarize my personal feeling about the financial status of the churchwide organization, I would use the words ‘stable and improving.’”

Mission Investment Fund

Mr. McAuliffe then called on the Rev. Arnold O. Pierson of the Mission Investment Fund (MIF). Pastor Pierson reported a very positive financial outlook for the Mission Investment Fund, noting that it has obtained “record heights,” increasing to over \$280 million. He noted that investments have tripled from \$65 million in 1989 to over \$195 million in 1997 at the beginning of this assembly.

Pastor Pierson indicated that 71 percent of the money invested in the fund comes from congregations and organizations, that one in four ELCA congregations has invested in the fund, and that the other 29 percent comes from individuals and families, many of whom have invested college funds for their children or grandchildren or in mission Individual Retirement Accounts.

Invested funds are used for low-interest loans for ELCA congregations for construction of new church buildings and for expansion and renovation of existing facilities. In 1989, the Mission Investment Fund wrote 16 loans; in 1997, over 165 loans are anticipated. Currently, there are 530 active loans totaling more than \$185 million. Pastor Pierson commented that the “growing numbers are evidence of the strong partnership of ELCA mission investors and the Lutheran congregations whose places and spaces for the proclamation of the Gospel have been built through Mission Investment Fund loans.”

Elections: Report of the First Ballot for Vice President

Reference: continued on *Minutes*, pages 350, 380, 493, 546 .

Bishop Anderson called upon ELCA General Counsel Phillip H. Harris, chair of the Elections Committee, to present the report of the first ballot for vice president. Mr. Harris reported that 951 votes were cast on the first ballot. Of those votes, 36 were illegal votes; thus 915 legal votes were cast. He noted that to elect on the first ballot, 714 votes (75 percent of the total votes cast) are necessary. Because this was a nominating ballot, no names have been eliminated. After the second ballot all but the top seven names would be eliminated. He also pointed out that it was very important that each ballot contain the full proper name with the correct spelling as the Elections Committee would have no way of knowing whether or not a name on a ballot was legitimate. He said that nominees who wish to withdraw their name from consideration may do so at the podium and also invited persons to bring the full names of nominees with the correct spelling to the podium and noted that they would be published along with the names of those who have withdrawn. He then proceeded to read the results of the first ballot listed by number of votes received.

Before Mr. Harris began to read the names of nominees with one vote, an unidentified voting member suggested that the names of persons receiving only one nomination not be read. Mr. Harris stated that he would read the names of persons believed to be clergy who had received votes and therefore ineligible for this position. He asked that if any identified as clergy are not, that the Election Committee be so informed.

Name of Nominee	Votes Received		
		Helmke, Mark S.	13
Butler, Addie	105	Rehmel, Judy	12
Bowes, Terry	63	Weiser, Carol L.	12
Day, Barbara	57	Byrd, Gwendolyn	10
Yandala, Deborah S.	56	Dubler, Andrea	10
Scheie, Myrna	36	Price, Barbara	10
Bergquist, Lorrie	34	Dietz, Karen	9
Sheie, Myrna	33	McDowell, Gretchen	9
Swanson, Patricia E.	31	Ruthroff, Charles F.	9
Jurisson, Cynthia	28	Koenig, Steve	8
Jurison, Cynthia	22	Lohr, Edith	8
Rapp, W. Jeanne	21	Peña, Carlos	8
Garber, Judy	19	Carr, Gwen	7
Banks, James	16	Gregory, Effie	7
Pate, Sylvia J.	15	Shealy, Mary Ann W.	7

Chossek, Aleta	6	Litke, John	2	Hawkiks, Delphia	1	Reeder, Earlene	1
Andersen, Myrna	5	O'Rourke, Melissa	2	Honsey, Harris D.	1	Rehnquist, William	1
Diehl, William	5	Pfiefer, Karen	2	Jarsocrak, Lynda	1	Rehwaldt, Susan S.	1
Gustavson, Sandra	5	Rostberg, Sharon 2		Jerstad, Cynthia	1	Remenschneider, Connie	1
Heller, Mary	5	Schieve, Mary Jane	2	Jeurrisen, Cathy	1	Robertson, Gerald	1
Jurison, Cynthia	5	Seibert, Phyllis	2	Jirissan, Cynthia	1	Rosky, Theodore	1
Klever, Mark	5	Aarestad, Margaret	1	Johnson, Karen	1	Ross, Donald	1
Peterson, Beverly A.	5	Adams, Robert	1	Johnson, Larry	1	Rude, Brian D.	1
Peterson, Ralph B.K.	5	Ashton, Faith	1	Jones, Mary R.	1	Ruthroth, Charles	1
Sieben, Claire	5	Bailey, Raymonde	1	Jones, Virginia	1	Salatiello, Lynda	1
Brown, Keith	4	Billings, William	1	Juraasn, Cindy	1	Sandstrom, Dale V.	1
Frank, Ira	4	Blackmore, Josiah	1	Jurasan, Cindy	1	Saunders, Edward	1
Groshong, Bonny	4	Blomquist, Mary Lou	1	Jurrisen, Cynthia	1	Schae, Myrna	1
Jurisson, Cynthia 4		Braasch, Catherine	1	Kleaver, Mark	1	Shapiro, Sam	1
Quie, Al	4	Bruning, Abbie	1	Larson, Velma	1	Shea, Myrna	1
Ware, Gloria J.	4	Burdick, Twyla	1	Leegaard, Marj	1	Sheie (no first name)	1
Warren, Neva A.	4	Burke, Carol	1	Lindbeck, George	1	Silvis, Julie	1
Brakke, Rebecca	3	Butler, Ann	1	Lockhart, Linda	1	Sinniger, Rosemary R.	1
Hamlett, Leroy	3	Carpenter, Linda	1	Marple, Dorothy	1	Sites, Edward	1
Hurty, Kathleen	3	Carillo-Cotto, Mayra	1	Marquardt, Betty	1	Snell, Nancy	1
Melbye, Diane	3	Chadwick, Joanne	1	McCaskey, Jeanne	1	Soto-Rank, Ramona	1
Messick, Margaret	3	Couser, Sandra	1	Miller, Jan	1	Taly, Robert	1
Shie, Myrna	3	Crichlow, Livingston	1	Misseck, Margaret	1	Thomas, Christopher	1
Steele, Athornia	3	Deets, Karen	1	Moncur, Marie	1	Timmerwilke, John T.	1
Wood, Janet	3	Dockter, Roy	1	Myers, Jim	1	Wegner, Melinda R.	1
Alderfer, William	2	Dottie, Rietow	1	Nellermoe, Barbara H.	1	Williams, Louise	1
Brown, Linda	2	Ebbert, Daniel	1	Nelson, Cheryl	1	Zimmer, Renee	1
Buckner, Addie	2	Eckert, Ralph	1	Nybakken, Barbara	1		
Butler, Eddie	2	Engstrom, Marlene	1	Obregon, Pablo	1	<i>Ineligible nominees</i>	
Dahlke, Nanette	2	Enstrom, Edward	1	Okerlund, David D.	1	Anderson, Roger L.	1
Engelbrecht, William	2	Foutz, Marjorie	1	Olson, Betty	1	Christensen, Gerald	1
Freije, Merle	2	Gifford, Judy A.	1	Pfeifer, Karen	1	Delk, Thomas	1
Fricke, Nancy	2	Gottschalk, Patricia	1	Pfeiffer, Karen	1	Havel, Kirkwood J.	1
Graff, Cathy	2	Grindal, Gracia	1	Prbahakar, Esther K.	1	McCoid, Donald	1
Gregory, Solveig	2	Groshona, Bonnie	1	Pyle, Barbara	1	Opalinski, Fred S.	1
Hsia, Juliet	2	Guenther, Jean	1	Rank, Ramona	1	Schumacher, Frederick	1
Johnson, Cynthia P.	2	Halling, William	1				

An unidentified speaker indicated that he was aware of at least one person who had received multiple nominations, but whose name was not listed on the report. Mr. Harris said that the Elections Committee would consider the matter if information was provided to the committee. [See page 266 of these minutes for the correction on this matter.]

Bishop Peter Rogness [Greater Milwaukee Synod] asked whether it would be possible to receive the correct spellings for several of the nominees. Mr. Harris said that the Elections Committee was unable to make that determination, and asked that correct information be submitted to the Elections Committee.

Bishop Anderson declared that there was no election on the first ballot. He announced that the second ballot for vice president would take place at 2:50 P.M., on Saturday, August 16. He also reminded voting members that persons who have been nominated and who wish to withdraw their names must do so at this time by submitting the proper form to the secretary.

Recess

Bishop Anderson called upon Secretary Almen who made several announcements, including instructions regarding the luncheons for review of churchwide units. He also announced that the anniversary being observed in the Heritage and Hope Village would be the 50th of the *Lutheran Vespers* radio program.

Bishop Anderson then asked Ms. Lorraine (Lorrie) G. Bergquist, a member of the Church Council, to lead the assembly in a closing hymn, “Rise Up! O Saints of God,” and prayer.

Following the closing devotions, Bishop Anderson commended assembly members for their good debate during this plenary session and declared the assembly to be in recess until 2:30 P.M.

Plenary Session Four

Saturday, August 16, 1997

2:30 P.M.—6:00 P.M.

The Rev. H. George Anderson, presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, called Plenary Session Four to order at 2:30 P.M. on Saturday, August 16, 1997. Bishop Anderson reviewed the agenda for the plenary session.

Report of the Elections Committee

Bishop H. George Anderson called upon General Counsel Phillip H. Harris, chair of the Elections Committee, who apologized to Ms. Loretta Walker and the 24 voting members who nominated her for the position of ELCA vice president. He said that her name had been omitted from the report of the first ballot, but would be included on the second ballot.

Report of the Secretary

Reference: *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section II, pages 15-39.

Bishop H. George Anderson introduced Secretary Lowell G. Almen, who presented his report. Secretary Almen traced the history of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America since its Constituting Convention in 1987. He reminisced about the hectic months following his first election as secretary, as the few official staff kept up a “marathon and unremitting pace” to develop what became the ELCA office in Chicago. He described using furniture destined for the junkyard and detailed a process of desk assignment he called “midnight requisition.” He then summarized the theme and key issues of the five churchwide assemblies, recalling some of the highlights. Looking back on ten years, he observed that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has experienced a stability of baptized membership and number of congregations, opening about three dozen new parishes each year. He reported a total income for congregations of \$1.8 billion. He said he was troubled by the fact that fewer than one-third of ELCA members worship on any given Sunday. He told of the importance of practicing our unity in “how we do church.” He used as a theme a quotation, dating back to 1748, from Henry Melchior Mühlberg: “a twisted cord of many threads will not easily break.” The complete text of the secretary’s report follows:

“One Church—Many Threads”

Report of the Secretary to the Fifth Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, August 16, 1997

We have heard it before. We need to hear it again and again. Let it be repeated often. The salutary exhortation of Pastor Henry Melchior Mühlberg echoes across time. At that first assembly two and a half centuries ago, Pastor Mühlberg said to those who assembled here in Philadelphia in 1748, “A twisted cord of many threads will not easily break.” His note of unity was crucial for that historic moment. The same note of unity remains essential for our ongoing life together. “A twisted cord of many threads will not easily break.”

In a way, Mühlberg foreshadowed the first principle of organization for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. That principle is expressed in our governing documents in this way. “The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be one church.” This statement in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions* of our church underscores our unity in one shared confession of faith.

“A twisted cord of many threads will not easily break.” “The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be one church.” Both that touchstone of unity, on the one hand, and that principle of oneness, on the other, are significant. Those declarations and affirmations not only witness to unity in the faith that we believe, teach, and confess. The principle—“The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be one church”—also is significant in underscoring our character as a church within the whole Church of Jesus Christ.

We do not come here representing some *ad hoc* collection of randomly scattered congregations. We are a part of a church body. We assemble as the baptized members of this united church. In our gathering these days, we are mindful, indeed, that this year marks our church’s tenth anniversary. True, in the long-range span of the Church catholic, a decade is barely a flicker of the eyelid of history. A decade does not even represent a quick blink. Yet, we have come a long way together.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America was officially constituted on April 30, 1987. That happened as representatives of the three uniting churches came together in Columbus, Ohio. Two days later, I was chosen as the first secretary of this church. From that moment on, the marathon was under way at an unremitting pace for those early organizational efforts. We started then with little that would foreshadow what would become the new churchwide office in Chicago. To give you an idea of how basic was that beginning, I can tell you that I carried in my suitcase from Minneapolis some paper clips, file folders, pens, pencils, notepads, and paper for our infant office in Chicago.

While the interior of the Lutheran Center in Chicago was being built and furnished during that summer and fall of 1987, we used temporary space in an adjoining building. For that interim office, we had temporary desks, chairs, and

other equipment. Most of those temporary furnishings were on their way to the junk yard. They paused briefly in their journey to serve us. As the initial staff came together in the fall of 1987 in that temporary space, there was good motivation to get to work early. That way, you could be assured of having a chair—as long as you remained seated. When a newly arriving executive director asked me how she should go about getting a desk, I replied, “The system that seems to work best is midnight requisition.” That is, “if no one is sitting at the desk or on the desk, it is yours.” To obtain a phone, I advised someone, “Grab the first one that is not already ringing.” Oh yes, those were the days—days best lived only once.

It was a relief to move into the completed facilities at 8765 West Higgins Road on December 14, 1987. We few original pioneers from the summer and fall of 1987 can now recall with humor our temporary space but those recollections also remind us of how grateful we can be for the Lutheran Center in Chicago. The facilities of the churchwide office have served this church well. That place has been a good setting to accomplish the responsibilities entrusted to those of us who minister there on your behalf.

Clearly, the rapidly evolving weeks of 1987 were a time of dealing with the fundamentals—dealing with what had to be done quickly and effectively. One of the first tasks that faced us in 1987 was finding an available site for the first Churchwide Assembly, an assembly that was then only two years hence. To give voting members of the first assembly an opportunity to visit the new churchwide office, Chicago was chosen as the city for that first assembly. The only available space was found nearby in the O’Hare Exposition Center at Rosemont, Ill. The assembly was held on Wednesday, August 23, through Wednesday, August 30, 1989. That first assembly celebrated our unity as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The theme of that first assembly was “Many Voices, One Song.”

As to the geography of our church, the first assembly was held in Region 5; for the second assembly, the venue shifted to Region 9 in the southeastern part of this church. That second assembly met on August 28 through September 4, 1991, in Orlando, Fla. The assembly’s theme was “See, Grow, Serve—to the Glory of God.” Already, by the time of that assembly, the need for refinement in the design and operation of the churchwide organization was evident. The secretary fulfilled the responsibility of preparing the narrative description and revised continuing resolutions on the responsibilities of churchwide units. Among the strategic decisions of that Orlando assembly were two policy statements. One was the adoption of the document, “Ecumenism—The Vision of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.” That document set forth this church’s commitment to the ecumenical endeavor. The statement also embraced the basic definition of the meaning of “full communion” in the life of the Church. The second historic document from that assembly set a healthy tone for moral reflection on a difficult issue in society. That second assembly adopted this church’s “Social Statement on Abortion.”

I found a humorous reminder and a lesson in rapid change at the end of the Orlando assembly. A sign stood just outside the hotel lobby where we had met for the assembly. The sign was being changed to welcome the next group. When I spotted the sign, it read: “Welcome Evangelical Lutheran Yamaha Motors.” Now, that would have been an interesting merger.

Region 4 became the venue for the next assembly. Voting members gathered in the heartland of the United States. The third Churchwide Assembly met in Kansas City, Mo., on August 25 through September 1, 1993. The theme was “Rooted in the Gospel for Witness and Service.” That assembly demonstrated the promise of renewed vitality and vigorous hope; clearly, this church was looking toward the future with strength and courage for the mission and ministry that God has given to us. Special attention was devoted at that third assembly to receiving the results of the Study of Ministry. In that connection, emphasis was given to ministry in daily life, to the definition of our lay rostered ministries, and to the constitutive work of pastors in the life of our church. Also at the 1993 Churchwide Assembly, two social statements were adopted. Those two social statements—one called, “Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity, and Culture;” and the other, “Caring for Creation”—both were strongly affirmed by the voting members in Kansas City.

By the time of the fourth Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, an adjustment was made in the assembly’s schedule in two ways. First, the dates were moved to earlier in August; and second, the number of days for the assembly was reduced from eight to seven. The reduction of one day was undertaken at the request of some synods and also the Conference of Bishops. That fourth Churchwide Assembly was held in Region 3 in Minneapolis, Minn., on August 16 through 22, 1995. The theme inaugurated a sequence of coordinated themes for our assemblies. The theme of the 1995 assembly underscored our mission as members, congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization. That theme in 1995 was “Making Christ Known.”

At the Minneapolis assembly, key decisions were made on the future direction of theological education for our church. A social statement on peace was approved. Furthermore, Presiding Bishop H. George Anderson was elected to a six-year term. Also at the Minneapolis assembly, for the second time in the life of this church, the secretary was reelected on the first ballot and I continue to express my gratitude for that affirmation of my work on your behalf.

Throughout this decade, I can assure you that I have been conscious of this fact—the fact that I was elected by voting members from throughout this whole church. I have sought to understand clearly and practice well such accountability. Let me say, therefore, that I am deeply grateful—grateful for the ways in which my election and accountability have been affirmed over this decade throughout congregations and synods of this church. Profoundly moving have been the repeated assurances of prayer and greatly appreciated have been the gracious words

of encouragement—words that have come from many of you and others like you throughout the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Now we gather here in Philadelphia. We assemble mindful of our heritage and hope. In this city, not far from where we are now meeting, the first Lutheran synod in North America was organized two and a half centuries ago. We can heed this day the truth that we walk in the footsteps of giants. We walk in grateful remembrance of the faith, dedication, vision, commitment, witness, and service of our forebears. Through their courage and faithfulness in their time, we now benefit from a strong and hearty heritage—a heritage that can guard us against fear and timidity; a heritage that can give us courage for the opportunities and gifts of the future. As our forebears trusted God in their time, as they ventured without fear into the mission to which God summoned them in their time, so now we can venture forth in hope and confidence. For we continue to be summoned to make Christ known; and in making Christ known, we show that we are, indeed, alive in our heritage and hope!

Looking back on our ten years together, we can offer some basic observations. One prominent fact has been the general stability in membership for ELCA congregations. Contrary to the predictions of some folks a decade ago and unlike the experiences of some other church bodies, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America witnessed growth in membership for a couple of years and only slight membership decline in other years. Further, the number of congregations has remained basically stable too, with slight change year after year. The change is the result of consolidations and mergers by some congregations, the dissolution of a few congregations who have completed their ministry, and the starting of some three dozen new congregations a year. For 1996, the 10,936 congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America reported a baptized membership of 5.2 million people. The total income of ELCA congregations in 1996 reached \$1.8 billion, up \$80 million from the previous year. In the parochial statistics each year, however, we see a troubling fact. On average, only 30 percent of our baptized members are in worship on a given Sunday. That is less than one-third of our members. Such limited participation needs to be a matter of ongoing concern.

As to specific observations related to my work on your behalf, I assure you that much attention has been devoted in the Office of the Secretary to care for historical records of our church. These endeavors included consolidation of the archives of our predecessor churches. We also have undertaken a major project in the historical preservation of the records of cooperative Lutheranism entrusted to us. Further, in the preparation of minutes and other documents in this past decade, we have sought to provide substantial detail. We have been committed to preparing a thorough picture for subsequent generations of our life together.

Ten years ago, when the Lutheran Center in Chicago was being finished, I looked ahead. In so doing, I recognized the rapidly emerging developments in computer technology. So, in accord with my responsibilities, I made certain that

the Lutheran Center included wiring for computer networks. Even that technical and practical step I saw as a reflection of our interdependence and unity within the life of our church. Now, as a result of those early actions, a wide variety of information is accessible from the churchwide office through your own computer wherever you may be. Ten years ago, I knew that we could not just dream about technology. We had to learn how to use those developments effectively as servants of the members, congregations, and synods of this church.

Yes, we in this decade have come a long way together. We recognize the fact that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is not an *ad hoc* association. That awareness is important for a true understanding of our life together. We are a church body. And as one body, we seek to reflect our unity not only in our confession of faith; we also seek to practice that unity in the way that we “do” church, that is, the way we operate as a church body. As stated in our governing documents, “This church shall seek to function as people of God through congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization, all of which shall be interdependent.” Then is declared the commitment to our living and working together through the three primary expressions of this church—congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization. “Each part, while fully the Church, recognizes that it is not the whole Church and therefore lives in a partnership relationship with the others.”

Indeed, “a twisted cord of many threads will not easily break.” Woven together into the Evangelical Lutheran in America are most of the threads of Lutheran history and heritage in North America. We are braided together for strength in mission. To nurture our sense of mission together, I have pursued a particular step. I have tried consistently to teach and foster a cohesive, common understanding of the particular polity of this church. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America reflects continuity with its predecessor church bodies—that is true. But, the particular polity of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America also represents a growing maturity in our Lutheran understanding of the Church planted in North America. Therefore, prompted by various requests over the past decade, I set my hand to preparing a resource for our life together. I put fingers to the keyboard and mind to the task. In so doing, I explored the way in which we in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America are summoned to live, work, and serve together. The result was published just last month. I hope that *One Great Cloud of Witnesses* contributes in wholesome ways to a deeper understanding of the mission and ministry that we share.

Time does not permit me to offer a more detailed survey of the work over the past decade. Much more could be said. Deeper, more extensive reflections could be offered. In these brief span of years, however, clearly much has happened. That is most certainly true. We have discovered together in profound ways this truth: the truth that we are one church, one church of many threads—beautiful and strong threads, all braided and woven tightly together. Oh yes, “a twisted cord of many threads will not easily break.” Walking in the footsteps of our forebears, we in our

time are now called anew to make Christ known. Indeed, through Christ, we are alive in our heritage and hope!

So as secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, I say to you this day, Glory be to God! And to all of you assembled here, I say thank you.

Appendix A to the Report of the Secretary

Additions to the Roster of Ordained Ministers 1995-1996

1991 to 1994 Corrections

The following persons were added to the roster of ordained ministers prior to 1995. The additions, however, were not reported in the minutes of the 1993 or 1995 churchwide assemblies.

Name	City/State	Admitted	Date	Region/ Synod
Eglite, Sarma A.	Brookline, Mass.	Received	09/01/91	7B
			from Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada	
Vang, Youa K.	Milwaukee, Wis.	Ordained	01/24/93	5J
Mohr, Donald H.	Armour, S.D.	Received	10/07/94	3C
			from The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod	

1995

Aguilar, Corazon G.	Hayward, Calif.	Ordained	09/09/95	2A
Allen, Sue E.	Palatine, Ill.	Ordained	08/13/95	5A
Amundson, Mary Laymon	Clear Spring, Md.	Ordained	11/26/95	8F
Amundson, Steven B.	Clear Spring, Md.	Ordained	12/10/95	8F
Anderson, Charlotte A.	Damon, Texas	Ordained	07/22/95	4F
Anderson, Ellen M.	Ashfield, Pa.	Ordained	07/16/95	7E
Anderson ¹ , Jennifer A.	West Des Moines, Iowa	Ordained	05/21/95	5D
Anderson, Linda L.	Luray, Va.	Ordained	03/19/95	9A
Anderson, Rochelle L.	Brenham, Texas	Ordained	07/30/95	4F
Anderson, Rosanne M.	Taylor, Mich.	Ordained	08/27/95	6A
Anderson, Russell C.	Fosston, Minn.	Reinstated	07/20/95	3D
Anderson, Scott J.	Wharton, Texas	Ordained	07/22/95	4F
Anderson, Thomas J.	Anoka, Minn.	Ordained	06/11/95	3G
Ankerfelt, Daniel D.	Verona, Wis.	Ordained	09/24/95	5K
Anthony, Mary G.	Olin, Iowa	Ordained	07/09/95	5D

Baase, Marc A.	Columbia, Pa.	Received	03/15/95	8D
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¹ Name later changed to Jennifer Anderson Koenig.

		from The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod			Christensen, Timothy B.	Great Falls, Mont.	Ordained	07/16/95	1F
Bakken, Eric E.	Cokato, Minn.	Ordained	10/01/95	3F	Church, Ann Rowe	Annapolis, Md.	Ordained	07/23/95	8F
Baldukas, David J.	La Crosse, Wis.	Ordained	06/25/95	5L	Clagg, Gregory S.	Linthicum Heights, Md.	Ordained	06/25/95	8F
Banwart, Keith G. Jr.	Glendale, Calif.	Ordained	02/18/95	2B	Clark, Kevin L.	Vermillion, S.D.	Ordained	07/02/95	3C
Bateson, John G.	Bridgeport, Ohio	Ordained	02/12/95	6F	Clark, Lawrence J.	Chicago, Ill.	Ordained	09/10/95	5A
Baumann, Richard B.	Jacksonville, Fla.	Ordained	05/06/95	9E	Clites, Daniel D.	Cannon Falls, Minn.	Ordained	08/27/95	3I
Baumgartner, Mia J.	Hopkins, Minn.	Ordained	11/18/95	3G	Collier, Morsal O.	Detroit, Mich.	Received	07/01/95	6A
Beamsley, Christopher T.	Leland, Ill.	Ordained	06/17/95	5B					
Belgum-Blad, Daniel J.	Aneta, N.D.	Ordained	06/11/95	3B	Conway, Beverly L.	Chicago, Ill.	Ordained	12/17/95	5A
Bembenek, Lane D.	Lone Star, S.C.	Ordained	06/23/95	9C	Cotner, Beverly D.	South Williamsport, Pa.	Ordained	11/26/95	8E
Bement, George D.	The Woodlands, Texas	Reinstated	02/01/95	4F	Cox, Douglas S.	Riverdale, Md.	Ordained	08/13/95	8G
Bengtson, Beth S.	St. Paul, Minn.	Ordained	10/01/95	3H	Crabb, Robert L.	Bronx, N.Y.	Ordained	02/26/95	7C
Bengtson, Carl R.	Los Banos, Calif.	Reinstated	07/25/95	2A	Croghan, Christopher M.	Saint Charles, Minn.	Ordained	10/01/95	3I
Beresford, Thulisiwe N.	Flint, Mich.	Ordained	12/16/95	6A	Crowell, Susan J.	Greenville, S.C.	Ordained	05/26/95	9C
Berg, M. Elaine	Endicott, N.Y.	Ordained	12/16/95	7D					
Bergren, Arthur C.	Rockford, Ill.	Ordained	08/13/95	5B	Dahle, Ronald B.	Williston, N.D.	Ordained	08/13/95	3A
Bernard, Timothy L.	Champion, Mich.	Ordained	06/11/95	5G	D'Aprile, Jan T.	Drexel Hill, Pa.	Ordained	12/30/95	7F
Beste, Anita W.	Cambridge, Minn.	Ordained	09/03/95	3G	Dardon, Diane R. Schmit	Waterloo, Iowa	Ordained	10/20/95	5F
Bitler, David A.	Duluth, Minn.	Reinstated	09/12/95	3E	Davick, Bradley W.	Naperville, Ill.	Ordained	07/09/95	5A
Bjorge, Nathan J.	Dresser, Wis.	Ordained	01/01/95	5H	Davoll, John W.	Upper Sandusky, Ohio	Ordained	07/08/95	6D
Blank, Paul L.	Timonium, Md.	Ordained	07/16/95	8F	Deal, Donna T.	Ferndale, Pa.	Ordained	10/14/95	7F
Bobb ² , Lisa A.	Walkersville, Md.	Ordained	10/29/95	8F	Dean, Timothy W.	Chicago, Ill.	Ordained	10/01/95	5A
Boettcher, Ruth A.	Beatrice, Neb.	Ordained	06/18/95	4A	Deckinger, Brian J.	Milan, Ind.	Ordained	07/15/95	6C
Bonham, Michael R.	Chattanooga, Tenn.	Ordained	07/23/95	9D	De Laurier-O'Neil, Alice	Tracy, Calif.	Ordained	05/07/95	2A
Bonner, Connie M.	Edgewood, Ky.	Ordained	10/21/95	6C	De Long, James A.	Lebanon, Pa.	Received	05/01/95	8D
Bouvier, Gregory S.	Wymore, Neb.	Ordained	08/26/95	4A					
Bradshaw, George R.	Jersey Shore, Pa.	Ordained	02/26/95	8E	Delvin, Sheri L.	Walnut Creek, Calif.	Ordained	08/26/95	2A
Brady, H. Wayne	Perth Amboy, N.J.	Ordained	06/25/95	7A	Deutsch, Daniel E.	Alpena, Mich.	Received	10/01/95	6B
Brandfass, David W.	Rio, Wis.	Ordained	09/10/95	5K					
Breckenridge, M. Sarah	Mahtomedi, Minn.	Ordained	04/22/95	3H	Diaz-Cabello, Neris	Pomona, Calif.	Ordained	01/15/95	2C
Brents, Scott E.	Bellingham, Wash.	Ordained	07/02/95	1B	Doherty, James W.	Edmonds, Wash.	Ordained	04/02/95	1B
Bricker, James P.	McAlisterville, Pa.	Reinstated	03/20/95	8E	Domeier, Debra L.	Perrysville, Ohio	Ordained	09/30/95	6E
Brown, Alan M.	Georgetown, S.C.	Ordained	06/10/95	9C	Donovan, John T.	Hesperia, Calif.	Ordained	06/18/95	2B
Brown, Todd C.	Rantoul, Ill.	Ordained	08/13/95	5C	Douglass, Katherine E.	Johnstown, Pa.	Ordained	01/14/95	8C
Brzowsky, Richard T.	Centralia, Ill.	Ordained	07/02/95	5C	Dukes, Charles H.	Scott Depot, Va.	Ordained	12/17/95	8H
Byrne, Robert T.	Stanley, N.C.	Ordained	05/19/95	9B	Dull, Eric J. J.	Ocean Park, Wash.	Ordained	07/09/95	1C
					DuMars, Virginia A.	San Jose, Calif.	Ordained	05/27/95	2A
Camp, Cindy G.	Schuylkill Haven, Pa.	Ordained	07/16/95	7E	Duminy, Alan E.	Aurora, Neb.	Ordained	07/08/95	4A
Camp, Gordon A.	Pine Grove, Pa.	Ordained	11/05/95	7E	Duminy, Shari A.	Hampton, Neb.	Ordained	09/30/95	4A
Campbell, Carolyn E.	Dalton, Neb.	Ordained	06/20/95	4A					
Campbell, George J.	Wichita, Kan.	Ordained	06/03/95	4B	Eddy, Richard G.	Corning, N.Y.	Ordained	12/02/95	7D
Carlson, Jeffrey K.	Glenwood Springs, Colo.	Ordained	04/23/95	2E	Eggert, Nancy J.	Alexandria, Va.	Ordained	11/12/95	8G
Carlson, Paul H.	Walnut Grove, Minn.	Ordained	07/09/95	3F	Ehrets, Sara K.	Jim Thorpe, Pa.	Ordained	12/24/95	7E
Casillas, Alan	Orchard Lake, Mich.	Ordained	09/24/95	6A	Eisenbraun, Helmut H.	Nevada, Mo.	Reinstated	12/03/95	4B
Challis, Pamela J.	Barrington, Ill.	Ordained	11/19/95	5A	Engquist, Debra R.	Lakewood, Colo.	Ordained	07/09/95	2E
Chancellor, David C.	Bellaire, Texas	Ordained	09/03/95	4F	Erdal, Paul J.	Billings, Mont.	Ordained	06/04/95	1F
					Erdmann, Kristine J.	Milwaukee, Wis.	Ordained	05/27/95	5J
					Evensen, Katherine A.	Saint Paul, Minn.	Ordained	03/24/95	3H

² Name later changed to Lisa A. Bobb Hair.

Fabie, Jo Ann	Rockdale, Wis.	Ordained	01/06/95	5K	Heffelfinger, Harry L. Jr.	Kutztown, Pa.	Ordained	07/16/95	7E
Feig, Erik W.	Tucson, Ariz.	Ordained	09/24/95	2D	Henderson, Thomas M.	Longwood, Fla.	Ordained	09/02/95	9E
Fidlar, Stacie R.	Seneca, Ill.	Ordained	09/16/95	5B	Henderson, Robert R.	Youngstown, Ohio	Ordained	08/06/95	6E
Fiksdal, Stephen A.	Peterson, Minn.	Ordained	08/13/95	3I	Hendricks, Patricia D.	Littlestown, Pa.	Ordained	10/13/95	8D
Fisher, Martha R.	Centerburg, Ohio	Ordained	08/06/95	6F	Henke, Linda W.	Denver, Colo.	Ordained	12/09/95	2E
Fisher, Nancy D. A.	Augusta, Ill.	Ordained	06/11/95	5C	Henning, Jill L.	Lilburn, Ga.	Ordained	06/25/95	9D
Fisher, Thad W.	Golden, Ill.	Ordained	07/08/95	5C	Henning, Matthew W.	Alpharetta, Ga.	Ordained	10/01/95	9D
Fossen, Michael J.	Mc Grath, Minn.	Ordained	07/16/95	3E	Henning, Troy M.	St. Paul, Minn.	Ordained	11/04/95	3H
Franz, Christopher J.	Clifton Heights, Pa.	Ordained	12/12/95	7F	Herzfeldt-Kamprath,	Klamath Falls, Ore.	Received	03/06/95	1E
Frantz, Donald E. II	Wilmington, Ohio	Ordained	06/18/95	6F	Donna L.		from Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada		
Frey, Gregory W.	Weatherly, Pa.	Ordained	07/16/95	7E	Herzfeldt-Kamprath,	Klamath Falls, Ore.	Received	03/06/95	1E
Friend, Diana L.	Shiloh, Ohio	Ordained	06/18/95	6E	Timothy P.		from Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada		
Fritz, David A.	Memphis, Tenn.	Ordained	07/23/95	9D	Hocker, Laura L.	Nashville, Tenn.	Ordained	09/16/95	9D
Frizzell, Thomas K. Jr.	Monterey, Calif.	Ordained	10/08/95	2A	Hoh, Daniel W.	Mattydale, N.Y.	Ordained	03/12/95	7D
Frohs, Mary A.	Potter, Neb.	Ordained	01/14/95	4A	Hoh, Pamela J.	Mattydale, N.Y.	Ordained	03/12/95	7D
Fugate, M. Terrell Jr.	Brunswick, Ga.	Ordained	07/02/95	9D	Holliday, Lisa Stanwich	Carteret, N.J.	Ordained	06/25/95	7A
					Holste, Donna P.	Woodville, Wis.	Ordained	06/11/95	5H
Garcia, Polo	Woodburn, Ore.	Ordained	07/22/95	1E	Holte, Paul L.	Rosendale, Wis.	Reinstated	02/13/95	5I
Gauche, Nancy L.	Burnsville, Minn.	Ordained	10/01/95	3H	Holthusen, T. Lance	Lake Lillian, Minn.	Reinstated	06/09/95	3F
Gibbs, Mark D.	Lafayette, Ind.	Ordained	04/01/95	6C	Hopp, Cynthia M.	Hazel Run, Minn.	Ordained	07/09/95	3F
Gibson, Kenneth D.	Chassell, Mich.	Ordained	06/05/95	5G	Hormann, Phyllis I.	Port Huron, Mich.	Ordained	07/29/95	6A
Gilbert, Arthur A.	Philadelphia, Pa.	Ordained	05/31/95	7F	Hove, Scott K.	Las Vegas, Nev.	Ordained	06/25/95	2D
Gilbert, Tricia L.	Sunberg, Minn.	Ordained	10/29/95	3F	Hughes, Sharon L.	Portland, Maine	Ordained	07/23/95	7B
Gilbreath, Jerry A.	Spencer, Neb.	Ordained	05/30/95	4A	Hyland, Heidi L.	Springfield, Ill.	Ordained	12/31/95	5C
Glamm, Carl W.	Taylor, Wis.	Ordained	10/15/95	5H					
Goitia-Padilla, Francisco J.	Dorado, Puerto Rico	Ordained	06/03/95	9F	Ilten, Jay R.	Guttenberg, Iowa	Ordained	10/29/95	5F
Goodrich, Matthew L.	Endicott, Wash.	Ordained	07/30/95	1D					
Grady, Rayford J.	Rockford, Ill.	Ordained	01/08/95	5B	Jacobson, Jeffrey S.	Lake, Benton, Minn.	Ordained	12/03/95	3F
Graeser, James E. Jr.	Orange Park, Fla.	Ordained	07/16/95	9E	Jacoby, Thomas C.	Shepherdstown, W.Va.	Ordained	06/25/95	8H
Graul, Douglas E.	Peak, S.C.	Ordained	07/09/95	9C	James, Jill E.	Chicago, Ill.	Ordained	04/01/95	5A
Groettum, Kip A.	Boxholm, Iowa	Ordained	10/29/95	5E	James, Karen L.	Baltimore, Ohio	Ordained	08/27/95	6F
Gutzmann, Brian K.	Santa Barbara, Calif.	Ordained	01/08/95	2B	Jarrett, Beth M.D.	Ocean Park, Wash.	Ordained	07/30/95	1C
					Jasch, Stephen R.	Grinnell, Iowa	Received	06/01/955D	
									from Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada
Hafterson, Craig R.	Valier, Mont.	Ordained	09/16/95	1F	Jensen, Kevin L.	Toledo, Ohio	Ordained	03/12/95	6D
Hagander, Sonja M.	Cedar, Minn.	Ordained	06/04/95	3G	Jerdee, Sylvia A.	Orr, Minn.	Ordained	09/24/95	3E
Haldeman, Bond R.	Iron Ridge, Wis.	Ordained	08/27/95	5K	Jewell, Barbara B.	Daykin, Neb.	Ordained	06/22/95	4A
Hall, David L.	Hatton, N.D.	Ordained	09/24/95	3B	Johnson, David L.	Goodrich, N.D.	Ordained	07/15/95	3A
Halverson, Kyle Wiersma	Chicago, Ill.	Ordained	07/09/95	5A	Johnson, Virginia E.	Tacoma, Wash.	Ordained	02/05/95	1C
Halvorson, Laurel E.	Champion, Mich.	Ordained	06/25/95	5G	Jones, Janet C.	Beloit, Wis.	Ordained	05/27/95	5K
Hamilton, Penelope A.	Wenonah, N.J.	Ordained	06/25/95	7A	Jones, Stephen T.	Beaver Falls, Pa.	Ordained	06/13/95	8B
Handrich, Kurt O.	Blanchardville, Wis.	Ordained	08/26/95	5K	Jordan, Kimberly A.	Dagus Mines, Pa.	Ordained	06/11/95	8A
Hang, Shongchai	Philadelphia, Pa.	Ordained	12/14/95	7F	Jordan, Lindsay P.	Ridgway, Pa.	Ordained	06/04/95	8A
Hansel, Karen M.	Darien, Ill.	Ordained	01/14/95	5A	Juhl, John D.	Pembina, N.D.	Ordained	01/15/95	3B
Hansen, Barbara K.	Luray, Va.	Ordained	11/05/95	9A	Juliot, Mark A.	Pontiac, Ill.	Ordained	07/30/95	5C
Hansen, Kurt A.	Belleville, Wis.	Ordained	08/13/95	5K					
Happel, Kent A.	Prairie Du Chien, Wis.	Ordained	06/04/95	5L	Kadel, Thomas E.	Mainland, Pa.	Reinstated	06/21/95	7F
Haspel-Schoenfeld, Hans P.	Bristol, Conn.	Ordained	10/22/95	7B	Kao, Sampson S.	Cupertino, Calif.	Received	04/27/95	2A
Haynes, Phyllis S.	Narrowsburg, N.Y.	Ordained	11/26/95	7C					from the Church of Christ-Thailand
Hedman, Douglas V.	Abercrombie, N.D.	Ordained	06/25/95	3B					

Kashork, James E.	Houston, Texas	Ordained	07/02/95	4F				Indigenous Church		
Kauppi, Nancy A.	Wilmot, S.D.	Ordained	09/10/95	3C	Meyer, Deanna W.	Harrisburg, Ill.	Ordained	05/14/95	5C	
Kaye, Karen A.	Gothenburg, Neb.	Ordained	07/01/95	4A	Meyer, Kevin J.	Seguin, Texas	Ordained	04/30/95	4E	
Kenosian, Mary L.	Wellsburg, Iowa	Ordained	02/19/95	5E	Michelsen, Heidi A.	San Salvador, El Salvador	Ordained	05/21/95	2A	
Kessinger, Sandra J.	Pittsburgh, Pa.	Ordained	06/17/95	8B	Milks, Linda C.	Seattle, Wash.	Ordained	05/14/95	1B	
Kieser, Mary F.	Woodbridge, Va.	Ordained	02/26/95	8G	Miller, John R. Jr.	Ellendale, Minn.	Ordained	04/09/95	3I	
Kinney, Kathleen M.	Craig, Iowa	Ordained	06/11/95	5E	Miller, Matthew L.	Kannapolis, N.C.	Ordained	05/19/95	9B	
Kinsey, R. Alan	Gouldsboro, Pa.	Ordained	08/27/95	7E	Morgan, Roosevelt	Milwaukee, Wis.	Ordained	10/01/95	5J	
Knutson, Brian K.	Harlowton, Mont.	Ordained	07/30/95	1F	Morgenstern, Maryann	Sidney, Mont.	Ordained	05/28/95	1F	
Kraft, O. Ralph Jr.	Spencer, N.C.	Ordained	10/08/95	9B	Morrissey, William D.	Lima, Ohio	Reinstated	12/10/95	6D	
Kratzer, E. Christopher	Sarasota, Fla.	Ordained	06/18/95	9E	Morrow, Constance M.	Kensington, Kan.	Ordained	07/23/95	4B	
Krogh, Steven D.	Los Alamitos, Calif.	Ordained	07/02/95	2C	Moser, Dawn M.	Lennox, S.D.	Ordained	12/16/95	3C	
Krueger, Marie K.	Mount Wolf, Pa.	Ordained	06/09/95	8D	Muehlbrad, Paul L.	Victoria, Texas	Ordained	07/09/95	4E	
Kurtz, Charles F.	Valders, Wis.	Ordained	08/06/95	5I	Mullen, Patrick S.	Atlantic Beach, N.C.	Ordained	10/01/95	9B	
					Murray, Eric L.	Oglethorpe, Ga.	Ordained	06/25/95	9D	
Larson, Kathryn E.	Carpenter, Iowa	Ordained	06/24/95	5F						
Larson, M. Suzanne	Williamsburg, Pa.	Ordained	07/09/95	8C	Nelsen, Todd A.	Ceylon, Minn.	Ordained	03/26/95	3F	
Leber, Lisa M.	Gettysburg, Pa.	Ordained	10/13/95	8D	Nelson, Michael F.	Cass Lake, Minn.	Ordained	08/27/95	3E	
Lefsrud, Sigurd O.	Kalispell, Mont.	Ordained	07/30/95	1F	Nguyen, Ha Xuan	Westminster, Calif.	Ordained	12/10/95	2C	
Leifeste, Sandra J.	Minden, Neb.	Ordained	06/24/95	4A	Nickel, Pamela J.	Taylor, N.D.	Ordained	09/03/95	3A	
Lemme, JoAnn E.	Flandreau, S.D.	Ordained	07/09/95	3C	Nilsen, Erika R.	Aitkin, Minn.	Ordained	07/16/95	3E	
Lemme, Timothy S.	Sherman, S.D.	Ordained	08/13/95	3C	Niskanen, Blaine O.	Marshalltown, Iowa	Ordained	04/02/95	5D	
Leske Oppedahl ³ , Paul D.	Eau Claire, Wis.	Ordained	11/04/95	5H	Nycklemoe, Katherine J.	Milwaukee, Wis.	Ordained	05/14/95	5J	
Lewis, Kelly Griffith	West Branch, Iowa	Ordained	07/22/95	5D						
Linderman, Michael C.	Succasunna, N.J.	Ordained	10/01/95	7A	O' Berg, Michael C.	La Habra, Calif.	Ordained	04/23/95	2C	
Lindhorst, Timothy W.	Montevideo, Minn.	Ordained	09/10/95	3F	Obregon, J. Pablo	Willmar, Minn.	Ordained	01/08/95	3F	
Lloyd, Arlen R.	Gatzke, Minn.	Ordained	07/30/95	3D	Odgren, Jeffrey W.	Nescopeck, Pa.	Ordained	07/16/95	7E	
Luna, Alfredo R.	Chicago, Ill.	Received	10/01/95	5A	Olkiewicz, Christopher D.	Des Moines, Iowa	Ordained	06/18/95	5D	
					Olson, David G.	Manly, Iowa	Ordained	10/08/95	5F	
Lund, Barbara J.	Tokyo, Japan	Ordained	07/16/95	5H	Olson, Erik A.	Fort Atkinson, Wis.	Ordained	08/06/95	5K	
Lundgren, Dean A.	Cannon Falls, Minn.	Ordained	06/25/95	3I	Olson, Margie A.	Canoga Park, Calif.	Ordained	08/13/95	2B	
Lundquist, Mary J.	Evansville, Ind.	Ordained	09/10/95	6C	Ostercamp, Daniel P.	Shevlin, Minn.	Ordained	10/14/95	3D	
Mach, Deborah L.	Glendive, Mont.	Ordained	11/19/95	1F	Palmer, Glenn A.	Rockland, Maine	Ordained	07/23/95	7B	
Martin, Russell L.	Columbus, Ohio	Ordained	09/09/95	6F	Pearson, Bradley A.	Black Creek, Wis.	Ordained	09/17/95	5I	
Mathisen, Richard A.	Dunellen, N.J.	Ordained	10/01/95	7A	Pedersen, Jon W.	Managua, Nicaragua	Ordained	06/11/95	2D	
Matz, Linda L.	Fargo, N.D.	Ordained	11/12/95	3B	Pepelnjak, Dale J.	Burlington, N.D.	Ordained	07/01/95	3A	
Maul, Traci L.	Baltimore, Md.	Ordained	07/06/95	8F	Pete, Lois L.	Oakland, Calif.	Ordained	06/24/95	2A	
McGuire, Patrick J. M.	Dunnellon, Fla.	Ordained	03/19/95	9E	Peters, James E.	La Junta, Colo.	Received	10/15/95	2E	
McIntyre, Terry L.	Chicago, Ill.	Ordained	04/01/95	5A						from the Roman Catholic Church
Melaas-Swanson, Barbara J.	Romeoville, Ill.	Received	06/12/95	5B	Peterson, Carol A.	Bay City, Wis.	Ordained	08/27/95	5H	
					Peterson, Mary E.	Owatonna, Minn.	Ordained	09/24/95	3I	
					Pietz, Thomas M.	Blooming Prairie, Minn.	Ordained	06/29/95	3I	
Menter, Keith A.	Ord, Neb.	Ordained	03/26/95	4A	Poole, Donald J. Jr.	Dongola, Ill.	Ordained	02/12/95	5C	
Mentzer, Timothy A.	Wadsworth, Ohio	Ordained	09/09/95	6E	Prois, Rodger C.	St. George, Utah	Ordained	06/25/95	2E	
Mesenbring, David G.	Fort Lauderdale, Fla.	Received	04/24/95	9E						
										from Saint Paul's Faith Mission African
					Quetel, Louis J.	Joliet, Ill.	Received	01/08/95	5B	
										from the Baptist Church

³ Name later changed to Paul D. Oppedahl.

Rappold, William G.	Altoona, Pa.	Reinstated	03/24/95	8C	Sternberg, Terrie L.	Pulaski, VA	Ordained	10/01/95	9A
Ray, Kenneth L.	Cary, N.C.	Ordained	05/19/95	9B	Stricklin, Melvina V.	Upperco, Md.	Ordained	08/27/95	8F
Reed, Michael L.	Turtle Creek, Pa.	Ordained	06/24/95	8B	Stubbs, LeAnn D.	Des Moines, Iowa	Ordained	08/06/95	5D
Reinholtzen, Sanna B.	Hettinger, N.D.	Ordained	12/31/95	3A	Summerville, Joseph E. III	Quicksburg, Va.	Ordained	12/29/95	9A
Renecker, Angela K.	Seattle, Wash.	Ordained	09/10/95	1B	Sutton, John R. Jr.	Carthage, Ill.	Ordained	08/08/95	5C
Ribone, Hector E.	New York, N.Y.	Ordained	04/22/95	7C	Swenson, Craig A.	Minonk, Ill.	Ordained	05/21/95	5C
Richter, Kay S.	North Branch, Minn.	Ordained	09/23/95	3H	Sylte, Dennis S.	Davenport, Neb.	Ordained	08/06/95	4A
Ricker, Richard B.	Litchfield, Minn.	Ordained	07/16/95	3F					
Rivera-Sanchez, Graciela	Santurce, Puerto Rico	Ordained	06/02/95	9F	Tan, George K.	Cerritos, Calif.	Received	08/01/95	2B
Rohrer, Donna W.	Elk River, Minn.	Ordained	09/16/95	3G			from the United Church of Christ		
Ronning, Jeffrey M.	Erskine, Minn.	Ordained	07/23/95	3D	Teitman, John G.	Beaver Springs, Pa.	Ordained	07/09/95	8E
Roth, Bruce R.	Worthington, Ohio	Ordained	06/11/95	6F	Tessmer, Claudia W.	West Union, Iowa	Ordained	11/11/95	5F
Rusinko, Gary S.	Waseca, Minn.	Ordained	08/27/95	3I	Tetrault, Diane S.	Johnson, Neb.	Ordained	09/10/95	4A
					Teves, Sherry P.	Orkney Springs, Va.	Ordained	12/05/95	9A
Sai'd, Rimon R.	Chicago, Ill.	Ordained	04/01/95	5A	Thomas, Edward L.	Los Alamos, N.M.	Ordained	05/19/95	2E
Schaar, Gerald D.	Bronx, N.Y.	Received	03/01/95	7C	Thompson, Christine C.	Detroit, Mich.	Ordained	07/09/95	6A
					Thompson, Charles R.	Mount Carroll, Ill.	Ordained	07/16/95	5B
Schlegel, James W.	Shartlesville, Pa.	Ordained	11/12/95	7E	Thurman, Rebecca Otto	West Collingswood, N.J.	Ordained	07/16/95	7A
Schmidt, Judy A.	Fort Riley, Kan.	Ordained	01/14/95	3F	Treat, Edward R.	Minden, Neb.	Ordained	03/19/95	4A
Schneck, Anthony J.	Baden, Pa.	Ordained	06/10/95	8B	Trittin, Charles A.	Inver Grove Heights, Minn.	Ordained	06/22/95	3H
Schneider, George M.	Beckley, W.Va.	Ordained	07/30/95	8H					
Scruggs, Berry L.	Welches, Ore.	Ordained	11/11/95	1E	Underwood, Rodney A.	Monticello, Iowa	Ordained	07/30/95	5D
Seamon-McGowan, William F.	West Chester, Pa.	Ordained	06/26/95	7F	Ursin, Raymond A.	Monongahela, Pa.	Received	11/01/95	8B
							from Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada		
Senge, Thomas E.	Monessen, Pa.	Ordained	03/11/95	8B					
Sessler, Scott W.	Manistee, Mich.	Ordained	07/02/95	6B	Vander Vegt, Vicki L.	Pine City, Minn.	Ordained	06/11/95	3E
Shane, Alison M. Whitney	Ottumwa, Iowa	Ordained	10/01/95	5D	Van Dyke, Michael A.	Osterburg, Pa.	Ordained	07/09/95	8C
Shane, Kent R.	Albia, Iowa	Ordained	07/02/95	5D	von Gunten, Todd H.	Clarkston, Mich.	Ordained	08/26/95	6A
Shepard, Kelli M.	Mundelein, Ill.	Ordained	11/04/95	5A	Vollenweider, Donald E.	Greeneville, Tenn.	Ordained	04/08/95	9D
Shipman, John W.	Au Gres, Mich.	Ordained	06/17/95	6B	Vork ⁴ , Linda M.	Tomah, Wis.	Ordained	07/09/95	5L
Short, Beverly A.	La Porte City, Iowa	Ordained	07/09/95	5F					
Shriver, Ruth A.	Mc Gregor, Iowa	Ordained	06/04/95	5F	Wagner, Richard E.	St. Petersburg, Fla.	Ordained	07/25/95	9E
Shrum, Alvin G.	Fort Sill, Okla.	Ordained	12/03/95	4C	Walbrodt, Alexander	Elderton, Pa.	Ordained	02/25/95	8B
Shuck, Kathleen F.	Muncy, Pa.	Ordained	01/29/95	8E	Wanwig, Susan L.	Mercer Island, Wash.	Ordained	07/16/95	1B
Sidney, Mark E.	New Douglas, Ill.	Ordained	04/09/95	5C	Weatherly, Preston E.	Irving, Texas	Received	06/01/95	4D
Skogen, Bradley J.	Staples, Minn.	Ordained	05/20/95	3D			from The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod		
Smeck, Julianne R.	Ypsilanti, Mich.	Ordained	07/29/95	6A	Weber, Doris I.	Princeton, Minn.	Ordained	06/25/95	3F
Smith, Brenda K.	Jamaica, N.Y.	Ordained	10/15/95	7C	Weisenburger, John	Minneapolis, Minn.	Ordained	08/12/95	3G
Smith, Marsha D.	Crookston, Minn.	Ordained	11/12/95	3D	Welch, G. Celene	Forth Worth, Texas	Ordained	05/21/95	4D
Smith, Randolph, W.	Beltrami, Minn.	Received	11/08/95	3D	Wendland, Mark J.	Benson, Minn.	Ordained	08/23/95	3F
					Westphal, Scott T.	Barnum, Minn.	Ordained	06/18/95	3E
Smith, Susanne E.	Englewood, Colo.	Received	07/01/95	2E	Wette, Maria T.	Tacoma, Wash.	Received	09/15/95	1C
							from Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada		
Snell, Gwendolyn H.	Detroit, Mich.	Ordained	09/10/95	6A	White, Garry W.	Johnston, S.C.	Ordained	07/10/95	9C
Soli, Peter J.	Eagle Bend, Minn.	Ordained	08/13/95	3D	Whitley, J. Robin	Charlotte, N.C.	Ordained	11/05/95	9B
Soltow, Frederick A. Jr.	Davis, W.Va.	Reinstated	08/15/95	8H	Whitlock, Margay J.	Kearny, N.J.	Ordained	06/25/95	7A
Spake, Eric A.	Traer, Iowa	Ordained	10/08/95	5F					
Stennes-Spidahl, John W.	Cashton, Wis.	Ordained	07/23/95	5L					
Stephens, Anthony H.	Kendall, N.Y.	Ordained	09/24/95	7D					

⁴ Name later changed to Linda M. Dutton.

Wilker, Michael D.	Watsonville, Calif.	Ordained	02/25/95	2A	Becker, Vivian J.	Glenwood, Ill.	Ordained	06/08/96	5A
Williams, A. Dean	Sarles, N.D.	Ordained	04/24/95	3B	Beckman, John W.	Stockton, Calif.	Ordained	01/07/96	2A
Windels, Nancy B.	Fergus Falls, Minn.	Ordained	12/03/95	3D	Benson, Julie E.	Petersburg, N.D.	Ordained	06/16/96	3B
Wise, Jeffrey N.	Columbus, Ohio	Ordained	10/22/95	6F	Bernal, Manuel	Glendora, Calif.	Ordained	03/31/96	2B
Wiseman, Nancy E.	Yardley, Pa.	Ordained	08/27/95	7F	Bezanson, Richard M.	Phoenix, Ariz.	Ordained	09/07/96	2D
Wood, Stephen M.	Kenton, Ohio	Ordained	06/10/95	6D	Bickford, Edith L.	Auburn, Neb.	Ordained	08/25/96	4A
Wood, Tamara	Fort Recovery, Ohio	Ordained	09/17/95	6D	Bingea, Gretchen J.	Ypsilante, Mich.	Ordained	09/29/96	6A
Wright, Dick L.	Elko, Nev.	Ordained	06/04/95	2A	Bingol, Thomas A.	Columbia, S.C.	Ordained	02/18/96	9C
Yarnell, Katharine A.	Athol, Kan.	Ordained	10/22/95	4B	Bishop, Randolph D.	Poestenkill, N.Y.	Ordained	07/14/96	7D
Yarnell, Ronald	Osborne, Kan.	Ordained	10/22/95	4B	Bjertness, Corey R.	Fordville, N.D.	Ordained	11/30/96	3B
Yochheim, Eric D.	Riverton, Wyo.	Ordained	06/11/95	2E	Boehne, Robert E.	Hoffman Estates, Ill.	Received	08/18/96	5A
Yohe, Lance V.	Selby, S.D.	Reinstated	01/01/95	3C					from The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod
Yuen, Royan S.	Pinole, Calif.	Ordained	10/01/95	2A	Bogard, Jennie E.	Hickory Hills, Ill.	Ordained	02/11/96	5A
Zaye, Linda G.	McComb, Ohio	Ordained	06/04/95	6D	Bowen, Susan M.	Greendale, Wis.	Ordained	05/30/96	5J
Zielins, Donald T.	Joshua Tree, Calif.	Received	03/06/95	2C	Bradburn, Michael W.	Hinsdale, Ill.	Ordained	02/11/96	5A
					Bradley-Love, Kathryn I.	Cincinnati, Ohio	Ordained	05/18/96	6F
					Bredlau, Peter S.	Reading, Pa.	Ordained	12/15/96	7E
					Brinkman, Cheryl L.	Tiro, Ohio	Ordained	08/11/96	6D
Zimmerman, Audrey M.	Dixon, Ill.	Ordained	08/20/95	5B	Bromhal, John F.	Frederick, Md.	Ordained	08/17/96	8F
					Brown, Bradley K.	Milwaukee, Wis.	Ordained	09/07/96	5J
					Brown, Donna M.	West Allis, Wis.	Ordained	09/29/96	5J
					Bullock, M. Wyvetta	Chicago, Ill.	Ordained	10/20/96	5A
					Burks, Alicia A.	Portsmouth, Ohio	Ordained	07/27/96	6F
					Butz, Jeffrey J.	Catasauqua, Pa.	Ordained	06/09/96	7E
1996					Carlson, Lori L.	Presho, S.D.	Ordained	06/29/96	3C
Aardahl, Wesley H.	Reserve, Mont.	Reinstated	08/08/96	1F	Carswell, Robert W.	Columbia, S.C.	Reinstated	12/02/96	9C
Acheson, Steven J.	Bonduel, Wis.	Ordained	04/14/96	5I	Chang, Mary	Chicago, Ill.	Ordained	10/20/96	5A
Alger, James T.	Oakes, N.D.	Received	05/01/96	3B	Chappell, Melissa A.	Chilhowie, Va.	Ordained	10/09/96	9A
					Christenson, Grant D.	Melvin, Ill.	Ordained	03/24/96	5C
Alms, Eugene R.	Madelia, Minn.	Ordained	04/21/96	3F	Church, Michael G.	Bronx, N.Y.	Ordained	08/11/96	7C
Andersen, Laurie J.	Brooklyn, N.Y.	Ordained	06/14/96	7C	Clark, Elsa L.	Everett, Pa.	Ordained	07/07/96	8C
Anderson, Chris B.	Bowden, N.D.	Ordained	02/04/96	3A	Claycomb, Steven C.	Lilly, Pa.	Ordained	06/23/96	8C
Anderson, Jonathan H.	Hampton, Iowa	Ordained	06/16/96	5F	Coe, Cameron	Baltimore, Md.	Reinstated	01/28/96	8F
Anderson, Michael F.	Rowland Heights, Calif.	Ordained	12/07/96	2B	Coning, William A.	Castlewood, S.D.	Ordained	06/22/96	3C
Anderson, Shannon K.	San Francisco, Calif.	Ordained	11/03/96	2A	Connelly, William V.	Oakland, Md.	Ordained	06/16/96	8H
Anglada, A. David	Brooklyn, N.Y.	Ordained	02/11/96	7C	Coon, Charles R.	La Crosse, Wis.	Reinstated	01/17/96	5L
Anholt, Gary L.	Quincy, Ill.	Ordained	08/04/96	5C	Cottingham, Jeffrey T.	Siren, Wis.	Ordained	10/05/96	5H
Apel, Dean M.	Palmer, Kan.	Ordained	01/14/96	4B	Crantz, Gretchen	Saegertown, Pa.	Ordained	07/13/96	8A
Appelo, Suzanne O.	Winlock, Wash.	Ordained	10/18/96	1C	Croonquist, Daniel W.	Tower, Minn.	Ordained	09/15/96	3E
Armstrong-Reiner, Mary E.	Liburn, Ga.	Ordained	10/20/96	9D	Cross, Ellen M.	Bradenton, Fla.	Ordained	07/20/96	9E
Askey, Dayle M.	Troutdale, Ore.	Ordained	06/16/96	1E	Currie, Roberta H.	Glen Ellyn, Ill.	Ordained	06/02/96	5A
Aurand, A. Elisabeth	Cedarhurst, N.Y.	Ordained	09/21/96	7C	Curtis, Nancy M.	New Haven, Ind.	Ordained	05/30/96	6C
Ayers, Shari L.	Cleveland, Ohio	Ordained	07/07/96	6E					
Bailey, Andrew J.	La Porte, Ind.	Ordained	05/30/96	6C	Dahlen, Lisa E.	Astoria, Wash.	Ordained	02/17/96	1E
Baker, Daniel D.	Glenville, Minn.	Ordained	06/30/96	3I	Davis-Jones, Gladys L.	St. Louis, Mo.	Ordained	09/21/96	4B
Ballenger, Brett W.	Lavallette, N.J.	Ordained	06/23/96	7A	Dayett, Bradley H.	Spring Grove, Pa.	Ordained	08/11/96	8D
Barnes, Charles D.	Babbitt, Minn.	Ordained	09/15/96	3E	deCathelineau, Valerie L.	Buffalo, N.Y.	Ordained	07/07/96	7D
Barnes, Virginia K.	Jacksonville, Fla.	Ordained	02/17/96	9E	Deike, Jane E.	Shawano, Wis.	Ordained	08/31/96	5I
Barrett, William R.	Zanesville, Ohio	Ordained	10/27/96	6F					
Beaudoin, Daniel G.	Edon, Ohio	Ordained	06/16/96	6D					

Dexheimer, Jeri R.	Washington, Kan.	Ordained	06/21/96	4B	Hanson, Fredrick H.	Cedarville, Mich.	Ordained	07/28/96	5G
Dietrich, Lauretta J.	Akron, N.Y.	Ordained	09/28/96	7D	Hartley, Kathryn J.	New London, Minn.	Ordained	01/14/96	3F
Dollhausen, Matthew M.	Mount Horeb, Wis.	Ordained	08/25/96	5K	Hasemann, Marilyn E.	Lock Haven, Pa.	Ordained	04/20/96	8E
Douglas, Stephen W.	Poplar Bluff, Mo.	Received	08/04/96	4B	Hatch, Janet M.	Adamsville, Ohio	Ordained	06/22/96	6F
					Hatcher, Marie F.	Jackson, Tenn.	Ordained	03/10/96	9D
Doyle, James C.	Castleton, N.Y.	Ordained	08/25/96	7D	Havlic, Susanne C.	Oak Forest, Ill.	Ordained	10/20/96	5A
Dunbar, Wesley W.	Circle, Mont.	Ordained	10/13/96	1F	Hawkins, Karen Salvo	Columbia, S.C.	Ordained	12/15/96	9C
Duncan, John W. Jr.	Lincolnton, N.C.	Ordained	08/15/96	9B	Hayes, Lisa M.	Newton Falls, Ohio	Ordained	06/09/96	6E
					Hazen, Judith A.	Sandstone, Minn.	Ordained	10/20/96	3E
Edwards, Terry L.	Staunton, Va.	Ordained	09/08/96	9A	Hedegaard, James S.	Harlem, Mont.	Ordained	07/07/96	1F
Ekstedt, Joy G.	Sacred Heart, Minn.	Ordained	10/05/96	3F	Hefner, Lori A.	Lexington, S.C.	Ordained	08/18/96	9C
El-Yateem, Khader N.	Brooklyn, N.Y.	Ordained	06/14/96	7C	Higgs, Julie K.	Davenport, Iowa	Ordained	05/30/96	5D
Erbskorn, Jeffrey M.	Spartanburg, S.C.	Ordained	10/19/96	9C	Hodges, Frederick A.	Culpeper, Va.	Ordained	09/08/96	9A
Ericksen, Julie R.	Stewartville, Minn.	Ordained	12/15/96	3I	Homesley, G. Scott	Southern Pines, N.C.	Ordained	05/31/96	9B
Erisman, R. Daren	Littleton, Colo.	Ordained	09/14/96	2E	Hoover, Ina R.	Charleston, S.C.	Ordained	05/12/96	9C
Ernst, Debra K.	Easton, Pa.	Ordained	06/28/96	7E	Housholder, Timothy J.	Rosholt, Wis.	Ordained	06/09/96	5I
					Hovland, Mary L.	Maynard, Minn.	Ordained	06/16/96	3F
Fath, Ingrid A.	Marlton, N.J.	Ordained	06/23/96	7A	Hummel, Leonard M.	Boston, Mass.	Ordained	04/28/96	7B
Fergus, Deborah E.	Farmington Hills, Mich.	Ordained	07/21/96	6A					
Ferro, Robert F. Jr.	Anchor, Ill.	Ordained	05/16/96	5C	Illausky, Gordon J.	Waterbury, Conn.	Ordained	01/21/96	7B
Field, James C.	Hanover, Kan.	Ordained	07/02/96	4B					
Fiene, Mary A.	Oxnard, Calif.	Ordained	11/03/96	2B	Jacobson, Karl N.	San Jose, Calif.	Ordained	08/28/96	2A
Flathmann, Drew E.	St. Paul, Minn.	Ordained	06/30/96	3H	Jacobson, Kristen J.	Lafayette, Calif.	Ordained	09/15/96	2A
Foss, John D.	Hawthorne, Calif.	Ordained	03/10/96	2B	Jaster, Nancy A.	Elgin, N.D.	Ordained	10/20/96	3A
Fox, Thomas C.	Marshallville, Ohio	Ordained	08/17/96	6E	Jennrich, Ellen C.	Culver City, Calif.	Ordained	11/24/96	2B
Frank, Emily J.	Medina, N.Y.	Ordained	05/11/96	7D	Jensen, T. Duane	Bountiful, Utah	Reinstated	05/15/96	2E
Freidheim, John M.	Aurora, Ill.	Ordained	02/11/96	5A	Jenson, Faith R.	Miles, Texas	Ordained	06/09/96	4D
Friedrichs, William E.	Springfield, Ga.	Ordained	08/11/96	9D	Johnson, Bruce E.	Homestead, Fla.	Reinstated	07/28/96	9E
					Johnson, James L.	Chinook, Mont.	Ordained	03/26/96	1F
Gaines, Philip A.	Melville, N.Y.	Ordained	11/25/96	7C	Johnson, Kay L.	Yorktown, Texas	Ordained	11/17/96	4E
Galchutt, Paul K.	Grayslake, Ill.	Ordained	07/28/96	5A	Johnson, Mark R.	Fallbrook, Calif.	Ordained	06/08/96	2C
Gantt, Jonathan C.	Hamlet, N.C.	Ordained	09/15/96	9B	Johnston, Jane B.	Estherville, Iowa	Ordained	08/17/96	5E
Geier, Warren L.	L'Anse, Mich.	Ordained	06/07/96	5G	Jones, William D.	Taylor, Texas	Ordained	05/26/96	4E
Geisen, Cynthia L.	Nashville, Tenn.	Ordained	02/25/96	9D	Jorn, Bernard C.	Jacksonville, Fla.	Ordained	12/19/96	9E
Goede, Nancy J.	Chicago, Ill.	Ordained	10/20/96	5A	Jungling, Laurie A.	Buffalo, S.D.	Ordained	07/28/96	3C
Greaver, William R. III	Conger, Minn.	Ordained	05/31/96	3I					
Green, Clifford J.	Boston, Mass.	Received	06/01/96	7B	Kahl, Daniel C.	Austin, Minn.	Ordained	01/07/96	3I
					Kallerson, John L.	Fayetteville, N.C.	Ordained	06/30/96	8G
Grieves, Charla M.	Turbotville, Pa.	Ordained	07/06/96	8E	Kasper, Kathleen G.	Hastings, Neb.	Ordained	08/18/96	4A
Griffin, Kirk A.	Charleroi, Pa.	Ordained	06/29/96	8B	Keck, David R. Jr.	Raleigh, N.C.	Ordained	08/15/96	9B
Grimshaw, Joanna Norris	Great Bend, Kan.	Ordained	08/10/96	4B	Keller, Roger G.	Jourdanton, Texas	Ordained	03/16/96	4E
Grimshaw, Scott M.	Great Bend, Kan.	Reinstated	09/01/96	4B	Kent, Susan A.	Blue River, Wis.	Ordained	08/04/96	5K
					Kersten, Linda A.	Freeport, Ill.	Ordained	08/18/96	5B
Haight, Leila K.	Brill, Wis.	Ordained	06/16/96	5H	Kersten, Phyllis N.	River Forest, Ill.	Ordained	06/08/96	5A
Hale, Sara J.	Yeadon, Pa.	Ordained	01/13/96	7F	King, Brian C.	La Crosse, Wis.	Ordained	06/16/96	5L
Hamill, William A.	Kadoka, S.D.	Ordained	09/21/96	3C	Kings, Marina	South Gate, Calif.	Ordained	09/15/96	2B
Haney, Bryant C.	Elk Grove Village, Ill.	Ordained	08/18/96	5A	Kjar, Sonja Christenson	Arthur, N.D.	Ordained	09/22/96	3B
Hankermeyer, Ralph W.	Coloma, Wis.	Ordained	06/09/96	5I	Klawonn, Mark G.	Grantsville, Md.	Ordained	08/10/96	8H
Hanson, Dwight J.	Osseo, Wis.	Ordained	06/09/96	5H	Klimpel, Eric R.	Bay City, Texas	Ordained	12/15/96	4F

Kline, John G.	West Des Moines, Iowa	Ordained	08/25/96	5D					from the Roman Catholic Church
Knape, Steven W.	Curtice, Ohio	Ordained	06/16/96	6D	Matthews, Edward C.	Huntington Valley, Pa.	Ordained	06/01/96	7F
Knecht, Jon D.	Jersey City, N.J.	Ordained	06/23/96	7A	McGinnis, Stephen J.	Cape Coral, Fla.	Ordained	07/01/96	9E
Knudten, Herbert J. Jr.	Malcolm, Iowa	Ordained	06/23/96	5D	McKee, William A.	Springfield, Ohio	Ordained	06/02/96	6F
Knutson, Barbara J.	Albert Lea, Minn.	Ordained	06/22/96	3I	McKennett ⁵ , Denise M.	Dickinson, N.D.	Ordained	08/11/96	3A
Koehl, William T.	Fishersville, Va.	Ordained	06/22/96	9A	Meier, Laura L.	Frankfort, Ind.	Ordained	05/30/96	6C
Korman, Marlys A.	Pine River, Minn.	Ordained	06/08/96	3E	Meier, Scott W.	Mulberry, Ind.	Ordained	05/30/96	6C
Kraft, Linda J.	Stafford Springs, Conn.	Ordained	01/14/96	7G	Meives, Margaret A.	Rock, Mich.	Ordained	03/24/96	5G
Krogstad, Sondra R.	Chandler, Ariz.	Ordained	10/26/96	2D	Mendez, Moises	San Diego, Calif.	Received	01/27/96	2C
Kuttler, Karen A.	Jamaica, N.J.	Ordained	03/30/96	7C					from the Lutheran Church in El Salvador
Kyle, Darrell O.	Harvard, Ill.	Ordained	06/15/96	5B	Mendrala, Paula M.	Bakersfield, Calif.	Ordained	07/07/96	2B
					Messinger, Lewis R.	Ford City, Pa.	Ordained	06/21/96	8B
Laakonen, Raejoy S.	Rudyard, Mich.	Ordained	07/15/96	5G	Meysing, Steven R.	Walcott, N.D.	Ordained	07/21/96	3B
Larsen, James R.	Madison, Va.	Ordained	09/08/96	9A	Micovsky, Rastislav	Windsor, Ont. Canada	Received	11/01/96	7G
Larson Caesar, Laurie A.	Beaverton, Ore.	Ordained	08/25/96	1E					from the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Augsburg Confession
Larson, Mari Beth	Vermillion, S.D.	Ordained	11/23/96	3C	Miller, Blair G.	North Robinson, Ohio	Ordained	07/20/96	6D
Larson, Sandra P.	Milton, N.D.	Ordained	07/14/96	3B	Miller, Craig A.	Brooklyn, N.Y.	Ordained	06/14/96	7C
Larson, Stephen M.	Geneva, Switzerland	Received	10/11/96	1B	Miller, Joyce A.	Tukwila, Wash.	Ordained	02/10/96	1B
					Miller, Keith G.	Lakewood, Calif.	Ordained	06/23/96	2B
Lashley, Charles H.	Joppa, Md.	Ordained	03/24/96	8F	Miller, Marion P.	Decorah, Iowa	Ordained	01/21/96	5F
Lassman, Lonnie D.	Duluth, Minn.	Received	08/21/96	3E	Miller, Robert E.	Anna, Ohio	Ordained	06/23/96	6F
					Miller, William B.	Tequesta, Fla.	Ordained	06/30/96	9E
Leaf, C. Timothy	Haysville, Kan.	Ordained	07/28/96	4B	Morgan, Robin J.	St. Louis, Mo.	Ordained	03/09/96	4B
Lee, Christopher W.	Mount Vernon, Ohio	Ordained	10/26/96	6F	Morse, Jean M.	Kimballton, Iowa	Ordained	08/24/96	5E
Lee, Jeffrey J.	Dover, Ohio	Ordained	12/14/96	6E	Mouritsen, John C.	Hudson, N.C.	Ordained	06/16/96	9B
Leer, Philip D.	Rugby, N.D.	Ordained	06/23/96	3A	Mueller, William R.	Smithtown, N.Y.	Ordained	06/14/96	7C
Lejman-Guy, Juli K.	Allen Park, Mich.	Ordained	09/07/96	6A	Muller ⁶ , Nadine E.	Webster, N.Y.	Ordained	11/05/96	7D
Lewis, David L.	Chicago, Ill.	Reinstated	03/01/96	5A					
Lewis, Mary A.	Houston, Texas	Ordained	08/18/96	4F	Naegele, Glenda L.	Ontario, Calif.	Ordained	06/30/96	2C
Lewison, Jennifer M.	Mount Vernon, Wash.	Ordained	08/04/96	1B	Naeve, Carol J.	Bark River, Mich.	Ordained	03/23/96	5G
Limthongviratn, Pongsak	Forest Park, Ill.	Received	09/25/96	5A	Nielsen, Dorthy B.	Havre, Mont.	Ordained	09/01/96	1F
					Nielsen, Kristin L.	Milwaukee, Wis.	Ordained	08/10/96	5J
					Niemi, Theodore D.	Hollister, Calif.	Ordained	10/27/96	2A
Lorring, Donald A.	Phoenix, Ariz.	Ordained	06/09/96	2D	Nilsen-Goodin, Solveig I.	Milwaukie, Ore.	Ordained	08/18/96	1E
Lott, Jeffrey K.	Wisconsin Rapids, Wis.	Ordained	03/10/96	5I	Nordby, Rodney D.	Evansville, Wis.	Ordained	07/28/96	5K
LoVan, Tom B.	Sioux City, Iowa	Ordained	01/14/96	5E	Nygren, Rodney K.	Orfordville, Wis.	Ordained	12/22/96	5K
Lund, Linda K.	Long Lake, Minn.	Ordained	10/20/96	3G					
Lundeen, Timothy W.	Lancaster, Minn.	Ordained	06/16/96	3D	Oehlschaeger, Amy M.	Wytheville, Va.	Ordained	10/27/96	9A
Lyman, Daniel C.	Wallingford, Pa.	Reinstated	03/01/96	7F	Oleson, Joan E.	Jenison, Mich.	Ordained	07/07/96	6B
					Oliver, Nancy	Russellville, Mo.	Ordained	07/28/96	4B
Madigan, Jeannine M.	Lindsey, Ohio	Ordained	01/13/96	6D	Olson, Constance S.	Cottage Grove, Minn.	Ordained	09/15/96	3H
Madsen, Anna M.	Badger, S.D.	Ordained	06/22/96	3C	Olson, Harry E. Jr.	Las Vegas, Nev.	Reinstated	09/21/96	2D
Malloy, Dayle A.	Havertown, Pa.	Ordained	11/09/96	7F	Olson, Scott E.	Chatsworth, Ill.	Ordained	06/09/96	5C
Manke, Christopher J.	Wauwatosa, Wis.	Ordained	06/23/96	5J	Olson, Timothy V.	Donnelly, Minn.	Ordained	07/13/96	3F
Martin, Lois, D.	Beach City, Ohio	Ordained	08/17/96	6E					
Martine, Michael J.	Mount Joy, Pa.	Ordained	02/04/96	8D					
Mathison Goodrich, Janine M.	Spokane, Wash.	Ordained	06/21/96	1D					
Mattei, Giuseppe	Capron, Ill.	Received	01/04/96	5B					

⁵ Name later changed to Denise M. Hanson.

⁶ Name later changed to Nadine E. Ridley.

Opoien, Thomas E.	Pierre, S.D.	Ordained	06/02/96	3C	Schultz, Hilbert A.	Rothschild, Wis.	Ordained	08/11/96	5I
Orvick, Mark N.	Lawrenceville, Ga.	Ordained	05/12/96	9D	Schwan, Paul A.	Middletown, Ohio	Received	12/07/96	6F
O'Shea, Laurie W.	Rush City, Minn.	Ordained	11/10/96	3H					from The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod
Owens, Mary K.	Brooklyn, N.Y.	Ordained	07/21/96	7C	Schweitzer, Arlene T.	Elderton, Pa.	Ordained	06/22/96	8A
					Scott, Michael D. Sr.	Nisswa, Minn.	Ordained	03/17/96	3E
Padgett, Nancy K.	Suwanee, Ga.	Ordained	07/14/96	9D	Seibert, Andrew J.	Brandon, Miss.	Ordained	08/17/96	9D
Pancoast, Kari S.	Hayward, Wis.	Ordained	08/04/96	5H	Seiffert, Sue A.	Heron Lake, Minn.	Ordained	11/17/96	3F
Pancoast, Michael E.	Hayward, Wis.	Ordained	10/27/96	5H	Sekas, Shelly D.	Waupun, Wis.	Ordained	06/09/96	5K
Parkinson, Marcia	St. Albans, N.Y.	Ordained	07/28/96	7C	Shen, Peter K.	Pullman, Wash.	Ordained	04/28/96	1D
Payne, Sam S.	Gary, Ind.	Ordained	05/30/96	6C	Sigmon, Craig E.	Rockwell, N.C.	Ordained	08/15/96	9B
Peconge, Brenda L.	Calamus, Iowa	Ordained	07/17/96	5D	Simmons, Paul R.	Page, N.D.	Ordained	06/15/96	3B
Pedersen, Audrey G.	Liberty, N.Y.	Ordained	11/16/96	7C	Simonsen, Lisa M.	Renton, Wash.	Ordained	09/27/96	1B
Peterhaensel, Mary A.	Falconer, N.Y.	Ordained	09/20/96	7D	Simpson, Liza L.	Granit Falls, Minn.	Ordained	12/28/96	3F
Pizanti, Robin W.	Chewelah, Wash.	Ordained	08/25/96	1D	Sipes, Carol	Carmichaels, Pa.	Ordained	05/30/96	8B
Platts, Elizabeth W.	Augusta, Ga.	Ordained	07/07/96	9D	Sloop, Ricky L.	Salisbury, N.C.	Ordained	12/13/96	9B
Pohlman, Brad C.	Madison, Wis.	Ordained	04/28/96	5K	Smith, Dennis A.	Emlenton, Pa.	Ordained	08/25/96	8A
Pond, Pamela Griffith	San Rafael, Calif.	Ordained	11/23/96	2A	Smith, Jodi M.	White Bear Lake, Minn.	Ordained	06/02/96	3H
Ports, Michele J.	Jackson Heights, N.Y.	Ordained	11/23/96	7C	Smith, Ruth E.	Chambersburg, Pa.	Ordained	09/29/96	8D
Potuznik, Stefan	Wauconda, Ill.	Received	06/23/96	5A	Smuts, Matthew A.	Alexandria, Minn.	Ordained	07/14/96	3D
					Sonnenberg, David A. Jr.	Camp Hill, Pa.	Ordained	06/07/96	8D
					Sorenson, David O.	Cobb, Wis.	Ordained	07/13/96	5K
Pounds, Richard G.	Pendleton, Ore.	Ordained	06/09/96	1E	Sorrels, Aaron I.	Gowen, Mich.	Reinstated	12/01/96	6B
Powell, Carla Thompson	Livonia, Mich.	Ordained	09/14/96	6A	Soruco, Jorge W.	Colorado Springs, Colo.	Ordained	10/06/96	2E
Powell, Darryl Thompson	Detroit, Mich.	Ordained	09/14/96	6A	Stack-Nelson, Troy R.	Owatonna, Minn.	Ordained	08/04/96	3I
Preston, Del D.	Dixon, Iowa	Ordained	02/11/96	5D	Staley, Christopher B.	Luana, Iowa	Ordained	07/28/96	5F
					Staude, Donald R.	Amherst, Wis.	Reinstated	06/03/96	5I
Rajashekar, Esther	Wyndmoor, Pa.	Ordained	03/09/96	7F	Stedman, Betty J.	Esmond, N.D.	Ordained	10/13/96	3A
Rajashekar, J. Paul	Philadelphia, Pa.	Received	10/28/96	7A	Steinhart, Carol A.	Abington, Mass.	Ordained	08/09/96	7B
					Stelzle, Ellen M.	Aurora, Ill.	Ordained	06/08/96	5A
					Stenke, William R.	East Lansing, Mich.	Ordained	06/23/96	6B
Rall, Timothy J.	Kannapolis, N.C.	Ordained	08/15/96	9B	Stetler, Charles L.	Effort, Pa.	Reinstated	01/03/96	7E
Rasmus, Robert J.	Orange, Texas	Ordained	07/21/96	4F	Steude, William L.	Saline, Mich.	Ordained	12/08/96	6A
Reidy, Philip L.	Naugatuck, Conn.	Ordained	09/08/96	7B	Stienstra, Christine A.	Amboy, Ill.	Ordained	08/23/96	5B
Reinemund, Stanley L.	Herington, Kan.	Ordained	08/25/96	4B	Stiles, Dale R.	Circle Pines, Minn.	Ordained	07/28/96	3H
Riebe, Kimberly K.	De Soto, Wis.	Ordained	05/19/96	5L	Stockness, Lauryl I.	Ellsworth, Wis.	Ordained	07/21/96	5H
Risch, Elizabeth S.	Baltimore, Md.	Reinstated	02/19/96	8F	Stolz, Paul C.	Green Bay, Wis.	Ordained	07/13/96	5I
Rist, Tanya R.	Hammond, Wis.	Ordained	10/13/96	5H	Stoopes, Jeffrey A.	Pembine, Wis.	Ordained	03/10/96	5G
Roberts, Ronald L.	Bird City, Kan.	Ordained	06/23/96	4B	Strom, Eric O.	Green Bay, Wis.	Ordained	09/21/96	5I
Rood, Katherine A.	Morgan, Minn.	Ordained	07/21/96	3F	Strom, Paul M.	Skandia, Mich.	Ordained	06/09/96	5G
Rudi, Jay A.	Billings, Mont.	Ordained	11/10/96	1F	Swinea, Robert W.	Coquille, Ore.	Received	02/21/96	1E
Russell, Andrew W.	Mount Jewett, Pa.	Ordained	06/02/96	8A					from The Episcopal Church
Sanders, Christine M.	Danville, Ohio	Ordained	11/09/96	6F	Teig, M. DeWayne	Menominee, Mich.	Ordained	05/26/96	5G
Sanders, John N.	Lexington, Ky.	Ordained	05/30/96	6C	Tenneson, Linda G.	Hawley, Minn.	Ordained	11/24/96	3D
Sandstrom, John D.	Watertown, S.D.	Received	05/05/96	3C	Thode, Andreas M.	Cambria Heights, N.Y.	Ordained	01/28/96	7C
					Thompson, Mark D.	Milwaukee, Wis.	Ordained	08/24/96	5J
					Thompson, Scott R.	Soap Lake, Wash.	Ordained	06/08/96	1D
Sandoz, Sherri L.	Lester Prairie, Minn.	Ordained	12/08/96	3F	Torgersen, Brenda K.	Peoria, Ill.	Ordained	07/14/96	5C
Schneider, Carolyn M.	Staten Island, N.Y.	Ordained	07/21/96	7C	Trester, Joseph E.	Roseville, Ohio	Ordained	07/13/96	6F
Schneider, Michael D.	Fontana, Calif.	Ordained	03/24/96	2C					
Schneider-Thomas, Julie E.	Comstock Park, Mich.	Ordained	04/14/96	6B					
Schroeder, William A.	Kerman, Calif.	Ordained	01/01/96	2A					

Tulu, Alemayehu	Grafton, N.D.	Ordained	06/23/96	3B
Valan, Kathy L.	Fargo, N.D.	Ordained	07/07/96	3B
Valasakos, Daniel J.	Tucson, Ariz.	Ordained	10/26/96	2D
Valeeva, Galina A.	Philadelphia, Pa.	Ordained	01/20/96	7F
Van, David P.	Lancaster, Pa.	Ordained	06/07/96	8D
VanDyke, N. Gregory	Spring Mills, Pa.	Ordained	06/30/96	8C
Velazquez-Rodriguez, Nelson L.	Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico	Ordained	04/21/96	9F
Vepsalainen, Hannu	Fairport Harbor, Ohio	Received from Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada	08/18/96	6E
Villanueva, Lydia	Chicago, Ill.	Ordained	06/08/96	5A
Vinajeras, Gus	Union City, N.J.	Ordained	06/23/96	7A
Wagner, Deborah, M.	Bethlehem, Pa.	Ordained	06/09/96	7E
Walker, Sandra A.	Houston, Texas	Received from Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada	12/12/96	4F
Waltz, Kathleen M.	Mitchell, S.D.	Ordained	07/20/96	3C
Wang, Jiali	Monterey Park, Calif.	Ordained	01/28/96	2B
Waterman, William D.	Ruskin, Neb.	Ordained	05/04/96	4A
Weist, James E.	Powers Lake, Minn.	Ordained	12/29/96	3A
Wellsandt-Zell, Rhonda J.	Pierre, S.D.	Ordained	03/23/96	3C
Werner, Katherine A.	East Lansing, Mich.	Ordained	03/09/96	6B
Wert, Thomas G.	Seattle, Wash.	Received from Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada	09/21/96	1B
Whelan, J. David	Menomonie, Wis.	Ordained	06/23/96	5H
White, Peggy L.	Sunnyvale, Calif.	Ordained	07/28/96	2A
Wieties, Marcy L.	Chester, Ill.	Ordained	08/11/96	5C
Wilhelm, Mark E.	Dallas, N.C.	Ordained	05/31/96	9B
Williams, Roy D.	Medford, Wis.	Ordained	09/08/96	5H
Wilson, Kimberly A.	Baldwin, N.Y.	Ordained	09/30/96	7C
Winkler, Gretchen B.	Prospect Heights, Ill.	Ordained	08/18/96	5A
Wolff, Edward S.	Saluda, S.C.	Ordained	07/20/96	9C
Wolford, Phyllis J.	Minersville, Pa.	Ordained	06/09/96	7E
Wood, Linda E.	Riverside, N.J.	Ordained	11/17/96	7A
Wood, Tyson J.	Massillon, Ohio	Ordained	08/17/96	6E
Woolly, D. Rhodes	Winchester, Va.	Ordained	06/01/96	9A
Worth, Dorothy	Pittsburgh, Pa.	Ordained	06/15/96	8B
Wright, David L.	Bedford, Pa.	Ordained	02/18/96	8C
Young, Erik F.	Torrance, Calif.	Ordained	08/10/96	2B
Young, Wayne W.	Johns Island, S.C.	Reinstated	03/07/96	9C
Zanton, William C.	New Windsor, Ill.	Ordained	08/25/96	5B
Zayas, Jose D.	Bayamon, Puerto Rico	Ordained	04/07/96	9F

Appendix B to the

Report of the Secretary

Removals from the Roster of Ordained Ministers 1995-1996

1987 to 1994 Corrections

The following persons were removed from the roster of ordained ministers prior to 1995. The removals, however, were not reported in the minutes of the 1989, 1991, 1993, or 1995 churchwide assemblies.

Name	City/State	Reason	Date	Region/ Synod
Tate, Frederick S. Jr.	Columbia, S.C.	Resigned	10/24/87	9C
Barth, James A.	Cannon Falls, Minn.	Resigned	11/01/89	3H
Boe, Victor C.	Mesa, Ariz.	Deceased	12/29/89	2D
Curfman, Scott F.	Gackle, N.D.	Removed	01/28/93	3B
Ellison, John C.	Cambridge, Minn.	Resigned	05/09/93	3G
Foreman, Larry M.	Plymouth, Minn.	Removed	06/17/93	3G
Hunsicker, R. Michael	Baltimore, Md.	Deceased	08/18/93	8F
Michelsen, Clifford S.	Minneapolis, Minn.	Resigned	03/29/93	3G
Chookiatsirichai, Sunthi	Minneapolis, Minn.	Resigned	06/02/94	3G
Gustafson, M. Brent	Itasca, Ill.	Removed	06/30/94	5J
Jacobson, Thomas A.	Little Canada, Minn.	Resigned	06/02/94	3G
Pipping, Jerald W.	Thornton, Colo.	Removed	05/15/94	6C
Reed, Stephen D.	Worcester, Mass.	Resigned	02/28/94	7B

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Abrahamson, Luther N.	Sun City West, Ariz.	Removed	12/01/95	2A
Adler, Frank F.	Ocean City, N.J.	Deceased	01/19/95	7A
Adrian, Joanne D.	DeKalb, Ill.	Removed	02/01/95	5D
Aldrich, Russell	San Jose, Calif.	Removed	01/31/95	2A
Alvarado, Jaime S.	San Antonio, Texas	Deceased	09/27/95	4E
Anderson, Kirk E.	Phoenix, Ariz.	Removed	01/19/95	1D
Anderson, M. Russell	Dawson, Minn.	Deceased	12/20/95	3F
Anderson, Mary M.	Wyandot, Ill.	Removed	09/08/95	5B
Arnold, Joyce L.	Nashville, Tenn.	Resigned	07/21/95	9D
Asuma, Thomas V.	Oshkosh, Wis.	Deceased	11/11/95	5I
Baalson, Elmo O.	Brooten, Minn.	Deceased	04/26/95	3F
Bachman, Gary G.	Robbinsdale, Minn.	Removed	09/09/95	5F
Bachmann, E. Theodore	Princeton Junction, N.J.	Deceased	11/29/95	7A
Balderach, Louis F.	Hondo, Texas	Removed	11/15/95	4E
Balderas, Tomas	Lubbock, Texas	Removed	01/01/95	4D
Bauerle, Richard E.	Engadine, Mich.	Deceased	11/10/95	5G
Beckstrand, O. Garfield II	Fort Myers, Fla.	Deceased	10/11/95	9E

Beltran, Sandra M.	Honolulu, Hawaii	Removed	09/29/95	3A	Ehlers, Stephen E.	Plainsboro, N.J.	Resigned	12/01/95	9D
Bengson, John C.	Bellbrook, Ohio	Removed	02/26/95	6F	Ehrlichman, James P.	Ballwin, Mo.	Resigned	05/01/95	4B
Benson, Wilbert E.	Minneapolis, Minn.	Deceased	02/14/95	5B	Eicher, Robert E.	Edon, Ohio	Deceased	11/01/95	6D
Berger, Ewald G.	Ottawa Lake, Mich.	Deceased	03/11/95	6D	Ellison, James M.	Wheeling, W.Va.	Resigned	02/28/95	8H
Bergquist, Carl A. Sr.	Worcester, Mass.	Deceased	08/23/95	7B	Elstad, Peter H.	Beach Lake, Pa.	Deceased	02/10/95	7C
Bernshausen, David	Yoakum, Texas	Resigned	08/26/95	4E	Engel, Leland E.	Indian Harbor Beach, Fla.	Deceased	10/28/95	9E
Biedenweg, Hans M.	Burlington, Wash.	Deceased	04/29/95	4A	Erickson, Wayne H.	Albuquerque, N.M.	Removed	06/01/95	1B
Billstein, Bruce L.	Round Rock, Texas	Removed	09/01/95	4E					
Bishop, James P.	Milwaukee, Wis.	Deceased	05/23/95	5J	Fagerlin, Carl W.	Tacoma, Wash.	Deceased	08/13/95	1C
Bishop, John S.	Gettysburg, Pa.	Deceased	02/18/95	8D	Fague, Harland D.	Port Charlotte, Fla.	Deceased	08/16/95	9E
Bishop, K. Jay	Springfield, Ohio	Deceased	06/11/95	6F	Faloon, Richard D.	Brookville, N.Y.	Resigned	06/30/95	7C
Blank, Franklin K.	Rochester, N.Y.	Deceased	03/06/95	7D	Farwig, Jack E.	Lansdowne, Pa.	Resigned	04/17/95	7F
Boe, Theodore M.	Tacoma, Wash.	Deceased	05/05/95	1C	Fehler, Harold E.	Brenham, Texas	Deceased	10/19/95	4F
Borleis, J. H. August	Norfolk, Va.	Deceased	04/13/95	8F	Fernandez, Edward H. Jr.	Sayreville, N.J.	Resigned	12/14/95	7A
Borrud, Richard J.	Custer, S.D.	Removed	10/01/95	1D	Ferris, Richard W.	Uniontown, Ohio	Resigned	08/28/95	6E
Bottjen, Leland A.	Mesa, Ariz.	Resigned	06/01/95	2D	Fish, Merton G.	Minneapolis, Minn.	Deceased	09/14/95	3G
Bower, Philip O.	Gettysburg, Pa.	Deceased	12/15/95	8F	Fisher, James N.	Dover, Ohio	Deceased	05/26/95	6E
Brailey, Everett D.	Denver, Colo.	Resigned	10/10/95	4A	Flesner, Dorris A.	Saint Paul, Minn.	Deceased	05/02/95	3H
Braun, Leon D.	Longview, Texas	Deceased	02/19/95	4D	Florstedt, Luther C.	Williamsburg, Va.	Deceased	06/30/95	9A
Brehmer, Franklin R.	Fredericksburg, Texas	Deceased	05/30/95	4E	Fork, Daniel W.	Columbus, Ohio	Removed	12/01/95	6F
Brubaker, Russell L. Jr.	Jupiter, Fla.	Deceased	07/07/95	9E	Forsberg, Gary A.	Cass Lake, Minn.	Deceased	04/09/95	3E
Buchanan, Willis S.	Hollins, Va.	Deceased	01/23/95	9A	Forss, Eric C.	Fort Wayne, Ind.	Removed	05/03/95	5B
Bulgerin, David L.	Taylor, Texas	Deceased	12/30/95	4E	Foss, Harlan F.	Sun City, Ariz.	Deceased	12/20/95	3I
Bullo, Randall S.	Seattle, Wash.	Deceased	01/11/95	1B	Foster, Preston B.	Paducah, Ky.	Resigned	02/03/95	6C
Burns, Ernest T.	Springfield, Ga.	Deceased	01/20/95	9D					
Burtness, Ernest G.	Roscoe, Ill.	Deceased	06/26/95	5K	Gaenicke, David R.	Bakersfield, Calif.	Removed	10/15/95	2B
					Ganskopp, Elmer H.	Wardensville, W.Va.	Deceased	05/09/95	9A
Carlsson, John E.	Lilydale, Minn.	Deceased	06/29/95	3H	Gilbert, Richard B.	Valparaiso, Ind.	Resigned	04/06/95	6C
Casey, Diane D.	Oak Lawn, Ill.	Removed	04/21/95	6F	Grabau, Harold T.	Houston, Texas	Deceased	07/29/95	4E
Christenson, Alfred M.	Waukesha, Wis.	Deceased	08/19/95	8F	Graf, Adam A.	Bowling Green, Ohio	Deceased	03/08/95	6D
Christenson, Ernest Jr.	Waukesha, Wis.	Deceased	08/19/95	8F	Grimm, Eckhard H.	Dallas, Texas	Removed	08/15/95	4D
Christesen, Gerald H.	Republic, Mich.	Resigned	02/02/95	5G	Gruber, Harry L.	Lititz, Pa.	Deceased	04/21/95	8D
Christion, Jimmy L.	Oklahoma City, Okla.	Resigned	02/28/95	4C	Grumdahl, Roger I.	Golden Valley, Minn.	Removed	04/13/95	3G
Coon, Charles R.	LaCrosse, Wis.	Removed	08/19/95	5L	Grumm, Walter W.	San Francisco, Calif.	Deceased	07/06/95	2A
Cressman, George E. Sr.	Lititz, Pa.	Deceased	05/27/95	8D	Guequierre, Earl D. O.	Rockaway Beach, Mo.	Deceased	10/16/95	4B
					Gustafson, Paul A. J.	Eagan, Minn.	Deceased	11/10/95	3H
Daleske, Luther H. C.	Almont, N.D.	Deceased	11/04/95	3A	Gutzmann, George P.	Northfield, Minn.	Deceased	01/27/95	3I
Dannhaus, Herman W.	San Antonio, Texas	Deceased	03/06/95	4E					
Deal, John B.	Des Plaines, Ill.	Resigned	12/18/95	5A	Hageman, Everett I.	Plainview, Ill.	Deceased	01/28/95	5C
Dirks, Douglas W.	Longmont, Colo.	Removed	11/03/95	1F	Halsey, William S.	Knoxville, Tenn.	Removed	06/15/95	9D
Doerfler, J. David	Austin, Texas	Removed	11/15/95	4E	Hamada, Yukio	Honolulu, Hawaii	Removed	09/09/95	2C
Douthwaite, Lawrence G.	Littlestown, Pa.	Resigned	01/01/95	8D	Hansen, Allison A.	Raytown, Mo.	Deceased	01/11/95	4B
Dozer, Reginald E.	Carrollton, Ohio	Deceased	11/04/95	8B	Hansen, Erling W.	Northfield, Minn.	Deceased	12/31/95	3I
Duehring, James M.	Epping, N.D.	Resigned	09/29/95	3A	Harjunpaa, Toivo K. I.	Berkeley, Calif.	Deceased	09/21/95	2A
Dunlap, Hubert A.	Batesburg, S.C.	Deceased	06/03/95	9C	Harvey, C. Anthony	San Francisco, Calif.	Deceased	01/04/95	2A
Dutcher-Walls, Timothy	Etobicoke, Ontario	Transferred to Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada	11/04/95	6D	Heany, Bruce R.	Littleton, Colo.	Removed	11/30/95	5A
					Hebard, Jack E.	Canton, Ga.	Deceased	09/26/95	9D
Edwins, J. Kenneth Jr.	Houston, Texas	Resigned	12/21/95	4F	Heimarck, Theodore	Northfield, Minn.	Deceased	02/27/95	3G
					Henrichs, Elmer A.	Clinton, Iowa	Deceased	08/29/95	5D

Hively, Earl L.	Pittsburgh, Pa.	Deceased	04/10/95	8B	La Fond, Larry L.	Virginia Beach, Va.	Resigned	08/31/95	9A
Hizer, Harold J.	Cheasapeake, Va.	Deceased	09/14/95	9A	Larsen, Douglas G.	New Ulm, Minn.	Deceased	03/17/95	3F
Hofer, John E.	Cincinnati, Ohio	Deceased	11/11/95	6F	Larson, Carl W.	Omaha, Neb.	Deceased	08/15/95	4A
Hoffmann, Leonard A.	Baldwin, Wis.	Resigned	02/21/95	5H	Laubach, Robert A.	Allentown, Pa.	Deceased	09/16/95	7E
Hoffner, Billy R.	Savannah, Ga.	Deceased	09/28/95	9D	Le Mont, Robert J.	Council Bluffs, Iowa	Deceased	10/31/95	5E
Hogan, William F.	Charleston, S.C.	Removed	07/01/95	9A	Lease, Henry A.	Stevens Point, Wis.	Deceased	02/06/95	5I
Hohman, Herbert G.	Lancaster, Pa.	Deceased	08/03/95	8D	Lee, James P.	Stockton, Calif.	Removed	01/31/95	2A
Holland, Carl B.	Tigard, Ore.	Removed	02/26/95	6F	Lewis, Robert T.	Ashern, Manitoba	Transferred	08/20/95	3C
Holls, Carlton Jr.	Glen Ellyn, Ill.	Resigned	07/31/95	5A					to Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada
Horne, Jan	Tulia, Texas	Removed	04/01/95	5B	Lindemann, Herbert F.	Rio Rancho, N.M.	Deceased	02/22/95	2E
Horner, Donald R.	St. Paul, Minn.	Removed	04/13/95	3G	Lindquist, Wilfred H.	Frederic, Wis.	Deceased	04/24/95	5H
Hostetler, Rebecca J.	St. Paul, Minn.	Resigned	10/31/95	3I	Lokensgard, Bernhard O.	Minneapolis, Minn.	Deceased	08/06/95	3H
Hoy, Daniel O.	Columbia, S.C.	Deceased	01/20/95	9C	Luttinen, Charles A.	Mount Vernon, Ill.	Deceased	03/11/95	5C
Hughes, Robert T.	Lancaster, Pa.	Resigned	04/01/95	8D					
Hugus, Howard S.	Naples, Fla.	Deceased	06/07/95	8E	Madson, Margaret H.	Minneapolis, Minn.	Removed	08/09/95	3G
Hulme, William E.	Roseville, Minn.	Deceased	02/21/95	3H	Martens, Harold A.	Pittsburg, Kan.	Deceased	01/19/95	4B
Hult, Philip W.	Santa Cruz, Calif.	Deceased	08/30/95	2A	Martens, Rudolf A.	Peoria, Ill.	Deceased	02/21/95	5C
					Mau, Carl H. Jr.	Redondo, Wash.	Deceased	03/31/95	1B
Ice, Oscar J.	Southfield, Mich.	Deceased	08/11/95	6A	Mau, Frederick H.	Lodi, Calif.	Deceased	09/08/95	2A
					Maul, Traci L.	Baltimore, Md.	Deceased	08/19/95	8F
Jacobson, Luther H.	Bagley, Wis.	Deceased	05/13/95	5K	McCarthy, Edward G.	Huntington, N.Y.	Resigned	02/22/95	9E
Jahr, Arnold H.	Waverly, Iowa	Deceased	09/11/95	5F	McCartney, Sedoris N.	Cannon Falls, Iowa	Deceased	02/19/95	5D
Jaye, Brian A.	Unity, Wis.	Resigned	06/24/95	5H	McCarty, David W.	West Milton, Pa.	Resigned	04/30/95	8E
Jensen, Everett J.	Seattle, Wash.	Deceased	05/17/95	1B	McCullough, Paul G.	Cameron, S.C.	Deceased	10/06/95	9C
Jensen, Vernon A.	Hudson, Wis.	Deceased	07/23/95	3I	McKnight, Henry T.	Hamburg, N.Y.	Deceased	09/08/95	9E
Jewell, Eugene W. Jr.	Rockford, Ill.	Removed	01/31/95	2A	Meisner, David H.	Minneapolis, Minn.	Deceased	11/22/95	3G
Johnshoy, Norman C.	Fresno, Calif.	Deceased	08/25/95	2A	Menke, Norman E.	Plymouth, Minn.	Deceased	03/14/95	3G
Johnson, Earl J.	Seaside, Calif.	Deceased	04/21/95	2A	Meyer, Quinton D.	East Amherst, N.Y.	Removed	12/31/95	7D
Johnson, Milton C.	Cupertino, Calif.	Deceased	12/01/95	2A	Michael, Hartzell A.	Belle Vernon, Pa.	Deceased	07/04/95	8B
Jovaag, Jonas O.	St. Paul, Minn.	Deceased	12/09/95	3G	Miesel, Rolland L.	Stone Mountain, Ga.	Deceased	07/07/95	9D
					Milius, Herbert C.	Janesville, Wis.	Deceased	03/22/95	5K
Kaada, Einar	Staten Island, N.Y.	Deceased	12/27/95	7C	Miller, O. Jerome	Dwight, Ill.	Deceased	03/05/95	5C
Kaiser, Gregory D.	Worland, Wyo.	Deceased	11/16/95	1F	Moline, Irvin R.	Portland, Ore.	Deceased	03/13/95	2B
Kallevig, Emil G.	Apache Junction, Ariz.	Deceased	04/03/95	3F	Mortensen, Fred S.	Boca Raton, Fla.	Resigned	08/14/95	9E
Kanyuch, John	Clark, Pa.	Deceased	12/16/95	8A	Morton, Richard E.	Lodi, Calif.	Deceased	05/19/95	2A
Kehres, Donald W.	Olathe, Kan.	Resigned	03/01/95	4B	Mostrom, Ruben K.	Northfield, Minn.	Deceased	03/11/95	3I
Kensing, Wilburn P.	Pottsville, Texas	Deceased	06/15/95	4D	Mostrom, Vincent G.	Des Moines, Iowa	Deceased	02/16/95	5D
Keyser, James L.	Toledo, Ohio	Deceased	12/09/95	6D	Mothershed, M. Virginia	Charlotte, N.C.	Removed	03/18/95	9B
Kim, Paul C.	Glendale, Calif.	Removed	03/11/95	2C	Mullen, Charles L.	Cincinnati, Ohio	Deceased	12/05/95	6F
Kirkegaard, Leif A.	Earlville, Iowa	Deceased	06/28/95	5F	Mumford, Paul J.	Richmond, Ind.	Deceased	07/27/95	6C
Kleckley, Henry D.	Tarboro, N.C.	Deceased	10/26/95	6C					
Knudsen, Paul H.	Staten Island, N.Y.	Removed	08/10/95	7C	Nein, George E. Jr.	Berwick, Pa.	Deceased	01/09/95	8E
Knudson, Jesse P.	Clifton, Texas	Deceased	02/02/95	4B	Nelson, Ernest N.	La Crosse, Wis.	Deceased	06/27/95	5L
Knutson, Russell E.	Greencastle, Pa.	Deceased	09/11/95	8D	Nelson, George L.	Galena, Ill.	Deceased	09/04/95	5B
Koester, Bruce T.	Monroe, Wash.	Resigned	07/31/95	3G	Nelson, Hans	Sauk Centre, Minn.	Deceased	07/23/95	3D
Koester, Charles L.	Franklin, Wis.	Deceased	02/22/95	5J	Nelson, John O.	Carmel, Ind.	Deceased	05/14/95	6C
Koetz, Wayne A.	Worth, Ill.	Deceased	06/16/95	5A	Nelson, Kenneth A.	Moline, Ill.	Deceased	10/07/95	5B
Kuhlmann, Elmer H.	Denver, Colo.	Deceased	08/20/95	2E	Nelson, Norman A.	Fair Oaks, Calif.	Deceased	11/19/95	2A
Kumpf, Donald C.	Melvin, Ill.	Deceased	08/20/95	5C	Nelson, Norman A.	Napa, Calif.	Deceased	09/26/95	2A

Nelson, Robert	Telford, Pa.	Deceased	10/25/95	7F	Schellhase, David L.	Sandusky, Ohio	Resigned	08/10/95	6D
Nelson, Sally E.	Argyle, Minn.	Resigned	09/01/95	3D	Schlachtenhaufen, Waldemar	Wausau, Wis.	Deceased	10/30/95	5I
Nerenhausen, Chester C.	De Pere, Wis.	Deceased	11/30/95	5I	Scholer, Alfred H.	Rock, Mich.	Deceased	05/02/95	5G
Neudoerffer, J. Frederick	New Haven, Conn.	Deceased	02/24/95	7C	Schroder, Alfred J.	Liverpool, N.Y.	Deceased	07/23/95	7D
Nicol, Lewis G.	Sandusky, Ohio	Deceased	07/03/95	6D	Sellstrom, C. Palmer	Spicer, Minn.	Deceased	10/19/95	3F
Nikolaisen, Richard A.	Des Moines, Iowa	Deceased	03/22/95	5D	Setterholm, Paul W.	Minneapolis, Minn.	Deceased	08/10/95	3G
Olsen, C. David	Bellflower, Calif.	Deceased	07/02/95	2B	Setterlund, Wallace V.	New Brighton, Minn.	Deceased	08/12/95	3G
Olson, Daniel R.C.	St. Paul, Minn.	Removed	04/13/95	3G	Singleton, William T.	Fishersville, Va.	Removed	11/01/95	9A
Olson, Gary L.	Fargo, N.D.	Deceased	11/04/95	3B	Slice, John N.	Chapin, S.C.	Deceased	04/06/95	9C
Ose, Gaylen V.	Roseville, Minn.	Deceased	07/15/95	3H	Smith, Robert J.	Batavia, N.Y.	Removed	09/01/95	7D
Otterstad, Robert L.	Bryan, Texas	Deceased	08/23/95	4F	Soland, Eugene F.	San Antonio, Texas	Removed	02/18/95	4E
Ozolins, Martins	Bloomington, Minn.	Deceased	04/22/95	3G	Soli, John C.	Forest Lake, Minn.	Deceased	12/11/95	3I
Palmquist, William C.	Alexandria, Minn.	Deceased	07/02/95	5F	Sorensen, Arthur W.	Albert Lea, Minn.	Deceased	04/23/95	3I
Pavlenko, Victor V.	Englewood, Colo.	Removed	12/31/95	2E	Sorensen, Victor G.	Rochester, Minn.	Deceased	04/29/95	3I
Pedersen, Robert C.	Boise, Idaho	Removed	11/03/95	1F	Spath, L. Michael	Collinsville, Ill.	Resigned	02/08/95	5C
Pederson, Keith G.	Belen, N.M.	Removed	12/01/95	5K	Stein, Philip O.	Chicago, Ill.	Deceased	04/28/95	5A
Pelphrey, C. Brant	Smithville, Texas	Resigned	12/06/95	4E	Stracker, Norberth H. Jr.	Ossining, N.Y.	Deceased	11/27/95	7C
Petersen, Adolf S.	Waupaca, Wis.	Deceased	03/31/95	5I	Swanson, Paul R.	Portage, Ind.	Resigned	10/14/95	5C
Peterson, John N.	Tempe, Ariz.	Deceased	07/07/95	2D	Sward, David A. E.	Anaheim, Calif.	Deceased	03/20/95	2B
Petrillo, William A.	Oxford, Wis.	Deceased	12/05/95	5B	Tamminen, Alexander G.	Eveleth, Minn.	Deceased	01/01/95	3E
Pettersen, David J.	Duluth, Minn.	Transferred	02/01/95	3E	Thompson, Mark C.	Minneapolis, Minn.	Removed	03/18/95	3I
					Thumhart, Anton R. Jr.	Manahawkin, N.J.	Deceased	12/08/95	7A
					Tofte, James A.	Spring Park, Minn.	Deceased	12/07/95	3G
Pfeifer, H. Wahl	Selingsgrove, Pa.	Deceased	10/21/95	8E	Tonsing, Ernest F.	Topeka, Kan.	Deceased	07/31/95	4B
Plekon, Michael P.	Holmes, N.Y.	Resigned	06/11/95	7C	Trautman, Dale C.	Fargo, N.D.	Resigned	02/23/95	3B
Poovey, William A.	San Antonio, Texas	Deceased	02/16/95	4E	Trowbridge, Joanne F.	Gettysburg, Pa.	Resigned	12/31/95	8D
Preus, Herman A.	Saint Paul, Minn.	Deceased	05/17/95	3H	Tyson, Dean E.	Warren, Ohio	Deceased	12/20/95	6E
Prowell, Cleon F.	York, Pa.	Deceased	02/26/95	8D	Uzupan, Daniel	Fort Ann, N.Y.	Removed	07/24/95	7D
Ranheim, Steven G.	Englewood, Colo.	Deceased	04/25/95	2E	Vetter, George C.	Zelienople, Pa.	Deceased	05/27/95	8B
Rhodes, Stephen R.	Greensboro, N.C.	Removed	01/03/95	9B	Victorin-Vangerud, Robert	Rochester, Minn.	Resigned	03/02/95	9D
Rockel, David H.	Lutherville, Md.	Removed	10/01/95	8B	Villaume, William J.	Corpus Christi, Texas	Deceased	03/27/95	4E
Rodriguez, Joseph R.	Waterloo, Iowa	Resigned	09/09/95	5F	Volkmar, Lloyd B.	Fort Worth, Texas	Deceased	01/25/95	4D
Roemer, Carl E.	Westbury, N.Y.	Resigned	09/18/95	7D	Walker, Brooke	Satellite Beach, Fla.	Resigned	03/02/95	9E
Rohs, David E.	Schenetady, N.Y.	Deceased	04/28/95	7D	Walker, Harry P.	Osseo, Wis.	Deceased	01/22/95	5H
Rowoldt, Walter E.	Lincoln, Neb.	Resigned	06/30/95	4A	Wangberg, Mark D.	Kula, Hawaii	Removed	04/01/95	3D
Runge, Earl G.	Emlenton, Pa.	Deceased	08/14/95	8A	Waugh, E. Franklin	Pittsburgh, Pa.	Resigned	12/11/95	8B
Ryan, Dennis M.	Phoenix, Ariz.	Removed	05/11/95	2D	Wee, Morris	Bloomington, Minn.	Deceased	12/14/95	3G
Saarinen, Jukka E.	Niagara Falls, Ontario	Transferred	10/05/95	6E	Weihe, Clifton M.	Santa Maria, Calif.	Deceased	02/17/95	2B
					Weltzin, Theodore J.	Watford City, N.D.	Deceased	12/24/95	3A
					Wensel, Robert H.	Fort Worth, Texas	Deceased	08/28/95	4D
Sadravi, Diane M.	Mobile, Ala.	Deceased	10/24/95	9D	Werberg, Robert J.	Irving, Texas	Resigned	04/02/95	4D
Sarvela, William R.	Milwaukee, Wis.	Deceased	03/22/95	5J	Westby, Philip G.	Fergus Falls, Minn.	Resigned	08/31/95	3D
Sauer, C. Richard	West Easton, Pa.	Resigned	05/15/95	7E	Westphal, Leonard R.	Columbus, Wis.	Deceased	12/28/95	5K
Scarvie, Walter B. Sr.	Tucson, Ariz.	Deceased	12/22/95	2D	White, Howard E.	Northfield, Minn.	Resigned	01/02/95	5K
Schauer, Allen E.	Gillette, Wyo.	Removed	11/16/95	3A					
Schedler, Jonathan L.	Gresham, Wis.	Removed	09/01/95	3B					
Schedler, Norman C.	Anoka, Minn.	Resigned	09/12/95	5C					

Wiencke, Gustav K.	Haverford, Pa.	Deceased	08/08/95	4A	Blake, Ronald R.	Edmonds, Wash.	Removed	01/13/96	1B
Williams, Kim-Eric	Manchester, Conn.	Resigned	11/01/95	7B	Bloomdall, Richard E.	Scandia, Minn.	Deceased	07/28/96	7C
Wittenstrom, Robert C.	Odessa, Texas	Deceased	01/25/95	4D	Bloomquist, Rudolph	Hamilton, Mont.	Deceased	09/30/96	1F
Wittschen, Norman R.	Columbus, Ohio	Removed	02/26/95	6F	Bollman, Paul R.	Dixon, Ill.	Deceased	03/18/96	5B
Wolff, Lorin J.	Lincoln, Neb.	Deceased	07/19/95	4A	Bowers, Louis T.	Columbia, S.C.	Deceased	02/09/96	9C
Ydstie, Ervin V.	Minot, N.D.	Deceased	12/03/95	3A	Bowman, Harry S.	Lewisburg, Pa.	Deceased	10/27/96	8E
Zacher, Mark P.	Waynesboro, Pa.	Resigned	12/06/95	8D	Brackman, Bruce D.	Kansas City, Mo.	Resigned	10/07/96	4B
Zech, Audrey L.	St. Paul, Minn.	Removed	08/01/95	3G	Brakke, Almon J.	Minneapolis, Minn.	Deceased	07/25/96	3G
Zerbst, David C.	Santa Fe, N.M.	Removed	12/02/95	2C	Brandt, Lowell N.	Minnetonka, Minn.	Resigned	10/07/96	3G
Ziegler, Edgar D.	York, Pa.	Deceased	01/03/95	8D	Brandt, Mark C.	Orofino, Idaho	Removed	03/08/96	1D
Ziemer, Cynthia A.	Oak Park, Ill.	Removed	04/06/95	5F	Brandt, Randall W. B.	Rosemount, Minn.	Removed	04/15/96	3I
					Braltie, Otto M.	Minneapolis, Minn.	Deceased	06/07/96	3D
					Braun, Arthur H.	St. Paul, Minn.	Deceased	04/05/96	9E
					Braunschweig, Oscar M.	Romeo, Mich.	Deceased	05/08/96	6A
					Bremer, E. Melvin	Kirkland, Wash.	Deceased	01/30/96	1B
					Breum, Janet K.	Mount Olive, Ill.	Removed	09/14/96	6C
					Brinkman, Vicki A.	Maplewood, Minn.	Resigned	11/30/96	3H
					Brown, Thomas M.	Archdale, N.C.	Removed	10/01/96	8D
					Bruland, Osborne Y.	Milwaukie, Ore.	Deceased	05/14/96	1E
					Bruland, Ruth P.	Las Vegas, Nev.	Removed	01/18/96	2D
					Bucher, John	Pittsburgh, Pa.	Deceased	08/22/96	8B
					Buchholz, Richard H.R.	Table Rock, Neb.	Deceased	10/11/96	4A
					Bunde, Lawrence T. Jr.	Anoka, Minn.	Deceased	12/27/96	3G
					Butt, Wilford C.	New Middletown, Ind.	Deceased	02/22/96	6C
					Casper, Larry A.	Bellevue, Neb.	Resigned	03/18/96	4A
					Chancellor, Hilton S.	Midland, Texas	Removed	09/21/96	4D
					Chen, Mark Y. S.	Chia-Yi City, Taiwan	Removed	03/07/96	2C
					Cheney, Alan E.	Watska, Ill.	Removed	06/01/96	3B
					Chervick, John J. Jr.	Brush, Colo.	Deceased	02/04/96	7G
					Christiansen, William I.	Stevens Point, Wis.	Resigned	07/11/96	5I
					Christoffersen, Sandee K.	Eau Claire, Wis.	Resigned	10/18/96	5H
					Coleman, Cindy S.	Shelby, N.C.	Resigned	06/09/96	8A
					Comsia, Daniel R. Jr.	Puyallup, Wash.	Resigned	02/22/96	1C
					Cornils, Stephen J.	Plymouth, Minn.	Removed	12/05/96	3G
					Coughlin, Joseph O.	Fargo, N.D.	Deceased	08/16/96	3B
					Crane, Jeffrey S.	Martin, Ky.	Removed	09/13/96	6B
					Cripe-Benzon, Susan A.	Delavan, Wis.	Removed	08/21/96	5A
					Cudlipp, Frederic L.	Jefferson, Md.	Resigned	02/22/96	8F
					De Freese, Paul M.	Omaha, Neb.	Deceased	03/31/96	4A
					Dennis, Peter J.	Barnegat, N.J.	Deceased	09/29/96	7A
					Dorkof, Kenneth A.	Cicero, N.Y.	Deceased	11/07/96	7D
					Dorman, Pamela E.	San Antonio, Texas	Removed	03/07/96	2C
					Dovre, Ellen S.	Coralville, Iowa	Resigned	11/15/96	3F
					Duis, Alfred J. O.	Summit, N.J.	Deceased	04/21/96	7A
					Dukes, Charles H.	Charles Town, W.Va.	Resigned	10/31/96	8H
					Duwe, Carl F.	North Canton, Ohio	Deceased	05/03/96	6E
					Dversdall, Norman O.	San Diego, Calif.	Deceased	07/22/96	2C

Edmund, Wayne F.	Woodbury, Minn.	Deceased	03/09/96	3D	Henderson, Frank M.	Hesperia, Calif.	Removed	08/24/96	2C
Eggen, Richard L.	Kennewick, Wash.	Removed	10/31/96	1E	Hertenstein, Theodore L.	Camden, Ind.	Deceased	09/07/96	6C
Eichler, Christine L.	Virginia Beach, Va.	Removed	01/18/96	3A	Hestenes, Joseph R.	Northwood, Iowa	Deceased	08/07/96	5I
Eidam, Frederic H.	Trexlerstown, Pa.	Deceased	04/11/96	7E	Hidalgo, Ariel H.	Livingston, N.J.	Removed	02/18/96	7A
Eklund, Marjorie L.	Greenville, N.C.	Deceased	10/03/96	9B	Hill, David W.	Louisville, Ky.	Removed	11/01/96	6C
Eller, Clarence H.	Santa Rosa, Calif.	Deceased	05/04/96	2A	Hoefler, James L.	Mesa, Ariz.	Removed	06/01/96	2A
Engelhart, Paul K.	York, Pa.	Deceased	05/28/96	8D	Hoffman, Gottfried H.	La Mesa, Calif.	Removed	11/04/96	2C
Erickson, David A.	Grand Forks, N.D.	Removed	08/28/96	3B	Hoh, Philip R.	Allentown, Pa.	Deceased	03/18/96	7E
Eriks, Paul W.	Seattle, Wash.	Removed	03/28/96	1B	Holmer, Edvin K.	Lakeland, Fla.	Deceased	02/21/96	9E
Evenson, Bruce J.	Charleston, S.C.	Removed	09/24/96	9C	Holtz, David W.	Summerville, Pa.	Resigned	12/31/96	8A
Evrard, Joseph L.	Schnecksville, Pa.	Deceased	08/31/96	7E	Hoover, Paul R.	Guilford, Conn.	Deceased	05/01/96	7D
					Horner, Jack J.	Fruitport, Mich.	Deceased	06/09/96	6B
Feiock, Arlo J.	Bemidji, Minn.	Resigned	08/31/96	3D	Houser, Philip G.	Fremont, Neb.	Removed	07/14/96	4A
Fowler-Lindner, Dana	Menominee, Mich.	Removed	09/14/96	5G	Hoyer, H. Conrad	Minneapolis, Minn.	Deceased	08/03/96	3G
Freseman, David R.	Summerfield, N.C.	Resigned	12/05/96	9B	Hughes, Stewart A.	Rincon, Ga.	Resigned	01/14/96	9D
Froemmig, Larry F.	Beliot, Wis.	Deceased	01/31/96	5K	Humbert, Larrie J.	Orange, Va.	Resigned	06/30/96	9A
Fry, C. George	Fort Wayne, Ind.	Resigned	06/30/96	6C					
Fullenwieder, Jann E. B.	Saskatoon, Saskatchewan	Removed	02/22/96	7F	Jacobs, John A.	Austin, Texas	Deceased	05/22/96	4E
					Jacobson, Douglas L.	Cedar Falls, Iowa	Deceased	09/19/96	5F
Gangsei, Lyle B.	Thousand Oaks, Calif.	Deceased	07/23/96	2B	Jenkins, Alvin E.	Hot Springs Village, Ark.	Deceased	01/06/96	4C
Gebhard, William A.	St. Paul, Minn.	Deceased	05/07/96	3H	Jenkins, Scott L.	Garden Grove, Calif.	Resigned	01/03/96	2C
Gedrose, David I.	Vancouver, Wash.	Removed	08/31/96	1D	Jeska, David L.	Minneapolis, Minn.	Resigned	12/13/96	3G
Gerhard, H. Paul	Rock Hill, S.C.	Deceased	10/11/96	8B	Johansson, Daniel K.	New York, N.Y.	Removed	01/25/96	7A
Giving, Gerald R.	St. Paul, Minn.	Deceased	06/21/96	3H	Johnson, Dale E.	Port Richey, Fla.	Removed	10/31/96	8E
Goetz, James L.	Taylor Falls, Minn.	Removed	07/26/96	3D	Johnson, Darrel D.	Mesquite, Texas	Removed	09/21/96	4D
Gornell, Raymond E. Jr.	Oswego, Ill.	Removed	09/14/96	5B	Johnson, Edward A.	Jasper, Ind.	Deceased	12/06/96	6C
Gorski, William E.	Santiago, Chile	Resigned	07/17/96	5A	Johnson, Elmer J.	Minneapolis, Minn.	Deceased	01/28/96	3G
Gouker, J. Wilbur	Philadelphia, Pa.	Deceased	02/05/96	8D	Johnson, Kenneth G.	Grand Rapids, Mich.	Deceased	11/06/96	6B
Gould, Mark R.	Oconomowoc, Wis.	Removed	09/12/96	5I	Jorgensen, Holger P.	Albert Lea, Minn.	Deceased	09/22/96	3I
Greenwalt, Arthur E. Sr.	Mount Dora, Fla.	Deceased	12/02/96	9E	Josephson, Elwyn D.	Hiawatha, Iowa	Deceased	12/01/96	5D
Grorud, Orville	Sioux Falls, S.D.	Deceased	03/30/96	3C					
Gross, Lora M.	Tacoma, Wash.	Removed	10/31/96	1C	Kammerer, John	Cherokee Village, Ark.	Deceased	04/01/96	3D
					Keiber, Lloyd K.	Harvard, Ill.	Resigned	12/12/96	5B
Haer, Frederick B.	Zelienople, Pa.	Deceased	01/06/96	8B	Keisler, James A. Jr.	Cayce, S.C.	Deceased	09/30/96	9C
Hallberg, Oliver A.	Jefferson, Ohio	Deceased	08/12/96	6E	Keller, Martin C. H.	Fairfield, Wash.	Deceased	06/08/96	1D
Hamilton, Don R.	New London, Minn.	Deceased	03/06/96	3F	Kenney, Steven M.	San Francisco, Calif.	Removed	11/23/96	7B
Hamilton, Michael D.	Holland, Mich.	Removed	09/12/96	5I	Kildahl, Harold B.	Orlando, Fla.	Deceased	11/22/96	9E
Hanggi, Roger J.	Chambery, France	Removed	10/15/96	3F	Kjaer, Svend	Iowa City, Iowa	Deceased	02/21/96	5D
Hansen, L. Warren	Vancouver, Wash.	Deceased	05/06/96	1C	Kline, Kevin H.	Chamberlain, S.D.	Deceased	01/07/96	3C
Harris, Richard L.	Roanoke, Va.	Removed	08/01/96	9A	Knitt, Leon L.	Appleton, Wis.	Removed	09/12/96	5I
Hartsook, Dennis D.	Lacey, Wash.	Resigned	04/25/96	1C	Koch, Richard J.	La Connor, Wash.	Removed	06/26/96	3G
Haugen, Joel E.	Chicago, Ill.	Removed	03/31/96	3F	Koeal, Julius A.	Mesa, Ariz.	Deceased	10/08/96	3C
Haugse, Ernest N.	Portland, Ore.	Deceased	06/09/96	1C	Koo, Justus	San Francisco, Calif.	Removed	09/19/96	2A
Hauptert, Nancy L.	Fort Wayne, Ind.	Removed	07/27/96	6D	Koponen, Donald E.	Portsmouth, R.I.	Removed	10/01/96	7B
Heidt, Emory B. Sr.	Lake City, Fla.	Deceased	10/26/96	9E	Krueger, David L.	Lancaster, Minn.	Resigned	10/19/96	3D
Heimsoth, Larry G.	Troy, Texas	Resigned	07/23/96	4C	Kruger, Ronald L.	Minonk, Ill.	Deceased	01/22/96	5C
Heinrich, Brian J.	Vancouver, British Columbia	Transferred to Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada	03/21/96	7C					
Helgren, Roger D.	Ottawa, Ill.	Removed	03/09/96	5B	Lady, Charles L.	Somerset, Pa.	Deceased	04/07/96	8C
					Landsverk, Obert J.	San Diego, Calif.	Deceased	01/25/96	2C

Lane, Jay W.	Abington, Pa.	Resigned	10/09/96	8B	Nye, Paul A.	Coopersburg, Pa.	Resigned	06/01/96	7E
Lange, Frederick W.	Flanagan, Ill.	Deceased	06/29/96	5A	Nye, William E.	Hickory, N.C.	Deceased	11/19/96	9B
Larsen, Gerald E.	Portland, Ore.	Deceased	04/25/96	1E					
Larson, Richard E.	De Forest, Wis.	Deceased	09/29/96	5K	Odden, Arthur K.	Irvine, Calif.	Deceased	10/02/96	2C
Larson, Rod C.	Sheridan, Ill.	Removed	03/09/96	5B	O'donnell, John D.	San Antonio, Texas	Deceased	01/01/96	4E
Lauffenburger, Raymond C.	Whiting, N.J.	Deceased	10/31/96	7A	Olafson, Erling K.	Des Moines, Wash.	Deceased	06/06/96	1B
Laustsen, Jeffrey P.	Niagara Falls, Ontario	Transferred	03/01/96	7A	Olmon, Glenn V.	Duluth, Minn.	Deceased	10/22/96	3E
					Olson, Kenneth N.	Wrangell, Alaska	Deceased	12/26/96	1A
					Olson, Orville A.	Cook, Neb.	Deceased	06/15/96	4A
Lepisto, Eli G.	Holiday, Fla.	Deceased	02/20/96	9E	Ong, Dwight	Kearney, N.J.	Deceased	07/13/96	7A
Loew, Ralph W.	Buffalo, N.Y.	Deceased	03/05/96	7D	Otterby, Leslie H.	Poulsbo, Wash.	Deceased	06/13/96	1C
Long, Alfred L.	Cresco, Pa.	Deceased	10/02/96	7E	Ovrebø, Victor C.A.	Montevideo, Minn.	Deceased	10/12/96	3F
Long, James R.	Kerrville, Texas	Deceased	08/07/96	4E					
Lucas, Harold F.	Naugatuck, Conn.	Deceased	07/15/96	7D					
Lucke, Mark H.	Richardson, Texas	Removed	02/24/96	4F	Palan, James R.	Ames, Iowa	Removed	02/17/96	3D
Lueck, Orville E.	Warren, Ohio	Deceased	11/03/96	6E	Palm, Harald	Elk River, Minn.	Deceased	11/08/96	3G
					Panos, James	Lawrenceville, Ga.	Deceased	09/22/96	9D
Mahnke, Allan W.	Golden Valley, Minn.	Removed	01/17/96	3G	Parker, Gail B.	Lansing, Mich.	Removed	11/02/96	6D
Marquart, Donald E.	Galveston, Texas	Resigned	10/28/96	4E	Peters, David C.	Elysburg, Pa.	Deceased	09/21/96	8E
Martenson, Robert R.	Richfield, Minn.	Deceased	03/14/96	9F	Petersen, Carlo	Solvang, Calif.	Deceased	05/26/96	2B
Maxwell, Robert M.	Dallas, N.C.	Deceased	10/03/96	9B	Petersen, Harald A.	Port Angeles, Wash.	Deceased	07/16/96	1C
McClain, Robert C.	Doubs Ferry, N.Y.	Removed	12/05/96	8G	Petrich, Albert A.	Red Oak, Texas	Deceased	06/13/96	4F
McEwen, Linda I.	St. Paul, Minn.	Resigned	10/19/96	3D	Pfafflin, Ursula	Dresden, Germany	Removed	06/01/96	6C
McEwen, Thomas A.	Englewood, Colo.	Removed	06/01/96	4B	Planz, William	Titonka, Iowa	Deceased	12/07/96	5E
McLeod, Jeremy E.	Denver, Colo.	Removed	12/14/96	6A	Powell, Daniel S.	Janesville, Wis.	Removed	01/19/96	5J
Medow, David J.	Joliet, Ill.	Removed	10/28/96	5B	Priess, Gilbert E.	Floral Park, N.Y.	Deceased	01/30/96	7C
Meinzen, Erwin H.	Fenton, Mo.	Deceased	05/24/96	4B	Puckett, Gary B.	Decatur, Ill.	Removed	09/12/96	5I
Menees, Mark W.	Salisbury, N.C.	Resigned	05/25/96	9B	Pulscher, William M.	Tomball, Texas	Removed	09/21/96	4D
Menke, Wilfred R.	Kenedy, Texas	Deceased	07/04/96	4E					
Messer, J. Ernest	Clifton, Texas	Deceased	08/11/96	4D	Qualben, L. Philip	Staten Island, N.Y.	Deceased	08/19/96	7C
Meyer, Alexander	Omaha, Neb.	Deceased	12/15/96	4A					
Meyer, Rodney L.	Coralville, Iowa	Removed	09/07/96	5F	Rasmus, R. Daniel	Minneapolis, Minn.	Removed	01/03/96	5D
Miller, Hollis A.	Concord, N.C.	Deceased	06/30/96	9B	Rau, Harry L. Jr.	China Grove, N.C.	Deceased	07/19/96	9B
Millon, Stewart D.	Galesburg, Mich.	Deceased	12/23/96	6B	Rebeck, David P.	Brea, Ohio	Removed	11/02/96	6D
Moen, John T.	Anaheim, Calif.	Deceased	02/08/96	2C	Reichley, Kenneth L.	San Diego, Calif.	Deceased	04/02/96	7C
Moore, John C. III	St. Louis, Mo.	Resigned	10/24/96	3C	Reitz, Gerhard O.	Spokane, Wash.	Deceased	03/07/96	1D
Moose, Paul E.	Hickory, N.C.	Deceased	08/05/96	9B	Rhoden, J. Marion	Lexington, S.C.	Deceased	08/18/96	9C
Moris, Walter J.	Gig Harbor, Wash.	Deceased	05/29/96	1C	Rieker, George W. Jr.	Point Pleasant, N.J.	Deceased	01/11/96	7A
Moser, Gilbert W.	Congress, Ariz.	Removed	06/01/96	2D	Robison, David E.	Whittier, Calif.	Deceased	05/15/96	2B
Mosher, David M.	Davenport, Iowa	Removed	01/05/96	5D	Roehl, Julius A.	Mesa, Ariz.	Deceased	10/08/96	3C
Murphy, Jack W.	Ashland, Pa.	Resigned	03/31/96	7E	Rohrbaugh, Rodger E.	York, Pa.	Deceased	04/15/96	8D
					Roleder, Emil J.	Woodburn, Ore.	Deceased	12/13/96	1E
Nau, Walter T.	Hickory, N.C.	Deceased	12/02/96	9B	Roseland, James E.	Livonia, Mich.	Removed	09/13/96	6B
Naugle, Charles V.	Macungie, Pa.	Deceased	01/29/96	7E	Rosenauer, Donn L.	Seattle, Wash.	Removed	01/13/96	1B
Nelson, Edward P.	Rock Island, Ill.	Deceased	11/22/96	5B	Ross, Sharon Z.	Dallas, Texas	Removed	05/31/96	4D
Nelson, Jonathan A.	Salt Lake City, Utah	Removed	05/15/96	2E	Rueckwald, Paul T.	Lubbock, Texas	Deceased	06/15/96	4D
Nelson, Karl W.	Rock Island, Ill.	Deceased	08/12/96	5B	Rye, M. Harold	Mesa, Ariz.	Deceased	05/25/96	5D
Nelson, Mark N.	Roseville, Minn.	Removed	02/06/96	3D					
Noon, Scott C.	Lititz, Pa.	Removed	03/31/96	5C	Sager, Theophil F.	Canyon Lake, Texas	Deceased	09/17/96	4E
Norbeck, Nels H.	Corvallis, Mont.	Deceased	10/21/96	1F	Sanders, Kenneth B.	Los Angeles, Calif.	Deceased	09/05/96	2B

Sandrock, Sigrid M.	Lacey, Wash.	Resigned	05/17/96	1C	Thompson, Leonard T.	Dawson, Minn.	Deceased	11/19/96	3F
Sayles, Carl E.	Roseville, Calif.	Removed	09/19/96	2A	Thomson, Peter W.	Springfield, Ill.	Deceased	03/19/96	5C
Schaaf, James L.	Columbus, Ohio	Deceased	11/30/96	6F	Timmermann, Howard A.	St. Paul, Minn.	Deceased	11/23/96	5H
Schaefer, Jeffrey L.	Palm Bay, Fla.	Removed	06/07/96	9E	Trexler, Bernard L.	Arden, N.C.	Deceased	04/04/96	9C
Schey, H. Norman	Colorado Springs, Colo.	Deceased	08/17/96	2E	Triller, H. Brian	Shady Grove, Pa.	Resigned	06/13/96	8D
Schick, Claude E.	Telford, Pa.	Deceased	10/19/96	7E	Trout, Nelson W.	Inglewood, Calif.	Deceased	09/20/96	2B
Schindler, Carl J.	Zelienople, Pa.	Deceased	11/13/96	8B	Truscott, Nancy E.	Cherry Hill, N.J.	Removed	09/30/96	7A
Schlewitt, Richard H.	Akron, N.Y.	Deceased	06/06/96	7D	Tyler, Warren A.	Burlington, N.C.	Deceased	05/10/96	9B
Schmidt, James D.	London, England	Deceased	08/18/96	6F					
Schmidt, Karl T.	Madison, Wis.	Deceased	02/16/96	5K	Ullery, David E.	Worthington, Ohio	Deceased	09/03/96	6F
Schmidt, Richard K.	West Reading, Pa.	Deceased	09/23/96	7E	Upstad, Hans	St. Paul, Minn.	Deceased	07/16/96	3B
Schmierer, John	Tacoma, Wash.	Deceased	11/03/96	3C					
Schofer, Albert G.	Blasdell, N.Y.	Deceased	03/06/96	7D	Vaillancourt, Lawrence H.	Polo, Ill.	Resigned	02/21/96	5B
Schulz, Leonard R.	Bismarck, N.D.	Deceased	06/09/96	3A	Vander Stoep, Claude	Arlington, Neb.	Deceased	06/05/96	4A
Schwindt, Reinhold H.	Fresno, Calif.	Deceased	08/01/96	2A	Venable, Michele M.	Oakland Park, Fla.	Removed	11/02/96	3C
Scott, Rory T.	Tigard, Ore.	Removed	10/31/96	1E	Vikstrom, Russell A.	Plymouth, Minn.	Deceased	03/15/96	3G
Segerhammar, Carl W.	Thousand Oaks, Calif.	Deceased	10/22/96	2B	Vosseler, Lawrence C. M.	Napa, Calif.	Deceased	01/29/96	2A
Seibert, Dorothy E.	Kintnersville, Pa.	Deceased	02/16/96	7F					
Sell, Harold W.	Allentown, Pa.	Deceased	04/28/96	7E	Wagner, B. Tim	Harrisburg, Pa.	Removed	09/15/96	8D
Senft, Herman P.	Saint Paul, Minn.	Deceased	08/30/96	3H	Waldum, H. Peder	Kalispell, Mont.	Deceased	06/07/96	1F
Shanor, Carl W.	Roswell, N.M.	Deceased	11/23/96	6F	Walker, Morris C.	Johnstown, Pa.	Deceased	01/10/96	7A
Shealy, Charles J. Jr.	Pomaria, S.C.	Deceased	08/09/96	9C	Warmanen, J. Cyrus	Crystal Falls, Mich.	Deceased	10/19/96	5G
Sherin, Gail L.	Westmont, Ill.	Removed	11/01/96	9E	Weaver, J. Benner	Seattle, Wash.	Deceased	01/08/96	1B
Shilling, Brian S.	Silver Spring, Md.	Removed	06/22/96	8G	Weber, Richard J.	Brenham, Texas	Deceased	01/08/96	4F
Shum, Benjamin W.	San Francisco, Calif.	Removed	09/19/96	2A	Wellenreiter, Gilbert E.	Winchester, Ill.	Resigned	09/30/96	5C
Silseth, Martinus E.	Brookfield, Wis.	Deceased	12/14/96	5J	Wenzelburger, Dale A.	Palm Harbor, Fla.	Removed	06/07/96	9E
Simpson, Gary D.	Middleton, Wis.	Resigned	06/16/96	5K	Wessinger, Charles S.	Chapin, S.C.	Deceased	12/13/96	9C
Sinner, Philip J.	Niles, Ohio	Deceased	11/09/96	6E	Whetstone, George E.	Waynesboro, Pa.	Deceased	11/30/96	8D
Skodacek, August A.	Youngstown, Ohio	Deceased	06/05/96	7G	Whitmoyer, Paul E.	Goldsboro, N.C.	Deceased	01/25/96	8D
Smeland, Arthur L.	Newport News, Va.	Deceased	04/20/96	9A	Widmark, Thomas E.	Cross Lake, Minn.	Resigned	09/18/96	3D
Smidt, Darold E.	Kenmare, N.D.	Deceased	12/16/96	3A	Wiediger, Carl G.	New Haven, Conn.	Deceased	12/19/96	7B
Smith, Larry W.	Gilbert, S.C.	Deceased	10/18/96	9C	Wiencke, Matthew I.	Thetford Center, Vt.	Deceased	04/18/96	7B
Smith, W. James	Billings, Mont.	Removed	10/07/96	1F	Wikstrom, Mark J.	Caruthers, Calif.	Removed	04/01/96	2A
Snyder, Roger L.	Livingston, Texas	Resigned	09/11/96	2A	Williams, Eric C.	Westerville, Ohio	Removed	10/19/96	6E
Sodt, William G.	Bellingham, Wash.	Deceased	08/07/96	1B	Williams, Heidi L.	Ames, Iowa	Resigned	10/30/96	7F
Soltvedt, Kristen A.	Austin, Minn.	Resigned	05/30/96	7C	Wissenberg, Martin B.	Cedar Rapids, Iowa	Removed	09/14/96	5B
Sommars, Fred A.	Edmonds, Wash.	Deceased	03/29/96	1B	Worthing, Mark W.	Ridgehaven, Australia	Removed	06/01/96	6C
Sorenson, Grant V.	Sun City, Ariz.	Deceased	12/30/96	2D	Wray, Jack C.	Savannah, Ga.	Removed	03/01/96	9D
Stadheim, Robert L.	Tempe, Ariz.	Removed	06/01/96	2D	Wright, Margot F.	Longmont, Colo.	Removed	11/02/96	3C
Steinhauer, Donald L.	Nescopeck, Pa.	Deceased	04/06/96	7E	Wu, Donald	Rowland Heights, Calif.	Removed	04/09/96	2B
Steinke, Harold D.	Port Ludlow, Wash.	Deceased	11/29/96	1C	Wuebben, Paul W.	Remson, Iowa	Deceased	10/07/96	5E
Stelling, Thomas O.	Tampa, Fla.	Deceased	12/25/96	9B	Wylie, Carol L.	Colorado Springs, Colo.	Deceased	12/03/96	2E
Stone, Alfred H.	Renton, Wash.	Deceased	11/01/96	1B					
Stover, Nevin B.	Stow, Ohio	Deceased	02/22/96	6E	Yaggie, Lloyd W.	Crestwood, Ky.	Removed	09/13/96	6C
Strohl, Chester E.	Horseheads, N.Y.	Deceased	02/15/96	7D	Yeagy, Arthur E. M.	Middletown, Pa.	Deceased	04/04/96	8D
Stuck, Werner W.	Columbus, Ohio	Deceased	04/29/96	6F	Yount, Walter N.	Gold Hill, N.C.	Deceased	12/08/96	9B
Tejan, Claude E.	Titusville, Fla.	Deceased	11/16/96	9E	Zickhur, Robert G.	Louisville, Ky.	Resigned	04/15/96	6C
Thelin, Llano G.	Ocean Park, Wash.	Deceased	04/29/96	1E	Ziegler, August G.	Perham, Minn.	Removed	02/17/96	3D

Ziegler, Harrison III	Harrisburg, Pa.	Deceased	11/09/96	8D
Zielins, Donald T.	Yucca Valley, Calif.	Resigned	01/03/96	2C
Zirkle, Otis W.	Chesapeake, Va.	Deceased	10/03/96	9A

**Appendix C to the
Report of the Secretary**

**Additions to the Roster of
Associates in Ministry 1995-1996**

1994 Corrections

The following persons were added to the roster of associates in ministry prior to 1995. The additions, however, were not reported in the minutes of the 1995 Churchwide Assembly.

Name	City/State	Date of Certification or Commissioning	Region/ Synod
Calhoun, Mary S.	River Forest, Ill.	Rostered AELC	5A
Casper, Mildred	Gold Hill, N.C.	Rostered LCA	9B
Folkening, John I.	Maywood, Ill.	Rostered AELC	5A
Marcinkowski, Susan	Chicago, Ill.	Rostered AELC	5A
Mix, Marsha E.	Elmhurst, Ill.	Rostered AELC	5A
Pohl, Joyce Z.	Chicago, Ill.	Rostered AELC	5A
Schnack, Ellen C.	Oak Park, Ill.	Rostered AELC	5A
Graf, Deborah M.	Sheboygan, Wis.	03/01/94	5J
Pearson, Linda M.E.	Salt Lake City, Utah	03/01/94	2E
Royal, Goldie	Tacoma, Wash.	04/24/94	1C
Stevenson, Brian Z.	Manassas, Va.	02/06/94	8G
Tahtinen, Lenora I.	Ishpeming, Mich.	05/19/94	5G
1995			
Adams, Jannie L.	Bellevue, Wash.	08/27/95	1B
Anderson, Glenn E.	Camden, N.J.	03/16/95	7A
Bonser, Melissa J.	Monument, Colo.	03/01/95	2E
Brandon, Shawn O.	Inver Grove Heights, Minn.	11/26/95	3H
Christenson, Jacqueline J.	Saint Petersburg, Fla.	01/22/95	9E
Elijah, Bruce	Houston, Texas	01/01/95	4F
Enoch, Gretchen E.	Louisville, Ky.	10/01/95	6C

Geisler, Joan	Livonia, Mich.	09/23/95	6A
Griffin, Clara C.	Everett, Wash.	05/01/95	1B
Harris, Evelyn L.	Alexandria, Minn.	01/15/95	3D
Ilten, Barbara A.	Guttenberg, Iowa	10/30/95	5F
Jowers, Florence M.	Greenville, Pa.	02/12/95	8A
Klatt, Karen	Hubertus, Wis.	03/12/95	5J
Lyman ⁷ , Judy K.	Elizabethtown, Pa.	06/04/95	8D
McClellan, Deborah, A.	Hanover, Pa.	01/22/95	8D
Peters, Marilyn L.	Albert Lea, Minn.	08/27/95	3I
Piel, Mark F.	Saint Charles, Mo.	04/21/95	4B
Preece, Susan L.	Atlanta, Ga.	10/01/95	9D
Reuss, Audrey M.	Waverly, Iowa	11/05/95	5F
Rogers, John A.	Lilburn, Ga.	05/01/95	9D
Sanford, J. Jeannine	Washington, D.C.	04/30/95	8G
Schultz, Lori J.	Milwaukee, Wis.	02/28/95	5J
Shaffer, Renee A.	Bellevue, Wash.	05/25/95	1B
Spehr, Eileen L.	Houston, Texas	08/28/95	4F
Vanatta, Carla Y.	Sycamore, Ill.	06/17/95	5B
Wartner, Gail C.	Hickory, N.C.	07/03/95	9B
Weber, Leslie D.	Erie, Pa.	02/05/95	8A
Wolfe, Ronald E.	Buffalo, N.Y.	03/26/95	7D
Wong, Karen E.	Washington, Ill.	08/06/95	5C
Wright, Kristine	Pinellas Park, Fla.	02/19/95	9E

1996

Alcantara, Janet C.	Danville, Pa.	08/03/96	8E
Bentz, Audrey A.	Keizer, Ore.	02/25/96	1E
Berg, Steven C.	Plymouth, Minn.	06/16/96	3G
Beyer, Almina L.	Fertile, Minn.	03/17/96	3D
Brown, Margaret L.	Kalispell, Mont.	05/05/96	1F
Carroll, Kathryn H.	Miami, Fla.	09/01/96	9E
Contos, Peggy S.	Bellaire, Texas	03/10/96	4F

⁷ Name later changed to Judy K. Collins.

Crosby, Patricia R.	Newberry, S.C.	11/10/96	9C
Cryer, Heidi A.	Tacoma, Wash.	06/16/96	1C
Floy, Jane C.	Fairport, N.Y.	06/01/96	7D
Gorton, Patricia S.	Cleveland, Texas	03/18/96	4F
Hahn, Mary L.	Davenport, Iowa	04/14/96	5D
Harvey, M. Suzanne	Ocean Springs, Miss.	06/02/96	9D
Huebner, Ingrid U.	Waukesha, Wis.	10/13/96	5J
Lentz-Friedrichs, Tara L.	Rincon, Ga.	11/23/96	9D
McCullough, G. Phyllis	Waynesboro, Pa.	06/23/96	8D
Mikkelson, Scott W.	Willmar, Minn.	04/28/96	3F
Morlock, Patricia A.	Troy, Ohio	09/22/96	6F
Paden, Maudy R.	Sharon Center, Ohio	09/22/96	6E
Phillips, Kathleen L.	Helena, Mont.	10/01/96	1F
Reid, Jonathan E.	Argyle, Texas	01/01/96	4D
Sladek, Michael W.	Bellevue, Wash.	07/01/96	1B
Slowik, Steven J.	Oak Park, Ill.	11/17/96	5A
Steinhart, Tammy A.	Syracuse, N.Y.	12/28/96	7D
Stover, Susan M.	Loveland, Ohio	06/22/96	6F
Swanson, Joanna C.	Edina, Minn.	03/24/96	3G
Travers, James W.	Devils Lake, N.D.	12/01/96	3B
Visser, Joyce E.	Alexandria, Minn.	04/21/96	3D
Volkman, Philip D.	Hallock, Minn.	05/26/96	3D
Williams, E. Louise	Valparaiso, Ind.	05/29/96	6C
Wolf, Rachael K.	Madison, Wis.	06/13/96	5K
Wright, Maureen O'Day	Murrysville, Pa.	04/01/96	8B

Appendix D to the Report of the Secretary

Removals from the Roster of Associates in Ministry 1995-1996

The several rosters under Associates in Ministry, representing the various roster categories that existed in ELCA predecessor churches, are identified as follows:

ALC-CCS	The American Lutheran Church: Commissioned Church Staff
LCA-LPL	Lutheran Church in America: Lay Professional Leaders
ALC-D	The American Lutheran Church: Deaconesses
AELC-CT	The Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches: Commissioned Teachers
AELC-D	The Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches: Deaconesses and Deacons

ELCA certified and commissioned Associates in Ministry, indicated in this list as ELCA-C, were rostered according to the standards and practices of this church.

1987 to 1994 Corrections

The following persons were removed from the roster of associates in ministry prior to 1995. The removals, however, were not reported in the minutes of the 1989, 1991, 1993, or 1995 churchwide assemblies.

Name	City/State	Reason	Date	Region/ Synod	Roster Identification
Gantz, Donald W. Jr.	Virginia Beach, Va.	Removed	12/31/87	7A	LCA-LPL
Paradise, Steven C.	Green Bay, Wis.	Removed	12/30/89	7A	LCA-LPL
Gahagen, Christine B.	Greenville, Pa.	Resigned	01/01/90	8A	LCA-LPL
Ramirez, Karen	Chicago, Ill.	Removed	03/14/91	5A	AELC-CT
Rumfelt, Lois, A.	Avon, N.Y.	Removed	06/01/91	7D	LCA-LPL
Koran, Kathleen Rystad	Staten Island, N.Y.	Ordained	03/21/93	7C	LCA-LPL
Gascho, Linda K.	Des Moines, Iowa	Removed	11/22/94	5D	ALC-CCS

1995

Ankerfelt, Daniel D.	Verona, Wis.	Ordained	09/24/95	5K	ELCA-C
Bakken, Eric E.	Cokato, Minn.	Ordained	10/01/95	3F	ALC-CCS

Betley, Mark A.	Denver, Colo.	Removed	06/30/95	2E	LCA-LPL	Todd, Jaquelyn	Glendale, Calif.	Removed	01/17/95	2B	ALC-CCS
Blank, Paul L.	Timonium, Md.	Ordained	07/16/95	8F	ELCA-C						
Borning, Myne C.	Ontario, Calif.	Deceased	01/01/95	2G	ALC-CCS	Vander Vegt, Vicki L.	Pine City, Minn.	Ordained	06/11/95	3E	ALC-CCS
Bystrom, Bertha J.	Elmira, N.Y.	Deceased	09/18/95	7D	LCA-LPL						
						Waldo, Joan H.	Neenah, Wis.	Deceased	10/31/95	5I	LCA-LPL
Clark, Sue R.	Norfolk, Va.	Resigned	05/01/95	9A	ELCA-C	Westman, Kathy L.	Benedict, N.D.	Removed	06/21/95	3I	LCA-LPL
Cole, Mary N.	Knoxville, Tenn.	Removed	07/17/95	9D	LCA-LPL	Whitlock, Margay J.	Kearny, N.J.	Ordained	06/25/95	7A	ELCA-C
						Wilson, Jeanette	Fresno, Calif.	Removed	01/31/95	2A	ALC-CCS
Dey, Robert A.	Paramus, N.J.	Removed	01/19/95	7A	AELC-CT	Wollin, Janice	Greenbush, Minn.	Removed	09/09/95	3D	ALC-CCS
Dumke, Dawn D.	Pemberville, Ohio	Removed	02/27/95	6D	ALC-CCS						
						Zoppi, Ellen M.	Hunker, Pa.	Removed	03/01/95	7E	LCA-LPL
Ellison, Michele P.	Washington, D.C.	Removed	09/01/95	7C	LCA-LPL						
Elmer, Linda L.	Reading, Pa.	Resigned	07/25/95	7E	ELCA-C						
Feig, Erik W.	Tucson, Ariz.	Ordained	09/24/95	2D	ELCA-C	1996					
File, Betty	Keyser, W. Va.	Removed	10/01/95	8F	ALC-CCS	Ajer, Margaret S.	Solvang, Calif.	Consecrated	06/15/96	2B	LCA-LPL
								Diaconal Minister			
						Appelo, Suzanne O.	Winlock, Wash.	Ordained	10/18/96	1C	LCA-LPL
Geffert, Glenn A.	Toronto, Kan.	Resigned	09/01/95	3H	AELC - CT						
Gennrich, Tracey A.	Phoenix, Ariz.	Resigned	11/30/95	2D	ELCA-C	Baker, Carol E.	St. Paul, Minn.	Removed	10/29/96	3G	ALC-CCS
Graff, Catherine L.	Mesa, Ariz.	Removed	02/09/95	2D	LCA-LPL	Bartz, Scott S.	Columbus, Ohio	Removed	09/13/96	6B	ELCA-C
						Behrens, Marci L.	Las Cruces, N.M.	Removed	05/15/96	2E	ELCA-C
Haglund, Pamela L.	Woodbury, Minn.	Removed	02/01/95	3H	LCA-LPL	Bengtson, Gloria E.	St. Paul, Minn.	Resigned	11/22/96	3G	ALC-CCS
Hansen, Barbara K.	Luray, Va.	Ordained	11/05/95	9A	LCA-LPL	Blandy, Jane B.	Glen Mills, Pa.	Resigned	06/20/96	7F	LCA-LPL
Haraldson, Paula Rae	Minneapolis, Minn.	Removed	02/01/95	3H	ELCA-C	Borg, Von F.	Tulsa, Okla.	Removed	04/01/96	4C	ALC-CCS
Hiller Arnelia B.	Norwalk, Calif.	Deceased	07/17/95	2B	ALC-CCS	Bowe, Julie M.	Mondovi, Wis.	Removed	09/12/96	5I	ELCA-C
Hoh, Pamela J.	Mattydale, N.Y.	Ordained	03/12/95	7D	ELCA-C	Bowen, William W.	Metuchen, N.J.	Deceased	12/18/96	7A	LCA-LPL
Johnson, Brian S.	Columbus, Ohio	Removed	04/22/95	6F	LCA-LPL	Campbell, Ann M.	Dodgeville, Wis.	Removed	12/31/96	5K	ELCA-C
Johnson, Rona C.	Phoenix, Ariz.	Removed	02/09/95	2D	LCA-LPL	Christenson, Mildred L.	Centerville, S.D.	Deceased	04/11/96	3C	ALC-D
						Cox, Sandra K.	Brandon, Fla.	Removed	06/07/96	9E	LCA-LPL
Kronstedt, Dale L.	Phoenix, Ariz.	Removed	02/09/95	2D	LCA-LPL						
						Davis, Edye M.	Fellwood, Mo.	Removed	06/15/96	4B	AELC-CT
Lane, Sharon L.	Wadena, Minn.	Removed	04/01/95	3D	ALC-CCS						
Lombard, Lois E.	Ankeny, Iowa	Resigned	03/06/95	5D	ELCA-C	Emanuelson, Evelyn V.	Milwaukee, Wis.	Deceased	01/03/96	5J	ALC-CCS
Luettt, Rebecca J.	Baileys Harbor, Wis.	Removed	11/27/95	5I	ELCA-C						
						Folkedahl, Nancy E.	Etrick, Wis.	Removed	03/26/96	5L	ALC-CCS
Mason, Susan C.	Urbana, Ohio	Removed	04/21/95	6F	ELCA-C	Forbes, Audrey D.	Ellicott City, Md.	Consecrated	05/19/96	8F	LCA-LPL
								Diaconal Minister			
Nelson, Robert W.	Camp Hill, Pa.	Deceased	06/10/95	8D	LCA-LPL						
Nycklemoe, Katherine J.	Milwaukee, Wis.	Ordained	05/14/95	5J	ELCA-C	Gerstenlauer, Joyce E.	Mechanicsburg, Pa.	Removed	09/15/96	8D	LCA-LPL
Paul, Marjorie A.	Easton, Pa.	Resigned	07/20/95	7E	LCA-LPL	Hankermeyer, Ralph W.	Coloma, Wis.	Ordained	06/09/96	5I	AELC-CT
Peterson, Richard D.	Indianapolis, Ind.	Removed	05/05/95	6C	LCA-LPL	Heim, Judy J.	Fremont, Neb.	Removed	03/09/96	6A	LCA-LPL
Potzler, Katherine M.	Madelia, Minn.	Removed	07/17/95	3I	ALC-CCS	Hovland, Mary L.	Maynard, Minn.	Ordained	06/16/96	3F	ELCA-C
Poulsen, Anna M.	Brush, Colo.	Deceased	06/08/95	2E	ALC-D						
						Knutson, Barbara J.	Albert Lea, Minn.	Ordained	06/22/96	3I	ALC-CCS
Sandmaier, Katherine	Carmel, Ind.	Resigned	01/30/95	6C	LCA-LPL	Koeppen, Carolyn S.	Utica, Mich.	Removed	03/09/96	6A	LCA-LPL
Solom, Marion E.	Wannaska, Minn.	Removed	04/01/95	3D	ALC-CCS						
						Langston, James E.	Orlando, Fla.	Resigned	10/13/96	9E	AELC-D

Lashley, Charles H.	Joppa, Md.	Ordained	03/24/96	8F	ALC-CCS
Lautensleger, Mary	Middletown, Ohio	Removed	05/01/96	6F	ELCA-C
Maasberg, Naomi W.	Kingston, Wash.	Resigned	11/30/96	1B	LCA-LPL
Mannon, Lenore C.	Tullahoma, Tenn.	Resigned	01/07/96	9D	LCA-LPL
Mansholt, Anita C.	Wichita, Kan.	Resigned	10/01/96	4B	AELC-CT
Marcinkowski, Susan	Chicago, Ill.	Resigned	11/25/96	5A	AELC-CT
McClendon, Karen A.	Columbia, Md.	Resigned	10/01/96	4B	LCA-LPL
McDaniel, Barbara A.	Dumfries, Va.	Removed	10/01/96	8G	LCA-LPL
Miller, W. Lawrence	North Charleston, S.C.	Deceased	03/14/96	9C	LCA-LPL
Milligan, Kathleen R.	Orefield, Pa.	Resigned	02/16/96	7E	ELCA-C
Mischnick, Nancy J.	Lansing, Ill.	Removed	06/01/96	6C	ALC-CCS
Oelschlager, Kathryn K.	Eau Claire, Wis.	Removed	10/04/96	6C	ALC-CCS
O'Shea, Laurie W.	Rush City, Minn.	Ordained	11/10/96	3H	ALC-CCS
Oswald, Glenn C.	Hope, N.J.	Removed	05/01/96	6F	LCA-LPL
Padgett, Nancy K.	Suwanee, Ga.	Ordained	07/14/96	9D	LCA-LPL
Palmer, Joleen A.	Kinston, Wash.	Resigned	12/31/96	1B	ALC-CCS
Palmer, Joyce C.	Lincoln, Neb.	Removed	07/16/96	4A	LCA-LPL
Peterson, Philip E.	Fargo, N.D.	Removed	10/10/96	3B	ALC-CCS
Rinas, Doreen S.	Manchester, Maine	Removed	11/23/96	7B	LCA-LPL
Ruhf, Tami L.	New York, N.Y.	Removed	02/01/96	8D	ELCA-C
Ruler, Linda M.	Portland, Ore.	Removed	09/15/96	8D	LCA-LPL
Sheetz, Gary M.	St. Louis, Mo.	Resigned	10/01/96	4B	AELC-CT
Sievert, Gary	Seattle, Wash.	Removed	12/31/96	7C	LCA-LPL
Slim, Ruth N.	Miami, Fla.	Removed	02/23/96	9E	LCA-LPL
Stedman, Ronald J.	Florissant, Mo.	Removed	01/01/96	4B	AELC-CT
Strickert, Gloria J.	Waverly, Iowa	Consecrated	12/22/96	5F	LCA-LPL
		Diaconal Minister			
Suhajda, Debra	Chicago, Ill.	Resigned	12/31/96	5A	AELC-CT
Tabola, Cloy D.	Fargo, N.D.	Removed	09/21/96	3A	ALC-CCS
Teig, M. DeWayne	Menominee, Mich.	Ordained	05/26/96	5G	ALC-CCS
Van Hala, Marcus N.	Big Rapids, Mich.	Removed	09/13/96	6B	ALC-CCS
Wagner, Deborah M.	Bethlehem, Pa.	Ordained	06/09/96	7E	ELCA-C
Ward, Dorothy K.	Spokane, Wash.	Deceased	04/14/96	1D	ALC-CCS
Weiszhaar, Darlis	Minot, N.D.	Removed	09/21/96	3A	ALC-CCS
Weseloh, Harold F.	Westlake, Ohio	Removed	01/01/96	7C	AELC-CT
Wolfe, Elizabeth M.	Albany, Ga.	Removed	02/01/96	9D	LCA-LPL

Appendix E to the Report of the Secretary

Additions to the Roster of Deaconesses of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America 1995-1996

1995

Name	City/State	Date of Consecration	Region/ Synod
Bernardo, Laura L.	Philadelphia, Pa.	07/30/95	7F
Stump, Janet A.	Schuylkill Haven, Pa.	12/08/95	7E

1996

Fregeau, Elsie J.	Rosemont, Ill.	06/30/96	5A
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Appendix F to the Report of the Secretary

Removals from the Roster of Deaconesses of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America 1995-1996

1995

Name	City/State	Reason	Date	Region/ Synod
Sparrar, E. Louise	Midlothian, Va.	Resigned	01/17/92	9A
Alberti, Eva	Malvern, Pa.	Deceased	06/08/95	7F
Amstutz, Betty R.	Harrisburg, Pa.	Deceased	02/03/95	7F
Hall, Jacqueline J. H.	Philadelphia, Pa.	Resigned	09/28/95	7F
Koder, Alma K.	Allentown, Pa.	Deceased	02/16/95	7E
Loehrig, C. Wilma	Gladwyne, Pa.	Deceased	01/04/95	7F
Tobias, Emma A.	Gladwyne, Pa.	Deceased	02/04/95	7F
Warrick, Marion E.	Gladwyne, Pa.	Deceased	06/20/95	7F

1996

Anderson, Marion E.	Gladwyne, Pa.	Deceased	01/28/96	7F
Hilger, Ruth M.	Gladwyne, Pa.	Deceased	08/06/96	7F
Hoeland, Charlotte E.	Gladwyne, Pa.	Deceased	01/15/96	7F

**Appendix G to the
Report of the Secretary**

**Additions to the Roster of Diaconal Ministers of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America 1995-1996**

1996

Name	City/State	Date of Consecration	Region/ Synod
Ajer, Margaret Schmitt	Solvang, Calif.	06/15/96	2C
Deming, Phillip R.	San Diego, Calif.	06/29/96	2C
Forbes, Audrey D.	Ellicott City, Md.	05/19/96	8F
Gable, Nancy	Gettysburg, Pa.	07/21/96	8C
Gall, Sharon M.	Lincoln, Ill.	12/15/96	5C
Sickles, Diana J.	Conroy, Iowa	08/25/96	5D
Strickert, Gloria J.	Waverley, Iowa	12/22/96	5F

**Appendix H to the
Report of the Secretary**

**Congregations Received, Removed, Consolidated,
Disbanded, Merged, or Withdrawn 1995-1996**

Congregations received, removed, consolidated, disbanded, merged, or withdrawn prior to 1995 but not previously reported in minutes of churchwide assemblies are included in this list. The ELCA congregation identification number (in parentheses) follows the name of each congregation.

“Merged” is defined as involving a congregation giving up its separate identity and uniting with an already existing congregation. “Consolidated” is defined as involving two or more congregations that join together to become a new entity, a “consolidation,” with a new name and a new congregation identification number.

State/City	Congregation/ Congregation Number	Region/ Synod	Action	Date
Alabama				
Silverhill	Zion (05809)	9D	Withdrew	09/08/95
Arizona				
Cottonwood	Spirit of Joy (30276)	2D	Received	05/31/95
Kearny	Peace (07392)	2D	Disbanded	12/31/96
Phoenix	Living Hope (30024)	2D	Disbanded	08/27/95
Yuma	Gloria de Cristo (30229)	2D	Received	05/31/95

California

Atasadero	Hope (30281)	2B	Received	06/01/95
Caruthers	Our Saviour (13773)	2A	Withdrew	01/28/96
Delano	Hope (16166)	2B	Disbanded	11/17/96
Hesperia	Rose of the Desert (07809)	2C	Disbanded	10/13/96
Long Beach	Bethel	2B	Merged with Holy Redeemer, Bellflower (13765)	05/01/95
Los Angeles	Our Savior's (13870)	2B	Disbanded	11/12/95
Milpitas	Reformation (05178)	2A	Disbanded	07/31/95
Oakland	Our Saviours (13904)	2A	Withdrew	01/28/96
Placentia	Redeemer (13935)	2C	Merged with Messiah, Yorba Linda (14043)	01/15/95
Ramona	Spirit of Joy (30198)	2C	Received	05/06/95
Santa Barbara	La Iglesia Hispano de Cristo (30062)	2B	Disbanded	03/15/96
San Francisco	First United (05161)	2A	Removed	12/31/95
San Francisco	St. Francis (13974)	2A	Removed	12/31/95
San Jose	Community (16011)	2A	Disbanded	12/07/92
San Jose	New Creation (30205)	2A	Received	04/19/96
Santa Clara	University (30255)	2A	Received	04/19/96

Colorado

Aurora	Martha and Mary (07837)	2E	Disbanded	12/31/92
Broomfield	Cross of Christ (30245)	2E	Received	05/20/95
Genoa	Chirst (10105)	2E	Disbanded	07/31/96
Lakewood	Peace with Joy (20021)	2E	Disbanded	09/22/96
Windsor	St. John (10249)	2E	Merged with Bethel (10248)	05/26/96

Connecticut

New Haven	Iglesia Luterana Resurreccion (07787)	7B	Received	03/19/95
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Delaware

Omar	Community (30291)	8F	Received	06/13/96
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Florida

Casselberry	Messiah (01728)	9E	Disbanded	03/02/96
Orlando	Living Word (16418)	9E	Disbanded	10/15/96

Georgia

Acworth	Christ Our Savior (30095)	9D	Received	05/18/96
Alpharetta	Lord of Life (30067)	9D	Received	05/18/96
College Park	True Vine (16394)	9D	Disbanded	01/28/96
Rossville	St. Matthew (05826)	9D	Merged with Ascension, Chattanooga, Tenn. (05814)	03/01/95
Skidaway Island	Messiah (30213)	9D	Received	05/19/95

Hawaii

Honolulu	Pearl Harbor (05093)	2C	Disbanded	06/11/95
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Illinois					Baltimore	Trinity (East) (02712)	8F	Consolidated with Bethany and Martin Luther	01/01/96
Benton	Faith (16357)	5C	Disbanded	07/28/96					
Bolingbrook	Joyful Spirit (30246)	5B	Received	06/15/96					
Cahokia	King of Kings (20044)	5C	Disbanded	04/30/95	Massachusetts				
Chicago	Bethany (10589)	5A	Disbanded	01/03/95	Braintree	Hope (10300)	7B	Consolidated with Gethsemane and Christ the King (Brockton)	06/01/96
Chicago	Bethesda (01923)	5A	Disbanded	01/07/96					
Chicago	Imani (30423)	5A	Formed by Consolidation of Messiah, (Englewood) and St. Matthew		Brockton	Christ the King (03566)	7B	Consolidated with Hope (Braintree) and Gethsemane (Brockton)	06/01/96
Chicago	Messiah (01930)	5A	Disbanded	07/01/92					
Chicago	Messiah-Englewood (30199)	5A	Consolidated with St. Matthew	10/15/96	Brockton	Gethsemane (03544)	7B	Consolidated with Christ the King (Brockton) and Hope (Braintree)	06/01/96
Chicago	Redeemer (10614)	5A	Disbanded	06/25/95					
Chicago	St. Matthew (01936)	5A	Consolidated with Messiah-Englewood	10/15/96	Brockton	Prince of Peace (30337)	7B	Formed by Consolidation of Christ the King, Gethsemane, and Hope (Braintree)	06/01/96
Chicago	Trinity (01838)	5A	Disbanded	12/10/95					
Chicago	Trinity (10619)	5A	Disbanded	12/29/96					
Forest Park	Thai Community Church of Chicago (30215)	5A	Received	06/09/95	Worcester	Iglesia Luterana San Juan (07656)	7B	Disbanded	05/05/96
Gurnee	Joy (30182)	5A	Received	06/08/96	Michigan				
Joliet	Iglesia Luterana Santa Cruz (30124)	5B	Received	06/15/96	Detroit	Augustana (02793)	6A	Consolidated with Victory (Detroit)	07/01/95
Lake in the Hills	Living Waters (30200)	5B	Received	07/09/95					
Loves Park	Living Christ (10777)	5B	Disbanded	06/01/95	Detroit	Divinity (11249)	6A	Disbanded	04/25/93
Maywood	St. John's (01907)	5A	Disbanded	11/30/96	Detroit	First Hungarian (02796)	6A	Disbanded	03/17/96
Rockford	Christ (10777)	5B	Disbanded	06/01/95	Detroit	Good Hope (11252)	6A	Disbanded	06/23/96
Schaumburg	Community of Christ Evangelical (07520)	5A	Merged with Prince of Peace (10781)	12/29/96	Detroit	Holy Communion (02754)	6A	Disbanded	11/03/96
					Detroit	Revelation (30315)	6A	Formed by Consolidation of Augustana and Victory	07/01/95
Indiana					Detroit	Victory (11265)	6A	Consolidated with Augustana (Detroit)	07/01/95
Fort Wayne	St. Andrew (20077)	6C	Merged with Lord of Life (10661)	12/01/95	Redford	Augsburg (02792)	6A	Disbanded	11/17/96
Gary	Resurrection (02281)	6C	Disbanded	03/05/95	Shingleton	Christ (30167)	5G	Received	05/19/95
Whitestown	St. Mark (02231)	6C	Withdrew	06/08/95	Minnesota				
Iowa					Atkinson	Bethel (02901)	3E	Disbanded	03/03/96
Waterloo	Lord of Life (11193)	5F	Disbanded	10/01/95	Bemidji	Fellowship of the Cross (16031)	3D	Disbanded	02/25/96
WestDesMoines	Lutheran Church of Hope (30128)	5D	Received	05/06/95	Cold Springs	Peace (30282)	3F	Received	05/19/95
Kentucky					Clarissa	Immanuel (05336)	3D	Consolidated with Our Savior (Clarissa)	04/01/96
Louisville	Fenner Memorial (02348)	6C	Disbanded	04/27/96					
Russell Springs	Prince of Peace (30103)	6C	Received	06/09/94	Clarissa	Our Savior (12029)	3D	Consolidated with Immanuel (Clarissa)	04/01/96
Maryland					Clarissa	Shepherd of the Valley (30332)	3D	Formed by Consolidation of Immanuel and Our Savior's	04/01/96
Baltimore	Amazing Grace (30330)	8F	Formed by Consolidation of Bethany, Martin Luther and Trinity	01/01/96	Danvers	Westbank (12040)	3F	Disbanded	06/01/95
Baltimore	Bethany (02690)	8F	Consolidated with Martin Luther and Trinity	01/01/96	Maple Grove	Lutheran Church of the Cross (30071)	3G	Disbanded	06/11/95
Baltimore	Martin Luther (10275)	8F	Consolidated with Bethany and Trinity	01/01/96	Minneapolis	Prince of Glory (11853)	3G	Disbanded	07/01/95
					Rochester	People of Hope (30221)	3I	Received	04/29/95
					Sacred Heart	Ebenezer (16305)	3F	Disbanded	06/16/96

Saint Cloud	University Lutheran Church of the Epiphany (30176)	3F	Received	05/19/95
Sauk Rapids	Living Waters (30266)	3F	Received	06/07/96
Starbuck	Minnewaska (12212)	3F	Withdrew	07/28/96
Starbuck	Bethany (03219)	3F	Disbanded	01/01/96
Mississippi				
Kreole	First (05799)	9D	Disbanded	05/28/95
Missouri				
Imperial	Family of Christ (30073)	4B	Received	06/09/95
Thayer	Epiphany (20168)	4B	Disbanded	11/30/95
Nebraska				
Lincoln	Lord of Life (30271)	4A	Received	06/14/96
Omaha	American (10183)	4A	Disbanded	09/30/96
Wayne	Our Savior (30285)	4A	Formed by	01/01/95
			Consolidation of	
			St. Paul and Redeemer	
Wayne	Redeemer (03373)	4A	Consolidated	01/01/95
			with St. Paul (Wayne)	
Wayne	St. Paul (03374)	4A	Consolidated	01/01/95
			with Redeemer (Wayne)	
Nevada				
Elko	Faith (30326)	2A	Received	05/19/95
New Hampshire				
Rochester	Resurrection (10510)	7B	Merged	01/01/95
			with Trinity, Newington (03531)	
New Jersey				
Basking Ridge	Holy Cross (16286)	7A	Consolidated	03/03/96
			with Epiphany (Passaic-Warren)	
Camden	Ta Trinidad (03747)	7A	Disbanded	01/08/95
Elizabeth	Holy Trinity (03647)	7A	Disbanded	08/31/95
Passaic-Warren	Epiphany (03674)	7A	Consolidated	03/03/96
			with Holy Cross (Basking Ridge)	
Plainfield	Cross of Life (30038)	7A	Received	05/29/95
Warren Twp.	Advent (30331)	7A	Formed by	03/03/96
			Consolidation of	
			Holy Cross (Basking Ridge)	
			and Epiphany (Passaic-Warren)	
New York				
Binghamton	Prince of Peace (07104)	7D	Disbanded	08/23/96
Buffalo	Ascension (10312)	7D	Disbanded	12/10/95
Freeport	La Iglesia Luterana de Cristo (30060)	7C	Received	06/13/96
New York	Grace Chinese, Queens (30240)	7C	Received	06/13/96
Niagra Falls	St. Paul (30286)	7D	Received	01/01/95
Schenectady	Our Saviour (07071)	7D	Merged	12/17/96
			with Our Redeemer, Scotia (20218)	

North Carolina

Kannapolis	Bethany (04197)	9B	Consolidated	06/04/95
			with Redeemer and St. David	
Kannapolis	New Hope (30290)	9B	Formed by	06/04/95
			Consolidation of	
			Bethany, Redeemer, and St. David	
Kannapolis	Redeemer (04200)	9B	Consolidated	06/04/95
			with Bethany and St. David	
Kannapolis	St. David (04201)	9B	Consolidated	06/04/95
			with Bethany and Redeemer	
Rocky Mount	Church of the Resurrection (16046)	9B	Consolidated	03/10/96
			with Trinity (Rocky Mount)	
Rocky Mount	Trinity (04090)	9B	Consolidated	03/10/96
			with Church of the Resurrection (Rocky Mount)	
Rocky Mount	Trinity (30329)	9B	Formed by	03/10/96
			Consolidation of Church of the Resurrection and Trinity	

North Dakota

Brampton	Brampton (12269)	3B	Disbanded	12/10/95
Crary	First (12288)	3B	Disbanded	12/31/95
Fairdale	Vange (12321)	3B	Disbanded	05/28/95
Hillsboro	St. Olaf (12384)	3B	Disbanded	09/03/95
Osnabrock	North Dovre (12477)	3B	Disbanded	06/04/95
Pettibone	Pettibone (12490)	3B	Disbanded	10/22/95
Watford City	Farland (12756)	3A	Disbanded	10/28/96

Ohio

Baltimore	Faith (30336)	6F	Received	05/30/96
Leipsic	First (04628)	6D	Disbanded	08/31/95
Youngstown	St. Paul's (13339)	6E	Disbanded	06/23/96

Oklahoma

Harrah	Christ (20236)	4C	Disbanded	03/31/96
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Oregon

Newberg	Zion (12912)	1E	Removed	11/01/95
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Pennsylvania

Braddock	Bethel (06568)	8B	Disbanded	06/02/96
Emporium	Good Shepherd Lutheran Church of St. Mary's (30371)	8A	Received	06/07/96
Erie	Good Shepherd (06282)	8A	Consolidated	06/23/96
			with Grace (Erie)	
Erie	Grace (06283)	8A	Consolidated	06/23/96
			with Good Shepherd (Erie)	
Erie	Lamb of God (30338)	8A	Formed by	06/23/96
			Consolidation of Grace and Good Shepherd	
Glen Rock	Jerusalem (01390)	8D	Withdrew	12/14/96

Jeannette	St. John's (06494)	8B	Merged with Salem, Delmont (06496)	01/01/96
Philadelphia	Salem (00662)	7F	Disbanded	06/23/96
Pittsburgh	Advent (06580)	8B	Merged with Zion (06595)	12/31/96
Sligo	Mount Zion (06353)	8A	Disbanded	12/31/96
Water Street	Christ (01231)	8C	Disbanded	12/31/95
South Dakota				
Corsica	St. John (13548)	3C	Disbanded	05/28/95
Flandreau	Lone Rock (13566)	3C	Disbanded	09/25/95
Prairie City	Homme (13712)	3C	Disbanded	05/26/96
Veblen	Palestine (13720)	3C	Disbanded	12/20/96
Volin	Faith United (30318)	3C	Formed by Consolidation of Zion, Volin, and Trondhjem	01/19/96
Volin	Trondhjem (13731)	3C	Consolidated with Volin and Zion (Volin)	01/19/96
Volin	Volin (13732)	3C	Consolidated with Zion and Trondhjem (Volin)	01/19/96
Volin	Zion (13733)	3C	Consolidated with Volin and Trondhjem (Volin)	01/19/96
Texas				
Austin	Lord of Life (30289)	4E	Received	09/21/96
Eagle Pass	Iglesia Luterana San Lucas (07845)	4E	Received	05/30/96
Rowlett	Joy (30270)	4D	Received	04/20/96
San Antonio	Faith (05907)	4E	Disbanded	05/01/94
San Benito	Living Faith Lutheran Outreach Center (16456)	4E	Received	06/23/95
Virginia				
Richmond	St. Matthew (06098)	9A	Disbanded	01/15/95
Roanoke	Emmanuel (06154)	9A	Disbanded	11/03/96
Washington				
Monroe	Morning Star (30274)	1B	Received	11/05/95
Spokane	Ascension (13004)	1D	Consolidated with Calvary (Spokane)	09/10/95
Spokane	Calvary (13006)	1D	Consolidated with Ascension (Spokane)	09/10/95
Spokane	Prince of Peace (30316)	1D	Formed by Consolidation of Ascension and Calvary	09/10/95
Wisconsin				
Bay City	St. John (14329)	5H	Disbanded	06/25/95
Milwaukee	Augustana (06724)	5J	Disbanded	05/31/96
Stoddard	Christ (16458)	5L	Disbanded	09/10/95

Appendix I to the Report of the Secretary

Rosters and Statistics

Roster of Congregations

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America counted 10,924 congregations on December 31, 1996, including congregations under development.

The record of congregations added to the roster of congregations indicates:

Additions to the Roster of Congregations

Congregations	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
Received by synodical action	22	25	22	30	20	17
Resulting from consolidations	6	5	3	6	4	8
Totals	28	30	25	36	24	25

The record of removals from the roster of congregations by categories shows:

Removals from the Roster of Congregations

Congregations	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
Withdrawn	4	4	8	8	2	4
Disbanded	31	30	36	32	33	34
Merged	4	6	7	7	5	5
Consolidated	10	11	6	13	10	18
Removed	–	–	–	–	3	–
Totals	49	51	57	60	53	61

The process for *withdrawal* of a congregation from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is specified by constitutional provisions 9.62. and 9.71. in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.

“Merged” is defined as involving a congregation giving up its separate identity and uniting with an already existing congregation (i.e., being *merged* into an existing congregation).

“Consolidated” is defined as involving two or more congregations that join together to become a new entity with a new name and a new congregation identification number (i.e., the congregations are *consolidated* to become a new congregation).

The roster of congregations is published annually in the yearbook of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, prepared by staff of the secretary. Congregations that have been received into this church or that have been

consolidated, merged, withdrawn, disbanded, or removed are listed at the end of the roster of congregations in the yearbook.

Any change in a congregation's synodical relationship is to be reported to the Churchwide Assembly. As provided by ELCA bylaw 10.02.02., "Any congregation in a border area desiring to change its synod relationship may do so upon approval of the synod assemblies of the synods concerned, which shall report any such change to the Churchwide Assembly."

The following changes of synodical relationships for congregations have been reported by synods:

Change of Synodical Relationships

Year of Transfer	Congregation	Ident. Number	Location	Former Synod	Receiving Synod
1993	Bethany	02092	Wenona, Ill.	5B	5C
1994	Emanuel	05018	Yorba Linda, Calif.	2B	2C
1994	St. Peter	14414	Fenwood, Wis.	5H	5I
1995	St. John	05566	Kenosha, Wis.	7G	5J
1996	St. Mark	06381	Adrian, Pa.	8A	8B
1996	Faith	06382	Oklahoma Borough, Pa.	8A	8B

Roster of Ordained Ministers

As of December 31, 1996, the roster of ordained ministers of this church listed a total of 17,402 ordained ministers (active and retired). Of that number, 1,966 (11.0 percent) were women and 400 were persons of color or persons whose primary language was other than English.

The numbers of additions to the roster of ordained ministers and removals from that roster are shown in the table that follows:

Ordained Ministers 1991-1996

Additions	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
Ordained	296	315	310	298	338	333
Reinstated	26	20	20	14	13	15
Received from other churches	23	8	33	18	21	18
Totals	345	343	363	330	372	366
Removals by						
Death	196	154	197	182	188	212
Resignation	58	50	51	41	50	45
Removal	96	115	71	89	55	95
Transfer to ELCIC*	1	1	5	2	4	2
Totals	351	320	324	314	297	354

The names of persons added to and removed from the roster of ordained ministers are listed annually in the yearbook of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Official Rosters of Laypersons

This church has established three rosters of laypersons. They are associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers.

The names of persons approved by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for admission to the roster of associates in ministry, the roster of deaconesses, and the roster of diaconal ministers—as well as the names of persons removed from those rosters—are listed annually in the yearbook of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Roster of Associates in Ministry

As of December 31, 1996, the roster of associates in ministry numbered 1,219 persons.

Associates in Ministry 1991-1996

Additions	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
Approval	42	40	36	31	30	32
Reinstatement	1	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	43	40	36	31	30	32
Removals by						
Death	7	6	5	8	6	5
Ordination	8	10	12	2	9	9
Resignation	12	9	7	16	7	12
Removal	71	79	49	36	23	30
Consecrated Diaconal Minister	—	—	—	—	—	3
Totals	98	104	73	62	45	59

Roster of Deaconesses

As of December 31, 1996, the roster of deaconesses numbered 88 persons.

Deaconesses 1991-1996

Additions	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
Approval	—	—	3	1	2	1
Reinstatement	0	1	0	0	0	0
Totals	0	1	3	1	2	1
Removals by						
Death	2	4	2	2	6	3
Resignation	0	1	0	0	1	0
Removal	0	1	0	0	0	0
Totals	2	6	2	2	7	3

Roster of Diaconal Ministers

The roster of diaconal ministers, established by the 1993 Churchwide Assembly, was started in 1996 with the consecration of seven persons. They are:

Initial Roster of Diaconal Ministers

Diaconal Minister	Date of Consecration	Synod
Audrey D. Forbes	05/19/96	8F
Margaret Ajer	06/15/96	2B
Philip R. Deming	06/29/96	2C
Nancy E. Gable	07/21/96	8C
Diana J. Sickles	08/25/96	5D
Sharon M. Gall	12/15/96	5C
Gloria J. Strickert	12/22/96	5F

Comparison between 1994 and 1995 Congregational Statistics

[Tables follow.]

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Summary of Congregational Statistics as of December 31, 1995

	1994	1995	Change	Percent	Statistical Analysis— Averages per Congregation
Summary of Membership Statistics					
Total Number of Congregations	10,973	10,955	18-	0.16-	473.80
Baptized Members	5,199,048	5,190,489	8,559-	0.16-	350.98
Confirmed Members	3,849,692	3,845,063	4,629-	0.12-	256.50
Communicating Members, Confirmed	2,828,995	2,810,000	18,995-	0.67-	21.86
Communicating Members, Unconfirmed	233,347	239,505	6,158+	2.63+	233.72
Communed and Contributed	2,563,892	2,560,474	3,418-	0.13-	
Analysis of Membership Gains and Losses Baptized Members—Accessions					
By Baptism—Children under Age 16	80,323	79,090	1,233-	1.53-	
By Baptism—Adults Age 16 and above	7,521	7,658	137+	1.82+	
By Affirmation of Faith	55,386	57,754	2,368+	4.27+	
By Transfer from ELCA Congregations	98,729	94,223	4,506-	4.56-	
By Transfer from Other Lutheran Congregations	17,673	18,084	411+	2.32+	
From Non-Lutheran Congregations	21,087	20,973	114-	0.54-	
From Other Sources and Statistical Adjustment	17,871	16,096	1,775-	9.93-	
Total Accessions—Baptized Members	298,590	293,878	4,712-	1.57-	

	1994	1995	Change	Percent
Baptized Members—Losses				
By Death	46,777	47,253	476+	1.01+
By Transfer to ELCA Congregations	75,409	72,757	2,652-	3.51-
By Transfer to Lutheran Congregations	13,986	12,493	1,493-	10.67-
To Non-Lutheran Congregations	16,217	15,498	719-	4.43-
For Other Reasons	156,481	153,234	3,247-	2.07-
Total Losses—Baptized Members	308,870	301,235	7,635-	2.47-
Confirmed Members—Accessions				
By Baptism—Adults Age 16 and above	6,463	6,504	41+	.63+
By Affirmation of Faith	43,370	45,184	1,814+	4.18+
By Transfer from ELCA Congregations	70,782	67,923	2,859-	4.03-
By Transfer from Other Lutheran Congregations	12,533	13,010	477+	3.80+
From Non-Lutheran Congregations	15,328	14,998	330-	2.15-
From Other Sources and Statistical Adjustment	16,610	15,832	778-	4.68-
Baptized Members Confirmed	54,528	55,029	501+	0.91+
Total Accessions—Confirmed Members	219,614	218,480	1,134-	0.51-
Confirmed Members—Losses				
By Death	45,813	46,291	478+	1.04-
By Transfer to ELCA Congregations	54,602	52,785	1,817-	3.32-
By Transfer to Other Lutheran Congregations	9,763	8,891	872-	8.93-
To Non-Lutheran Congregations	11,681	11,316	365-	3.12-
For Other Reasons	106,700	102,840	3,860-	3.61-
Total Losses—Confirmed Members	228,559	222,123	6,436-	2.81-

Summary of Financial Statistics—

Totals—End of Year	1994	1995	Change	Percent
Total Receipts	\$1,720,742,578	\$1,802,819,069	\$82,076,491+	4.76+
Total Disbursements	1,689,892,487	1,739,949,531	50,057,044+	2.96+
Assets, Value on December 31	10,837,854,282	11,129,299,905	291,445,623+	2.68+
Total Indebtedness on December 31	857,687,316	878,239,433	20,552,117+	2.39+
Average Giving per Baptized Member	272.15	287.21	15.06+	5.53+
Average Giving per Confirmed Member	367.55	387.71	20.16+	5.48+

*Statistical
Analysis—
Averages per
Congregation*

164,565.87
158,826.98
1,015,910.54
79,673.35
7.89%
62.09%

Detail of Financial Statistics

Receipts for Regular Operation

Regular Giving by Members	1,236,157,852	1,295,728,239	59,570,387+	4.81+
Designated Giving by Members	178,802,800	195,078,795	16,275,995+	9.10+
Earned Income, Unrestricted	48,831,136	54,656,562	5,825,426+	11.92+
Earned Income, Restricted	28,739,240	33,468,436	4,729,196+	16.45+
Grants and Subsidies	14,140,904	14,448,179	307,275+	2.17+
Cash Borrowed	100,625,243	99,270,873	1,354,370-	1.34-
Other Receipts	113,445,403	110,167,985	3,277,418-	2.88-

	<i>Statistical Analysis—</i>		
	1994	1995	Percent of Total Disbursements
Disbursements for Regular Operation			
Current Operating Expenses	1,143,674,199	1,182,052,558	3.35+
Capital Improvements	173,547,959	175,649,860	1.21+
Payment on Debts	126,174,264	131,756,402	4.42+
Mission Support	118,085,199	120,303,360	1.87+
Designated Gifts	6,568,781	4,348,448	33.80-
World Hunger Appeal/Disaster Response	10,974,208	10,047,858	8.44-
Mission Partners	3,161,444	3,175,170	0.43+
Vision for Mission	468,812	463,980	1.03-
Missionary Sponsorship	5,171,395	4,853,433	6.14-
Synodical Benevolences	10,918,063	14,048,830	28.67+
Local Community Benevolences	22,106,035	22,073,751	0.14-
Other Benevolences	9,691,949	8,792,236	9.28-
Other Expenses	59,350,179	62,383,645	5.11+
Assets, Value on December 31			
Church Edifice and Lot	8,493,032,599	8,679,358,616	2.19+
Parish House and Lot	632,042,867	620,267,756	1.86-
Parsonage(s) and Lot(s)	431,176,151	420,477,312	2.48-
Other Real Estate	244,842,903	265,408,378	8.39+
Endowment and Memorial Funds	524,978,345	583,552,122	11.15+
Cash, Savings, Bonds, etc.	363,800,866	407,924,585	12.12+
Other Assets	147,980,551	152,311,136	2.92+
Bequests Received During Year			
Number of Bequests Received	—	3,875	Per 100 Deaths 8.20
Total Value of Bequests Received	—	\$ 56,546,980	Ave. Value per Bequest \$ 14,592.76

Summary of Congregational Information

	<i>Statistical Analysis—</i>		
	1994	1995	Percentage of Congregations Reporting Ethnic Group Members
Worship Services			
Total Attendance at Worship Each Week	1,576,242	1,571,568	0.29 -
Average Sunday Attendance per Congregation	145	145	—
Percent of Baptized Members Attending Worship	30.32	30.28	—
White	10,751	10,731	0.18-
Native American	1,436	1,434	0.13-
Black	3,224	3,235	0.34+
Asian/Pacific Islander	3,781	3,721	1.58-
Hispanic/Spanish	2,796	2,776	0.71-
Other	595	768	29.07+
Total Ethnic Baptized Membership			Percent Ethnic Baptized Membership
White	5,066,789	5,074,080	0.14+
White Hispanic	25,492	26,222	2.86+
Native American	6,685	6,912	3.39+
Native American Hispanic	104	117	12.50+
Black	49,156	49,460	0.61+
Black Hispanic	731	686	6.15-
Asian/Pacific Islander	21,870	22,007	0.62+
Asian/Pacific Islander Hispanic	164	190	15.85+
Other	3,716	3,926	5.65+
Other Hispanic	1,170	903	22.82-

Distribution of Congregations by Size

Size of Congregation	Baptized Members		Total Baptized Members	Percent
	Total Congregations	Percent		
-0-	75	0.68 %	—	— %
Very Small	2,843	25.95	304,178	5.86
Small	3,001	27.39	773,061	14.89
Moderately Small	1,630	14.87	686,031	13.21
Medium Sized	1,295	11.82	762,134	14.68
Moderately Large	872	7.95	705,196	13.58
Large	792	7.22	932,825	17.97
Very Large	447	4.08	1,026,942	19.78

Size of Congregation	Confirmed Members		Total Confirmed Members	Percent
	Total Congregations	Percent		
-0-	81	0.73 %	—	— %
Very Small	3,957	36.12	401,390	10.43
Small	3,243	29.60	823,556	21.41
Moderately Small	1,448	13.21	604,881	15.73
Medium Sized	978	8.92	575,546	14.96
Moderately Large	600	5.47	486,416	12.65
Large	454	4.14	527,306	13.71
Very Large	194	1.77	425,871	11.07

Comparison Between 1994 and 1995 Congregational Statistics

Comparing year-end tabulations of congregational statistics for 1994 with those of year-end 1995 provides an indication of net gains and losses in numbers.

With a total of 5,190,489 baptized members in 10,955 congregations, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America remained largely stable in membership for 1995. That figure represented a slight decrease of 8,559 from 5,199,048 in 1994. The decrease was less than two-tenths of one percent (0.16 percent).

Congregations reported for the second consecutive year an increase in baptisms of adults 16 years and over (up 137 persons from 7,521 in 1994 to 7,658 in 1995). Affirmations of faith also increased by 2,368, up from 55,386 in 1994 to 57,754 in 1995.

Affirmation of faith is often made by former Lutherans and others who have allowed their church membership to lapse into inactivity. An increase in members returning to their faith and church roots is always a welcome sign.

The number of youth confirmed in 1995 increased by almost one percent (0.91 percent) over 1994 (up 501 from 54,528 in 1994) for the second year in a row.

Losses attributable to roll cleaning by congregations were down substantially again in 1995 as in 1994. In 1995, congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America reported 3,247 fewer losses (a decrease from 156,481 to 153,234) for reasons other than deaths and transfers. Losses due to deaths increased slightly (up 476 from 46,777 in 1994 to 47,253 in 1995).

Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America continued to report fewer baptisms of children under age 16 (down 1,233 to 79,090 in 1995). Fewer baptisms reflect the declining birth rate in the general population.

Confirmed membership in 1995 for ELCA congregations was 3.8 million (3,845,063), down 4,629 from 1994. Communing and contributing membership, indicators of active participation, remained steady at 2.6 million (2,560,474 in 1995 compared with 2,563,892 in 1994).

The average number of persons at regular weekly worship, which is another indicator of participation by members in the life of congregations, remained the same in 1995 as in 1994. About 1.6 million or 30 percent (30.28 percent) of all baptized members attend worship each week. Since 1988, average worship attendance has fluctuated slightly between 30 and 31 percent. The number of unconfirmed children partaking of the sacrament of Holy Communion increased by 2.63 percent from 233,347 in 1994 to 239,505 in 1995.

The average number of baptized members per congregation was 473, and the average confirmed membership was 351. In 1995, the average number for communing and contributing members per congregation was 234.

For 1995, 2.09 percent of ELCA baptized members were African American, Asian, Hispanic, American Indian, or Alaska Native people. For 1994, the percent

was 2.07. All ethnic communities showed increases in numbers in 1995. The actual numbers were: African American membership, 49,460, up 304; Asian and Pacific Islander membership, 22,007, up 137; Hispanic membership, 28,118, up 457; and American Indian or Alaska Native membership, 6,912, up 227. Some 3,900 (3,926) members declared their race or ethnic heritage as “other.” In the year of its birth in 1988, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America counted 98,166 African American, Asian, Hispanic, and Native American members. By 1995, that number increased to 110,423 persons.

More than 9,357 congregations reported having Sunday Schools that involved 886,744 pupils and 141,754 leaders. A total of 7,188 congregations reported holding vacation Bible schools in 1995.

Income for the congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in 1995 exceeded \$1.8 billion (\$1,802,819,069), up \$82 million (\$82,076,491) or nearly five percent (4.76 percent) from 1994. This follows an increase of 3.65 percent (\$60,672,311) from 1993 to 1994. Of that total, \$1.3 billion (\$1,295,728,239) was received in regular, unrestricted offerings, up almost five percent (4.81 percent) and greater than the three percent gain (2.91 percent) in regular giving from 1993 to 1994.

The experience of two consecutive years of increase in giving by ELCA members is a blessing for our congregations and this whole church. It is a sign of healthy generosity and commitment. The average regular giving per confirmed member increased from \$367.55 in 1994 to \$387.71, up five and a half percent (5.48 percent) or an increase per confirmed member of \$20.16.

Congregations reported for 1995 nearly \$1 billion (\$991,476,707) in savings and investments, endowments, and memorial funds—up \$103 million (\$102,697,496) from the previous year.

Total disbursements by ELCA congregations for local operating expenses grew by nearly \$40 million (\$38,378,359). That amounted to an increase of more than three percent (3.35 percent) to a total of \$1,182,052,558. Congregations reported nearly a five percent increase (+5.11 percent) in other expenses, up \$3 million (\$3,033,466) to \$62 million (\$62,383,645).

Regular mission support—that is, monies passed from congregations to the 65 synods and to the churchwide organization to support the national and international ministries of the church—increased nearly two percent (1.87 percent) for a total of \$120,303,360.

The category of giving formerly called “Designated Gifts” but, for the first time on the 1995 report forms, renamed “Specific Mission Support,” decreased by one-third. This decrease is probably the result of some confusion as to what category was to be used to report gifts for specified mission projects. “Specific Mission Support” (\$4,348,448) and another category of congregational giving, “Synod-Related Special Benevolences,” which might have been used in error for

“Specific Mission Support,” actually increased more than five percent (5.20 percent). In 1995 both these categories totaled \$18,397,278 compared to a total of \$17,486,844 in 1994.

Money for community benevolent causes decreased slightly (-0.14 percent) from \$22,106,035 in 1994 to \$22,073,751 in 1995.

The number of congregations reporting indebtedness decreased by one percent. Sixty-two percent (62 percent) of ELCA congregations reported that they had no debt in 1995 compared to 61 percent, which reported in 1994 that they were free of debt.

Comparison between 1995 and 1996 Congregational Statistics

[Tables follow.]

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Summary of Congregational Statistics as of December 31, 1996

	1995 ¹	1996	Change	Percent	Statistical Analysis— Averages per Congregation
Summary of Membership Statistics					
Total Number of Congregations	10,955	10,936	19-	0.17-	
Baptized Members	5,190,427	5,180,910	9,517-	0.18-	(10,851) 477.45
Confirmed Members	3,845,005	3,838,750	6,255-	0.16-	(10,846) 353.93
Communing Members—Confirmed	2,809,953	2,808,336	1,617-	0.05-	(10,842) 259.02
Communing Members—Unconfirmed	239,498	247,787	8,289+	3.46+	(10,842) 22.85
Communed and Contributed	2,560,427	2,538,197	22,230-	0.86-	(10,816) 234.67

Analysis of Membership Gains and Losses Baptized Members—Accessions

By Baptism—Children under Age 16	85,152	83,799	1,353-	1.58-
By Baptism—Adults Age 16 and above	8,270	8,103	167-	2.01-
By Affirmation of Faith	61,850	65,013	3,163+	5.11+
By Transfer from ELCA Congregations	99,242	95,804	3,438-	3.46-
By Transfer from Other Lutheran Congregations	19,216	18,746	470-	2.44-
From Non-Lutheran Congregations	22,205	21,641	564-	2.53-
From Other Sources and Statistical Adjustment	18,159	19,859	1,700+	9.36+
Total Accessions—Baptized Members	314,094	312,965	1,129-	0.35-

¹ The figures displayed here for 1995 may be different than those reported on the 1995 year-end report. The reason for differences is explained by a change in the way data from non-reporting congregations is handled. In 1996, all computer programs were converted from an IBM platform to a Hewlett-Packard platform. Before the change, data about member accessions and losses for congregations that did not file a report for the current year were presumed to be zero. After the conversion, the rule was intentionally changed, and the most recently reported numbers were brought forward. Because this report was produced after the change of rules, the 1995 figures reported here may differ from those reported last year.

Baptized Members—Losses

By Death	50,967	50,373	594-	1.16-
By Transfer to ELCA Congregations	77,386	74,321	3,065-	3.96-
By Transfer to Lutheran Congregations	13,410	13,699	289+	2.15+
To Non-Lutheran Congregations	16,511	16,522	11+	0.06+
For Other Reasons	170,077	165,676	4,401-	2.58-
Total Losses—Baptized Members	328,351	320,591	7,760-	2.36-

Confirmed Members—Accessions

By Baptism—Adults Age 16 and above	7,035	6,917	118-	1.67-
By Affirmation of Faith	48,499	50,770	2,271+	4.68+
By Transfer from ELCA Congregations	71,546	69,030	2,516-	3.51-
By Transfer from Other Lutheran Congregations	13,801	13,342	459-	3.32-
From Non-Lutheran Congregations	15,918	15,556	362-	2.27-
From Other Sources and Statistical Adjustment	17,461	17,880	419+	2.39+
Baptized Members Confirmed	58,515	59,251	736+	1.25+
Total Accessions—Confirmed Members	232,775	232,746	29-	0.01-

Confirmed Members—Losses

By Death	49,904	49,417	487-	0.97-
By Transfer to ELCA Congregations	56,242	54,214	2,028-	3.60-
By Transfer to Other Lutheran Congregations	9,557	9,722	165+	1.72+
To Non-Lutheran Congregations	12,046	11,864	182-	1.51-
For Other Reasons	114,475	112,259	2,216-	1.93-
Total Losses—Confirmed Members	242,224	237,476	4,748-	1.96-

Summary of Financial Statistics—

Totals—End of Year	1995	1996	Change	Percent	<i>Statistical Analysis— Averages per Congregation</i>
Total Receipts\$	1,802,795,441\$	1,871,488,600\$	68,693,159+	3.81+	\$172,423.86
Total Disbursements	1,739,926,435	1,821,385,813	81,459,378+	4.68+	167,838.72
Assets, Value on December 31	11,129,289,905	11,547,435,830	418,145,925+	3.75+	1,063,887.58
Total Indebtedness on December 31	878,239,433	933,989,000	55,749,567+	6.34+	86,050.21
Average Giving per Baptized Member	287.21	297.36	10.15+	3.53+	
Average Giving per Confirmed Member	387.71	401.33	13.62+	3.51+	
					Percent—Indebtedness/Assets 8.08%
					Congregations with No Debt 62.81%

Detail of Financial Statistics**Receipts for Regular Operation**

Regular Giving by Members	1,295,705,472	1,330,490,347	34,784,875+	2.68+
Designated Giving by Members	195,078,113	210,145,589	15,067,476+	7.72+
Earned Income, Unrestricted	54,656,383	55,903,054	1,246,671+	2.28+
Earned Income, Restricted	33,468,436	35,853,936	2,385,500+	7.12+
Grants and Subsidies	14,448,179	13,920,771	527,408–	3.65–
Cash Borrowed	99,270,873	105,521,230	6,250,357+	6.29+
Other Receipts	110,167,985	119,653,673	9,485,688+	8.61+

Disbursements for Regular Operation

Current Operating Expenses	\$1,182,033,162	\$1,237,800,418	\$55,767,256+	4.71+	67.95%
Capital Improvements	175,649,860	186,689,138	11,039,278+	6.28+	10.24
Payment on Debts	131,756,402	137,765,659	6,009,257+	4.56+	7.56
Mission Support	120,299,945	120,835,610	535,665+	0.44+	6.63
Specific Mission Support—Designated Gifts	4,348,448	4,883,332	534,884+	12.30+	0.26
World Hunger Appeal/Disaster Response	10,047,605	9,786,583	261,022–	2.59–	0.53
Mission Partners	3,175,170	3,295,530	120,360+	3.79+	0.18
Vision for Mission	463,980	395,285	68,695–	14.80–	0.02
Missionary Sponsorship	4,853,433	4,577,857	275,576–	5.67–	0.25
Synodical Benevolences	14,048,830	14,696,720	647,890+	4.61+	0.80
Local Community Benevolences	22,073,719	23,065,268	991,549+	4.49+	1.26
Other Benevolences	8,792,236	9,939,956	1,147,720+	13.05+	0.54
Other Expenses	62,383,645	67,654,457	5,270,812+	8.44+	3.71

Assets, Value on December 31

Church Edifice and Lot	8,679,358,616	8,967,558,040	288,199,424+	3.32+
Parish House and Lot	620,267,756	618,293,424	1,974,332–	0.31–
Parsonage(s) and Lot(s)	420,477,312	438,035,817	17,558,505+	4.17+
Other Real Estate	265,408,378	273,657,226	8,248,848+	3.10+
Endowment and Memorial Funds	583,552,122	633,274,520	49,722,398+	8.52+
Cash, Savings, Bonds, etc.	407,914,585	446,487,508	38,572,923+	9.45+
Other Assets	152,311,136	170,129,295	17,818,159+	11.69+

Bequests Received During Year

Number of Bequests Received	3,595	3,413	182–	5.06–	Per 100 Deaths 6.77
Total Value of Bequests Received	\$ 56,546,980	65,111,871	8,564,891+	15.14+	Ave. Bequest 19,077
Intended Mission Support	\$109,739,395	124,065,099	14,325,704+	13.05+	

**Summary of Congregational Information
Distribution of Congregations by Size**

Worship Services Congregation	Size of Congregation		Baptized Members		Percentage of Congregations Reporting Ethnic Group Members		Statistical Analysis— Percent
	Total	Congregations	1995	1996	Total Baptized Members	Change	
Total Attendance at Worship Each Week	87	1,571,537	0.79%	235	1,302	0.08	5.80
Very Small	2,842	144	25.98	144	300,702	—	14.93
Average Sunday Attendance per Congregation	2,996	30.27	27.39	30.30	0.73	0.09	97.99%
Percent of Baptized Members Attending Worship	1,614	10,733	14.75	10,717	1679,816	0.14	14.68
White	1,294	11.83	11.83	14.42	761,566	0.55	13.18
Medium Sized	875	1,434	8.00	3,346	1709,602	3.43	50.69
American Indian and Alaska Native	784	3,235	7.16	3,761	436,060	1.07	54.89
African American/Black	444	3,721	4.05	2,873	1,072,131	3.49	16.89
Latino/Pacific Islander/Hispanic	768	2,776	4.05	2,873	1,072,131	3.49	26.27
Other	768	768	8.30	830	62+	8.07	7.58

Total Ethnic Baptized Membership	Congregations		Confirmed Members		Total Confirmed Members	Percent	Percent Ethnic Baptized Membership
	Total	Congregations	Total	Congregations			
White	92	5,074,087	0.84%	489	13,358	0.26	97.67%
Very Small	3,955	26,222	36.16	25,884	338	1.28	0.49%
American Indian and Alaska Native	3,226	6,912	29.49	7,005	99,767	1.34	10.41
African American/Black	1,423	49,459	13.01	49,707	820,766	4.27	20.00
Latino/Pacific Islander/Hispanic	1,008	686	9.21	560	248,550	0.50	10.95
Other	586	22,007	5.35	1,898	158,282	18.36	10.01
Average	447	190	4.08	126	166,192	0.49	10.40
Very Large	199	3,926	1.81	4,805	648,726	33.68	10.00
Other Hispanic	903	903	1.81	4,805	846,760	22.38	10.00
					1,839+	203.65+	0.05

Comparison Between 1995 and 1996 Congregational Statistics

Membership Remains Stable

With a total of 5,180,910 baptized members in congregations, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) remained largely stable in membership for 1996. That figure represented a slight decrease of 9,517 noted from 5,190,427 in 1995. The decrease was less than two-tenths of one percent (0.18%).

The number of congregations decreased by 19 from 10,955 in 1995 to 10,936 in 1996, largely as a result of consolidations and mergers of congregations. Confirmed membership in 1996 for ELCA congregations remained steady at 3.8 million (3,838,750), down 6,255 from 1995. Communing and contributing membership, indicators of active participation, however, declined to 2.5 million (2,538,197 in 1996 compared with 2,560,427 in 1995).

The average number of persons at worship on Sundays, which is another indicator of participation by members in the life of congregations, remained almost the same in 1996 as in 1995. About 1.6 million or 30 percent (30.30%) of all baptized members attend worship each week. Since 1988, average worship attendance has fluctuated slightly between 30 and 31 percent.

Baptism of children has been in a slight but steady decline for the past seven years. From 1995 to 1996, the decrease was 1,353, down from 85,152 in 1995 to 83,799 in 1996. The decline in baptisms of children reflects the slowed birth rate in the population in general, Secretary Almen said.

Congregations also reported a decrease in baptisms of adults 16 years and older (down 167 persons from 8,270 in 1995 to 8,103 in 1996). For the second consecutive year, the number of members received through affirmations of faith increased by 3,163, up from 61,850 in 1995 to 65,013 in 1996.

The number of youth confirmed in 1996 increased by more than one percent (1.25%) over 1995 (up 736 from 58,515 in 1995) for the seventh year in a row. Losses attributable to roll cleaning by congregations were down again in 1996 as in 1995 and 1994. In 1996, ELCA congregations reported 4,401 fewer losses (a decrease from 170,077 to 165,676) for reasons other than deaths and transfers.

The number of unconfirmed children partaking of the sacrament of Holy Communion increased by three-and-one-half percent (3.46%) from 239,498 in 1995 to 247,787 in 1996.

The average number of baptized members per congregation was 477, and the average confirmed membership was 354. In 1996, the average number for communing and contributing members per congregation was 234.

Losses due to deaths was down slightly in 1996 (down 594 from 50,967 in 1995 to 50,373 in 1996).

For 1996, 2.14 percent of ELCA baptized members were African American, Black, Asian, Hispanic, or American Indian or Alaska Native people. For 1995, that percentage of total ELCA membership was 2.09 percent.

Hispanic membership increased the most with 1,306 members added to the baptized rolls of congregations. The actual numbers were: African American or Black membership, 49,707, up 248; Asian and Pacific Islander membership, 21,898, down 109; Hispanic membership, 29,424, up 1,306; and American Indian and Alaska Native people membership, 7,005, up 93. Some 4,800 (4,805) members declared their race or ethnic heritage as “other.”

In the year of its birth in 1988, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America counted 98,166 African American, Asian, Hispanic, and Native American members. By 1996, that number increased 14.5 percent to 112,839 persons.

More than 9,300 (9,308) congregations reported having Sunday Schools that involved 875,789 pupils and 140,804 leaders. A total of 7,277 congregations reported holding vacation Bible schools in 1996.

“In this age of instant communication, people throughout this church use new technologies to tell others about the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the ministries of our church,” said Secretary Almen. “For instance, we now know that 762 congregations or seven percent have an e-mail address and 2,181 pastors—22 percent of pastors serving congregations—use e-mail in their ministries.”

Ninety-one percent of ELCA congregations returned completed reports for 1996, according to the report of the Office of the Secretary.

Giving to ELCA Congregations Grew by Nearly \$70 Million in 1996

Income for the 19,936 congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in 1996 approached \$1.9 billion (\$1,871,488,600), up \$69 million (\$68,693,159) or nearly four percent (3.81%) from 1995.

Of total congregational receipts, \$1.3 billion (\$1,330,490,347) was received in regular, unrestricted offerings, up almost three percent (2.68%). While the dollar amount increased for 1996, the percentage of increase was slightly lower than for 1995. For 1995, the percentage of increase in regular giving by members over the year before was almost five percent (4.81%).

Increased financial commitment of members throughout this church is crucial for each congregation and this whole church. Annual increases in giving by members of three to five percent every year allow congregations, synods, and churchwide ministries to accomplish the mission to which the church has been called by Jesus Christ, which is to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ throughout the world, relieve people’s hunger and suffering, and serve with compassion.

The average regular giving per confirmed member increased from \$387.71 in 1995 to \$401.33, up three and a half percent (3.51%) or an increase per confirmed member of \$13.62.

Total disbursements by ELCA congregations for local operating expenses reached almost \$56 million (\$55,767,256). That amounted to an increase of more than four percent (4.71%) to a total of \$1,237,800,418.

Regular mission support—that is, monies passed from congregations to the 65 synods and to the churchwide organization to support the national and international ministries of the church—increased less than one-half percent from \$120,299,945 in 1995 to \$120,835,610 in 1996.

That increase of half a million dollars (\$535,665) in 1996 for regular mission support was disappointing when compared to the more than \$2 million increase experienced in 1995. The vast and strategic domestic and international mission endeavors of this church need strong support. Through continued commitment to the synodical and churchwide ministries, congregations are helping to make Christ known around the world.

Specific Mission Support (formerly called “Designated Gifts”) increased by 12.30 percent or by \$534,884 to \$4,883,332 in 1996. Synodically Related Special Benevolences also increased almost five percent (4.61%) from \$14,048,830 in 1995 to \$14,696,720 in 1996.

Money for community benevolent causes increased 4.49 percent (\$991,549) to \$23,065,268 in 1996 after showing a slight decline for 1995.

Congregations reported nearly an eight and one half percent increase (8.44%) in other expenses, up \$5.3 million (\$5,270,812) to \$68 million (\$67,664,457).

Sixty-three percent (62.81%) of ELCA congregations reported that they had no debt in 1996.

Congregations reported for 1996 more than \$1 billion (\$1,079,762,028) in savings and investments, endowments, and memorial funds, up \$88 million (\$88,295,321) from the previous year.

Rate of Response on Parochial Reports

For year-end 1995, 91.0 percent of all ELCA congregations filed parochial reports by the close of data entry at the end of May 1996.

Archives

The major emphasis for the archives during the 1995-1997 biennium has been to obtain and carry out a grant project from a federal agency to organize some of the most significant records among the archives holdings. At the same time, the archives staff members also were faced with the continuing increase in demand for

reference services, both traditional and now through “cyberspace.” In addition, efforts continue to collect, preserve, and provide access to additional materials. Work with synodical, regional, and congregational archivists and others throughout the church also has received attention.

The archives of our church provide both physical preservation of and access to materials. Activities to help in understanding and appreciating ELCA history also are undertaken.

Knubel Archives Grant

The Archives of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America was awarded a two-year grant for \$83,310 from the U.S. National Archives National Historical Publications and Records Commission. The grant was given to organize, process, and catalog the major collections of the Helen M. Knubel Archives of Cooperative Lutheranism (1917-1987). Among these archives, founded and administered by the late Helen M. Knubel, are records of the various organizations that played a major role for American Lutheran unity and ecumenical movements both within the U.S. and abroad in the 20th century. The 650 cubic feet of records that are the subject of this grant are those of: the National Lutheran Commission for Soldiers’ and Sailors’ Welfare, 1918-1922; National Lutheran Council, 1918-1966; Lutheran World Convention (American Section), 1923-1947; U.S.A. National Committee of the Lutheran World Federation, 1947-1987; Lutheran Council in the U.S.A., 1966-1987; Lutheran World Ministries, 1977-1987; and the Abdel Ross Wentz (1883-1976) Papers, 1921-1948. The Wentz papers are those related to his leadership role in the Lutheran World Convention and as the “architect” of the original constitution (1947) of the Lutheran World Federation. Together, these and other collections of the Knubel Archives document inter-Lutheran efforts in the areas of: famine, refugee and emergency war relief; church-state relations; immigration services; European-American church relations; global missions; ecumenical and interreligious dialogues; churches in the third world; social welfare; ministry for the rural and urban church; student work; ethnic ministries; and much more.

A full-time archivist and part-time secretary, together with other ELCA archives staff members, are working on this project. They are creating complete finding aids and cataloging. The cataloging information for this grant and all of the archives holdings can now be searched from many libraries in the country through the Online Computer Library Center (OCLC), a national library bibliographic database, or by anyone around the world through an online catalog searchable through the ELCA World Wide Web home page. Ultimately, with funds set aside for that purpose, selected portions of the Knubel Archives materials also will be made widely available via microfilm. The grant project will be completed in July 1998, with microfilming beginning as soon as feasible.

Services and Activities

The entry of the archives into the world of cyberspace was completed in 1996, by the addition of information about the archives and its holdings to the ELCA “home page” on the World Wide Web at www.elca.org/os/archives/intro.html. Prior to 1996, the archives holdings information had been available through the national Online Computer Library Center (OCLC), but with the web page, additional general information is posted on an electronic bulletin board. Among the information online is general archives services information, including those to congregations with links to online versions of “Brief Guide for Archives of ELCA Congregations,” and two records management documents “Retention of Active Records” and “Maintaining the Parish Register.” Other information relates to genealogical services, microfilm loan, holdings information, including the links to the on-line catalog and a listing of regional and synodical archivists.

In 1995 the total number of users was 1,287 and in 1996 1,493. Researchers who visited the archives included persons from Argentina, England, Finland, Germany, and India, as well as from throughout the United States.

The increase in use of the archives is partly attributable to the cyber connection, but also to traditional outreach. For the archives, this has meant the director’s participation in congregation heritage events, contributing historical photographs as a feature in *Seeds for the Parish* and others used for “Mosaic,” which is the ELCA video magazine, several in-house exhibits, the promotion and use of two traveling exhibits on ELCA women’s history and multicultural heritage, hosting an annual “Lutheran Archivists Breakfast” at the Society of American Archivists meeting, and the twice annual *ELCA Archives Network News*, published on behalf of the churchwide, synodical, and regional archives work.

The ELCA Archives Network, comprised of archivists from synods or regions, met November 2, 1996, in Fort Wayne, Indiana, once again in conjunction with the Lutheran Historical Conference meeting to save travel costs for most of the participants. While not all synods or regions were represented at the meeting, it was an important time for reviewing mutual concerns and discussing several technical matters not appropriate or solvable through letter, phone, or e-mail contacts alone. The group decided that such meetings, even if they are brief and even if not all can attend, are still important for archives programs throughout this church.

Donations to the Archival Collections

Among the many collections of records and papers received in 1995-1996 were the official records of the first bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Herbert W. Chilstrom, 1987-1995. Records from many other units of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America also continue to be received, mainly through the ELCA Records Retention Schedule. An unusual donation came from

the former Lutheran Church in America's Department for Press, Radio, and TV. Film production elements, mainly original negatives, for the "Davey and Goliath" television film series of the early 1960s were found and transferred from the original animator, Art Clokey, now living in California.

Among personal papers donated were those of Sylvester C. Michelfelder (1889-1951), c. 1945-1963. Michelfelder was a pastor of the American Lutheran Church who later served as the first general secretary of the Lutheran World Federation. Also donated were papers, 1913-1918, of the Rev. August W. Edwins (1871-1942), the first foreign missionary of the Augustana Church who went to China. Another mission related donation of hymnals, liturgies, and photographs c. 1900-1950s, are from Puerto Rico and the pre-history of the ELCA Caribbean Synod. These materials were from the family of the late Rev. William G. Arbaugh, missionary to Puerto Rico, 1928-1956. Yet another mission related donation were papers, c. 1941-1990s, of Esther Bacon (1916-1972), missionary nurse and midwife in Liberia. Materials were collected by her biographer (*Outlaw for God*), Dr. Birney Dibble.

A group of donations was made in conjunction with an oral history project, "Role of the Eight District Presidents in the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod Controversy, 1969-1977." Begun by the Rev. Rudolph P. F. Ressmeyer, one of "the eight," the oral histories were transcribed and donated along with personal papers of each of the eight men: Ressmeyer's papers, 1968-1976; Herman R. Franc papers, c. 1970s; Harold L. Hecht (1923-1990), papers, 1974-1977; Paul E. Jacobs (1914-1977), papers, 1970-1977; Emil G. Jaech, papers, 1974-1976; Waldemar E. Meyer (1922-1989), papers, c. 1970s; Herman F. Neunaber, papers, 1969-1976; and Robert J. Riedel, papers, 1973-1976.

Archives Advisory Committee

The committee met annually during 1995-1996, with Mr. Duane P. Swanson, Minnesota Historical Society, serving as chair. After four years of service as chair, Swanson remains on the committee, but is succeeded as chair by Mr. Paul A. Daniels, ELCA Region 3 and Luther Seminary Archivist. Others on the committee in the past two years included: the Rev. George E. Handley, formerly coordinator of ELCA Region 7, Ms. Christopher Ann Paton, Georgia State University, and the Rev. James L. Schaaf, Trinity Lutheran Seminary, who died on November 30, 1996. He was well known for his teaching, researching, writing, and other professional contributions in the field of American Lutheranism.

Library and Records

The Lutheran Center Library now serves a confirmation student in California, the librarian in Hyderabad, India, an army chaplain in Texas, and a women's Bible study group in Georgia with the same efficiency as it serves the Lutheran Center staff person who walks up to the desk. This is possible because the Lutheran Center

Library has opened its door on the information super highway—offering an electronic catalog of the holdings, reference assistance by e-mail, and links to relevant full-text sites. The tools that make this possible are found in a home page on the World Wide Web, which includes the library's catalog in a format appropriate for searching with a web browser, and an e-mail address to which anyone may direct inquiries. The Lutheran Center Library's door is open (www.elca.org/os/library.html).

Partnership is the key to efficient library services. The ELCA library belongs to the American Theological Library Association and the Chicago Library System. Like most full-service libraries, the ELCA library is a member of the Online Computer Library Center (OCLC) through which we share our holdings with 23,746 libraries in 62 countries, using 42 language groups. Their 615 million holdings also are made available to us. We also retrieve cataloging records from OCLC, making that labor intensive process more efficient and economical.

The retrieved bibliographic records are down loaded to the online public access catalog on the local area network of the Lutheran Center, making the library catalog available at every staff person's personal computer.

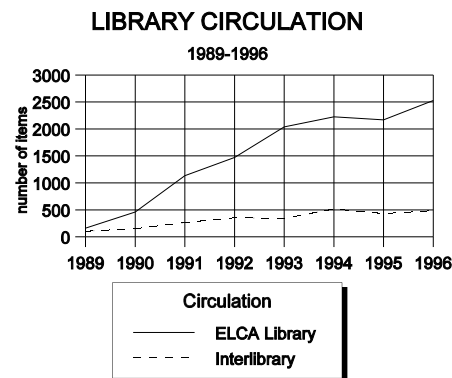
The ELCA library subscribes to several vital reference indexes, such as *Religion Index* and *Books-in-Print*, on CD-ROM. Blocks of searches purchased from OCLC FirstSearch, an online document delivery service, will gradually replace some of these subscriptions—thus, reducing our cost while, at the same time expanding our access to more data resources.

The collection of books and videotapes has reached 11,000 through judicious purchases, gifts from Augsburg Fortress, Publishers, subscriptions to all of the publications of the Lutheran World Federation, World Council of Churches, and the Alban Institute, among others, and through gifts from individuals and units who wish to make their material available to others. Seven volunteers assist with the physical processing of material, shelving, and other labor intensive library tasks.

In order to encourage sharing of resources and economizing on periodical subscriptions in the churchwide office, the union list of all periodicals coming into

the Lutheran Center is posted on the local area network, and the library subscribes to over one hundred of the most commonly used journals.

Circulation statistics attest to an increasing demand for the materials and services of the Lutheran Center Library. In 1989, as the library was being established, 162 books circulated. Each year has seen a steady increase in circulation so that



in 1995, 2,168 items circulated, and in 1996 the circulation reached 2,529. Similarly, interlibrary loan transactions numbered 104 in 1989, 430 in 1995 and 487 in 1996. No count is available of the number of people who visit the ELCA library in person to use its materials and services.

Grant funds from the Lutheran Brotherhood, a benefit society based in Minneapolis, were used to establish the Lutheran Center Library and have enabled the expansion of its services. The library has proven its value to the Lutheran Center staff—saving them both time and money—as they seek the information necessary to make decisions, develop programs, and maintain their level of expertise in their appointed areas. It is providing the same time and cost effective service to those outside the Lutheran Center, who now have equivalent access to its services.

Care of Records

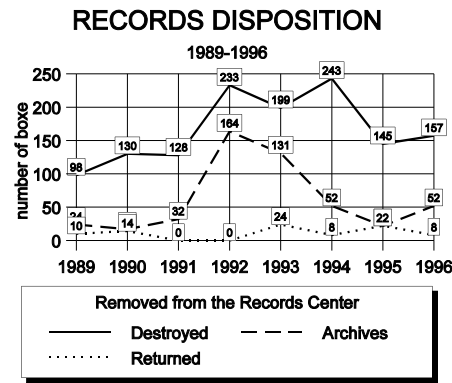
In March 1996, *Active Records Management: Guidelines for Synods and Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* was prepared and distributed by the Office of the Secretary. Documents produced by several departments were published under one cover, including new or revised guidelines for the care of records in synodical offices and congregations. Topics that have received attention include: the care of cash funds and financial records, personnel records, electronic records and databases, official minutes and reports, vital and legal records, the parish register, records related to pastoral care of parishioners, files on persons rostered in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and the care of archival materials. This document was distributed to synodical offices, regional archivists, regional resource centers, and—in electronic form—to users of the ELCA Internet web site.

The electronic distribution of this material has generated an ongoing conversation by e-mail with pastors and lay persons concerning these policies and the issues they raise. Synodical offices are encouraged to duplicate and distribute this document to their congregations. Copies have also been sent upon request.

Information is one of the key resources necessary for the efficient operation of any organization. The goals of records management are rapid retrieval of accurate information, appropriate and economical storage of information, compliance with legal or administrative requirements for retention of data, consistency in policy governing similar kinds of records, protection of this church's vital records, and prompt and cost effective disposal of obsolete or extraneous records.

In keeping with this church's bylaws and action by the Church Council, the secretary has responsibility for developing and administering a records management program in the churchwide office. The records management program requires staff to plan for the entire life cycle of their records. Through this program, the useful and vital records of this church are identified, maintained, and safeguarded. When they are no longer in active use, records are moved to the Archives or destroyed.

The *Records Retention Schedule*, as approved by the Church Council in November 1989 and revised in 1991, defines the operational, legal, fiscal, and historical value of records, in all formats, in the churchwide office. This schedule charts the life cycle of the records—directing the length of time each needs to be kept in the primary filing area and defining when and for how long they may be transferred to semiactive storage in the off-site records center—and identifies those which should be admitted to the Archives of this church. Supplementing the *Records Retention Schedule*, the *Records Management Manual*, revised in 1997, instructs staff in the appropriate procedures for handling various types of records—financial, personnel, legal, and electronic.



A computerized database monitors the accession, circulation, and final disposition of records in the Lutheran Center's off-site records center. Records are purged from the records center at the end of each fiscal year. At the end of 1996, 235 cubic feet of records were destroyed, 78 cubic feet of records were transferred to the Archives, and 12 cubic feet were returned to active use in the unit. At the end of 1995, 217 cubic feet of records were destroyed, 33 cubic feet were transferred to the

Archives and 33 cubic feet of files were returned to active use.

As we enter the tenth year of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, we have seen many changes in personnel in the Lutheran Center as well as the ending and beginning of many programs. These changes always require thoughtful decisions in order to fulfill the requirements for appropriate disposition of records.

Minutes and Publications

The secretary is responsible for documenting and preserving the legislative history of this church. Minutes are prepared by the secretary and staff related to the secretary for the Churchwide Assembly, the Church Council and its Executive Committee, the Cabinet of Executives, and the Conference of Bishops. Protocol copies of the minutes of all boards, steering committees, and advisory committees also are collected and maintained as a permanent record, as required by churchwide bylaw 13.41.02.a.

In accord with action of the 1993 Churchwide Assembly [CA93.7.61], copies of the published minutes of the 1995 Churchwide Assembly were distributed to its voting members, synodical and regional offices, units of the churchwide

organization, and libraries of the seminaries and colleges and universities of this church. Congregations and individuals may order copies from Augsburg Fortress, Publishers.

Publication of the 1995 assembly minutes, 992 pages in length, occurred in February 1997. The length of time necessary for publication can be attributed to a shortage of staff available for that function, new in-house typesetting procedures, and a commitment to ensuring that a complete historical record of that assembly would be produced.

Yearbook

The 1997 yearbook of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America represented the ninth churchwide directory to be printed since the inception of this church. Published in January 1997, the current edition contains 673 pages—153 pages more than the initial 1988 volume.

Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions

The secretary provides for the publication of the governing documents of this church. Following adoption of various amendments by the 1995 Churchwide Assembly, a new edition of the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* was produced.

To simplify review and revision of congregation constitutions, the English text of the Model Constitution for Congregations is available not only as a booklet but also in ASCII computer-readable format on floppy diskettes through Augsburg Fortress, Publishers. A Spanish-language translation of the Model Constitution for Congregations has been prepared and is available upon request from the Office of the Secretary.

Meeting Management and Travel

Assembly Planning

Planning for the fifth Churchwide Assembly in 1997 at Philadelphia required extensive preparation and attention by staff members of the Office of the Secretary. Thorough efforts have been devoted to enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the biennial assembly.

By action of the Church Council, Denver, Colorado, has been chosen as the site of the August 16-22, 1999, sixth Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Management of Meetings and Travel Coordination

In 1996, staff helped to research sites, negotiate rates and contracts, and assist churchwide units, regions, and other groups to coordinate the details of more than 150 meetings.

The churchwide organization renewed a two-year contract with its travel management company. This agreement provides three on-site reservation agents who handle requests of travelers for the churchwide organization, always seeking the lowest available fares at the time reservations are made. They also are responsible for reviewing tickets after they have been issued to assure that even lower fares have not become available.

The year 1996 was a volatile one for travelers. Air fares were reduced several times during the year due to competitive pricing by the airlines. Throughout 1996, 216 airline tickets were reissued by the travel management firm, which resulted in a savings of \$18,839 for this church.

The churchwide organization continues to maintain the lowest average air-ticket cost of any organization participating in a monthly national survey of travel managers. The average ticket price for the 7,514 tickets purchased in 1992 was \$301. The average ticket price for the 7,540 tickets purchased in 1993 remained at \$301. The average ticket price for 7,644 tickets purchased in 1994 was \$276. The average ticket price for 8,067 tickets purchased in 1995 was \$295. The average ticket price for 8,434 tickets purchased in 1996 was \$286, while the national average was \$533. These figures do not include missionary travel booked through another agency by the Division for Global Mission.

The chart below shows the dollar amounts for airline tickets for the Church Council, board, committee, task force, and staff members since 1988.

	Total Airfare Expended	Number of Tickets Issued	Average Ticket Cost
1988	\$2,380,103	8,772	\$288
1989	\$2,870,164	9,548	\$301
1990	\$2,602,891	8,028	\$325
1991	\$2,460,662	7,601	\$324
1992	\$2,256,917	7,514	\$301
1993	\$2,268,572	7,540	\$301
1994	\$2,114,122	7,644	\$276
1995	\$2,383,933	8,067	\$295
1996	\$2,414,320	8,434	\$286

Program Directions 1997-1999

The secretary of this church is required to provide leadership under the oversight of the bishop of this church (churchwide constitutional provisions 13.41. and 11.33; continuing resolution 15.11.A91.). The secretary also bears responsibility for supervising the fulfillment of the specific duties assigned to this office (churchwide bylaws 13.41.01. through 13.41.05. and elsewhere).

The challenge of accomplishing these tasks remains substantial, even after nearly a decade of experience in the life of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The volumes of work for available staff mean that completion of projects often takes far longer than desirable. Efforts continue, however, to ensure that the duties of the office are carried out wisely, responsibly, and effectively.

LOWELL G. ALMEN, *Secretary*

Elections: Second Ballot for Vice President

Reference: continued on *Minutes*, pages 262, 380, 493, 546.

Bishop H. George Anderson announced the second ballot for the election of the vice president of this church. General Counsel Phillip H. Harris, chair of the Elections Committee, read the corrections to the spelling of names of nominees for vice president that had been provided to the Elections Committee. He again announced the addition of the name of Loretta Walker as a nominee, then read a list of persons who had withdrawn their names as nominees, and would therefore not be continued on the second ballot:

Helmke, Mark S.	13	Fricke, Nancy	2
Weiser, Carol L.	12	Pfeifer, Karen	2
Dubler, Andrea	10	Rostberg, Sharon 2	
Koenig, Steve	8	Schieve, Mary Jane	2
Gregory, Effie	7	Seibert, Phyllis	2
Andersen, Myrna	5	Ashton, Faith	1
Diehl, William	5	Blomquist, Mary Lou	1
Gustavson, Sandra	5	Chadwick, Joanne	1
Peterson, Beverly A.	5	Crichlow, Livingston	1
Brown, Keith	4	Ebbert, Daniel	1
Groshong, Bonny	4	Eckert, Ralph	1
Messick, Margaret	3	Engstrom, Marlene	1
Wood, Janet	3	Foutz, Marjorie	1
Brown, Linda	2	Gottschalk, Patsy	1

Groshona, Bonnie	1	Obregon, Pablo	1
Guenther, Jean	1	Pfeifer, Karen	1
Hawkiks, Delphia	1	Pfeiffer, Karen	1
Honsey, Harris D.	1	Pyle, Barbara	1
Misseck, Margaret	1	Salatiello, Lynda	1
		Sandstrom, Dale V.	1

He also stated that those persons nominated on the first ballot named as ineligible because they are ordained persons were to be removed from this second ballot since there had been no challenge to that ruling of the Elections Committee. Bishop Anderson explained the voting procedures for the second ballot, led the assembly in prayer, and instructed the voting members to complete their ballots. He subsequently declared balloting to be closed.

Bible Study

Bishop Anderson announced that the Bible studies for this assembly would focus on St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians. He introduced Bishop Charles H. Maahs [Central States Synod] for the first Bible study.

Bishop Maahs began with a story of a divided church in Central Kansas in 1887. Noting the persistent problem of church division, redeclared that, in First Corinthians, "Paul brings the Gospel to bear in daily life" in the midst of a deeply divided church. The theme for his presentation, he said, would be "The Unity of the Church in a Diverse Culture." He asked the assembly members to use "empathetic imaginations—put yourself into it, be a member of that church [in Corinth]. . . . Here is a church on a missionary frontier . . . you are going it alone out there on that frontier. You are a first generation Christian." In Corinth, he said, it was "truly a diverse community, a crossroads of the world at that time, and here our empathetic imagination, I believe, has a parallel in our own 20th century. One scholar suggests, and I quote, 'That all of the evidence together suggests that Paul's Corinth was at once the New York, the Los Angeles, and the Las Vegas of the ancient world.'" Bishop Maahs commented that Paul had founded the Church but was only there with them 18 months and therefore the Christians in Corinth had many questions as they lived in the faith after Paul left. He continued, "We've got to understand that church, understand it in the sense that there are in our times parallels to that church—and there are many. Then we can talk about Paul's message to Corinth as a message to us."

Bishop Maahs spoke of Paul's work in Corinth as work amongst people without the background of the Jewish people who "believed in God, believed in

revelation, believed in the Ten Commandments, had a strong ethical background and at least had a strong foundation on which to build.” He then spoke of a workshop he had attended on the catechumenate, “the process that is being used by some of our congregations in the United States and Canada. Patterned after the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults process of the Roman Catholic Church, the catechumenate is a ministry of education and witness that reaches out to the unchurched, the unbaptized. It is a process that very carefully asks the primary questions about the meaning of God, the meaning of the Gospel, the ethical standards that are integral to our faith. How do you take the unchurched, the unbaptized, with no background or tradition or upbringing in the faith and lead them on a journey to a faithful life in the Church?”

“I believe that the greatness of the Apostle Paul,” Bishop Maahs continued, “consisted in his ability to bring the resources of the faith that included his own Jewish background, and included the words of Jesus to which he had access but which he does not often quote directly. It included his own conversion, his call to discipleship and apostleship. It included Christian tradition that had already been formulated before him in which he in turn passed on. He brought all of these resources and interpreted them for new situations—what does the tradition mean here and now? Paul’s preaching and teaching of the Gospel; the example of his own faith in Jesus Christ, his crucified Lord; his theology of the cross; and his commitment of his own example to a life of love and mission, give us an astonishing picture of what the living word of God truly means. In that way Paul was a great servant of Christ, an extraordinary missionary of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.”

In the Corinthian church, he said, there were deep divisions, cliques, and parties, which threatened the unity of that church. Bishop Maahs summarized Paul’s response as, “My Corinthian friends, your divisions are totally out of order and contrary to the nature of the Church. The Church is one body just as there is one Christ in whom we have all been baptized and through whom we have received one Holy Spirit. . . your leaders are to be your servants for the sake of Christ, . . . notice how God works among us, through a cross, the weakness of God is stronger than humans, the foolishness of God is wiser than humans.” St. Paul declares that there is absolutely no place in the life of the Church for any arrogant rejection of one another or of any of the ministers who have come to work among you, he said, noting that there are different roles for ministers—some sow; some plant; some water; and another will harvest.

Bishop Maahs concluded, “Why is it that among the followers of Jesus of Nazareth there can ever be arrogance and claims of superior place in the name of Jesus Christ? Why is there in the Church the persistence of this fundamental contradiction that in the name and spirit of God, some would elevate themselves above others?” He said, “I believe that the first expression of unity here is to be found in Paul’s insistence on proclaiming the Gospel. . . . Before the cross all believers stand together in solidarity on even ground.”

Following the Bible study, Bishop Anderson invited the assembly to stand and sing the hymn, “Holy, Holy, Holy.”

Introductions: Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sierra Leone

Bishop H. George Anderson introduced the Rev. Marie Barnett, a pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sierra Leone. He welcomed her and expressed concern for her family, which is separated due to civil war in that country.

Proposals on Full Communion: The Episcopal Church

Reference: 1997 *Pre-Assembly Report*, Section IV, pages 49-64; Section VI, pages 11-26; Section V, pages 1-24, continued from *Minutes*, pages 37, 125, 605, 621.

Bishop H. George Anderson stated that the Rev. Michael Rogness and the Rev. Walter R. Bouman would each speak for 15 minutes, after which the assembly would go into a committee of the whole for discussion for 45 minutes. He said, “We are now going to have the opportunity to hear from two theologians who have differing views on the proposals before us. . . . I am glad to see how we used that committee of the whole discussion [on *A Formula of Agreement*] this morning to discuss respectfully and express our views, to listen [to one another], and to listen to the promptings of God’s Spirit as we reflect on decisions ahead.” Bishop Anderson introduced Pastor Rogness and Pastor Bouman and commented, “I am very grateful that they were willing to accept my invitation to present to us in this fashion. Dr. Rogness is professor of homiletics at Luther Seminary, Saint Paul, Minn. Dr. Bouman is a professor in systematic theology at Trinity Lutheran Seminary in Columbus, Ohio. Both of these professors are committed churchmen, well respected scholars, and I want to thank them for agreeing to share with the assembly their reflections on the full communion proposal.”

Pastor Rogness was invited to begin his presentation. He said, “Bishop Anderson; Dr. Bouman, my colleague from a sister seminary; and dear friends. I feel privileged and grateful for the opportunity to be here today. I have three parts to these 15 minutes. Number one, some clarification; number two, several reasons why we should not adopt the *Concordat*; and number three, a positive alternative.

“First, some clarifications—a couple items. In the first place, I come from the Upper Midwest where, as many of you know, a lot of the opposition to the *Concordat* has come from. However, as a region we have been enthusiastic about our ecumenical relationships and we continue to be so. We fully intend to continue that. Our seminary provides education for about one hundred non-Lutheran students who have enriched our campus enormously. Nor do I consider my views a regional voice. As I have prepared for this assignment, I have been contacted by people

from all the regions of our ELCA. Second point of clarification, during the three years when I was the American staff member at the Ecumenical Institute of the Lutheran World Federation in Strasbourg, France, my family and I worshiped with the Episcopalians and we feel a deep debt of gratitude to that group of people who became our spiritual home for those three years.

“Part number two, I submit seven reasons, in summary fashion, why we should not adopt the *Concordat*.

“1. The goal of ecumenism has never been, ‘you become like me.’ To present a united front for witness and mission in this world, we see each other as sisters and brothers in Christ, we respect our various traditions, we cooperate, and we embrace the diversity that enriches the Christian Church in this world. Unity in Christ has never been uniformity. Divisions of the Church have injured us but the diversity has been enriching. With the *Concordat*, in terms of ministry structure, we become Episcopalian and they stay Episcopalian. The Episcopalians are willing to suspend, temporarily, their rejection of our ministry and recognize it as authentic, but it is clearly a conditional acceptance. That is, our ministry is recognized as authentic now because we are changing to be like theirs. If we are to adopt something from the Episcopalians, I would prefer that we use more of the marvelous *Book of Common Prayer*, one of the finest prayer and worship books in the English language.

“2. We must be very clear that the *Concordat* contradicts the ministry decisions made by our assembly in 1993 where [voting members] voted decisively to retain the office of one ordained ministry, that is, one ordination to the pastoral ministry; not ordaining deacons; and not separating the office of bishop from that of a pastor. The definition of ministry in the *Concordat* is clearly the threefold form. Granted there are concessions to us in footnotes six and seven. I ask you simply to read the text of the *Concordat* and you will realize that the weight and the expectation of the document is on the threefold ministry. Paragraph number three is very, very clear. ‘We agree that the threefold ministry of bishops, presbyters, and deacons in historic succession will be the future pattern of the one ordained ministry.’ As these words are read in coming years, they will move the ELCA away from what we decided in 1993 and toward the Episcopal form of threefold structure. The *Concordat* does not require three ordained offices of ministry. But the direction, it seems to me, is very obvious. For instance, it pledges us Lutherans to ‘continued study and reform’ on this matter. The official commentary says the ELCA must be faithful to its pledge to adopt the threefold order. It is obvious to me that the *Concordat* sets in motion a trend which will invariably end up in full-fledged threefold ministry with three ordained ministries which is what we pledge to work toward in the document. Advocates of the *Concordat* are fond of saying that it would not change much because we will have our threefold ministry and the Episcopalians will have theirs. My reply is that to say on one hand we are not changing much, and then to tell Episcopalians we are willing to change on those

issues they want changing, sends mixed messages all around. Such double-talk it is unfair to Episcopalians. There are different traditions of ministry in our ELCA and we ought to discuss these questions on their own rather than simply take on one form of ministry to conform to another church.

“3. The *Concordat* will, in effect, separate the office and elevate the office of bishop from that of a pastor. It takes away the ability of a pastor to ordain; it makes the office of bishop a lifetime office, not in terms of service but in terms of title and status as well as maintaining the right to function as a bishop after a term is done. In our American Lutheran tradition, bishops authorize ordination as a matter of good order. They, in fact, do most of the ordinations and in some synods all the ordinations. But we have always affirmed that pastors can ordain pastors. That is the whole point of our Lutheran view, the one ordained ministry ordains others into that ministry. We have never taken the rite of ordination away from pastors and given it exclusively to bishops, thus making the office of bishop separate as well as theologically and practically a superior office to pastors. In the Augsburg Confession, Article V, the office of ministry is established to convey the gifts of God’s salvation to people through Word and Sacrament. The very heart of Christian ministry is where the Word is proclaimed and the Sacraments are administered. The ordained ministry is defined by, and is at its very heart, the ministry of Word and Sacrament, that is, the parish pastor. In contrast to the Episcopalian tradition of three distinct ordained offices, Lutherans have from the very beginning insisted there is one ordination to the pastoral office and that bishops and pastors share that office. Please read the *Concordat* carefully and see for yourself that the office of the bishop and the pastor are separated. The historic episcopate is an office conveyed by the bishop. The Lutheran confessions state that the reformation church intended to keep the traditional offices, which we have done, Apology, Article IV, with our bishops, pastors, and diaconal ministers or deacons in congregations as some have. During the Reformation, Lutherans in Germany had no bishops to do the ordaining, so the rite of ordination is specifically a rite affirmed for the whole church. Of course the historical circumstances were different. But the Treatise on the Power and the Primacy of the Pope, one of our confessions, in paragraph 65 makes a very clear statement. It says, ‘But since the distinction between bishop and pastor is not by divine right, it is manifest that ordination administered by a pastor in his own church is valid by divine right.’ The Lutheran confessions never insist on the historic episcopate. They affirm the unity of the ordained office of pastor and bishop. They never take away the ability of ordination from the pastoral office. The *Concordat*, on the other hand, forbids pastors to ordain ever. If anyone doubts that the *Concordat* separates and elevates the office of bishop from that of a pastor, one look at the ceremonies involved will make a decisive impression. One bishop to ordain a pastor in a relatively simple ceremony, but six bishops to install, ordain, consecrate bishops, whatever word we use. Ask anybody who attends those two ceremonies to judge which office is considered the more important to the Church. At my own synodical assembly this

spring our former bishop for eight years since the merger, Roger Munson, gave his reasons for opposing the *Concordat* by beginning his talk, 'My name is Pastor Roger Munson and that's good enough for me.'

"4. The Augsburg Confession says that agreement in Word and Sacrament is the only condition for unity. There has never been one prescribed structure of ministry in worldwide or American Lutheranism. The requirement of the *Concordat*, however, is that we must adopt the hierarchical system of the Episcopal structure as an additional condition for full communion with them. Thus adding a condition for unity which we have never had before. One of the reasons Lutherans have never insisted upon that is that there is flexibility of ministry in the Bible. The New Testament does not prescribe any one form of ministry. As a matter of fact, a bishop in the New Testament and in the early church is more similar to today's parish pastor than to the more administrative position of a bishop. Robert Marshall and David Preus, former presidents of the LCA [Lutheran Church in America] and The ALC [The American Lutheran Church]; John Reumann, former dean of our Philadelphia seminary and chair of the ELCA Study on Ministry; William Lazareth, former seminary professor and a bishop in the ELCA; all oppose the *Concordat* for that reason. They are all here at the assembly so I assume they will have opportunity to voice their opinion.

"5. The claim that the *Concordat* will further witness and mission is overstated. It may, in fact, hamper us. Tim Huffman, a professor of missions and a colleague of Dr. Bouman at Trinity Seminary says he is offended at how people are using missions to persuade people for the *Concordat*. He said we are carrying on and will continue to do all kinds of mission, all kinds of cooperation, on the local, national, and international level. We will keep on doing that. There is not one person in this assembly hall who will cut back cooperating with his or her Episcopalian neighbors if the *Concordat* is not adopted. For us to hit some kind of a panic button and to worry that not adopting the *Concordat* will cripple or diminish our relationship with The Episcopal Church is nonsense. The Episcopalians that I know have no problem accepting the fact that we as a church might choose not to adopt their structure. But we all know that both sides will continue in a partnership. Furthermore, I would argue that this top heavy structure of clergy, which is really a structure shaped in the middle ages, is ill suited to the realities of 20th century mission. The key to mission in the future church is the activity of the laity. Notice that the *Concordat* is totally concerned with rank and levels of clergy. Our confessions affirm the priesthood of all believers—the priesthood of all believers which is so important to us is never once mentioned in the *Concordat*. The Episcopal Church, of course, affirms the ministry of the laity but they understand that term differently than what we mean by the priesthood of all believers. Priesthood for them is a term basically relating to clergy.

"6. We need to realize the *Concordat* locks us into one form of ministry that cannot be amended or changed until the whole process is complete, somewhere in

the middle of the next century when all pastors ordained by non-Episcopal bishops have died out. With the *Concordat* we must change our constitution immediately on key issues until the whole process is done. The unsettled questions and ambiguities along the way will require a Joint Commission which will have a lot of authority, which will become a bureaucracy of its own, taking staff time, travel, and meeting expenses, costs which nobody has begun to calculate. I know of no other instance in the entire history of Lutheranism where a Lutheran church has committed itself to that kind of inflexibility.

"7. The argument that European Lutherans have this structure and are still Lutheran I do not find persuasive. Of course they are Lutheran, they inherited the structure from the 16th century, in some cases passed it on to former mission churches. Their history is different from ours. In America we have a different kind of history. For example, the Augustana Synod specifically rejected the historic episcopate when Archbishop Nathan Söderblom visited America and offered to incorporate the Augustana Synod into the historic episcopate. They said no. They did not want to be encumbered by structures from the past.

"In addition to those seven reasons, I have two more practical comments. In the first place, this is going to be enormously expensive. Do we want a structure where we will pay travel and housing expenses for six bishops for the installation of all 66 ELCA bishops and over 200 Episcopalian bishops? It will easily cost more than two or three missionaries. Secondly, do we want our church to adopt this kind of uniformity with the Episcopalians at the price of deep divisions in our own church? I have run out of time for an alternate proposal. Let me say that we are committed to partnership with enthusiasm with our Episcopalian sisters and brothers."

Bishop Anderson then invited Pastor Bouman to address the assembly on the other side of the issue.

Pastor Bouman said, "Bishop Anderson, members of the Churchwide Assembly, and guests. This is a great time in history. I would not want to have lived at any other time in this millennium. For it is so pregnant with opportunity, so full of possibilities for this church. You are challenged to bring to fruition the ecumenical work of this century. You are called to discern the Lord's will for this church and the four churches who have already adopted the ecumenical agreements [The Episcopal Church, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Reformed Church in America, and United Church of Christ]. By your decisions you will help to reconfigure the face of American Christianity. You are by now familiar with the *Concordat*. You know that there has been a lot of concern and disagreement about its terms. But it is a joy for me to be here and to state why this assembly should adopt it. Although this is the first time that I have ever spoken to a Churchwide Assembly, I am glad that it is a significant time. Except that I feel like a bumper sticker I saw recently: 'If at first you do not succeed, do not try skydiving.'

“Let me begin by listening to the many who ask why our church should even bother with ecumenical agreements. The argument goes that we already live at peace with our neighbors, no matter what their church. Our churches are doing all right in an atmosphere of friendly competition. We are comfortable in our own church. We are able to cooperate with other churches. Why not just let it go at that?

“The Word of God in Ephesians speaks directly to this concern. God has reconciled all people by the blood of Christ, by the grace which makes us alive when we were dead in sin. Christ is our peace—also our peace between people. He has broken down the dividing wall. He has called us to be one [Eph. 2:4-16]. It is a mistake to claim that our reformation ancestors thought the price of unity was too high. That price has already been paid by our dear Lord Jesus Christ! It is the price of disunity that is too high.

“Therefore, Ephesians urges us to live in visible unity according to Christ’s call, putting up with one another in love, making every effort, every effort, to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. ‘For there is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your call’ [Eph. 4:1-4].

“Christ’s call is about a unity as visible and concrete as Christianity itself. Christ’s prayer was that his disciples ‘become completely one, so that the world may know that you, Father, have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me’ [John 17:23]. When we take up these ecumenical proposals, we are seeking to be obedient to Christ. We want to be faithful to the unity which he has given us, for which he is the price, and to which he has called us.

“In America, the peaceful co-existence of our denominations was a significant step in faithful obedience, a contrast to the terrible religious wars of Europe. Here, Christians learned to live side by side without murdering each other. But we still did not trust another church to represent adequately the truth of Christianity. Even if there already was another Christian church in Storm Lake, Iowa, or Chatfield, Minn., we thought that the truth of the Gospel would only be faithfully represented if we started a Lutheran church there. Often, we even started our own kind of Lutheran church next to another Lutheran church in town.

“A careful look reveals that factors other than the Gospel often divided our churches: race and ethnic group; culture and style of worship; language and economic class. Such division calls into question our obedience to Christ, casts doubt upon the Gospel, and stands in the way of recognizing our need for each other and our ability to serve each other. It impedes our witness in evangelizing our neighbors and in addressing the needs of our society.

“We have learned from the experiences of other Christians that ‘full communion’ is perhaps the best way for denominations to be obedient to Christ’s gift and peace and call. We do not merge our churches, giving up our rich traditions, creating a large religious organization. ‘Full communion’ means affirming that in another church the Gospel is proclaimed and the sacraments

appropriately administered. It means that we can cooperate with each other fully, do mission together, have a common strategy for addressing the immense challenges of city and country. It means that we adopt agreements by which churches can exchange ministers. But, it also means that we do not have to be in the same place. Episcopalians can represent us, and we can represent them. A single congregation can have Episcopal and Lutheran members engaging in common worship and witness. A single pastor can serve several small Episcopal and Lutheran churches. A campus can have a single gathering of students, faculty, and staff for common worship and witness. And this is where the *Concordat* comes in. For it deals with that kind of community that makes our ministers interchangeable.

“In the dialogues, which began nearly 30 years ago, Lutherans and Episcopalians quickly discovered that we have unity in the Gospel and the sacraments. We recognized that we had very similar worship traditions and forms of church life. So, fifteen years ago, we formally recognized each other as churches of the Gospel and began interim sharing of the Eucharist, in each other’s churches and at some joint services. But, despite this, there remained an apparently insurmountable obstacle to the interchanging of our ministers. It was this: The Episcopal Church required that bishops who participate in the historic episcopate preside at the ordination of all clergy. The historic episcopate means that new bishops are installed by bishops who can trace their succession back to about the third century after Christ. The Episcopal Church has bishops who share in this kind of succession. The ELCA does not.

“Because pastors of the ELCA have not been ordained by bishops in the historic episcopate, any exchange of clergy with The Episcopal Church seemed impossible. An Episcopal priest could serve a Lutheran congregation, but a Lutheran pastor could not serve an Episcopal congregation without being re-ordained by an Episcopal bishop. Re-ordination of Lutheran pastors was clearly unacceptable to Lutherans, because it would call into question the authenticity of Lutheran ordinations.

“What to do? The initial Lutheran position, the one with which I started in 1983, was that the Episcopalians ought to be just like us. Lutherans do not think the historic episcopate is necessary for ordained ministry, so each church should simply accept the ministries of the other. The initial Episcopal position was that the Lutherans ought to be just like them. If they could re-ordain all Lutheran pastors, reinstall all Lutheran bishops, then they could accept us. Standoff! There could be only casual cooperation, there would be no overcoming the great obstacle to full communion.

“What happened in the course of our dialogue is what happens in all genuine dialogue. Each of us began to make the attempt to see matters from the other’s point of view. We Lutherans began to see that we needed to take some action which would enable The Episcopal Church to recognize the historic episcopate in

our bishops. Episcopalians saw that they needed to take some action that would recognize Lutheran ministry now.

“After many sessions, the dialogue members agreed to some accommodations, so that each church could meet the requirements of the other for interchangeability of ministers. The Episcopalians said, ‘If you Lutherans can accept the pattern of the historic episcopate, we can recognize your ministry.’ The Lutherans said, ‘If you Episcopalians can recognize our ministry today, we can accept the pattern of the historic episcopate tomorrow.’ And when you reduce the *Concordat* to its essentials, that is what both churches are agreeing to do.

“In the dialogue sessions we learned about each other’s histories. We confirmed our agreement in the Gospel and the Sacraments. We were encouraged by the full communion taking place between Lutherans and Anglicans in Europe and emerging in Africa and Central America. We were instructed by documents of the Lutheran World Federation and the Lutheran Council in the USA, which stated that Lutherans could indeed share in the historic episcopate.

“Most importantly we each consulted our own official documents. The Episcopal *Book of Common Prayer* requires the historic episcopate for reunion of the Church, but the historic episcopate can be the outcome, not the pre-condition, of unity. It can be the consequence, not the starting point. The Episcopal Church could suspend its church law so that Lutheran pastors could at once serve in Episcopal contexts. Thus, the Lutheran requirement would be met. The Lutheran confessions state that Lutherans have no objection to the historic episcopate. They declare the desirability of keeping the historic episcopate if at all possible. Indeed, some Lutheran churches throughout the world actually have always had the bishops in historic succession. The ELCA could agree that in the future all newly-elected bishops would be installed by having three Episcopal bishops, as well as three Lutheran bishops, share collegially in the laying-on of hands. Thus, the Episcopal requirement would be met.

“These are the essentials in the *Concordat*. Everything else is dotting ‘i’s and crossing ‘t’s. Some provisions reassure each other that we really mean what we say as we move into full communion. But the essence is clear: The Episcopal Church recognizes now our pastoral ministries; and we install future bishops so that The Episcopal Church can see in them the historic episcopate.

“The *Concordat* has formulations about which some have raised questions that have to do with interpretation and meaning. The debate in our church has been helpful in voicing fears and asking questions. These fears and questions need to be heard. They deserve response. There is no time here today to respond to every concern, but I want to try to make a few important clarifications.

1. The final text of the *Concordat* has been carefully re-worked, so that it is in full agreement with the ministry report which this assembly adopted in 1993. That is its intention, that is how it should be read.

2. The *Concordat* does not expect that Lutherans become Episcopalians, or vice versa. We each keep responsibility for our own traditions of doctrine and practice. The interpretation of ministry and the office of bishop remains our own.
3. We do not adopt the Episcopal form of ministry, and vice versa. Episcopalians have one ordained ministry in threefold form: bishops, priests, and deacons. They will all be able to serve in Lutheran contexts. Lutherans have a single form of the one ordained ministry: pastors. They will be able to serve in Episcopal contexts. The ELCA will continue to have a single form of the one ordained ministry in the future. Our bishops will continue to be pastor-bishops.
4. We will not ordain our bishops or our deacons.
5. We will continue to license lay persons for sacramental ministry in unusual circumstances.
6. We can continue or establish full communion with churches that do not have bishops and fully accept their pastors.

“Are we Lutherans violating our confessions? Are we adding something to the Gospel and the Sacraments? Not at all. Both Lutherans and Episcopalians agree that the Church exists always and only wherever the Gospel is rightly proclaimed and the Sacraments rightly administered. We also agree that we can require what the Lutheran confessions call human traditions for the sake of peace and good order in our life together. Our confessional policy is that we can accommodate one another when that can be done without sin. Having human traditions is not a limitation of our freedom in the Gospel, it is an extension of our freedom.

“Because the *Concordat* has been the occasion for so much controversy, I have sometimes been tempted, as I was again last night, to conclude that we should simply give up the effort, that we cannot move forward if we are overwhelmed by fear and suspicion. But, this temptation must be resisted. We have all learned much from the debate, and the proposal is the better for it. But, the proposal is based in the Gospel and the witness of the confessions. It is built on the visionary initiatives of many Lutheran leaders. It is time for us to advance their work another step. We are free to believe the vision of the Gospel. We are free to respond creatively to God’s will for the Church. We are free to dream God’s dream for unity. We are free to vote with the hope inspired by the Holy Spirit.”

Committee of the Whole

Bishop H. George Anderson invited Secretary Lowell G. Almen to present the motion to move into the committee of the whole as agreed by the adoption of the Order of Business. He stated that if the motion was adopted, Vice President Magnus would chair the committee of the whole.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

Voice Vote

CARRIED: To recess into a “committee of the whole” for 45 minutes for the purpose of discussing the proposal for establishment of full communion with The Episcopal Church.

Vice President Kathy J. Magnus assumed the chair.

Ms. Melissa R. O’Rourke [South Dakota Synod] said, “I am a lay voting member from the South Dakota Synod and I have two points I would like to make. I emphasize that I am a lay member because probably some of my thoughts are directed towards the lay voting members here today. First, Bishop Anderson, in his report to the assembly, spoke about how people feel marginalized, how people, perhaps lay people in our church, in our society, feel like there are people making more decisions for them without consulting them. He also said, as part of the discussion about initiatives, that the ELCA is committed to unleashing the commitment of members for the sake of mission. As a lay person, I read the *Concordat*—the entire document—and my initial impression, which really has not changed at all, is that what the adoption of the *Concordat* does is build up the hierarchy of this church. What that does for me as a lay person is make me feel further away from what happens in this church, that somehow I count less—right or wrong. But I have to say that many times I do feel, as a lay person, even talking like this today that there are comments that I make that a theologian sitting next to me might say, ‘Well, you are just a lay person. I’m a theologian. Let me explain this to you.’ Rather than building up mission perhaps the *Concordat* detracts from our mission. Secondly, with due respect to the drafters of this document, I feel that I have heard over and over again at this assembly that this document is poorly drafted. We have heard confessions from the drafters, including last night Pastor Bouman over and over again, that the language of the document is imprecise, ambiguous, capable of multiple interpretations. This is the document that we are going to have to live with long after the drafters are gone and are not going to be around to tell us what it really means and boil it down to essentials for us. The document gives us conflicting messages. I do not expect to know right now what the Holy Spirit is going to do, but as Dr. Bouman said, the adoption of this document can reconfigure the face of American Christianity. When something is that important, I would expect no less (and I hope that all of us as voting members would expect no less), than to have a document that reasonably informs us of what it means in the future of this church. What I can support as an alternative proposal is the document that many of, I believe all of you voting members, did have passed out to you today, some alternate ecumenical proposals. I would simply invite all of the voting members to look at those as alternatives. You do not have to feel guilty about saying no.”

The Rev. Darrell H. Jodock [Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod] appealed to colleagues to focus on the issue before the assembly and said, “The issue that is before us is not whether to have closer relations with The Episcopal Church, the issue is whether this is the way to do it or not. . . . I would just appeal to my colleagues and fellow voting members to make the comments pertain to that part of what we are talking about.”

The Rev. David A. Weeks [Southwestern Minnesota Synod] commented, “The *Concordat* as we have it is the result of 30 years of dialogue between the Lutheran Church and The Episcopal Church, and the *Concordat* itself is the result of the Lutheran-Episcopal Dialogue III. There were 16 members on the committee, eight Lutherans and eight Episcopalians. When it came time when the document itself was drafted and time to be voted upon to be sent to the churches, the Episcopal delegation voted unanimously, all eight in favor of it. The Lutheran delegation voted five for and three against. That is roughly 62.5%. What I find ironic and curious and disturbing is that we as a delegation here, as an assembly, are asked to approve this document at a higher percentage than our own people who worked on the committee. The best theologians in this church who knew the document most intimately could not approve this document at the rate we are asked to approve it. I did go to the open hearings to listen and one thing came to my mind as I listened. It was clear to me that there were, of the people who were there to represent us as the resource persons, two of the people who voted in favor of the document and none of the persons who voted against it. I asked the question last night and got no answer—no one would or could answer me—so I ask it again today: Are any of the three people who voted against the *Concordat* on the committee here and were any of those three people invited to be resource people and if not, why not?”

The Rev. Daniel F. Martensen, director of the ELCA Department for Ecumenical Affairs, responded, “Professor Walter Bouman is the only person here from the dialogue team who voted for this [the *Concordat* document] as a resource person and Pastor Bouman is here for the purpose of being present on the podium to the 15-minute discussion today.” Ms. Magnus asked, “There are then no other persons from that team present?” Pastor Martensen responded, “No.”

The Rev. John C. Kintner [Northwest Washington Synod] stated, “I used to think ecumenism was a good idea in mission work—it’s absolutely vital. It involves reaching out from our church and in doing that it would be impossible for us with just Lutheran measurements and rhetoric to justify totally and completely and flawlessly what we intend to do before the fact. These things have to be lived before they become better and better over time, like doing a cooperative worship service in your home town for Easter perhaps. There were villages I went to as a LAMP pastor-pilot, one of them is the village where the story, *And I Heard the Owl Call My Name*, [came from]. I was not allowed to go into that village because of objections from the Anglican bishop . . . , not just to practice ministry but even to appear in the area. There are hard edges to this unity which comes from not

approving these documents. This may not be the way we want to do it right now, but this process has been going on since 1962. What I have not heard from the opposition is any kind of substitute process that will lead all our sister communions to agreement. We are not called to succeed in ministry or to be safe, but simply to risk ourselves for the sake of the Gospel. The other thing I would add and mention particularly is the structure of the episcopacy that clarifies and limits the clergy hierarchy in a given communion. So in The Episcopal Church, with which I have worked for years and years and where I have my office as a pastor out in Western Washington, the lay people's duties and areas of influence are clearly delineated and never invaded by the clergy. We, on the other hand, one reason this gets so complicated when we talk about this is because people fill the sky with rhetoric which is one way the clergy has of capturing the debate. The other thing I would say is, remember when you vote on this that you are not just voting yes or no on this particular document. You are voting yes or no on whether I should go into that village and do ministry in cooperation with my Anglican comrades. We have trusted you who are in opposition for many years to read the material and participate honestly over time. You are now asking us to trust you that you are still ecumenical and wish to do these things. I hope, if this does not pass, that you are correct. We have done the best we could, we will continue, but passing this is necessary—rejecting it has drastic consequences.”

Ms. Dale Ann Swenson [Western North Dakota] said, “I speak in favor of ecumenism but I am opposed to the *Concordat*. I feel like I have been run over by a train and I am looking for the constancy of grace. There is at least one statement within the *Concordat* that directly contradicts one of the provisions of Chapter 2 of this church's constitution. If this assembly adopts the *Concordat*, we will be guilty of false teaching. Specifically, I am speaking of the provision of the *Concordat* which describes the shared agreement regarding the benefits received in the Lord's Supper. The new statement of belief that ‘we receive the divine grace and forgiveness of sins offered in this sacrament with the joyful offering of ourselves in thankful service to the Lord.’ These words directly conflict with the most basic of Lutheran teaching, the Small Catechism. There it says, ‘whoever believes these words, “given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins” has exactly what they say, forgiveness of sins.’ But this new statement of belief in the *Concordat* is false teaching because it takes away the free gift of the Lord's Supper and turns it into a transaction. Unless we offer ourselves joyfully and thankfully we do not receive grace or forgiveness. The Lord's Table then becomes a marketplace, value given for value received. I would like the chair to put on the screen both statements so that the assembly can see how they contradict one another. This church cannot adopt the *Concordat* unless we first amend Chapter 2 of our constitution. Therefore, this assembly should forget the *Concordat* and simply declare that we are in full communion with The Episcopal Church.”

Vice President Magnus responded that it was not possible to get that material on the screen without providing the technicians with the texts being called for.

Mr. Ken A. Grant [North/West Lower Michigan Synod] spoke in favor of the *Concordat* saying, “First, the proposal is consistent with historical tradition, especially as highlighted by Philipp Melancthon's understanding that justification by grace through faith is the central doctrinal understanding of the faith and therefore those issues not related to justification are not a necessity to the salvation of the faithful. The historic episcopate is such an issue. By taking such a small step toward The Episcopal Church that we can take, can be used as a sign of unity. It does not effect the good order of the preaching of the Word and the administration of the Sacraments, the very ways in which we understand and are filled with such grace. This proposal does not compromise our confessions, but in fact gives us the opportunity to renew our understanding of the confessions as we share them with the brothers and sisters in The Episcopal Church. We are strengthened by such leadership and our confessions will be given a new audience to hear our heritage of grace. Second, this *Concordat* is a witness to the rest of the world who will see that we are so sure of our own understanding of our confessional heritage that we are able to open our arms to The Episcopal Church. In doing so, we say to the world that we will lead the Reformation Churches into the next century. To those who look to this church for a sign of unity and hope in a society that can be seen as tearing itself apart, a resounding yes to this proposal will signal that we have taken the lead and not just in words but in our deeds as well.”

Mr. Neil Johnson [Northwestern Minnesota Synod] said, “If the *Concordat* was a contract that I was reviewing for a client of my law firm I would have some serious concerns as follows. First, agreements need to use clear, unambiguous language that states exactly what is intended. It causes me serious concern when during the open hearings I heard one of the drafters state that if he had to do it over again, he would use different words and terms. I have heard too much explanation that the intention and meaning is other than the words actually used. Second, I think the obligations, requirements, prohibitions, and responsibilities must be specified clearly. This agreement appears to require future actions, impose obligations and requirements upon the ELCA that are unspecified, the consequences we cannot prudently evaluate. The simple fact of the matter is, what matters is what is black and white on paper. That is what will control the parties to this agreement in the future, not the explanations that we hear now.”

The Rev. Robert L. Munneke [Northeastern Minnesota Synod] commented, “I have been thinking about my sister-in-law who is a senior warden in her Episcopal church. It is interesting to hear her talk about her bishop. She holds her bishop with tremendous respect, but sees her bishop as one who helps empower her to do her ministry as a lay person. The priesthood of believers need folks who can help empower and guide. I think our bishops need to have a strong role. I think it is a misplaced correlation to say that because the way The Episcopal Church's bishops operate that their work of overseas missions is going downhill. That would be like saying that the ELCA does not have as many overseas missionaries as we did some years ago because we no longer offer worship services in Swedish. Things have

become more complex than that. I do not think the Lord cares all that much whether we have a three-fold ministry or a ten-fold or a fifteen-fold—whatever works. We have ordained people right now doing all kinds of tasks in addition to that of parish pastors. We have ordained people who are teachers, administrators, counselors, social workers, CEOs, and rightly so. In essence, we have about a fifteen-fold ministry now and that works well. When I was ordained 36 years ago, I made a promise—signed the book—that I would try to help to faithfully proclaim the Gospel in accordance with the confessions. I feel that I can still do that and will try to do that. I think the *Concordat* does not violate that for me in any way.”

Ms. Margery Wolf [Pacifica Synod] observed, “Although I live in Southern California right now, I originally came from the Midwest so perhaps this is a result of my Midwestern upbringing, or perhaps it is a result of my 100 percent stubborn German heritage, but I have found that any time someone tries to prod me into an action with the whip of guilt I tend to be more like the Missouri mule and put on my brakes and do either nothing or exactly the opposite. I have been told to my face that a vote against the *Concordat* is a vote to kill the entire ecumenical movement, a movement that the ELCA has been striving towards for many years. I do not see that I or anyone else who votes against this particular suggestion is voting to kill the ecumenical movement. I believe that we are voting to find a way to continue the ecumenical movement in a clearer way that is more satisfying and less divisive than the one we have before us. I also, with due respect to everyone who has spoken in favor of the *Concordat*, have the definite feeling that a vote against the *Concordat* is automatically [considered] a vote against the word of our Lord Jesus Christ and against the printed word of the Bible. That gives me great cause for being disturbed because that is questioning my faith in Jesus Christ and it is questioning my loyalty to my church and the printed word of the Bible. I do not appreciate the prodding of guilt and it has been my experience in my already-long life that anyone who has to resort to guilt to get his view or her view in action, those people have a very weak case in truth, in facts, and in fidelity. I for one will not bow under this whip of guilt. I will vote my heart and the way the good Lord leads me and I hope the rest of you will do the same.”

The Rev. William L. Hurst Jr. [Metropolitan New York Synod] commented, “I believe there is a practical implication that looms over these proposals. This is really a question not a statement that I would like to hear addressed about the orderly exchange provision of the one proposal and the interchangeability of ministers proposal. On what basis interchangeability? Is it to be academic, one M.Div. as good as another M.Div.; one seminary’s program considered academically equivalent to the other? Is it going to be tutorial? One denomination’s candidacy committee process as valid as the other? Or, is it to be confessional, what do you believe and teach and confess? I think it is a time of real risk and perhaps of real opportunity. The risk is, I believe, that we will opt for some lowest common denominator process around either an academic set of structures or judicatorial ones. The opportunity might be that we reroute our

processes whether under these agreements or apart from them. The only baseline that really matters for providing leadership to equip the saints for ministry in the world: What do you confess to be the apostolic faith if you would pastor or lead the people of God in mission and ministry?”

The Rev. Bradley C. Jenson [Northeastern Minnesota Synod], observing the long lines at the microphones, said, “This is my third national assembly and never in my experience of three assemblies have I seen more people gathered or a house more divided than we are divided on the *Concordat*. I ask you this question, is it necessary to divide the Lutheran Church in order to promote ecumenical unity. I do not believe it is necessary. I think we need to get beyond the *Concordat* and focus on a third alternative. Still, I believe, in the minds of the voting members here in this assembly it is seen as an either/or and there is no third alternative. I am impressed by the work of Dr. Darrell Jodock who put before us this morning an alternative resolution that can accomplish almost everything that the *Concordat* could accomplish without dividing Lutheranism in the ELCA. I will read this for you. ‘This resolution affirms The Episcopal Church as a member with us in the one holy catholic and apostolic church and embraces the members of The Episcopal Church as brothers and sisters with us in the faith, and affirms and continues the 1992 Lutheran-Episcopal agreement for intereucharistic sharing, recognizing the validity of the Sacraments of Baptism and Communion in The Episcopal Church, and welcomes members of The Episcopal Church to our altars; recognizes the validity of the ordained ministry as presently existing within The Episcopal Church and encourages the use of each other’s clergy as mission needs call for in accordance with appropriate procedures within each church; commits itself through the appropriate churchwide agencies, synods, and congregations to joint mission planning with The Episcopal Church and invites The Episcopal Church to continue in dialogue and consultation with us toward the development of ecumenical actions supported by a strong consensus in each church.’ Good friends, this alternative is very simple but it accomplishes almost everything that the *Concordat* could accomplish for us and it will not divide the Lutheran house. I urge you to consider this third alternative.”

Bishop Steven L. Ullestad [Northeastern Iowa Synod] stated, “My roots are in the Hauge Synod and I received my theological education in a Lutheran seminary, so I feel that the issues around the priesthood of all believers and the ministry of the baptized has been something that has been very much a part of my life and my education. That is why I am a little bit concerned about the representation of what The Episcopal Church believes on that issue as well as what was referred to in The Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope. That treatise was written against those bishops who were evil bishops, bishops who were refusing to ordain and so the Lutherans determined that in that emergency situation, we needed to clarify that the authority to ordain rests with the whole Church not with the bishops, and it does not rest with pastors either. So if we would read this as if somehow the treatise locates the authority to ordain with pastors, that would not be an accurate reading.

It is grounded in our understanding in Article V [of the Augsburg Confession], that the office of ministry is given to the whole Church and at this point we are in complete agreement with The Episcopal Church, and that is why there are so few references and such short sentences about the priesthood of believers within the *Concordat* itself.” Bishop Ullestad referred the assembly to the booklet, “Ecumenical Proposals: Documents for Action by the 1997 Churchwide Assembly,” page 8, second column, second paragraph and Section IV, page 56, third paragraph in the *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*. He quoted, “We believe that all members of this church are called to participate in the apostolic mission. They are therefore given various ministries by the Holy Spirit. Within the community of the Church the ordained ministry exists to serve the ministry of the whole people of God.” He then said, “Then, of course, the note that clarifies that ‘we hold the ordained ministry of Word and Sacrament to be a gift of God to his Church and therefore an office of divine institution,’ Article V. On this point, The Episcopal Church and the Lutheran Church are in complete agreement that the ministry is located with the Church, not with bishops, not with popes, not with pastors. But it is the Church that then gives that authority to ordain, in our case, to bishops and again the Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope clearly states that the one distinction between pastors and bishops is that bishops are called to ordain unless they refuse to ordain faithfully. We were reminded of this by Archbishop [George] Carey of Canterbury when he addressed the Joint House of Bishops and Conference of Bishops meeting. He accurately represented the Episcopal ecclesiology at this point, for which I am sure we are all grateful, but many of us perhaps were not as clear about it prior to his remarks. For Episcopalians, the ministry of Christ is given to the whole church. The laity is the foundational order of ministry from which all other ministries flow. We are in complete agreement on this.”

Ms. Marsha A. L. Thomas [Northwest Washington Synod] said, “I would like to echo the words of both Marge Wold and one of the earlier speakers in the following appeal. There have been many documents in our hands regarding this proposal including some which are insulting or patronizing or threatening. These have come from the fringes representing both sides of this document. I appeal to the assembly to look beyond these writings and statements and focus on the issues of the *Concordat* itself. As we are doing here in this discussion, focus on how this will address us as a future church, will meet or will not meet our needs moving forward in the 21st century, will shape our identity regardless of the way the vote is ultimately decided. Let us leave the trivial at the door and look instead at whether or not this particular proposal is what we believe the Holy Spirit calls us to as a church.”

The Rev. Russell L. Meyer [Florida-Bahamas Synod] commented, “We heard very passionately from two very gifted speakers and we are blessed from them. [They spoke about] the two basic perspectives that are in our church today and we should be blessed that they spoke it so clearly and so well because that is the choice before us. The one speaks of a vision of being divided from the one holy catholic

church in the 16th century and is saying, to put it simply, ‘So what? We will now go on our own way.’ The other speaks of a wound that must be healed, if not today sometime soon—a wound that was inflicted upon us and that our governing documents, and our confessions speak of. What we have to vote on today is something that the ecumenical community in this country is watching right now. How we vote will, in a large part, be a vote for the ecumenical movement in this country. Because the question that is being put before us is, are we able to accept a healing of something that was taken away from us a long time ago. Yes, it will bring some change upon us. Every year will bring change upon us. But are we able to accept something that was taken away so that we might be included back again in that sign of unity which the Church has had since it found the Nicene Creed. We say that creed every week but we lack that sign that was given as a sign of unity among the churches. We have a choice that we will make and if we say no to the *Concordat*, we will be saying no to all of those ecumenical partners—we will be saying do not try, do not even try, do not send a generation of your best scholars and theologians to try to work out differences because when it comes right down to it, no church wants to take upon itself a change. We will remain in stand-off. Or we can vote yes and we can say with gratitude to the Episcopalians that you have so graciously returned to us something that was removed from us and you have done it in a way which will allow us to keep our order of ministry and our self-understanding and without threatening us. And you are willing to walk with us as we make the changes that we both will require and you will take the change upon you to make sure the Gospel is at the center of that sign of unity, the office of bishop.”

Ms. Shai Celeste [Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod] recalled, “Fourteen years ago when I was baptized as an adult after having been a Muslim all my life, it was through an epiphany. I became a Christian by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and by the grace of God alone. I am therefore first always a Christian. As a Christian I live in the hope that one day the entire body of Christ will be united. However, when I chose just a few years ago to become a Lutheran it was a decision I made based on my fervent belief not only in the ministry of the laity as the *Concordat* calls it, but in the priesthood of all believers—a priesthood of which I am a member, (praise be to God who is the author of my faith), and a priesthood which I believe will be seriously compromised due to a hierarchical system which elevates the office of bishop. My second brief point is that if a synod in assembly in this great Evangelical Lutheran Church in America exercises its sacred and holy privilege to vote a seated bishop out of office, the provisions in the *Concordat* which establishes the lifelong office for bishops and lifetime voice in the Conference of Bishops, I am convinced, will certainly diminish both the role and the efficacy of that vote.”

Ms. Julie A. Silvius [New Jersey Synod] said, “Sisters and brothers in Christ, I rise in favor of entering into full communion with The Episcopal Church. As we, the voting members of this assembly, shape the direction of our church we must be aware of from where we come. Last week I was blessed to see a service led by

children who had participated in a Vacation Bible School in a congregation in my synod. A group of children ages two through twelve were telling in their way what they had learned in Vacation Bible School, what we as a church had taught them. Their voices rang out in song with these words, 'I am the Church, you are the Church, we are the Church together, all who follow Jesus, all around the world, yes, we are the church together.' Let us remain consistent with the lessons we teach our children and vote in favor of remaining a Church together."

The Rev. Kathryn Vitalis Hoffman [Eastern North Dakota Synod] recalled, "In our opening worship for this assembly, we were asked by Bishop Anderson this compelling question, 'Are we prepared to deal with the unpredictable things that might happen to us if God really answered our prayer and sent that powerful Spirit among us?' With this question in mind, I ask a few more. Could it be that the Holy Spirit that is sent among us is calling us to consider an alternative ecumenical proposal that is mission-driven rather than clergy-ridden? Is it possible that we could overwhelmingly agree on this alternative proposal to strengthen our close relationship with The Episcopal Church? Is it possible that we could adopt these claims: that we affirm The Episcopal Church as a member with us in the one holy catholic and apostolic church; we welcome members of The Episcopal Church to our table with Eucharist sharing; we recognize the validity of their Sacraments of holy baptism and holy communion; and we recognize the validity of their ministry just as it is; we encourage the use of each other's clergy in mission; we invite The Episcopal Church to continue in dialogue and consultation? Another question: can you imagine this alternative as the springboard to our mission and ministry with our sisters and brothers in The Episcopal Church? Finally, is it possible—now I may be dreaming here—but is it possible that the media will capture this spirit of unity with headlines like these: ELCA Overwhelmingly Adopts Alternative Ecumenical Proposal; Lutheran Affirms, Recognizes, Welcomes, Commits, Invites. One last thought. When we pray, 'Come, Holy Spirit,' we had better be prepared for the consequences."

The Rev. Susan E. Nagle [New Jersey Synod] raised a concern about "the Study of Ministry and Augustana V that we heard earlier from Dr. Rogness. I value the emphasis in the Study of Ministry on the unitary office and we will continue to have it. But I think the greatest value is the declaration of the study that Augustana V has a more unitary office than we ever imagined and that is that it is not about ordained ministry but about God's ministry to us for justifying faith. I think that is the greatest gift that the Lutheran church has to give to the one holy catholic and apostolic church. As I rear my children, I try to be less concerned and to teach them to be less concerned about the dangerous influence that other people might have on them and teach them how to be a good influence on others. As I have listened to the arguments and the debate and the discussion, I have been listening for a word from these ecumenical partners about the gifts that we have to give to the Church and I have heard it, in fact, from our Episcopalian brothers and sisters, what Lutherans have to give as a gift to us, I heard, and parenthetically beyond the

strength of their confessions, which is no small gift in itself, is their corrective to the hierarchical nature of the episcopate. I think that regardless of what microphone people are standing at, all of us do believe that the Lutherans do have a gift to give to the Church."

Mr. Albert H. Quie [Minneapolis Area Synod] stated, "I will be opposing the adoption of the *Concordat*. We are a very deeply divided church right now because of the *Concordat*. I think this is something that Christians have gone through throughout the ages and I think we have learned something from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. He said if you just love those who love you, you are just like the Gentiles. *Agape* is when people who are at odds with each other can still love each other. So what we need to do is to not look at the person who has a different view than ourselves with contempt, but with love, difficult as it is for a human being. We are divided, I believe, because there are some people in our church who do believe that we need to get back to the historic episcopate. And there are many like myself, who absolutely do not believe in the historic episcopate. Then there are some who could go either way. So this is what we are faced with, are we going now to heal our church or are we more concerned with how the world will look at us if we turn down the *Concordat*? There is an opportunity, I believe, to solve these two problems. One is to go back and talk with The Episcopal Church again and say there is a deep objection to the historic episcopate within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, but the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America will accept you in full communion just the way you are—just accept us the way we are. The second one is, we have reached the point where this document has to have an exegesis now to explain that it means something different than what it says. Can you imagine 20 years, 40 years, or when we start quoting it as we do the Augsburg Confession that you put in an exegesis with it? Can we take the time, as the author of the resolution that would come if we defeat the *Concordat*, to write this thing the way we really believe it ought to be? And also to deal and talk with the Episcopalian brothers and sisters and say, 'Do you understand our dilemma? We need you, we need your help.' Let me just say, what we need to do is like my son when he came to me when he became an adult and he refused to do what I wanted him to do. I remember when I did that to my dad. When I did that to my dad, refused to do what he wanted me to do, I was in fear and trembling that our relationship would cease. But when my son did that to me, I realized how proud my dad was. I had courage enough to say 'no.'"

Vice President Kathy J. Magnus announced that the time for the meeting of the committee of the whole had concluded and returned the chair to Bishop Anderson as the assembly rose from committee of the whole and reconvened in plenary session.

Bishop Anderson commented, "I would say to those disappointed people [who did not have an opportunity to speak] that there is another day. This was limited to

45 minutes and when we next convene we will be able to continue as we have Sunday and Monday. I hope you will have a chance to speak at that time.”

An unidentified voting member asked, “I wonder if it is possible for us to keep the same order in which people have been up here [at microphones] as we begin the discussion tomorrow? These folks have invested a lot of time in waiting to speak, so if we could honor that, I think that would be a helpful courtesy.” Bishop Anderson said that if there was no objection from the assembly, he was willing to entertain the possibility of this being done. The Rev. Franklin D. Fry [New Jersey Synod] said, “I have some difficulty with that because I would guess from the number of people still standing that we could have a four-hour conversation narrowly focused on this point. I am one of those who have something a bit different to speak to and urge. I hope that some of us who did not intrude ourselves in this debate would not be closed out later on.” Bishop Anderson judged, “It is better to seal off this procedure and move to the discussion as a full assembly when we get to the *Concordat* again rather than to try to gel what we have at this point. I apologize to those who did not get to speak but we did the best we could.”

Bishop Richard J. Foss [North Dakota Synod] inquired if the results of the second ballot for vice president would be reported to the assembly during this plenary session. The answer was in the affirmative.

Young Adult and Youth Convocations

Bishop H. George Anderson welcomed the members of the young adult and youth convocations, noting that the presence of the Young Adult Convocation was a direct result of an action taken by the 1995 Churchwide Assembly.

The members of the youth and young adult convocations came to the platform with the song, “I Will Do A New Thing,” the text of which declared: “I will do a new thing in you. Whatever you ask for, whatever you pray for, whatever you long for, nothing shall be denied, says the Lord.” Ms. Rebecca Lawrence, newly elected president of the Lutheran Youth Organization, thanked the assembly on behalf of the young adult and youth convocations for allowing them time to share their vision for the ELCA. She highlighted three visions that youth and young adults have for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America: it should provide a place of safety and belonging; it should provide a place of experience and exploration; and it should be a place for fulfillment of potential. She stated that the voices of youth are powerful and should be heard and that their voices would now be heard in response to Bishop Anderson’s seven initiatives.

Members of the Youth Convocation then delivered their responses to the initiatives and concluded with a challenge: “We, as the youth, are ready and willing to let God do a new thing through us. Are you?” The presentation by the Youth Convocation then closed with song.

Members of the Young Adult Convocation took as their theme the words “I will build a new bridge” from the second verse of the song, “I Will Do A New Thing.” They took note of their status as the first ever Young Adult Convocation on a platform at a Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. They proclaimed their diversity and their unity, and they built their presentation around the image of living on the bridge between youth and adulthood. They offered their gifts of talent and energy to this church, asked adults to “show us God in what you do and who you are,” and reminded the assembly that “we are all children of God.”

The young adults serving as voting members of the assembly were asked to stand and be recognized. They were greeted with applause.

Speakers celebrated the work of the 70 young adults in the convocation and lifted up the challenge to this church of Bishop Anderson’s sixth initiative, “Connect with Youth and Young Adults;” used a rainbow as the symbol of the young adults’ promise for the future; looked forward to the Summit Meeting in 1998 to envision young adult ministry. Another speaker told of how Bishop Anderson’s initiatives and the Young Adult Convocation broke down the barriers of loneliness and separateness and asked this church to reach out to the young adults, “so that together we can build a new bridge.” The Young Adult Convocation exited the platform to the sounds of that verse of their song.

Bishop Anderson thanked the members of the youth and young adult convocations for their participation in the assembly and for their presentations to the assembly.

Elections: Second Ballot for Vice President

Reference: continued on *Minutes*, pages 262, 350, 380, , 546.

Bishop H. George Anderson called upon General Counsel Phillip H. Harris, chair of the Elections Committee, to report on the results of the second ballot for vice president. Mr. Harris announced:

Number of ballots cast	1,013
Number of invalid ballots cast	5
Number of legal (valid) votes cast	1,008
Number of votes necessary for election	760 (75 percent)

Mr. Harris thanked the assembly for its patience with the committee as it worked its way through counting paper ballots. “After this second round, paper ballots will probably not be needed,” he said.

These seven names will appear on the third ballot: *Votes Received*

Butler, Addie	208
Jurisson, Cynthia	126
Sheie, Myrna	112
Bowes, Terry	87
Yandala, Deborah	68
Day, Barbara	58
Bergquist, Lorrie	47

A printed list containing these names along with those of everyone who received votes on the second ballot was distributed and therefore not read by Mr. Harris. The results of the second ballot were as follows:

Name of Nominee	Number of Votes Received	Name of Nominee	Number of Votes Received
Butler, Addie	208	Sieben, Claire	5
Jurisson, Cynthia	126	Litke, John	5
Sheie, Myrna	112	Klever, Mark	5
Bowes, Terry	87	Shealy, Mary Ann W.	4
Yandala, Deborah S.	68	Hurty, Kathleen	3
Day, Barbara	58	Heller, Mary	3
Bergquist, Lorrie	47	Frank, Ira	3
Walker, Loretta	38	Dahlke, Nanette	2
Swanson, Patricia E.	29	Chossek, Aleta	2
Rapp, W. Jeanne	25		
Garber, Judy	22		
Banks, James	18		
Quie, Al	15		
Pate, Sylvia J.	13		
Rehmel, Judy	12		
Byrd, Gwendolyn	12		
Peña, Carlos	11		
Ruthroff, Charles F.	10		
Price, Barbara	9		
Warren, Neva A.	8		
Dietz, Karen	7		
Lohr, Edith	7		
Carr, Gwen	6		

Nellermoe, Barbara H.	2
Hsia, Juliet	2
Hamlett, Leroy	2
Alderfer, William	2
Aarestad, Margaret	2
Prbahaker, Esther K.	1
Peterson, Ralph B.K.	1
O'Rourke, Melissa	1
Remenschneider, Connie	1
Olson, Betty	1
Nybakken, Barbara	1
Melbye, Diane	1
Moncur, Marie	1
Marple, Dorothy	1
Jarsocrak, Lynda	1
Halling, William	1
Carrillo-Cotto, Margaret	1
Silvis, Julie	1
Sinniger, Rosemary	1
Burdick, Twyla	1
Burke, Carol	1
Brakke, Rebecca	1
Butler, Ann	1

Bishop Anderson announced that there was no election on the second ballot. "Overnight, biographical information will be collected on the seven nominees for vice president, and these biographies will be distributed at Plenary Session Five at 10:00 A.M., Sunday, August 17, 1997," he said.

Bishop H. George Anderson announced that he would entertain a motion to extend the closing time of this session by 20 minutes in order to conduct the business of the College Corporation Meetings.

MOVED; *Two-Thirds Vote Required*
SECONDED; *Yes-450; No-227*
DEFEATED: To extend the closing time of this session by 20 minutes.

An unidentified voting member who had voted on the prevailing side of the previous vote moved for reconsideration.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

Yes—503; No—122

CARRIED: To reconsider the previous motion.

MOVED;

Two-Thirds Vote Required

SECONDED;

Yes—491; No—142

CARRIED: To extend the closing time of this session by 20 minutes.

Bishop Anderson then convened the meetings of four Lutheran college corporations.

Recess

Bishop Anderson called to the platform Mr. Charles A. Adamson, a member of the Church Council, to lead the assembly in the hymn, “Blessed Assurance,” and in the closing prayers.

The chair stated that the assembly stood in recess until 10:00 A.M., Sunday, August 17, 1997.

Plenary Session Five

Sunday, August 17, 1997

10:00 A.M.—12:30 P.M.

The Rev. H. George Anderson, presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, called Plenary Session Five to order on Sunday, August 17, 1997, at 10:00 A.M. He thanked the people responsible for the morning’s worship service, especially the Rev. Fred W. Meuser for his sermon, members of the worship staff (the Rev. Paul R. Nelson, Mr. Scott C. Weidler, organist, Ms. Ruth A. Allen, the Rev. Karen M. Ward, Ms. Rhonda Griffith, Ms. Teresa Bowers), and the many volunteers who had worked long and hard on the service. He noted that assembly members might want to take some time to read about the worship space in the Assembly Program, in particular, the work of artist Steven Erspamer of St. Louis, Missouri, that graced the worship space.

Bishop Anderson described the banquet held on Saturday evening, August 14, as “a most delightful evening and I think we all came away grateful for the first ten years and hopeful for the next,” and he expressed special thanks to Lutheran Brotherhood for its support in making the banquet, featuring the storytelling of the Rev. Walter Wangerin, possible.

Bishop Anderson announced that the third ballot for vice president would be cast at 10:40 A.M. The floor debate on the proposal full communion with the Reformed churches would follow that ballot for vice president. At 12:10 P.M. debate would end in order to receive greetings from the bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, the Rev. Telmor G. Sartison.

Reflections on the Assembly Theme

Bishop Anderson invited the Rev. Lowell G. Almen, secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, to again lead in a time of reflection on the assembly theme, “Making Christ Known: Alive in our Heritage and Hope.” Secretary Almen asked, “Did you know that nearly three dozen different languages are used regularly in worship in congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America?” A video was to have been shown at this time but electronic difficulties did not permit that to happen. Secretary Almen suggested that this segment of his reflections should be postponed until a later time.

Report of the Credentials Committee

Secretary Lowell G. Almen reported on behalf of the Credentials Committee that the total number of voting members present as of 9:30 A.M. on Sunday, August 17, 1997, was 1,040 registered on site.

1998-1999 Budget Proposal: First Presentation

Reference: *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section IV, pages 135-180; Section I, pages 15-16; continued on *Minutes*, page 710.

Bishop Anderson called upon the Rev. Stephen M. Youngdahl, a Church Council member and chair of the council's Budget and Finance Committee, for the first presentation of the budget. Pastor Youngdahl announced that debate and action on the budget would take place during Plenary Session Ten, Tuesday, August 19, 1997. Pastor Youngdahl introduced the Rev. Robert N. Bacher, executive for administration, who presented an overview of the proposed budget.

Pastor Bacher noted that this was the fifth churchwide organization budget presented to a Churchwide Assembly and that this church has learned some essentials about budget building and its preparation. Some of these considerations are:

1. Seek a broad consensus on priorities;
2. Allocate resources to all other areas of work based on relative need;
3. Be aware of such fixed costs as assemblies, subsidies, and governance items;
4. Activate all possible sources of income that are consistent with this church's mission and values;
5. Develop strong internal decision-making about the allocation of resources that cut across churchwide units; and
6. Interpret, to tell the story, communicate the need, explain how things are handled, address commonly-held misconceptions about the budget.

He shared what he called "myths" that "do not hold water" about ELCA finances:

1. That the largest source of income for the churchwide budget is designated giving (in truth 83 percent is from undesignated giving);
2. That most of the money is spent on staff (in truth only 24.5 percent goes for staff costs; if missionary personnel is included the amount is 32 percent; and if the mission developers are added the amount is slightly more than 35 percent);

3. That most grants go to ecumenical work (in truth congregations receive the most from grants, followed by global partner churches around the world, and then seminaries);
4. That the churchwide unit with the largest budget is the Division for Church in Society (in truth the Division for Global Mission and the Division for Outreach both receive more); and
5. That between 10 and 20 percent of congregational income goes to support churchwide ministries (the truth is closer to 3.5 percent).

Pastor Bacher asked, "What about the relationships that a budget represents? A budget is nothing but a means to an end. What is the end? What results do we seek? My own work in budget matters takes on meaning and comes alive when I think of the relationships involved. First of all, the relationship to the God whose creative, redeeming, and sanctifying activity in the world brings forth a joyful response including financial giving. . . . A relationship to God's mission in the world is another relationship. In this church we understand that mission in six ways, proclaiming God's saving Gospel, carrying out Christ's Great Commission, serving in response to God's love, worshiping God, nurturing members in the Word of God, and manifesting the unity given in Christ." He continued, "Then there is the relationship with each other. We simply cannot carry out the full sense of mission with a full sense of church by ourselves. . . . Being related to each other in mission calls forth a promise to support each other with prayer, with friendship, and with money. . . . The relationships to God, to mission, to each other, and to our culture are important. It is important that we use these good gifts, received from the hands of a loving God in a wise way."

Greetings: The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod

Bishop Anderson introduced the Rev. Alvin L. Barry, president of The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod, who brought greetings to the assembly. Pastor Barry said that he wanted to share three key thoughts with the assembly:

1. He thanked God for the blessings continually poured out on congregations of these two Lutheran church bodies, for the preaching of the Gospel, and for the powerful comfort of the forgiveness of sins and the promise of eternity in heaven.

2. He expressed the "deep concern" felt by some in The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod over the ecumenical decisions facing this assembly, as well as his own belief that those proposals represent another "unfortunate example of how our two church bodies are continuing to move farther away from one another in terms of our theological understanding and confessional commitments. It would be our feeling that through the adoption of these proposals, you [the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America] would in reality be moving away from

the scriptural and confessional position of historic Lutheranism.” At the same time, he expressed the desire and commitment of The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod “to work with you to address our various theological differences for we do desire closer theological ties with you. We also appreciate the work we share in common in relieving human need and suffering through humanitarian entities such as the Lutheran World Relief and Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service.”

3. He said that God “continues to hold before each of our churches the challenge and the need for us boldly to reach out with the saving Gospel of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ; . . . we must leave no stone unturned . . . so that people everywhere might join us in knowing, believing, rejoicing, and living in the great and glorious saving truths of the Gospel, for it is to this task that we have been called.”

As Pastor Barry departed, Bishop Anderson expressed regret at “the separation that seems to have widened between the two church bodies. I ask of you forgiveness for anything, in word or deed, that I have done to increase that difference because like you I bear in my heart the vision that we can one day be a single vigorous Lutheran voice in this country.”

Elections: Third Ballot for Vice President

Reference: continued on *Minutes*, pages 262, 350, 493, 546.

Bishop Anderson asked the voting members to take their seats for the third ballot for vice president. He read the list of seven nominees, explained the voting procedures, noting that the electronic voting machines would now be used, but that the results would not immediately be shown on the video screen because of the Elections Committee need to calculate the two-thirds majority needed for election. He then led the assembly in prayer. He instructed the voting members to register their votes and then declared the third ballot for vice president to be closed.

The nominees were:

- Addie Butler
- Cynthia Jurisson
- Myrna Sheie
- Terry Bowes
- Deborah Yandala
- Barbara Day
- Lorrie Bergquist

Bishop Anderson called upon General Counsel Phillip H. Harris, chair of the Elections Committee, who reported that there was no election, as no nominee

received the requisite two-thirds majority. He reported that 1,007 votes were cast. The three persons with the highest number of votes would continue to the fourth ballot. The vote totals were:

	<i>Votes Received</i>
Addie Butler	357
Cynthia Jurisson	202
Myrna Sheie	163
Terry Bowes	94
Deborah Yandala	86
Barbara Day	59
Lorrie Bergquist	46

Proposals on Full Communion: Reformed Churches (continued)

Reference: *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section IV, pages 35-48; Section VI, pages 9-11 and pages 21-26; Section V, pages 1-23; continued on *Minutes*, pages 37, 125, 432, 600, 605, 621, 659.

Discussion of the proposal for establishment of full communion between this church and three churches of the Reformed tradition resumed.

Bishop Anderson asked Secretary Almen to read the resolution transmitted to the Churchwide Assembly by the Church Council.

MOVED;

SECONDED: RESOLVED, that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America adopt *A Formula of Agreement* on the basis of *A Common Calling* and declare that it is in full communion with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Reformed Church in America, and the United Church of Christ; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this full-communion agreement will take effect when all four churches act affirmatively on this resolution in accordance with their respective governing procedures; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America appoint representatives to a Lutheran-Reformed Joint Committee, which will coordinate implementation of full communion in the four churches; and be it further

RESOLVED, that Presiding Bishop H. George Anderson present a progress report on the work of the committee to the next Churchwide Assembly (1999).

Bishop Anderson reminded assembly members that under the “Rules of Organization and Procedure” previously adopted no amendments and no substitute motions were permitted. He said, “What is asked of you by our Reformed partners is a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ vote on the proposals. A two-thirds vote is required for passage when we later vote on both proposals.”

Bishop Ralph A. Kempksi [Indiana-Kentucky Synod] asked whether so-called alternative proposals being circulated among voting members truly were alternative possibilities for consideration. Bishop Anderson replied that it would be up to the voting members to determine after discussion on the two documents before the assembly was completed whether or not the alternatives were viable. Bishop Kempksi asked what the status of relationships with partner churches would be if this assembly were to reject the proposals in the language agreed by all partners and voted upon by the partner churches and then this assembly went on to adopt an alternative proposal in language not agreed upon by the partner churches. Bishop Anderson said, “That is a general question for the assembly to consider, not for me to answer.”

Bishop Anderson continued with his directives to the assembly. He said, “We will continue in this discussion until a motion to close debate, that is, moving the previous question, is adopted by the assembly. Then the assembly by its vote on that motion, will determine whether it wishes to continue or close discussion at that point.” He then invited voting members of the assembly to begin discussion.

Bishop Paul E. Spring [Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod] stated that he had changed his mind on *A Formula of Agreement*. He stated that he was now speaking to the *Concordat of Agreement* as well. He commented, “I ask the question, not only what does the past teach us for today, but what does God’s future say to us? . . . It means union and forgiveness—that is our hope.” We have the opportunity to say “yes” to God’s future, as a foretaste of the coming unity, the “messianic banquet” of the Lord, he said.

The Rev. Darrell H. Jodock [Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod] informed the chair and the assembly of his intention to submit alternative motions in the event either of the ecumenical proposals was defeated.

Mr. Richard S. Ylvisaker [Northeastern Iowa Synod] commented, “I speak as a lay . . . [voting member] and that is important for what I want to say. I share some concerns about specific features of these two proposals for full communion. I find others based on exaggerated fears, and in some cases on clear misrepresentation of what is in the documents. I want to raise a different sort of concern—namely the risk involved in affirming both proposals simultaneously, as some supporters of full communion say we must. I agree that at this juncture it probably would be nearly unthinkable to approve one without approving the other; in part because they have been so heavily promoted together. Assume for the sake of argument that we have been able to resolve all of our objections to specific features of the two agreements, each taken separately. Even in that case, how wise would it be to approve the two

together? I say, how wise? It would certainly be a bold move, as the 1991 ecumenism document says. But how wise? Boldness is not a virtue if it is at the expense of wisdom. This question can arise at more than one level. We can, for example, worry about the tension between the different concepts of ordained ministry that inform the two agreements. The group of 37 among our synodical bishops, who insist that the two agreements must be approved together or not at all, consider this what they call ‘a wonderful tension.’ But their reason for seeing it this way is not reassuring. In their statement of June 29 [1997] they make the case this way, ‘that we can be in relationships of full communion with the Presbyterians and Episcopalians at the same time simply maintains that we are not bound to a form of ministry prescribed by either church. Because the Lutheran confessions allow us to stand in that ecumenical tension, we are no more bound to allegiance to the historical episcopate than we are committed to a congregational polity of church government such as in the UCC.’ How wonderful can this tension be if it has to be defended with a limping analogy that effectively removes from the *Concordat* one of its central features? I have a deeper concern, one that has been growing the more and more I pondered these proposals and has nothing to do with anyone’s problematic reasoning. This position is bound up with my position as a lay person in this church. How likely are we to be able to implement these two agreements simultaneously so that they can take root?”

The Rev. Mark A. Graham [Virginia Synod] stated, “I need to confess to you this morning that I have forgotten to trust. If the vote on the *Formula* had been taken yesterday I probably would have voted ‘no’ on one if not both. . . . I think the Holy Spirit has finally gotten to my heart to help me to remember to trust. I confess that I had forgotten that I can trust my presiding bishop, George Anderson. . . . I know him to love Jesus Christ more than anyone or anything else—the man taught Lutheran confessions and probably has read them in the original languages. If Bishop Anderson, who loves Jesus and knows the Lutheran confessions, says these are good measures with which we need to go, I need to trust him. . . . I have forgotten that I can trust Christians outside the Lutheran confession. When I hear Pastor John Thomas of the UCC confess Jesus Christ, and saying that they baptize in the Trinity and lift up the cross, the salvation of the world, I have to trust that, in spite of some troubles I might have at the local scene. I also have some troubles at local Lutheran scenes. I need to trust other Christians and I had forgotten that. Most especially, I confess to you that I had forgotten until this moment to trust Jesus Christ.” He concluded his remarks by saying, “I do not know what our youth will encounter 50 years from now, but I know and trust the Lord will see them through. I pray and I urge you . . . to remember that you can trust one another. Most especially, we can trust the Lord Jesus Christ and I believe the Holy Spirit calls us to remember that.”

The Rev. Franklin D. Fry [New Jersey Synod] said, “There has been great passion about both these proposals in presentations to this assembly. I would want you to know that I speak with just as much passion in the concern I have which is,

bluntly speaking, either we are to approve both or disapprove both. The most important day of my life was April 15, 1928, when by the grace of God and the work of the Spirit I was buried and raised with our Lord Jesus Christ, for nearly 70 years later—after 45 years in the pastorate of this church and extensive ecumenical activity, locally, nationally, internationally—I have learned two things: to be exceedingly grateful that I have been placed within the Lutheran tradition and witness in the Church catholic. Secondly, to become aware, more and more, of the enrichment that has been provided for me by the close relationships we have been able to begin to develop with two major families of that Christian Church; enriched, for example, by relations with the Reformed churches with their much greater sensitivity and audacity and clarity about political activism and social activism, somewhat of a corrective of Lutheran pietism. But I did not become a Presbyterian because of that gratitude. Grateful for the tradition of worship and the sense of the Church in the Episcopal tradition; that has enriched me in the other direction. But I have not become an Episcopalian. I am a Christian in the Lutheran tradition and I fear more than anything else that we approve reaching out with one partner and flatly reject the other. To do so would have three effects: it would cast our church to one side and probably lead to a generation of division from the other; it would divide the Church if we say ‘yes’ to either and ‘no’ to the other; and I believe it is important that we adopt both or disapprove both, recognizing if we do a vote we have tempered the relationship and the commitment on both sides by being able to point to the other side.”

The Rev. John H. P. Reumann [Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod] noted, “Yesterday I spoke to the basic principle in the Reformed proposal of complementarity and dangers with it. There is another form of complementarity that by approving both the *Formula of Agreement* and the *Concordat* we have done things that complement each other—as if one step to the right and one step to the left will keep the *status quo*. Since I take ecumenical agreements very seriously, I have to say both will bring change. I have argued that the one will bring relativized doctrine and the other the historic episcopate. I want to look two or three steps down the road. The United Church of Christ, we learned in one of the hearings, is in full communion with the Disciples of Christ, another American denomination which, however, does not practice infant baptism though it has a weekly Lord’s Supper. Whether it is a sacramental view of the Table is another matter. One can think about clergy interchange and questions already being raised by persons of the . . . Evangelical Reformed heritage, in the UCC in Pennsylvania. Finally, things equal to the same things are not equal to each other. The two bodies that would be in full communion with the ELCA will not be in full communion with each other. Will this mean an Episcopal-Presbyterian dialogue on episcopacy which the ELCA would broker, committed to a three-fold historic episcopate? I take very seriously in the *Concordat* Section III, paragraph one, that second sentence so difficult to parse. The answer to that probably is, ‘You would not need a dialogue, it has already been done in the Churches of Christ United [COCU].’ In the judgement of

many the ELCA would inevitably become involved in COCU. I know that some Episcopalians regard the *Concordat* as a block to COCU. But I have talked to others who regard it as an inevitable and hoped-for result. Looking down the road then, we must ask, ‘Is this the ecumenism of the future in 2000 or 2002?’ Or in an alternate view, will the last estate be worse than the first? Cultural Protestantism, weakened confessions, and some form of the historic episcopate. In my judgment, the Lutheran heritage has more to offer and is in a better bridge position for a church that is reformed and catholic, especially with Roman Catholics, under our commitment to the Gospel and the freedom of the Gospel.”

Bishop George P. Mocko [Delaware-Maryland Synod] said, “For years I was one who opposed the *Formula*. My own synod was one, with my encouragement, which brought resolutions to this body to oppose it. Like my colleague, [Bishop] Paull Spring, I have changed my mind. Two factors have been involved. First, my experience in raising precisely the kinds of concerns that Dr. Lazareth brought before us in that ecumenical dialogue. The reaction typically and almost across the board was, ‘George, thank you for raising these concerns. We need to hear that and you Lutherans are the only people around who can do it for us. We need you.’ The second reaction that I had which swayed me was when I, in the early years, attempted to bring in [The Lutheran Church—] Missouri Synod representatives with me. The reaction there was, ‘George, do not bring Missouri. All they do is talk, talk, talk, talk, talk, talk, talk, talk, talk and then they walk away.’ I’m afraid if we walk away at this point, we will tar ourselves with that brush. The documents before us are far from perfect, a lot of things need to be worked out, there are a lot of ambiguities in them. But I remind us all that the documents that brought forth the ELCA, out of the merger of The ALC, the LCA, and the AELC, were also imperfect documents with many ambiguities. We are still working some of them out, but I do not think any one of us would want to go back to before, back to LCA, ALC, etc. We have been able to work these out. I think these proposals have great potential. There are things we can work out. If we walk away from it, I fear that not only these particular ecumenical partners but also those with whom we are trying to open conversations—Methodists, Baptists, AME [African Methodist Episcopal]—will also be suspicious of us and say, ‘What’s the use of it, 25 or 30 years you talked with them and then walked away?’ I favor both proposals.”

An unidentified voting member, using a white card, sought clarification regarding his concern “that people might vote one way with the assumption that a substitute will be an appropriate substitute. That’s what I want to speak against.” Following advice from the chair clarifying the voting member’s intent, Bishop Anderson asked him to wait to speak either for or against the motion on the floor having indicated his intent with either a red or green card.

The Rev. Hans O. Andrae [Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod] spoke against adopting *A Formula of Agreement*, saying, “Among those supporting the *Formula* I detect all too often a degree of indifference, maybe even a measure of contempt,

with regard to doctrine, really the truth. Some are saying something like this, ‘Even if we have different beliefs about the presence of Christ in the Lord’s Supper, let us still in love go together in full communion.’ It seems to be a choice—either love or truth. I believe that the celebration of the Lord’s Supper should be one in love and truth. The truth that Jesus tells us should be upheld in love; the truth that is taught in Luther’s Small Catechism; that with the bread and the wine we receive the body and blood of Christ for forgiveness of sin. In the [congregation] where I am serving, we invite people to commune with us with these words that are printed in each bulletin, ‘If you are a member of another Christian congregation, you are welcome to commune with us today as you, with us, believe that with the bread and the wine you receive the body and blood of Christ for forgiveness of sin.’ It is an open invitation but we are upholding the words of Jesus and the words and teaching of our great Lutheran heritage as presented and taught in the *Small Catechism* of Luther. I also tell my parishioners if they desire to commune in any other Christian tradition, whether words of institution are said for the elements and if they receive the bread and the wine in this faith, they may commune elsewhere in Christendom as well. But I desire us to uphold strongly our Lutheran heritage based on the words of Jesus and presented and taught in the Small Catechism.”

The Rev. Joseph Stark III [Indiana-Kentucky Synod] stated, “This year marks my 17th anniversary as a pastor in the ELCA and its predecessor body, the LCA. Although this is my first Churchwide Assembly, I have participated in many synod assemblies. During those 17 years I have heard debates year after year after year—heated debates on abortion, homosexuality, inclusive language. At one time I was very sure about how to deal with those issues, but over the years I have become less and less sure about how to do it—those issues and a host of many others. During that same time I have become more and more sure about one thing—that is what we confess in our *Lutheran Book of Worship* each Sunday, namely, that we are in bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves. And further that we have no hope except in the grace of God through Jesus Christ. That grace calls me to my Lord’s prayer in John’s Gospel to be one as he and the Father are one. The ELCA stands at the threshold of expressing its unity with other Christians in a way that has not been possible before. I urge this assembly not to pass up this opportunity that may not come to us in exactly the same way again and urge adoption of this proposal on full communion.”

The Rev. John D. Larson [New Jersey Synod] said, “I know there are some of us who will vote against this proposal because we do trust God to lead us to a far more active ecumenical life during the coming years. We will not vote against the proposal because we are fearful or because we are self-righteous; but because we do trust God to lead us to a more ecumenical life without the particular definition of full communion that we have with these two proposals. I think it is time that we take some of our anecdotes and apply them to the principles that are related to these proposals. In my home town of Cresskill [New Jersey], I have a wonderful relationship with the UCC pastor who is just a couple of blocks away from our

church. [That pastor] is very helpful for me. I could never be the pastor in her congregation. She could never be the pastor in my congregation. There could be many, many things that we can do together and especially with the temptation of finances and with manipulation of things that we sometimes call mission, the temptation to try to work together in unreasonable ways will not honor her people in their UCC church, and they may not honor our folks at Our Saviour Lutheran in Cresskill either. I believe that among the things that Dr. [William H.] Lazareth suggested yesterday the issues of pastoral exchange are among the most serious problems with the proposal. I also want to suggest to a number of you who may feel like you are wavering in your vote about this Reformed proposal, in case you are against the proposal with the Episcopalians—you may have very different reasons from me—but I suggest that you realize that if you vote with me against the Reformed proposal, there is a greater chance of the proposal with the Episcopalians also not being passed. We do need to consider both of them together even though we also consider them each in their own best interests.”

Bishop Jon S. Enslin [South-Central Synod of Wisconsin] commented, “I am your representative on the Executive Board of the National Council of [the] Churches [of Christ in the U.S.A.] where I interact with all of the denominations in our ecumenical proposal. My concern is that there will be a number of people here who really believe that if indeed we can vote down one or the other proposal, there is an alternative that will resolve our concerns. That is to say, we can tell everybody that we want to be in relationship with them, that we can declare that, and that will resolve the issue. I was trying to figure out how to help you understand that that will not work and this is going to be very bizarre. . . . I want you for a moment to think of that person with whom you are most romantically committed. Then I want you to picture that person as me. And I want you to imagine that our relationship is such that we have gone through trials and tribulations, marital counseling, and we are before the altar. The pastor says to you, ‘Do you want to relate to this person as your significant other—contemporary service?’ and you say, ‘Yes.’ . . . And then the pastor turns to me and says, ‘Do you want to relate to this person as your significant other?’ and I say, ‘I can’t handle that.’ And then I turn to you and say, ‘I love you very much. I really want to be in relationship to you. I care about you. Let’s cut through all this structural stuff and do it.’ Now that’s not a perfect parallel but it is close. We’ve had 32 years of counseling together, the votes have been taken in other places, and we really have to say ‘yes’ or ‘no.’ The votes have been overwhelming in other places—the closest vote was 800 to 30 I believe. That’s a pretty strong affirmation and if we come in with another proposal, it will not be received positively—it will be seen as ‘no.’”

Mr. Robert A. Ubbelohde [president of Suomi College, Hancock, Michigan] spoke as a member of the Churchwide Assembly with voice but no vote. He said, “I grew up in the Evangelical and Reformed Church and came to the ELCA after it [the E&R Church] merged into the United Church of Christ. Today I am puzzled because we have put a substantive question, I think in many ways, to the United

Church of Christ, ‘Are you a confessional church?’ I understand that to mean that I believe in God, the Creator; Christ, as my Savior; and the presence of the Holy Spirit. In response to our substantive question, we have received a procedural, a process answer, ‘Our polity does not allow us to answer that question affirmatively.’ In my simplistic logic, that means and my understanding is, that the United Church of Christ as a body cannot claim to be a confessional church. I would hope that you would join me in rejecting at this time *A Formula of Agreement* and urge continual prayer and discussion with the United Church of Christ and the other Reformed bodies.”

The Rev. Maria E. Erling [New England Synod] said, “I have been working in ecumenical work for about 12 years and been on dialogue teams. I want to talk about how important and how precious ecumenical language is, especially these documents that we have before us. It is not language like other language. It is the language that is the property of two partners who write it together. I want to speak in favor of *A Formula of Agreement* and also the other ecumenical proposal, the *Concordat*, as being the fruit of ecumenical dialogue and a proposal that belongs to all of our communions. It is not possible for us to behave unilaterally and to be ecumenical. I want to say how difficult it was for me at first to understand what ecumenical language was, but how much I grew to appreciate it and how it is designed so that both partners can find themselves in the text. It is not like our confessional language where we only find one side or another. We need to find room in it. It is very carefully drafted and crafted so that when I read it I can find myself in it and so that when my Episcopalian or my Presbyterian sisters or brothers read that text, they also can find some familiar things and some other things that make them grow. Finally, I want to talk about what these commitments we make will do. They commit us to further relationship and talking together. The text is beautiful in *A Formula of Agreement*. It says [these churches] are binding themselves to far more than merely a formal action; they are entering into a relationship with gifts and changes for all. They are going to be accountable to each other. We cannot invent new language and unilaterally propose it to them and say, ‘this is our alternative.’ We must be committed to the fruit of our ecumenical work. In the *Concordat* we have the same kind of language that says, ‘Each church promises to issue no official commentary on this text that has not been approved by the Joint Commission as a legitimate interpretation thereof’—protection that says that we are in an ecumenical relationship and the language that we need to use when we speak to each other is shared language.”

The Rev. Paul N. Hanson [South Dakota Synod] argued, “It has been suggested to this assembly that we would do well to adopt both *A Formula of Agreement* and the *Concordat* to balance one against the other, to temper the one against the other. The argument goes that full communion with the Reformed churches would prove that full communion with The Episcopal Church does not mean that we would lock ourselves into that hierarchical structure. I rise to speak against that. The logic makes me think of a song about an old woman who swallowed a bird, she

swallowed the bird to catch the spider which she swallowed to catch the fly—but I do not know why she swallowed the fly. She swallowed one thing to fix something else that she had swallowed. We do not have to do that. It would be a bad idea. It was obvious yesterday that many, many of us do not want to swallow a hierarchical form of ministry. Passing the *Formula* would not make the other document [the *Concordat*] more palatable.”

Mr. Ken A. Grant [North/West Lower Michigan Synod] said, “I speak strongly for *A Formula of Agreement* for two reasons. I do so for the basic understanding that we are agreeing upon this document on its own merits. I think we get ourselves into trouble if we vote against this document as a safeguard for voting against the other one. This document presents us with the wonderful opportunity to say to Christians around the world that we are extending our hands in partnership with other Reformed churches, churches that share our same heritage from the 16th century reformation that we began the journey with. These are not ideas and concepts and partners that are unknown to us. These are people who have walked with us, spoken with us, prayed with us for not just 30 years but for centuries. We have the historic opportunity to say to them, ‘yes, we believe in your ministry and we understand our differences, but even so we walk forward together.’ How important that has to be for a world that looks at the Church and says, ‘All they do is rip themselves apart.’ We are Christians first and foremost. Luther, himself, did not like the title Lutheran. He was committed to reforming the Church as it stands—and so are we. We have the opportunity to say to the Christians of the Reformed tradition, ‘we will walk with you, we will speak with you, we will pray with you, we will be at Table with you, we will have the opportunity to teach one another.’ This is an opportunity we cannot miss, we cannot bypass it thinking that there might be a better one along the way. This is a good document, one that is worth our time and our effort and our prayers. We have the opportunity today in this assembly to move forward, and not just to move forward with what we can say, but move forward with what we will do now and in the future with our partners of the Reformed tradition.”

Bishop Guy S. Edmiston [Lower Susquehanna Synod] commented, “I want to be very clear in clarifying the concern that has been raised about other resolutions that might be submitted to this assembly if *A Formula of Agreement* was not adopted. The only ecumenical document that we can address relative to the Reformed churches is *A Formula of Agreement*. It is the only document that comes before us out of joint conversations, joint deliberations, and joint agreements with our Reformed church partners. Any other resolution that would be considered and adopted by this assembly would only be an internal document for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. We have no way of determining the response of our Reformed partners.”

The Rev. Deborah Taylor [Minneapolis Area Synod] said, “First, if after careful, thoughtful, and prayerful consideration, I was in the least bit convinced that

efforts for mission, evangelism, advocacy, and service between local congregations were dependent upon the passage of *A Formula of Agreement*, I would not be standing here with a red card [speaking against the proposal]. My experience has been, and continues to be, that those local efforts do happen. They happen with faith, they happen with creativity, and they happen with mutual support. These mutual efforts have—and do—include the sharing of clergy in our own synod. A rostered Minneapolis Area Synod pastor serves a UCC church. Secondly, I am deeply concerned and disturbed by the implication that we should vote on *A Formula of Agreement* with our primary motivation being our trust in our elected leaders. Bishop Anderson, nobody appreciates more than I the leadership, sensitivity, care, and graceful listening ear which you have provided in your leadership of this church in the past two years. But I am acutely aware that I also stand in the tradition of one who stood at the Diet of Worms and said in clear and unequivocal terms that it is both unsafe and unwise for a Christian to speak against their conscience. That same Martin Luther reminded us that it is the laity of the Church, through the exercise of the priesthood of believers, who are to provide the corrective and the guide even for our bishops and councils. I urge my fellow voting members to make this decision based on their own conscience through the same prayerful and thoughtful dialogue, discourse, and consideration which you have and I have.”

The Rev. J. Howard Mettee [Southeastern Synod] suggested that his “comments can be construed to apply to all three of the documents that we are dealing with [*A Formula of Agreement*, *Concordat of Agreement* and *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*]. In the late 1950s we, with the new hymn book, in the Kyrie began to pray for the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the *churches* of God, and the unity of all. It should not have surprised us when a few years later, John XXIII was elected pope, convened [the Second Vatican Council], and unleashed a flood of ecumenical fervor. Several years later, we adopted a green book for our worship and we understood a new language. We prayed for the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the *Church* of God, and the unity of all. A few years later we should not have been surprised when the ELCA came into being as we prayed that prayer each week. We have been praying that prayer for 40 years and now God seems again to have responded to our prayers. It seems appropriate for us to say thank you for that response. In all of the documents we have an opportunity to trust God, much as I trusted God when this ELCA came into being. I join my comments with those of Bishop Mocko who said that when we formed the ELCA there were a lot of questions among us, but we trusted God to work it through. And 10 years later we celebrate that. Hopefully, 10 years from now we will celebrate this joyful day and the new relationship with our ecumenical brothers and sisters.”

Mr. Charles R. (“Pete”) Gross [Pacifica Synod] said, “I open with what may sound like a facetious comment but I think it is important. The last time that I heard this sense of urgency ‘Do today or you’ll never have another chance,’ was when a

gentleman was trying to sell me some stock. What we are dealing with here is an issue of man in an effort to fulfill God’s plan. But what we are really talking about here is an organizational structure and to that I speak from 44 years of pragmatic and theoretical experience in organization administration and management. That experience includes being a legislative advocate which I think is particularly applicable to this. This agreement and the *Concordat*, this man-devised organizational structure has, in my experience of similar types in the past, driven a wedge between the operating level and management—in this case we are talking about the laity. It is perceived by many lay people, as it is by myself, that this is a move toward the law and away from what we have historically held as being our position in relation to God. For years you have told me to believe in certain tenets, now you say these tenets are no longer correct. I have heard it intimated that I might be acting out of fear when after I have examined the facts and the realistic consequences of this piece of man-made legislation and find that the proposal is a poor piece of such man-made legislation. Its ambiguity is such that it would not stand a minute in any other type of body. I close by saying that I am shocked that a member of this assembly would intimate that God will abandon his plan for unity if this assembly votes down these human contracts.”

Ms. Carrie Waller [Northern Illinois Synod], a youth voting member of the assembly, commented, “I do not feel that this bridge that I am on as a young adult is the first bridge that I have been on in my life. I lived in a small town in Colorado and I was on a bridge where my friends and my parents were on one side and the Church was on the other. I was a baptized Lutheran, my parents were not members of a church. I had my friends of all denominations pull me aside and say, ‘Hey, Carrie, want to go to church with me this Sunday?’ I went with friends of mine who lived across the street who I went to school with and so on. I feel that I have not become a Presbyterian or I have not become a member of any of the other denominations. In fact it has made me stronger as a Lutheran and I feel that other people I have talked to being involved with LYO and being involved with a lot of youth events and a lot of adult events, that it will pull people together stronger as a Lutheran. I really hope that you would consider what would Jesus do—WWJD.”

The Rev. George Villa [Southern California (West) Synod] stated, “Last Friday I attended three open hearings on the urban initiative, the multicultural mission strategy, and theological education. These three are the priorities for our church because they speak to our function in mission. When I served on the Commission for a New Lutheran Church, one of the prevailing questions was always function over form. Function over form reminds us that as Lutherans we always seem to be talking about the wrong things at the right time. Whether we vote these proposals up or down is not going to make one bit of difference at my local urban multi-ethnic congregation in Los Angeles. These common proposals pertain more to form than to function and I see them more as *adiaphora*. My faithfulness in mission at the local level has nothing to do with whether I am in apostolic succession or any other form that we might choose. My faithfulness in mission at the local level is rooted

in my faithfulness to the Gospel. Function over form is more critical. I would urge that we vote 'yes' on this *adiaphora* stuff, get over it, and get to the mission of the Church."

The Rev. Robert S. Jones [South Dakota Synod] said, "I hope this will be considered a neutral statement. I hope I have time in the three minutes [allowed each speaker] to read the eight points of the policy statement on ecumenism of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America [*Ecumenism: The Vision of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, page 10]. I think it is information that really does pertain to our discussion here and on the *Concordat*." He then read the eight points. "To be ecumenical means to be committed to the oneness to which God calls the world in the saving gift of Jesus Christ. It also means to recognize the brokenness of the Church in history and the call of God, especially in this century, to heal this disunity of Christ's people. By the Holy Spirit, God enlivens the Church to this ministry. In striving to be ecumenical, this church:

1. seeks to manifest the unity that God wills for the Church in a future that is open to God's guidance;
2. seeks to understand and value its past, its history, and its traditions in all their varied richness as gracious gifts of God, which are incomplete themselves as it finally moves toward unity in Christ;
3. contributes and learns, not by attempting to reprimatinate the past, but by moving toward the manifestation of unity in Christ and thus toward other Christians;
4. commits itself to share with others in the worship of the Triune God, to the task of proclaiming the Gospel to all, and to share with others in lifting up its voice and its hands to promote justice, relieve misery, and reconcile the estranged in a suffering world;
5. calls upon its members to repent of ways in which they have contributed to disunity among Christ's people by omission and commission;
6. urges each of its members to pray, both within their own church and with members of other churches, for the unity of the Church to be concerned with new attitudes, to be ready to sacrifice nonessentials, and to take action, including the reception, where possible, of ecumenical agreements all for the unity of the Church;
7. recognizes that the burden of the proof rests with the resistance to unity in spite of agreement in the Gospel; and
8. seeks to express oneness in Christ in diverse models of unity, consistent with the Gospel and the mission of the Church.'

That is what we of the ELCA have committed ourselves to and that is what these resolutions are about."

The Rev. Ross S. Goodman [New England Synod] encouraged the assembly to vote for *A Formula of Agreement* and the *Concordat of Agreement* and said, "[I am] originally from North Dakota and now living in exile in Massachusetts and surrounded by Episcopalians and Congregationalists There is a climate of fear and doubt and suspicion around accepting these agreements. We see in a mirror dimly, now we know in part and only later will we more fully understand. We cannot be completely ready. Every new venture of ministry involves risking the step of faith and I urge the assembly to sin boldly. I have read and studied the agreements and I have to admit that part of me is on the fence about each one. But I am voting in favor because I do trust and respect my most excellent, and possibly infallible, Pastor [Bishop H. George] Anderson, the chief ecumenical officer of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. I am also voting for the agreements because the youth who gathered in New Orleans [at the national LYO gathering] commend them to us . . . by their faith. Finally, I am voting for them for the sake of our witness to the world. If we reject either one, I will return to Boston embarrassed and ashamed to face my Episcopalian and Congregational brothers and sisters and the unbelievers and unchurched around me."

Bishop William B. Trexler [Florida-Bahamas Synod] called the previous question.

MOVED;

Two-Thirds Vote Required

SECONDED;

Yes-822; No-126

CARRIED: To move the previous question.

Bishop Anderson noted that the action to move the previous question ended debate on the proposal for full communion with the Reformed churches. The matter would come before the assembly again at its next stated time on the agenda.

Report of the Memorials Committee (continued)

Reference: *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section VI, Category 27, pages 71-75; continued on *Minutes* pages 139, 490.

Bishop Anderson called upon Ms. Sandra G. Gustavson, chair of the Memorials Committee, who reported that the committee was not ready to bring back the item referred to the committee during Plenary Session Three.

Category 27: Ordination of Openly Gay and Lesbian Persons

A. Sierra Pacific Synod (2A) [1997 Memorial]

WHEREAS, *Vision and Expectations: Ordained Ministers in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, adopted by the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America at its October 1990 meeting, includes the following paragraph in Section III:

Sexual conduct. The expectations of this church regarding the sexual conduct of its ordained ministers are grounded in the understanding that human sexuality is a gift from God and that ordained ministers are to live in such a way as to honor this gift. Ordained ministers are expected to reject sexual promiscuity, the manipulation of others for the purposes of sexual gratification and all attempts of sexual seduction and sexual harassment, including taking physical or emotional advantage of others.

Single ordained ministers are expected to live a chaste life. Married ordained ministers are expected to live in fidelity to their spouse, giving expression to sexual intimacy within a marriage relationship that is mutual, chaste, and faithful. Ordained ministers who are homosexual in self-understanding are expected to abstain from homosexual sexual relationships.

WHEREAS, Luther taught, and the Augsburg Confession, Article 23, affirms that requiring clergy to be celibate is not God's intention for the Church; and

WHEREAS, some research in the physical and psychological sciences offers evidence that homosexuality goes beyond "self-understanding" to the core of the being of an individual; and

WHEREAS, as long as homosexual persons are denied the right to marry, we believe it to be unfair to enforce a standard for their conduct that is based on marital status; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that this [1997 Sierra Pacific Synod] Assembly memorialize the 1997 Churchwide Assembly to remove from *Vision and Expectations: Ordained Ministers in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* the sentence which reads, "Ordained ministers who are homosexual in their self-understanding are expected to abstain from homosexual sexual relationships"; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this assembly direct the Sierra Pacific Synod Council to forward to the Church Council's Executive Committee for proper referral and disposition under the bylaws and continuing resolutions of the Church the proposal that the following sentence be removed from *Vision and Expectations: Ordained Ministers in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*: "Ordained ministers who are homosexual in their self-understanding are expected to abstain from homosexual sexual relationships."

B. Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod (8G) [1996 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the ELCA has been unable to reach a consensually recognized statement on human sexuality and is not likely to have an approved statement in the near future; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA documents which preclude the ordination of openly lesbian and gay candidates for ministry were developed without churchwide debate and without the benefit and guidance of an official church statement on human sexuality; and

WHEREAS, Martin Luther in both the 95 Theses and at the Diet of Worms ("...unless I am convinced by Scripture and clear reason, I cannot recant...") makes it very clear that

we are to use Scripture and good reasoning as norm and standards of our Christian life together; and

WHEREAS, former Bishop Herbert Chilstrom urged the 1995 Churchwide Assembly to refer to Acts 15 and the actions of the Council of Jerusalem and its decision, inspired by the Gospel and good reasoning, to open church membership to the uncircumcised; and

WHEREAS, Presiding Bishop George Anderson and Conference of Bishops Chair Charles Maahs, in their March 1996 "Open Letter from the Bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America," quoted affirmatively the 1991 and 1995 Churchwide Assembly declarations that "gay and lesbian people, as individuals created by God, are welcome to participate fully in the life of the congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America"; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod memorialize the Churchwide Assembly to use the Gospel and good reasoning to fulfill the promise of full participation in the church, by removing all written impediments in ELCA documents to the ordination of otherwise qualified openly gay and lesbian candidates who are committed to lifelong, faithful relationships.

C. Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod (8G) [1997 Memorial]

WHEREAS, *Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline of Ordain Ministers*, approved in its present form by the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America at its December 1993 meeting, includes the following paragraph in b.4):

"Sexual Matters. The biblical understanding which this church affirms is that the normative setting for sexual intercourse is marriage. In keeping with this understanding, chastity before marriage and fidelity within marriage are the norm. Adultery, promiscuity, the sexual abuse of another, or the misuse of counseling relationships for sexual favors constitute conduct that is incompatible with the character of the ministerial office.

Practicing homosexual persons are precluded from the ordained ministry of this church"; and

WHEREAS, *Visions and Expectations: Ordained Ministers in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, adopted by the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America at its October 1990 meeting, includes the following paragraph in Section III, The Ordained Minister as Person and Example:

"Sexual conduct. The expectations of this church regarding the sexual conduct of its ordained ministers are grounded in the understanding that human sexuality is a gift from God and that ordained ministers are to live in such a way as to honor this gift. Ordained ministers are expected to reject sexual promiscuity, the attempts of sexual seduction and sexual harassment, including taking physical or emotional advantage of others. Single ordained ministers are expected to live a chaste life. Married ordained ministers are expected to live in fidelity to their spouses, giving expression to sexual intimacy within a marriage relationship that is mutual, chaste, and faithful. Ordained ministers who are homosexual in their self-understanding are expected to abstain from homosexual relationships"; and

WHEREAS, Luther taught and the Augsburg Confession, Article XXIII affirms that requiring clergy to be celibate is not God's intention for the church; and

WHEREAS, some research in physical and psychological sciences offers evidence that homosexuality goes beyond "self-understanding" to the core of the being of an individual; and

WHEREAS, as long as homosexual persons are denied the right to marry, we believe it to be unfair to enforce a standard for their conduct that is based upon marital status; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that this assembly memorialize the 1997 Churchwide Assembly to remove from *Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline* the sentence which reads, "Practicing homosexual persons are precluded from the ordained ministry of this church."; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this assembly also memorialize the 1997 Churchwide Assembly to remove from *Visions and Expectations: Ordained Ministers in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* the sentence which reads, "Ordained ministers who are homosexual in their self-understanding are expected to abstain from homosexual sexual relationships."; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this assembly memorialize the 1997 Churchwide Assembly to instruct that the necessary changes to the ELCA constitution, bylaws, and other governing documents be made to support and effect these changes.

BACKGROUND

The following information prepared by the Division for Ministry provides information that will assist members of the Churchwide Assembly to respond to the memorials of the Sierra Pacific Synod and the Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod:

1. *Vision and Expectations: Ordained Ministers in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline of Ordained Ministers: Their Use and Relationship.*

The document *Vision and Expectations: Ordained Ministers in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* was adopted by the ELCA Church Council at its October 1990 meeting, "as a statement of this church;" the council authorized its distribution to the congregations, ordained ministers, candidacy committees, and seminaries of this church. The purpose of this document is "to express the high value and importance that the ordained ministry of Word and Sacrament has in the life of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America" (*Vision and Expectations*, page 3).

Vision and Expectations followed the document *Definition and Guidelines for Discipline of Ordained Ministers*, which was adopted by the Church Council on November 19, 1989. The purpose of this document is to "describe the grounds for which ordained ministers may be subject to discipline according to the practice of

this church" (page 3). Both *Vision and Expectations* and *Definition and Guidelines* deal with a wide range of matters related to rostered persons and this church's expectation of them.

The relationship and sequence of these two documents are important. *Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline of Ordained Ministers* was adopted one year prior to *Vision and Expectations* and states that "practicing homosexual persons are precluded from the ordained ministry of this church" (page 4). In the *Vision and Expectations* document, the sentence related to homosexual persons states: "Ordained ministers who are homosexual in their self-understanding are expected to abstain from homosexual sexual relationships." This sentence was recommended for inclusion by the Conference of Bishops so that the language of the latter document would be consistent with the language of the former.

It is the responsibility of the Division for Ministry to "develop, in consultation with the Conference of Bishops, ecclesiastical standards for the admission of persons to and continuation of persons on the rosters" of ordained ministers, associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers (*Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions* 16.11.B95.1). Any change to the text of *Vision and Expectations* would be the responsibility of the Division for Ministry, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council. Similarly, the Committee on Appeals has the responsibility to "establish definitions and guidelines, subject to approval by the Church Council, to enable clear and uniform application of the grounds for discipline" (20.71.11.).

Vision and Expectations is used by candidacy committees of this church to indicate what the expectations of this church are related to ordained ministry so that candidates understand what is expected of them when they enter ordained ministry. It is also a statement of the conduct expected while candidates are in the process of preparing for service, in seminary, and in internship. *Definitions and Guidelines* is the basis for disciplinary action of ordained ministers serving within this church. Thus the issue of "openly gay and lesbian persons" serving in the ordained ministry of this church is not only related to *Vision and Expectations* but the standards by which an ordained minister is subject to the disciplinary process of the ELCA (as stated in *Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline*).

2. *Possible Study of the Issue of Ordination Policy Concerning Homosexual Persons*

At its October 1990 meeting, the Church Council took the following action:

"To refer the resolution of the Sierra Pacific Synod Assembly on a possible study of the issue of ordination policy concerning homosexual persons to the Division for Ministry for a recommendation, following consultation with the bishop of this church and the Conference of Bishops, on a process for responding to the Sierra Pacific Synod's request; and to

request that a report from the Division for Ministry be provided at the April 1991 meeting of the Church Council on a proposed process.”

At the April 1991 meeting of the Church Council, a report was received that had been approved by the board of the Division for Ministry, after consultation with the Conference of Bishops and the Office of the Bishop. This report stated that the existing policies of the ELCA (*Vision and Expectations* and *Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline*) clearly preclude the ordination of practicing homosexual persons. The report also indicated that, while study was done in the predecessor bodies of this church related to this issue, this had not been done in the ELCA. It referred to the two studies then under way, the Study of Ministry and the Study of Human Sexuality, and indicated that these would “bear upon the issue of this church’s practice regarding the ordination of homosexual persons.”

The Division for Ministry recommended “that a study of this church’s policy regarding the ordination of homosexual persons be undertaken through the Division for Ministry” following the completion of the two studies of ministry and sexuality.

The Church Council subsequently adopted the following resolution:

“To consider engaging through the Division for Ministry in a study of this church’s policy regarding the ordination of homosexual persons after the reports of the Study of Ministry and the Study of Human Sexuality are completed, and to request that a report be made to the 1995 Churchwide Assembly.”

3. Subsequent Action of the Church Council Related to *Vision and Expectations*

At the November 1995 meeting of the Church Council the following motion was made by a council member:

“To direct the Division for Ministry to review and possibly revise or recommend deletion of the following sections of the policy document, *Vision and Expectations: Ordained Ministers in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, specifically those sentences on page 13 of that document that read, ‘Single ordained ministers are expected to live a chaste life,’ and ‘Ordained ministers who are homosexual in their self-understanding are expected to abstain from homosexual sexual relationships;’ and to direct the Division for Ministry to report on this matter at the April 1996 meeting of the Church Council.”

This motion was defeated.

4. Current Use of the *Vision and Expectations* Document in Candidacy

At the March 1997 meeting of the board of the Division for Ministry, action was taken to adopt the *Guidelines for the Use of Vision and Expectations in the ELCA Candidacy Process*. These guidelines affirmed the use of the document in

both endorsement and approval decisions of candidacy committees and described its use in the new entrance phase of candidacy.

5. Message on Human Sexuality and Social Statement on Human Sexuality

In dealing with the timeline for the possible development of a statement on human sexuality, the Church Council reported to the 1995 Churchwide Assembly that:

“a proposed social statement on human sexuality will not be available for consideration by the 1997 Churchwide Assembly and that any decision related to the scheduling of a possible social statement on human sexuality will not be made until after the 1997 Churchwide Assembly, following further churchwide study and discussion.”

The 1995 Churchwide Assembly took several actions related to the ELCA’s discussion of human sexuality (including the possibility of the development of a social statement on this topic), not all of which were in agreement with each other. At its November 1995 meeting, the Church Council clarified that this church would not revisit the issue of a possible statement on human sexuality until after the 1997 Churchwide Assembly.

Plans to develop a “message of concern,” however, continued. At the November 1996 meeting of the Church Council, the document *Sexuality: Some Common Convictions* was adopted “as a Message of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.” In the discussion, staff of the Division for Church in Society noted that the matter of homosexuality was not addressed in this message because the intent of the document is to comment only on areas of agreement throughout this church on matters related to human sexuality.

6. Process of Moral Deliberation

As part of its response to the actions taken by the 1995 Churchwide Assembly in its discussion of human sexuality, the Church Council affirmed in November 1995:

“That—within the context of and consistent with the response of the bishop of this church and the Conference of Bishops to the request of the 1995 Churchwide Assembly for ‘words of prayer and encouragement’ to gay and lesbian persons—appropriate efforts related to issues of hospitality and justice will be undertaken by staff of the Division for Church in Society.”

The Division for Church in Society prepared a plan for a process for moral deliberation in the ELCA on the subject of homosexuality, beginning in 1997. Several assumptions informed this process. First, there was no intent to connect this deliberative process with the development of ELCA social policy on homosexuality. The learnings and relationships from this deliberative process could

eventually contribute to ELCA policy, but there was no intent to tie together the deliberative process and any future policy development. Second, this process of moral deliberation was to be biblically, theologically, and confessionally informed; insights from the social sciences and personal experience would contribute to this process. Third, the process was to be safe and civil for all involved. Fourth, the process was intended to define terms and provide accurate information to the participants. Fifth, bridge-building among members of the ELCA who hold diverse and sometimes polarized opinions on matters related to homosexuality was a primary concern. Reports describing methods and resources used and any conclusions that the process groups believe merit sharing throughout the church would be made available through the Division for Church in Society.

Based on these assumptions, several “pilot projects” are being carried out in 1997. These models and their deliberative methodologies will be evaluated, and recommendations will be prepared in 1998. The following will be settings for these conversations: the Center for Ethics at Roanoke College in concert with the Virginia Synod (for clergy); the Central States Synod (for congregations); a Faith and Life Form to be held in the western United States (for self-selected laity who attend as interested individuals); Trinity Lutheran Seminary (for faculty and students of colleges and seminaries); and the Commission for Women (conversations with lesbians).

At its March 13-15, 1997, meeting, the board of the Division for Ministry expressed:

“its strong affirmation of the strategies being undertaken by the Division for Church in Society to promote moral deliberation within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America regarding this church’s views and policies on homosexuality; and further, states the commitment of this division, especially because of its responsibility for recommending standards for rostered ministries, to be an active participant in the development and use of models for conversation and continuing moral deliberation on this sensitive and important subject.”

RATIONALE OF THE MEMORIALS COMMITTEE

The Memorials Committee recognizes that the proposed change in practice concerning the ordination of gay and lesbian persons cannot be separated from the wider discussion in this church concerning human sexuality. The committee also acknowledges the concern expressed through these memorials that *Vision and Expectations* and *Definitions and Guidelines* single out a particular behavior, not mentioning specifically others that could be similarly named.

The past discussion of the draft statement on human sexuality, however, revealed the depth of division within this church and the need to continue discussion within the Church on this matter, which touches the lives of so many persons. The activities described above complement local initiatives throughout the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America that are seeking to find new ways to talk about the issue of homosexuality, within the context of this church’s commitment to welcome gay and lesbian persons, to value the gifts they bring to this church, and to stand with them in the protection of their civil rights.

Given this process and lacking a new ELCA social statement on human sexuality, the Memorials Committee does not recommend endorsement of the action called for in the memorials of the Sierra Pacific Synod and Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod.

Ms. Gustavson directed assembly members to *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section VI, pages 71-75: Category 27, Ordination of Openly Gay and Lesbian Persons, which comprised memorials from the Sierra Pacific Synod and Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod. The Memorials Committee offered the following recommendation:

Moved;

Seconded: To acknowledge the concerns that are expressed in the memorials of the Sierra Pacific Synod and the Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod on the ordination of gay and lesbian persons—concerns that are part of the context of this church’s ongoing dialogue related to human sexuality;

To decline to make the changes in church policy and practice requested by these memorials;

To refer these memorials instead to the Division for Ministry as the division carries out its responsibility for recommending standards for rostered ministries and as it participates in the development and use of models for conversation and continuing moral deliberation on this sensitive and important subject;

To affirm the work of the Division for Church in Society as it assists this church to explore models of conversation and continuing moral deliberation that can serve this church in its commitment to continuing dialogue on issues related to human sexuality, including homosexuality; and

To request that a status report on the learnings of these conversations be brought through the Church Council to the 1999 Churchwide Assembly.

Mr. Mark Kremen [Northwest Washington Synod] with reference to the final paragraph of the motion, said, “I think it would be better if we amend that and we take time to say that we will take a stand, whether yea or nay, on that resolution [in 1999] instead of continuing to just talk about it both on a national level and a synodical level.”

The Rev. Hans O. Andrae [Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod] proposed the following amendment:

MOVED;

SECONDED: To retain paragraph 2 of the motion and to strike paragraphs 1, 3, 4, and 5, so that the motion would read, “To decline to make the changes in church policy and practice requested by these memorials.”

Pastor Andrae argued that the “current statements that we have within the ELCA are very fine and valid expressions of our biblical, theological, and confessional faith in what marriage is and human sexuality. . . . I believe that the document, *Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline of Ordained Ministers* from November 1989 and then again—slightly revised—in 1990 as the *Vision and Expectations: Ordained Ministers in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* are valid expressions of what we ought to uphold in our church and are upholding so far.” He concluded that his motion to amend was based on the documents already held by this church.

Bishop Richard N. Jessen [Nebraska Synod] observed that “the recommendation of the Memorials Committee mentions as one of the very important processes taking place in this church now, some pilot projects on moral deliberation. . . . What we are trying to find is a far better way of helping our church to come to grips with controversial matters such as these than taking a yes or no vote at a Churchwide Assembly. We need to develop greater consensus in our church on these matters before we can do this and it is so important that we support these pilot projects on moral deliberation.”

Bishop Robert W. Mattheis [Sierra Pacific Synod] indicated that the Sierra Pacific Synod Assembly supported removal from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America document on ministerial standards a prohibition against homosexuals serving in the ministry in *Vision and Expectations: Ordained Ministers in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*. He commented, “We would like to have

had this assembly act on that resolution and remove that sentence. However, I am willing to go along with the recommendation of the Memorials Committee that this be referred as indicated in their motion. Therefore I speak against the amendment [to the Memorials Committee’s motion] in order that this church might be committed to the conversation and moral deliberation that this referral and this motion calls for.”

The Rev. Frederick J. Schumacher [Metropolitan New York Synod] spoke for the amendment and observed, “As a person committed to Scriptures and a part of the one, holy, and apostolic church, to its history and its particular moral and ethical positions, I believe that ongoing discussion on the issues that are raised in this memorial is just destroying our church. I have in my hand [the message adopted by the Church Council of the ELCA on November 9, 1996], *Sexuality: Some Common Convictions*, and it is a rather sad state for me to tell the congregation that I serve that six pages is all that we can agree on in this church. . . . We should put to rest this ongoing discussion in which something is so strongly affirmed in the Scripture and the traditions of our church.”

Ms. Carole M. Silvoy [Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod] identified herself as an associate in ministry and said, “I too am a member of a catholic and apostolic church and for me, to not discuss this issue in its entirety would be an insult to the committee that brought forth these resolutions and the Memorials Committees from the different synods. I think it is vitally important that we keep this dialogue going.”

Bishop Donald H. Maier [Northwest Washington Synod] called the previous question.

MOVED;

Two-Thirds Vote Required

SECONDED;

Yes-898; No-86

CARRIED: To move the previous question.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

Yes-267; No-706

DEFEATED: To retain paragraph 2 of the motion and to strike paragraphs 1, 3, 4, and 5, so that the motion would read, “To decline to make the changes in church policy and practice requested by these memorials.”

The Rev. Leah K. Schafer [Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod] spoke in favor of the motion by the Memorials Committee and recounted, “For the last five years I have served on our synod’s Reference and Counsel Committee. We have had numerous resolutions come to our committee regarding issues directly or

indirectly related to the issue of homosexuality. Many of those resolutions have asked our church to break or ignore its own rules. Our bishops have called those resolutions out of order. This last synod assembly we brought forward from our Reference and Counsel Committee a resolution that did not ask for the rules to be broken or ignored but to be changed. I am glad that ongoing conversation will happen in this direction.”

The Rev. Franklin D. Fry [New Jersey Synod] proposed the following amendment:

MOVED;

SECONDED: To add “to take action at this assembly,” so that the second paragraph would read: “To decline to take action at this assembly to make the changes in church policy and practice requested by these memorials.”

Pastor Fry stated that he felt this addition to the motion “allows us to be more open to paragraphs three and four and to continuing dialogue.” Chair Gustavson, on behalf of the Memorials Committee, commented that this would be consistent with the intent of the recommendation.

MOVED;

SECONDED; Yes-746; No-224

CARRIED: To add “to take action at this assembly,” so that the second paragraph would read: “To decline to take action at this assembly to make the changes in church policy and practice requested by these memorials.”

Ms. Carole M. Silvoy [Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod] said, “Among the most beautiful gifts in my life are the friends and family who grace my table, grace the music, grace the laughter and the tears of my life. . . . Many of the people who grace my life are homosexual or lesbian, or bisexual, and or transgendered. . . . So many of them are so broken because they have been told for so long that there is something not Christian about who they are and I want to be able to say to them, ‘No, anybody who says those things has not met my God. Come meet my God.’” She said that it was “unfair for us to ask clergy to both not be allowed to have a committed relationship but be celibate. There is no choice there, there is only one, it is a double standard in my point of view. I would hope that we could grow into the kind of church that welcomes all of who people are.”

Mr. Mark Kremen [Northwest Washington Synod] sought to offer wording for a possible amendment to paragraph 5 that this proposal be brought to the 1999

Churchwide Assembly in order to vote on this issue. Bishop Anderson noted that there was no prior reference in the motion for the phrase, “this proposal,” or to a concrete proposal and asked Mr. Kremen to discuss the issue further and to bring back to the assembly a proposal that more clearly matched his intent. Mr. Kremen agreed to Bishop Anderson’s request.

Bishop Anderson announced that discussion on this matter would continue during the next presentation by the Memorials Committee.

Introductions: Bishops of ELCA Predecessor Churches

Observing the orders of the day, Bishop Anderson recognized the Rev. Will L. Herzfeld (Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches), the Rev. Robert J. Marshall and the Rev. James R. Crumley Jr. (Lutheran Church in America), and the Rev. David W. Preus (The American Lutheran Church), former bishops of the predecessor church bodies of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and invited assembly members to welcome them.

Greetings: Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

Bishop H. George Anderson introduced the Rev. Telmor G. Sartison, bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC), who brought greetings to the assembly. Bishop Sartison offered a brief history of the developing relationship with the Anglican [Episcopal] Church in Canada. He said, “In 1989, we came into an arrangement with the Anglican Church in Canada called *Interim Sharing of the Eucharist*. Two things in particular about that interim sharing: 1) people of one church were welcome at the Table of people of the other church; and 2) we agreed that in both denominations there was the clear preaching and teaching of the Gospel. In 1991, we adopted a statement called *Sacramental Practice*. It is much like the statement you are looking at and in it we refer to communion as the meal of the baptized. In 1995, we went back with the Anglicans again and extended our interim sharing. We added three things that were fairly significant: 1) members from one church could transfer into the membership of another without having to be rebaptized or reconfirmed; 2) clergy could be called from the one church into the other; and 3) we also suggested that there be an evaluation process for bishops which was uncomfortable for them but something that we are used to, at least in a way, through our regular elections and we agreed to continue in the pursuit of full communion. This year, 1997, a question was put to us—and the counterpart question is going to the Anglicans next year when they meet—the question is this, ‘Are you prepared to take the constitutional steps necessary to understand the installation of bishops as ordination?’ Two weeks ago, we came to the point of decision on this question. Of about 360-some [voting members] about 10 said ‘no,’ and the rest said ‘yes.’”

Bishop Sartison referred to the national assemblies of both churches as the highest legislative body in each church. He reminded the assembly that as voting members of each of these bodies decide on issues they “make our decisions in the context of our understanding of the Scriptures and our confessions, in the context of our debates, and in the midst of our understanding of the current reality in which we live. . . . Do not get lost in fear and do not be driven by threat or perceived threat [as decisions are made]. Look at the proposals. Is there opportunity there? Is the Holy Spirit calling this church to respond in some radical way, yet not entirely clear, to a new purpose in life?” He said, “As Lutherans, I firmly believe, we have something to give. I know that and I know that we have something to receive.”

Bishop Anderson expressed gratitude to Bishop Sartison for his greeting and, on behalf of the assembly, presented a gift to him as a token of appreciation.

Reflections on the Assembly Theme

Bishop Anderson called upon Secretary Lowell G. Almen who introduced the video presentation postponed from the beginning of this plenary session. Information was provided about the 304 congregations of the ELCA which regularly employ languages other than English and the eight congregations which offer worship in three languages besides English. He said, “The listing of the languages provides a hint of the rich diversity of ethnic heritage and backgrounds found within the congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.”

Greetings

Secretary Lowell G. Almen read a letter of greeting to the assembly from the President of the United States, Mr. William J. Clinton.



THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

August 13, 1997

Warm greetings to all those celebrating the tenth anniversary of the formation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Religion has always played a central role in the lives of our people, and America has stood as a beacon of religious freedom for citizens around the world. Your dedication to this vital tradition has helped to bring strength and hope to our country, and your steadfast devotion to your faith has upheld your congregations and communities in times of both joy and adversity.

As you gather to reaffirm your commitment to the values that have guided the ELCA for the past decade, I salute you for your commitment to creating a society united in peace and the spirit of compassion.

Best wishes for a memorable anniversary celebration.

Bill Clinton

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany

Bishop H. George Anderson introduced the Rev. Helmut Edelmann, secretary of the German National Council and chief ecumenical officer of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany, to bring greetings from his church body.

Pastor Edelmann acknowledged that on the agenda of this assembly “there are very important topics, ecumenical proposals and recommendations with long-term consequences for the ELCA itself, for bilateral relations to other churches, for the Church worldwide in ecumenism including the relationship to the Lutheran community overall.” He stated that the churches in Germany with their European background are dealing with the same issues. “From the German Lutheran point of view, we undertake efforts to deepen the understanding of the *Leuenberg Concord* and to foster and to facilitate the common practice. . . . We are also dealing with the *Joint Declaration on [the Doctrine of] Justification* [with the Roman Catholic Church].” He continued, “While searching for a worldwide Christian communion, we are together on an exciting journey to discover all Christians as a family of God.”

Bishop Anderson thanked Pastor Edelmann for his greeting and presented a gift of appreciation to him.

Recess

Bishop H. George Anderson then offered a closing prayer, and led the assembly in the singing of the hymn, “In Christ, Called to Baptize,” written for the Ninth Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation held in Hong Kong, China, in July 1997. The assembly stood in recess for the day at 12:30 P.M.

Plenary Session Six

Monday, August 18, 1997

8:00 A.M.-12:30 P.M.

The Rev. H. George Anderson, presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, convened Plenary Session Six at 8:01 A.M. with a call to Morning Prayer. He introduced Ms. Deborah Yandala, a member of the Church Council, to lead the assembly in morning worship. “I Just Came to Praise the Lord” was sung as the gathering hymn and “On Eagle’s Wings—Psalm 91” and prayer were included in the service.

Order of Business

Bishop Anderson then announced changes in the day’s agenda. He stated that speeches from the three vice presidential nominees would be heard at 10:30 A.M. and that discussion of the *Concordat of Agreement* would pause at that point. At 12:15 P.M., the fourth ballot for vice president would be taken. There was no objection to these changes in the orders of the day.

Reflections on the Assembly Theme

Bishop Anderson then called upon the Rev. Lowell G. Almen, secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, to present some reflections on this church’s heritage in keeping with the assembly theme, “Making Christ Known: Alive in our Heritage and Hope.” Secretary Almen stated that there are 112,839 members of congregations of the ELCA “who identify themselves as African American, Black, Asian American, American Indian, Alaska Native, or Hispanic people. Many threads of heritage are woven into the fabric of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. This rich variety is underscored in the growing number of members who are persons of color or persons whose primary language is other than English.” He focused on the election in 1983 of the Rev. Nelson Trout as the first African American bishop in a predecessor church body of the ELCA, The American Lutheran Church, South Pacific District. “Pastor Trout not only filled roles as a pastor, a seminary professor, a social service administrator, and a church executive; he also was a treasured mentor to so many people.” He died September 20, 1996. The assembly then heard Pastor Trout speaking on videotape: “I would like to know if the future will find us as much concerned about

the consequences of our theology as we are about the content of our theology. Will the future find this church keen in its understanding of the means of grace, able to actualize grace between pastors and people, and between people and people? I shall be listening for your footsteps as they resound in the corridors of service and ministry. . . . We know what our task is; let's go do it."

Report of the Credentials Committee

Speaking on behalf of the Credentials Committee, Secretary Almen announced that as of 8:00 P.M. on Sunday, August 17, 1997, 1,044 voting members were registered.

Elections: First Common Ballot for Elections

Reference: *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section VII, pages 9-21; continued on *Minutes* pages 652, 679, 789.

Bishop Anderson reviewed the procedures for the first common ballot for elections to vacancies on the Church Council, churchwide boards, and committees. He reminded assembly members that they would need three things in order to vote: the slate of nominees, a computer ballot form, and a special pencil. Biographical descriptions of the nominees were printed in the *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section VII. An additional list of persons nominated from the floor had been distributed to assembly members. Bishop Anderson called upon General Counsel Phillip H. Harris, chair of the Elections Committee, to describe the tickets and further describe the balloting process.

Mr. Harris reminded voting members to use a number-two pencil and noted that there were 85 tickets on this common ballot, printed in the *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section VII, pages 9-21. He asked voting members, as they filled out the computer ballots, to vote for only one person in each ticket. Voting members may leave some tickets blank, but then need to be careful not to confuse numbers. If a ballot becomes spoiled, however, replacement ballot forms would be available in the voting registration area, where a spoiled sheet could be exchanged for a new one. Deadline for turning in the ballots was 2:00 P.M. Monday, August 18, 1997.

Bishop Anderson observed that it would take approximately 30 minutes to complete the ballot. Four ballot stations were located at the entrance to the plenary hall and at the bottom of the escalators in the Heritage and Hope Village, he said.

Mr. Charles W. Horn III [Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod] rose to clarify a point. In Section VII, page 18, ticket number 65, Ms. Barbara A. Swartling, Bainbridge Island, Wash. [1B], was listed as candidate A, and Ms. Jane C. Von

Seggern, Atlanta Ga. [9D], was listed as candidate B. In the biographical information, the order was reversed. He asked which order is to be used in the election? Mr. Harris replied that the ticket controls the counting of the ballots, not the enumeration of the biographical information.

Ecumenical Greetings

Bishop Anderson introduced Mr. Albert Pennybacker of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. (NCC), who serves as president of the Ecumenical Development Initiative and as the associate general secretary for Public Policy. Bishop Anderson described the NCC as "a forum for many Protestant denominations and Orthodox churches to work together, to find new ways to carry out God's mission." Mr. Pennybacker brought greetings from the 33 member communions, "a wide and inclusive community of faith, . . . prayerfully alert to what you do in these days since the life of those churches not here are deeply involved in and shaped by what you do here. We are, after all, blood kin." He announced that the Rev. Joan Brown Campbell, general secretary of the NCC, who was recuperating from successful restorative back surgery, sent her warmest greetings and gratitude for this church's partnership in ecumenical ministry.

Mr. Pennybacker observed that "conciliar ecumenism itself is about Christian unity, that above all else. Councils are called to live beyond themselves and to call the churches to lives of faith beyond themselves which is to live with the certainty of our unity in God's gracious gift." He cited the Rev. Michael Kinnamon, one of the authors of *A Common Calling*, on the Gospel logic of unity: "'Because of God's gift, therefore, we seek deeper ties [to one another].' That's what you struggle with in these days, to reach beyond the separation within the body of Christ so that God's gift of our oneness will indeed be a grace more fully received and less a hovering accusation." Mr. Pennybacker closed his remarks with a word of encouragement and warmth: "The confessional reconciliations before you are enormously important not only in themselves but in the promise they hold for our facing together those other nonconfessional realities that divide, wound, isolate, and hurt God's people The missionary problem and ethical needs can only be faced as a Christian community together."

Prayer on behalf of Bishop Sumoward Harris

Bishop Anderson then provided background information on a petition offered during this day's Morning Prayer on behalf of the Rt. Rev. Sumoward Harris, bishop of the Lutheran Church in Liberia. On August 12, 1997, Bishop Harris and his family were terrorized when the bishop's official residence was burglarized and

church properties taken. Bishop Harris appealed to the new government in Liberia to intervene and to bring security to a country that has too long been plagued by that kind of violence. Bishop Anderson encouraged the members of the assembly to hold Bishop Harris, his family, and the Lutheran Church in Liberia in their prayers.

Elections: Correction to the Common Ballot

Bishop Robert D. Berg [Northwest Synod of Wisconsin] rose to correct information on the common ballot. In the slate of nominees printed in the *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section VII, page 12, Category 19, Division for Ministry board, Clergy, candidate D., the Rev. Rolf A. Nestingen holds congregational membership at Eau Claire, Wisconsin, not in North Dakota. This information was listed incorrectly in the biographical information also, he said.

Proposals on Full Communion (continued)

Reference: 1997 *Pre-Assembly Reports*, Section IV, pages 49-64; Section VI, pages 11-26; Section V, pages 9-23; continued on *Minutes*, pages 37, 125, 381, 432, 600, 605, 621, 659.

Bishop Anderson advised the assembly, “Now we turn our attention to the proposal for full communion with The Episcopal Church, the *Concordat of Agreement*. That resolution is on page 50 of Section IV, which the Church Council transmitted to you for discussion and for vote. The full text of the *Concordat of Agreement* follows. You will also want to keep in mind that there is relevant material from synodical actions found in Section VI, and the responses from the ELCA seminaries found in Section V. I am first going to ask the secretary to read the resolves of the action before us and then I am going to outline for you how I see the discussion moving and how we will take the votes.” He then called on Secretary Almen.

Secretary Almen said, “The resolution transmitted by the Church Council to the assembly is as follows:

RESOLVED, that this Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America accepts, as a matter of verbal content as well as in principle, the *Concordat of Agreement*, as set forth below; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America agrees to make those legislative, constitutional, and liturgical changes necessary to implement full communion between the two churches, as envisioned in the *Concordat of Agreement*.

Bishop Anderson stated, “You now have the resolution before you. The discussion of this resolution will continue until the previous question has been moved by a voting member and the assembly has agreed to close debate. At 10:30 A.M. we have agreed on a special order. After the special order, it is my understanding, if we are still debating we would return to this debate. In order for you to know what to expect as we move beyond this to the vote, I want to tell you how I propose to handle the votes and their aftermath. Once debate on this proposal is closed, we will move to sequential votes on the two full communion proposals. I will call upon Secretary Almen for prayer at that point and we will vote first on *A Formula of Agreement* with the Reformed Churches. The results of that vote will be announced and I would suggest that we refrain from showing audible reaction at that point and instead enter another moment of prayer and vote on the *Concordat of Agreement*. After that vote is announced, I suggest that we channel our emotions, whatever they may be, into singing, ‘The Church’s One Foundation.’ This hymn, it seems to me, focuses on the foundation of our faith and our church, expresses our unity, and does not focus on subsequent or particular superstructure. Both of the votes require a two-thirds majority for adoption. I think we are ready for debate, it certainly looks like you are [noting the long lines at the microphones].”

The discussion opened with the Rev. Fred S. Opalinski [Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod], who commented, “As you have reminded us so often during this assembly, Lutherans love to sing. We love to sing ‘A Mighty Fortress.’ Luther, of course, wrote that hymn with the image of the Church of Christ prevailing against the forces of the devil. But I fear for too long too many Lutherans have sung that hymn with the image of our little castle with thick stone walls built long ago in fear, alas, reinforced from time to time. For too long the Lutheran stance has been one of us and them. ‘We are here on the inside, we have the true faith, the right understanding of the Gospel, the right teaching of the Sacraments, the right hold on ministry, we’ll just stay inside and, more importantly, keep the others out.’ During these decades of ecumenical dialogue, we Lutherans have dared to crack open the doors of that castle, we’ve lowered the drawbridge, walked out into the sunlight, and have even dared to admit that other Christians may actually have something to offer us. We have come so far these recent years. Voting ‘no’ to the *Concordat* will sound a trumpet of retreat for our church no matter how we may try to nuance an explanation. It will raise that drawbridge and slam the door shut in the face of our Anglican family members. More than that, it will say to the world that what many of them thought about Lutherans was true after all. We can talk the talk, we are good with words, but we’re not able to walk the walk. Bishop Anderson, before this discussion began, we heard your passionate plea to affirm the one church of Christ in three directions: to clasp the hands offered to us by the Reformed, the Episcopal, and the Roman Catholic communions. What have we to fear? I trust your leadership and your judgment; you would not sell us a bill of

goods. I trust also the work of those who have labored these 30 years. I trust all of those guests who have addressed us from the greater church, asking us to move in the direction that you call us to. But most of all, I trust that Christ has broken down the dividing walls between us, reconciling us in one body through the cross. It is time for us today to en flesh that God-given reality with our affirmative vote.”

The Rev. Philip M. Larsen [Eastern North Dakota Synod] stated, “Although I was not born there [North Dakota], I make no apologies for serving two rural congregations of this church. It might be helpful for me if one of the voting members on the floor gives me a call Saturday evening, because I sometimes forget things on Sunday morning and as I park my Volkswagen Jetta at Zion and South Trinity, when I come back to that vehicle after those services somehow the doors unexplainedly opened and my backseat is full of sweet corn and zucchini. It is that season where I live and there is a limit to the amount of sweet corn and zucchini two adults and two boys under five can consume in a week’s period. I speak against the *Concordat*, the document, not against Episcopalians. I, too, like so many, have relatives who are Episcopalian. My dear brother-in-law serves as a chaplain. We have great theological dialogue. I love him dearly. I am against the document. Secretary Almen listed in his report to this Churchwide Assembly that there are 17,402 active and retired clergy in this ELCA. I wonder those present or your pastor back home—who ordained them? Ask her, ask him. Was it a seminary president who did that rite of ordination? Was it a parish pastor of your home congregation? The *Concordat* tells me as I read the words that it was enough at that time and at that place for that ordination. But as I read in Section C, [paragraph] number 8, the *Concordat* tells this church that only bishops shall ordain clergy. It was enough at that time and place for the ordinations of those 17,402 pastors in this church, but it is not enough if this *Concordat* is approved. Now I can understand how busy eight seminary presidents are in the tasks they do for these institutions of this church. Maybe they would rather not serve as the ordainer at a rite of ordination. But I cannot support a document that tells me only bishops shall ordain clergy. Can we not make Christ known as we are commanded to do?”

Bishop Robert W. Mattheis [Sierra Pacific Synod] said, “I wish to urge this assembly to vote yes on the *Concordat*. It is about mission. It is not the final word, it is not a perfect document, neither was the *Augsburg Confession* or we would not have the *Book of Concord* to give further explication to who we are. This document does not say everything that could be said about being Lutheran; it does not intend to do so. It sets us on a course. It signals a place to begin a commitment to walk together into a future that is exciting, that is new and, I believe, shaped by God. We are not setting a new course. That was done by the adoption of the constitution in 1987 when we chose as one of our six purposes to be an ecumenical church. We voted to adopt our ecumenical vision, I think that was in 1991. This is about mission. It is about making Christ known. When I go home, hopefully, this document will have been approved. I will be able to talk with the bishop of the Northern California Episcopal Diocese and we will begin to strategize about

[common mission in northern] California. For ten years, we have had a struggling preaching point there, as have the Episcopalians. There is no full-time Protestant clergy in that community. We cannot sustain a ministry there—together we will do that. In Marina, Calif., near Monterey, we have a congregation that was going to be closed a year ago. The Episcopal Church said, ‘let’s do something together.’ Should this pass we will proceed with developing that Lutheran-Episcopal mission at Marina, Calif. This is about mission. The world is watching us and they care about what we are doing. I spoke last evening with my daughter in California who said she was watching TV and saw a report with the indication that people are eagerly waiting to hear the results of our vote. The world is interested. We will send a message. I urge your adoption of this *Concordat*. We are called to step out in faith, to embrace a Spirit-formed future that responds to new relationships.”

The Rev. David A. Weeks [Southwestern Minnesota Synod] observed, “The Apostle Paul writes, ‘For I am not ashamed of the Gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to all who believe.’ In my eight years of ministry, I have taught hundreds of people in new member classes that the Lutheran confession is defined by a confession of faith and not by polity. Other churches, whether it be an episcopacy or a presbytery, are defined by polity; but we as Lutherans by confession of faith. That confession is the Gospel of Jesus Christ, that faith alone, grace alone, Christ alone shall establish and sustain and guarantee this church. The wisdom of the reformers in Article VII [of the Augsburg Confession] states, ‘For true unity in the Christian faith, all that is necessary is that the Gospel be preached and the Sacraments be rightly administered.’ In essence, it is Christ and Christ alone—nothing other than, nothing less than, nothing less than Christ. The *Concordat* adds one more thing to the necessity of the Church and that is the historic episcopacy. In the open forum which I attended, the question was asked, ‘Is the historic episcopacy *adiaphora*?’ *Adiaphora* is a fancy word for something that is unnecessary. To which the Lutheran [representative] said, ‘Yes, the historic episcopacy is *adiaphora*.’ Bishop Jones [the Episcopalian representative] said, ‘I cannot answer whether or not the historic episcopacy is *adiaphora*.’ You and I need to know whether or not the historic episcopacy is *adiaphora* or not. It is *adiaphora* in order for us to come into agreement, we need to agree on that. The wisdom of the Reformation was that Christ and Christ alone establishes, sustains, and guarantees the Christian Church. To vote for the *Concordat* to add the historic episcopacy as a necessary mark of the Church is to say that Luther and the Reformers were wrong. And that I cannot do. If we would vote against the *Concordat*, we can and we should do ministry with The Episcopal Church. We can do that in many, many ways. We can look at the alternate proposal. I invite you to join me in voting ‘no’ on the *Concordat* but ‘yes’ to ministry with The Episcopal Church; ‘yes’ to joint Vacation Bible School programs; ‘yes’ to Bible studies together; ‘yes’ to worship services; ‘no’ to the *Concordat*; but ‘yes, yes, yes’ with an exclamation point to have relationships with them.”

Bishop Mark S. Hanson [Saint Paul Area Synod] said, “I came to this assembly with a knot in my stomach over the *Concordat* and now the knot is even tighter. The threads of that knot come from my childhood home where I was taught to love Jesus, to believe that we are justified by grace through faith alone, to cherish the priesthood of all believers, and to be suspicious of the power of clergy. The threads of that knot come from our own synod assembly which voted two-thirds against the *Concordat*. The threads come from pastors in our synod who cannot find their place in this document and wonder if there is a place for them in a church that adopts the historic episcopate. The threads are also from my colleague, the Episcopal bishop of Minnesota, who said to me, ‘Mark, if the things you are saying about us are true, then I do not want to be an Episcopalian and I certainly would not want to be in full communion with us.’ But the threads of my knot also come from my own decision to support the *Concordat* because I believe it is time for this church to have full communion as its practice not just as its policy, for it grants unity without demanding uniformity. Because I believe that the freedom that the Gospel of Jesus Christ alone permits us to accept the historic episcopate as a sign of unity but not as necessary for salvation. Because I believe that the Holy Spirit through the Word will continue to reform the office to which I have been called, ensuring that it exists for the sake of the Gospel. And I will support it because I believe it is time to move closer to those churches with whom we have such theological agreement so that we might reach out to churches that we have far greater differences for the sake of mission. I had hoped that an alternate resolution might relieve the knot in my stomach, but I realize it would simply be giving it away to others to carry. So now I am at peace and I will go home with that knot in my stomach whatever the outcome of this vote, for it will remind me that we are a divided church, it will cause me to wonder if we made the right decision, it will make me worry about my pastoral leadership of a synod that is not in agreement with me, but that knot will also remind me how serious has been the issue about which we have acted. It will call us to reconciliation and healing and to that process I commit my leadership.”

The Rev. Robert C. Reier [Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod] expressed three concerns, “Even though my wife is employed by The Episcopal Church, I still have three additional concerns about this document. One, if we turned the tables and asked The Episcopal Church to have one ordination with no special ordinations for bishops, no ordinations of deacons, the bishops may assign other pastors to ordain, congregations have greater autonomy to change and empower the authority of bishops, and a bishop holds the title only for the term of office, their vote would be quite different, and probably rejecting, facing such changes in polity and doctrine. Two, Dr. Bouman said that, if it could be done over again, he would change some of the terminology. Clearing up some issues in the document are a must, such as clearly stating an affirmation of the priesthood of all believers. We can do a better job of writing it. Three, there is a special concern for our presiding bishop and our own synodical bishop, David Strobel, if we join in too many of these agreements.

The installations of bishops could be hazardous to their health in that it might cause more hair loss from the rubbing or severe neck strain or paralysis with the number of bishops’ hands on their heads. I recommend there be anointing with hands soaked with Grecian Formula or Rogaine.”

The Rev. C. Peter Setzer [North Carolina Synod] inquired whether it would be helpful if the assembly had a well-qualified person to explain the relationship between the *Porvoo Agreement* and the *Concordat* and international dialogue. He said, “It is my understanding that our representative from the Strasbourg institute [Lutheran World Federation Institute for Ecumenical Studies, Strasbourg, France] is here. Is it appropriate to move at this time that he be granted the privilege of speaking?”

Bishop Anderson responded that it would be appropriate to make that motion.

Pastor Setzer then moved the following motion.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

Yes-679; No-248

CARRIED: To grant Mr. Michael J. Root voice to explain the relationship between the *Porvoo Agreement* and the *Concordat of Agreement* and international dialogue.

Bishop Anderson indicated that he would recognize three more speakers, giving time for Mr. Root to come forward and address the assembly.

Bishop Stephen P. Bouman [Metropolitan New York Synod] acknowledged that he had “a knot in his stomach, too, some of it in memory of having been in the Missouri Synod.” He raised three contexts saying, “One, in a world in which we not only turn our backs on the poor and the sojourner, but also blame them, our witness together in the public square is sometimes muted. I think it would mean a lot to our public witness, at least where I do ministry, if we were able from the heart of our identity, from the Eucharist, from our ministries, to be able to say, ‘no,’ to those who would dump on the poor. Second, what kind of a way of being the Church will we have? We are going to begin to answer that question. Will it be issue-driven or communal? If it is communal, we will in relationship make our confession. We will find each other not around the defended space, but in prayer, liturgy, mission. Finally, whether we talk about being a confessional church or talk about apostolic succession, or whether we talk about the historic episcopate, does not it really have to do with, in some way, a trust that the Holy Spirit has continued to share with us that the promises of God in Jesus Christ are true and trustworthy.”

The Rev. Kent S. Stoutenburg [Southwestern Washington Synod] stated, “I have a couple of things I want to say. First, I want to emphasize that the issues of the *Concordat* and the *Formula* are separable. They should not be considered as

one entity because they ask us to do very different things. The *Formula* asks us to recognize that another communion is Christian. The *Concordat* asks us to change our structure. Second, mission should not be dependent upon passing this document. Last night I went to worship at a 175-year-old Anglo-catholic Episcopal Church at a worship service conducted by three Methodists with rock music. Near my home is a building which is owned jointly by the Presbyterian Church, The Episcopal Church, and The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod. They are doing mission together and they do not have a *Concordat*. Bishop Enslin raised the issue of a marriage analogy. I would ask you who are ordained here to consider a couple who comes to you for pre-marital counseling and says, ‘Pastor, we have known each other all our lives. We’ve been talking for 35 years and dating for 15.’ ‘But,’ she says, ‘he’s not quite good enough for me yet but he has promised over the next five to 25 years to adopt some changes which will make our marriage full.’ I’d send them both back for counseling. Finally, my fellow members of the ELCA, I ask you to understand that this is a matter of conscience for those of us who oppose this. There is no power to be gained here, there is nothing to be had except possibly the enmity of some bishops under whom we might someday like to serve. And I do not think I am just letting my three-eighth Norwegian [heritage] show. This really does come down to an understanding of what constitutes the Church and as far as I’m concerned, that means that the spread of the Gospel is potentially undermined. Paul said he would never eat meat rather than test the faith of those who were weaker. If those of us who oppose the *Concordat* are weaker, then we beg the deference of you who are stronger.”

Ms. Mitzi J. Budde [Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod], said, “Professionally I am a faculty member and librarian at Virginia Episcopal Seminary. I have served on this faculty for six years. Before that I was on the faculty at Lutheran Southern Seminary for five years. I am a lay person, a rostered associate in ministry of the ELCA. In this experience of working, living, and worshiping in an Episcopal seminary community, my ministry has been encouraged, honored, and nurtured by my Episcopalian colleagues, both as a lay person and as a Lutheran. One example. Last year I was assigned to chair the faculty committee which drafted all the faculty evaluations, to assess Master of Divinity students and their fitness for ordination in The Episcopal Church. One of the most respected and prolific writers on the vocation of the laity and the priesthood of all believers is Verna Doszer, an Episcopalian lay theologian from Washington, D.C. At Virginia Seminary, eight of 25 faculty members are lay persons and the seminary offers two Master’s programs for laity in addition to the Master of Divinity program. Last semester our school offered a semester-long course on the *Concordat of Agreement* where lay and ordination-track students studied the ecumenical discussions of the Lutheran and Episcopal Church and the Augsburg Confession. That [course] was jointly taught with Gettysburg Seminary. The Episcopal Church has a strong and vibrant theology of the priesthood of all believers. The Episcopal Church also has a long tradition of upholding the ministry

of the ordained, including bishops. But valuing the ministry of my bishop does not devalue in any way my ministry as a lay person. Further, the *Concordat* offers safeguards to protect the Church from any abuse of power by bishops in the review process for bishops which the *Concordat* establishes in Section B.6 on page 59. Finally, I want to remind the assembly of the wonderful gifts which The Episcopal Church has to offer us: a rich and deep tradition of worship practices and liturgies; the teaching, *lex orandi, lex credendi*, which means what we pray proclaims what we believe and confess; a wealth of resources and spirituality; theological agreement with us in our essentials for unity, i.e., the Gospel and the Sacraments; a model of ministry that connects the present to the tradition of the Church across time and space; a strong foundation.”

Bishop Peter Rogness [Greater Milwaukee Synod] stated, “I want to say a word not so much about the content of the proposals themselves, but the process and where we are as a church as we come out of this vote. I think the ELCA is, without question, a vigorously ecumenical church. I do not believe that’s what is at issue in this conversation. I treasure the kind of ecumenical involvement we have in Milwaukee, the activities and the planning that goes on with my partners in other denominations. I think the ecumenical pedigree and track-record of some of the Church leaders of the ELCA who are raising questions about these proposals is without question. We are an ecumenical church. This is not a conversation between ecumenical advocates and isolationists. Rather, the shape of the question is, ‘What is the nature of the step that we take at this point in our church’s life in ecumenical relations?’ I became concerned several months ago as the debate heated up, that we were going to be forced with doing one of two things at this assembly, neither of which seemed palatable. The first was we would pass these proposals, one or both, with a substantial segment of our church not only opposed but deeply troubled by what we are doing. Or, we would fail to pass these proposals with likely a majority of people gathered here wanting to take this step forward and feeling frustrated and thwarted by a stubborn minority. In either case, we leave this place deeply divided. Was there any way out? Why were we in this kind of predicament? I think we are here because we ignored some things we have learned about how we do business well as a church. We have learned in adopting our ecumenical vision statement which we fought about in 1989, redrafted and brought back in 1991 and passed. We have learned by the way we issue drafts of social statements, fight about them, and then go back and issue a draft that more clearly reflects where we are as a church. We have done it at this assembly with the statement on sacramental practices which we had in earlier draft form. In this case, even though there have been 30-some years of dialogues, when these proposals were issued, they were issued as non-amendable. Even the slight adjustments made last fall in the *Concordat* did not alter the substance of what was done. We were locked in without a chance to kind of fight about it and discover where the mind of our church is. The resolutions that arose out of the Greater Milwaukee Synod and Southwestern Minnesota Synod at synod assemblies are attempts to say what we

have learned through the conversation, where it is that we now find ourselves standing as a church, and what it is that we can broadly agree to even if there are a few additional pieces of the current proposal that we still need to work on.”

Mr. Michael J. Root, of the Institute for Ecumenical Studies, Strasbourg, France, arrived at a microphone on the assembly floor, whereupon Bishop Anderson allotted him three minutes, the time allowed for speeches by the rules of organization, to respond to the query of Pastor Setzer concerning the relationship between the *Porvoo Agreement* and the *Concordat*. Mr. Root said, “It is accurate to say that the *Concordat* fits into a general pattern along with the *Porvoo Agreement*, which is between the British and Irish Anglican Churches and the Nordic and Baltic Lutheran Churches with the exception of Latvia and Denmark. And then also with the international Anglican-Lutheran report on episcopacy, *The Niagara Report*. This general international report, I think, can be seen as having two contextual applications in the *Concordat* and the Scandinavian *Porvoo Agreement*. They share a common theological vision: it is the Church as a whole which stands in apostolic succession. God uses means to hold the Church in apostolic succession. There are various means God uses: unity and continuity in the common biblical canon; unity and continuity in the creeds; unity and continuity in ordained ministry. All of these means can be abused, none are infallible in our use of them. Episcopal succession is not necessary or essential in the strict sense to the existence or unity of the Church, but it can be a useful sign. This vision, I think, is common. Also there is a similar mechanism in the *Porvoo Agreement* and the *Concordat*. Anglicans immediately recognize Lutheran ministries, Lutherans take on episcopal succession as a sign of unity and continuity. The *Porvoo Agreement* does call on the Anglican Churches in Britain and Ireland and the Scandinavian Lutherans—it calls upon less from both sides than the *Concordat* because the churches start much closer together. But in essence, the theological vision and the fundamental mechanism are, broadly speaking, highly similar. I would also note that there are Anglican-Lutheran agreements in Canada, [and also] between the Lutheran United and Reformed Churches of Germany and the Church of England. These agreements, however, can be seen as essentially being like our 1982 interim-Eucharistic sharing agreements. You heard yesterday the Canadian church [Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada] is moving further along. There are discussions in Germany but they have so far had no result. I do think one can say the *Concordat* fits into a developing pattern of Anglican-Lutheran relations around the world including the international dialogue.”

Ms. Kirstin E. Vorhes [Northern Great Lakes Synod] reminded assembly members that the Lutheran Youth Organization convention at New Orleans passed a resolution supporting all of the ecumenical proposals. She said, “I urge all of you to take this under consideration. In this assembly there are very few youth voting members and we cannot express the voice of the youth through our vote without your help and support. Secondly, it seems that one of the concerns for those who oppose ecumenical proposals is that The Episcopal Church believes this, or the

United Church of Christ believes that, while we believe something else, as if passing these proposals would have an effect on what we believe. Sure, we have our differences but what one person believes is something very personal and cannot be taken away by anyone or anything. We cannot lose our belief by accepting [people] who believe differently. We cannot lose our belief with getting along with others who believe different things and we will not lose our belief by passing these proposals.”

The Rev. Ladd G. Bjerneby [Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod] stated, “I would like to tell you why I feel free to vote against the *Concordat of Agreement*. I feel free to do so because I have learned to trust my Episcopalian friends. Let me tell you what happened recently in my congregation. I looked out one Sunday morning and I saw a familiar face in the congregation. After worship I walked up to her and realized that she was a member of St. Paul’s Episcopal Church—we do quite a lot together—and so I started to visit with her and she said, ‘I believe I am going to come join your congregation and I’m going to bring my daughter.’ I asked her why. She said, ‘Sunday School at St. Paul’s Episcopal is falling apart; we just cannot keep it together.’ So I said, ‘Well, let’s not move so quickly. We could do something together. Let’s talk about that. If you cannot keep Sunday School running at St. Paul’s, come to Emmanuel and we can share it, we’re only a block and a half apart, we can run the program together at least until St. Paul’s builds up its membership and can run Sunday School again.’ As soon as I was back in the office that week I called Dr. Priest and I said, ‘Tom, I hear your Sunday School is having trouble. Let’s see if we can do that together. Our Sunday School could use a little help too, we would not mind having someone else come and teach.’ And Tom said, ‘Sure, that’s a good idea. Let’s talk about it and see if that’s a move we need to make.’ So we are considering that together, St. Paul’s Episcopal and Emmanuel Lutheran. Now Tom knows very well where I stand on the *Concordat*, that I cannot in good conscience vote for it, but that does not prevent us from working together in mission. In fact, when I explained why I cannot vote for the *Concordat*, Tom said to me, ‘Ladd, I cannot blame you.’ I will trust my own children who are in that Sunday School to an Episcopal Sunday School teacher. I am not afraid of The Episcopal Church. We are one in mission with The Episcopal Church. But I trust my Episcopalian friends to understand and respect my choice to vote my conscience, to vote ‘no’ on the *Concordat*, but to remain in mission with my Episcopalian brothers and sisters in our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Bishop Donald J. McCoid [Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod] said, “Each Lord’s Day we do indeed pray for [the] unity of all. We turn to God and ask God to look to us in our disunity so that unity may come. We certainly understand that there is alienation and brokenness in all the expressions of God’s Church, the family of God. But we also have been people who have always affirmed that unity comes as a gift of God working among us—the reason for our prayer. Lutherans are free in the Gospel to accept the historic episcopate, not as necessary, but as a gesture of reconciliation to bring unity for the sake of the Gospel and the mission

of the Church. We have always had room to interpret our ministry forms as witnessed by the confessional Lutheran church bodies in other places in the world who do indeed have another form. Often my Episcopal colleagues in Southwestern Pennsylvania have shared, ‘We need you.’ Well, we need them. In an area that has been devastated by economic downturn, closing of steel mills, where we have small membership congregations that do not know what their future will be, we are talking about the ways in which we can cooperate in ministry. It is not simply doing Christian education, which is important; doing service and priestly ministries together, which is very important; but we also need to come to the point where we can share ministers for the sake of mission, to give people in small communities in the nine counties of Southwestern Pennsylvania a sense of hope that they might be able to say that we can continue in the congregations that we have with the traditions, the background, so that we might also be people who can share and bring the presence of ministry for the sake of the people of God in that place. So that the Word and Sacraments might be rightly proclaimed and administered and also so that we might be able to provide a witness for God’s people in that community and in that area.”

Bishop Richard J. Foss [Eastern North Dakota Synod] commented, “I rise to speak against the adoption of the *Concordat*. I was invited to write in the May [issue of *The*] *Lutheran* [magazine] my articulation of that and I will not repeat it. Michael Rogness and others have mentioned much of that and very well. In my family are Episcopal, Presbyterian, Methodist, and Lutheran Christians. We get along quite well, actually. I want to do something to continue and further those relationships, but I cannot vote for the *Concordat*. As a pastor and now serving as a bishop, I ask many people to do many things and usually when I do that I say something like this, ‘I think you would be good for this, it would be good to me, but I only want you to say ‘yes’ if you really mean ‘yes.’ If you say ‘no,’ this does not work for me now, I will come back another time and ask you to do something else. If you say ‘yes,’ and I find out later that you meant ‘no’ but you were either too afraid or too polite, and did not have enough trust in me, I will have a very hard time coming back again and asking anything else.’ In our division, I’m afraid that if we say ‘yes’ it will be more because we are afraid or polite or embarrassed and a large percentage of this body will really mean ‘no’ and that will bode ill for us. The truth is that this church already pays enough attention and deference to us bishops. It is hard enough to stay connected and in touch. I do not think we need more attention on us bishops.”

The Rev. Kurt S. Strause [Lower Susquehanna Synod] commented, “I speak in favor of the *Concordat* because the *Concordat* focuses its attention upon bishops and their place in the Church for a very important reason, but it is a reason which Lutherans have only now recently begun to pay attention to because of the ecumenical century which we find ourselves living in. An important ministry of the priesthood of all believers is the calling of pastors to serve this church as bishops of our synods. Our bishops serve this church as shepherds under the one who is our

Good Shepherd. The relationship of these shepherds with one another, their own relationship of unity with one another, can be a very powerful witness to an unbelieving world of the reconciling love of Christ. This is important for the life of the whole Church—the whole Church—not just a church comprised of Lutherans.”

Mr. Charles Kurfess [Northwestern Ohio Synod] said, “I hope that sometime during this debate the following question can be answered or at least addressed. The question is, ‘If the *Concordat* is adopted, what immediate and long-range potential impact do we anticipate on our seminaries with regard to curriculum, admission, continued existence, etc. and further, what impact is anticipated on the Episcopalian seminaries?’”

The Rev. Connie P. McCallister [Saint Paul Area Synod] stated, “You heard my bishop speak about what this is going to mean to us in our synod. I want so badly to go down the road with the ELCA in full communion with The Episcopal Church [that] I will vote ‘yes’ for full communion with the Reformed. I have been in prayer on this and my heart is breaking to see in this 10-year celebration to know that this church will be changed and be different. Not necessarily because we will be with the Episcopalians but because we have come to a fork in the road. I want too badly to be with my ELCA, but every fiber of my being, the essence of me, shouts out and cries ‘no’ to the historic episcopacy. As I watched worship yesterday and in every day of worship, my heart has broken as I watched this body, because I know that after the vote I may be waving goodbye as you move down that path. Yesterday in worship, I heard Jesus’ words, ‘Why do you weep, Mary?’ And Mary looked up and said, ‘Rabboni.’ I know, and I am sure, and I am comforted, and I am at peace, as my bishop is, that our Lord will be with each of us. He will walk with the ELCA down the path that it must take and for those who cannot go down that path, He also will walk with us. I am at peace also because I have the promise in my Lord that there will come a time when the perishable must put on the imperishable and in the twinkling of an eye we will be one with our Lord. Perhaps it is only then that we can have true unity where there will be no [Roman] Catholics, no Episcopalians, no Lutherans, no bishops, no pastors, we will be one with the Lord and we will at last have true unity.”

Mr. Gerald H. Philpy [Indiana-Kentucky Synod] shared with the assembly, “I am certainly no theologian. I am not an ecclesiastical scholar. I am a lay person, an engineer from Indiana. For 23 of my 46 years I was an Episcopalian. I would like to address this assembly on a couple of sticking points which I think may be blocking us moving forward. First, on the point of the historic episcopate. I think if you walked into any Episcopal Church in this country and asked a lifelong Episcopalian what the historic episcopate is, you would probably be greeted with blank stares. My perspective is there has probably been more discussion on this point in the last year among Lutherans than in the last 100 years among Episcopalians. It simply is not part of the daily congregational life of The Episcopal Church. I cannot remember a sermon, I cannot remember a Sunday

School lesson, I cannot remember a Bible Study or a youth gathering in which the historic episcopate was discussed. It rather is part of the heritage of the Church, a heritage which goes back almost 2000 years, so it is natural that the Episcopalians do not want to depart from this heritage. Now we could rework this language again, but I think that as Dr. Bouman said, there has been enough work done to have reached a point where we have something which is going to allow us to move forward. But I can assure you that even if you have objections to the historic episcopate, it simply will not enter into the daily congregational life, because it does not in The Episcopal Church. On the concern about hierarchy, particularly with respect to bishops, I simply have not observed a difference in the ministry of bishops in either The Episcopal Church or the Lutheran Church. It has been a marvelous thing to see this *Concordat* come together and seeing our bishop, Bishop Kempfski, working with Bishop Jones of Indianapolis. They consider themselves peers. I have always felt that bishops were teachers and leaders but also friends. I really have not observed any differences, probably more differences in personalities than there are in the office. I would like us to consider the many positive things this *Concordat* can bring for us. In our own synod, we currently have 41 pastoral vacancies. That's 41 places where we simply cannot offer communion right now in an unbroken fashion. We have to have people travel and in a state like Kentucky that is very difficult because Lutherans are few and far between. So in weighing the vote here and deciding, I would ask simply that you look at all the things that we can get in a very positive sense from having this agreement and weigh them against a fairly narrow set of things which I think really are not going to have any effect on our daily congregational life. I urge you to join me in supporting this *Concordat*."

Mr. William E. Diehl [Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod] commented, "This is without doubt the most important vote to be taken in the history of the ELCA. If we approve the *Concordat*, we will be passing along to future ELCA assemblies a road map which they are bound to follow and implement. Those words are in the very first paragraph of the *Concordat*, 'bound to follow and implement.' Two days ago we heard from some distinguished theologians their views on the *Concordat* and they were sharply divided. A few minutes ago Bishop Matthias said there was much to be desired in the *Concordat* that needed to be changed. But the problem is, we are not going to be able to change it. We are 'bound to follow and implement' it. The document is faulty and it is the document we are voting on. We are not voting on ecumenism. We decided that in 1991. We all agree on that. We are voting on a document that cannot be changed. It is so faulty that only five of our eight commission [Lutheran-Episcopal Dialogue III] members voted in favor of it. This document will be a bible for future assemblies. They will have to implement the three-fold ministry of ordained bishops, presbyters, and deacons. Through constitutional changes they will be bound to follow those directions because the language is there. All the assurances we have been given that such is not the intent will be meaningless to future ELCA assemblies because they will be

bound to follow the language of the *Concordat*. People have said that we must have faith in the future, but in this instance we are voting on the future right now. God has given us brains. We must decide our best judgment right now and then have faith that God's will will be done through our voting. I can vote for *A Formula of Agreement* because the language is sufficiently flexible that there will be opportunity for changes; not so with the *Concordat*. There is no opportunity for change. So because we have to follow the *Concordat* for the assembly years ahead, I hope that we will vote against it and offer The Episcopal Church a letter of intent in the form of the alternate resolution showing that we intend to move ahead with them, but not on the basis of this faulty document."

Ms. Joy Elizabeth Shoffner [North Carolina Synod] said, "With you, I am a member of the priesthood of believers in the body of Christ. With you, I am a child of God. There is no greater designation and there never will be. In this hour of our church, our neighbors across the ocean and across the street, await our witness. Because I hear God's call, because I see Jesus Christ's example, because I know the Holy Spirit's power, I publicly profess my love to our sisters and brothers in Christ and bear witness to my love and faith in the Triune God. I say 'yes' to *A Formula of Agreement*. I say 'yes' to the *Concordat*. I say 'yes' to full communion. And I pray that you do too as we together strive to heed God's call."

Mr. Donald Grossbach [Minneapolis Area Synod] identified himself as a lay member of this church "and I am speaking as someone who sits in the pews on Sunday with no formal theological training at a seminary or a Lutheran school. I am a lifelong Lutheran and I take refuge and pride in the fundamental belief of Lutheranism in the priesthood of all believers. I teach my children about the simplicity of the Lutheran message and the absence of human-made trappings or requirements in our theology as I was taught by my parents. We could eliminate our liturgies and our hymnals and we would still be Lutherans. I came to the assembly undecided about the *Concordat*. After the many years of study and discussion by our theologians, I assumed that there would be good explanations for the adoption of the historic episcopate into the practice of the ELCA. However, I have not yet heard a convincing reason for its inclusion into our interpretation of Lutheran theology. With the adoption of the *Concordat*, future generations of Lutherans would grow up in a church that is episcopal in practice. My children would no longer be able to teach their kids about the simplicity of Lutheranism. We can be just as ecumenical and more evangelically Lutheran by adopting *A Formula of Agreement* with the Reformed churches and Dr. Jodock's alternative proposal to the *Concordat*. When I struggled with my decision about the *Concordat*, I asked myself, 'What would Martin Luther say, if he was told that we need to accept the historic episcopate to fulfill our mission?' His answer [would be], 'Absolutely not.'"

Bishop Donald H. Maier [Northwest Washington Synod] said, "I strongly favor the adoption of the *Concordat* as a platform of trust with The Episcopal Church on

which we continue to build a common mission and a common witness to Christ in this nation. I would like to try to answer some of the concerns of some on this floor. One regarding why is this necessary for mission. In my understanding, it is the mission of the Church to show forth the wonderful works of God in Jesus Christ. One of those works is a church that is one, and which, in the prayer of our Lord Jesus, is to manifest that [oneness] and make it as clear as possible. There have been concerns expressed in this assembly about the power of bishops and kind of a creeping hierarchy. I would invite the voting members to take out their constitutions and to read the section of the constitution on the office of the bishop. The bishop's duties are carefully defined and they are what they are. Among them is the responsibility to provide for and to preside at the ordination of those who become pastors of Word and Sacrament in this church. But into the future, if there is any change in the duties and the functions of the office of the bishop, it will be by constitutional amendment. Constitutional amendments are made by this body where in this day of about 1000 people, 600 are lay people and 400 are ordained, and of the 400, 65 are bishops. I also leave you with a word from our Lord Jesus in calling out disciples for himself in mission that 'If any would save your life, you will lose it. And if any of you will lose your life for my sake and the sake of the Gospel, you will find it.'

Bishop Curtis H. Miller [Western Iowa Synod] raised a question, "The *Concordat* establishes a 'joint ecumenical-doctrinal-liturgical commission, accountable to the two churches in a manner to be determined by each church.' [1997 Pre-Assembly Report, Section IV, paragraph 10, page 61] and also that 'Each church promises to issue no official commentary on this text that has not been approved by the Joint Commission . . .' [1997 Pre-Assembly Report, Section IV, paragraph 11, page 62]. There is a great deal of puzzlement and uncertainty about the work of this Joint Commission. I would ask if you as the chair or another resource person could explain how the Joint Commission will work. Specifically, how will the representatives be appointed and will it be broadly based? What will be the nature of its accountability in the ELCA? Will there be opportunity to review the work of this Joint Commission by baptized members, synods, or the churchwide assembly? Finally, is it possible for us to think that the joint commission could produce a commentary that would clarify questions and understandings that have been raised since the first proposal was drafted?"

Bishop Anderson asked the Rev. Daniel F. Martensen, director of the ELCA Department for Ecumenical Affairs, to respond. He also stated that constitutional matters would be referred to Secretary Almen.

Pastor Martensen responded, "At this point it has been decided that the initial first step to be taken, if there is a positive vote, would be the putting together of a very small liaison committee in order to begin the process at a later time of establishing a Joint Commission. The size of the Joint Commission has not yet been determined, but in talking with the bishop [Bishop Anderson], we have agreed that it would be balanced and geographically representative in its nature and that it

would not carry any power that would supersede the internal decision-making entities of the ELCA or The Episcopal Church. It would be kind of a coordinating entity. For example, in dealing with ministry questions, it would probably constitute or encourage the constitution of a small group of people, heads of our ministry units for example, to begin to discuss the first steps to be taken. At some point the coordinated step then would happen. I cannot respond to the later part of that in terms of constitutional dimensions which might at some time have to be addressed.

Secretary Lowell G. Almen responded to the accountability issue, "As indicated in the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the churchwide organization decision-making authority resides with the Churchwide Assembly and between meetings of the assembly, with the Church Council as the board of directors of this church. So entities that serve in a coordinating function between churches or other entities appointed in our church have the responsibility of reporting to the Church Council. The decision-making authority resides in the Church Council, on the issues assigned to the council, and in the Churchwide Assembly."

Ms. Melissa R. O'Rourke [South Dakota Synod] said, "I have been standing here in line for awhile and I saw some *U.S.A. Today*'s being read. I did not bring anything up here to read to you, but I hope everybody is still here today. I have learned a lot of things since I came out here from South Dakota. Maybe sometime (even though *Rand McNally* left us out of the atlas one year), [you'll] get out a map of South Dakota and see how spread out we are. We had a long trip here to Philadelphia and I have learned a lot since we got here. One thing that I am hearing is that we seem to be lacking in Christian unity. I thought before I got here that I was in unity with other Christians. That's what I thought. Was I mistaken? In our little town, we have wonderful joint ministries, with the Baptists, the Methodists, the Free Methodists, the UCC [United Church of Christ], and the [Roman] Catholics. We run a food pantry together, we do services together on Good Friday and Thanksgiving, and in the summertime when we did not have a pastor for six months, the United Methodist pastor came over and gave us communion. I still think I received forgiveness of sin, but we did not have a *Concordat*. I believe that we do have true Christian unity. If you are not sure about that, come on out to South Dakota and see the mission that we are doing together. See the joint Lutheran-Episcopal ministries on the reservations. They are being done without a *Concordat*, without our adopting the historic episcopacy. Let me ask you, did anybody here get a mail-in voting ballot—I did not. Instead, I was mailed stacks and stacks of things, I was mailed whole separate envelopes about *A Formula of Agreement* and the *Concordat*. We discussed that at our synod assembly. We voted on it. I studied. I prayed. I prayed for the guidance of the Holy Spirit; but I did not receive a mail-in ballot. I was sent plane tickets to come on out here to Philadelphia and pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit and vote on it myself. I was not told—I was not sent an envelope that said, "Trust the committee, trust the bishop, they will not sell you a bill of goods, vote "yes." I was told to come out

here and do that myself. If there is anybody here that is thinking they have to vote 'yes' to have a warm and fuzzy feeling about being in unity with other Christians, you do not need to do that. You can have that warm and fuzzy feeling now before we even have a *Concordat*. We are in true unity with all those who believe in Jesus Christ."

The Rev. Paul M. Hasvold [Northeastern Iowa Synod] identified himself as a member of the first Lutheran-Episcopal Dialogue, and speaking in favor of the *Concordat*, said, "I have two comments on what seems to me some of the commonest and greatest fears concerning the passage of the *Concordat* with The Episcopal Church. One, it was declared on Saturday that if we adopt the *Concordat* we would be taking on their structure. Those very words were used, 'their structure' in the historic episcopate, a form of polity then that would not be our own. I comment that that is false and unfair. We are a confessional church. The historic episcopate is in the confessions, our desired form of church polity. No form of polity is considered essential by our confessors and a full ordering of the Church is by human right. Nevertheless, the historic episcopate is respected and desired. Listen to two quotations from the Apology to the Augsburg Confession. Article XIV.1: 'On this matter we have given frequent testimony to our deep desire to maintain the Church polity and various ranks of ecclesiastical hierarchy, although they were created by human authority.' And in XIV.5: 'Furthermore, we want at this point to declare our willingness to keep the ecclesiastical and canonical polity provided that the bishops stop raging against our churches.' Article XXVIII of the Augsburg Confession contains a compromise proposal to preserve among Lutherans what is the historic polity of the Christian Church. Our 16th century Lutheran confessors were not able to preserve in Germany the historic episcopate. They tried, they sincerely desired to maintain it, they declared their willingness to keep it, and implicitly the hope that it be restored because of their deep commitment to Christian unity. If we adopt it now, we are reclaiming it. Two, discussions of the *Concordat*, including the Saturday speech, have been filled with speculations about the distancing of bishops from pastors and increasing a spirit of hierarchy and a diminishing of the priesthood of all believers. I do not want to speculate and we are urged to read the *Concordat*, so let me do it. There is a wonderful paragraph at [Section] B.6. It begins, 'The Episcopal Church hereby endorses the Lutheran affirmation that the historic catholic episcopate under the Word of God must always serve the Gospel' and it continues by offering structures."

The Rev. Joe R. Haugstuen [Montana Synod] commented, "I ask you to consider what will happen if the *Concordat* is defeated? Tomorrow, the sun will come up. We need more work, we do not have consensus among our teaching faculty members, we have widespread division within our synods. It seems to me, ecumenism is done by consensus. We need to convince our own people that this is the time and this is the way that we want to proceed. I think many people are convinced that this is the time, but they are not convinced that this is the way to proceed, that the document itself is flawed. We need again to work on the document, we need again to talk about the historic episcopate, we need to talk about

polity, we need to talk about what results this document will have in the life of our church. I would propose that we say 'no' to the *Concordat*, but continue our discussions. I do not think that we will be rebuffed by The Episcopal Church. I really seriously doubt that we will be rebuffed. I want to call to mind what Bishop Rogness said, that it is the means by which we have gone about reaching agreement that is flawed. It seems possible that we can proceed, that this is not an impasse, but it will take more than a few feel-good arguments and a few very pointed editorials in *The Lutheran* to convince our people that we are proceeding in the right manner."

Bishop Marcus J. Miller [Northeastern Ohio Synod] said, "I have appreciated the anecdotes that have been told about the local Christian cooperation in a variety of endeavors. Many of us are part of this church body because those kinds of ecumenical endeavors have been encouraged and supported and have been a part of our life together in the Church. But I rise to speak in favor of the *Concordat* on the importance of our decision together in this assembly for the sake of local ministries. In the hearing of many of the anecdotes, I guess I must confess that I have also been a bit surprised at the way in which sometimes local practice seems to supersede the decisions that we make in covenant together in this assembly and as a church. Our decision to support the *Concordat* speaks a clear word to those of us who provide leadership for this church locally, and I anticipate that affirmation as we return to Northeastern Ohio and as I work with Clark Grue, who is the bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Ohio, to strengthen and increase our ministry at Cleveland State University and at Case Western Reserve University and as we speak together to renew the Church on the west side of Cleveland. It is important for me, and for us, that our ministries be recognized now. The *Concordat* provides for that recognition now. And in recognizing fully our ministries now, we can go forward to make Christ known."

Ms. Sally Hanson [South Dakota Synod] commented, "I am a lifelong Lutheran and, like so many of you, what is important in my life is reaching out to others with the good news of Jesus Christ. I was so excited to come to the Churchwide Assembly and help make decisions to further our mission; important, big decisions that really matter. I really want to be a part of historic decisions, but this document is not it. I have been told to accept the historic episcopate as a gift or as something that we accept for the sake of ecumenism, as something that does not matter in the daily life of our congregations—I cannot. I just cannot accept the historic episcopate because it contradicts what I believe about the Word being enough. Since so many Lutherans feel this way, I do not believe this document will enhance our mission. The *Concordat* with its requirement of the historic episcopate is divisive and that will inhibit our mission not enhance it. We can do better on our ecumenical agreements. I must vote 'no' on the *Concordat* and I urge you to do so also."

The Rev. Martin M. Roth [Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod] stated, "I am trying to stay on course surrounded by voices inviting, no, urging me to fear—fear not Greeks bearing gifts, but rather Anglicans bearing an historic episcopacy. Fear that the acceptance of the *Concordat* will inevitably mean for Lutherans an

evolution to a top-heavy, princely episcopacy, a centralized authority that will certainly run amok and undercut our confessional integrity, infringing on our evangelical freedom. But I also hear other voices, voices of heritage and hope, that help me keep on course and unafraid. The voices of Luther and Cranmer visiting quietly with each other during days of reformation, to discuss common concerns and issues, both theological and pastoral. I hear Henry Melchior Mühlberg's voice speaking during Colonial times, times during which Lutherans and Anglicans exchanged pulpits, shared communion fellowship, and clergy of both churches met together. I hear him saying, 'Their articles of faith have been extracted from the Word of God as well as ours. Their expressions of their articles of faith are as good as evangelistic Lutherans could wish them to be.' But the voice I hear most clearly is saying, 'Perfect love casts out fear. When the Son makes you free, you are free indeed.' This is the freedom of the Gospel not only from something but for [something]—for stepping out in love, hope, and faith that although no humans can know or see for certain the details of the future, we can trust as we enter that future that God's hand will lead us and God's love will continue to guide and shape us. Hearing these voices of heritage and hope, I say in my own voice, I am unafraid, I am in support."

Bishop Paul J. Blom [Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod] moved the previous question.

MOVED; *Two-Thirds Vote Required*
SECONDED; *Yes-636; No-308*
CARRIED: To move the previous question.

Vote on A Formula of Agreement and the Concordat of Agreement

Reference: continued on *Minutes*, pages 37, 125, 381, 413, 600, 605, 621, 659.

Debate having been closed, Bishop Anderson said, "Let me just review this once again so you understand how we are going to proceed. Now that the debate is completed, we will move to sequential votes on the two proposals. We will vote first on the Reformed proposal [*A Formula of Agreement*] and announce the vote results. I will however ask the secretary to offer prayer before we take that vote. Then, before proceeding to the vote on the *Concordat [of Agreement]*, I will again ask the secretary to offer prayer as we prepare to cast our vote on that proposal. Both of these votes will require a two-thirds majority. I hope that we can carry it through in a focused manner. After the vote is announced on the second proposal [*Concordat of Agreement*], I am asking that we join together in singing 'The Church's One Foundation,' the text of which will appear on the screen."

Bishop Anderson then asked the assembly, "Please now turn to Section IV, page 37 [*1997 Pre-Assembly Report*] and, Secretary Almen, would you please read

the resolves of the action before us transmitted to the assembly by the Church Council?

Secretary Almen read the resolution concerning *A Formula of Agreement*.

RESOLVED, that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America adopt *A Formula of Agreement* on the basis of *A Common Calling* and declare that it is in full communion with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Reformed Church in America, and the United Church of Christ; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this full-communion agreement will take effect when all four churches act affirmatively on this resolution in accordance with their respective governing procedures; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America appoint representatives to a Lutheran-Reformed Joint Committee, which will coordinate implementation of full communion in the four churches; and be it further

RESOLVED, that Presiding Bishop H. George Anderson present a progress report on the work of the committee to the next Churchwide Assembly (1999).

Bishop Anderson then invited Secretary Almen to offer prayer. Secretary Almen said, "Let us pray: Almighty God, who fulfilled your word of promise and poured out upon your church the gift of the Holy Spirit, open our hearts, we pray, to receive the fullness of your grace and power, that our lives may be strengthened for your service and our hearts may be conformed to your loving will. You are the God of all generations. You are our ruler, guide, and hope. Grant now to your people the direction of your wise and loving Spirit. Be present, we pray, with us to whom you have given particular responsibilities for the well-being of your Church. Strengthen us always in witness to the Gospel, bestow upon us a spirit of devotion, and lead us in all our works and ways to serve and please you, to the glory of your name, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen."

Bishop Anderson then announced that the assembly would proceed to vote on *A Formula of Agreement* with the Reformed Churches.

ASSEMBLY *Two-Thirds Vote Required*
ACTION *Yes-839; No-193*
CA97.4.8 WHEREAS, the prayer of our Lord, the intent of our ecumenical vision, and the opportunities for mission that

God is offering to us all demand that we express more fully the visible unity of the Church of Jesus Christ; and

WHEREAS, the witness of the Reformed and Lutheran Churches in Europe has resulted in over two decades of full communion within the framework of the *Leuenberg Agreement*; and

WHEREAS, the four churches represented in the Lutheran-Reformed Committee for Theological Conversations (1988–1992)—the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Reformed Church in America, and the United Church of Christ—have their historical roots in the Reformation and, in part, have understood themselves in the context of their relationship to one another; and

WHEREAS, these four churches rejoice in nearly four decades of dialogue during which the doctrines and confessional commitments of the respective churches have been thoroughly discussed in an atmosphere of mutual respect and a growing sense of common mission and understanding; and

WHEREAS, *A Common Calling*, the report of the Lutheran-Reformed Committee for Theological Conversations, reaffirmed a consensus reported in previous dialogues that there are no “church-dividing differences” precluding full communion among these four churches; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America adopt *A Formula of Agreement* on the basis of *A Common Calling* and declare that it is in full communion with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Reformed Church in America, and the United Church of Christ; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this full-communion agreement will take effect when all four churches act affirmatively on this resolution in accordance with their respective governing procedures; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America appoint representatives to a Lutheran-Reformed

Joint Committee, which will coordinate implementation of full communion in the four churches; and be it further

RESOLVED, that Presiding Bishop H. George Anderson present a progress report on the work of the committee to the next Churchwide Assembly (1999).

Bishop Anderson announced. “By a vote of 839 favoring, 198 opposed, *A Formula of Agreement* is adopted.”

A Formula of Agreement

Introduction

The Lutheran Reformed Coordinating Committee, on February 3, 1997, called attention to the fact that *A Formula of Agreement* sets forth a fundamental doctrinal consensus that is based on and presumes the theological agreements of earlier Lutheran-Reformed dialogues, including the 1983 statement: “our unity in Christ compels us to claim our strong affinities in doctrine and practice. Both Lutheran and Reformed traditions:

- a. Affirm themselves a living part of the church catholic.
- b. Confess the Nicene and Apostles’ Creeds.
- c. Affirm the doctrine of justification by faith as fundamental.
- d. Affirm the unique and final authority of Holy Scriptures in the church.
- e. Affirm the real presence of Christ in the Lord’s Supper.
- f. Affirm the priesthood of all believers and have interpreted this as our servanthood to God and our service to the world.
- g. Affirm the vocation of all the baptized, which is service (ministry) in every aspect of their lives in their care of God’s world.
- h. Affirm that they are in faithful succession in the apostolic Tradition and that faithful succession in this Tradition is all that is necessary for mutual recognition as part of the church catholic.
- i. Share a common definition of a church in the apostolic Tradition: a community where the word is rightly preached and the sacraments rightly administered.
- j. Identify a ministry of word and sacrament as instituted by God.
- k. Ordain once to a ministry of word and sacrament, and the functions of such persons are identical.

- l. Understand that ordination is to the ministry of the church catholic. Such ordinations in both traditions have usually been by presbyters.
- m. Have granted the appropriateness under some circumstances of one ordained person exercising *episkope*, oversight (under a variety of titles including that of bishop), but both traditions have ordinarily exercised the function of *episkope* collegially through such structures as presbyteries and synods.
- n. Affirm that the church always must be open to further growth and reformation. Both traditions have been willing to be self-critical. Both traditions have become increasingly open to a historical-critical understanding of the history of the church and of their respective traditions within the apostolic Tradition.” (*An Invitation Action*, pages 2-3).

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Preface

In 1997 four churches of Reformation heritage will act on an ecumenical proposal of historic importance after the timing reflects a doctrinal consensus which has been developing over the past thirty-two years coupled with an increasing urgency for the church to proclaim a gospel of unity in contemporary society. In light of identified doctrinal consensus, desiring to be a visible witness to the unity of the Church, and hearing the call to engage together in God's mission, it is recommended:

A FORMULA OF AGREEMENT

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Reformed Church in America, and the United Church of Christ
That the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Reformed Church in America, and the United Church of Christ declare on the basis of A **Common Calling** and their adoption of this A **Formula of Agreement** and their adoption of this A **Formula of Agreement** in full communion with one another. Thus, each church is entering into or affirming full communion with three other churches.

The term “full communion” is understood here to specifically mean that the four churches:

- ! recognize each other as churches in which the gospel is rightly preached and the sacraments rightly administered according to the Word of God;

Unofficial Notes

A Formula of Agreement

These notes were NOT part of the text to be considered by the Churchwide Assembly. Only the Official Text, including both the regular text and the endnotes, of A Formula of Agreement was presented with the recommendation of the Church Council for a vote at the 1997 Churchwide Assembly. These notes were provided as an interpretation resource. The Church Council directed that staff persons prepare various resources to assist in the study, consideration, and discussion of the ecumenical proposals on the agenda of the 1997 Churchwide Assembly.

Preface

The 1997 Churchwide Assembly considered the proposal to declare full communion with three church bodies of the Reformed family of churches. The

- ! withdraw any historic condemnation by one side or the other as inappropriate for the life and faith of our churches today;
- ! continue to recognize each other's Baptism and authorize and encourage the sharing of the Lord's Supper among their members;
- ! recognize each others' various ministries and make provision for the orderly exchange of ordained ministers of Word and Sacrament;
- ! establish appropriate channels of consultation and decision-making within the existing structures of the churches;
- ! commit themselves to an ongoing process of theological dialogue in order to clarify further the common understanding of the faith and foster its common expression in evangelism, witness, and service;
- ! pledge themselves to living together under the Gospel in such a way that the principle of mutual affirmation and admonition becomes the basis of a trusting relationship in which respect and love for the other will have a chance to grow.

This document assumes the doctrinal consensus articulated in *A Common Calling: The Witness of Our Reformation Churches in North American Today*, and is to be viewed in concert with that document. The purpose of *A Formula of Agreement* is to elucidate the complementarity of affirmation and admonition as the basic principle for entering into full communion and the implications of that action as described in *A Common Calling*.

A Common Calling, the report of the Lutheran-Reformed Committee for Theological Conversations (1988-1992), continued a process begun in 1962.¹ Within that report was the "unanimous recommendation that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Reformed Church in America, and the United Church of Christ declare that they are in full communion with one another" (*A Common Calling*,

decision related to all three Reformed churches was made in one "bundled" vote because all three are members of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, and thus understand themselves to share one fellowship similar to that shared by the member churches of the Lutheran World Federation.

The description of the characteristics of full communion are similar to those contained in this church's document, "Ecumenism—The Vision of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America," approved by the 1991 Churchwide Assembly. That statement declares that full communion may exist when two church bodies share: (1) a common confession of the Christian faith; (2) a mutual recognition of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, allowing for joint worship and an exchangeability of members; (3) a mutual recognition and availability of ministers; (4) a common commitment to evangelism, witness, and service; (5) a means of common decision making on critical common issues of faith and life; (6) a mutual lifting of any condemnations that exist between the churches.

pp. 66-67). There followed a series of seven recommendations under which full communion would be implemented as developed within the study from the theological conversations (*A Common Calling*, p. 67). As a result, the call for full communion has been presented to the four respective church bodies. The vote on a declaration of full communion will take place at the respective churchwide assemblies in 1997.

Mutual Affirmation and Admonition

A concept identified as early as the first Lutheran-Reformed Dialogue became pivotal for the understanding of the theological conversations. Participants in the Dialogue discovered that "efforts to guard against possible distortions of truth have resulted in varying emphases in related doctrines which are not in themselves contradictory and in fact are complementary. . ." (*Marburg Revisited*, Preface). Participants in the theological conversations rediscovered and considered the implications of this insight and saw it as a foundation for the recommendation for full communion among the four churches. This breakthrough concept, a complementarity of mutual affirmation and mutual admonition, points toward new ways of relating traditions of Reformation churches that heretofore have not been able to reconcile their diverse witnesses to the saving grace of God that is bestowed in Jesus Christ, the Lord of the Church.

This concept provides a basis for acknowledging three essential facets of the Lutheran-Reformed relationship: (1) that each of the churches grounds its life in authentic New Testament traditions of Christ; (2) that the core traditions of these churches belong together within the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church; and (3) that the historic give-and-take between these churches has resulted in fundamental mutual criticisms that cannot be glossed over, but need to be understood "as diverse witnesses to the one Gospel that we confess in common" (*A Common Calling*, p. 66). A working awareness emerged,

Note that this *A Formula of Agreement* does not stand alone, but is based upon the series of dialogues conducted in North America and in Europe (outlined in the historical narrative). For a fuller description of the theological agreement that serves as the basis for this proposal, see especially, *A Common Calling: The Witness of our Reformation Churches in North America Today*.

which cast in a new light contemporary perspectives on the sixteenth century debates.

The theological diversity within our common confession provides both the complementarity needed for a full and adequate witness to the Gospel (mutual affirmation) and the corrective reminder that every theological approach is a partial and incomplete witness to the Gospel (mutual admonition) (*A Common Calling*, page 66).

The working principle of “mutual affirmation and admonition” allows for the affirmation of agreement while at the same time allowing a process of mutual edification and correction in areas where there is not total agreement. Each tradition brings its “corrective witness” to the other while fostering continuing theological reflection and dialogue to further clarify the unity of faith they share and seek. The principle of “mutual affirmation and admonition” views remaining differences as diverse witnesses to the one Gospel confessed in common. Whereas conventional modes of thought have hidden the bases of unity behind statements of differences, the new concept insists that, while remaining differences must be acknowledged, even to the extent of their irreconcilability, it is the inherent unity in Christ that is determinative. Thus, the remaining differences are not church-dividing.

The concept of mutual affirmation and admonition translates into significant outcomes, both of which inform the relationships of these four churches with one another. The principle of complementarity and its accompanying mode of interpretation make it clear that in entering into full church communion these churches:

- ! do not consider their own traditional confessional and ecclesiological character to be compromised in the least;
- ! fully recognize the validity and necessity of the confessional and ecclesiological character of the partner churches;

Mutual Affirmation and Admonition

A significant development in the relationship between Lutheran and Reformed churches is the realization that each tradition has expressed doctrinal positions with certain emphases. In the past these differing emphases were considered not only contradictory, but serious enough to be church dividing. The conversations of the last 30 years have led the participants to declare that there are essential agreements in critical matters of faith, and while these doctrines are expressed in various ways, they are not contradictory. This principle of “complementarity” is considered a major breakthrough in ecumenical dialogue and serves as the foundation for this *A Formula of Agreement*.

The Lutheran-Reformed dialogue asserts that this concept is, in turn, based on the multifaceted witness of the New Testament about such matters as how the church organizes itself for ministry and mission. Thus, the two traditions share a common foundation in the Scriptures and the apostolic tradition of the Church. In fact, the dialogue participants assert that the full witness of the Scriptures is captured only when the emphases

- ! intend to allow significant differences to be honestly articulated within the relationship of full communion;
- ! allow for articulated differences to be opportunities for mutual growth of churchly fullness within each of the partner churches and within the relationship of full communion itself.

of the two traditions are expressed together.

A Fundamental Doctrinal Consensus

Members of the theological conversations were charged with determining whether the essential conditions for full communion have been met. They borrowed language of the Lutheran confessions: “For the true unity of the church it is enough to agree (*satis est consentire*) concerning the teaching of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments” (*Augsburg Confession*, Article 7). The theological consensus that is the basis for the current proposal for full communion includes justification, the sacraments, ministry, and church and world. Continuing areas of diversity, no longer to be seen as “church-dividing,” were dealt with by the theological conversations under the headings: The Condemnations, the Presence of Christ, and God’s Will to Save.

On Justification, participants in the first dialogue agreed “that each tradition has sought to preserve the wholeness of the Gospel as including forgiveness of sins and renewal of life” (*Marburg Revisited*, p. 152). Members of the third dialogue, in their Joint Statement on Justification, said, “Both Lutheran and Reformed churches are . . . rooted in, live by, proclaim, and confess the Gospel of the saving act of God in Jesus Christ” (*An Invitation to Action*, p. 9). They went on to say that “both . . . traditions confess this Gospel in the language of justification by grace through faith alone,” and concluded that “there are no substantive matters concerning justification that divide us” (*An Invitation to Action*, pp. 9-10).

Lutherans and Reformed agree that in Baptism, Jesus Christ receives human beings, fallen prey to sin and death, into his fellowship of salvation so that

When the emphases of the Lutheran and Reformed traditions are placed side-by-side, a relationship of “mutual affirmation and admonition” is created in which representatives of the two traditions can both support and constructively criticize the theological position of the other. This process has and will continue to deepen the unity in the Christian faith already shared by the two traditions. Seen in this light, the emphasis shifts from criticism of one tradition by the other to expressions of what the traditions have in common. The depth of theological agreement between the two traditions makes the remaining differences (which are not to be glossed over) no longer church dividing.

Mutual affirmation and admonition leads to a new way for the two traditions to relate to one another. By entering into full communion the churches of the two traditions affirm both their own tradition and that of the partner churches, viewing those traditions as complementary rather than contradictory. Remaining differences between the two traditions are considered opportunities for growth in our common faith in Christ Jesus.

they may become new creatures. This is experienced as a call into Christ's community, to a new life of faith, to daily repentance, and to discipleship (cf. *Leuenberg Agreement*, III.2.a.). The central doctrine of the presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper received attention in each dialogue and in the theological conversations. The summary statement in *Marburg Revisited*, reflecting agreement, asserts:

During the Reformation both Reformed and Lutheran Churches exhibited an evangelical intention when they understood the Lord's Supper in the light of the saving act of God in Christ. Despite this common intention, different terms and concepts were employed which . . . led to mutual misunderstanding and misrepresentation. Properly interpreted, the differing terms and concepts were often complementary rather than contradictory (*Marburg Revisited*, pp. 103-104).

The third dialogue concluded that, while neither Lutheran nor Reformed profess to explain how Christ is present and received in the Supper, both churches affirm that "Christ himself is the host at his table. . . and that Christ himself is fully present and received in the Supper" [emphasis added] (*An Invitation to Action*, p. 14). This doctrinal consensus became the foundation for work done by the theological conversations.

The theme of ministry was considered only by the third dialogue. Agreeing that there are no substantive matters which should divide Lutherans and Reformed, the dialogue affirmed that:

Ministry in our heritage derives from and points to Christ who alone is sufficient to save. Centered in the proclamation of the word and the administration of the sacraments, it is built on the affirmation that the benefits of Christ are known only through faith, grace, and Scripture (*An Invitation to Action*, p. 24).

The dialogue went on to speak of the responsibility of all the baptized to participate in Christ's servant ministry, pointed to God's use of "the

A Fundamental Doctrinal Consensus

The participants in the Lutheran-Reformed dialogue relied on the traditional Lutheran understanding of the conditions necessary to achieve the unity of the Church as given in the Augsburg Confession: the proper preaching of the Gospel and the correct celebration of the sacraments. Having determined that those matters related directly to the Gospel and sacraments, such as the doctrine of justification, the ministry of the Church, and the mission of the Church, are no longer in dispute between the two traditions, the conditions for greater unity as expressed in the proposal for full communion are appropriate.

As the chief article of the faith, the doctrine of justification is at the core of the Church's proclamation and life. The dialogue participants determined that both traditions express adequately the doctrine of justification by grace through faith for the sake of Christ alone.

ordained ministers as instruments to mediate grace through the preaching of the Word and the administration of the sacraments," and asserted the need for proper oversight to "ensure that the word is truly preached and sacraments rightly administered" (*An Invitation to Action*, pp. 26, 28, 31).

The first dialogue considered the theme of church and world a very important inquiry. The dialogue examined differences, noted the need of correctives, and pointed to the essentially changed world in which the church lives today. Agreeing that "there is a common evangelical basis for Christian ethics in the theology of the Reformers," (*Marburg Revisited*, p. 177), the dialogue went on to rehearse the differing "accents" of Calvin and Luther on the relation of church and world, Law and Gospel, the "two kingdoms," and the sovereignty of Christ. The dialogue found that "differing formulations of the relation between Law and Gospel were prompted by a common concern to combat the errors of legalism on the one hand and antinomianism on the other." While differences remain regarding the role of God's Law in the Christian life, the dialogue did "not regard this as a divisive issue" (*Marburg Revisited*, p. 177). Furthermore, in light of the radically changed world of the twentieth century, it was deemed inappropriate to defend or correct positions and choices taken in the sixteenth century, making them determinative for Lutheran-Reformed witness today. Thus, the theological conversations, in a section on "Declaring God's Justice and Mercy," identified Reformed and Lutheran "emphases" as "complementary and stimulating" differences, posing a challenge to the pastoral service and witness of the churches. "The ongoing debate about 'justification and justice' is fundamentally an occasion for hearing the Word of God and doing it. Our traditions need each other in order to discern God's gracious promises and obey God's commands" (*A Common Calling*, p. 61).

Differing Emphases

! The Condemnations:

Turning to the sacraments, the dialogue participants recognized in the proclamation of each of the traditions an authentic understanding of the grace and forgiveness bestowed in the waters of Holy Baptism. Historically, Lutherans and Reformed have not recognized in the other tradition a proper understanding of the presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper. Based on the most recent dialogues, however, agreement has been reached that representatives of the two traditions have misunderstood the intentions of the other, masking the essential agreement that has always existed in this matter.

Members of the Lutheran and the Reformed traditions affirm that the ministry of the Church was ordained by God to instill faith by the proclamation of the Word and the celebration of the sacraments.

The condemnations of the Reformation era were an attempt to preserve and protect the Word of God; therefore, they are to be taken seriously. Because of the contemporary ecclesial situation today, however, it is necessary to question whether such condemnations should continue to divide the churches. The concept of mutual affirmation and mutual admonition of *A Common Calling* offers a way of overcoming condemnation language while allowing for different emphases with a common understanding of the primacy of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the gift of the sacraments. *A Common Calling* refers with approval to the *Leuenberg Agreement* where, as a consequence of doctrinal agreement, it is stated that the “condemnations expressed in the confessional documents no longer apply to the contemporary doctrinal position of the assenting churches” (*Leuenberg Agreement*, IV.32.b). The theological conversations stated:

We have become convinced that the task today is not to mark the point of separation and exclusion but to find a common language which will allow our partners to be heard in their honest concern for the truth of the Gospel, to be taken seriously, and to be integrated into the identity of our own ecumenical community of faith (*A Common Calling*, p. 40).

A major focus of the condemnations was the issue of the presence of Christ in the Lord’s Supper. Lutheran and Reformed Christians need to be assured that in their common understanding of the sacraments, the Word of God is not compromised; therefore, they insist on consensus among their churches on certain aspects of doctrine concerning the Lord’s Supper. In that regard Lutheran and Reformed Christians, recalling the issues addressed by the conversations, agree that:

In the Lord’s Supper the risen Jesus Christ imparts himself in his body and blood, given for all, through his word of promise with bread and wine. He thus gives himself unreservedly to all

In addressing the Church’s ministry, the dialogue participants also affirmed the essential nature of the ministry of all the baptized, who are empowered by the ministry of Word and Sacrament.

The relationship of the church to the world, and the proper distinction of Law and Gospel, were thoroughly addressed in the dialogues. While complete agreement on the role of the Law in the on-going life of the believer has not been achieved by these dialogues, the remaining differences are deemed not to be church dividing, particularly in light of the radically changing world in which we live. Again, the differences that remain are considered to be complementary rather than contradictory in nature.

who receive the bread and wine; faith receives the Lord’s Supper for salvation, unfaith for judgment (*Leuenberg Agreement*, III.1.18).

We cannot separate communion with Jesus Christ in his body and blood from the act of eating and drinking. To be concerned about the manner of Christ’s presence in the Lord’s Supper in abstraction from this act is to run the risk of obscuring the meaning of the Lord’s Supper (*Leuenberg Agreement*, III.1.19).

! The Presence of Christ:

The third dialogue urged the churches toward a deeper appreciation of the sacramental mystery based on consensus already achieved:

Appreciating what we Reformed and Lutheran Christians already hold in common concerning the Lord’s Supper, we nevertheless affirm that both of our communions need to keep on growing into an ever-deeper realization of the fullness and richness of the eucharistic mystery (*An Invitation to Action*, p. 14).

The members of the theological conversations acknowledged that it has not been possible to reconcile the confessional formulations from the sixteenth century with a “common language. . . which could do justice to all the insights, convictions, and concerns of our ancestors in the faith” (*A Common Calling*, p. 49). However, the theological conversations recognized these enduring differences as acceptable diversities with regard to the Lord’s Supper. Continuing in the tradition of the third dialogue, they respected the different perspectives and convictions from which their ancestors professed their faith, affirming that those differences are not church-dividing, but are complementary. Both sides can say together that “the Reformation heritage in the matter of the Lord’s Supper draws from the same roots and envisages the same goal: to call the people of God to the table at which Christ himself is present to give himself for us under the word of forgiveness,

Differing Emphases

The Condemnations

During the sixteenth-century Reformation, representatives of both traditions issued condemnations about certain doctrinal positions taken by the other. While taking these condemnations seriously because they were designed to protect the integrity of the proclamation of Gospel, new insights have led to the conclusion that such condemnations no longer apply to the churches. It seems appropriate to overcome the language of condemnation through the use of the mutual affirmation and mutual admonition discussed above, which will lead to a common way of articulating the truth of the Gospel.

Of particular importance in the condemnations of the sixteenth century were those related to the presence of Christ in the Lord’s Supper. After considerable conversation, representatives to the Lutheran-Reformed dialogue assert their common belief that the

empowerment, and promise.” Lutheran and Reformed Christians agree that:

In the Lord’s Supper the risen Christ imparts himself in body and blood, given up for all, through his word of promise with bread and wine. He thereby grants us forgiveness of sins and sets us free for a new life of faith. He enables us to experience anew that we are members of his body. He strengthens us for service to all people. [The official text reads, “*Er starkt uns zum Dienst an den Menschen*,” which may be translated “to all human beings”) (*Leuenberg Agreement*, II.2.15].

When we celebrate the Lord’s Supper we proclaim the death of Christ through which God has reconciled the world with himself. We proclaim the presence of the risen Lord in our midst. Rejoicing that the Lord has come to us, we await his future coming in glory (*Leuenberg Agreement*, II.2.16).

With a complementarity and theological consensus found in the Lord’s Supper, it is recognized that there are implications for sacramental practices as well, which represent the heritage of these Reformation churches.

As churches of the Reformation, we share many important features in our respective practices of Holy Communion. Over the centuries of our separation, however, there have developed characteristic differences in practice, and these still tend to make us uncomfortable at each other’s celebration of the Supper. These differences can be discerned in several areas, for example, in liturgical style and liturgical details, in our verbal interpretations of our practices, in the emotional patterns involved in our experience of the Lord’s Supper, and in the implications we find in the Lord’s Supper for the life and mission of the church and of its individual members. . . . We affirm our conviction, however, that these differences

risen Christ gives to all who participate in the Lord’s Supper the gift of his body and blood, which is appropriated by faith. *How* Christ is present in this sacrament is a secondary concern to the act of receiving the gifts of forgiveness, life, and salvation Christ offers under the forms of bread and wine.

The Presence of Christ:

That Christ is truly present in the Sacrament of the Altar and imparts such gifts is part of a great mystery of God’s gracious love for all people. One of the goals of full communion is for Lutheran and Reformed Christians to grow in their understanding of this mystery as together they share this sacrament.

While a growing common understanding of the Lord’s Supper is evident, members of both traditions must acknowledge that differences remain. These differences are no longer considered church dividing, according to the representatives to the dialogues, and are indeed complementary. The essence of the Reformation heritage regarding the Sacrament of the Altar, shared both by Lutherans and the

should be recognized as acceptable diversities within one Christian faith. Both of our communions, we maintain, need to grow in appreciation of our diverse eucharistic traditions, finding mutual enrichment in them. At the same time both need to grow toward a further deepening of our common experience and expression of the mystery of our Lord’s Supper (*An Invitation to Action*, pp. 16-17).

God’s Will to Save:

Lutherans and Reformed claim the saving power of God’s grace as the center of their faith and life. They believe that salvation depends on God’s grace alone and not on human cooperation. In spite of this common belief, the doctrine of predestination has been one of the issues separating the two traditions. Although Lutherans and Reformed have different emphases in the way they live out their belief in the sovereignty of God’s love, they agree that “God’s unconditional will to save must be preached against all cultural optimism or pessimism” (*A Common Calling*, p. 54). It is noted that “a common language that transcends the polemics of the past and witnesses to the common predestination faith of Lutheran and Reformed Churches has emerged already in theological writings and official or unofficial statements in our churches” (*A Common Calling*, page 55). Rather than insisting on doctrinal uniformity, the two traditions are willing to acknowledge that they have been borne out of controversy, and their present identities, theological and ecclesial, have been shaped by those arguments. To demand more than fundamental doctrinal consensus on those areas that have been church-dividing would be tantamount to denying the faith of those Christians with whom we have shared a common journey toward wholeness in Jesus Christ. An even greater tragedy would occur were we, through our divisiveness, to deprive the world of a common witness to the saving grace of Jesus Christ that has been so freely given to us.

Reformed, is that the people of God are invited to receive from Christ, who is truly present with his body and blood in the bread and wine of this meal, the gifts of “forgiveness, empowerment, and promise.” As the people of God gather around this meal, we proclaim Jesus’ death and his resurrection, even as we await his return in glory.

The remaining doctrinal and liturgical diversity will have practical consequences. The representatives to the Lutheran-Reformed dialogue assert that isolation from one another has resulted in quite diverse sacramental practice, with the result that members of one tradition are often uncomfortable at worship in a congregation of the other tradition, sometimes to the point of questioning its theological integrity. However, as the

The Binding and Effective

Commitment to Full Communion

In the formal adoption at the highest levels of this *A Formula of Agreement*, based on *A Common Calling*, the churches acknowledge that they are undertaking an act of strong mutual commitment. They are making pledges and promises to each other. The churches recognize that full commitment to each other involves serious intention, awareness, and dedication. They are binding themselves to far more than merely a formal action; they are entering into a relationship with gifts and changes for all.

declaration of full communion on the basis of *A Formula of Agreement* and *A Common Calling* builds confidence in the theological intentions and commitments of the partner churches, liturgical practice will increasingly be seen as complementary rather than contradictory, and the experience of our diverse practices will become occasions for enriching our common understandings.

God's Will to Save:

Lutherans and Reformed are agreed that salvation is a gift of God alone, through Christ alone, on account of faith, which is itself a gift from God. Despite this agreement in faith, the doctrine of predestination (that is, that God decided before creation whether one will be damned or saved) has historically divided the two traditions, even though contemporary understandings have changed considerably from the time of the Reformers. In part these differences are based on differing emphases related to God's love. The two traditions are in agreement that ultimately the goal is to preach the gracious goodness and love of God to a world in need of salvation. Such a commitment diminishes the need to achieve doctrinal uniformity in favor of expressing the breadth and depth of the unity we share in so many other matters of the Christian faith. Even more important is the concern to present

responds to the ecumenical conviction that “there is no turning back, either from the goal of visible unity or from the single ecumenical movement that unites concern for the unity of the Church and concern for engagement in the struggles of the world” (“On the Way to Fuller Koinonia: The Message of the Fifth World Conference on Faith and Order,” 1993). And, as St. Paul reminds us all, “The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this” (1 Thessalonians 5:24, NRSV).²

a common witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ in a world that is offended by divisions within the Christian Church.

The Binding and Effective

Commitment to Full Communion

With the approval of *A Formula of Agreement*, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the three Reformed churches pledge to make a strong commitment to one another. A new relationship among the four church bodies will be initiated that will bring gifts and changes to all. In that sense, the vote to approve *A Formula of Agreement* is binding on the church bodies, allowing all of them to support the life and witness of the others. The specific process by which the vote on full communion was taken in the four church bodies is described in endnote 2.

Living out all the dimensions of such a new relationship will not always be easy. Nonetheless, the four church bodies promise to struggle together to overcome whatever difficulties may be encountered in the spirit of mutual admonition and correction described above.

This new relationship of full communion will include the establishment of a small, joint commission, with representatives of all four church bodies, whose task will be to channel issues for discussion to the appropriate decision-making groups in the four churches. This form of joint

decision-making is a more formal example of how the churches will cooperate with one another. Congregations will be the main arena for living out this new relationship, however, as they seek to bear witness to the unity for which Christ prayed in making their witness to the Gospel in the world.

End Notes

¹ For a summary of the history of Lutheran-Reformed Dialogue in North America, see *A Common Calling*, pp. 10-11. The results of the first round of dialogue, 1962-1966, were published in *Marburg Revisited* (Augsburg, 1966). The second round of dialogue took place in 1972-1974. Its brief report was published in *An Invitation to Action* (Fortress, 1983), pp. 54-60. The third series began in 1981 and concluded in 1983, and was published in the book, *An Invitation to Action*. Following this third dialogue a fourth round of “Theological Conversations” was held from 1988 to 1992, resulting in the report, *A Common Calling: The Witness of Our Reformation Churches in North America Today* (Augsburg, 1993). In addition, the North American participants in Lutheran-Reformed Dialogue have drawn on the theological work found in the *Leuenberg Agreement*, a Statement of Concord between Reformation churches in Europe in 1973, published in *An Invitation to Action*, pp. 61-73, as well as the Report of the International Joint Commission of the Lutheran World Federation and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, 1985-1988, *Toward Church Fellowship* (LWF and WARC, 1989).

² **The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:** To enter into full communion with these three churches [Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Reformed Church in America, United Church of Christ], an affirmative two-thirds vote of the 1997 Churchwide Assembly, the highest legislative authority in the ELCA, will be required. Subsequently in the appropriate manner other changes in the constitution and bylaws would be made to conform with this binding decision by an assembly to enter into full communion.

The constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) do not speak specifically of this church entering into full communion with non-Lutheran churches. The closest analogy, in view of the seriousness of the matter, would appear to be an amendment of the ELCA’s constitution or bylaws. The constitution provides a process of such amendment (Chapter 22). In both cases a two-thirds vote of members present and voting is required.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.): Upon an affirmative vote of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the declaration of full communion will be effected throughout the church in accordance with the Presbyterian *Book of Order* and this *Formula of Agreement*. This means a majority vote of the General Assembly, a majority vote in the presbyteries, and a majority vote of the presbyteries.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) orders its life as an institution with a constitution, government, officers, finances, and administrative rules. These are instruments of mission, not ends in themselves. Different orders have served the Gospel, and none can claim exclusive validity. A presbyterian polity recognizes the responsibility of all members for ministry and maintains the organic relation of all congregations in the church. It seeks to protect the church from every exploitation by ecclesiastical or secular power and ambition. Every church order must be open to such reformation as may be required to make it a more effective instrument of the mission of reconciliation. (“Confession of 1967,” *Book of Confessions*, p. 40).

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall be governed by representative bodies composed of presbyters, both elders and ministers of the Word and Sacrament. These governing bodies shall be called session, presbytery, synod, and the General Assembly (*Book of Order*, G-9.0100).

All governing bodies of the Church are united by nature of the Church and share with one another responsibilities, rights, and powers as provided in this Constitution. The governing bodies are separate and independent, but have such mutual relations that the act of one of them is the act of the whole Church performed by it through the appropriate governing body. The jurisdiction of each governing body is limited by the express provisions of the Constitution, with the acts of each subject to review by the next higher governing body (G-9.0103).

The Reformed Church in America: Upon an affirmative vote by the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America (RCA), the declaration of full communion will be effected throughout the church, and the Commission on Christian Unity will, in accordance with the responsibilities granted by the *Book of Church Order*, proceed to initiate and supervise the effecting of the intention of full communion as described in the *Formula of Agreement*.

The Commission on Christian Unity has advised the General Synod and the church of the forthcoming vote for full communion in 1997. The Commission will put before the General Synod the *Formula of Agreement* and any and all correlative recommendations toward effecting the Reformed Church in America declaring itself to be in full communion with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and the United Church of Christ.

The Constitution of the Reformed Church in America gives responsibility for ecumenical relations to the General Synod (BCO, Chapter 1, Part IV, Article 2, Section 5). To be faithful to the ecumenical calling, the General Synod empowers its Commission on Christian Unity to initiate and supervise action relating to correspondence and cooperative relationship with the highest judicatories or assemblies of other Christian denominations and the engaging in interchurch conversations “in all matters pertaining to the extension of the Kingdom of God.”

The Constitution of the Reformed Church in America gives responsibility to the Commission on Christian Unity for informing “the church of current ecumenical developments and advising the church concerning its ecumenical participation and relationships” (BCO, Chapter 3, Part I, Article 5, Section 3).

Granted its authority by the General Synod, the Commission on Christian Unity has appointed RCA dialogue and conversation partners since 1962 to the present. It has received all reports and, where action was required, has presented recommendation(s) to the General Synod for vote and implementation in the church.

The United Church of Christ: The United Church of Christ (UCC) will act on the recommendation that it enter into full communion with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and the Reformed Church in America, by vote of the General Synod in 1997. This vote is binding on the General Synod and is received by local churches, associations, and conferences for implementation in accordance with the covenantal polity outlined in paragraphs 14, 15, and 16 of the Constitution of the United Church of Christ.*

The United Church of Christ is “composed of Local Churches, Associations, Conferences, and the General Synod.” The Constitution and Bylaws of the United Church of Christ lodge responsibility for ecumenical life with the General Synod and with its chief executive officer, the President of the United Church of Christ. Article VII of the Constitution grants to the General Synod certain powers. Included among these are the power:

- ! to determine the relationship of the UCC with ecumenical organizations, world confessional bodies, and other interdenominational agencies (Article VII, par. 45h).
- ! to encourage conversation with other communions and when appropriate to authorize and guide negotiations with them looking toward formal union, (VII, 45i).

In the polity of the United Church of Christ, the powers of the General Synod can never, to use a phrase from the Constitution, “invade the autonomy of Conferences, Associations, or Local

Churches.” The autonomy of the Local Church is “inherent and modifiable only by its own action” (IV, 15). However, it is important to note that this autonomy is understood in the context of “mutual Christian concern and in dedication to Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church,” (IV, 14). This Christological and covenantal understanding of autonomy is clearly expressed in the Constitutional paragraphs which immediately precede and follow the discussion of Local Church autonomy:

The Local Churches of the United Church of Christ have, in fellowship, a God-given responsibility for that Church, its labors and its extension, even as the United Church of Christ has, in fellowship, a God-given responsibility for the well-being and needs and aspirations of its Local Churches. In mutual Christian concern and in dedication to Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church, the one and the many share in common Christian experience and responsibility (IV, 14).

Actions by, or decisions or advice emanating from, the General Synod, a Conference, or an Association, should be held in the highest regard by every Local Church (IV, 16).

* As provided in the *Constitution of the United Church of Christ*:

Paragraph 14. The Local Churches of the United Church of Christ have, in fellowship, a God-given responsibility for that Church, its labors and its extension, even as the United Church of Christ has, in fellowship, a God-given responsibility for the well-being and needs and aspirations of its Local Churches. In mutual Christian concern and in dedication to Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church, the one and the many share in common Christian experience and responsibility.

Paragraph 15. The autonomy of the Local Church is inherent and modifiable only by its own action. Nothing in this Constitution and the Bylaws of the United Church of Christ shall destroy or limit the right of each Local Church to continue to operate in the way customary to it; nor shall be construed as giving to the General Synod, or to any Conference or Association now, or at any future time, the power to abridge or impair the autonomy of any Local Church in the management of its own affairs, which affairs include, but are not limited to, the right to retain or adopt its own methods of organization, worship and education; to retain or secure its own charter and name; to adopt its own constitution and bylaws; to formulate its own covenants and confessions of faith; to admit members in its own way and to provide for their discipline or dismissal; to call or dismiss its pastor or pastors by such procedure as it shall determine; to acquire, own, manage and dispose of property and funds; to control its own benevolences; and to withdraw by its own decision from the United Church of Christ at any time without forfeiture of ownership or control of any real or personal property owned by it.

Paragraph 16. Actions by, or decisions or advice emanating from, the General Synod, a Conference or an Association, should be held in the highest regard by every Local Church.

Bishop Anderson asked Secretary Almen to read the resolution regarding the *Concordat of Agreement*.

RESOLVED, that this Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America accepts, as a matter of verbal content as well as in principle, the *Concordat of Agreement*, as set forth below; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America agrees to make those legislative, constitutional, and

liturgical changes necessary to implement full communion between the two churches, as envisioned in the *Concordat of Agreement*.

Bishop Anderson then invited Secretary Almen to offer prayer. Secretary Almen said, “Let us pray: Remember, O God, according to the multitude of your tender mercies, your whole Church, all who join with us in prayer, and all our sisters and brothers wherever they may be in your vast kingdom who stand in need of your grace and mercy. Pour down upon us all the riches of your love so that preserved in body and soul, and steadfast in the faith of the Church, and may ever praise your wonderful and holy name, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.”

Bishop Anderson then invited the assembly to proceed with the vote on the *Concordat of Agreement*.

VOTED (MOTION FAILED FOR LACK OF *Two-Thirds Vote Required*
ACHIEVING A TWO-THIRDS MAJORITY): *Yes-684; No-351*

CA97.4.9 RESOLVED, that this Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America accepts, as a matter of verbal content as well as in principle, the *Concordat of Agreement*, as set forth below; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America agrees to make those legislative, constitutional, and liturgical changes necessary to implement full communion between the two churches, as envisioned in the *Concordat of Agreement*.

Bishop Anderson announced to the assembly, “By a vote of 684 to 351, the proposal does not receive the necessary two-thirds majority and the proposal [*Concordat of Agreement*] is defeated.” He then said, “Now I would like you all to stand and sing together as a single body.”

The assembly then sang the hymn, “The Church’s One Foundation.”

Following the singing of the hymn, Bishop Anderson addressed the assembly saying, “I first want to say to you that I am enormously proud of the way you carried on that discussion. Both of them. I think you should feel that you did it

with dignity and you did it with sincerity and great passion, and I commend you for the way you handled the debate on both matters.”

The Rev. Darrell H. Jodock [Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod] rose to offer a motion concerning a previously distributed “Alternative Proposal” on ecumenical relations with The Episcopal Church as a substitute for the failed *Concordat of Agreement*.

MOVED;

SECONDED: WHEREAS, through our ecumenical dialogues enormous strides have been made in learning to understand other churches and in mutual recognition that we are brothers and sisters in Christ; and

WHEREAS, ecumenical actions require strong consensus if they are to increase the visible unity of Christ’s church; and

WHEREAS, the decision of the ELCA, in Churchwide Assembly, not to adopt the *Concordat of Agreement* reflects an absence of the necessary consensus on some specific terms of that document rather than a lack of commitment to ecumenical action with The Episcopal Church; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA wishes to strengthen its close fellowship with The Episcopal Church; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the ELCA, in Churchwide Assembly, hereby:

1. Affirms The Episcopal Church as a member with us in the “one holy catholic and apostolic church,” and embraces the members of The Episcopal Church as brothers and sisters with us in the faith; and
2. Affirms and continues the 1982 Lutheran-Episcopal agreement for “interim Eucharistic sharing,” recognizing the validity of the sacraments of baptism and communion in The Episcopal Church, and welcomes the members of The Episcopal Church to our altars; and
3. Recognizes the validity of the ordained ministries presently existing within The Episcopal Church, and encourages the use of each other’s clergy as mission needs call for, in accordance with appropriate procedures within each church; and
4. Commits itself through the appropriate churchwide agencies, synods, and congregations to joint mission planning with The Episcopal Church; and

5. Invites The Episcopal Church to continue in dialogue and consultation with us toward development of ecumenical actions supported by a strong consensus in each church.

Pastor Jodock spoke to the motion stating, “I formulated this proposal several weeks ago because I was worried that once the *Concordat* was defeated, if it was to be defeated, that there would be a vacuum. I recognize that some people have said from the floor that this is not a joint agreement. This is instead a resolution addressed to us, to our officers, to our synods, to our congregations that we resolve to continue in the process. We resolve to continue to find cooperative ways to engage in mission and we resolve to continue the discussions. Some of the objections to the *Concordat* were based on misunderstandings. Let us grant that. But other of the objections to the formulation in the *Concordat* are things to which some attention needs to be given. I believe that if we continue the process, we can find another way, another set of words to advance our ecumenical endeavors.”

The Rev. Mark Borchers [Western Iowa Synod] said, “I make a motion that we recess until order of the day at 10:30 A.M. so we can honestly soothe my troubled mind and other troubled minds and hearts. To listen to our vice presidents [the nominees for the vice presidency who would be addressing the assembly], and that we take up this motion [the motion on the floor] after the order of the day when we all have had time to think prayerfully and concentrate on what is before us.”

MOVED;

SECONDED: To recess until the special order at 10:30 A.M.

Bishop Steven L. Ullestad [Northeastern Iowa Synod] moved the following amendment.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To recess until the afternoon session at 2:00 P.M.

Bishop Curtis H. Miller [Western Iowa Synod] asked for clarification of the amendment, “Is it to recess until 2:00 P.M. or postpone debate on this until 2:00 P.M.?” Bishop Anderson clarified, “The original motion was to recess which means we would rise, and the amendment was to that motion. You cannot amend a motion to recess and assume it is a motion to postpone.” Then, Bishop Miller inquired whether the effect of the motion would be that the assembly would conduct no business until the afternoon plenary session. Bishop Anderson responded affirmatively.

MOVED;
SECONDED; Yes-133; No-876
DEFEATED: To recess until the afternoon session at 2:00 P.M.

MOVED;
SECONDED; Yes-594; No-411
CARRIED: To recess until the special order at 10:30 A.M.

Bishop Stanley N. Olson [Southwestern Minnesota Synod] served notice that he wished to offer another motion to postpone rather than recess if this motion was defeated. Bishop Anderson declared that since the motion was adopted the assembly was in recess until 10:30 A.M.

Following the recess, Bishop Anderson called the assembly back to order at 10:30 A.M. He proposed that the orders of the day be suspended, out of deference to the three persons who were supposed to speak as vice presidential nominees. He said, "It would seem to me that it would be good to give us and them just a little space. And in fact I think it would be a good idea for us to give ourselves a little space, so I am going to suggest that we suspend the rules and take up the speeches of the three candidates in half an hour at 11:00 A.M. That should still give us time and in the meantime, I have a few remarks to make and we could do some routine business to get ourselves focused a bit more before we move to the number of branching roads that lie ahead of us. If there is no objection, we will suspend the rules. If there is objection, we will vote on suspending the rules and I will ask for a motion to that effect."

The Rev. Russell L. Meyer [Florida-Bahamas Synod] inquired, "Are we considering the alternative proposal that we left at recess?" "No," Bishop Anderson responded, "I am suggesting that we act first on suspending the rules to give us some time. I would think that that kind of action would come up after the speeches by the vice presidential candidates, just to give them some space and us some focus."

MOVED;
SECONDED; Yes-725; No-41
CARRIED: To suspend the rules to permit the special order at 11:00 A.M. and to use the intervening time for routine business on other matters.

Bishop E. Roy Riley Jr. [New Jersey Synod] stated, "I am presuming that the resolution that was introduced just before recess is still on the floor?" "Yes, it is,"

Bishop Anderson responded, "but my proposal was that we not speak on the various possibilities ahead of us until after the vice presidential nominees have spoken, but we do some other routine business in the meantime. I think that is the assembly's will."

Bishop Anderson then said, "I would like to go back to remarks I was making before the recess. As I said at the beginning, I believe your action was taken with thoughtfulness and the debate was certainly conducted in an excellent manner. I understand you to be saying that this vote does not rescind our ELCA ecumenical stand nor curtail our commitment to ecumenical dialogue. We have passed a significant, in fact, an historic document in terms of *A Formula of Agreement*, and at an appropriate time I hope we can recognize those who participated in that activity, as well as recognize and thank at a later time in this assembly those who worked so faithfully on the *Concordat of Agreement*.

"I want to assure our ecumenical partners and all who have worked on both of these agreements that your efforts are greatly appreciated and I hope to say more about that a bit later. I believe that we have entered a new era by our focused activity together and by the actions we have taken. So, we are in a new world and a new phase and I am hoping to build together to do that well."

Report: Committee of Reference and Counsel

Reference: 1997 Pre-Assembly Report, Section X; continued on *Minutes*, page 917.

Bishop Anderson called upon Mr. William H. Engelbrecht, chair of the Committee of Reference and Counsel, to report on behalf of the committee.

Motion A: Board of Pensions—Out-of-Pocket Expenses

The following motion was submitted by Bishop Lee M. Miller [Upstate New York Synod]:

RESOLVED, that the Board of Pensions be asked to explore ways in which "out-of-pocket" medical costs may be reduced for rostered persons in their first three years of ministry.

The Committee of Reference and Counsel offered the following recommendation:

MOVED;
SECONDED: To refer the following resolution to the ELCA Board of Pensions:

RESOLVED, that the Board of Pensions be asked to explore ways in which “out-of-pocket” medical costs may be reduced for rostered persons in their first three years of ministry;

and

To request that the Board of Pensions bring a recommendation to the ELCA Church Council at its April 1998 meeting.

Bishop Lee M. Miller [Upstate New York Synod] said an issue of this kind cannot be resolved properly on the floor of an assembly of more than 1,000 voting members without prior study. He had proposed, therefore, that the motion be referred and stated that the recommendation of the committee was in full accord with his intent.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

Yes-805; No-50

CA97.4.10 To refer the following resolution to the ELCA Board of Pensions:

RESOLVED, that the Board of Pensions be asked to explore ways in which “out-of-pocket” medical costs may be reduced for rostered persons in their first three years of ministry;

and

To request that the Board of Pensions bring a recommendation to the ELCA Church Council at its April 1998 meeting.

Mr. Engelbrecht then introduced the following motion:

Motion B: Participation of Youth and Young Adults

The following composite motion was submitted by Ms. Meredith Diane Lovell [Delaware-Maryland Synod] and by Mr. Jeffrey L. Kane [New England Synod]:

WHEREAS, youth and young adults are an essential part of this church; and

WHEREAS, youth and young adults not only are the future leaders of this church, but also the leaders of the Church today; and

WHEREAS, we have affirmed that through the youth and young adult convocations; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the synods of this church be encouraged to amend their constitutions so that there be at least one youth (under age 21) and one young adult (ages 21-30) among the voting members to the Churchwide Assembly; and be it further

RESOLVED, that synods encourage congregations to send at least one youth (under age 21) or one young adult (ages 21-30) representative voting member to synod assemblies; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America offer special resources to assist youth and young adult voting members.

The Committee of Reference and Counsel offered the following recommendation:

MOVED;

SECONDED: To refer the resolution to the ELCA Conference of Bishops; and

To request that the Conference of Bishops offer advice and counsel to the ELCA Church Council at its April 1998 meeting.

Chair Engelbrecht explained that two similar resolutions had been combined by the Committee of Reference and Counsel, one submitted by Ms. Lovell and another by Mr. Kane, and that Mr. Kane had agreed to having both motions submitted in this composite form.

Bishop John C. Beem [East-Central Synod of Wisconsin] said not all voting members of the East-Central Synod of Wisconsin had received the committee’s printed report and requested that copies be distributed to them. Bishop Anderson requested that pages distribute copies to that synod and inquired if any other voting members had not received the report of the Reference and Counsel Committee.

Ms. Lovell spoke in support of the recommendation. She observed that some 35 youth were present as voting members. “Youth are the future of this church, but they bring new points of view even now to this church. They have a different perspective as a result of growing up more recently; that voice needs to be heard in this church—at this assembly and at synod assemblies.” She said that it was important that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America provide tools and materials to support the leadership of youth in this church’s life.

Mr. Mark J. Jackson [Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod] spoke in support of the resolution and encouraged youth and young adult voting members to return to their synod councils and nominating committees and to seek out youth for service as voting members to churchwide assemblies. He said, "We have seen and experienced the unique perspective of young people in capacities of leadership on synod councils, committees, the Lutheran Youth Organization, and churchwide boards. We feel this gift is also appreciated at churchwide assemblies."

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

Yes-849; No-56

CA97.4.11 To refer the following resolution to the ELCA Conference of Bishops:

WHEREAS, youth and young adults are an essential part of this church; and

WHEREAS, youth and young adults not only are the future leaders of this church, but also the leaders of the Church today; and

WHEREAS, we have affirmed that through the youth and young adult convocations; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the synods of this church be encouraged to amend their constitutions so that there be at least one youth (under age 21) and one young adult (ages 21-30) among the voting members to the Churchwide Assembly; and be it further

RESOLVED, that synods encourage congregations to send at least one youth (under age 21) or one young adult (ages 21-30) representative voting member to synod assemblies; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America offer special resources to assist youth and young adult voting members;

and

To request that the Conference of Bishops offer advice and counsel to the ELCA Church Council at its April 1998 meeting.

Motion C: New Constitution for Synods, Bylaw S7.34. Proposed

The following motion was submitted by Mr. Jeffrey L. Kane [New England Synod]:

WHEREAS, Churchwide Assembly voting members have a wealth of information and experience to share with synods, congregations, and individuals; and

WHEREAS, the following proposed new bylaw would open up more lines of communication between the churchwide office, synods, congregations, and individuals; and

WHEREAS, the precedent has been set with members of the ELCA Church Council serving as advisory members of synod councils; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the *Constitution for Synods* be amended by addition of a new bylaw, S7.34., as an optional provision as follows:

S7.34. Members of the synod who are serving terms as voting members of the Churchwide Assembly shall be given voice at synod assemblies as advisory members.

Mr. Engelbrecht introduced the following recommendation of the Committee of Reference and Counsel:

MOVED;

SECONDED: To refer the resolution to the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee of the Church Council; and

To request that the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee provide a recommendation to the Church Council at its April 1998 meeting.

Mr. Kane, as author of the resolution, spoke in favor of the committee's recommendation.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

Yes-807; No-79

CA97.4.12 To refer the following resolution to the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee of the Church Council:

WHEREAS, Churchwide Assembly voting members have a wealth of information and experience to share with synods, congregations, and individuals; and

WHEREAS, the following proposed new bylaw would open up more lines of communication between the churchwide office, synods, congregations, and individuals; and

WHEREAS, the precedent has been set with members of the ELCA Church Council serving as advisory members of synod councils; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the *Constitution for Synods* be amended by addition of a new bylaw, S7.34., as an optional provision as follows:

S7.34. Members of the synod who are serving terms as voting members of the Churchwide Assembly shall be given voice at synod assemblies as advisory members.;

and

To request that the Legal and Constitution Review Committee provide a recommendation to the Church Council at its April 1998 meeting.

Motion D: Amendment of ELCA Model Constitution for Congregations, Provision C20.02.

The following motion was submitted by the Rev. Annette C. Crickenberger [Eastern North Dakota Synod]:

WHEREAS, there is an inconsistency between an existing provision in the *Model Constitution for Congregations* [C9.02.] and proposed [C20.02.] regarding the issuance of letters of call by congregations (see *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section IV, page 133); therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the following be added to proposed C20.02.: “or a candidate for the roster of ordained ministers who has been recommended to the congregation by the synodical bishop.”

Mr. Engelbrecht introduced the following recommendation of the Committee of Reference and Counsel, which was adopted without discussion:

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

Yes-729; No-36

CA97.4.13 To refer the following resolution to the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee of the ELCA Church Council:

WHEREAS, there is an inconsistency between an existing provision in the *Model Constitution for Congregations* [C9.02.] and proposed [C20.02.] regarding the issuance of letters of call by congregations (see *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section IV, page 133); therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the following be added to proposed C20.02.: “or a candidate for the roster of ordained ministers who has been recommended to the congregation by the synodical bishop”;

and

To request that the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee provide a recommendation to the Church Council at its April 1998 meeting.

Motion E: Board of Pensions Pre-Retirement Financial Planning Seminars

The following motion was submitted by the Rev. Bradley C. Jenson [Northeastern Minnesota Synod]:

WHEREAS, the ELCA Board of Pensions conducts a number of pre-retirement seminars each year for those who are under the ELCA Pension Plan; and

WHEREAS, the seminar is designed for those rostered personnel who are 50 years of age and over; and

WHEREAS the Social Security system figures prominently in retirement planning; and

WHEREAS, a precarious situation is projected for the Social Security system after the year 2030; and

WHEREAS, planning for retirement includes responsible estate planning; and

WHEREAS, the constitution of the ELCA mandates that the ELCA Foundation coordinate its programs and ministries with the objectives and programs of other financial-resource development activities of this church; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Board of Pensions be requested to include rostered personnel, age 35 and up, in pre-retirement financial planning seminars; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the 1997 ELCA Churchwide Assembly request that the ELCA Board of Pensions include an educational component be given in conjunction with pre-retirement seminars.

Mr. Engelbrecht introduced the following recommendation of the Reference and Counsel Committee:

MOVED;

SECONDED: To refer the resolution to the Board of Pensions, the ELCA Foundation, and the Division for Ministry; and

To request that the Board of Pensions, ELCA Foundation, and Division for Ministry provide a recommendation to the ELCA Church Council at its April 1998 meeting.

Mr. Engelbrecht reported that he had spoken with Mr. John G. Kapanke, president of the ELCA Board of Pensions, who had indicated that the board already had plans under way to fulfill the intent of the motion.

Pastor Jenson, author of the resolution, spoke in favor of the motion to refer. He expressed concern for younger pastors with respect to the future of the Social Security system and encouraged that younger plan members be invited to pre-retirement seminars to learn more about financial planning. He said, "I think we need to be aware of our options as we head toward retirement, to put this church in our wills, to consider the ELCA Foundation, and I think the pre-retirement seminar that the Board of Pensions runs would be an excellent way to do that."

Mr. Barry R. Herr [Lower Susquehanna Synod] sought to move:

MOVED: To amend the original motion by substituting the words, "enrolled members," in the first resolve for the words, "rostered personnel."

Bishop Anderson ruled the motion out of order, because it pertained to the original motion, rather than the motion presently on the floor.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

Yes-868; No-42

CA97.4.14 To refer the following resolution to the Board of Pensions, the ELCA Foundation, and the Division for Ministry:

WHEREAS, the ELCA Board of Pensions conducts a number of pre-retirement seminars each year for those who are under the ELCA Pension Plan; and

WHEREAS, the seminar is designed for those rostered personnel who are 50 years of age and over; and

WHEREAS the Social Security system figures prominently in retirement planning; and

WHEREAS, a precarious situation is projected for the Social Security system after the year 2030; and

WHEREAS, planning for retirement includes responsible estate planning; and

WHEREAS, the constitution of the ELCA mandates that the ELCA Foundation coordinate its programs and ministries with the objectives and programs of other financial-resource development activities of this church; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Board of Pensions be requested to include rostered personnel, age 35 and up, in pre-retirement financial planning seminars; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the 1997 ELCA Churchwide Assembly request that the ELCA Board of Pensions include an educational component be given in conjunction with pre-retirement seminars;

and

To request that the Board of Pensions, ELCA Foundation, and Division for Ministry provide a recommendation to the ELCA Church Council at its April 1998 meeting.

Bishop Anderson invited assembly participants to sing the hymn, “Soon And Very Soon.”

Elections: Speeches by Vice Presidential Nominees

Bishop Anderson announced, “According to the rules of procedure you adopted, and that we amended, we will now take the time to hear from each of the three persons who received the highest number of votes on the last ballot for vice president. They have drawn names by lot to determine the order in which they will speak.” That order was: (1) Ms. Addie J. Butler; (2) Ms. Myrna J. Sheie; and (3) Ms. Cynthia A. Jurisson. Bishop Anderson explained that each would have five minutes to address the assembly. He instructed voting members to hold applause until the end of each speaker’s presentation.

Ms. Addie J. Butler

“Giving honor to God who is my Lord and Savior, Pastor Chair, voting members of this assembly, and visitors to this Churchwide Assembly, I plan to use the next five minutes to answer four questions that I think you may have and the answers to which would help you to get to know me a little bit better.

“First, who is Addie Butler? I like to call myself Addie Butler, child of God. Like Jeremiah, God knew me before I was formed in my mother’s womb—a child of God who was destined to become a woman of great faith, a faith that first lived in my grandmothers, Addie and Mary, now lives in my 85-year old mother, and yes, lives in me. I grew up in north central Philadelphia, an area not far from here and I was baptized at the age of eight-years-old in a believers baptism at a Baptist church. I believed in my heart and confessed with my lips that Jesus Christ was my Lord and Savior. I was asked, ‘Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ? Do you believe that Christ died for your sins?’ On two affirmative responses, the pastor said, ‘I now baptize you in the name of the Triune God.’ I go back to that time because that’s the foundation upon which I have built my faith journey.

“I joined the Lutheran church back in 1969 when I joined the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Our Redeemer in Washington, D.C. Now that was a predominantly African American congregation with an African American Lutheran

pastor, and quite honestly, I thought that was typical of the Lutheran Church in America. I got involved with Redeemer [Lutheran Church] because it was the ‘60s—time of civil unrest, times of rumors of wars—and true wars at times—and every time there was a problem in the neighborhood, the pastor and representative members of that congregation were in the streets. So I got to know members of the congregation before I ever visited for worship. That was my reason for visiting but that’s not why I stayed in the Lutheran church. I stayed because I found something that resonated so deeply within me that I could not go elsewhere—and that is, we’re saved by grace alone through faith alone. It struck a resonant chord and thus I stayed. I’m now a member of Reformation Lutheran Church here in Philadelphia, a congregation that I love to call the best Lutheran church in our territory. We are fairly small relative to many other congregations in our church. We have two worship services each Sunday morning and together about 300 parishioners gather, primarily African American. We are liturgical, we are confessional, but I like to say that we’re contextual Lutherans because we have included the culture of the congregation. One of our biggest holidays is the African Heritage Day and we all get dressed in traditional African clothing. Not to leave anyone out though—because we are not exclusively African American—we dress our sisters and brothers of other ethnic groups, so we all celebrate African Heritage Day. Our pastor is of European descent and we’ve adopted him and brought him along also. He [sings from] hymns from time to time, and when someone else is up speaking, do not be surprised if the Spirit moves and he utters a vigorous ‘Amen.’ I am saying all this so that you will get a sense of my heritage. All of this blends together—my African American roots, my urban roots, my Hebrew roots from the Holy Scriptures and Jesus the Christ, my European roots inherited from this church, and my parents—all blend together, threads of a twisted cord that will not easily break.

“Question two: What background do you have that prepares you for the office of the vice presidency? Many of my credentials are listed on the bio, so I do not have to go into that in great depth, but I will call your attention to the fact that I have moved progressively with responsible positions within this church, congregational, synodical, regional, and churchwide. All these blend together to prepare me to continue in the legacy of leadership started first by my sister Chris [Christine H. Grumm, first vice president of the ELCA], and continued by my sister Kathy [Kathy J. Magnus, second vice president of the ELCA].

“What about my vision, my hope, the youth, ecumenism, inclusivity? And the last quick question modified from one of the questions that appeared two thousand years ago in the Epistles—can anything good come out of Philadelphia? Come and see.”

Ms. Myrna J. Sheie

“I appreciate the opportunity to address you. I began my career as a junior high English teacher, joyfully and willingly. A junior high classroom is an

interesting place to be. There is a great deal of energy, a great deal of excitement, and for the teacher, a fair amount of exasperation. It is a time in the life of a junior high school student when what Erik [H.] Erikson says, ‘They are about the developmental task of determining independence versus intimacy; or autonomy versus affiliation. Their goal is to establish identity as a person and be able to say, I am, this is who I am.’ We have talked a lot in these days about the ELCA being ten years old. We too are on a developmental time line and we are at the point of saying, ‘This is who we are.’ We’ve gotten past organizational details to a strong sense of mission. That word has been used over and over in these days. There is increased trust, increased confidence. Our youth helped us to define ourselves just a couple of days ago. They said the voices of youth are powerful and they should be heard, they reminded us of their energy and vibrancy and resilience. One young man said, ‘There is a passion, a spirit burning deep within us.’ Then they said, ‘The youth are ready, are you?’ And we answered, ‘Yes.’ It was a celebration of who we are as the ELCA.

“So who are we as the ELCA? We have seven exciting initiatives before us which begin with deepening our worship life and go all the way through developing leaders for the future. We are a church that has large successful events which bring more than 30,000 young people to a town renowned for large events [the 1997 National Youth Gathering in New Orleans, La.] and they thank us for coming. We are a church that is present in the midst of disaster. I have spent time in East Grand Forks [Minnesota] over the summer helping people who have been affected by the normally calm waters of the Red River of the North. We are a church that’s strong in urban areas as well as in rural areas. We are a praying church, a singing church. We are a church where God is at work even in the midst of the most difficult situations. The theme of the first assembly of this church was ‘Many Voices, One Song.’ I go back to that today as we’ve taken a vote that was difficult for us. There is one song, one God, but many voices within that song.

“So who am I in the midst of this? I, like Addie, am a child of God. I am passionately committed to Jesus Christ and passionate about this church that I love so well. People who know me well tell me that I am collegial, that I have a positive spirit, that I am organized, that I am synergistic (I like to pull things together), and that I am an implementor (I like to put wheels under things), and that I have a sense of humor. I am a person who believes the vice president of this church serves the whole Church. Like the junior high teacher that I was years ago, that person as vice president values every individual in the ELCA, values every congregation, and every synod that make up the diversity of who we are as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.”

Ms. Cynthia A. Jurisson

“I anticipate that if you could, each one of you would probably like to ask each one of us the following question. ‘What are the convictions and the commitments

that you would bring to this position of vice president?’ For me, there is a short answer and that is that I truly believe that the Lutheran church’s mission is most effective when there is a genuine and inseparable partnership between the ministry of the laity and the ministry of the clergy. But there is also a longer answer for me. I’d like to give you that answer by sharing with you three experiences that have deepened my appreciation of the ministry of the laity and convinced me of its importance, especially in the decades ahead.

“First I want to tell you about how my family has been personally touched by Lutheran mission work and relief efforts. My father was born in Estonia, one of millions of children who lost both their homes and their families in World War II. By the time he was 14, he had already spent three years in a displaced persons camp in Germany, but his life was transformed by the mission work of American Lutherans who dared to rise to the challenge of resettling refugees. That mission work took a lot of different forms. Some people from here went to Germany and actually began to live and work in the DP camps; others did not go to Germany but they went to the New York harbor to meet those refugees who came in by boat; and still others in other places in the country opened their hearts and their homes and took in strangers like my father and made them friends. But what my father and other refugees received was nothing less than a miracle, a miracle that would not have happened without the ministry of so many Lutherans, ordained and lay.

“A second story. Because of my father’s career, before I had turned 15 I had lived in 11 different places. We had lived in Massachusetts, the state of Washington, Illinois two or three times, Virginia, Arkansas, Colorado, and Wisconsin. My mother used to joke that we could recite the names of all the state capitals not from memory but from experience. No matter where we moved there were two places that we had to find the very moment we got into town—the Lutheran church and the Sears department store, and not always in that order. At the Sears store, we found things that the house needed; but at the Lutheran church, we found things that our hearts needed—Word and Sacraments and the open arms of new acquaintances who would soon become good friends. In so many Lutheran congregations what we found was community.

“One more story. About 15 years ago I had an experience that shook my faith to its very depths and then some. Not just once or twice but six times in less than 12 months my family and I gathered in a windswept cemetery in rural South Dakota to bury our close relatives. Six times I sat in the pew of that church and listened to the pastor assure me of the promise of the Gospel and the power of the Holy Spirit to heal our sorrows. And six times the lay people of that church did their best to prove that everything that pastor had said was most certainly true. Every funeral was followed by a luncheon provided without our ever having asked for it. Every sidewalk was plowed and salted and made safe for us to use in our walk to the grave site, no small endeavor in the South Dakota winters. And at every house where death had touched, enormous amounts of food would miraculously appear

right before dinner time often for weeks after the funeral. My faith was shaken to its very depth, but six times those humble tag-team evangelists, lay and ordained working together, carried the love of Jesus Christ to me in word and deed and restored my own faltering faith.

“Just a few concluding observations. These experiences have continued to shape my understanding of mission and ministry. I think they also point to three huge challenges facing our church today. First, the challenge of responding to the overwhelming hunger and homelessness and poverty that plagues so many people both in this country and abroad. Second, the challenge of building community and healing the very real divisions in our society while still celebrating our very real God-given diversity. Third, the challenge of doing evangelism in an increasingly secular society. For the past eight years I have had the unique experience of being a lay person called to train students for both lay and ordained ministries in our church. My personal experience as well as my work as an historian convinced me that the various mission efforts of our church are most effective when there is a genuine and inseparable partnership between the ministry of the laity and the ministry of the clergy.”

Bishop Anderson thanked the nominees for sharing their visions and their personal interests. He announced that the fourth ballot would be cast at 12:15 P.M.

Bishop Anderson counseled that additional deliberation and next steps on the ecumenical proposals not occur in haste. He said, “The [synodical] bishops will be meeting for dinner this evening, that had been planned before, and it might be a good thing for you to have a chance to share your concerns, your opinions, your attitudes about what is going on with them so that it might be possible for us to take counsel together. As I read the procedures that we adopted, we agreed to act on the proposals [on full communion]. We have acted on those proposals so we are not on the time limit that we had previously imposed on ourselves if we wish to take further action.”

The Rev. Stephen P. Gerhard [North Carolina Synod] offered the following motion.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To postpone further discussion about the ecumenical proposals related to full communion until after the dinner hour on Monday evening, August 18.

Mr. Charles Kurfess [Northwestern Ohio Synod] asked whether it was necessary for a motion to reconsider to be offered before this plenary session

recessed in order for it to be deemed in order. Bishop Anderson responded, “No, you have the next day of business as well.”

MOVED;

SECONDED;

Yes-861; No 142

CARRIED: **To postpone further discussion about the ecumenical proposals related to full communion until after the dinner hour on Monday evening, August 18.**

The Rev. Terri K. Stagner [Southeastern Synod] requested that adequate time be given for discussion of the *Statement on Sacramental Practices*.

Urban Strategy

Reference: *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section IV, pages 79-86.

BACKGROUND

Extensive work has been under way through the Division for Outreach on the development of an urban strategy. At the 1995 Churchwide Assembly in Minneapolis, attention was given to an “urban initiative.” At the assembly’s direction, the Division for Outreach and its urban team were instructed to work on issues in urban ministry, including strategy options as well as models and designs for work in the city. Five memorials were presented to the 1995 assembly that requested particular responses to issues of leadership and other urban ministry matters. The memorials were referred to the Division for Outreach for the urban initiative to be presented to the 1997 Churchwide Assembly.

Immediately following the Churchwide Assembly, the urban team of the Division for Outreach began to hold consultations and listening-posts with urban practitioners and leaders in city congregations, communities, and structures. Members of the urban team in the Division for Outreach were: Pr. Jerrett L. Hansen, team leader; Pr. Ruben Duran; Pr. Susan Ericsson; Mr. James L. Sims Jr.; and Pr. Warren A. Sorteberg, advisor.

Members of the team met throughout the country, looking first at the Northeast, Los Angeles, and Chicago because those areas were receiving a large percentage of the Division for Outreach urban partnership support. Listening was expanded to smaller urban areas, including Reading, Pennsylvania, and Lansing, Michigan, to learn from those communities what “urban” issues were present and emerging. The listening and consultation process also included meeting with 20 urban ELCA bishops and visits with faculty and students at the ELCA seminaries in Philadelphia, Chicago, and Berkeley, California. Meetings also were held with

urban ministry practitioners from other denominations. A day-long conversation took place with the leaders of social ministry organizations related to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

This process of consultation, listening, and conversation led to the development of the document, “In the City for Good.” The document evolved through 10 revisions before being presented to the Church Council in April 1997.

According to the Division for Outreach, the document is not intended to be a strategy that people anywhere can simply place over on their own territory and follow the dotted lines. It is intended to point in a certain direction, lifting up and naming the realities and opportunities in urban ministry. As a result, people in their localities may undertake the process of planning and implementing their own strategies, using this vision and intended outcomes as their guide. The document echoes what urban practitioners have said in pointing in a particular direction and stating that the reason for being in the city is to bring about transformation in lives, congregations, and communities in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

The Church Council recommends adoption of the following resolution:

**RECOMMENDATION OF
THE CHURCH COUNCIL**

WHEREAS, the 1995 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America authorized the Division for Outreach to continue the development of an urban initiative process and asked for a report to the 1997 Churchwide Assembly; and

WHEREAS, five synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America submitted memorials to the 1995 Churchwide Assembly concerning urban ministry that were referred to the Division for Outreach to be included in its work related to the urban initiative process, with a report to the 1997 Churchwide Assembly; and

WHEREAS, in order to develop a framework for urban ministry and to suggest directions for the ELCA’s ministry in the city in the future, the urban ministry team of the Division for Outreach in the past two years has:

- (1) met with urban church leaders in over 40 cities;
- (2) engaged in an assessment of current ministry needs;
- (3) consulted with synodical bishops, seminary faculty, and leaders of social service agencies; and
- (4) studied urban ministry models in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and other denominations; and

WHEREAS, the urban ministry team has developed a biblical and theological foundation as a vision and action plan for urban ministry, entitled, “In the City for Good,” therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America endorse “In the City for Good” as a statement of commitment, direction, and intent for urban outreach ministry by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the congregations, ministry leaders, synods, agencies and institutions, and churchwide units take responsibility for implementation of the “Vision for Urban Ministry” and “Action Plan for Urban Ministry,” in accord with the document, “In the City for Good,” beginning with a decade-long emphasis (1998-2008); and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the Churchwide Assembly request the Office of the Bishop and the Church Council to identify sources of funding, in order to facilitate the urban mission initiatives with a goal of at least \$500,000 annually beginning February 1, 1999, and continuing through A.D. 2008, with such funds to be a resource out of which new local, synodical, and churchwide proposals might be funded, in order to support and strengthen the ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in urban settings; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the presiding bishop, in consultation with the executive director of the Division for Outreach, appoint an urban mission project team—consisting of urban pastors and lay leaders, as well as such others as staff of appropriate churchwide units, a seminary representative, a representative from agencies and institutions, and a representative from the Conference of Bishops—to assist the Division for Outreach in overseeing and coordinating the emphasis on “In the City for Good” and the funding process for the urban mission initiatives. This team shall report annually to the Church Council through the Division for Outreach and biennially to the Churchwide Assembly.

Bishop Anderson introduced the recommendation of the Church Council on the proposed urban strategy. He said, “Our society has gone through some remarkable change in the past century. We have experienced major shifts in population from rural to urban areas—and many of us have experienced this shift personally. . . . We know our cities are places of great opportunity as well as great need. We need now to take stock at the end of this century to see where we are and to ask ourselves a good Lutheran question, ‘What does this mean?’ What are the implications of an increasingly urbanized society [and a church] that seeks to serve and to ‘Make Christ Known?’ These are the kinds of questions that are addressed in the urban strategy that is before you. This strategy was developed by the Division for Outreach and its partners in synods and congregations throughout our church. It is intended to complement the rural strategy that was adopted by the Churchwide Assembly four years ago. This Urban Strategy reflects our church’s commitment to be *In the City for Good.*”

Bishop Anderson then introduced the Rev. Richard A. Magnus, executive director of the Division for Outreach, who introduced the Rev. Jerrett L. Hansen, chair of the urban team of the Division for Outreach, who, following a brief video, presented the initiative.

Pastor Hansen recounted the counsel of Jeremiah 29:5: “Seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.” He noted that Lutherans have lived in America’s cities for more than 200 years; that our past is well documented in the history of American cities; and that “we pray now that our future can be secured in those cities as we commit ourselves to work on their behalf, work for the well-being and the welfare of all who live there.” This church’s commitment to work in the city, is not bound by geography, for urban life is a set of dynamics that can be present in communities of almost any size, he said.

Pastor Hansen said that the 1995 Churchwide Assembly asked the Division for Outreach to study the matter and provide a recommendation for consideration by this 1997 assembly. The division assigned the task to its urban team, which consisted of the Rev. Jerritt L. Hansen, Baltimore-Washington, D.C., area, team leader; the Rev. Ruben Duran, Chicago, Ill.; the Rev. Susan Ericsson, Philadelphia, Pa.; Mr. James L. Sims Jr., Oakland, Calif.; and the Rev. Warren A. Sorteberg, Division for Outreach staff, advisor. Pastor Hansen said that the urban team listened and heard, wrote and rewrote, prayed and wrestled with ministry issues, and was led to a vision of transformative ministry for the next 10 years and into the new millennium. He continued, “The vision for urban ministry calls for transformation in three distinct dimensions. First, transforming lives—people’s lives changed by their relationship with Jesus Christ. Secondly, transforming congregations—our ministries and our congregations lively and viable and effective in reaching and serving people. Thirdly, transforming communities into places that are desirable, safe, and renewed places in which to live and work. Our church can make it happen.”

Pastor Hansen said that the team hoped that the strategy would set a direction for this entire church. “This is a direction paper, pointing the way. The work of how it gets strategized is done in the local context.” The board of the Division for Outreach, he said, was asking this church to endorse the strategy, to commit itself to a decade-long emphasis using vision for urban ministry, to provide at least \$500,000 annually for the next 10 years for new work and new initiatives, and to establish an urban-mission project team to oversee and coordinate the 10-year effort. “Now together we pray. Our theological foundation is firmly biblical. Our role as Lutherans in the city is a record of history. We know what we have done well and we know what we have not done so well. We have reviewed our gifts and abilities that now bring us to the challenge. The action plan sets our direction. The action plan details our steps. The resolutions will make it possible that we, all together as the ELCA, can set our course to be *In the City for Good*,” he said.

Bishop Anderson thanked Pastor Hansen for his presentation, introduced the recommendation of the Church Council, which in accordance with the Rules of Organization and Procedure became *de facto* a motion before the assembly.

MOVED;

SECONDED: WHEREAS, the 1995 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America authorized the Division for Outreach to continue the development of an urban initiative process and asked for a report to the 1997 Churchwide Assembly; and

WHEREAS, five synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America submitted memorials to the 1995 Churchwide Assembly concerning urban ministry that were referred to the Division for Outreach to be included in its work related to the urban initiative process, with a report to the 1997 Churchwide Assembly; and

WHEREAS, in order to develop a framework for urban ministry and to suggest directions for the ELCA’s ministry in the city in the future, the urban ministry team of the Division for Outreach in the past two years has:

- (1) met with urban church leaders in over 40 cities;
- (2) engaged in an assessment of current ministry needs;
- (3) consulted with synodical bishops, seminary faculty, and leaders of social service agencies; and
- (4) studied urban ministry models in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and other denominations; and

WHEREAS, the urban ministry team has developed a biblical and theological foundation as a vision and action plan for urban ministry, entitled, “In the City for Good,” therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America endorse “In the City for Good” as a statement of commitment, direction, and intent for urban outreach ministry by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the congregations, ministry leaders, synods, agencies and institutions, and churchwide units take responsibility for implementation of the “Vision for Urban Ministry” and “Action Plan for Urban Ministry,” in accord with the document, “In the City for Good,” beginning with a decade-long emphasis (1998-2008); and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the Churchwide Assembly request the Office of the Presiding Bishop and the Church Council to identify sources of funding, in order to facilitate the urban mission initiatives with a goal of at least \$500,000 annually beginning February 1, 1999, and continuing through A.D. 2008, with such funds to be a resource out of which new local, synodical, and churchwide proposals might be funded, in order to support and strengthen the ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in urban settings; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the presiding bishop, in consultation with the executive director of the Division for Outreach, appoint an urban mission project team—consisting of urban pastors and lay leaders, as well as such others as staff of appropriate churchwide units, a seminary representative, a representative from agencies and institutions, and a representative from the Conference of Bishops—to assist the Division for Outreach in overseeing and coordinating the emphasis on “In the City for Good” and the funding process for the urban mission initiatives. This team shall report annually to the Church Council through the Division for Outreach and biennially to the Churchwide Assembly.

Mr. Livingston L. Chrichlow [Metropolitan New York Synod] spoke in support of the initiative. He said that cities in America will continue to have problems and the people may be forgotten; this church, therefore, needs to be there to support its ministry with “these our brothers and sisters in Christ.” As the strategy is implemented, he said, “I could envision a doubling of that \$500,000 pledge through in-kind efforts on the local scene through grants and through creative financing. We together have a clear need to be *In the City for Good*.”

The Rev. Charles R. Leonard [Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod] said that, as an urban pastor, he supported the initiative, but was concerned about the amount of funding and how that figure was determined. He recommended that the figure be increased to show an even greater commitment to the urban churches throughout the country.

The Rev. Cedric E. Gibb [South Carolina Synod] spoke in support of the initiative, and stated that most of his ministry was spent in the city. He commented on the double meaning of *In the City for Good*, meaning forever as well as for the good of the people in the city. “I believe in the city. There are many people who need to hear that Gospel, and our church has the word to give to a dying city,” he concluded.

The Rev. John K. Hesford [Southeast Michigan Synod] said that he favored adoption, but wished to offer several suggestions. He suggested that “we need to

transform this from a cautionary statement, a hesitancy perhaps that prolongs action, into a bold more aggressive statement of our involvement in mission.” He urged that the amount in the plan be increased to \$1 million, and that this church should move not with deliberate speed but with haste.

Ms. Dawna M. Svaren [Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod] who indicated that as an alternate-route seminary student at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary she was assigned to an inner city congregation for one week. She was assigned to Immanuel Lutheran Church in Los Angeles, Calif., which is a congregation “that has bars on its windows and barbed wire which surrounds its parameters and has a break-in at least once a week. Yet this is a congregation that is committed to the people of its neighborhood. It keeps its doors open each Sunday morning during worship and Sunday School so that those who are walking on the sidewalk can hear worship, can hear its members in prayer. It is also a congregation that, each school day opens up for an after-school program so that the children in the neighborhood have a safe place to stay, a place to do their homework, a teacher who is there on a voluntary basis who is with them to explore new and wonderful things. I am in favor of this initiative for these congregations who support their communities that we, as a church, need to support these congregations.”

Mr. Robert Bratt [Grand Canyon Synod] inquired about the results anticipated after 10 years. The Rev. Susan M. Ericsson, a member of the urban team, said, “What we hope those reports will show as they are delivered is that we can be telling stories of individual lives, of congregations, and of communities that have been transformed through the efforts of our ELCA congregations and individual church members and through partnerships with others in the community. If you look at our action plan, you will see that there are expected outcomes . . . and we like to believe that at the end of the 10 years, the report will be that each and every outcome has been realized.”

Bishop Glenn W. Nycklemoe [Southeastern Minnesota Synod] spoke in support of the initiative, observing that he would have appreciated having the rural and exurban congregations mentioned so that “the interdependence between urban, suburban, exurban, and rural” and “our oneness” is understood.

Ms. Sofia Amare [Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod] spoke in support of the initiative, which she said “was giving hope to people,” and recommended that the amount funded should be increased to \$1 million.

The Rev. L. Wayne Kendrick [Saint Paul Area Synod] urged adoption and said, “I think it is one of the best mission statements that has come before us as a church in a long time. . . . This proposal defines a mission vision that is a wonderful statement for every congregation to adopt. If all of us worked at transforming ourselves through the power of the Holy Spirit, then looked at transforming our congregations (again by the power of the Holy Spirit), and finally engage together in transforming our place of residence—it would be a marvelous commitment, direction, and intent for our ministry together.”

Sister Gunnel M. Sterner [Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod], a member of the ELCA Deaconess Community, spoke in support of the initiative, stating that she was grateful that this church wants to stay *In the City for Good*. She encouraged voting members to walk down Arch Street from the Liberty Bell to the convention center to see what “in the city for good” means in reality within six blocks of the assembly site.

Ms. Evelyn J. P. Weston [Northwestern Minnesota Synod] moved the previous question.

MOVED; *Two-Thirds Vote Required*
SECONDED; *Yes-871; No-44*
CARRIED: To move the previous question.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION *Yes-926; No-22*

CA97.4.15 WHEREAS, the 1995 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America authorized the Division for Outreach to continue the development of an urban initiative process and asked for a report to the 1997 Churchwide Assembly; and

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RESOLVED, that the Churchwide Assembly request the Office of the Presiding Bishop and the Church Council to identify sources of funding, in order to facilitate the urban mission initiatives with a goal of at least \$500,000 annually beginning February 1, 1999, and continuing through A.D. 2008, with such funds to be a resource out of which new local, synodical, and churchwide proposals might be funded, in order to support and strengthen the ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in urban settings; and, be it further

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and the funding process for the urban mission initiatives. This team shall report annually to the Church Council through the Division for Outreach and biennially to the Churchwide Assembly.

In the City for Good

An initiative for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to revitalize its ministry in urban areas of the United States and the Caribbean.

In this document, “city” refers to a geographical location. The term “urban” is understood as a set of dynamics that can be present in small, medium, and large cities as well as in older suburbs and developing edge cities. The term “urban” is not defined solely by numbers or location.

• • •

Two people are standing at the corner of Central and Broadway across from First Lutheran Church in a Texas city. They are both commenting about what they see in that community.

One says, “I see nothing but devastation, youth dealing drugs and promoting violence; I see poverty and hopelessness. This is a community falling apart.”

The other sees not only what is but also what can be. She has a visionary eye. She says, “I see lots of people. I see children and youth. I see people’s lives in need of hope with opportunities for change. I see kids and parents in need of community and things that hold communities together. I see an opportunity for Christians to work with others as part of a plan to transform and renew their neighborhood and to provide for the well-being of its citizens.”

• • •

This urban initiative is an opportunity for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to revitalize its ministry in urban communities.

Within this document, the horizon before us is scanned so that as a church we may move forward to strengthen our witness and service to the people in the cities of our land. More detailed road maps will be developed out of this initiative and action plan by congregations, clusters, synods, regions, and churchwide units working cooperatively.

Ministry in the city is the responsibility of the whole church. That responsibility includes urban congregations, members, and pastors, as well as congregations that are not in the city but whose welfare is connected to the city and

its health. Synods, their committees and leaders, agencies, and institutions all have a stake in the witness and mission of Christ in the city.

Likewise, the churchwide units of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (including the Division for Outreach, Division for Church in Society, Division for Congregational Ministries, Division for Ministry, Division for Higher Education and Schools, Commission for Women, Commission for Multicultural Ministries, and the Offices of the Bishop, Secretary, and Treasurer) also share in providing resources and leadership to this church as it seeks to serve the urban United States and the Caribbean.

In the City for Good

The biblical, theological, historical, and on-the-ground realities of urban life are a challenge to ministry; they call this church to commit itself to a vision and a plan of action for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to be in the city for good.

I. The Vision for Urban Ministry

This vision for urban ministry calls for transformation in three dimensions: (1) transforming lives; (2) transforming congregations; (3) transforming communities.

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold the new has come” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Dimension One:

People’s lives transformed by the Gospel of Jesus Christ:

The marks of transformed lives include: (1) personal faith in Jesus Christ; (2) love of God and neighbor; (3) active commitment to fellowship in the body of Christ, prayer, Bible study, tithing, and evangelical outreach; and (4) hopefulness motivated by the Spirit of God.

“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind that you may prove what is the will of God. . .” (Romans 12:2-3).

Dimension Two:

Congregations transformed into lively, viable, and effective places of ministry:

The marks of transformed congregations include: (1) spiritual vitality evident in celebrative worship, Bible study, and outreach; (2) participation in and commitment to community; (3) strong proclamation of the Gospel through Word and Sacrament; (4) a climate of openness that invites participation and welcomes the guest; and (5) clarity of vision that is owned widely by members.

“You are no longer strangers and sojourners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone” (Ephesians 2:19-20).

Dimension Three:

Communities transformed and renewed into desirable places to live and work:

The marks of transformed communities include: (1) neighborhoods that are safe, economically sound, socially healthy, and environmentally aware; (2) ability to provide for the well-being of citizens through availability of jobs, training, education, housing, and health care; (3) places where residents actively participate in community life and decision-making; and (4) building and rebuilding with hope and opportunity for the future.

“They shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations” (Isaiah 61:4b).

A. The Theological Foundation

In Jeremiah’s letter to the exiles in Babylon, it is written: *“The Lord says ... I know the plans I have for you, plans for good and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope”* (Jeremiah 29:11). Jeremiah’s advice to the Hebrews in the city of Babylon was *“to build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what you grow. [W]ork for the good of the cities where I have made you go, and pray to the Lord on their behalf, because if they are prosperous, you will be prosperous too”* (Jeremiah 29:5-7).

When Jesus visited his cities and towns, he saw the harassed and helpless ones (first century urban residents) as a ripe harvest, a rich treasure. *“Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest’”* (Matthew 9:35-38).

Jesus Was in the City for Good!

More people live in cities today than ever before, and the percentage is growing (51 percent now and projected at 75 percent globally by the year 2020).

Since Babylon, cities have always been simultaneously places of great human achievement and symbols of human degradation and evil, places of great hope and places to fear. Again and again, God has visited cities with mercy and sent his prophets to proclaim judgment, direction, and redemption.

Jesus came to seek and save the lost in the cities and villages of Judea and Galilee. Scripture gives us the powerful picture of Jesus weeping over the people of Jerusalem. The missionary activity of the Apostle Paul in the cities of the first century indicates their importance to the spread of the Gospel and the growth of the Church of Jesus Christ.

American cities also present the best and the worst in our society and culture, producing both glory and shame. The cities of our nation are places of opulence, the arts, learning, music, entertainment, and commerce. They are centers of finance, technology, and communications; they also are the purveyors of societal values.

Urban life in the United States and the Caribbean is also rife with signs of division, brokenness, misplaced priorities, and hatred. Cities harbor violence, greed, and widespread decay. Cities are affected by a breakdown of family structures and commitments and the erosion of the community relationships necessary for neighborhood health and vitality.

Urban areas are divided between the rich and the poor, the haves and have-nots; they are divided racially and ethnically. Deep rifts divide social classes and people with varied life-styles. A high degree of self-segregation occurs in the city, collectively adding diversity to the wider community as new people move in, but continuing old patterns of community separations. All of these things tear at the fabric of community stability and life. Life becomes fragile under these circumstances, and the tragedy of the human predicament is everywhere evident in crime, racism, violence, family abuse, drug and alcohol addictions, and other behavior that reflects the hopelessness of the people.

The city’s best gift can be a sense of community, cohesiveness, and cooperation and the knowledge that the city is a key element for building a future. Urban areas are made up of singles and families; ethnic cultures and economic classes; gays, lesbians, and straights; residents and transients. They live in community and tension, sometimes creatively, sometimes destructively. This cross section of people, values, culture, gifts, and dilemmas makes the city a strategic place in the emerging urban world. The city’s richness and excitement as well as its vibrancy drives the pulse of the population.

The cities and urban areas of America are mission fields with people from every nation of the globe, from every economic class and ethnic community, a true treasure of diverse people, all of whom suffer from the fallenness and brokenness of our world. God sends the Church into this rich harvest to do ministry. As Jesus ministered to a fallen world by preaching the Good News, teaching the Word of God, and healing the infirmities of the multitudes, so the Church of Jesus Christ today is sent into the city for good to preach, teach, and bring healing in Christ’s name.

In faithfulness to the great commission of Christ, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America seeks to minister to people in every setting:

- ! *small town and rural;*
- ! *suburban; and*
- ! *large and small cities.*

B. The Place of Lutherans in the City

Lutherans have been present in America's cities for over 300 years, building neighborhoods and settling immigrants as they established themselves in a new land. Because of that history, generations of people have heard the Gospel proclaimed and received the peace of God through the sacraments. The blessing of being part of the church community has shaped the lives of millions in special ways, and through the years, city churches have provided leaders for witness and service to the world.

We have much to celebrate about the ministry of our church in the city. Such ministry:

- ! proclaims the Gospel to women, men, and children;
- ! provides pastoral care for people of all ages;
- ! welcomes waves of people from various countries;
- ! establishes schools, social services, and hospitals;
- ! equips leaders in communities throughout America;
- ! builds housing, feeds the hungry, clothes the naked, visits the imprisoned, protects the vulnerable, and cares for orphans and widows;
- ! builds church communities of new ethnic groups and gives birth to new expressions of Christian witness; and
- ! provides meeting space for community organizations, child day care, elder care, and self-help groups.

Currently, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has:

- ! 3,166 congregations in small, medium, and large cities;
- ! 1,600 congregations in suburbs near large and medium cities;
- ! 100 Hispanic ministries;
- ! 45 Asian ministries;
- ! 200 congregations with 30 percent or more African American members;
- ! 20 American Indian ministries; and
- ! 3 Arab and Middle Eastern ministries.

Lutherans have much to celebrate in the city. We have been there! We have baptized, taught, preached, and made disciples. We are in the city for good!

C. Some Areas in Our Work That Require Change

It is well, however, to remember that many of our practices do not serve Christ well:

1. Generally, our thinking and behavior have supported congregations that are autonomous rather than interdependent, collegial, and regional.
2. We have not paid proper attention to the fright and flight that has emptied our cities and our churches.
3. We have ignored the racism that is active in our church and our culture.
4. Our inner city ministries have lacked support and a sense of celebration.
5. We have failed to build the interdependence) between city and suburb, city and small town, and city and rural communities—that is necessary to benefit this whole church.
6. We have over-emphasized social activism at the expense of the evangelical invitation to Christ.
7. Attention to aging church buildings has consumed energy and resources often inadequate to the building needs and often at the expense of mission outreach.
8. We have not empowered capable lay leaders, and our churches have remained clergy dominated.
9. While ELCA resolutions commit us to inclusiveness, in actuality we have failed to honor them and remain primarily a homogeneous church.
10. Partnership support in the form of financial assistance from churchwide units and synods has often failed to empower effective ministry and outreach.

Recognizing our failures and successes, we trust in the power of God to transform us to be in the city for good!

D. Gifts Lutherans Bring to the City

Gifts that Lutherans bring to the city include:

1. **Faith** in Jesus Christ as the Redeemer who brings new life to people and communities;
2. A **theology of grace**) a vital and important message for urban residents;
3. A strong **heritage** as a church with a presence in every major city;
4. Significant local **resources** for doing ministry (leaders, lay and clergy; buildings; coalitions and cooperatives; community programs; funding sources);

5. A wealth of **Lutheran partners** in our hospitals, schools and universities, nursing homes, immigration services, family and children services, and seminaries;
6. Committed **leaders** from all ethnic communities;
7. The potential for **ecumenical partners** with whom we can shape collaborative efforts far stronger than Lutherans can accomplish alone; and
8. Committed **financial and training resources** churchwide to do urban ministry.

E. Critical Issues Confronting the Church in the City

These eight issues were identified in a year-long series of consultations with urban pastors, lay people, and bishops throughout the country:

1. A significant number of congregations with declining membership and shrinking financial capabilities and resources;
2. A lack of intentional planning for the future by congregations, coalitions, cooperatives, and synods;
3. The need to recruit and develop leaders among our laity and clergy; and to involve congregations and seminaries in lay training programs, urban internships, models for mentoring, and ecumenical cooperation;
4. A growing separation between ethnic and cultural communities in spite of increasing cultural diversity;
5. The challenge to work cooperatively—within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and with ecumenical partners, as well as in the public and private sectors;
6. A dramatic increase of radical poverty, our lack of effective models for ministry among the poor and lack of commitment of resources to serve the poor;
7. The challenge to build healthy communities that are environmentally sound and where people are able to live and prosper in safety;
8. The need for Christian worship that is both authentic and appropriate as well as connects with the culture of the community.

II. The Action Plan for Urban Ministry

This vision for urban ministry calls for transformation in three dimensions: (1) transforming lives; (2) transforming congregations; and (3) transforming communities.

Dimension One:

Peoples lives transformed by the Gospel of Jesus Christ:

Intended outcomes and goals are:

1. evangelism that makes disciples of Jesus Christ;
2. discovery of new meaning for life that stems from relationship with Jesus Christ;
3. behavior modeled after Jesus, with priorities based on the Gospel;
4. Christ-centeredness, rather than self-centeredness;
5. discipline in prayer, Bible study, worship, and stewardship;
6. cultivation of spiritual gifts and use of those gifts in church and community;
7. service to God in daily life through the priesthood of all believers;
8. a spirit of hospitality with strangers, guests, and one another;
9. participation in reaching others with the message and importance of salvation;
10. changing people's hearts from the hardness of cultural norms to the reality of the love of Christ;

A. Action Plan for Transforming Lives

To move us toward the outcomes and goals, we will provide resources through the divisions, synods, and regions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to take the following actions:

1. create culturally relevant worship opportunities that engage people at a spiritual level and help them to know Jesus Christ;
2. provide study opportunities for people of all ages to support the idea that leaders of congregations need to be involved in weekly study of the Word;
3. establish small-group ministries as a way to gather people for spiritual nourishment and growth;
4. use spiritual gift inventories that aid people in discerning their role in the mission of the Church of Christ; and
5. promote ministry in daily life.

Dimension Two:

Congregations transformed into lively, viable, and effective places of ministry:

Intended outcomes and goals are:

1. congregations whose priority is making Christ known in word and deed;
2. ministries that are able to speak to their communities and attract people for worship, growth in faith, and service;
3. congregations that change in response to their community's need;

4. pastoral leaders with the ability to envision the future and bring people into the vision;
5. spiritual vitality seen in Bible study, prayer ministry, celebrative worship, and ministry suited to the community;
6. music that is spiritual, contextually alive, and dynamic as part of worship;
7. ministries committed to outreach with the Gospel, advocacy for justice, and addressing human need; and
8. congregations that are responsible and responsive partners in the community.

B. Action Plan for Transforming Congregations

To move us toward the outcomes and goals, we will:

1. provide trained leaders to help congregations assess their mission and plan (pilot in nine synods);
2. offer workshops and training in the following areas: redevelopment, racial transition, consolidations, collaborations, parish development, ethnic-specific outreach, spiritual growth, Bible study and faith formation, small-group ministry, hospitality, and church growth;
3. develop a network of urban church advisors to help synods and congregations make crucial decisions, plan, and implement ministry;
4. help congregations with redevelopment grants;
5. help congregations with ministry adjustment grants;
6. begin new ethnic-specific ministries and plan for their self-reliance;
7. help congregations in communities of racial and ethnic transition with grants and other resources;
8. support congregations with teaching and mentoring programs;
9. develop processes for identifying new urban pastors;
10. work to improve salaries and benefits for urban ministry leaders;
11. cooperate with the Commission for Multicultural Ministries and ethnic communities to develop and implement mission strategy;
12. identify successful models (based on outreach and growth) for cross-cultural congregations;
13. support development of Bible school models for training lay ministers;
14. encourage development of local training centers for urban ministry;
15. work with seminaries to develop special urban training events and opportunities;
16. increase urban internship sites;

17. encourage congregations to work in mutual ministry and support one another; and
18. identify educational resources and training opportunities in the area of conflict resolution and mediation.

Dimension Three:

Communities transformed and renewed into desirable places to live and work:

Intended outcomes and goals are:

1. church buildings that are used for community organizations and community improvement or development;
2. safe neighborhoods in which to live and work;
3. places where the health of the Church in the city creates strong, healthy, and environmentally aware communities;
4. urban and suburban partnerships that recognize the interdependent nature of the metropolitan area;
5. adequate housing;
6. jobs that pay living wages;
7. adequate social services and sound educational opportunities;
8. people participating in community life and decision-making;
9. churches that are active in neighborhood stabilization and improvement;
10. economic investment in city neighborhoods; and
11. drug-free communities with reduced crime.

C. Action Plan for Transforming Communities

To move us toward the outcomes and goals, we will:

1. provide opportunities for pastors and congregations to learn the ingredients of healthy communities;
2. encourage urban church buildings to be open as safety zones for all;
3. encourage suburban and urban congregations to develop mutual-ministry relationships establishing covenant commitments;
4. seek ecumenical partners to address human needs;
5. work collaboratively with social ministry organizations throughout this church to serve human needs;
6. work with the Division for Church in Society, the Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs, and synodical social concerns committees to change the ways poverty issues are addressed;

7. promote development of effective church-based community organizations;
8. enhance and promote the Women and Children Living in Poverty strategy, known as “A Plan to Listen and Act”;
9. provide training for urban church leaders on community and congregational improvement projects;
10. encourage cooperation with civic and private agencies for economic development, housing rehabilitation and construction, jobs, and business development;
11. encourage youth ministry opportunities through summer jobs, Youth Corps, Lutheran Volunteer Corps, etc.;
12. help congregations serve emerging community needs with regard to changes in welfare programs of states and territories; and
13. cooperate with neighborhoods in creating drug-free zones.

III. How Implementation Works

This vision and action plan for ministry in the city is useful only in its local adaptation, recognizing that all planning for growth in ministry is best done locally.

Congregations and synods are to take authority and responsibility to be aggressive and creative to accomplish their ministry.

Assessment, strategy development, and implementation can have many partners, but each congregation must take responsibility for its own future.

The congregations, synods, agencies, and churchwide ministries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America are asked to pledge to work together to bring about the transformation described here so that truly we may give glory to God by being *in the city for good!*

Bishop Anderson’s announcement of the adoption of the initiative was greeted with lengthy applause. He commented that the vote was a strong affirmation of the team’s work and a strong commitment of this church to be *In the City for Good*.

Report of the Memorials Committee (continued)

Reference: continued on *Minutes*, pages 139, 394, 767.

Bishop Anderson indicated that the amount of time remaining in this plenary session would not permit introduction of the Multicultural Mission Strategy. He invited, therefore, Ms. Sandra G. Gustavson, chair of the Memorials Committee,

to continue the committee’s report. Bishop Anderson stated, “You will recall we were discussing the proposal on gay and lesbian issues and we will pick up our discussion on that matter.”

Category 27: Ordination of Openly Gay and Lesbian Persons (continued)

Reference: *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section VI, pages 71-75; continued on *Minutes*, page 394, 767.

Ms. Gustavson directed assembly members to *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section VI, pages 71-75: Category 27, Ordination of Openly Gay and Lesbian Persons, which comprised memorials from the Sierra Pacific Synod and Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod. She indicated that discussion of the committee’s recommendation now would resume. The recommendation of the Memorials Committee, as amended, was as follows.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To acknowledge the concerns that are expressed in the memorials of the Sierra Pacific Synod and the Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod on the ordination of gay and lesbian persons—concerns that are part of the context of this church’s ongoing dialogue related to human sexuality;

To decline to take action at this assembly to make the changes in church policy and practice requested by these memorials;

To refer these memorials instead to the Division for Ministry as the division carries out its responsibility for recommending standards for rostered ministries and as it participates in the development and use of models for conversation and continuing moral deliberation on this sensitive and important subject;

To affirm the work of the Division for Church in Society as it assists this church to explore models of conversation and continuing moral deliberation that can serve this church in its commitment to continuing dialogue on issues related to human sexuality, including homosexuality; and

To request that a status report on the learnings of these conversations be brought through the Church Council to the 1999 Churchwide Assembly.

Mr. Mark Kremen [Northwest Washington Synod] moved the following:

MOVED;

SECONDED: To amend the recommendation of the Memorials Committee by deleting paragraphs 3, 4, and 5 and replacing them with the following:

To refer these memorials to the Division for Ministry and the Division for Church and Society, requesting that these divisions develop a recommendation for action at the 1999 Churchwide Assembly regarding the ordination of gay and lesbian persons.

Mr. Kremen spoke to the amendment saying that this church has delayed action on similar memorials for three churchwide assemblies, while people are waiting to know where this church stands. He urged this church to take a stand at the 1999 Churchwide Assembly by taking an action at that assembly.

Ms. Nancy C. Fricke [Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod] acknowledged the issue to be a difficult one to address. She observed that it took 70 years for women to achieve the right to vote, and that the six years since the 1991 Churchwide Assembly first addressed the issue of the participation of homosexual persons in the life of this church is a very short period of time. She said, "This is an issue that we need to spend a good deal of time deliberating. I think the resolution paragraph which deals with the deliberative process is extremely important--this church needs that time."

Mr. Timothy L. Barr [Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod] spoke against the amendment. He said that this church needs to discuss and pray, and to take a stand, but that its members need to come together as a church. He added that the discussion of the ecumenical proposals was lengthy, and that the assembly ought to commit substantial time to the discussion of the issue of ordination of gay and lesbian persons.

Bishop Paull E. Spring [Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod] observed that this church already has a policy in effect as expressed in the *Vision and Expectations: Ordained Ministers in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* document. He spoke, therefore, in opposition to the amendment.

In order that the resolution apply to all rostered persons, the Rev. Donald A. Haas [Delaware-Maryland Synod] moved:

MOVED;

SECONDED: To amend the amendment by addition of the words, "consecration, and commissioning," after the word, "ordination."

Speaking to his amendment which included all rostered persons, Pastor Haas said, "If it applies to one group, it should apply to all, or none."

MOVED;

SECONDED;

Voice Vote

CARRIED: To amend the amendment by addition of the words, "consecration, and commissioning," after the word, "ordination."

The Rev. Mark A. Graham [Virginia Synod] moved:

MOVED;

SECONDED: To amend the amendment by addition of the word, "non-celibate," before the words, "ordination, consecration, and commissioning."

Speaking to the amendment, Pastor Graham observed that this church in fact has ordained celibate gay and lesbian persons. The amendment, he said, was intended to address the situation in a more precise way.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

Voice Vote

CARRIED: To amend the amendment by addition of the word, "non-celibate," before the words, "ordination, consecration, and commissioning."

Bishop Anderson, observing that it was then 12:15 P.M. and that the orders of the day called for the fourth ballot for vice president to be cast and therefore further discussion and action on this memorial would be deferred.

Elections: Fourth Ballot for Vice President

Reference: continued on *Minutes*, pages 262, 350, 380, 546.

Bishop Anderson indicated that 60 percent of votes cast was needed for election. He asked for the names of the three nominees to appear on the screen, in descending vote order from the third ballot: Ms. Addie Butler; Ms. Cynthia Jurisson; and Ms. Myrna Sheie.

Ms. Judith L. Garber [Lower Susquehanna Synod] inquired about the order in which the nominees had addressed the assembly. Bishop Anderson responded that order in which they spoke had been determined by lot and that the order in which they appeared on the screen was in descending vote order. He then identified the first person who spoke was Addie Butler, the second person who spoke was Myrna Sheie, and the third person who spoke was Cynthia Jurisson.

Prior to balloting, Bishop Anderson offered prayer. Bishop Anderson ordered ballots cast and subsequently declared balloting to be closed. Following balloting, General Counsel Phillip H. Harris, chair of the Elections Committee, reported that 1,005 votes were cast and asked that the results be posted on the video screens. The results reported were:

Ms. Addie J. Butler	524 (51.14%)
Ms. Myrna J. Sheie	252 (25.07%)
Ms. Cynthia A. Jurisson	229 (22.79%)

Bishop Anderson declared that there had been no election and that the two persons receiving the highest number of votes on the fourth ballot would appear on the next ballot. He named those persons as Addie Butler and Myrna Sheie. He announced that the fifth ballot would take place during the afternoon session this same day, Monday, August 18, 1997, at 4:30 P.M.

Recess

Bishop Anderson called upon Secretary Lowell G. Almen to make several announcements. Secretary Almen informed the assembly that the anniversary to be celebrated in the Heritage and Hope Village marked the 10th year of the Ecumenical Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women.

Bishop Anderson then called upon the Rev. Nelson T. Strobert, a member of the Church Council, who led the assembly in singing the hymn, “Rise, Shine, You People,” and offered the closing prayer.

At 12:27 P.M., Bishop Anderson declared the assembly in recess until 2:30 P.M.

Plenary Session Seven

Monday, August 18, 1997

2:30 P.M.—6:00 P.M.

Order of Business

The Rev. H. George Anderson, presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, called Plenary Session Seven to order on Monday, August 18, 1997, at 2:34 P.M. Bishop Anderson announced that the offering to be received at the evening’s Service of Holy Communion would be designated for assistance to Augusta Victoria Hospital located on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem. He said, “I cannot think of another institution that is more of an example of Lutherans living out our theme, ‘Alive in Heritage and Hope.’ We and other Lutheran churches around the world began supporting this hospital on the Mount of Olives with prayers and funds in 1950 when the Lutheran World Federation became the trustee of that hospital. The need for funds now is crucial and urgent.” He asked assembly members to remember in prayer all the people in Jerusalem, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan, and the staff and patients of Augusta Victoria Hospital.

Ecumenical Greetings

Presiding Bishop Anderson introduced the Most Rev. Alexander Brunett, bishop of the Diocese of Helena, Montana, chair of the ecumenical committee of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. Archbishop Brunett addressed the assembly with these words: “I greet you prayerfully in the name of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and the 60 million plus [Roman] Catholic people in the United States. We are with you in spirit and prayer during your days here in Philadelphia.” He expressed appreciation to Bishop Anderson and his staff for the hospitality extended to him and thanked the Rev. Daniel F. Martensen, director of the Department for Ecumenical Affairs, noting that the department has been “tremendous to work with” in their mutual ecumenical endeavors.

Bishop Brunett said, “You are facing with faith the serious responsibilities of overseeing your internal Lutheran life and in making decisions about your relations with other Christian churches with whom you are in dialogue. Indeed, those of us outside of your church are in awe of the responsibilities you have taken upon yourselves in recent years: The coming together of the Evangelical Lutheran Church [in America] in 1987, the affirmation of your ecumenical vision in 1991, and now the three [ecumenical] proposals that have been before this Churchwide Assembly. I can only share with you a prayer of praise and acknowledgment for

what God is doing in your church and a word of support in your ecumenical outreach with our church [the Roman Catholic Church] and your other ecumenical partners.

“For Roman Catholics and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America this is a particularly momentous time, as [his Eminence Edward Idris] Cardinal Cassidy of the [Vatican] Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity noted at the Lutheran World Federation Assembly last month. He is the highest ranking Vatican or [Roman] Catholic official in ecumenism, [and] he was talking about the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*. [Cardinal Cassidy] said, ‘. . . we are able to reflect today on an ecumenical development of enormous proportions—namely, the fact that at this time in history, in these remaining years of the twentieth century, we are on the verge of a very positive achievement which is historic because it aims at settling a fundamental issue on which we have been divided since the sixteenth century . . . the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* to which both of our communities are giving formal consideration, and which we both hope will receive a positive response’ As you know, the ELCA and its predecessor bodies along with the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod through our nine rounds of United States dialogue, and especially our 1983 statement on justification by faith, have made significant contributions to the theological basis on which the *Declaration* is based. We know that this important stage must be reached before we go on to reconcile other important elements of our church life—the sacraments, the ordering of the ministry, the ways of deciding and acting together in Christ as our Redeemer and Lord. Indeed, our own dialogues in the United States have developed significant contributions regarding all of these concerns. However, the theological agreement reflected in this *Joint Declaration* is only one element in our deepening communion with one another. Our common prayer, our spiritual concern for one another, our actions together in mission and service, our witness to the world, and our educational work, all reflect the same urgency with which we approach our theological agreement. We move forward with patience and realism. As Cardinal Cassidy pointed out, ‘The heritage of the separation and alienation between our communities, coming to us from the 16th century, is unfortunately complex. It touches on other vital concerns which we must also continue to address on our way toward reconciliation. Nor are these concerns simply of human origin. They relate, rather, to the will of Christ himself. A central matter among these would be the nature and the mission of the Church founded by Christ. This issue itself touches on many other areas our dialogues . . . have already begun to address We need to approach this process with a patience marked with love for Jesus Christ and for one another, as we search to resolve the differences that still exist, in our search for visible unity between us.’”

Bishop Brunett expressed particular gratitude “for the grass-roots efforts between Lutherans and [Roman] Catholics. As I have been going around the last three or four days talking to different people here, it has impressed me very much

how many stories you can tell me about wonderful ecumenical things happening in dialogue and cooperation happening at the local level. So many of you confessed that you saw this as very solid and rewarding collaboration. This is the texture of relationships which the theological agreement serves and which provides the energy to keep church leaders and theologians working to resolve remaining challenges. Your Lutheran [Ecumenical Resource] Network, LERN, and our Roman Catholic [counterpart] network provide the synodical and diocesan leadership that neither our congregations nor our national bodies can give. It is this local and congregational leadership in preaching, educating, prayer, common practical projects in mission and education, Bible studies, and ecumenical formation that enable us to grow into that unity in which the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* is a testimony—our one Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. While this clear goal of visible unity is deep in my own heart, and is a conviction shared by the [Roman] Catholic leadership of the United States, be assured that it is an essential commitment of the whole Roman Catholic Church. As Pope John Paul II said in his 1995 encyclical, *That They All May Be One* [*Ut unum sint*, quoted by Cardinal Cassidy in his remarks to the 1997 Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation in Hong Kong], ‘. . . it is absolutely clear that ecumenism, the movement promoting Christian unity, is not just some sort of “appendix” which is added to the Church’s traditional activity. Rather ecumenism is an organic part of her life and work, and consequently must pervade all that she is and does. It must be like the fruit borne by a healthy and flourishing tree which grows to its full stature.’ In addressing the Hong Kong assembly on this *Joint Declaration*, [Cardinal Cassidy] said, as we seek to bring this process to a successful conclusion, we need to keep before us the Lord’s ‘prayer for his disciples . . . that they may all be one.’ This has been our motivation. Because it is the will of Christ that we should seek unity, there can be no turning back on the road to ecumenism. As together we give thanks to God for the ecumenical path on which he is leading us, I pray that with his grace, [Roman] Catholics and Lutherans will strive with even more commitment to overcome the obstacles which still impede our unity. It is an inspiration to our church, and especially those of us who give leadership to our ecumenical commitments, to see your development. We appreciate your own struggles, and we struggle with you. We share with you the gratitude to God for the mission and ministry you perform in the world. We pledge ourselves to continue the pilgrimage with you as we discern together God’s will for the church in our world today. I pray that in our continuing dialogue and efforts, we are motivated by the fact that it is the Lord’s will to which we are responding—the Lord, who has sent his Spirit to guide us into all truth. May God bless you. May God bless your work. Thank you for the opportunity to share this privileged moment on our joint journey of faith and unity.”

In response to Archbishop Brunett’s greeting, Bishop Anderson recalled that many assembly members had grown up in a time when the relationship between the Lutheran and Roman Catholic churches was not what it is today. He said, “It is truly amazing what the Holy Spirit has done in our midst during these last

generations and I only thank God that I have been able to live in a time when the atmosphere of controversy and suspicion has turned instead into an atmosphere of honesty, mutual sharing, and serious addressing of the issues that we both now can confess together and that we still must decide and discuss. Thank you for presence representing the other side of that contemporary miracle.”

Multicultural Mission Strategies

Reference: *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section IV, pages 87-90.

BACKGROUND

Today, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is predominantly a White, middle-class church whose members are mostly of Estonian, Danish, Finnish, German, Latvian, Norwegian, Slovak, or Swedish ethnic heritage.

Some outreach efforts among African American, American Indian and Alaska Native, Asian, and Hispanic people were made by The American Lutheran Church, Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches, and Lutheran Church in America in the decades of the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. The membership of African American, American Indian and Alaska Native, Asian, and Hispanic membership of all the three predecessor church bodies combined, however, was less than two percent of the total membership.

At a time when approximately 23 percent of the United States is African American, American Indian and Alaska Native, Asian, or Hispanic, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in 1987 adopted a mission challenge, to reach a goal of at least 10 percent African American, American Indian and Alaska Native, Asian, and Hispanic members within 10 years.

In faithfulness to the biblical mandate to proclaim the Gospel and acknowledging the trends in population expansion, the constituting convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America committed this church to reach out to greater degree than had been done by the predecessor church bodies among those in the African American, American Indian and Alaska Native, Asian, and Hispanic communities.

The resources of this church for the outreach effort are the 5.2 million members, 11,000 congregations, synods, churchwide units, agencies and institutions. This is a powerful resource for the proclamation of the Gospel and for this outreach ministry.

The Multicultural Mission Strategy, adopted by the 1991 Churchwide Assembly, lays out a clear comprehensive, interdependent plan of action to achieve this goal. This strategy does not simply call for a ten-year project, rather it calls the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to an intense beginning of an ongoing

comprehensive ministry with African American, Arab and Middle Eastern, American Indian and Alaska Native, Asian, and Hispanic people.

Since 1991, a very intentional outreach effort with African American, Arab and Middle Eastern, American Indian and Alaska Native, Asian, and Hispanic people has been underway. Now we are witnessing the results of these efforts. For example, today we have more African American, Arab and Middle Eastern, American Indian and Alaska Native, Asian, and Hispanic members in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America than in 1991. Since 1991, three new Arab and Middle Eastern ministries were started. More language- and culture-specific resources are being produced to assist congregations in strengthening their existing ministries and outreach.

The Multicultural Mission Strategy Staff Team, appointed by the executive for administration in the churchwide organization, provides coordination between and among the churchwide units to ensure that the ministry efforts of the various churchwide units are focused on the Multicultural Mission Strategy objectives.

At the fall 1996 churchwide board and steering committee meetings, this staff team conducted reviews of the Multicultural Mission Strategy efforts of our church. The results of these findings assisted the staff team revising and strengthening the Multicultural Mission Strategy of this church. The spring 1997 churchwide board and steering committees endorsed the revised strategy for this church’s continuing outreach efforts with African American, Arab and Middle Eastern, American Indian and Alaska Native, Asian, and Hispanic people. Now this strategy is presented to the 1997 Churchwide Assembly for its consideration.

At the April 1997 meeting of the Church Council, the council voted:

To transmit to the 1997 Churchwide Assembly the following “Recommitment to a Strategy for Proclamation of the Gospel” [*Pre-Assembly Report*, Section IV, pages 89-90]; and

To recommend that the 1997 Churchwide Assembly adopt the following resolution:

RECOMMENDATION OF THE CHURCH COUNCIL

WHEREAS, a stated purpose of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is to “Carry out Christ’s Great Commission by reaching out to all people to bring them to faith in Christ . . .”(ELCA churchwide constitutional provision 4.01.b.); and

WHEREAS, this church further proposes to “Manifest the unity given to the people of God by living together in the love of Christ . . .” (4.02.f.); and

WHEREAS, this church, “in faithfulness to the Gospel, is committed to be an inclusive church in the midst of division in society” (5.01.b.); and

WHEREAS, this church at its constituting convention set a goal that within 10 years of its establishment the membership of this church “shall include at least 10 percent people of color and/or primary language other than English” (5.01.A87.); and

WHEREAS, inclusivity has been held back by racial attitudes and a lack of personal witness and evangelism;

WHEREAS, the groundwork for growth has been laid and populations of persons of color and language other than English are growing;

WHEREAS, the achievement of this goal will require much intentional activity of all expressions of this church—congregations, synods, and churchwide organization—as well as related entities, including this church’s campus ministries, colleges, universities, schools, seminaries, and other institutions; therefore, be it

RESOLVED that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, make a renewed affirmation of and commitment to the 10 percent membership growth goal and the Multicultural Mission Strategy adopted by the 1991 Churchwide Assembly; and be it further

RESOLVED that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America renew its commitment to the amended Multicultural Mission Strategy Action Plan; and be it further

RESOLVED that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in all its expressions seek to make all church structures accountable for implementing the amended Multicultural Mission Action Plan; and be it further

RESOLVED that the churchwide organization, synods, congregations, and agencies and institutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America be urged to commit adequate funding for the implementation of the amended Multicultural Mission Strategy Action Plan; and be it further

RESOLVED that the churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America serve as a resource to and with synods and congregations to reach out to an increasingly multicultural population; be it further

RESOLVED that the amended “Action Plan” and “Implementation Steps” be adopted as the strategy by which the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America works towards the 10 percent membership growth goal.

Bishop Anderson directed the attention of assembly members to the proposed Multicultural Mission Strategy, stating that as we seek to become a church that welcomes all people, we are exploring ways to live up to our commitments, which has not been as easy as anticipated. Many have assumed that, if we possessed a welcoming attitude, everyone would be glad to come into this church and would feel comfortable. He stated, “I think we’ve learned over the last decade that we carry cultural baggage of various sorts along with our theological traditions.” This

church set a goal in 1987 [that within 10 years of its establishment, the membership of this church shall include at least 10 percent people of color and/or whose primary language is other than English] to be open and inviting of all persons and their gifts. “While we have not achieved that goal, we have moved toward it,” he said.

Bishop Anderson introduced the Rev. Frederick E. N. Rajan, executive director of the Commission for Multicultural Ministries. Pastor Rajan recalled that six years ago, the 1991 Churchwide Assembly adopted a Multicultural Mission Strategy, which laid out a clear, comprehensive, and interdependent plan of action to achieve the goal of ten percent membership of persons of color and/or whose primary language is other than English. He reported, “While we are far behind in achieving our goal, indeed the 1996 parochial reports tell us only 2.14 percent of the baptized members in our church [at the end of 1996] were persons of color; we recognize that we have a long way to go in achieving our goal; we recognize that the harvest is plentiful—in fact, today 28 percent of this nation’s population is comprised of persons of color.”

He spoke of new work beginning with persons of Arab and Middle Eastern heritage and of ministry begun 99 years ago in Puerto Rico. “We are confident that a Spanish-language worship book will be ready by the turn of the century,” he said, “and we have come a long way in providing such a resource.” He affirmed, “Witness with the African American communities started 350 years ago, but for the first time we will have an African American Lutheran hymnal that will celebrate and rejoice in their historical hymns and worship material available in the African American tradition.” Pastor Rajan also spoke of the developing work with the Filipino community and with the American Indian and Alaska Native communities.

Features of the Multicultural Mission Strategy are: (1) to make all structures accountable and responsible for implementing the strategy; (2) to provide adequate funding for the implementation of the strategy at all levels of our church; and (3) to assist synods and congregations in their outreach to increase the multicultural population through training and resources. Pastor Rajan concluded, “People of God, we must not look back; we must look to the future. All of us, the five million of us, are missionaries of our church and we must work together to achieve this goal. All of our 11,000 ‘mission posts,’ as we call our congregations, must make a commitment to achieving this goal. All of our churchwide units, synods, and the incredible number of colleges and universities and seminaries and other institutions must help each other in achieving this goal. We must address the wall that separates us; we must combat racism and forms of discrimination; and we must pray, and pray, and pray that God will give each of us the vision for this outreach effort.”

Bishop Anderson asked Secretary Almen to present the following recommendation of the Church Council:

MOVED;

SECONDED: WHEREAS, a stated purpose of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is to “Carry out Christ’s Great Commission by reaching out to all people to bring them to faith in Christ . . .”(ELCA churchwide constitutional provision 4.01.b.);

WHEREAS, this church further proposes to “Manifest the unity given to the people of God by living together in the love of Christ . . .” (4.02.f.);

WHEREAS, this church, “in faithfulness to the Gospel, is committed to be an inclusive church in the midst of division in society” (5.01.b.);

WHEREAS, this church at its constituting convention set a goal that within 10 years of its establishment the membership of this church “shall include at least 10 percent people of color and/or primary language other than English” (5.01.A87.);

WHEREAS, inclusivity has been held back by racial attitudes and a lack of personal witness and evangelism;

WHEREAS, the groundwork for growth has been laid and populations of persons of color and language other than English are growing; and

WHEREAS, the achievement of this goal will require much intentional activity of all expressions of this church—congregations, synods, and churchwide organization—as well as related entities, including this church’s campus ministries, colleges, universities, schools, seminaries, and other institutions; therefore, be it

RESOLVED that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, make a renewed affirmation of and commitment to the 10 percent membership growth goal and the Multicultural Mission Strategy adopted by the 1991 Churchwide Assembly; and be it further

RESOLVED that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America renew its commitment to the amended Multicultural Mission Strategy Action Plan; and be it further

RESOLVED that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in all its expressions seek to make all church structures accountable for implementing the amended Multicultural Mission Action Plan; and be it further

RESOLVED that the churchwide organization, synods, congregations, and agencies and institutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America be urged to commit adequate funding for the implementation of the amended Multicultural Mission Strategy Action Plan; and be it further

RESOLVED that the churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America serve as a resource to and with synods and congregations to reach out to an increasingly multicultural population; and be it further

RESOLVED that the amended “Action Plan” and “Implementation Steps” be adopted as the strategy by which the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America works towards the 10 percent membership growth goal.

Ms. Mechelle Severson [Southeastern Minnesota Synod] spoke in support of the recommendation, but noted that the original document did not address the question of “multi-racial” and “bi-racial” individuals. She stated, “I represent a multicultural population that are members of our church. I do consider myself a person of color; however, my father was mixed European and my mother was a Filipino. The more we try to be inclusive, the more we exclude. In order to acknowledge the different cultures even within the Scandinavian countries, I would like the wording of multicultural or multiracial or biracial included.”

Mr. Douglas Miyamoto [La Crosse Area Synod] moved:

MOVED;

SECONDED: To amend the first resolve by deleting the word, “the,” in the third line and inserting the words, “a minimum of,” so that the first resolve reads as follows:

RESOLVED, that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, make a renewed affirmation of and commitment to a minimum of 10 percent membership growth goal and the Multicultural Mission Strategy adopted by the 1991 Churchwide Assembly; and be it further”

Mr. Miyamoto stated, “It is important to not set a goal that once that goal is achieved that the attention to this is not taken as seriously as it is now. I would like to see that that is just a minimum goal set so that we can give ongoing attention to

it throughout the future years of our church.” Bishop Anderson requested the representatives of the drafting committee to respond. Pastor Rajan said that the committee supported it, as it reflected the spirit of the proposed strategy.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

Yes-859; No-69

CARRIED: To amend the first resolve by deleting the word, “the,” in the third line and inserting the words, “a minimum of,” so that the first resolve reads as follows:

RESOLVED, that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, make a renewed affirmation of and commitment to a minimum of 10 percent membership growth goal and the Multicultural Mission Strategy adopted by the 1991 Churchwide Assembly; and be it further”

The Rev. Antonio Cotto [Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod] spoke in support of the strategy, and said, “We have 29 million Hispanics in this country [which] is a great resource from where we can start evangelizing and recruiting people for the Lutheran church. Nevertheless, we need to have a clear mandate and [plan] of how we are going to do the job that is needed to be able to achieve the 10 percent that we have proposed here today. . . . Based on the statistics that we have, we have 29,300+ Hispanics belonging to the ELCA and we have achieved that probably within the ten years. But I am not very satisfied with that because the numbers tell us that we can do much, much better.” He also spoke of the need of more funding and resources in order to accomplish the goals set before this church.

The Rev. Mary B. Zurell [Delaware-Maryland Synod] spoke in favor of the recommendation, recounting her own experience of “transformation” as a seminary intern in a multi-racial congregation in central Milwaukee, Wis., 14 years ago. She commented, “For the last 12 years, I have served a multi-racial congregation in Baltimore, Md. I would like to express what a difference being with brothers and sisters of different ethnic and racial and cultural heritages can do for all of us. . . . I believe that our multi-racial emphasis lends wholeness to the body [the church].”

Mr. Daniel Bulau [Northwestern Ohio Synod] inquired whether “10 percent” referred to 10 percent membership or to 10 percent *growth* in membership. Pastor Rajan clarified that the “goal set for ourselves in 1987 was to have 10 percent of our membership in our church in ten years be persons of color and/or primary language other than English.”

Mr. Bulau then offered the following motion:

MOVED;

SECONDED: To amend the first and last resolved paragraphs by deleting the word, “growth.”

Mr. Bulau noted that the deletion of the word, “growth,” would clarify the intent of the recommendation.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

Yes-772; No-135

CARRIED: To amend the first and last resolved paragraphs by deleting the word, “growth.”

Mr. Jeffrey L. Kane [New England Synod] asked that Pastor Rajan explain “what the difference between the Multicultural Mission Strategy committee will be from that of the commission’s [Commission for Multicultural Ministries] steering committee itself. They seem to me to be very similar and I just want to be sure that we have clear, defined goals for both of them before we create yet another committee within the ELCA.” Pastor Rajan responded that the commission has some specific mandates and “one of these mandates is to make the African American, Black, Asian, Hispanic, American Indian, Alaska Natives, and Arab and Middle Eastern persons full partners and participants in the life of our church. The Multicultural Mission Strategy Staff Team is a team which is appointed by the executive for administration to monitor and coordinate the work of implementing the multicultural mission strategy efforts across our church. Another group, the Multicultural Mission Strategy Consulting Committee provides consultation and advice specific to how we go about implementing the multicultural mission strategy efforts and how this growth goal will be monitored and reported back to [the church]. . . . The commission’s steering committee provides advice and counsel to the whole church and to the work of the commission in fulfilling the broader mandate of working on all areas of our church’s ministry.”

The Rev. Thomas A. Prinz [Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod] spoke against the resolution and cautioned assembly members that “when we in our legitimate missionary endeavors approach immigrant communities in the United States that have been traditionally a part of other Christian communities, it is an imperative that we understand the difference between persons who are ‘de-churched’ who have been taken away, detached from their traditional religious communities because of their immigration to another country, and those persons who are, in fact, unchurched, who belong to no tradition. We have committed ourselves ecumenically in some ways in this assembly, and I hope we would

continue to commit ourselves to being sensitive to the rest of the Christian community with which we share this country.”

Mr. Mark Kremen [Northwest Washington Synod], identified himself as a member of the Snohomish Nation, a Washington State tribe of Native Americans. Urging adoption of the recommendation, he referred to the American Indian medicine wheel, which teaches the significance of the colors red, yellow, black, and white. Those colors, he explained, “are the representations of all the peoples of the world, . . . we look to our Creator and we use all these colors that we are all different races but we look toward our Creator, our God. I would like to have it noted that part of the history of us as Native American peoples that we are people who have embraced all colors of races.”

Ms. Lisabeth Aline Huck [New England Synod] inquired about the fourth resolved paragraph concerning congregational funding for the implementation of the Multicultural Mission Strategy. She asked, “Would that be funding in their own local budgets or for benevolence to synods and [the] churchwide [organization]?” Pastor Rajan explained, “Each congregation will determine how much money they would like to spend within their budget for ministry with persons of color in their community.”

Mr. William E. Diehl [Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod] referred to the comments previously made by Ms. Mechelle Severson who had said that she was a multi-racial person and as such wished to be included in the strategy’s concerns. Mr. Diehl noted that “we increasingly will become a multi-racial nation” and asked if there is “some reason why multi-racial persons are not cited” in the recommendation? Pastor Rajan explained that the commission utilizes an ethnic classification system consistent with that of the U.S. Census Bureau. He said, “This gives us an idea about what is happening demographically in our society and how we can compare that with what is happening in our church. We have been mindful of the enormous discussions which are happening in our society especially with regard to bi-racial people. In fact, every year close to three million marriages happen across ethnic lines. That is an issue that is before the Census Bureau and as the Census Bureau makes its own decisions we will make appropriate revisions and changes in terms of counting the membership [of this church]. We depend on congregations to identify where every individual wants to identify within the congregational parochial report form. This is an issue, in my opinion, which needs to be discussed between the members of the congregation, if they are bi-racial folks, and with their pastor in determining how they want to be identified within the categories.”

The Rev. José Pablo Obregon [Southwestern Minnesota Synod] noted the existence of multicultural ministries in the Upper Midwest. Pastor Obregon stated, “When I came to the United States about 11 years ago, I was not Lutheran . . . and if it was not for this church, I would not have the opportunity to preach the grace of God to other people. I would encourage you to open the doors to other people

who would like to join us—to make sure that the grace of God continues to be spread out in the church.” Pastor Obregon shared his concern, “that multicultural ministry in this church is being used as a tokenism. . . . If we pass this proposal we must act upon it and not just put it in our files and leave it there.”

The Rev. Melody Beckman Eastman [Metropolitan Chicago Synod] observed that in the Metropolitan Chicago Synod, studies have noted a need for support of the deaf community as “a unique culture and American Sign Language is itself a unique language. It is not English turned into sign, but has its unique syntax and grammar. That culture is a culture that has been excluded.” She inquired whether under the strategy and in this motion, the phrase “primary language other than English” would include speakers of American Sign Language? Pastor Rajan responded that American Sign language is a language other than English and that the commission has considered the deaf community as a distinct culture since 1988 conversations with the deaf community about the question. The ELCA Church Council [in 1991] affirmed a multi-unit approach for addressing the concerns of the deaf community. Pastor Eastman asked for a more direct answer to her question. Pastor Rajan responded, “It does not.”

The Rev. D. Craig Landis [Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod] inquired whether the minimum goal of ten percent, as adopted earlier in Mr. Miyamoto’s amendment, was meant to apply to the last resolved paragraph as well as to the first. Bishop Anderson suggested that the matter be reviewed before a response would be made to Pastor Landis.

Ms. Margery Wolf [Pacifica Synod] recounted her congregation’s multicultural mission. Six years ago her church voted to begin an Hispanic ministry in response to a large increase in the Hispanic population in Southern California. She said, “We started out, in an effort to maintain the Hispanic speaking culture, by having two congregations going parallel—but definitely two congregations. As a result of the culture differences, we soon found that the Hispanic people were not used to a regular tithing or offering and the English-speaking congregation was footing the bill. Being two parallel congregations, there was no communication, no sharing of ideas of ministry in any way, and it became a problem, a lot of discord in our church. About a year ago, we decided that the Hispanic ministry was much too important to allow it to fall by the wayside. The only alternative we had was to change our original view of Hispanic ministry. We have now changed to one congregation, two languages. We have hired a full-time associate pastor who preaches 50 percent with the Hispanic and serves the English congregation 50 percent. In this short time, this system is working fantastically.”

Ms. Carole M. Silvoy (Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod) noted that her thesis while a college student considered how deaf ministry meets liberation theology. She said that she had served for seven years as an assistant to the pastor of a deaf congregation. She stated that “not only is deafness a culture in the United States, it is an oppressed culture. Language is taken away from deaf people, it has not been

recognized consistently. For a hundred years, sign language was forbidden to be used in the teaching of deaf children Hearing people decided that sign language was not a good thing for deaf people. That is a pattern of oppression and plays out in the lives of deaf people as a form of racism. I have sincere misgivings on continuing to move in a direction that gives lip service to recognizing deafness as a culture but oppresses deaf people in their cultural understanding of themselves by excluding them. I feel that exclusion is itself a form of oppression and racism.”

Bishop Anderson called upon Secretary Almen to comment on the question raised previously by Pastor Landis. Secretary Lowell G. Almen responded that “the final resolved is making implied reference to ELCA continuing resolution 5.01.A87. from 1987, which read, ‘It shall be the goal of this church that within 10 years of its establishment its membership shall include at least 10 percent people of color and/or whose primary language is other than English.’ To address the problem raised related to the final resolve, and to reflect directly that continuing resolution, some possible language in the final two lines could be: “. . . by which the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America works toward the goal of at least 10 percent membership of persons of color and primary language is other than English.” No objection was voiced and the chair so ordered.

The Rev. Steven D. Olson [East-Central Synod of Wisconsin] called the question.

MOVED; *Two-Thirds Vote Required*
SECONDED; *Yes—830; No—81*
CARRIED: To move the previous question.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION *Yes—870; No—61*

CA97.5.16 WHEREAS, a stated purpose of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is to “Carry out Christ’s Great Commission by reaching out to all people to bring them to faith in Christ . . .”(ELCA churchwide constitutional provision 4.01.b.);

WHEREAS, this church further proposes to “Manifest the unity given to the people of God by living together in the love of Christ . . .”(4.02.f.);

WHEREAS, this church, “in faithfulness to the Gospel, is committed to be an inclusive church in the midst of division in society” (5.01.b.);

WHEREAS, this church at its constituting convention set a goal that within 10 years of its establishment the membership of this church “shall include at least 10 percent people of color and/or primary language other than English” (5.01.A87.);

WHEREAS, inclusivity has been held back by racial attitudes and a lack of personal witness and evangelism;

WHEREAS, the groundwork for growth has been laid and populations of persons of color and language other than English are growing; and

WHEREAS, the achievement of this goal will require much intentional activity of all expressions of this church—congregations, synods, and churchwide organization—as well as related entities, including this church’s campus ministries, colleges, universities, schools, seminaries, and other institutions; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, make a renewed affirmation of and commitment to a minimum of 10 percent membership goal and the Multicultural Mission Strategy adopted by the 1991 Churchwide Assembly; and be it further

RESOLVED that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America renew its commitment to the amended Multicultural Mission Strategy Action Plan; and be it further

RESOLVED that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in all its expressions seek to make all church structures accountable for implementing the amended Multicultural Mission Action Plan; and be it further

RESOLVED that the churchwide organization, synods, congregations, and agencies and institutions of the

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America be urged to commit adequate funding for the implementation of the amended Multicultural Mission Strategy Action Plan; and be it further

RESOLVED that the churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America serve as a resource to and with synods and congregations to reach out to an increasingly multicultural population; and be it further

RESOLVED that the amended “Action Plan” and “Implementation Steps” be adopted as the strategy by which the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America works toward the goal of at least 10 percent membership of persons of color and primary language is other than English.

Recommitment to a Strategy for Proclamation of the Gospel

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, at its constituting convention in 1987, adopted the following goal: “It shall be a goal of this church that within 10 years of its establishment the membership shall include at least 10 percent people of color and/or primary language other than English” (ELCA continuing resolutions 5.01.A87).

The ten-year deadline for this churchwide goal has arrived. The present 2.13 percent membership of people of color or of those whose primary language other than English falls dramatically short of the original goal. We are grateful, however, for the growth in African American, Black, American Indian and Alaska Native, Arab and Middle Eastern, Asian and Hispanic people. Between 1987 and 1994 the persons of color and/or primary language other than English membership grew by 23.7 percent. But there is still much work to be done.

The ten percent goal is, of course, only an intermediate goal—a useful benchmark and challenge—encouraging all the church to renewed effort. The real vision is of our church being truly welcoming of all people, regardless of race, background, status, or family situation.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, through the Churchwide Assembly, calls upon all expressions of this church—congregations, synods, and churchwide ministries—and all ELCA-related entities and institutions:

1. To make all church structures accountable for implementing the Multicultural Mission Strategy Action Plan;
2. To commit adequate funding for implementation of the Multicultural Mission Strategy Action Plan; and
3. To equip synods and congregations to reach out to an increasingly multicultural population.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall make a renewed affirmation of the commitment to the 10 percent membership growth goal and the Multicultural Mission Strategy adopted by the 1991 Churchwide Assembly.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall make a renewed commitment to the amended “Multicultural Mission Strategy Action Plan.” The amended “Action Plan” calls for:

1. All baptized members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to reflect, confess, and act on our personal commitment for ministries with African American, Black, American Indian and Alaska Native, Arab and Middle Eastern, Asian, and Hispanic people;
2. All members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to support and encourage the ministry of congregations with predominantly African American, Black, American Indian and Alaska Native, Arab and Middle Eastern, Asian, and Hispanic members;
3. All congregations to learn about their communities, develop, and implement plans for outreach in their neighborhoods with African American, Black, American Indian and Alaska Native, Arab and Middle Eastern, Asian, and Hispanic people;
4. All ELCA congregations to become partners in this effort;
5. All synods in cooperation with churchwide units to identify congregations in racially changing communities and assist them to develop strategies for outreach;
6. All synods to provide leadership to congregations that are engaged in or exploring ministry with African American, Black, American Indian and Alaska Native, Arab and Middle Eastern, Asian, and Hispanic communities;
7. All ELCA pastors, rostered lay ministers, and persons in leadership positions to accelerate efforts to develop and support leaders to serve in multicultural ministries;
8. All schools, colleges, universities, seminaries, and affiliated organizations to accelerate efforts to recruit, develop and support leaders to serve in multicultural ministries;

9. All synodical bishops, pastors, rostered lay ministers, persons in leadership positions, and congregation members to receive training sessions in order to combat racism and classism;
10. All synodical bishops, pastors, rostered lay ministers, and persons in leadership positions to work with pastors and African American, Black, American Indian and Alaska Native, Arab and Middle Eastern, Asian, and Hispanic people to address the issues of justice and advocacy on behalf of people living in poverty, in prison and discriminated against due to race, ethnicity, or gender.

Implementation Steps

This Multicultural Mission Strategy will be implemented through the existing interdependent structures of this church.

1. Congregations and individuals of the ELCA will be the primary centers of outreach activity.
2. Synods will provide leadership in their respective areas.
3. Churchwide units will provide the needed resources, and the Church Council and the Churchwide Assembly will provide enabling and monitoring activities.
4. A Multicultural Mission Strategy Consulting Committee will provide strategic guidance for this outreach effort of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

To ensure that all expressions of this church are made more fully accountable for working toward the goal of at least 10 percent of the church's membership being African Americans, Blacks, American Indians and Alaska Natives, Arabs and Middle Easterners, Asians, and Hispanics, the following steps should be implemented annually so that:

1. All **synodical bishops** shall receive annual reports from congregations outlining their multicultural ministry efforts.
2. The **Conference of Bishops** shall receive annual reports from each bishop that outline the progress made by synods toward the 10 percent goal, based on an annual action plan.
3. The **bishop of this church** shall receive an annual action plan, budget and progress report from each churchwide unit for the implementation of the 10 percent goal.
4. The **Church Council** shall receive an annual report from the executive for administration outlining the progress made toward achieving the 10 percent goal by the churchwide units.
5. The **Multicultural Mission Strategy Consulting Committee**, appointed by the presiding bishop, will provide concentrated attention and recommendations to the Multicultural Mission Strategy efforts of this church. The Multicultural Mission Strategy Consulting Committee will include: one representative each

from the African American, Black, American Indian and Alaska Native, Arab and Middle Eastern, Asian, and Hispanic communities; the presiding bishop; the executive for administration; the executive director of the Commission for Multicultural Ministries; executive directors for the divisions for Church in Society; Congregational Ministries, Ministry, Outreach, and Higher Education and Schools ; executive director of the Commission for Women; the director of the Department for Communication; and a representative of the Church Council, the Publishing House of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and the Conference of Bishops.

6. The **Commission for Multicultural Ministries** will provide the director for the Multicultural Mission Strategy. The commission will monitor annually the progress toward achieving this goal and report regularly to the Church Council and Churchwide Assembly. The director for Multicultural Mission Strategy, in consultation with the appropriate churchwide units, will draft the strategic plan and provide annual and/or periodic updates, work with churchwide units to focus on the activities needed to implement these strategies, and monitor progress toward achieving the goal.
7. The **Multicultural Mission Strategy Staff Team** will provide coordination between and among the churchwide units and ensure that the ministry efforts of the various churchwide units are focused on the Multicultural Mission Strategy objectives. This staff team will be appointed by the executive for administration.

Resource Development

Planning for the development of language- and culture-specific resources and resources to assist congregations in racially changing communities to develop outreach strategies will be implemented through the existing interdependent structures of this church. The churchwide resource planning systems now in place will develop the plans for language- and culture-specific resources. The unit and inter-unit decision-making processes employed for other resources also will make decisions for language- and culture-specific resources.

Financial Resource Development

To fund this outreach effort, a churchwide financial resource development strategy will be developed by the Multicultural Mission Strategy Consulting Committee that:

1. Asks each synod, churchwide unit, and church-related agency and institution to review its budget for the purpose of ascertaining resources available to address the strategy;
2. Establishes this outreach effort as an area for designated gifts;

3. Considers including the funding of this strategy in a special churchwide appeal; and
4. Approaches external funding agencies for support of this outreach effort.

Evaluation

The director for Multicultural Mission Strategy, working with the Department for Research and Evaluation, will provide instruments and a process to evaluate the progress towards the goal. Such evaluation will include a statistical report of the activity such as attitudes, development of resources, and synodical involvement.

American Indian and Alaska Native Strategic Plan

Reference: *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section IV, pages 91-104

BACKGROUND

The American Indian and Alaska Native Strategic Plan was developed over a period of five years. This comprehensive plan is the result of work undertaken by American Indian and Alaska Native people at a planning consultation held in January 1996.

This strategic plan articulates the relationship that American Indian and Alaska Native people envision with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America over the next five years. This plan focuses on four specific areas: congregation development, leadership development, public policy advocacy, and social ministry.

The steering committee of the Commission for Multicultural Ministries, at its October 1996 meeting, adopted this strategic plan for the purpose of guiding the American Indian and Alaska Native ministry efforts of this church.

This strategic plan was presented to the Church Council at its November 9-11, 1996, meeting. The Church Council took the following action on this matter (CC96.11.54):

To receive with appreciation the strategic plan developed by the American Indian and Alaska Native community;

To refer this document to the Division for Outreach, Division for Ministry, Division for Church in Society, Department for Communication, and the Department for Synodical Relations (Conference of Bishops);

To request that these units discuss with the Commission for Multicultural Ministries the initiatives described in this plan; and

To request that the Commission for Multicultural Ministries, in consultation with these units, submit through the council's Program and

Structure Committee to the Church Council at its April 1997 meeting a report and possible recommendations for action.

In response, the Commission for Multicultural Ministries organized a meeting between the units cited above and the American Indian and Alaska Native Strategic Plan Task Force to discuss this strategic plan and possible recommendations for action. A consensus emerged that this was a good plan; all participants agreed to work toward accomplishing the plan of action of this strategy.

The participating churchwide units pledged to help to carry out the intent of the plan in consultation with the director for American Indian and Alaska Native ministries and the American Indian and Alaska Native Advisory Council.

The participating churchwide units requested the synods to participate in planning and implementing the intent and direction of this strategic plan in consultation with the director for American Indian and Alaska Native ministries, American Indian and Alaska Native Advisory Council, and other appropriate churchwide units.

At the April 1997 meeting of the Church Council, the council voted:

To receive with appreciation the American Indian and Alaska Native Strategic Plan;

To affirm the directions for witness and service outlined in this strategic plan, which will be undertaken in partnership with American Indian and Alaska Native people;

To transmit to the 1997 Churchwide Assembly the American Indian and Alaska Native Strategic Plan; and

To recommend adoption of the following resolution by the 1997 Churchwide Assembly:

RECOMMENDATION OF THE CHURCH COUNCIL

To receive with appreciation the American Indian and Alaska Native Strategic Plan developed by the American Indian and Alaska Native community;

To express support and deep appreciation for existing ministries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America with American Indian and Alaska Native people; and

To recommit the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to partnership with existing American Indian and Alaska Native congregations and to intensified outreach with the Gospel among the wider American Indian and Alaska Native communities.

Bishop Anderson called upon the Rev. Frederick E. N. Rajan, executive director of the Commission for Multicultural Ministries, to introduce the proposed American Indian and Alaska Native Strategic Plan. Bishop Anderson said, “This is our specific commitment to share in ministry with American Indian and Alaska Native peoples. . . . [a] strategic plan for enhancing our ministry with native peoples [which] was developed by and with American Indians and Alaska Natives.” Pastor Rajan commented that this plan was “developed over a period of five years and points to the future. This plan articulates the relationship of American Indian and Alaska Native people in mission with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America over the next five years. We have come a long way since the first Lutheran mission to serve the native community was established some 350 years ago along the Delaware River at Fort Christina, the first Swedish settlement in North America. Today, the American Indian and Alaska Native ministry is spread out throughout this land from Alaska to North Carolina. Today we are engaged in American Indian and Alaska Native ministries in 21 congregations. Today we are enriched by the gifts of over 7,000 American Indians and Alaska Native people who are members of their tribes and their villages and of this church.” Pastor Rajan then introduced Ms. Ramona Soto Rank, a member of the Klamath tribe of Eastern Oregon, a member of the ELCA Church Council, and president of the American Indian and Alaska Native Lutheran Association.

Ms. Rank invited voting members who also are enrolled members of recognized tribes to stand. They were greeted with applause. “[There] are more than 525 recognized tribal entities in the United States,” she noted, “all of them survivors of this country’s holocaust, American Indian, Alaska Native—names that were given to these people by those who came very lately to our shores. Many times, in our own land, we are forgotten, we are invisible people. . . . Christopher Columbus wrote in his journal that they were a gentle people with great generosity.” She continued, “Lutheran Christians were part of the migration [of the Europeans to the New World]. Here in Pennsylvania, we stand on ground that was sacred to the Delaware [tribal] people Here in Philadelphia, we celebrate the coming of Lutheran clergy to America. Although most of their energy was spent shepherding the souls of the immigrants, there was some early contact with tribal people. Should the Gospel be shared with them? This is a question that we would never ask today.” Ms. Rank noted that now the ELCA has six tribal congregations located in Alaska and that Our Savior Lutheran Church in Montana is more than 100 years old. “One of the most interesting pieces of our history is the Lutheran presence with the Mohican people,” she stated, “[as] each time this tribe was forced to move from their homeland to the west, the Lutheran pastor moved with them.” History was made in 1969 when an organization was born between the Lutheran church and Indian people, she said. “This said that there was a partnership between American Indian people and the Lutheran Church, that they [the American Indian people] were no longer to be objects of mission but to be partners in ministry.” In 1981, Lutherans became partners in advocacy and education with the founding of the National Indian Lutheran Board (NILB), which provided advocacy and seed

grants for Indian-managed projects. Ms. Rank continued, “The Christian church in Indian country has had a checkered past—while bringing the Gospel, it has also brought destruction. Whole tribes were split apart, children removed from their families, tribal religions outlawed, and a civilization program established. This history is not well known but it is very well known in Indian country. I want you to know this history because I want you to know the importance of a ministry like the National Indian Lutheran Board, because it has provided an incredible credibility between Indian tribes and the Lutheran church.” Ms. Rank highlighted five areas of hope found in the American Indian and Alaska Native Strategy:

- (1) Congregational development;
- (2) Leadership development;
- (3) Social ministry;
- (4) Legislative advocacy; and
- (5) Communications.

“Each of these areas is important to uplift in our joint ministry. We need the ELCA to maintain its support for our historic existing congregations. We need to support our new ministries, especially those in urban areas where 65 percent of all Indian people live,” said Ms. Rank. The American Indian and Alaska Native Strategic Plan is essential to continue this important work, Ms. Rank concluded.

Bishop Anderson thanked Ms. Rank for her comments and read the following recommendation of the Church Council:

MOVED;

SECONDED: To receive with appreciation the American Indian and Alaska Native Strategic Plan developed by the American Indian and Alaska Native community;

To express support and deep appreciation for existing ministries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America with American Indian and Alaska Native people; and

To recommit the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to partnership with existing American Indian and Alaska Native congregations and to intensified outreach with the Gospel among the wider American Indian and Alaska Native communities.

Bishop Donald D. Parsons [Alaska Synod] spoke in favor of the resolution and extended greetings from Alaska natives of his synod, who are largely Inupiat people. He said, “I have been taught that when one brings greetings to sisters and brothers, what is really being said is that we wish we could be with you; we are a part of you; we cannot be with you, but we want you to know that we are there in spirit; and we are with you in common cause, in common concern, in common

faith; and these greetings bear our love and our solidarity and our partnership with you fully.” Bishop Parsons stated that it took him a long time to learn why people listened so intently when such greetings were brought to them. He commented, “There is a long history of the Church involved with first-nation people across our country. It is a history of faithfulness; it is also a history of great pain. It is a history of partnership; it is a history of domination. It is a history of walking along side; it is a history of patronization. . . . Even in the midst of partnership, too often across this church first-nation people still experience the church in domination and a church patronizing. There are often emphases that we bring to people which say, ‘this is what we would like to do for you—this is important to do for you—we need to do things in this time frame—you need to do them in this way’—without any of the consultation that is needed. Sometimes that consultation takes years before it emerges from people. We need to listen.”

Ms. Dorothy M. Scholz [Metropolitan New York Synod] spoke in favor of the recommendation and thanked Ms. Rank for the historical perspective she had provided. Ms. Scholz stated that she had been a staff person from the Lutheran Council [in the U.S.A.] of “the transcultural seminar which formed our [ELCA] multicultural ministries and formed the four groups that we really focused on [African America, Asian, Native American, and Hispanic peoples] had as much representation from the Native American community as from any of the others. . . . I thought that [the seminar’s] great genius was that it brought together an equal number of people from the African American, Asian, Native American, Hispanic communities, as well as from the White community.” She concluded that these communities wanted the church “to hear their stories, to find out what they had to contribute to us all, and we have all benefitted.”

The Rev. Stephen L. Shriner [East-Central Synod of Wisconsin], who serves the Lutheran Church of the Wilderness (92 percent Native American and 8 percent other ethnic backgrounds), one of the congregations serving the Mohican nation, spoke in favor of the strategy. He stated, “If there is a people who have every right to hate, it is the Native American people. Yet, they are the warmest, most welcoming, most loving people you ever want to come among. . . . They want the world to come and to be a part of their world, for them to have the opportunity to share their life with you. . . . We, as a Lutheran church, are blessed to have Native American people as part of our congregational life, for truly they bring a flavor of the true mission of Jesus Christ—to open the arms and open the doors and welcome in.” Pastor Shriner commented, “It is not anymore a case of what we can teach them, but rather it is what they can teach us, for their spirituality is a touch of true spirituality that God gave to all His people.”

Mr. Jack Russell [Greater Milwaukee Synod] spoke in support of the recommendation. It is important to know, he said, that “the plan before the assembly emanated from the community itself. We, as planners and final participants of this plan, kept true to the intent of the Indian community; and, as such, I urge its passage and adoption. We hope that we can continue to be a vital

part of this church.” Mr. Russell stated that it saddens his heart “when people are invited to the table but yet sometimes we do not get a full piece of the pie.”

The Rev. Phillip A. Hausknecht [Grand Canyon Synod] inquired about the source of funding to support the goals of the proposed strategy, asking how things will happen financially and in terms of personnel? Pastor Rajan responded that the funding would come from ongoing program moneys from various churchwide units. The commission was not requesting new funding, he said.

Ms. Sofia Amare [Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod] stated, “I speak for many lost, quiet communities [who] stand for their faith and in strong support of this church body. [They] should be encouraged by this strategic plan.”

Bishop John C. Beem [East-Central Synod of Wisconsin] urged continued support of the Native American community. “They bring tremendous blessings in return to us that far outstrip our support of them,” he said. He observed, “The Church of the Wilderness (Bowler, Wis.) is represented on national and synodical boards. They provide a retreat center for us in our synod and other synods in Wisconsin for people to come to for quiet. They bring deep joy by their presence when they gather at synodical and conference activities and share a wonderful spirit of hospitality . . . true gifts to the church.”

Bishop Floyd M. Schoenhals [Arkansas-Oklahoma Synod] spoke in support of the proposed plan, stating, “Over 150 years ago, Moravian missionaries accompanied the Cherokees from the Southeastern part of the United States to Indian Territory in what is now Oklahoma, part of the territory of our synod. Those missionaries walked with and worked with American Indian people and wept with them as they came to this new state. Over the years, that ministry has now been passed on. We have inherited it as the ELCA as part of our heritage. The American Indian people in northeastern Oklahoma have rejoiced with the way this church has walked with them and worked with them. But there also have been fears expressed, and sometimes hopes dashed, because some of the signals that we have given have indicated that maybe in the future we will not walk with or work with them as closely as we have in the past.” Bishop Schoenhals stated that he was pleased that this church has asked the Native American people and Alaska Native people to develop this plan. He reported the members of Ebenezer Lutheran congregation in Oakes, Oklahoma, and Oakes Indian Center rejoiced to see that this would be presented.

Bishop Lee M. Miller [Upstate New York Synod] inquired how the proposed plan would address the [American Indian] people in the northeast, specifically the people of Upstate New York. Ms. Rank stated that she was not sure that she understood the question; however, native people everywhere are included in this plan. Bishop Miller further inquired how this church would reach them and what kinds of contacts would be made? Ms. Rank responded that, if the plan were to be adopted, such implementation would be considered during the advisory committee’s meeting in October 1997, with representatives from all parts of the country.

The Rev. José Pablo Obregon [Southwestern Minnesota Synod] thanked “our American Indian and Native Alaska brothers and sisters for setting up an example to people from other multicultural backgrounds. Thank you for breaking ground for all of us and motivating us to come to the churchwide assemblies in the future and present our own plans as well. I also want to thank you for the specific way you bring [your need for support] before this church.”

The Rev. Yvonne E. Wesley-Rohrbaugh [Lower Susquehanna Synod] called the question. Bishop Anderson indicated that the electronic voting system was out of order and that the vote would be cast by use of voting cards.

MOVED; *Two-Thirds Vote Required*
SECONDED; *Hand Vote*
CARRIED: To move the previous question.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION *Hand Vote*

CA97.5.17 To receive with appreciation the American Indian and Alaska Native Strategic Plan developed by the American Indian and Alaska Native community;

To express support and deep appreciation for existing ministries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America with American Indian and Alaska Native people; and

To recommit the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to partnership with existing American Indian and Alaska Native congregations and to intensified outreach with the Gospel among the wider American Indian and Alaska Native communities.

American Indian Alaska Native Strategic Plan

Foreword

As Lutheran Christians we are heirs to a tradition that confesses Jesus Christ as Lord. Christ, through faith by the power of the Holy Spirit, calls us, a people of diverse nations, to be God’s people. Christ sends us among all peoples with a unique mission to baptize and teach (Matthew 28:18-20). As members of one holy, Catholic, and apostolic church, we meet each other in our diversity as the body of Christ. As members of one body, we are called to “bring Good News to the poor, proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go “free” (Luke 4:18-19). Therefore, the essential mission works of this church consists of worship, evangelism, advocacy for justice, service to human needs, preparing people for leadership in church and society, nurturing people in faith and witness, being diligent in prayer, and empowering and equipping congregations to serve as God’s instruments of mission, regardless of cultural differences.

The Lutheran witness with American Indians and Alaska Natives has more than 350 years of history: It is a history filled with hope and broken promises, solidarity and injustice, affirmation and paternalism, strategies and inaction, grand goals and lack of funding. With this conflicting legacy we enter the 1990s. At the end of 1994, the ELCA American Indian and Alaska Native membership was 6,685. While general ELCA membership declined 1.7 percent between 1987 and 1994, American Indian and Alaska Native membership increased by 18.1 percent during that same period. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has 21 congregations with 10 percent or more American Indian and Alaska Native members.

While this growth in membership is encouraging, the church has a lot more to accomplish. Recognizing the urgency of the need and opportunity, American Indian and Alaska Native leaders gathered in Las Vegas January 25-28, 1996, for a “Strategic Planning Event.” The leaders began to develop a vision statement and goals for the areas of congregation development, leadership development, public policy advocacy, and social ministry. A task force commissioned by the leaders held subsequent meetings to finalize the vision and goals. Here, in this plan, they are before you.

The recommended goals and strategies are the means by which the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America can become effective in its ministry with American Indians and Alaska Natives. The plan will guide the Commission for Multicultural Ministries and other churchwide units as we work on behalf of American Indians and Alaska Natives.

The commission is indebted to everyone who was involved in this process. The church gratefully acknowledges the grant from Aid Association for Lutherans, given for work on an American Indian and Alaska Native strategic plan. Now we must move forward with the firm knowledge that the God who does not “leave us or forsake us” will make Native voices heard and respected in this church. Let us

go forward as one body, knowing we are different but inseparably united in our baptism.

COMMISSION FOR MULTICULTURAL MINISTRIES

The Rev. Frederick E. N. Rajan, *executive director*

Kathleen M. Fleury, *director for Native American Ministries*

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Executive Summary

The American Indian and Alaska Native¹ Strategic Plan articulates the relationship American Indians and Alaskan Natives envision with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America over the next five years, beginning with this vision:

American Indians and Alaska Natives are a people created by God, redeemed by Jesus Christ, and sanctified by the Holy Spirit. We give unique expression to our faith as we proclaim the Good News, share in the ministry of Word and Sacrament, participate in the mission of reconciliation with God

and His creation, seek justice for all people, and celebrate diversity within Christ's unifying love. In all of these ways we nurture American Indian and Alaska Native peoples, their congregations and communities, and the church.

The plan focuses on four specific areas—congregation development, leadership development, public policy advocacy, and social ministry—and lists specific goals for each.

Congregation development involves supporting existing congregations and establishing new congregations that serve American Indian and Alaska Native peoples. These congregations would offer dynamic worship and teaching communities, serve as centers of mission where the Word is preached and Sacraments are administered, and provide support and caring for the communities they serve. The task force identified four goals.

1. An American Indian and Alaska Native Advisory Council will be convened to monitor and guide congregation development activities that affect American Indians and Alaskan Natives.
2. All clergy and lay persons called to serve American Indian and Alaska Native congregations will participate in a culturally relevant orientation program within three months of accepting the call.
3. The Division for Outreach, in cooperation with synods, will establish four new American Indian and Alaska Native congregations.
4. The director of the department for Native American ministries, in partnership with the Division for Congregational Ministries, will provide a resource development plan for new and existing American Indian and Alaska Native ministries.

Leadership development means cultivating lay and rostered American Indians and Alaska Natives in the church to share their gifts in both the church and society. The task force identified five goals.

1. The department for Native American ministries will convene a Multicultural Theological Education Consulting Committee to develop an overall framework that seminaries can use in their curriculum to affirm the traditional teachings and gifts of Native people in the context of Christian theology and doctrine.
2. The synod multicultural ministry committees will recognize American Indian and Alaska Native leaders in the church and acknowledge the spiritual gifts of tribal traditions.
3. The department for Native American ministries will develop a mentoring program for American Indian and Alaska Native people that will equip them to provide spiritual and administrative leadership to congregations, members, and communities.

¹ The term *American Indian and Alaska Native* reflects that for each region, each tribe, even each congregation, uniqueness exists among American Indian and Alaska Native peoples.

4. The 1999 Churchwide Assembly will be presented with a resolution that affirms the church's commitment to American Indian and Alaska Native people.
5. Each year the department for Native American ministries and the Lutheran Youth Organization will develop a list of American Indian and Alaska Native people from ages 15 to 18, enabling LYO to encourage youth participation at events that will provide leadership development opportunities for Native young people.

Public Policy Advocacy seeks social change by promoting justice and full participation by American Indians and Alaska Natives in determining their destiny. The task force identified four goals.

1. The Division for Church in Society will advocate for issues related to American Indian and Alaska Native social justice concerns, including religious freedom, protection of sacred sites, land, language, sovereignty, self-determination, treaty rights, arts, stewardship of the earth, and Alaska Native subsistence issues.
2. The Department for Communication will be responsible for communicating the ELCA's advocacy for American Indian and Alaska Native people to ELCA congregations and the general public.
3. The department for Native American ministries will be responsible for communicating accurate information to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for initiating advocacy for American Indian and Alaska Native issues.
4. The Commission for Multicultural Ministries will request the Multicultural Mission Strategy Staff Team to provide a status report on the implementation of the issues contained in the 1991 "Report on Multicultural Mission Strategy" related to American Indian and Alaska Native people.

Social ministry manifests Christ's love through a partnership with existing human service agencies and ecumenical community networks that promote the spiritual and physical health and well-being of all God's creation. The task force identified three goals.

1. The director of the department for Native American ministries and the American Indian and Alaska Native Advisory Council will sponsor and facilitate culturally sensitive learning experiences for the ELCA and related social ministry organizations.
2. The department for Native American ministries will develop an informational data system that will specify opportunities for enriching social ministry efforts between congregations.
3. The Multicultural Mission Strategy Staff Team will provide the department for Native American ministries a status report on the actions affecting American

Indian and Alaska Native peoples identified in the 1991 "Report on Multicultural Mission Strategy."

In addition to the specific goals and strategies for each planning area, the task force identified four recommendations that support the intent of this plan.

1. The first recommendation asks the 1997 Churchwide Assembly and the synods to reaffirm their commitment to existing American Indian and Alaska Native congregations by providing continuing financial and pastoral support to these congregations.
2. The second recommendation calls specifically for continuing financial and pastoral support for existing ministries in Alaska Native communities on the Seward Peninsula and in Anchorage, where the six Alaska Native Lutheran churches represent one-third of the baptized Native Lutherans in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. It also calls for the church to address the needs of the large number of Alaska Natives who are unchurched in urban areas where Lutheran churches exist.
3. The third recommendation calls for any evaluation the Division for Outreach or synods do of an American Indian and Alaska Native congregation to be channeled through the director of the department for Native American ministries and the American Indian and Alaska Native Advisory Council. Such an evaluation should involve at least two American Indians and Alaska Natives who are acquainted with the uniqueness of ministry in this context.
4. The fourth recommendation calls for the director of the department for Native American ministries and the American Indian and Alaska Native Advisory Council to report annually to the Commission for Multicultural Ministries Steering Committee on the accomplishment of goals and strategies of this plan.

The American Indian and Alaska Native Strategic Plan is a call for change that American Indians and Alaska Natives hope the church will embrace wholeheartedly. Growth in all four planning areas must occur for American Indians and Alaska Natives to realize fully their role within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and to strengthen their communities in service to God.

Section I: Introduction

The American Indian and Alaska Native Strategic Plan points to the future. The plan articulates the relationship American Indians and Alaska Natives envision with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America over the next five years. Defined in the context of the following vision statement, this relationship is grounded in reconciliation and the mutual upbuilding of the saints. We share God's mission of proclaiming the Gospel to all peoples.

American Indians and Alaska Natives are a people created by God, redeemed by Jesus Christ, and sanctified by the Holy Spirit. We give unique expression to our faith as we proclaim the Good News, share in the ministry of Word and Sacrament, participate in the mission of reconciliation with God and His creation, seek justice for all people, and celebrate diversity within Christ's unifying love. In all of these ways we nurture American Indian and Alaska Native peoples, their congregations and communities, and the church.

To provide a context for this vision and the plan itself, this section describes the history of Lutheran ministries to American Indian and Alaska Native communities, summarizes current statistics on American Indian and Alaska Native ELCA members, and sets forth the four planning areas this document addresses.

Throughout, the strategic plan uses the term *American Indian and Alaska Native* instead of *Native American*. The task force agreed that *American Indian and Alaska Native* represents more accurately the people to which the term refers, namely, Native people who are indigenous to this country or land. As one task force member said, "We are not all the same people." The term *American Indian and Alaska Native* suggests that for each region, each tribe, even each congregation, uniqueness exists.

History

Some 350 years ago, the first Lutheran mission to serve Native communities was established. In 1645, John Campanius was called as pastor of the congregation along the Delaware River at Fort Christina, the first Swedish settlement in North America. Campanius extended his call to include the Delaware people. He learned their language and later translated Luther's Small Catechism for their use.

During the next 150 years, several other attempts at ministry in American Indian and Alaska Native communities were made. All were short lived or failed in their original intent and later abandoned. It wasn't until the late 1800s that Lutheran mission attempts began to take hold. Some continue today.

In 1734, the Rev. John Sargeant began a congregational mission in Massachusetts for the Mohicans. Two years later, converts gathered into a regular mission town, named Stockbridge. The Rev. John Sargeant Jr., continued the mission after his father died. Wars and westward expansion diminished the Stockbridge Tribe, which moved to New York. Samson Occom, an Indian minister and outstanding poet, was one of many tribal members who served the Mohicans as pastor and wrote Hymn 538 in the blue Lutheran hymnal, "Now the Shades of Night Are Gone."

In 1821, the tribe moved to Wisconsin. Originally served by the Methodist and Presbyterian missionaries, the Stockbridge appealed for funds to support a pastor, but were refused. So the tribe approached a Lutheran pastor at Shawano, Theodore Nickel. Nickel held his first service in April 1898. The next year, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod called a pastoral candidate from Springfield Lutheran

Seminary. The Lutheran Indian Mission Church was built in 1901 on what is now called Mission Lake. Soon a Christian school opened, followed by a boarding school. In 1933, the boarding school closed, though a day school continued. Today, the original mission has grown to three congregations: Immanuel Mohican Lutheran, the oldest, still holds worship in the original mission church; a congregation begun in 1931 at Morgan; and the largest, the Lutheran Church of the Wilderness, organized in 1937 in memory of the first mission church at Stockbridge, Mass.

The Danish missionary Niels L. Nielsen went to Oklahoma to start a mission with the Cherokee in 1892. Six years passed before he performed his first baptism. The Moravians, who had begun ministry to the Cherokee in 1842, asked the Danish Lutherans to continue their work. Oaks, Okla. currently has two strong Lutheran communities—Eben Ezer Lutheran Church and Oaks Indian Center.

John Plocher, of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, began work with the Apache in Arizona in 1893. He, too, needed six years before his first baptism. But his years of extensive work in the southwest have resulted in three Lutheran communities in the state today—House of Prayer Lutheran Church in Rock Point, Navajo Lutheran Church in Many Farms, and Southwest Indian Ministries in Phoenix.

In 1894, Tollef L. Brevig arrived in Teller, Alaska, on the Seward Peninsula. He came as a school teacher, but his missionary efforts had a lasting impact. In 1917, the Norwegian Lutheran Church in America took over his work. The peninsula now boasts five active congregations in Teller, Brevig Mission, Shishmaref, Wales, and Nome, with a new mission start in Anchorage.

After the 1950s, when the U.S. government terminated its partnership with many Indian nations, the next decade saw a dramatic rise in "Indian consciousness." American Indians and Alaska Natives wanted to protect their traditions. The American Indian Movement (AIM) grew out of this heightened awareness. LUCHIP—Lutheran Church and Indian People—was also taking shape at this time. Members of AIM confronted participants at a LUCHIP meeting and, later, those attending the ALC's 1969 convention. AIM members refused to leave the convention until the Lutheran church made commitments to help Indian people help themselves.

What resulted from these confrontations was the National Indian Lutheran Board (NILB), formed in 1970 and housed under the Lutheran Council in the USA. Eugene Crawford, Sisseton Wahpeton Sioux, served as executive director. The board's diversity was its strength. It included both Lutheran clergy and lay leaders, not all of whom were Lutheran; 75 percent of the members were American Indian and Alaska Native. The NILB strengthened the church's social ministry response to Native needs. During its 17-year history, NILB distributed about \$200,000 each year to Native communities across the country for a variety of projects. The organization also held seminars for tribes going through the Federal Acknowledgment Program. In 1978, Native, African American, Asian, and

Hispanic church leaders gathered to begin envisioning a new Lutheran church that would include all of God's children. A core group, the Transcultural Seminar, offered their ideas and expectations to the Commission for a New Lutheran Church.

When the Lutheran churches merged in 1987, NILB gave way to the Commission for Multicultural Ministries (CMM). CMM's role was to inform, consult, and provide a resource to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for ethnic groups. CMM established ministry programs for each ethnic group. These were originally called "desks," and Rose Robinson, Hopi, was the first director for Native American Ministries, from 1988 to 1989. Gordon Straw, Brothertown Indian Nation of Wisconsin, served as director, then consultant, for the Native American Desk from 1990 to 1995. During his tenure, Straw maintained the Native American Grants Program and served as liaison between the ELCA structure and Native communities. The strategic planning process began in 1990 as a joint project between the Native American Desk and the Division for Outreach.

The new ELCA constitution also called for each ethnic group forming an association. The one serving American Indians and Alaska Natives is called the Native American Lutheran Association.

In 1995, the Native American Desk was renamed the department for Native American ministries by its new director, Kathleen Fleury, Little Shell Band of Chippewa Indians in Montana. Under her leadership, the process for developing a strategic plan for American Indians and Alaska Natives continued, resulting in this document.

Current Status

Demographics tell us much about American Indian and Alaska Native ministries today. At the end of 1994, 6,685 American Indians and Alaska Natives were members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, or 11 percent of total ELCA membership. They live in every region of the church and every synod except the Caribbean. Significant populations are concentrated in a few areas, typically where the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has been strong or has placed great mission emphasis. The Alaska Synod has 23 percent of American Indian and Alaska Native ELCA members (1,410). Three synods—Alaska, Montana, and East-Central Wisconsin—account for over one-third of all members (2,187).

Since 1987, American Indian and Alaska Native membership has increased by 18.1 percent while general membership fell 1.7 percent. Thirty synods reported growth in American Indian and Alaska Native membership between 1988 and 1991. Growth was strongest in Alaska, Southwestern Washington, and Montana. Twenty synods reported a decline in American Indian and Alaska Native membership. The greatest declines were in Indiana/Kentucky and Sierra Pacific. The 10 synods with the largest American Indian and Alaska Native membership are, in order, Alaska,

East-Central Wisconsin, Montana, Northwestern Minnesota, Grand Canyon, Northeastern Minnesota, Minneapolis Area, South Dakota, Eastern North Dakota, and Greater Milwaukee. As of 1995, there were 18 American Indian and Alaska Native congregations, 11 ecumenical partners, and 7 specialized American Indian and Alaska Native ministries. (Appendix C includes maps showing American Indian and Alaska Native population and congregation distribution.)

The numbers representing leadership of American Indians and Alaska Natives in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America are revealing. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has 21 ordained American Indian and Alaska Native pastors. Four are female, 17 male. Few serve an ELCA congregation with significant American Indian and Alaska Native membership. Instead, the majority are involved in ministry through ecumenical partnerships or through churchwide efforts. Four are retired. Three American Indian and Alaska Natives serve as lay professional ministers. Only one American Indian or Alaska Native Lutheran student attended an ELCA seminary in 1992. This represents a decline from a high of five in 1988.

In 1994, synod councils had 14 American Indian and Alaska Native members, or 1 percent of total council membership. Synod staff had no American Indian and Alaska Native members. That same year, two American Indian or Alaska Natives held churchwide positions and two support positions. All were lay women. Ten American Indians and Alaska Natives served on ELCA committees in 1994.

Concerns and Issues

The preceding historical overview and present-day accounting of American Indian and Alaska Native Lutherans point to the four areas of concern this strategic plan addresses: congregation development, leadership development, public policy advocacy, and social ministry. As their membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America increases, American Indians and Alaska Natives need congregations and related resources to support this growth. New and existing congregations need strong leadership from American Indians and Alaska Natives, who will bring to their work a sensitivity to tribal traditions and Native spiritual gifts. Because Christians are called to seek justice for all peoples, this plan seeks support in advocating at a public policy level for those in need. Any commitment to advocacy also involves expanding social ministries that promote the spiritual and physical well-being of American Indians and Alaska Natives. Growth in all four areas must occur for American Indians and Alaska Natives to realize fully their role within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and to strengthen their communities in service to God.

Section II: The Planning Process

Strategic planning is the process of determining what an organization intends to be in the future and how it will get there. Strategic planning can be described as developing a vision for the future and determining how to move forward toward that desired future.²

The director of the department for Native American ministries and other concerned persons identified the need to develop a strategic plan that would do three things:

1. Stimulate forward thinking and clarify future direction of the department for Native American ministries;
2. Improve performance within the department for Native American ministries; and
3. Help American Indian and Alaska Native congregations and communities survive—even flourish—within the body of the church.

This plan was developed with input from many, an indication of their desire to reach a shared vision.

Purpose and Scope

The purpose of the American Indian and Alaska Native Strategic Plan is to provide a planned approach for bringing about positive change in the many programs and services of the department for Native American ministries and to serve as a focus for the director's work through the year 2001.

The scope of the plan is national and designates the director to implement the goals of the plan on behalf of American Indian and Alaska Native peoples. Thus, this plan is about the executive branch of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, not about regional or local congregations. The task force that drafted the plan believes that regional and local areas must develop plan specifics to their individual and cultural needs and encourages them to use this plan as a model.

Methodology: The Planning Events

The primary method used to develop this strategic plan was a key informant approach. Members of a larger planning group gathered information about the problems and needs of American Indian and Alaska Native congregations and communities. A smaller task force then defined a strategic approach for addressing these concerns.

The larger planning group first gathered in Las Vegas, Nev., January 26-28, 1996. This event hosted the first consultation for American Indian and Alaska

Native people in many years; 42 people attended. (Appendix B lists the planning consultants who attended this meeting.) The major outcomes of this event were:

1. Developing overall vision statements;
2. Identifying congregation development, leadership development, public policy advocacy, and social ministry as the four planning areas;
3. Developing general goal statements for each planning area; and
4. Announcing the American Indian and Alaska Native Task Force for Strategic Planning.

The second and third planning events were held in Minneapolis, Minn., on February 18-19 and March 17-18, 1996. The task force met to finalize the strategic plan and develop content for the final draft. (Appendix A lists the task force members.) The major outcomes of these events were:

1. Refining goals and developing specific action strategies for each;
2. Identifying four major recommendations that will be used to guide the successful implementation of the plan; and
3. Deciding how to implement the review of the final draft of the strategic plan, which will be submitted to American Indian and Alaska Native planning members, congregations, and communities.

The consultants, Margaret Peake Raymond and Lenore Franzen, worked with the groups using a consensus model. All members made decisions about the plan. The consultants developed an evaluation measure to determine how successfully planning activities were achieved and to gain recommendations for making changes in the process. These reports were summarized and submitted to the department for Native American ministries.

Section III: The Strategic Plan

The American Indian and Alaska Native Strategic Plan is ambitious in scope and bold in intent. The task force sees this document as a call for change that American Indians and Alaska Natives and the church will embrace wholeheartedly. The following plan focuses on four specific areas: congregation development; leadership development; public policy advocacy; and social ministry. Each area was first identified in the 1995 Native American Mission Strategy. In drafting the plan, the task force defined the four areas, then developed goals for each one. The goals have been prioritized. The strategies are the specific steps necessary to achieve a particular goal and are listed in the order in which they must be completed.

1. Congregation Development

² Bryan W. Barry. *Strategic Planning Workbook for Nonprofit Organizations*, Amherst H. Wilder Foundation, 1986.

Congregation development involves supporting existing congregations and establishing new congregations that serve American Indian and Alaska Native peoples. These congregations would offer dynamic worship and teaching communities, serve as centers of mission where the Word is preached and Sacraments are administered, and provide support and caring for the communities they serve.

Goal 1: In 1996, the Commission for Multicultural Ministries will establish an American Indian and Alaska Native Advisory Council to monitor and guide activities that affect American Indians and Alaska Natives, such as congregation development.

Strategy: A community task force identified by the American Indian and Alaska Native Advisory Council and the Division for Outreach will guide local congregation developments.

Goal 2: By 1999, all clergy and lay persons called to serve American Indian and Alaska Native congregations will participate in a culturally relevant orientation program within three months of accepting the call.

Strategy: The department for Native American ministries, in partnership with local congregation and related churchwide units, will develop orientation programs.

Goal 3: By the year 2000, the Division for Outreach, in cooperation with synods, will establish four new American Indian and Alaska Native congregations.

Strategy: The department for Native American ministries, in partnership with the Division for Outreach, will identify and prioritize potential American Indian and Alaska Native ministry sites.

Strategy: The department for Native American ministries and the American Indian and Alaska Native Advisory Council will assist the Division for Outreach in developing the ministry criteria and identifying pastor development for this ministry.

Strategy: The department for Native American ministries and the American Indian and Alaska Native Advisory Council will educate the Division for Outreach concerning the unique needs of these new congregations, which will require continuing financial and pastoral support.

Goal 4: By 1999, the director of the department for Native American ministries, in partnership with the Division for Congregational Ministries, will provide a resource development plan for American Indian and Alaska Native ministries.

Strategy: The director of the department for Native American ministries, in partnership with the Division for Congregational Ministries, will develop a plan to provide culturally relevant worship materials for American Indian and Alaska Native congregations.

2. Leadership Development

Leadership Development means cultivating lay and rostered American Indians and Alaska Natives in the church to share their gifts in both the church and society.

Goal 1: In 1998, the department for Native American ministries will convene a Multicultural Theological Education Consulting Committee to develop an overall framework that seminaries can use in their curriculum to affirm the traditional teachings and gifts of Native people in the context of Christian theology and doctrine.

Strategy: The department for Native American ministries, in cooperation with the CMM Steering Committee and the American Indian and Alaska Native Advisory Council, will name a Multicultural Theological Education Consulting Committee.

Strategy: The director of the department for Native American ministries will meet with seminary presidents, seminary academic deans, and the Multicultural Theological Education Consulting Committee to develop ways of affirming Native spirituality and Native leadership through faculty and curriculum development.

Goal 2: In 1997, the Synod Multicultural Ministry Committees, in consultation with the department for Native American ministries, will recognize American Indian and Alaska Native leaders in the church and acknowledge the spiritual gifts of tribal traditions.

Strategy: The director of the department for Native American ministries, with input from the American Indian and Alaska Native Advisory Council, will prepare a letter to the synod Multicultural Ministries Committee.

Strategy: The department for Native American ministries will request an annual report from the synod Multicultural Ministries Committees on how American Indian and Alaska Native people have been utilized.

Goal 3: By 1998, the department for Native American ministries, in partnership with the Commission for Women, will develop a mentoring program for American Indian and Alaska Native people that will equip them to provide spiritual and administrative leadership to congregations, members, and communities.

Strategy: The department for Native American ministries will revise the Commission for Women's mentoring model to fit the needs of American Indians and Alaska Natives and create a written document that describes this revised model.

Strategy: The department for Native American ministries will use name banks, such as the one developed by the Commission for Women, to identify American Indian and Alaska Native people who are willing to participate in a mentoring relationship.

Strategy: The department for Native American ministries will identify mentoring pairs (mentors and mentees) that will nurture leadership development at

multiple levels, including theological education, *American Indians and Alaska Natives in leadership, and youth leadership.*

Strategy: The department for Native American ministries will work in partnership with synods and institutions to develop and empower lay American Indians and Alaska Natives, equipping them to serve the church.

Goal 4: The 1999 Churchwide Assembly will be presented with a resolution that affirms the church's commitment to American Indian and Alaska Native people.

Strategy: The Commission for Multicultural Ministries will request the Office of the Bishop to present to the 1999 Churchwide Assembly a status report on resolutions adopted by previous assemblies relative to American Indians and Alaska Natives.

Strategy: The department for Native American ministries will prepare the resolution with input from the American Indian and Alaska Native Advisory Council.

Goal 5: By October 1 of each year, beginning in 1997, the department for Native American ministries and the Lutheran Youth Organization will develop a list of American Indian and Alaska Native people from ages 15 to 18 or grades 10 to 12, enabling the Lutheran Youth Organization to encourage youth participation at events that will provide leadership development opportunities for Native young people.

3. Public Policy Advocacy

Public Policy Advocacy seeks social change by promoting justice and full participation by American Indians and Alaska Natives in determining their destiny.

Goal 1: In 1997, the Division for Church in Society will consult with the department for Native American ministries in order to advocate for issues related to American Indians and Alaska Native social justice concerns, including religious freedom, protection of sacred sites, land, language, sovereignty, self-determination, treaty rights, arts, stewardship of the earth, and Alaska Native subsistence issues.

Strategy: The director of the department for Native American ministries will collaborate with the Lutheran Department for Governmental Affairs to share information about American Indian and Alaska Native social justice issues and use the communication network established within the Department for Communication.

Strategy: The department for Native American ministries and the American Indian and Alaska Native Advisory Council will provide a resource directory of organizations and individuals who are committed to legislative advocacy and social change for American Indian and Alaska Native people.

Goal 2: By 1998, the Department for Communication, in partnership with the department for Native American ministries, will be responsible for communicating

the ELCA's advocacy for American Indian and Alaska Native people to ELCA congregations and the general public.

Strategy: The Department for Communication will ensure accuracy through consultation with the department for Native American ministries on any communication effort related to American Indian and Alaska Native peoples.

Strategy: The Department for Communication will feature regularly information and articles about American Indians and Alaska Natives using all of its resources.

Strategy: The department for Native American ministries, in consultation with the American Indian and Alaska Native Advisory Council, will be responsible for communicating accurate information to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for initiating advocacy for American Indian and Alaska Native issues.

Goal 3: In 1997, the executive director of the Commission for Multicultural Ministries will request the Multicultural Mission Strategy Staff Team to provide a status report on the implementation of the issues contained in the 1991 "Report on Multicultural Mission Strategy" related to American Indian and Alaska Native peoples.

Strategy: The executive director of the Commission for Multicultural Ministries will meet with the Multicultural Mission Strategy Staff Team.

Strategy: The Multicultural Mission Strategy Staff Team will prepare a status report.

Strategy: The department for Native American ministries will distribute the report to the American Indian and Alaska Native Advisory Council.

4. Social Ministry

Social ministry manifests Christ's love through a partnership with existing human service agencies and ecumenical community networks that promote the spiritual and physical health and well-being of all God's creation.

Goal 1: In 1999, the director of the department for Native American ministries and the American Indian and Alaskan Native Advisory Council will sponsor and facilitate culturally sensitive learning experiences for ELCA and related social ministry organizations.

Strategy: The department for Native American ministries and the Advisory Council will develop an American Indian and Alaskan Native training "resource bank."

Strategy: The department for Native American ministries, in partnership with HONOR (Honor Our Neighbors' Origins and Rights), will provide training resources.

Goal 2: In 1998, the department for Native American ministries will develop an informational data system that will specify opportunities for enriching social ministry efforts between congregations.

Strategy: The department for Native American ministries, the Department for Research and Evaluation, and the Department for Information Technology will develop an informational system that may include Lutherlink and Ecunet.

Strategy: The Division for Outreach will expand the Mission Partners program to include all American Indian and Alaska Native congregations.

Strategy: The department for Native American ministries will identify American Indian and Alaska Native communities and ELCA congregations that partner in addressing social ministry concerns.

Goal 3: In 1997, the Multicultural Mission Strategy Staff Team will provide the department for Native American ministries a status report on the actions affecting Native American people identified in the 1991 “Report on Multicultural Mission Strategy.”

Strategy: The director of the department for Native American ministries will report findings to the CMM Steering Committee.

Section IV: Conclusion

While this strategic plan sets forth several goals for each planning area, the task force prioritized them according to importance for the American Indian and Alaska Native community. The following four goals received the highest ranking and so should be addressed first:

Congregation Development Goal

In 1996, the Commission for Multicultural Ministries will establish an American Indian and Alaska Native Advisory Council to monitor and guide activities that affect American Indians and Alaska Natives, such as congregation development.

Leadership Development Goal

In 1998, the department for Native American ministries will convene a Multicultural Theological Education Consulting Committee to develop an overall framework that seminaries can use in their curriculum to affirm the traditional teachings and gifts of Native people in the context of Christian theology and doctrine.

Public Policy Advocacy Goal

In 1997, the Division for Church in Society will consult with the department for Native American ministries in order to advocate for issues related to American Indian and Alaska Native social justice concerns, including religious freedom, protection of sacred sites, land, language, sovereignty, self-determination, treaty rights, arts, stewardship of the earth, and Alaska Native subsistence issues.

Social Ministry Goal

In 1999, the director of the department for Native American ministries and the American Indian and Alaska Native Advisory Council will sponsor and facilitate culturally sensitive learning experiences for ELCA and related social ministry organizations.

Recommendations

In addition to the specific goals and strategies for each planning area, the following recommendations will support the intent of this plan and ensure it is carried out. The first three recommendations relate to congregation development and call for a renewed commitment from the church and its governing bodies. The last recommendation provides a regular reporting mechanism for accomplishments toward implementing the strategic plan.

The **first recommendation** asks the Churchwide Assembly and the synods to reaffirm their commitment to existing American Indian and Alaska Native congregations by providing continuing financial and pastoral support.

The **second recommendation** calls specifically for continuing financial and ordained pastoral support for existing ministries in Alaska Native communities on the Seward Peninsula and in Anchorage, where the six Alaska Native Lutheran churches represent one-third of the baptized Native Lutherans in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. It also calls for the church to address the needs of the large number of Alaska Natives who are unchurched in urban areas where Lutheran churches exist.

The **third recommendation** asks that any evaluation the Division for Outreach or synods do of an American Indian and Alaska Native congregation be channeled through the director of the department for Native American ministries and the American Indian and Alaska Native Advisory Council. Such an evaluation should involve at least two American Indians and Alaska Natives who are acquainted with the uniqueness of ministry in this context.

The **fourth recommendation** calls for the director of the department for Native American ministries and the American Indian and Alaska Native Advisory Council to report annually to the Commission for Multicultural Ministries Steering Committee on the accomplishment of goals and strategies of this plan. The American Indian and Alaska Native Strategic Planning Task Force has been privileged to formulate this document. We have done so fully aware that organizational change, however difficult, is necessary for the Native Lutherans to

be partners in ministry with the church. We hope that the Native communities and the church will embrace the plan wholeheartedly and that God will guide us as we walk together toward its implementation.

Appendix A

Strategic Planning Task Force

Many people contributed to this strategic plan. The American Indian and Alaska Native Strategic Planning Task Force consisted of 14 members. Following are biographical sketches of each member.

Emily Brooks, Inupiat Eskimo, is a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and a delegate for the Alaska Synod meeting. She has learned many hymns in her dialect and is “involved in everything that’s for the good of the village,” including offering her house as a “safe home” for people who need a place to stay.

Bonnie Evans, Muskogee (Creek), is program coordinator for two graduate programs at Evergreen State College in Olympia, Wash. She works with the Nisqually Tribe in her church and community, has served as a spiritual counselor in Health Fair, and works with inmates at Washington State Corrections Center. A member of Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, Evans has served as a church school teacher and on her church council. She has served on the synod council since 1992, as a Multicultural Council consultant to the Outreach Committee since 1995, and was on the pastoral Placement Committee from 1989 to 1994. She was commissioned as a Lutheran lay pastor in 1994. Since 1995, Evans has been on the CMM Steering Committee.

Kathleen Fleury, Little Shell Band of Chippewa Indians in Montana, is director of the department for Native American ministries and Racial Justice Ministries. She graduated from the University of Washington Law School in 1978 and is a member of the Montana State Bar Association. Fleury served as Coordinator of Indian Affairs under two governors for the state of Montana. At her local church, she has served on the church council. She served on the first council of the Montana Synod, served as board member for the Commission for Multicultural Ministries, and board member of the National Indian Lutheran Board.

Daphne Gustafson, Inupiat Eskimo, is the owner and manager of Johnny’s Express Fuel in Fairbanks, Alaska. At the local level, she has served as the church council treasurer and chair of the social concerns board. She is currently on the Finance Committee. Since 1988, Gustafson has been active in the Alaska Synod Multicultural Ministries Committee. From 1989 to 1995, she was on the CMM Steering Committee. Gustafson is treasurer for the Native American Lutheran Association.

The Rev. Marlene Whiterabbit Helgemo, Ho-Chunk Tribe, is the first American Indian woman ordained in the Lutheran church. She presently serves as

pastor for the All Nations Indian Church in Minneapolis. She also is manager and advisor to the Lutheran Youth Organization’s Multicultural Advisory Committee. Helgemo served on the Division for Church in Society board and as vice president for the Native American Lutheran Association. She has been a staff consultant to the Division for Congregational Ministries since 1995.

The Rev. Lawrence Jacobs, Stockbridge-Munsee Tribe, is pastor of the Lutheran Church of the Great Spirit in Milwaukee, Wis. He was ordained as a Lutheran minister in 1990. He represented the Lutheran Church of the Great Spirit on the Synod Multicultural Ministries Committee from 1990 to 1996, and as a member of the Native American Lutheran Association from 1991 to 1995.

Doug Miller, Stockbridge-Munsee Tribe, is a tribal planner. He is a member of the Church of the Wilderness in Bowler, Wis., serving as chair and vice-chair of the church council. At the synod level, he was part of the ELCA Transition Team, served on the East-Central Synod of Wisconsin Council, and the Synod Multicultural Ministries Committee.

Joan Mitchell, Chippewa Cree Tribe, is an engineer involved with tribal environmental projects. She is a member of Our Saviour’s Church in Rocky Boy, Montana. Mitchell served on her local church council for two terms. At the synod level, she was on the Council of Churches.

Tom Okleasik, Inupiat Eskimo, is a graduate of California Lutheran University and currently is a member of Our Savior’s Lutheran Church in Nome, Alaska. He served on the Minority Youth Advisory Committee (1985-1987) and has served on the Alaska Synod since 1991.

The Rev. Fred Rajan, executive director of the Commission for Multicultural Ministries, received M.Div. and M.Th. degrees from Faith Evangelical Lutheran Seminary. After serving Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Texas, Rajan became involved at the national level of the church. Before his current position, he was associate director for advocacy, CMM, and director of Multicultural Mission Strategy, CMM.

Bishop Mark Ramseth has been bishop of the Montana Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America since 1991. He has served congregations in Washington, Idaho, California, and Montana. Ramseth serves on the board of regents for Concordia College and Pacific Lutheran University. He chairs the board of directors at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary and is advisory bishop to the ELCA Department for Communication. A graduate of St. Olaf and Luther Seminary, he holds graduate degrees from Union Theological Seminary in Virginia and San Francisco Theological Seminary.

Vance Robbins, Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, is president of the Lutheran Youth Organization. He is a college student at Texas Lutheran, active in the St. John’s Lutheran Church in San Antonio, Texas, and the Eben Ezer Church in Oaks, Okla. Locally, he served from 1993 to 1994 on the Eben Ezer Evangelism

Committee and from 1988 to 1994 with the Lutheran Youth Organization. Robbins was a Conference 4 representative to the Arkansas-Oklahoma Lutheran Youth Organization from 1989 to 1991, vice president from 1991 to 1992, and president in 1992. He served on the LYO Multicultural Advisory Committee from 1991 to 1994, and program team manager of the LYO Convention since 1995. Robbins coordinated the first-ever National Native American Lutheran Gathering in Oaks, Okla. in 1993.

Jack Russell, Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, works in the public school maintenance department in Fincastle, VA. He is a member of the Wheatland Evangelical Lutheran Church, where he has served as vice president of his church council. Russell was a member of the Virginia Synod Multicultural Ministries Committee and is currently on CMM's Advisory and Steering Committees. In addition, he is vice president for the Native American Lutheran Association. In 1996, Russell will serve as lay minister in the Greater Milwaukee Synod.

Ramona Soto Rank, Klamath Tribe, is currently studying at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary. She is a member of the Church of the Four Winds and Resurrection Lutheran Church. Soto Rank has served as youth coordinator of Hope Lutheran Church (1977-82), the call committee at Resurrection Lutheran Church (1990), and since 1987, on the board of directors for the Church of the Four Winds. From 1978 to 1989, she served as coordinator for Inter-Lutheran Native American Concerns, member of Region 1 Multicultural Council (1978-present), and chair of the Oregon Synod Multicultural Council since 1990. She has served on the ELCA Church Council since 1990, the LCA Division for Parish Services (1980-87), and the National Indian Lutheran Board (1978-87).

Appendix B

Strategic Planning Consultants

The following individuals served as consultants to the plan and participated in the strategic planning event in Las Vegas in January 1996:

The Rev. Mary Abrahamson, St. Paul Ojibwa Lutheran Church;

Marilyn Bode, Multicultural Ministries Committee;

Cathy Braasch, director for leadership development and training, Division for Outreach;

The Rev. Joe Brown-Thunder Sr., Lakota Lutheran Center;

The Rev. Neal Buckaloo, Region 1 staff, Multicultural Ministries Committee;

Jeanne Calabaza, secretary, Division for Higher Education and Schools;

Jean Chaudhuri, storyteller and multicultural events organizer, Alzona Lutheran Church;

Dr. Vine Deloria Jr., consultant, University of Colorado Department of History;

Rosemary Dyson, ELCA Commission for Multicultural Ministries;

Bonnie Evans, CMM Steering Committee, Strategic Planning Task Force;

Kathleen Fleury, director, department for Native American ministries and Racial Justice Ministries;

Ira Frank, vice president, Southwest Washington Synod;

Mary Louise Frenchman, St. Paulus Lutheran Church, San Francisco;

Ralph Gomez, mission partners coordinator, Grand Canyon Synod;

Daphne Gustafson, treasurer, Native American Lutheran Association;

Heidi Helgemo, steering committee, Commission for Women;

The Rev. Marlene Helgemo, staff consultant, Division for Congregational Ministries Strategic Planning Task Force;

Warner Huss, outreach ministry and education, Concordia College, White Earth Rediscovery Center;

The Rev. Lawrence Jacobs, Lutheran Church of the Great Spirit, Milwaukee, strategic planning task force;

Sherry James, chairperson, Multicultural Awareness Committee, Montana Synod;

Lynda Jarsocrak, president, Native American Lutheran Association;

The Rev. Eleanor Johnson, Duluth Indian Church, Northeast Minnesota Synod;

Lucy Kjar, president, Fargo-Moorhead Native American Ministries;

Jennie Lightfoot, CMM Steering Committee, Multicultural Advisory Committee;

The Rev. Rafael Malpica-Padilla, director for Latin America, Division for Global Mission;

Sharon Metz, executive director, HONOR;

Doug Miller, chair of church council, Lutheran Church of the Wilderness, Wisconsin.

Joan Mitchell, engineer involved with tribal environmental projects, Montana;

Sol Bird Mockicin, Church of the Living Waters, Cherokee, N.C.;

Tom Okleasik, chair, Alaska Synod Multicultural Ministries Committee;

Diana Peterson, senior secretary, Commission for Multicultural Ministries;

Erik Phelps, CMM Steering Committee;

Helen Pootoogooluk, Shishmaref Lutheran Church;

The Rev. Fred Rajan, executive director, Commission for Multicultural Ministries;

Bishop Mark S. Ramseth, bishop, Montana Synod;

Rebecca Rank, Multicultural Advisory Committee, Lutheran Youth Organization;

Vance Robbins, president, Lutheran Youth Organization;

Jack Russell, CMM Steering Committee;
Alice Siroti, St. Paul Ojibwa Lutheran Church, N.D.;
Christina Smith, personnel and management specialist, Indian Health Service,
Oregon;
Linda Smith, seminary student, Auburn, Wash.;
Rita Sockpick, secretary, Alaska Native Lutheran Church;
Marilyn Sorenson-Bush, WELCA board, chair, Multicultural Commission;
Ramona Soto Rank, ELCA Church Council, chair, Oregon Synod Multicultural
Ministries Committee;
The Rev. Stephen L. Shriner, co-chair, Multicultural Committee;
The Rev. Gordon Straw, former director, Native American Ministries-ELCA;
Darla Thiele, drug and alcohol prevention educator, North Dakota;
Larry Thiele, co-chair, Dacotah Oyate Lutheran Church, North Dakota;
Albert White Hat, Lakota traditional consultant;
Joe Wilson, lay pastor, House of Prayer Lutheran Church, Arizona;

Margaret Peake Raymond served as lead consultant for the project. A member of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, Raymond has an MSW from the University of Oklahoma in social planning and community development. In 1984 she founded the Minnesota Indian Women's Resource Center, a comprehensive social services organization for Indian women and their children. Raymond served as executive director of MIWRC until 1966, developing a training and treatment program, family services, a child care, and housing. For her work she has received two prestigious awards, the Center for Women Policies Studies Jessie Bernard Wise Woman Award (1994) and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Community Health Leadership Award (1995). Raymond is a board member of the Indian Child Welfare Law Center and the American Indian Business Developmental campaign for the American Indian AIDS Task Force. She serves on the Health Advisory Committee for the College of St. Catherine and the Field Advisory Committee for the University of Minnesota Graduate School of Social Work. She sits on the national advisory committee for women's services for the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

Lenore Franzen served as content and editorial consultant for the project. She graduated from Luther College and holds a master's degree in English from the University of Iowa. Since 1976, Franzen has held numerous editorial positions with World Book Encyclopedia, West Publishing Company, the University of Minnesota, Augsburg Fortress Publishers, and the Johnson Institute. In 1991, Franzen became self-employed, providing writing and editorial services to a variety of profit and not-for-profit organizations in the Twin Cities. From 1993 to 1995 she taught persuasive speech at Luther Seminary. She is a founding board member of

The Rose, a magazine of Lutheran renewal. Franzen is active at her home congregation, Gloria Dei Lutheran Church in St. Paul, where she has been a member of the council and the call, stewardship, and outreach committees.

Bishop Anderson invited assembly members to stand and join in singing "I Love to Tell the Story."

The Rev. Harold S. Weiss [Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod], rising to request a point of personal privilege, permission for a hearing-impaired pastor from the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, who was serving as volunteer for the assembly, to be seated among the voting members for the remainder of the afternoon and evening sessions so that she might hear better. Hearing no objections, Bishop Anderson granted the request with the understanding that this person would not have voting privileges.

Bible Study: Session II

Bishop Anderson introduced Ms. Musimibi Kanyoro, who would present the assembly's second Bible study. Ms. Kanyoro serves as executive secretary for women in church and society of the Lutheran World Federation. Born in Kenya, she studied philosophy and religious studies at the University of Nairobi and received her Master and Doctor of Philosophy degrees in linguistics from the University of Texas at Austin, Texas.

Following an opening prayer, Ms. Kanyoro expressed gratitude and appreciation to Bishop Anderson and the staff of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for inviting her to this 1997 Churchwide Assembly. She shared that she was "especially delighted to be here at this time when there have been debates on a number of ecumenical issues. I come from a family which does not usually debate differences that exist in our churches, but really lives out those differences. My parents are second-generation Quakers and due to different school systems, intermarriages, and personal choices, we have in our family—three Quakers, two [Roman] Catholics, one Presbyterian, two Lutherans, one Anglican, and one Pentecostal among the siblings of my parents. . . . My family thinks we are all one; we just happen to worship in different places."

In this second part of the Bible study, Ms. Kanyoro focused on chapters 8, 9, and 10 of 1 Corinthians, setting it against a background of mission. She referred to those chapters as the "food" chapter, and said, "If you are wondering what food has to do with mission, then we are in the same boat. I would like us to ask together while studying [these chapters] 'How does food teach us to do mission?'" She then used a video, entitled, "Diverse Cultures—One Gospel," to show how

Christians around the world worship and witness in a variety of ways. The video contained stories from the Philippines and from St. Petersburg in Russia. Ms. Kanyoro commented, “If we take seriously our call to witness in the 21st century, we have to learn what it means to read and study our Bibles, insuring proper dialogue in the biblical material and what is going on in our world.” Focusing on the Apostle Paul’s experience with the church at Corinth, she observed that many of the questions and concerns of the Corinthians are the same questions and concerns for us today. She asked, “Should Christians take part in the ceremony with the blood sacrifices such as we have just seen [in the video]? Are the brothers and sisters from the Philippines, who are asking the church to recognize their traditional worship, Christians? Is the Easter ceremony of blessing the eggs in our sister Christian church, the Orthodox Church, a Christian practice or a cultural practice? How does the ambiguity of our times and our cultures shape an understanding of how the Spirit of God is still at work in this, God’s world? We might even push these questions farther and ask, ‘How does the intertwining of religion and culture in any particular context affect the attitudes of Christians to other forms of beliefs or other living faiths?’ . . . These are also similar questions that the people of Corinth asked in the early Church.” Ms. Kanyoro asked, “What can we learn from our world and from the Bible about how to continue to communicate and make Christ known across boundaries and frontiers of differences? What can Christians do and what should they not do? Where are the limits of Christian freedom in our world where societies describe themselves with terms such as secularized, post-modern, post-Christian, pluralistic, and so on and so forth.”

Reiterating her focus on mission, she affirmed, “The mission of the church of Jesus Christ is to make Christ known; to proclaim the good news about this Jesus the Christ; to teach, baptize, to nurture the believers in the Gospel. The mission of the church is to respond to human needs by loving servants. The mission of the church is to seek to transform the injustices that exist in society. The mission of the church is to try to sustain with integrity all of God’s creation. Do we stand in danger of being sidetracked by agendas which in themselves may be trivial in comparison with the big mission agenda before us?” Ms. Kanyoro quoted Saint Paul speaking to the people of Corinth, “All of us possess knowledge.” She continued, “Yes, we possess knowledge, we know these things and that is good, but this is not what Christian mission is about. The problem with context based on knowledge is that it leads to pride. Paul uses the words, ‘Knowledge puffs up.’ The aim of Christian ethics is not just what we know or what we think we know, but to live for others.” Hence, she expounded, “(1) Christian mission is about love; love builds up and love benefits others; Christian actions are generated by love; (2) Christian mission is about the grace of God; the love of God given to us through his Son Jesus Christ; and (3) Christian mission is about caring for people, for all people and their needs, not just caring for some or just those in our own ‘fold.’”

Returning to the analogy of food, Ms. Kanyoro affirmed that food has everything to do with mission. She concluded, “These ‘food’ chapters of 1 Corinthians tell us that Christians have a responsibility not to use freedom to injure other people’s spiritual life. Christians have a responsibility to not use freedom to endanger their own spiritual life. Christian freedom is freedom for others. Christians must constantly read history, read their Scriptures, and discern what is right to do. The ‘food’ chapters also tell us that dialogue on those issues that concern us is part of the mission of the church in today’s secular society—dialogue in families; dialogue in the congregations; dialogue in the parish; the synod; with other Christian believers of other confessions; with people of other faiths; and with people with no religious commitment. We must talk together and to one another.”

Elections: Fifth Ballot for Vice President

Reference: continued from *Minutes*, pages 262, 350, 380, 493.

Bishop Anderson explained that on the fifth ballot a majority of votes cast would be necessary for election. He read the names of the two nominees on this ballot in alphabetical order: Ms. Addie J. Butler and Ms. Myrna J. Scheie. Bishop Anderson informed the assembly that the results of the vote would be reported as soon as they were available and verified. Bishop Anderson led the assembly in prayer. Bishop Anderson then ordered that ballots be cast by means of the electronic voting system, and subsequently declared balloting to be closed.

Bishop Anderson asked Mr. Phillip H. Harris, chair of the Elections Committee, to announce the results of balloting. Mr. Harris reported that there were 994 votes cast, with a simple majority needed for election. Ms. Butler received 670 votes; Ms. Scheie received 324. Bishop Anderson declared Ms. Addie J. Butler vice president–elect of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

CA97.5.18 To elect Ms. Addie J. Butler (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania) to a six-year term as vice president of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Bishop Anderson invited Ms. Butler to come to the dias. On her way to the dias, she was embraced by Ms. Kathy J. Magnus, outgoing vice president. Ms. Butler greeted assembly members with the words, “Thank you, thank you, and thank you.” She stated that she would be vice president to all of the members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America—to life-long Lutherans, Lutherans who were formerly members of another church, Lutherans of European descent, Lutherans whose fathers and mothers came from another country, Lutherans who are children, youth, young adults, and fully adults, Lutherans who are members of this church today and those who will become members during her tenure. She shared her vision of a church that is destined to grow. She asked that the members of this church remember her in prayer, as she will remember them in her prayers, and pray for the growth and development of this church.

Initiatives for a New Century: A Call to Commitment

Reference: *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section II, pages 7-18; Section IV, page 203.

Vice President Kathy J. Magnus assumed the chair for consideration of the seven proposed *Initiatives for New Century: A Call to Commitment*. Vice President Magnus noted that the Church Council had “walked” with Bishop Anderson as he developed the initiatives, and drew attention to the council’s recommendation. She called upon Secretary Lowell G. Almen to read the recommendation of the Church Council and the text describing initiatives. There being no discussion, the assembly proceeded to vote.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

Yes—913; No—5

CA97.5.19 WHEREAS, in 1993 this church began an Inquiry process to understand current trends and realities and to examine the future mission of this church; and

WHEREAS, discussions from the Inquiry process have led, in this biennium, to the development of realistic, focused, mission-oriented initiatives following significant listening and conversation throughout this church; and

WHEREAS, we now prepare for mission in a new century; and

WHEREAS, Presiding Bishop H. George Anderson, in his report to the 1997 Churchwide Assembly, calls the initiatives a “churchwide call to action”; therefore, be it RESOLVED, that the 1997 Churchwide Assembly affirm the “Initiatives for a New Century: A Call to Commitment”; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the 1997 Churchwide Assembly encourage the individuals, congregations, synods, churchwide organization, colleges, universities, seminaries, agencies, and institutions of this church to bring these initiatives to life; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the Office of the Presiding Bishop oversee and coordinate the implementation of these initiatives.

INITIATIVES FOR A NEW CENTURY: A Call to Commitment

What does God have in mind for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as we move toward the turn of the century—and of the millennium? Just as the calendar tells us we are at a crossroads, our world also presents us with a series of dramatic changes that invite our response. How should we read these “signs of the times”? How can we use the gifts that God has given us to seize this opportunity and participate in God’s mission in the world?

We all feel that the nature of life has changed in the last decades. No matter where we live, we describe the same cluster of factors that have made our lives different. For many these changes are disturbing or inconvenient; for others in our society they are devastating. Often these factors are connected with a sense of loss, but a second look will reveal that these changes have also brought new possibilities with them.

THE TIME IS RIGHT

A Fluid Situation. In the five years between 1985 and 1990, 103 million Americans—about 40% of the population—moved. The result is a sense of rootlessness and a lack of connection to a wider community. The old landmarks of authority also have disappeared or been discredited. Many feel there is no center, no stable reference point for persons or societies.

The flip side of mobility, combined with technological advances in travel and communication like the worldwide web, is that our individual and collective views of the world are broadened. Our population is becoming more diverse, bringing new voices to public discussion. Advances in medicine have prolonged average life spans, giving us more years of activity and more discretionary time in the years of retirement.

In this time when society is in a molten state, when everything is being “reinvented,” the church has a matchless opportunity to be engaged in shaping whatever new society will emerge from these years of transition. In such times, it is the communities that have a clear purpose and definite goals that will become the crystallization points for the world of the future.

Increased Stress. Do you remember the prediction from twenty years ago, that the big problem of the 90s was going to be what to do with our leisure time? Things have turned out just the opposite. Families feel that two incomes are needed in order to maintain adequate living standards. “Down-sizing,” “right-sizing,” “reductions in force,” and other euphemisms for loss of jobs raise uncertainty in the work place and put monumental pressures on those who remain employed. Children and young people face greater requirements on their time from school activities. Life is experienced as a series of demands, exceeding the resources available. Leisure itself has become work.

This situation begs for a message of grace, a word of release to simplify life and help people find the “one thing needful” (Luke 10:42).

Seeking a Voice. People feel themselves pushed farther out to the margins of society. They believe that decisions about their lives are being made by others who do not consult them or even care about their welfare. The social conventions that formerly protected Sunday and made church membership one of the assumptions of community life have dissolved. Congregations in rural areas and in urban settings often discover that they are the only local institution left.

This unique position, however, offers the possibility of identity with the poor and dispossessed in a way that our former privileged position did not. The church need not be afraid of being pushed to the edge of society. That is where the church was born. The church is genetically engineered to thrive in adversity and “tribulation.” It’s in the church’s DNA. Or perhaps we should call it BNA: “Be Not Afraid.”

Polarization. Social pressures have not led to common action, but to separation and polarization. Rodney King’s plea after his beating—“Why can’t we all get along?”—still echoes unanswered. “Litigation” has become an everyday word, and violence has become everyday fare on the news. The United States has one of the greatest differentials between rich and poor in the world, and the gap is widening. Young and old find themselves in tension over dwindling resources. Individuals and groups feel isolated, but their solution is to pull up the drawbridge and further cut themselves off. Each day when I turn my car into the main road, I see a sign on the property directly across the street. It says, “Forget the dog, beware of owner.” Just to make sure you get the message, the owner has now added a new sign underneath: “No trespassing.”

In this tense environment the church is called to demonstrate the possibility of a community where members are “reconciled to one another” across all the fault lines of society. In our fractured world that would indeed be a sign of hope.

Widespread Spiritual Hunger. We are in the midst of a major spiritual revival in the United States, but many people are seeking answers outside the Christian church. New age religions, Zen Buddhism, adaptations of native American religion, astrology, and a host of other movements will account for a market of half a billion dollars for “spirituality” this year. Our ELCA web site tracks the number of visits it receives from countries outside the United States. During a given period last year, the highest number of visits—3,800—came from Japan! Do we realize that we must literally “speak to the world” about our faith?

Many persons seem to yearn for the deeper community that is offered in our congregations, particularly those where small group ministries and service opportunities are offered. They are coming, like those biblical inquirers, to ask, “Is there any word from the Lord?” Are we ready to tell them in words they can understand?

WHO WE ARE

The Lutheran Church has time-tested resources to bring to this moment of opportunity for God’s mission. Indeed God may have given us exactly this time to discover what strengths our church has to offer to a world in transition.

A Praising Church. Our Reformation heritage emphasizes grace and gratitude. We believe that God created the world to be a good place and that God

wills wholeness for creation. We bring the good news that God loves us and comes to us in Jesus Christ before we are ready. So we are a church of song and praise—“Now Thank We All Our God.”

A Realistic Church. We understand the depth and craftiness of sin. We are not paralyzed by seemingly intractable social problems. We can tolerate paradox and ambiguity, and even expect them as part of human imperfection in knowledge. But we trust even more firmly in the power of God to deal with sin and overcome human frailty and injustice.

A Serving Church. We see the daily work of every person as the calling of God. This daily work is used by God to maintain human life. When persons lack the essentials of home and work, family and health, we both call for justice and seek to fill the need. As a result we provide helping ministries—from one-to-one sharing in congregations to a nationwide network of human service agencies.

A Teaching Church. The origin of our church in the study of the Bible has led us to emphasize an educated clergy and membership. We recognize the authority of Scripture. Our confessions give us a clear doctrinal identity. We instruct children in the basics of the faith. We are known for our colleges and universities, our seminaries, and our publication program.

A Global Church. As the largest and oldest church of the Reformation in the world we maintain fellowship with one another across oceans and national boundaries. Through our membership in the Lutheran World Federation we have pulpit and altar fellowship with 56 million other believers in 68 nations. We can learn much from these brothers and sisters about prayer, witness, and steadfastness in times of hardship. We have been leaders in ecumenical councils and dialogues. These relationships offer the possibility of cooperative ministry at home and overseas.

SEVEN KEY INITIATIVES

The opportunities are limitless. We must select those critical areas where action now will make the most difference for the future. Here are seven initiatives that will focus our existing programs and seize the new opportunities that God has given us. These are not the only important areas where our church is in ministry. But I believe these are the critical ones that warrant our special attention between

now and the year 2001. The purpose of these initiatives is to strengthen the whole ministry of our church in preparation for the challenges of the 21st century.

In order to stimulate specific activities in support of these initiatives, a sample list of “We will’s” is included in each category. Many other activities, already in place or yet to be defined, could also be added.

1. DEEPEN OUR WORSHIP LIFE

Worship is the heart of the Church’s life—the source of strength and will for evangelism, stewardship, service, and all other aspects of our life in Christ. There we encounter the living God, who touches hearts and minds, lives and spirits. We discover the ways in which God is present in and through our daily activities. And we are empowered to carry out our baptismal call: to both bear Christ to the world and issue the invitation, “Come and see Jesus.” Our goal is to become a church united by a common theological and liturgical core with diverse expressions of worship.

- ❖ We will seek every opportunity to talk with each other about the ways we encounter the living God in worship.
 - We will talk in our congregations, in synods and across synodical boundaries, in campus ministries and other worshipping communities, in seminaries, and in groups where persons have deep differences in culture and worship style. We will discuss why we worship and how we worship. We will reflect on basic questions of purpose relating to preaching, hospitality, spiritual formation and other elements. We will explore the diversity that arises from culture, context, tradition and perspective. We will learn from each other.
- ❖ We will strengthen skills that enhance worship—and will be open to sharing our gifts with others.
 - We will link congregations noted for lively and inviting worship with those that want to discover new depth in worship, using both established methods (meetings and videos) and new technologies (video conferencing).
 - We will develop language and culture specific resources for worship, in a variety of styles that are welcoming.
 - We will stimulate creativity in music and the visual and performing arts, and develop new ways of using art and the media.
 - We will develop an appreciation for worship forms and music from a wide variety of cultures within the global Christian community.

2. TEACH THE FAITH

Our Lord commands us to make disciples of all nations. As we reach out to new communities and to the unchurched, we need to ground our members in the Bible and in the most basic truths of our Lutheran heritage. In doing so we can energize all of our members to share the news of Jesus Christ with neighbors and to live out their Christian calling in the world. We will seek to be energized by a prayerful openness to the leading of the Holy Spirit. And we will use the insights of Lutheran theology as powerful tools for understanding and addressing the needs of society.

- ❖ We will participate in an ELCA-wide “Call to Discipleship,” linked to the year 2000 (with appropriate liturgical rites within the cycle of the church year).
 - We will ask our most creative congregations and their leaders, our teaching theologians, our bishops and others to design this call and to help our church move toward a model of life-long growth in discipleship.
 - We will develop a one- to two-year program where individuals will publicly commit to learning the faith. This school of discipleship will involve a wide range of resources and teaching opportunities, including family video devotional sessions and worship resources.
- ❖ We will develop or share congregationally developed resources and curricula:
 - for teaching persons with no previous knowledge of the Christian faith;
 - for teaching our adult members, so that they are invited and equipped to “live and witness in the power of the Word”; and
 - for communities where language- and culture-specific resources are needed.
- ❖ We will learn about our faith and our Lutheran understanding of Scripture by exploring both our differences and our similarities with other faith traditions. From the perspective of the Eighth Commandment we will ask, “What does it mean to put the best construction on another’s faith experience?”

3. WITNESS TO GOD’S ACTION IN THE WORLD

We are called to proclaim God’s good news boldly. We are called to witness to God’s life-giving love for a creation marred by sin and evil. More than ever before, it is now urgent for us to turn outward in witness and in service. We draw upon our rich theological and pastoral heritage, on the insights of ethnic and cultural traditions, and on our strong history of participating in society. These

resources offer us the possibility of both modeling and sharing with the world a new vision of life in community.

- ❖ We will strengthen those skills that help congregations “turn inside out” in witness and service.
 - We will link congregations that have specific gifts and experiences with those that want to deepen their commitment to effective witness and service.
 - We will use creatively the tools of the new technology. By the end of 1998 our church will have a strong Internet presence—in *evangelism*—that will complement and support the work of congregations, campus ministries, and other worshipping communities.
 - By 1999 we will pilot a model that can be used in all nine regions of the ELCA to help congregations that are ready for transformation to mission/outreach to make that change.
- ❖ We will encourage congregations to model life in community by assisting them:
 - to address and deliberate on pressing social and ethical questions in a spirit of civility, drawing upon Scripture, our theological tradition, contemporary knowledge, and our varying experiences; and
 - in their cooperative efforts with civic and private agencies for community renewal through economic development, housing rehabilitation, jobs and business development.

4. STRENGTHEN ONE ANOTHER IN MISSION

The opportunities are so vast and needs of the world so great that we must find ways to share the mission. We need to increase our ability to work together through all the expressions of the church, through the daily lives of our members, through other Christian bodies, and through our partner churches in other countries.

- ❖ We will design a process and methods to assess the resources and talents that the baptized bring to the mission and ministry of the church.
- ❖ We will create and strengthen networks linking congregations, synods, institutions, agencies, the churchwide organization, and our ecumenical and global partners.

- We will use the new technologies to link our congregations and agencies and will encourage all congregations to be connected by computer by the year 2000; we will ask the youth of our church to help make this vision become a reality.
- We will expand global and domestic people-to-people mission opportunities (through mission partners, global mission, and other means).
- We will strengthen the networks by which financial resources are linked with mission needs.

5. HELP THE CHILDREN

The social upheavals of our time and the growing gap between rich and poor have been especially damaging to the lives of children and families. As we prepare for the new millennium, we must assure the youngest and most vulnerable members of our world that they have a future.

- ❖ We will call on every congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to declare itself to be a “safe haven” for children and youth by the end of 1998.
 - We will ask these 11,000 “safe havens” to build upon their assets and resources, within the context of their local communities, as they provide support and nurture to children and their families/care givers.
 - We will establish an ELCA “Safe Haven Network” and use both church media and existing networks to share stories and models from congregations.
 - We will encourage partnership in this effort with Lutheran colleges and social ministry organizations.
 - We will expand by at least 50 per year our network of preschools and day schools, which often serve as “islands of hope”.
- ❖ We will create an ELCA Children’s Council and, where appropriate, synodical Children’s Councils, to promote the well-being of children and to provide a clear and unified voice for children.
- ❖ We will redouble our efforts to aid children, youth and young adults at risk from racism, hunger, violence and poverty, both at home and throughout the world.
 - We will strengthen the ELCA-wide strategy relating to women and children living in poverty (an emphasis adopted by the 1993 Churchwide Assembly for the decade of the 1990s).

- We will advocate with the government for public measures that support the well-being of children.
- We will advocate for and support our church’s efforts to meet the basic needs of children through Lutheran social ministry organizations, as they provide adoption, counseling and caring services for children, and through the ELCA World Hunger Program, which carries our concerns for children throughout the world.

6. CONNECT WITH YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS

Our church needs to renew its commitment to Gospel-centered, relational ministry with youth and young adults: to intersect with them in challenging ways on their journey toward adulthood; to provide an “oasis” for them on that journey where they can be safe and nourished in the faith; and to provide the “keys” to meaningful participation in the life of the church. We have many things going for us in our work with youth and young adults—a catechetical tradition that provides personal contact with pastors and congregational leaders, a well-organized Lutheran youth organization, the largest youth gatherings in the country, excellent camps and retreat centers, and a network of church colleges and campus ministry programs.

- ❖ We will create greater synergy among our existing assets for youth and young adults.
 - We will call a “summit meeting” in 1998 of youth/young adults, representatives from our youth-related programs, and other experts on “Generation X/Post-Modern” youth in order to map out a comprehensive strategy of congregational ministry in the post-confirmation years. Special attention will be given to reaching youth who are currently “underserved” by the church.
 - We will provide means for congregations with youth and young adult ministry, as well as our Lutheran colleges and campus ministries, to share their gifts with congregations seeking to enhance their connection with youth and young adults.
- ❖ We will develop and provide ready access to challenging ministry and service activities for youth and young adults, including:
 - “summer service teams” of youth, perhaps in partnership with ELCA outdoor ministries;
 - a churchwide “clearinghouse” for summer and full year church service internships in synods, social ministry organizations, schools, congregations, the churchwide offices, and related organizations (e.g., Bread for the World, Lutheran Volunteer Corps);

- a youth and young adult volunteer opportunity system using the World Wide Web;
- a periodical (on- or off-line) for and by young adults about service opportunities;
- invitations to the youth and young adults of our church to develop programs for the whole church (e.g., creating a healthier planet).

❖ We will provide special assistance to new ministries that have a primary focus on youth and young adults—especially those at risk from racism, sexism, hunger, violence, drugs, and poverty, including those who are in prison.

7. DEVELOP LEADERS FOR THE NEXT CENTURY

The challenges of the next century cannot be foreseen, but we can identify, prepare and support persons who have the commitment and good judgment that the future will require. We need to begin now to identify members of our congregations, including young people, who have the potential to become the leaders in our congregations and institutions. While the need to develop indigenous leadership is especially critical among our ethnic communities, our whole church needs leaders who can respond to the multicultural realities of the next century—and who have the ability to minister in an increasingly complex and rapidly changing society.

- ❖ We will take every opportunity to encourage and support pastors and lay leaders in their service in the church and in their ministry in daily life.
 - We will make life-long learning an expectation for all leaders in mission.
 - We will continue to explore the use of electronic networking to provide resources and opportunities to exchange ideas.
- ❖ We will seek to understand what leadership will require in the 21st century and identify and develop leaders for the future who have the necessary gifts.
 - Beginning in 1998, we will design a leadership development pilot project that could include the following elements:
 - + We will identify and gather persons—lay and clergy—who are currently exercising faithful and creative leadership in the church and in daily vocations, and ask them to reflect on leadership qualities: what gifts leaders will need in the new century.
 - + Potential leaders could be identified by synods, using these findings and the synods’ own experience. These emerging leaders could be invited to participate in a multi-year year process of servant

leadership development, through distance learning, small group work and immersion sessions focusing on Biblical studies, spiritual formation, global awareness, and learning through service.

- We will develop strategies for identifying, supporting and preparing leaders in ethnic-specific communities and strategies for enhancing the ability of church leaders to minister in an increasingly multicultural context for ministry by 1999.

❖ We will provide guidance, educational opportunities, and financial support for those who are preparing to be leaders in mission. In the coming biennium, we will launch the Fund for Leaders in Mission to provide the financial base for this endeavor.

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Three themes thread through and connect these seven initiatives:

- ❖ **Discipleship**—the need to “continue in Christ’s Word” (John 8:31) throughout all of life. We know that, in its members our church has gifts, resources, and commitment in abundance. What is needed is direction, encouragement and certain skills/tools that can encourage life-long growth in faithfulness, in witness and in service.
- ❖ **Leadership**—the acknowledgment that a church with strong clergy and lay leadership will be a church that is strong in mission. We know that our church has many persons with the gifts for leadership—those described in II Timothy 2:2 as “faithful people who will be able to teach others.” Some of them are already serving as leaders. The job before us is to identify them, to learn from their experiences, and help them to equip themselves and others to be even more effective in their leadership.
- ❖ **Partnership**—the acknowledgment that no part of the church stands alone, that we need each other if we are to be faithful to the mission God has entrusted to us. We have a great need to *listen* to each other, to talk with each other about what is at the core of our faith and our hope. And we need to learn from each other. The biblical image of a body with many members (Romans 12) envisions a flow of action that is neither “top down” nor “bottom up.” It is truly *among* the parts. Individuals and congregations can work with and help one another. The churchwide organization and synods can assist in that

communication, filling in wherever needed. All parts of the church can constantly learn from one another.

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In short, these initiatives are not a one-size-fits-all national program, a sleek churchwide “silver bullet.” The specific activities described here are *just a beginning*, a preliminary list of things we can do together to become a stronger people of God. Unless these activities are understood as a *beginning*, the seven initiatives will never achieve their full potential. It is my dream that individuals, congregations, synods, churchwide units, and our Lutheran agencies, ministries and institutions will not only participate in the activities described above, but will also bring these initiatives to life in their own context, using their own gifts and insights, launching additional activities that reflect the hopes and the needs of their communities.

Should you, as voting members of the 1997 Churchwide Assembly, affirm these initiatives, they can become a framework for future conversations throughout the church. In the coming years, I hope we will take every opportunity to ask each other: “How are you bringing these initiatives to life where you live?” No one can do it alone; we will need to join with others to focus with renewed energy in these critical areas. As the conversations continue, I hope that you will add your own “we wills” in new or renewed activities. And I hope you will join me in praying for the Spirit’s guidance in the renewal of our church as we approach the 21st century.

These are crucial times. The tasks are immense, but we are not alone. We recall Paul’s words to the Corinthians:

“Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God. Not that we are competent of ourselves to claim anything as coming from us; our competence is from God, who has made us competent to be ministers of a new covenant, not of letter but of spirit. . . .” (II Cor. 3:4-6).

It is God’s mission, and we pray that our efforts may be used in that life-giving cause.

Bishop Anderson resumed the chair and thanked Vice President Magnus for her leadership.

Ministry in Daily Life

Reference: 1997 Pre-Assembly Report, Section IV, pages 105-107.

BACKGROUND

In response to recommendations related to the Study of Ministry, the 1993 Churchwide Assembly voted:

To adopt . . . the following recommendations regarding the ministry of the baptized, in keeping with the recommendations of the Task Force on the Study of Ministry and the board of the Division for Ministry:

1. To reaffirm the universal priesthood of all believers, namely, that all baptized Christians are called to minister in the name of Christ and, empowered by the Holy Spirit, to proclaim the promise of God in the world and in their various callings and to bear God’s creative and redeeming Word to all the world, to meet human needs, to work for dignity and justice for all people, and peace and reconciliation among the nations, while praying for one another, hearing confession and forgiving one another, and, in unusual circumstances and where authorized, to administer the sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion.
2. To direct the Division for Ministry and the Division for Congregational Ministries to lift up and develop further this church’s commitment to encourage all baptized members to understand, be equipped for, and live out their ministries in the world and in the Church. This church’s commitment shall be demonstrated by integrating the emphasis on the ministry of the baptized into the life of this church in and through its various expressions [that is, congregations, synods, and churchwide organization], units, institutions, laity movements, but especially through congregations. The Division for Ministry and the Division for Congregational Ministries shall make a progress report and appropriate recommendations to the 1995 Churchwide Assembly.
3. To direct the Division for Ministry to arrange for a two-year period (1993-1995) of theological study and reflection on the ministry of the baptized in the world and on ways in which faithful people are expected to account for their ministries to both God and the community of believers [CA93.6.17].

Having received the progress report of the Division for Ministry on matters related to the ministry of the baptized, the 1995 Churchwide Assembly voted:

To affirm the plans of the Division for Ministry, in consultation with the Division for Congregational Ministries, to continue and to deepen the churchwide conversation on matters related to the ministry of the baptized during the 1996-1997 biennium; and

To request that the Division for Ministry bring a report and possible recommendations on this matter to the 1997 Churchwide Assembly [CA95.3.12].

At its March 1997 meeting, the board of the Division for Ministry reviewed and requested affirmation of the report and recommendations in the document, “A

Call to Action: Ministry in Daily Life.” Having reviewed that request, the Church Council recommended adoption of the following resolution:

**RECOMMENDATION OF
THE CHURCH COUNCIL**

To receive the report of the Division for Ministry on ministry in daily life; and

To affirm the following recommendations of *Call to Action: Ministry in Daily Life*:

1. *Teach the Faith for Living the Faith*

To recommend that all persons, congregations, synods, churchwide units, and agencies who shape documents, resources, or events on Lutheran identity, include in their work an explicit and forceful presentation of the concept of ministry in daily life with relevant and concrete suggestions for living the faith.

2. *Develop Leaders for the Next Century*

- a. To direct that the Division for Ministry and the Conference of Bishops—at the time of the next revision or reprinting of manuals, standards, guidelines, and policies¹ used in the selection and approval of candidates, first-call theological education, mobility, and the call process in congregations—ensure that such documents reflect a strengthened understanding of the ministry of all people and the role of the ministry of Word and Sacrament in strengthening that ministry.
- b. To urge providers of theological education to keep in the forefront of their work the intent of the Study of Theological Education to make theological education accessible to a broader spectrum of people, especially those who are not seeking a church occupation but desire to explore their faith and reflect theologically on their ministries in the world.

3. *Strengthen One Another in Mission*

- a. To direct the Division for Congregational Ministries and Division for Ministry to develop study documents, methods, and materials that foster a strong positive relationship between clergy and laity, in order to combat clericalism and anti-clericalism, so that lay and ordained persons may work together in a full and equal partnership that allows both to fulfill their roles in God’s mission.
- b. To encourage all expressions of this church and all ministry settings to involve laity in decision-making roles, in order to include the witness, wisdom, experience, and expertise from the worlds of business, education, law, and health care, and the voices of people who are unemployed, retired, and young.

- c. To direct the Division for Congregational Ministries to develop processes, models, and resources that make it possible for congregations to organize for and practice the principle of honoring the ministry of all members in the world.²
- d. To authorize that the Division for Ministry monitor this church’s progress in achieving these stated goals, with a report on this progress to be made at the 1999 Churchwide Assembly.

¹ Such documents include: The Candidacy Manual, First-Call Theological Education Program Practices Organizer, Mutual Ministry Committee Manual, Mobility Information Packet for Rostered Persons, Congregational Profile, and Guidelines for the Call Process in the Congregation.

² New models might lead to creative ways of addressing such questions as: How might this orientation to ministries in the world change the way congregations call leaders, spend money, construct buildings, and organize their work? How would congregations relate to members who participate minimally in the life of the congregation, but who consider themselves religious and are actively engaged in the world as faithful people?

Bishop Anderson called the attention of assembly members to the Church Council’s recommendation concerning the ministry of the baptized. The assembly heard “The Ripples of the Baptized,” a reflection on how the Gospel ripples as the baptized carry out their vocations in the world. The Rev. Joseph M. Wagner, executive director of the Division for Ministry, then introduced Mr. Nelvin Vos, chair of the board of the Division for Ministry, and Ms. Sally Simmel, the divisions’s director for ministry in daily life.

Pastor Wagner recalled that the 1993 Churchwide Assembly had approved in the final report of the Task Force on the Study of Ministry, and had authorized a two-year period of study and reflection on the ministry of the baptized and how this church supports that ministry. The results of the study were reported to the 1995 Churchwide Assembly. Mr. Vos commented, “In these recommendations, we decide how this church will honor and support and equip the ministries of all the members of this church in the future. The recommendations invite and challenge the church to consider new models for congregations, to think of creative ways to bring the voices and wisdom of more people into the decision-making processes, to provide access to theological education to a broader spectrum of people, and to work toward full partnership of laity and clergy as we are all called within the church and to the world. In brief, what these recommendations attempt to do is to integrate the understanding of the ministry of the baptized more fully into the bloodstream of this church.”

Bishop Anderson then advised the assembly that the following recommendation of the Church Council was before the voting members for discussion and vote.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To receive the report of the Division for Ministry on ministry in daily life; and

To affirm the following recommendations of the “Call to Action: Ministry in Daily Life”:

1. *Teach the Faith for Living the Faith*

To recommend that all persons, congregations, synods, churchwide units, and agencies who shape documents, resources, or events on Lutheran identity, include in their work an explicit and forceful presentation of the concept of ministry in daily life with relevant and concrete suggestions for living the faith.

2. *Develop Leaders for the Next Century*

a. To direct that the Division for Ministry and the Conference of Bishops—at the time of the next revision or reprinting of manuals, standards, guidelines, and policies¹ used in the selection and approval of candidates, first-call theological education, mobility, and the call process in congregations—ensure that such documents reflect a strengthened understanding of the ministry of all people and the role of the ministry of Word and Sacrament in strengthening that ministry.

b. To urge providers of theological education to keep in the forefront of their work the intent of the Study of Theological Education to make theological education accessible to a broader spectrum of people, especially those who are not seeking a church occupation but desire to explore their faith and reflect theologically on their ministries in the world.

3. *Strengthen One Another in Mission*

a. To direct the Division for Congregational Ministries and the Division for Ministry to develop study documents, methods, and materials that foster a strong positive relationship between clergy and laity, in order to combat clericalism and anti-clericalism, so that lay and ordained persons may work together in a full and equal partnership that allows both to fulfill their roles in God’s mission.

b. To encourage all expressions of this church and all ministry settings to involve laity in decision-making roles, in order to include the witness, wisdom, experience, and expertise from the worlds of business, education, law, and

health care, and the voices of people who are unemployed, retired, and young.

c. To direct the Division for Congregational Ministries to develop processes, models, and resources that make it possible for congregations to organize for and practice the principle of honoring the ministry of all members in the world.²

d. To authorize that the Division for Ministry monitor this church’s progress in achieving these stated goals, with a report on this progress to be made at the 1999 Churchwide Assembly.

1 Such documents include: The Candidacy Manual, First-Call Theological Education Program Practices Organizer, Mutual Ministry Committee Manual, Mobility Information Packet for Rostered Persons, Congregational Profile, and Guidelines for the Call Process in the Congregation.

2 New models might lead to creative ways of addressing such questions as: How might this orientation to ministries in the world change the way congregations call leaders, spend money, construct buildings, and organize their work? How would congregations relate to members who participate minimally in the life of the congregation, but who consider themselves religious and are actively engaged in the world as faithful people?

Mr. John D. Litke [Metropolitan New York Synod] moved the following amendment.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To amend the recommendation by renumbering section 3.d. as section 4; and by changing in the third line of that section the word, “these,” to read, “the”; and by inserting the phrase, “1 through 3,” after the word, “goals”; so that the text reads:

4. To authorize that the Division for Ministry monitor this church’s progress in achieving the stated goals 1 through 3, with a report on this progress to be made at the 1999 Churchwide Assembly.

Mr. Litke spoke to his motion stating that without the amendment, “these stated goals would only apply to subsection 3, and I think the assembly would wish that the committee monitor and report on the progress with all of the stated goals in this resolution. Bishop Anderson stated that the committee had indicated that this amendment was acceptable.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

Voice Vote

CARRIED: To amend the recommendation by renumbering section 3.d. as section 4; and by changing in the third line of that section the word, “these,” to read, “the”; and by inserting the phrase, “1 through 3,” after the word, “goals”; so that the text reads:

4. To authorize that the Division for Ministry monitor this church’s progress in achieving the stated goals 1 through 3, with a report on this progress to be made at the 1999 Churchwide Assembly.

Ms. Bonnie Block [South-Central Synod of Wisconsin] said that she believed the assembly should adopt the recommendation without reluctance. She observed, “We have often used the trickle down theory in terms of affirmation of lay ministry. I would refer voting members to page 150 of our budget. We are spending approximately \$140,000 on the ministry in daily life and we are spending \$4 million on the seminary line item. Ministry in daily life . . . is a hands-on thing and I do not think that trickle down of training works very well for lay ministries. She served notice that she planned to offer an amendment to the budget proposal that would transfer \$100,000 from support to seminaries to support of Ministry in Daily Life.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

Yes—899; No—15

CA97.5.20 To receive the report of the Division for Ministry on ministry in daily life; and

To affirm the following recommendations of the “Call to Action: Ministry in Daily Life”:

1. *Teach the Faith for Living the Faith*

To recommend that all persons, congregations, synods, churchwide units, and agencies who shape documents, resources, or events on Lutheran identity, include in their work an explicit and forceful presentation of the concept of ministry in daily life with relevant and concrete suggestions for living the faith.

2. *Develop Leaders for the Next Century*

- a. To direct that the Division for Ministry and the Conference of Bishops—at the time of the next revision or reprinting of manuals, standards, guidelines, and policies¹ used in the selection and approval of candidates, first-call theological education, mobility, and the call process in congregations—ensure that such documents reflect a strengthened understanding of the ministry of all people and the role of the ministry of Word and Sacrament in strengthening that ministry.

- b. To urge providers of theological education to keep in the forefront of their work the intent of the Study of Theological Education to make theological education accessible to a broader spectrum of people, especially those who are not seeking a church occupation but desire to explore their faith and reflect theologically on their ministries in the world.

3. *Strengthen One Another in Mission*

- a. To direct the Division for Congregational Ministries and the Division for Ministry to develop study documents, methods, and materials that foster a strong positive relationship between clergy and laity, in order to combat clericalism and anti-clericalism, so that lay and ordained persons may work together in a full and equal partnership that allows both to fulfill their roles in God’s mission.

- b. To encourage all expressions of this church and all ministry settings to involve laity in decision-making roles, in order to include the witness, wisdom, experience, and expertise from the worlds of business, education, law, and health care, and the voices of people who are unemployed, retired, and young.

- c. To direct the Division for Congregational Ministries to develop processes, models, and resources that make it possible for congregations to organize for and practice the principle of honoring the ministry of all members in the world.²

4. To authorize that the Division for Ministry monitor this church's progress in achieving the stated goals 1 through 3, with a report on this progress to be made at the 1999 Churchwide Assembly.

- 1 Such documents include: The Candidacy Manual, First-Call Theological Education Program Practices Organizer, Mutual Ministry Committee Manual, Mobility Information Packet for Rostered Persons, Congregational Profile, and Guidelines for the Call Process in the Congregation.
- 2 New models might lead to creative ways of addressing such questions as: How might this orientation to ministries in the world change the way congregations call leaders, spend money, construct buildings, and organize their work? How would congregations relate to members who participate minimally in the life of the congregation, but who consider themselves religious and are actively engaged in the world as faithful people?

A Call to Action: Ministry in Daily Life

During the 1995 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, staff persons for the ministry in daily life program in the Division for Ministry and Division for Congregational Ministries presented a major report on churchwide activities that recognize and support the ministries of all members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Since then growing openness has been evident for the practical application of this foundational reformation position in the life of the church.

Progress Report

It has been encouraging to see the concept and practice of the ministry of the baptized enabling members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to claim their Lutheran heritage and the power of their presence as God's people in society. The following are examples of resources that support members in their search for faith and life connections:

1. The variety of resources for use by individuals, congregations, and synods has increased since the 1995 Churchwide Assembly and now includes a book of dramas, a book of workshop designs, new brochures, and an updated catalog of resources.

2. The goal of creating a climate in the church for deeper and wider conversation, begun in the early days of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, continues in numerous places. Major new resources for this objective include:

- a. *Working: Making a Difference in God's World* is a source-book for turning congregations into places where God's people are equipped for their daily ministry in the workplace. The source-book was so popular it required the production of a supplement early in 1997.
- b. *Splash! The Ripples of the Baptized* is a Growth in Excellence in Ministry focus resource for transforming congregations for the future, using ministry in daily life as an organizing principle.
- c. The *Connections: Faith and Life* project provides a new way of doing small groups, connecting meaningful daily ministry with Lutheran doctrine to foster Lutheran identity among ELCA members. The *Connections* resource will be in use in congregational and other ministry settings in the fall of 1997.

3. The 1995 Churchwide Assembly accepted a proposed "process of theological reflection and conversation." That process is now in place. It has two prongs:

- a. A conference of theologians (representing several academic disciplines (church history, homiletics, ethics, practical theology, Old and New Testament)) met in January 1997. The participants surfaced questions and issues that need special attention in order for the concept of vocation and the ministry of the whole people of God to be infused into the bloodstream of this church.
- b. Groups of persons in similar occupations are meeting with facilitators over a period of up to two years to establish personal trust and theological depth and to reflect out of their own faith and work experiences. Material from the January 1997 theological conference informs these conversations.
- c. A collection of theological papers will be published in 1998, with suggestions for use in academic and congregational settings. The collection will make available the learning and insights of these cooperative theological reflections and conversations.

Recommendations

As this church explores its own future, our long-held theology of the baptismal call of all persons provides a vehicle for multiplying the power of the Church in the world through its laity who are there on a day-to-day basis. While the future is unknown, the call of God to the people is clear. Times change, and we discover new ways to address the world in which we do God's will. Clergy and laity in community must commit to moving forward into a way of being the Church that includes all the people of God working in all of the places in the world where the Church must do its ministry. Our theology in this regard is more than adequate to make the Church a powerful force in the world.

Appreciation and commitment to the concept of ministry in daily life also should be a factor as this church evaluates the capabilities and vision of candidates for rostering, persons seeking call, and those currently under call or appointment.

The recommendations are a call to action. They are offered in a spirit of support for churchwide initiatives that rest on a clear understanding of vocation and the priesthood of all believers.

1. *Teach the Faith for Living the Faith*

To recommend that all persons, congregations, synods, churchwide units, and agencies who shape documents, resources, or events on Lutheran identity, include in their work an explicit and forceful presentation of the concept of ministry in daily life with relevant and concrete suggestions for living the faith.

2. *Develop Leaders for the Next Century*

- a. To direct that the Division for Ministry and the Conference of Bishops—at the time of the next revision or reprinting of manuals, standards, guidelines, and policies¹ used in the selection and approval of candidates, first-call theological education, mobility, and the call process in congregations—ensure that such documents reflect a strengthened understanding of the ministry of all people and the role of the ministry of Word and Sacrament in strengthening that ministry.
- b. To urge providers of theological education to keep in the forefront of their work the intent of the Study of Theological Education to make theological education accessible to a broader spectrum of people, especially those who are not seeking a church occupation but desire to explore their faith and reflect theologically on their ministries in the world.

3. *Strengthen One Another in Mission*

- a. To direct the Division for Congregational Ministries and Division for Ministry to develop study documents, methods, and materials that foster a strong positive relationship between clergy and laity, in order to combat clericalism and anti-clericalism, so that lay and ordained persons may work together in a full and equal partnership that allows both to fulfill their roles in God's mission.
- b. To encourage all expressions of this church and all ministry settings to involve laity in decision-making roles, in order to include the witness, wisdom, experience, and expertise from the worlds of business, education, law, and health care, and the voices of people who are unemployed, retired, and young.
- c. To direct the Division for Congregational Ministries to develop processes, models, and resources that make it possible for congregations to organize for and practice the principle of honoring the ministry of all members in the world.²

4. To authorize that the Division for Ministry monitor this church's progress in achieving the stated goals 1 through 3, with a report on this progress to be made at the 1999 Churchwide Assembly.

¹ Such documents include: The Candidacy Manual, First-Call Theological Education Program Practices Organizer, Mutual Ministry Committee Manual, Mobility Information Packet for Rostered Persons, Congregational Profile, and Guidelines for the Call Process in the Congregation.

² New models might lead to creative ways of addressing such questions as: How might this orientation to ministries in the world change the way congregations call leaders, spend money, construct buildings, and organize their work? How would congregations relate to members who participate minimally in the life of the congregation, but who consider themselves religious and are actively engaged in the world as faithful people?

Recognition of Chaplains

Bishop Anderson recognized chaplains serving the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and commended them for their work. He then introduced chaplains in attendance. United States Air Force: Lt. Col. Rodger T. Ericson; Maj. Gwendolyn S. King; Col. John O. Lundin; United States Army: Maj. Robert L. Helton Jr., Col. John K. Stake; United States Navy: Cdr. Robert J. Rodriguez, Lt. Karis K. Graham, Lt. Cynthia K. Bye. He also recognized and welcomed two visiting chaplains from other church bodies. Bishop Anderson introduced and extended particular gratitude to his assistant for federal chaplaincy, the Rev. Lloyd W. Lyngdal.

Bishop Anderson welcomed Chaplain Victor C. Langford III, who recently had been promoted to the rank of General. Chaplain Langford serves St. Mark Lutheran Church, Seattle, Washington, and stated that it was his pleasure and privilege to address assembly members and shared his thanks, as there was much for which to "praise the Lord." Quoting the psalmist, he said, "Praise ye the Lord. Praise ye servants of the Lord. Praise the name of the Lord. Blessed be the name of the Lord from this time forth and forever more. From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same, the Lord's name is to be praised." He declared, "We praise the Lord for the ministry of the federal chaplaincy of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. We praise the Lord for the 160 active-duty military chaplains filling the ranks of the Army, Air Force, Coast Guard, Marines, and the Navy. We praise the Lord for the 240 Army and Air National Guard chaplains, for the reserve chaplains of the Army, Air Force, Coast Guard, Marines, and Navy. We praise the Lord for the 40 pastors who serve the Civil Air Patrol as chaplains . . . for the 65 Veterans Affairs chaplains . . . for the eight Federal Bureau of Prisons chaplains." Chaplain Langford noted that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has 513 military and civilian chaplains who are committed to making Christ known and providing pastoral care and who are scattered throughout the United States and the world. "Praise the Lord!" he exhorted, "The sun never sets on our chaplains

making Christ known throughout the world. Chaplains count it a privilege and a pleasure to care for the hospitalized and to bring hope to the prisoners. Yet, more chaplains are needed.” He extended thanks to the ELCA chaplains and reminded assembly members of the importance of federal chaplaincies and their ministry to this church and to the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Bishop Anderson affirmed the need for additional chaplains and extended gratitude for the ministry chaplains provide.

Recess

Bishop Anderson called upon Secretary Lowell G. Almen to make announcements. He then invited the Rev. Richard G. Deines to lead assembly members in the concluding prayer and the hymn, “Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God.” The assembly recessed at 5:44 P.M.

Plenary Session Eight

Monday, August 18, 1997

8:00 P.M.—9:30 P.M.

The Rev. H. George Anderson, presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, called Plenary Session Eight to order at 8:03 P.M.

Reflections on the Assembly Theme

Bishop Anderson then called upon the Rev. Lowell G. Almen, secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, to share reflections on this church’s heritage in keeping with the assembly theme, “Making Christ Known: Alive in our Heritage and Hope.” Secretary Almen asked, “Did you know that the planting of Lutheran congregations in North America occurred in stages? The stages were shaped by immigration patterns. In general, Lutheran history in the Eastern part of the United States is traced to the 1700s Many Lutheran congregations in the middle part of this country were born in the 1800s. . . . Lutheran migration westward gave birth to many West Coast congregations in the 20th century.” A video was shown telling the history of the Norwegian settlement at Muskego in Wisconsin, where the first baptism in that congregation was on Reformation Day 1843. “Muskego Church was the first structure erected by Norwegians in North America solely for worship. Built in 1844, it served that congregation until 1869. Old Muskego Church was moved in 1904 to the Lutheran seminary campus at St. Paul, Minn., and still stands on the campus of Luther Seminary, where it is a reminder of the faith and dedication of some of our Lutheran forebears in the Upper Midwest,” he said.

Bishop Anderson asked whether the reflections would be made available for congregations. Secretary Almen responded that they can be ordered from the Department for Communication.

Bishop Anderson suggested beginning with consideration of the proposed action on “Policy and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns,” and then proposed returning to the ecumenical situation—calling on some guests and then leaving it to the voting members to work out a solution or a conclusion. He added that there also could be a few items from the Memorials Committee.

The Rev. Synde Manion [Southern California (West) Synod] asked that voting members be provided with a copy of the ELCA “Social Statement on Abortion” before considering Board of Pension matters related to that issue. She then moved:

MOVED;

SECONDED: To provide voting members with a copy of the ELCA “Social Statement on Abortion” before considering Board of Pension matters related to that issue.

Pastor Manion said that she had read a copy, and observed that it was incredibly well-written, and that “there are numerous references to the document in the proposals that we have that are, in my opinion, incomplete and do not really represent the full picture of what the document presents. One of the things that the recommendation of the Memorials Committee on that issue suggests is that we should move to educate the members of our church about what the social statement is. I think that education should start here and give us an opportunity to read the Social Statement before we are asked to debate the issues about this statement.”

MOVED;

SECONDED;

Yes—706; No—179

CARRIED: To provide voting members with a copy of the ELCA “Social Statement on Abortion” before considering Board of Pension matters related to that issue

Bishop Jon S. Enslin [South-Central Synod of Wisconsin] asked whether the previous action meant that items related to abortion could not be taken up until the assembly had received a copy of the church’s statement. Bishop Anderson said that such was not the way he interpreted the action.

Policy and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns

Reference: *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section IV, page 119-128

BACKGROUND

In 1994, the board of the Division for Church in Society proposed that a Social Statements Review Committee be appointed to examine the bases, procedures, and authority of social statements, and to propose needed changes in church policy and practice.

The Church Council affirmed this plan at its November 1994 meeting. A committee consisting of representatives from the Church Council, the Conference of Bishops, and the Office of the Bishop, together with theologians and ethicists

from ELCA seminaries, congregational leaders, and members of the board of the Division for Church in Society subsequently was appointed.

In 1996, the committee issued its final report, “Witness in the World,” which was adopted by the board of the Division for Church in Society on September 26-28, 1996, and subsequently affirmed by the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America at its meeting on November 9-11, 1996.

The board and Church Council also directed staff to develop revisions of the current policies and procedures document adopted by the 1989 Churchwide Assembly. Those revisions were to reflect the content and spirit of the committee’s final report.

The revised policies and procedures document, as presented here, was approved by the board of the Division for Church in Society at its February 27-March 1, 1997, meeting. Subsequently, the Church Council voted in April 1997:

To adopt the amended document entitled, “Policies and Procedures for Addressing Social Concerns in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America” (CC97.4.47).

RECOMMENDATION OF THE CHURCH COUNCIL

To affirm the adoption by the Church Council of the document, “Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns,” as a revision of the former document, “Social Statements of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) Principles and Procedures,” which was adopted by the first Churchwide Assembly on August 28, 1989; and

To authorize the Church Council to make appropriate adjustments in these policies and procedures as further experience would indicate.

Bishop Anderson stated that the material before the assembly “gives you a description of a way of dealing with social concerns that is intended to build on our church’s strengths and address the needs of our members, our congregations, agencies, and institutions. It also provides us with a strong foundation for addressing the needs of the broader society.” Following is the recommendation of the Church Council:

MOVED;

SECONDED: To affirm the adoption by the Church Council of the document, “Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns,” as a revision of the former document, “Social Statements of the Evangelical Lutheran

Church in America—Principles and Procedures,” which was adopted by the first Churchwide Assembly on August 28, 1989; and

To authorize the Church Council to make appropriate adjustments in these policies and procedures as further experience would indicate.

Bishop Anderson introduced the Rev. Charles S. Miller, executive director of the Division for Church in Society, Ms. Ingrid Christiansen, chair of the division’s board, and the Rev. Karen L. Bloomquist, director for studies in the Division for Church in Society, who were present for the discussion. Bishop Anderson invited Pastor Miller to give a brief overview of the material.

Pastor Miller noted that in addition to the text of the document printed in the *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section IV, pages 120-128, a further exhibit [a page containing a circle graph] had been distributed to voting members earlier this day, which would be helpful in following his introductory comments. Pastor Miller reviewed the history and background that led to the preparation of the document before the voting members for action. He commented that the document regarding social statements adopted by this church in 1989 has served the church well. In 1994, the division began to review this church’s experience with social statements. After two years of careful study, the report, “Witness In The World,” was delivered to and adopted by the Church Council. He said, “Subsequently, the division proceeded to draft the policies and procedures document which now you have before you in your assembly materials. This document is intended to replace the document adopted in 1989.”

Pastor Miller commented, “Briefly stated, the document has these key features. There are four spheres of activity, each critically important to our address of social concerns. These four spheres set forth a cluster of means for attending to the social mission of this church. The four spheres seek to serve the diverse forms of faith and church that dwell within the ELCA, and also to contend with the rapidly changing, often unpredictable, circumstances of the society and world in which we live. Through these four spheres of activity operating in a balanced sort of way, we are postured to engage social matters with flexibility and in evolving ways.” He described the four spheres as follows:

- I. Equipping and nurturing members for their calling in the world;
- II. Encouraging learning and moral discourse around specific social issues of our time;
- III. Development and enactment of social policy—social statements and social policy resolutions; and
- IV. Interpreting and applying social policy to issues of the day.

Pastor Miller concluded, “In their totality, these policies and procedures provide, we believe, the framework for faithful social responsibility and effective social witness. Through balanced attention to the four spheres, this church stands to make a significant contribution to our society and world in grateful response to God’s saving grace in Jesus Christ.”

Mr. Richard S. Ylvisaker [Northeastern Iowa Synod] spoke in strong support of the resolution, but said, “I do have two qualifications that I would like to articulate briefly. The strong feature is the encouragement it gives to the development of this church as a community of moral deliberation. . . . One qualification is [in lines 296-297, page 123] it says ‘deliberation *usually* precedes activity in sphere three’ Why not *always*? It seems to me that any social policy statement that truly reflects the consensus in the church should always be the product of moral deliberation. In Sphere Three, which is clearly the most extensive part of the document, there is a real tension between the characterization of social statements on the one hand as tools of open-ended moral deliberation and on the other hand, as statements which articulate and establish policy.”

The Rev. Stephen Goodwin [Indiana-Kentucky Synod] noted that many statements issued by this church in the past years have been controversial, and some have lead to “ambiguous and resentful feelings when members of congregations seem to feel that they have been robbed of that moral deliberation by the church’s official teaching. And to disagree with the church’s official teaching is somehow compromised in a faithful Lutheran response.” He suggested focusing on teaching documents that would encourage moral deliberation rather than absolute statements that might sometimes be perceived as dogmatic.

Mr. Gene Ludtke [Grand Canyon Synod], a member of the board of the Division for Church in Society, said that at his Synod Assembly a resolution was passed supporting moral deliberation by members within congregations and “asked each congregation to furnish the name of at least one person to contact throughout the year so we can bring these issues directly to the congregations in a timely manner.”

The Rev. Martin M. Roth [Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod] referred to the sentence [lines 454-457, page 124], which reads, “They appeal to theology, ethics, secular knowledge, history, and contemporary experience to offer coherent and plausible reasons for their judgments” observing that the language was weak. He said, “In our [governing] documents we talk about Scripture being the norm for faith and practice.” Pastor Bloomquist said, “The particular sentence to which you refer is actually drawn directly from the 1989 document as is much of the descriptive and normative material in terms of social statements. In speaking to the heart of the point you are making, certainly Scripture as source and norm for the positions that we as a church adopt is established elsewhere in the document. This particular sentence is intended to point to some of the array of other disciplines that enter into that process.” Bishop Anderson referred to lines 401-407, page 124,

which state, “They are subject again and again to the testing of whether they are faithful to Scriptures as ‘the authoritative source and norm of [this church’s] proclamation, faith, and life’ (ELCA constitutional provision 2.03.) and to its creeds and confessions (ELCA constitutional provisions 2.04., 2.05., and 2.06.)” as a possible response to the concern expressed.

Pastor Roth then observed the need for documentation and asked, “Who provides the continuity in terms of what we have already established earlier in the document, theologically, confessionally, and the rest so that each social statement does not appear unrelated in the mode of preparation?” Pastor Miller responded that the writers provide such continuity as well as the board of the division. Finally, the Church Council provides this continuity, since it must “approve the document or authorize it for coming before the Churchwide Assembly also . . . and most surely asks the biblical and theological questions of consistency about which you are asking.”

The Rev. John H. P. Reumann [Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod] asked, “Is there provided in the development of social statements provision for consulting the work in process or existing social statements on the same topic by other Christian churches?” Pastor Bloomquist responded, “Though it is true that is not specified in this particular procedural document, the actual practice has been to do quite a bit of consulting through various gatherings of theologians and ethicists ecumenically with other church bodies in this country. Especially in the development of the peace statement that occurred to a considerable degree in relationship to the Lutheran World Federation and many of its member churches. . . , writers try to be in contact with other church bodies and to find ways in which some of the perspectives can inform what we are working on.”

Pastor Reumann said that he was looking for some orderly way to include this matter in the proposed document. He asked whether addition of the words, “There may be included consideration of discussions and statements on the theme in other Christian traditions,” after the words on page 125, section B.1.b., line 578, “by congregations and members of this church,” would be considered a friendly amendment.

Bishop Anderson said he thought that it would be acceptable as a friendly amendment to the document. He inquired whether there were any objections.

The Rev. Donna M. Wright [Nebraska Synod] suggested that a better place for the insertion would be on page 127, line 784.

Pastor Reumann said that he was concerned that such consultation enter into the development of a statement on a societal issue. He said, “If you put it in this other proposed point under the heading of Abiding Attitudes and Aims within the ELCA and as a resource for our members and church’s agencies, such material may be appropriate there but my concern was in the development of it. I am willing to let the drafters of the document before us who know it far better and how it might fit into the process give us a recommendation.”

Pastor Wright moved:

MOVED;

SECONDED: To insert the following sentence, proffered by the Rev. John H. P. Reumann, at the end of line 784: “There may be included consideration of discussions and statements on the theme in other Christian traditions.”

Pastor Wright, in speaking to the amendment, observed the lead-in sentence, “Throughout the four spheres of activity outlined above, we strive to be guided by some abiding attitudes and aims:” [lines 771-773]. She said, “This indicates that throughout the development of social statements, guides for moral discourse, etc. that in this case, the use of other church bodies’ resources would be used . . . throughout the process of development.” Pastor Miller said that they “found both concerns expressed to be friendly and compatible with the philosophy of the document and therefore the assembly might wish to adopt both amendments which would mean that it would be found concretely in the section related to social statements and in the overall philosophy of abiding attitudes and aims of our practice.”

Bishop Jon S. Enslin [South-Central Synod of Wisconsin] said that it was his understanding that, if amendments are agreeable to the maker, the assembly need not vote on the matter. Bishop Anderson indicated that some had proposed that Pastor Reumann’s emendation be placed elsewhere; it was, therefore, no longer a friendly amendment, but an issue upon which the decision of the assembly was necessary.

The Rev. Richard W. Vevia Jr. [Pacifica Synod] questioned if the substance of the proposed emendation was not already in the document in lines 473-476 and “then maybe it ends up being in three places.” Bishop Anderson read that sentence: “They are shaped by careful and critical listening to this church and to society, as well as to other church bodies and ecumenical organizations, both in this country and around the world.” “However,” he ruled, “the fact remains that two people did not seem to feel that was adequate.”

The Rev. Keith A. Hunsinger [Northwestern Ohio Synod] proposed that the emendation be cited at all three places. Bishop Anderson inquired, “Will the assembly consent to allow the staff to insert references at the points mentioned without formal action from [the voting members of the assembly]?” Applause confirmed acceptance.

Mr. Thomas H. Seaman [Florida-Bahamas Synod], referring to page 125, B. Social Statement Development, asked, “I wonder if there was discussion in the development of this [document] as to whether documents that are in the development stage should be released to the media prior to their approval process

or to the final approval of the documents?” Pastor Miller responded that it has been the common understanding that documents under development should not be released until they first have been reviewed by the board of the division and subsequently by the Church Council. He said that even though it was not stated specifically in the proposed document, previous experience has made that unstated policy a routine part of this church’s operational practice.

The Rev. Steven D. Olson [East-Central Synod of Wisconsin] referring to page 125, item B.1.c., line 588, asked whether the word, “should,” in reference to a statement being available for 18 months before a social statement is considered by a Churchwide Assembly, meant “that it will be or is that just a general ballpark?” He stated that he would be in favor of having at least 18 months to consider possible social statements. Pastor Miller commented, “I refer you to line 574—all of the indented material [lines 575-590] is material that [according to line 574] is material that the board of the division ‘shall assure.’ So that is understood to be a mandate not an option for the division.”

Bishop Anderson noted that the motion before the assembly was to adopt the recommendation of the Church Council and that the text of the statement already had been approved by the Church Council. He referred to the second paragraph of the Church Council recommendation which would “authorize the Church Council to make adjustments in these policies and procedures as further experience would indicate.” Bishop Anderson said, “It would seem to me that would then let the Church Council take your suggestions and work with them. I doubt that we really have the document itself before us. My ruling would be that we would ask for your suggestions and the location for them [in the document] but not try further amendment of the document” [during the plenary session].

The Rev. John D. Larson [New Jersey Synod] expressed concern about the section regarding the selection of topics on page 125, stating, “I like what I see in number 3 [lines 562-565] but I’m afraid it is diluted in number 4 [lines 566-570]. Number 3 says in line 562, ‘The Church Council and Churchwide Assembly shall approve social statement topics. . .’, i.e., both are necessary to approve them. But in number 4, it says, ‘The Church Council or the Churchwide Assembly’—not ‘and’ but ‘or’—‘may direct the Division for Church in Society to develop a social statement on a particular topic’ with that topic being selected by only one of the two groups rather than both.” He asked for clarification of the issue. Pastor Bloomquist said, “It is important to recognize that number 3 is the normative understanding set forth here. At the same time, it was thought by the committee that it was important to at least allow for the possibility that there may be a particularly urgent major issue that it felt it is necessary to address in the life of this church; and particularly on some issues on which this church has done previous studies in the past. That’s why number 4 was inserted there. The weight should definitely be given to number 3 as the normative understanding.”

Mr. Leslie C. Jackson [Sierra Pacifica Synod] inquired about the appendix on “Messages on Social Issues,” page 128, where lines 807 and 816 appear to stand in contradiction. He quoted line 807, “[respond on selected occasions with timely and perceptive counsel] ‘on new situations and pressing concerns.’ However, it also says later on in line 816 that ‘they are not new policy positions of the ELCA but build upon previously adopted social statements and social policy resolutions.’ Would there be a possibility that a message comes out prior to a social statement being issued? Is it [a message] like an emergency statement?” Pastor Bloomquist said, “What this procedural document tries to make very clear is that social statements are the central vehicle by which this church develops social policy. . . . Messages could fall either under a Sphere II or a Sphere IV kind of document depending on the particular issue and what is needed, but they are not seen as establishing new social policy.”

The Rev. Thomas J. Wagner [South-Central Synod of Wisconsin] called the question.

MOVED;

Two-Thirds Vote Required

SECONDED;

Yes—966; No—39

CARRIED: To move the previous question.

Bishop Anderson indicated that the vote on the recommendation of the Church Council would require a two-thirds majority vote because it affirms revision of a prior assembly-approved document that required a two-thirds vote.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

Yes—981; No—29

CA97.5.21 To affirm the adoption by the Church Council of the document, “Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns,” as a revision of the former document, “Social Statements of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America—Principles and Procedures,” which was adopted by the first Churchwide Assembly on August 28, 1989; and

To authorize the Church Council to make appropriate adjustments in these policies and procedures as further experience would indicate.

Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns

Faithful participation in society is integral and vital to the mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. We as individual members and as a corporate body live out our Christian faith in encounter with the concerns that shape life in God's creation. Consequently, the first ELCA Churchwide Assembly (1989) approved the document "Social Statements in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America: Principles and Procedures" "in order to clarify, order, and strengthen their role in the life and mission" of this church. That document guided the adoption of the first six social statements of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.¹

In 1994 the board of the Division for Church in Society commissioned a special review committee to examine this church's experience with addressing social concerns, especially through social statements.² In 1996 the Social Statements Review Committee issued its report "Witness in the World."³ What follows is a new procedural document, which replaces the original one and incorporates the recommendations of the Social Statements Review Committee report.

"Witness in the World" recommended that "future social statement practice be part of a new coordinated initiative of churchwide activities designed to improve and re-focus this church's engagement with social matters." It proposes "four distinct yet interrelated spheres of activity which seek to form in this church new partnerships, practices, and capacities for discerning and doing God's will in our world." These four spheres are: (1) Equipping and Nurturing Members; (2)

¹ The first social statements of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America are: *Church in Society: A Lutheran Perspective* (1991), *Abortion* (1991), *The Death Penalty* (1991), *Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope, and Justice* (1993), *Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity, and Culture* (1993), and *For Peace in God's World* (1995).

² Minutes of the board of the Division for Church in Society, September 29-October 1, 1994.

³ The report was adopted by the board of the Division for Church in Society (minutes of board meeting, September 26-28, 1996) and affirmed by the ELCA Church Council (minutes of council meeting, November 9-11, 1996).

Encouraging Learning and Moral Discourse; (3) Development and Enactment of Social Policy; and (4) Interpreting and Applying Social Policy. While each sphere of activity contains distinct initiatives, each sphere supports and relates to the others. The following sets forth this church's bases for addressing social concerns, describes the four spheres of activity, and outlines the procedures for each sphere.

Called to Witness in Society

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America addresses social concerns in witness to God's just and loving intention for all of creation. We participate in society in grateful response to God's saving grace in Jesus Christ. Through faith in the Gospel, we are freed to love our neighbor in this world, as we hope and pray for "a new heaven and a new earth" (Revelation 21:1). While this world is corrupted by sin, it also is created by the Triune God who promises it fullness and continues to sustain it. In this world the Church is called to live its faith, love, and hope by caring for and transforming the structures of society, working for justice, and preserving the earth. For "what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" (Micah 6:8).

The ELCA's constitution makes clear the commitment of this church to listen to, deliberate with, and address its members and the broader society on social concerns.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America confesses the Gospel to be "the power of God to create and sustain the Church for God's mission in the world" (ELCA constitutional provision 2.07.).

"To participate in God's Mission, this church shall: . . .

1. "Serve in response to God's love to meet human needs, caring for the sick and the aged, advocating dignity and justice for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, and standing with the poor and powerless and committing itself to their needs. . ." (ELCA constitutional provision 4.02.c.); and
2. "Nurture its members in the Word of God so as to grow in faith and hope and love, to see daily life as the primary setting for the exercise of their Christian calling, and to use the gifts of the Spirit for their life together and for their calling in the world" (ELCA constitutional provision 4.02.e.).

"To fulfill these purposes, this church shall: . . .

1. "Encourage and equip all members to worship, learn, serve, and witness; to fulfill their calling to serve God in the world; and to be stewards of the earth, their lives, and the Gospel. . ." (ELCA constitutional provision 4.03.b.);
2. "Lift its voice in concord and work in concert with forces for good, to serve humanity, cooperating with church and other groups participating in activities

that promote justice, relieve misery, and reconcile the estranged. . .” (ELCA constitutional provision 4.03.g.);

3. “Study social issues and trends, work to discover the causes of oppression and injustice, and develop programs of ministry and advocacy to further human dignity, freedom, justice, and peace in the world. . .” (ELCA constitutional provision 4.03.l.); and
4. “Work with civil authorities in areas of mutual endeavor, maintaining institutional separation of church and state in a relation of functional interaction” (ELCA constitutional provision 4.03.n.).

Social statements and other resources on social concerns build on the rich legacy of the church bodies that united to form the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. As a confessional church with an historical sense, this church continues to look to the social statements of The American Lutheran Church and the Lutheran Church in America for guidance, while it develops its own social statements and further deliberates on social concerns.⁴ These historical documents, too, summon this church to a coherent, responsible, and prophetic public witness.

In its first social statement, *The Church in Society: A Lutheran Perspective*, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America affirmed anew its calling to witness in society and made the following basic commitments:

- ! “to sustain and support its members in the baptismal vocation to serve God and neighbor in public life” (6);
- ! “to serve God and neighbor in its life and work as an institution;” and
- ! “to foster moral deliberation on social questions” (7).

Constitutional Directives

The activity of the four spheres described in this document shall be consistent with the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.

The constitution assigns primary responsibility for this church’s preparation and coordination of resources on social concerns to the churchwide organization, particularly to its Division for Church in Society. The task of the division is to be carried out in a spirit of interdependence, partnership, and cooperation with congregations and synods as well as with other churchwide units.

⁴ The constituting convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America resolved to “receive the social statements of the existing churches as historical documents.” The board of the Commission for Church in Society voted “that the term ‘historical documents’ in the resolution of the constituting convention to the Commission for Church in Society regarding AELC, ALC, and LCA social statements be interpreted to mean that common elements of the former statements be utilized as the interim contextual basis and guiding principles for present advocacy work until such time as the ELCA develops and adopts new social statements” (minutes of board meeting, September 17-19, 1987). The Division for Church in Society distributes these social statements and encourages their continued use in this church until an ELCA social statement replaces them. The Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches did not develop formal social statements in its short history.

“The congregations, synods, and churchwide organization of this church are interdependent partners sharing responsibly in God’s mission. In an interdependent relationship primary responsibility for particular functions will vary between the partners” (ELCA constitutional provision 5.01.c.).

“This church shall seek to function as people of God through congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization, all of which shall be interdependent. Each part. . .lives in a partnership relationship with others” (ELCA constitutional provision 8.11.).

In fulfillment of the purposes of this church, the churchwide organization shall:

- “b. Provide resources to equip members to worship, learn, serve, and witness in their ministry in daily life. . . .
- “d. Witness to the Word of God in Christ by united efforts in proclaiming the Gospel, responding to human need, caring for the sick and suffering, working for justice and peace, and providing guidance to members on social matters. . . .
- “i. Develop and administer policies for this church’s relationship to social ministry organizations and cooperate with public and private agencies that enhance human dignity and justice. . . .
- “j. Determine and implement policy for this church’s relationship to governments” (ELCA constitutional provision 11.21.).

The Division for Church in Society “shall assist this church to discern, understand, and respond to the needs of human beings, communities, society, and the whole creation through direct human services and through addressing systems, structures, and policies of society, seeking to promote justice, peace, and the care of the earth. To fulfill these responsibilities, this division shall:

- “a. develop and coordinate this church’s theological and ethical study and analysis of social issues as part of its social witness.
- “b. develop this church’s social statements for action by the Church Council and Churchwide Assembly; and prepare, in consultation with the Office of the Bishop and appropriate churchwide units, messages and resolutions on social issues for action by the Church Council.
- “c. work in corporation with the Division for Congregational Ministries and the Division for Ministry to relate this church’s social witness to the life of congregations and to the ministry of members in daily life; and assist, when appropriate, the Division for Congregational Ministries and the Publishing House of the ELCA in the development of educational resources and strategies. . . .
- “i. direct and implement this church’s public-policy advocacy to national and international organizations with other churchwide units, and coordinate its public policy advocacy to state governmental bodies. . . .

“j. give expression in this church’s concern for corporate social responsibility, both in its internal affairs and its interaction in the broader society” (ELCA continuing resolution 16.11.E97.).

The synod shall:

“Plan for the mission of this church in the synod, initiating and developing policy, and implementing programs, consistent with churchwide policy, including: . . .

! “assistance for resources for congregational life;

! “interpretation of social statements in a manner consistent with the interpretation given by the churchwide unit which assisted in the development of the statement, and initiation of social study programs, and suggestion of social study issues . . .”;

and

“Respond to human need, work for justice and peace, care for the sick and the suffering, and participate responsibly in society” (ELCA constitutional provision 10.21.e., items 6 and 7, and 10.21.o.).

Sphere One:

Equipping and Nurturing Members

Description

The first sphere of activity is that of equipping and nurturing members of this church for their calling in the world. All expressions and ministries of this church participate in this ongoing task of formation for vocation. Attention to the personal and communal sources of social witness and policy development is meant to build up this church’s capacity to engage in personal and corporate deliberation and action. This sphere of activity calls for the development of resources) in the broad sense of people, networks, and materials) to assist this church to be a community of moral deliberation and a church faithfully active in society.

This sphere of activity enables us to be faithful followers of Jesus Christ in our world today. It relies and expands upon the catechetical work of this church. It attends to foundational and formative dimensions of the Christian moral life, such as the meaning of discipleship, methods of moral deliberation and discernment, the authority of Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions, and the place of experience and reason in ethical decision making. Developing our capacities in these areas requires deepening our knowledge of the Bible and the Lutheran Confessions. It also requires certain attitudes, values, behaviors, and skills that enable us to use Scripture and tradition in social witness and policy development. Clearly, this equipping and nurturing is a long-term task that calls for the regular development of material for widespread use throughout this church. We seek creative new resources) particularly teachers and methods of learning) that enjoy a permanent

place in the lives of members and congregations and help create a culture of formation for vocation.

Procedures

1. The Church Council upon nomination by the Office of the Bishop shall appoint a Coordinating Team to oversee this sphere of activity. This team shall include persons representing churchwide units, the Conference of Bishops, and the seminaries and colleges and universities of this church.
2. The Office of the Bishop shall assign a lead churchwide unit, which in turn appoints a team leader from its staff.
3. The Coordinating Team shall assure that resources are regularly under development for widespread use throughout the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. It shall plan and publicize an initial decade-long program of activities. This plan shall give particular attention to leadership development, both clergy and lay. The team also shall catalogue and promote relevant extant resources.

Sphere Two:

Encouraging Learning and Moral Discourse

Description

The second sphere of activity is that of encouraging learning and moral discourse among members of this church around social concerns of our times. This church’s moral deliberation does not always intend or result in churchwide assembly action. Therefore, this sphere of activity promotes open-ended deliberation on specific contemporary social concerns without the pressure of legislative decision or community consensus. Further, such routine practices of moral reflection and deliberation in congregations, homes, social ministry organizations, and other settings serve those occasions where this church discerns a need to draw corporate normative conclusions. Insofar as this activity provides common content and experience for this church’s intention to be a community of moral deliberation, it usually precedes activity in sphere three and thereby also offers a basis for considered selection of those concerns that should be subject to legislative decision.

Churchwide activity in this sphere primarily involves the development of resources that aim to encompass the church’s analysis of particular social concerns within the framework of basic Christian theology and morality. This sphere of activity includes the production of messages, study documents, and teaching materials, as well as the development of models and the preparation of resource persons for congregational deliberation. Approaches to study vary from issue to issue and group to group, but all approaches aim to encourage an inclusive, in-depth

process of learning and deliberation about a consequential social concern. This sphere lends itself particularly well to periodic conversation experiences such as listening posts, continuing education events, and conferences on specific social concerns. Resources in this sphere of activity should be regularly under development for widespread use throughout the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Messages are a particular means to encourage learning and moral discourse. They also draw out the implications of this church's social policy (sphere four). Messages rely upon this church's social statements and social policy resolutions and require the approval of the ELCA Church Council (see the Appendix).

Procedures

1. The Division for Church in Society shall be responsible for churchwide activities in this sphere of activity. It shall carry out its responsibility in accordance with the principle of interdependence.
2. The division, in order to assist members of this church in their study of social concerns, shall formulate a biennial program for the study of selected topics and for the development of relevant resources (people, networks, materials) and programs. In developing study material, it shall assemble for most projects a team of persons, often including persons from congregations, seminaries, colleges, and social ministry organizations of this church. In selecting topics and developing resources, the division shall draw upon the wealth of expertise and interest in social concerns within this church and shall base its decisions upon ongoing and wide-ranging consultation with relevant members and groups throughout the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, including the Conference of Bishops.
3. The board of the Division for Church in Society shall adopt the biennial program of study and shall review study material for publication and distribution.
4. The division shall report its biennial program of study to the Church Council and the Churchwide Assembly and shall promote this program throughout this church.

Sphere Three:

Development and Enactment of Social Policy

Description

The third sphere of activity is that of lifting this church's voice in witness to social concerns through the development and enactment of social policy. Here this church's moral deliberation aims at corporate conclusions. This sphere of activity engages our theology with broad social concerns as well as specific issues through

documents that set forth this church's normative understandings and policy on individual and corporate Christian responsibility in the world. Such documents are social statements and social policy resolutions, that is, actions of the Churchwide Assembly or Church Council on matters of social concern.

Social statements are major documents addressing significant social issues. Typically, they provide an analysis and interpretation of an issue, set forth basic theological and ethical perspectives related to it, and offer guidance for the corporate Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and its individual members. Social statements are documents of the highest quality. They vary in scope, length, frequency, and forms of moral discourse, according to the needs of their subject matter. In all cases, social statements are the product of extensive and inclusive deliberation within this church, a process that is an integral part of their educational purpose. Because of the considerable resources and care that this church invests in them, and because of the participatory process used in their development, social statements are the most authoritative form of social policy and are adopted only by the Churchwide Assembly.

Guiding Perspectives for Social Statements

The perspectives outlined below are intended to help guide this church's understanding, development, consideration, and use of social statements.

1. ***Social statements are theological documents.*** These documents arise from and address the changing circumstances of our world in light of God's living word of Law and Gospel. With the aid of contemporary experience and knowledge, they bring this church's understanding of its faith to bear on social issues. Because they view issues from the perspective of the Church's faith, social statements are clearly rooted in the biblical and confessional witness of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. They are subject again and again to the testing of whether they are faithful to Scriptures as "the authoritative source and norm of [this church's] proclamation, faith, and life" (ELCA constitutional provision 2.03.) and to its creeds and confessions (ELCA constitutional provisions 2.04., 2.05., and 2.06.). They themselves are not new creeds or confessions.

2. ***Social statements are teaching documents.*** In their preparation, content, and use, these documents bring together the realities of our world, the experience of Christians living their vocation, and the convictions of faith. Social statements give voice to the prophetic mandate of this church, its calling to care for God's world, and its commitment to reason together on social concerns. In so doing, they inform, guide, and challenge this church and its members. They are intended "for the equipment of the saints, for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ" (Ephesians 4:12).

Church members are called upon to give social statements serious consideration as they form their own judgments. In their use as teaching documents, their authority is persuasive, not coercive. Their teaching function builds upon and seeks to nurture the freedom of Christians to decide and act responsibly. Social statements help shape the conscience of Christians by appealing to their faith, moral convictions, and reason. The respect they evoke comes from the truth and wisdom they embody, which has stood the testing of various forums within this church and to which testing they always continue to be subject. Their effective teaching significance is determined by the intrinsic quality of their content and by their use in the Church.

3. ***Social statements involve this church in the ongoing task of theological ethics.*** In these documents, this church addresses the question: “What ought we as Christians and the Church think and do about this social issue?” Social statements seek to discern God’s will for today, offering insight and direction on how people should view an issue and act justly in relation to it. Their focus is most commonly on those ethical guidelines that mediate between very general moral affirmations and the detailed requirements of a particular situation.

Social statements hope to reflect the qualities of a community of forgiven sinners called to do God’s will. They probe for shared convictions and the boundaries of faithful action; within this framework, they acknowledge diversity. These documents recognize the complexity of society and the power of sin as well as the responsibility of this church to speak and to act with hope and boldness. They appeal to theology, ethics, secular knowledge, history, and contemporary experience to offer coherent and plausible reasons for their judgments. As the work of a community that stands under God’s judgment and grace, social statements exhibit openness to the Holy Spirit’s further guidance.

Social statements are meant to foster the art of ethical reflection and discussion in congregations and other expressions of this church. They depend on a vision of the Church as a community of moral deliberation in which serious communication on matters of society and faith is vital to its being. United by baptism, members are free to discuss and disagree, knowing that they are ultimately bound together in the body of Christ by the Gospel and not by their moral judgments.

4. ***Social statements result from an extensive, inclusive, and accepted process of deliberation throughout this church.*** They are shaped by careful and critical listening to this church and to society, as well as to other church bodies and ecumenical organizations, both in this country and around the world. The Department for Studies of the Division for Church in Society works with representative and diverse groups of this church to develop social statements through careful and thorough research and study. In order to explore adequately the issue, these groups include persons with needed specialized knowledge and persons

directly affected by the issue. Broad participation by congregations and synods, as well as by other churchwide units, are to be encouraged and facilitated in the study process. The Conference of Bishops provides one forum for discussing major social statements (ELCA continuing resolution 15.41.A91.h.). Their development is guided by the constitutional mandate to “provide structures and decision-making processes for this church that foster mutuality and interdependence and that involve people in making decisions that affect them” (ELCA constitutional provision 4.03.o.).

5. ***Social statements guide the institutional life of this church.*** They set forth the principles and directions that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America considers necessary to govern the internal and external practices of its social responsibility in accordance with its understanding of God’s will. They express mutual expectations and provide for mutual accountability in this church.

Social statements establish policy for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America’s work in the areas of advocacy and corporate social responsibility (ELCA constitutional provisions 11.21.i., j., and m.; and continuing resolution 16.11.E97.i., and j.), enabling, limiting, and directing these activities.

Social statements include in their implementing resolutions instructions and recommendations on how their governing principles and directives are to be carried out by different parts of this church.

It is expected that ELCA-affiliated agencies and institutions will develop policies and practices consistent with the principles and directives of social statements.

Those who represent this church are expected to present the positions of the social statements as those of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. This understanding recognizes their freedom to disagree with these positions.

6. ***Social statements, intended to be used widely in the life and mission of this church, reflect awareness of the various audiences and ministries which they are to serve.*** To help stimulate consideration of social issues in congregations, their language is clear and appropriate for congregational life. They are a helpful resource for pastors, bishops, theologians, and other teachers and leaders in our church. Social statements offer individual members guidance and support for their participation in society. They address the broader society in ways fitting for public discussion of social issues. Social statements offer faithful and viable policy directives that have the support of the legislative authority of this church.

Procedures for Social Statements

The board of the Division for Church in Society shall oversee the development and implementation of social statements in accordance with the principle of interdependence.

A. Selection of Topics

1. Synods may propose topics for social statements “through a) Synod Assembly memorials to the Churchwide Assembly or b) resolutions for referral from the Synod Assembly through the Synod Council to the Church Council and c) Synod Council resolutions addressed to the Church Council or for referral to a unit of the churchwide organization through the Church Council’s Executive Committee” (ELCA constitutional provision 10.21.e.8).
2. The board of the Division for Church in Society shall recommend topics for social statement development to the Church Council and the Churchwide Assembly for approval. Its recommendations shall be based upon synod proposals and ongoing and wide-ranging consultation with relevant members and groups throughout the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, including the Conference of Bishops. Its recommendations shall normally be selected from topics already under study (*Sphere Two*).
3. The Church Council and Churchwide Assembly shall approve social statement topics. They may adopt, modify, or reject the recommendations of the board of the Division for Church in Society.
4. The Church Council or the Churchwide Assembly may direct the Division for Church in Society to develop a social statement on a particular topic. In exceptional circumstances, they may do so without benefit of “sphere two” study.

B. Social Statement Development

1. The board of the Division for Church in Society shall oversee the study process leading to a social statement. It shall assure that:
 - a. an appropriate group is named to study the topic.
 - b. ways are found to encourage broad participation by the congregations and members of this church.
 - c. social statements are preceded by a study document and/or first draft specifically prepared as a step in policy deliberation and development. Decisions about preliminary documents should be made on a case-by-case basis according to the scope of concerns that the proposed social statement will involve and the extent of the church’s history with the topic. A preliminary document, with a designed format for study and response, should be available at least eighteen months before the social statement is considered by a Churchwide Assembly.

2. Synods shall receive copies of preliminary studies and drafts for review and counsel. Synods shall cooperate in the preparation of social statements by encouraging study of and response to preliminary documents by congregations, individuals, synod committees, and synod forums or hearings.
3. The Conference of Bishops shall be one forum for deliberation on preliminary documents.

C. Social Statement Adoption

1. The board of the Division for Church in Society shall review, if need be, revise, and approve proposed social statements, and recommend through the Church Council (ELCA churchwide bylaw 14.21.03.) that they be adopted by the Churchwide Assembly; it shall recommend to the Church Council that they be on the agenda of the next Churchwide Assembly.
2. The Church Council shall review and act upon the recommendations of the board of the Division for Church in Society (ELCA churchwide bylaws 14.21.01., 14.21.02., 14.21.03.). The Church Council may offer a report expressing its observations and recommendations on social statements for the consideration of the Churchwide Assembly.
3. Synods shall receive the proposed social statement at least four months prior to the Churchwide Assembly at which it will be considered for review by voting members.
4. Only the Churchwide Assembly shall adopt ELCA social statements (ELCA constitutional provision 12.21.d.).
 - a. A two-thirds vote of the voting members of the Churchwide Assembly shall be required to adopt a social statement.
 - b. It shall be recorded on the printed statement that the social statement was adopted by a majority of at least two-thirds of the Churchwide Assembly.
 - c. Implementing resolutions shall be printed as part of the social statement.
 - d. An addendum shall be added to those statements that elicit significant division in the Churchwide Assembly summarizing differing points of view.

D. Social Statement Use

1. All expressions of this church are expected to encourage use of social statements. The Division for Church in Society shall provide counsel when questions of interpretation or application arise.
2. The Division for Church in Society shall cooperate with the Division for Congregational Ministries and the Division for Ministry (ELCA continuing

resolution 16.11.E97.c.) and other churchwide units and synods to develop accompanying resources and to encourage the use of social statements in this church.

3. Synods shall interpret social statements in a manner consistent with the interpretation of the Division for Church in Society (ELCA constitutional provision 10.21.e.8). This interpretation may include resolutions adopted by the synod assembly that apply social statements to issues that are particular to the territory of the synod.

E. Social Statement Reconsideration

Churchwide Assemblies may reconsider previously adopted social statements. Such reconsideration may involve either a revision or removal of the statement. This may be done in two ways:

1. A Churchwide Assembly, by a two-thirds vote, may call for the reconsideration of a social statement at the next assembly. Subsequent to such a vote, the social statement shall be referred to the Division for Church in Society for re-study. The proposed change and the reasons for it shall be made available to this church with an official notice of such proposed action to be sent to the synods by the secretary of this church at least one year prior to the Churchwide Assembly at which it will be considered. A two-thirds vote of the Churchwide Assembly shall be required to revise or remove the social statement.
2. The Church Council by a two-thirds vote of its voting members may ask the Churchwide Assembly to reconsider a social statement. Such Church Council action must be taken no later than at the Church Council meeting in the autumn prior to the Churchwide Assembly. The proposed change and the reasons for it shall then be made available to this church with an official notice of such proposed action to be sent to the synods by the secretary of this church at least four months prior to the Churchwide Assembly. A two-thirds vote of the Churchwide Assembly shall be required to reconsider the statement and also to revise or remove it. Both actions may occur at the same Churchwide Assembly.

Procedures for Social Policy Resolutions

1. Social policy resolutions refer to actions, other than social statements, of the Churchwide Assembly or Church Council on matters of social concern.
2. Normally, social policy resolutions shall rely upon or be consistent with the teachings and policy of social statements.
3. The board of the Division for Church in Society, the Church Council, synods, and voting members of the Churchwide Assembly may propose social policy resolutions.

4. Social policy resolutions shall be managed according to the established rules and procedures of the board of the Division for Church in Society, the Church Council, synods, and the Churchwide Assembly.
5. In those exceptional cases where proposed social policy resolutions revise established teaching and policy, the board of the Division for Church in Society, the Church Council, or the Churchwide Assembly shall assign responsibility to develop supporting foundational theological material and descriptive documents to accompany the proposed resolution.
6. All social policy resolutions must be approved by the Churchwide Assembly, or in the interim, by the Church Council. Where revisions to established teaching and policy are proposed, a two-thirds vote of the voting members of the assembly or council shall be required to adopt the social policy resolution.

Sphere Four:

Interpreting and Applying Social Policy

Description

The fourth sphere of activity is that of interpreting and applying the social policy of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to public and corporate policy. This sphere of activity lifts up ELCA social policy documents and assists this church to consider the ways that its policy illuminates, forms, critiques, and guides human behavior and the structures of church and society. Further, it assists this church in its institutional policies and practices, including decisions about the biennial advocacy plan of this church. This sphere of activity typically results in documents and narratives that are expository and descriptive in nature. Messages are one form of document in this sphere of activity serving both to interpret ELCA social policy and promote moral deliberation (*see Sphere Two*).

This fourth sphere of activity does not preclude or replace other ways in which church social policy is interpreted within this church. Social policy of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is interpreted daily by pastors, bishops, advocates in public and corporate sectors, and other church leaders (local, synodical, churchwide) as they live out their callings. In addition, some educational materials developed by the Division for Congregational Ministries are also designed to interpret social statements. In the activity described in this fourth sphere, however, the interpretation of this church's social policy is viewed as formal exposition and requires affirmation by the board of the Division for Church in Society and review by the Church Council.

Procedures

1. The Division for Church in Society shall manage this sphere of activity according to established procedures.

2. The frequency of developing interpretative material shall depend on such criteria as timeliness, expressed need by members of this church, and participation in ecumenical or interfaith coalitions addressing specific social topics for which this church has policy.
3. The board of the Division for Church in Society shall have responsibility to affirm activity in this sphere and the Church Council shall review it.
4. The Division for Church in Society shall routinely inform the Office of the Bishop and the Conference of Bishops of this interpretation activity in a timely way.

Abiding Attitudes and Aims

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America sets forth these policies and procedures as a means to enrich faithful social responsibility and effective social witness. Throughout the four spheres of activity outlined above, we strive to be guided by some abiding attitudes and aims:

- ! that our posture be self-critical, modest, and authentic;
- ! that our conversations be characterized by respect for participants and others;
- ! that our deliberation be based upon careful analysis;
- ! that we not simplify complex issues and not accept easy answers to difficult problems;
- ! that in our ministry we use the rich resources of our members and our church's agencies and institutions; and
- ! that, being transformed and renewed by the Gospel, we may "discern what is the will of God) what is good and acceptable and perfect" (Romans 12:2).

Through committed and balanced attention to the four spheres of activity may we in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America make a significant contribution to our society and world in witness to God's just and loving intention for all of creation and in grateful response to God's saving grace in Jesus Christ.

Appendix

Messages on Social Issues

This appendix is adapted from "Messages on Social Issues," which was approved by the board of the Commission for Church in Society of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, October 7, 1989, and adopted by the Church Council, November 19, 1989.

Description

Messages are normally brief communications that draw attention to a social issue and encourage action on it. They provide this church flexibility to respond on selected occasions with timely and perceptive counsel on new situations and pressing concerns.

Messages are forms of communications which the Church Council adopts, and are thus distinctive from social statements which are adopted only by the Church-wide Assembly. Messages are not the result of widespread deliberation in this church (as are social statements) but are intended primarily to encourage further discussion and action on specific current social issues among members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. They are not new policy positions of the ELCA but build upon previously adopted social statements and social policy resolutions.

Messages address the contemporary situation in light of the prophetic and compassionate traditions of Scripture. They point to human suffering, grave injustice, pending danger, social perplexity, or hopeful developments and urge that evil be resisted, justice done, and commitment renewed.

Messages express the convictions of the church leadership that communicates them and who believe that their message should be heard in this church and beyond. They signal certain priority concerns that arise from this church's mission in the world. Messages are based upon and are consistent with this church's social statements and social policy resolutions. Normally, no more than one message is considered in one meeting of the Church Council.

The Division for Church in Society and the Office of the Bishop shall consult with each other to ensure proper coordination in the preparation and distribution of non-policy churchwide messages on social concerns.

Procedures

1. The board of the Division for Church in Society shall oversee the development of messages on social issues.
 - a. The Division for Church in Society shall work closely with the Office of the Bishop, other churchwide units, and synods in the selection of issues and the preparation of messages.
 - b. The Division for Church in Society shall be guided by the following criteria in selecting issues for messages:
 - (1) the issue's consistency with this church's social statements and social policy resolutions;
 - (2) its pertinence to this church's ongoing mission;
 - (3) its significance in society; and
 - (4) its timeliness and urgency.

- c. The Division for Church in Society shall notify the Office of the Bishop about its plans to present a message to the Church Council when the division begins work on a message.
 - d. The board shall review, if need be, revise, and approve the proposed messages, and recommend that they be adopted by the Church Council.
 - e. The Division for Church in Society shall be responsible for the production and distribution of the adopted messages.
2. The Office of the Bishop shall coordinate the plans for messages of the Division for Church in Society with the Church Council.
 - a. The Office of the Bishop shall notify the Church Council of the division's plan to present a message to the council when the division begins work on the message.
 - b. The Office of the Bishop shall insure that the Church Council receives the text of the message after it is approved by the board of the Division for Church in Society.
 3. The Church Council shall act upon the recommendations from the board of the Division for Church in Society, and adopt, modify, or reject the message.
 4. Under extraordinary circumstances, the Church Council, after consultation with the Division for Church in Society, may suspend these procedures (which normally take at least two or three months) to respond to an especially urgent situation.

Bishop Anderson thanked the staff and board of the Division for Church in Society for its work and presentation to the assembly.

Proposals for Full Communion:

Response of the Reformed Churches

Bishop Anderson invited to the platform the representatives of the three Reformed churches with which this church voted to establish full communion earlier this day. He commented, "From my point of view, we have made history today. We have approved *A Formula of Agreement* and I believe that this agreement shows the world a new way to be one in Christ. I welcome the opportunity for this church to share in the gifts and traditions which our ecumenical partners in the Reformed tradition will bring to us. By approving [*A Formula of Agreement*], I believe the Churchwide Assembly has shown that the ELCA is strong enough and trusting enough to take these steps. Now we begin, of course, the hard work of using this agreement to strengthen mission and witness across our country and around the world. Over the next few months, I will appoint representatives to work with our partners in beginning the implementation of these provisions and I

will challenge our representatives to keep the mission of Christ always before us as we work in our new life together. I would also like to thank all of those who took part in this discussion. First, those who labored for many years in the dialogue—a series of rounds of dialogues—which led to this vote, especially our ecumenical staff during that period: [the Rev.] William G. Rusch, [the Rev.] Daniel F. Martensen, and [the Rev.] Darlis J. Swan; also those ecumenical partners in the various rounds of the dialogue with the Reformed churches who are now closer to us as sisters and brothers in Christ, those who worked hard for their approval over the last two years, and those who raised important concerns about this agreement here and in other media. I hope that all feel heard in this process, especially in the debate and discussion over these last days, and I hope that all will join with me in thanking God for this agreement and the process that led us to such an historic vote. Finally, I pledge to those who raised concerns in the process that their concerns are marked and will be honored to the extent that we can do so as we carry out this agreement. While I celebrate the vote and the agreement, I know we have a lot of work to do, but I pledge to you and to the partners that we will do our best as a church to be cooperative and active partners in the process."

Bishop Anderson then recognized the Rev. Aurelia Takacs Fule, ecumenical consultant, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.); the Rev. Douglas W. Fromm, ecumenical officer, Reformed Church in America; and the Rev. John H. Thomas, assistant to the president for ecumenical concerns, United Church of Christ.

Pastor Fule addressed the assembly, stating, "For years we have been working, hoping, longing for your affirmative vote. Today the Reformed churches are grateful to God and to this assembly for voting to heal part of the break of the church of the Reformation. Together we will pray that we may use wisely and fruitfully the new opportunities given to our churches and that standing together with mutual affirmation and admonition, we may be able to assist each other to become the Church God wants us to be in this place and at this time. Besides our gratitude, we also carry sorrow. We regret that not three but only two parts of the brokenness is healed and we pray that God may bless the continued journey."

Pastor Fromm said, "As has already been noted to you, two of us were last week in Hungary attending the Alliance of Reformed Churches General Meeting. At that time, Milan Opocensky, general secretary of the Alliance, made these comments about the ecumenical initiatives, 'Sometimes in the church there is a temptation to think that we can live and work alone. But we live in a global village, we are bonded together in Jesus Christ, and we are called to give a more visible expression to the unity that already exists in Christ. We can say with the apostles, we live because you stand firm in the Lord. We are carried by the faithful witness of our brothers and sisters in Christ. We can learn from each other, we can support each other, we can express our solidarity in situations of stress and difficulty, we can challenge each other, we can inspire each other in the area of social witness. In love and charity, we can enrich each other in spirituality.' We are equally challenged by the urgent issues and problems of today. Together our faith is tested. We all know that there are moments that are critical moments, that are life-defining

moments, when we come face to face with the integrity of our faith. These we might say are the testing (and sometimes they are even the testy) times in our lives. In relation to such moments, someone has given us simple advice which is also an affirmation of faith, an affirmation of trust. The advice is simply this: Jump, and the net will appear. I do not know if [the Rev.] Mark Graham [a voting member of this Churchwide Assembly from the Virginia Synod] would say that is similar to ‘sinning boldly’ [a quote from Pastor Graham’s earlier speaking]. This summer, as Lutheran and Reformed Churches, after over 400 years of different paths, after 32 years of discussion and deliberations, dialogues, we have jumped—a bold leap of faith—toward full communion. As a people of faith, we trust, we know, we believe that the net of God’s grace is there, will be there, and will appear for us, for our churches back home, for all the people of faith we represent who comprise the large company of our churches who can now gather and celebrate at Table together in full communion. With you, we will pray, we will wait, and we will work for the day when all God’s people in recognition of their baptism will gather at one Table, celebrating one ministry, one faith, and from that Table move together in one mission in the name and manner of our Lord, Jesus Christ. God’s blessing upon each and all of you.”

Pastor Thomas said, “I am so privileged and so proud to be on this stage with Aurelia Fule and Doug Fromm and, if you could use your imagination for a moment [since they were not on the stage], with Guy Edmiston, Darlis Swan, and Dan Martensen. They have enriched my life, strengthened my faith, and been sons and daughters of encouragement to me and to each of us. This has been a day of deep gratitude, tempered by the awareness of the tears of disappointment not only of good colleagues but of dear friends. So it is a day that is not really a happy day but it is a day of great joy, deep joy and, I believe, of great promise. A few days ago, I spoke of my gratitude for the many gifts I had received in these years and those gifts have been amplified and expanded and expressed in many ways throughout this time together. I go from this place profoundly grateful for all your gifts to me personally, for the gracious way in which you have asked me to once again be an interpreter for my church, and for the ways in which you have embraced me into this family. Many gifts. A few of you know that I am married to Linda Herman, who is the daughter of [the Rev.] Stewart W. Herman, one of the distinguished leaders of the Lutheran Church in America, with a career that spanned the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, the Lutheran Council [in the U.S.A.], the Lutheran World Federation, the World Council of Churches, and the American Church in Berlin. Stewart and [Etheylyn] Lyn are well on Shelter Island [Shelter Island Heights, N.Y.]. I know they have been thinking of you and of me in this week. I mention Stewart’s name partly to express my affection for Stewart and also to honor his ecumenical leadership that in many ways has led not only me but many of you; but also because Linda learned in her home a table grace and I suspect Stewart learned it in a Lutheran parsonage in Harrisburg, Pa. So from that Lutheran parsonage at Zion Lutheran Church in Harrisburg, let me close with this very simple prayer that expresses both our gratitude and our hope, ‘For these and all Thy

gifts of love, we give you thanks and praise. Look down, O Father, from above and bless us all our days. Amen.’”

The assembly recognized the ecumenical guests with a standing ovation and thunderous applause.

Bishop Anderson also recognized the ELCA members of the Lutheran-Reformed Coordinating Committee: Bishop Guy S. Edmiston, chair, the Rev. John A. Clausen, the Rev. Philip Hefner, Ms. Diane Lowe, the Rev. John Rollefson, and Mr. Roland Bernard Welmaker. They were thanked with applause.

Proposal for Full Communion:

The Episcopal Church (continued)

Reference: 1997 *Pre-Assembly Report*, Section IV, pages 49-64.; continued on *Minutes*, pages 37, 125, 381, 413, 432, 605, 621, 659.

Bishop Anderson offered some thoughts on the actions of this Churchwide Assembly earlier this day, saying, “Now a couple of words from me as to where we are and what we might do next, not parliamentarily but as a church. I am very pleased that we had such a strong affirmation of *A Formula of Agreement* with the Reformed Churches. Many members of this assembly hoped and intended that their positive vote for that *Formula* would be matched by a positive vote for the *Concordat of Agreement* and they were very insistent and encouraging to us to reach out in both directions simultaneously. That did not occur, but I would ask us to take what did happen today as a first step in the process of reaching out boldly in many directions as our 1991 ecumenism statement challenges us to do. That would mean that we thank God for where we are, but we look ahead and ask ourselves now, ‘What more can we do? What should we do in relationship to The Episcopal Church?’

“I think the first thing for me is to recognize that as I listened to your debate, I did not hear one word, as far as I can recall, one word of criticism or negativity about the principles, the polity, or the doctrine of The Episcopal Church. I feel that is a very strong affirmation of our sister church and a strong basis on which we need to ask ourselves, ‘What do we do next?’ But what I did hear were unresolved issues about the document, about the meaning of certain passages in the document, the *Concordat*, and unresolved issues among us as to our view of ministry. I think there in those places is where the issue lies.

“I believe that our work, our homework, is to address both our own internal understanding, talking to one another, testing out, communicating back and forth about what is possible and what is not possible for us at this time in our history, but at the same time address a text or some other text that can embody an agreement that we could offer to The Episcopal Church. Therefore, I hope that out of our

discussion today, tomorrow, how ever long it takes, that we can commit ourselves to working with our own members—and I do not mean just those who are here—I mean our church and with colleagues in The Episcopal Church—to develop some new text, some new agreement, that we can approve before asking The Episcopal Church to approve it. I think the shoe is on our foot at this point. That’s all I have to say. I am very grateful as I said earlier to you for the way you conducted the debate and I am sure you will continue that way. Now I think we are in a problem-solving mode in an effort to try to find a way forward that will suit the mood and the intention of this assembly.

“We have a proposal before us, presented by Dr. Jodock, and we need to start dealing parliamentarily with its contents or its possibilities.”

The Rev. Keith A. Hunsinger [Northwestern Ohio Synod] spoke in opposition, “My opposition comes from the third resolve which calls for us to ‘encourage the use of each other’s clergy as mission needs call for, in accordance with appropriate procedures within each church.’ My concern is that the appropriate procedures within each church right now require us to be reordained. There is no one but lay people in this room according to that motion. I do not know that that was the intent, but whether it was the intent or not, it is, I believe, a concern with trying to do ecumenism unilaterally and I urge the rejection of this motion.”

Bishop E. Roy Riley Jr. [New Jersey Synod] moved to table the proposal.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To table the motion offered by the Rev. Darrell H. Jodock with respect to this church’s relationship with The Episcopal Church.

Bishop Riley spoke to his motion saying, “As one who strongly advocates for all the ecumenical proposals, I have neither the strength nor the energy to continue discussion tonight at 9:15. Secondly, the proposal presents itself as an alternative which, of course, it is not because there are no alternatives to the *Concordat* and the *Formula*, which were prepared by churches together. Thirdly, I think we ought to take the time to reflect on what our presiding bishop, chief ecumenical officer, and pastor of the church has shared in reflection about where we might go, and come back to this task perhaps tomorrow, not necessarily with this proposal.”

Bishop Anderson explained, “The motion is to lay on the table, and as you know that essentially puts it out of debate and would require an action sometime later to take from the table. It [the motion on the floor] is not debatable and requires a majority vote.”

MOVED;

SECONDED;

Yes—755; No—258

CARRIED: To table the motion offered by the Rev. Darrell H. Jodock with respect to this church’s relationship with The Episcopal Church.

Ms. Katharine A. Kelker [Montana Synod] moved the following motion, which she previously had offered as a substitute motion, but which she now offered as a primary motion.

MOVED;

SECONDED: RESOLVED, that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, in Churchwide Assembly, hereby:

1. Requests that the presiding bishop, Church Council, Department for Ecumenical Affairs, and the Conference of Bishops create opportunities for dialogue and teaching within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America concerning the possible avenues for full communion with The Episcopal Church;
2. Requests that an incremental process for full communion with The Episcopal Church be continued during the 1997-1999 biennium; and
3. Aspires to ratification of a *Concordat of Agreement* with The Episcopal Church at the Churchwide Assembly in 1999.

Ms. Kelker said, “I believe that this motion capsulizes some of the things you said in your remarks about our responsibility as a church to come together in dialogue and teaching about the matters raised in the proposed agreement which failed. As someone who in her professional life works with labor bargaining and conflict resolution, I know that how you handle the aftermath of a bargain that has not been struck is very important. I personally feel that our attitude as a church needs to be humble at this point and it should be a time of teaching and learning before we seek once again to be in dialogue with The Episcopal Church.”

Bishop David W. Olson [Minneapolis Area Synod] moved to table “for the same reasons Bishop Riley just articulated” in his motion to table the earlier motion on the floor.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

Yes—674; No—341

CARRIED: To table the motion offered by Ms. Katharine A. Kelker with respect to this church’s relationship with The Episcopal Church.

Ms. Dorothy M. Scholz [Metropolitan New York Synod] requested that copies of Ms. Kelker's motion be distributed. Bishop Anderson agreed that this could be accomplished.

Mr. Douglas Miyamoto [La Crosse Area Synod] moved the following motion to recess, subsequently adopted without discussion.

MOVED;

SECONDED:

Yes—780; No—218

CARRIED: To recess for the day.

Bishop Anderson declared the assembly to be in recess until 8:00 A.M., Tuesday, August 19, 1997.

Plenary Session Nine

Tuesday, August 19, 1997

8:00 A.M.—12:30 P.M.

The Rev. H. George Anderson, presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, called Plenary Session Nine to order at 8:03 A.M. on Tuesday, August 19, 1997.

He called upon Mr. William T. Billings, a member of the Church Council, to lead Morning Prayer. The gathering hymn was “Lord, Your Hands Have Formed,” and the Psalm was number 148, “Let All Creation Bless the Lord.”

Bishop Anderson proposed that the assembly focus on two major issues on the agenda: full communion and the sacramental practices statement. He said there would be a report on the first common ballot for Church Council, boards, and committees; the presentation of the “faceted glass” window; and a presentation of the international and domestic service ministry.

Reflections on the Assembly Theme

Bishop Anderson called upon the Rev. Lowell G. Almen, secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, to share reflections on the assembly theme, “Making Christ Known: Alive in our Heritage and Hope.” Secretary Almen spoke about the history of our ELCA seminaries, beginning with Hartwick Seminary in New York, which was established in 1797. He said, “Although it historically bears the distinction of being the first Lutheran seminary established in North America, Hartwick Seminary no longer exists. The oldest operating Lutheran seminary in North America is at Gettysburg, Pa. Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg was established in 1826. . . . Historically, the seminary campus is part of the Civil War battlefield. The seminary’s oldest building was used as a lookout by both armies at various points during the Battle of Gettysburg. Two Lutheran seminaries were started in 1830. One of them is Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary located in Columbia, S.C. The history of Trinity Lutheran Seminary in Columbus, Ohio, also can be traced to 1830. The present Trinity Seminary was created in 1978 through a merger of Hamma School of Theology in Springfield, Ohio, and Lutheran Theological Seminary in Columbus, Ohio. The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia was established in 1864. Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago was formed in 1967 following mergers of six previous seminaries—through predecessor seminaries, its history extends to 1860. Wartburg Theological Seminary at Dubuque, Iowa, emerged as a full theological

school in 1853; in succeeding years various seminaries have merged into Wartburg. Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minn., is also a result of several mergers of seminaries. It traces its history to 1869 and now is the largest of the eight ELCA seminaries. The youngest seminary of the ELCA is Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary in Berkeley, Calif. It was formed in 1952. Each year these seminaries continue to prepare pastors and other persons to serve our congregations even for a new century and a new millennium.”

Ecumenical Proposals: The Episcopal Church (continued)

Reference: *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section IV, pages 49-64; continued on *Minutes*, pages 37, 125, 381, 413, 432, 600, 659.

The Rev. Charles R. Leonard [Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod] sought to move for reconsideration of the original motion on the *Concordat of Agreement*. Bishop Anderson ruled that he could not so move because he had voted on the losing side.

Ms. Katharine Kelker [Montana Synod] moved that her motion from last evening be removed from the table.

Bishop Anderson informed the assembly that the motion that was being referred to had been distributed as *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Supplemental Section IV, page 64.1.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

Yes—723; No—258

CARRIED: To remove from table the following motion of Ms. Katharine Kelker:

MOVED;

SECONDED: Resolved, that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, in Churchwide Assembly, hereby:

1. Requests that the presiding bishop, Church Council, Department for Ecumenical Affairs, and the Conference of Bishops create opportunities for dialogue and teaching within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America concerning the possible avenues for full communion with The Episcopal Church;

2. Requests that an incremental process for full communion with The Episcopal Church be continued during the 1997-1999 biennium; and
3. Aspires to ratification of a *Concordat of Agreement* with The Episcopal Church at the 1999 ELCA Churchwide Assembly.

Ms. Kelker sought to move to emend the phrase, *Concordat of Agreement*, to read, “full communion agreement.” The emendation was accepted as an editorial change without voiced objection. The motion would then read:

MOVED;

SECONDED: RESOLVED, that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, in Churchwide Assembly, hereby:

1. Requests that the presiding bishop, Church Council, Department for Ecumenical Affairs, and the Conference of Bishops create opportunities for dialogue and teaching within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America concerning the possible avenues for full communion with The Episcopal Church;
2. Requests that an incremental process for full communion with The Episcopal Church be continued during the 1997-1999 biennium; and
3. Aspires to ratification of a full communion agreement with The Episcopal Church at the 1999 ELCA Churchwide Assembly.

Ms. Kelker spoke to her motion, saying, “I have presented this motion because I believe it is important for us to think now, in the new day, of what happened and what was revealed yesterday about our own division and to commit ourselves to an effort to teach and learn about the issues involved in full communion, and to be more united in our understanding, before we come back to a bargaining table or a discussion table with The Episcopal Church.”

Bishop Steven L. Ullestad [Northeastern Iowa Synod] moved an amendment to the motion.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To amend the motion by addition of the following as a new item 2:

2. Requests that educational opportunities be created, in consultation with The Episcopal Church, for members of the

faculties of ELCA colleges and seminaries, the Conference of Bishops, rostered persons and laity, specifically designed to communicate the history, theology, and ecclesiology of The Episcopal Church.

and,

To renumber the remaining items accordingly.

Bishop Ullestad said, in speaking to his motion, “Even though there is reference to the importance of educational opportunities in paragraph one, I believe it is extremely important that we specify the importance for us as a church to come to know our brothers and sisters in The Episcopal Church much more clearly. One of my deepest sadnesses in this whole conversation is what are clearly misrepresentations and misunderstandings of the history, theology, and ecclesiology of The Episcopal Church. When it shows up in *USA Today* in this morning’s newspaper, I imagine I can understand that, sometimes those theological concepts are a bit complex. But when seminary faculty or other colleagues of mine seem to not be able to represent accurately what that history is, it becomes very painful. Thomas Cramner and other Anglican reformers were actually burned at the stake for their beliefs in the reformation principles, such as the priesthood of all believers and locating the ministry of Christ with the ministry of the whole Church, making sure that the laity were the foundational order of ministry. Those concepts continue to be woven into their theology and liturgy even to this day with the concept of the priesthood of believers appearing in their rite for ordination. I believe it is unfair to us as an assembly to continue to deal with misunderstandings and misrepresentations. But even more seriously, I believe it dishonors the martyrs of the Reformation when we do not accurately depict and report the history of this church.”

The Rev. Bradley C. Jenson [Northeastern Minnesota Synod] moved an amendment to the amendment to the motion.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To amend the amendment offered by Bishop Steven L. Ullestad by adding at the end of that amendment, “and that study materials on the three-fold office of ministry and the rationale of our current Lutheran doctrine of ministry be made available to all of our congregations during this two-year period until the next ELCA Churchwide Assembly.”

The Rev. Stephen Goodwin [Indiana-Kentucky Synod] said, “I rise to speak against this amendment and, if it applies to all other amendments and indeed the original motion, so be it.” We are seeking, on the floor of the [Churchwide]

Assembly to do now what nearly 40 years of ecumenical dialogue with our Episcopal sisters and brothers has not successfully done. We can only speak now for ourselves and have no authority, I think, to address anything that might be labeled Lutheran-Episcopal. . . . I think we need to function with integrity. I believe it would be improper for us not only to address this motion as part of something that is deemed to speak on behalf of ourselves and an ecumenical neighbor, we can only speak for ourselves.”

Mr. David H. Taylor [Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod] inquired, “I have a question regarding the intent and intended use of the information that is to be presented to the congregations. As a lay member of the group here I would like to know what the purpose is of the materials that are being requested.”

Pastor Jenson responded, “The purpose of the motion is to get at the issue that has been at the heart of our division, a deeper understanding of our current Lutheran doctrine of ministry and the three-fold office of ministry which was our difficulty here. My concern with the way the motion has been reading thus far is that it operates at a level beyond the congregation and I really believe that if the congregations of this church could simply grapple, have the materials to grapple with these issues in the congregations, I think we would be much better served as we head to our next [Churchwide] Assembly. One of the difficulties and frustrations thus far dealing with the *Concordat*, especially in the last year, is the lack of avenues to get information out for those of us who have been opposed to the three-fold office of ministry. We just have not had those opportunities and that is why we took the extraordinary step here at this assembly to publish a newsletter. We would not have to do that if we had more opportunities to get material out to the congregations. We ask only for inclusivity and diversity, a principle which this church has espoused for 10 years. Please include us as a diverse voice on this doctrine of ministry. Do not make us work so hard to get our message out.”

Bishop David W. Olson [Minneapolis Area Synod] moved the previous question on both amendments pending.

MOVED;

Two-Thirds Vote Required

SECONDED;

Yes—853; No—131

CARRIED: To move the previous question on the addition of a new paragraph 2, and the amendment of that paragraph.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

Yes—685; No—310

CARRIED: To amend the amendment offered by Bishop Steven L. Ullestad by adding at the end of that amendment, “and that study materials on the three-fold office of ministry and the rationale of our current Lutheran doctrine of ministry be made available

to all of our congregations during this two-year period until the next ELCA Churchwide Assembly.”

MOVED;

SECONDED;

Yes-845; No-159

CARRIED: To amend the motion by addition of the following as a new item 2:

2. Requests that educational opportunities be created, in consultation with The Episcopal Church, for members of the faculties of ELCA colleges and seminaries, the Conference of Bishops, rostered persons and laity, specifically designed to communicate the history, theology, and ecclesiology of The Episcopal Church; and that study materials on the three-fold office of ministry and the rationale of our current Lutheran doctrine of ministry be made available to all of our congregations during this two-year period until the next ELCA Churchwide Assembly.

and,

To renumber the remaining items accordingly.

Bishop Anderson then stated that the following main motion as amended was before the assembly.

MOVED;

SECONDED: RESOLVED, that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, in Churchwide Assembly, hereby:

1. Requests that the presiding bishop, Church Council, Department for Ecumenical Affairs, and the Conference of Bishops create opportunities for dialogue and teaching within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America concerning the possible avenues for full communion with The Episcopal Church;
2. Requests that educational opportunities be created, in consultation with The Episcopal Church, for members of the faculties of ELCA colleges and seminaries, the Conference of Bishops, rostered persons and laity, specifically designed to communicate the history, theology, and ecclesiology of The Episcopal Church; and that study materials on the three-

fold office of ministry and the rationale of our current Lutheran doctrine of ministry be made available to all of our congregations during this two-year period until the next ELCA Churchwide Assembly.

3. Requests that an incremental process for full communion with The Episcopal Church be continued during the 1997-1999 biennium; and
4. Aspires to ratification of a full communion agreement with The Episcopal Church at the Churchwide Assembly in 1999.

The Rev. Roger A. McKinstry [Northeastern Iowa Synod] inquired of the chair if it was possible to make a motion to reconsider the vote on the *Concordat of Agreement*. Bishop Anderson stated that it would be permissible. Pastor McKinstry advised that he had voted on the prevailing side when the earlier vote was taken.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To reconsider the vote on the *Concordat of Agreement*, establishing full communion with The Episcopal Church.

An unidentified voting member asked, “Does the second also have to be from someone who voted [with the prevailing side] and if so, could that person be identified?” Bishop Anderson responded that it is not necessary for the second to come from the prevailing side. The speaker then moved to object to reconsideration.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To object to consideration of the motion on the floor to reconsider the vote on the *Concordat of Agreement*.

Bishop Anderson explained, “The objection to consideration means simply that you do not want to talk about it and it puts it in limbo. It removes it from the floor. It is just like it never happened.”

MOVED;

Two-Thirds Vote Required

SECONDED;

Yes-460; No-543

DEFEATED: To object to consideration of the motion on the floor to reconsider the vote on the *Concordat of Agreement*.

The Rev. Harlan R. Kaden [Central States Synod] rose to a point of order and inquired, “According to Section I, page 22, [1997 Pre-Assembly Report], of the Rules of Procedure that we adopted on the first day of the assembly, according to the first paragraph, a motion to reconsider ‘is debatable if the motion to be reconsidered is debatable.’ Is that correct?” Bishop Anderson agreed that the Rules of Procedure would be in effect in this situation.

The following motion was again before the assembly.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To reconsider the vote on the *Concordat of Agreement*, establishing full communion with The Episcopal Church.

The Rev. Roger A. McKinstry [Northeastern Iowa Synod] commented, “I voted ‘no’ yesterday and I need to explain why. I voted not because I disagree with the three-fold order of ministry, it was not because I disagree with the laying on of hands by Episcopal bishops, it was out of fear. I voted out of fear, I voted out of anger. Over the years, I have been told by other Lutherans that I am not Lutheran because I disagreed with them. Out of anger, I voted ‘no.’ Over the years, I have been told by Pentecostals that I am not filled with the Spirit because I disagreed with their definition. I voted yesterday out of anger. I voted ‘no’ yesterday because I was angry with my Episcopalian brothers and sisters who insisted that I had to go along with their views of ordained ministry, and if I did not consider the episcopacy and the laying on of hands for ordination and the consecration of bishops, that I was not in full communion with them. I have been in full communion with my Episcopal brothers and sisters ever since I have been a Christian. I voted out of anger yesterday. And so I would ask those who voted ‘no’ yesterday out of fear, out of anger, and for other reasons that they cannot today justify to themselves, to reconsider how they voted.”

Bishop Anderson reminded the assembly, “We are not ready to reopen the question of the issues yet, we simply need to discuss the question of whether you [the assembly] wish to bring this before us—reasons for and against reconsideration.”

The Rev. Arlen J. Foss [Southwestern Minnesota Synod] opposed reconsideration, stating, “I was one of those who voted against this yesterday for many reasons, but one of them was because I felt it was a very divisive issue. Do not think for a moment that six votes represents the congregations back home. To reconsider this now when I have read in the papers, I have heard comments in the paper from our synod this morning, that maybe the best thing is to let sleeping dogs lie. I think to reconsider now would be even more divisive. If I had voted ‘yes’ yesterday, I think I would be inclined, and on this marginal basis, I would be inclined now for the sake of the divisiveness being accentuated, to vote ‘no.’ We

have a constitution that interpreted two-thirds and one-third. We thought that was agreeable at one time. Finally, I heard much said about the Holy Spirit yesterday. When we voted, there was a prayer for the Holy Spirit. I am assuming if the Holy Spirit was not there yesterday that’s why we are voting again, and if he was there, I would be willing to accept it. Let’s not divide our congregations and our churches further. We have an amendment proposed for us this morning that can give us more time to debate. Let’s think about what the papers are going to say tomorrow that have already said something about us this morning. Let’s not divide this church anymore. What is the price we are willing to pay in our church to pass the *Concordat* this way this time?”

The Rev. Russell L. Meyer [Florida-Bahamas Synod] spoke in favor of reconsideration, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth, and it was void, there was darkness, and the Spirit moved over the waters. He sort of healed the void and the darkness. Now which way to go? What’s the right way? We have ourselves a mess—we really do—with our partners in ecumenical dialogue and with ourselves. Yesterday there was an alternative proposal that was submitted and distributed among tables that was never fairly debated. There are many of us who feel that should we have ever had the opportunity to speak to that, we would have been able to show to most of you that it was not a fair alternative, no matter how well intentioned. There are some of us who believe very deeply that minds were changed because they thought there was another way out. We made a contract coming into this assembly with The Episcopal Church that we would look at a specific document at this time and at this hour, one that had been carefully worked, and if we say ‘no’ to that document, we say ‘no’ to The Episcopal Church, and things have to begin again. One has to ask the question, if after 35 or 40 years of dialogue one wants to take up conversation again with a partner who had said ‘no’ at the end of it. There were many things that never got to be said, that deserved to be said, on both sides. It is fair for us now to come back and to say the Spirit has been moving over our troubled waters and we have thought and lived and not slept well with this—on both sides We came here to speak of how we shall relate. We do it on the congregational level, we do it on a synodical level, but we have yet to do it on a churchwide, the general convention level. That is what we came to talk about and we have not settled that question. We did not give it, to some of us, the fair consideration on that level, church-to-church, not just congregation-to-congregation and synod-to-diocese—but church-to-church, the highest legislative assembly of our church with the highest legislative assembly of their church. So I urge you to vote for reconsideration so that we might speak church-to-church.”

Mr. Robert Frey [Pacifica Synod] spoke against reconsideration, “When we opened this assembly under Robert’s Rules of Order, we agreed that the matter of the *Concordat* would be decided by a two-thirds vote of this assembly, not by an almost two-thirds vote of this assembly. We took that vote yesterday, we did not receive a two-thirds vote in favor. It was to be one binding vote. I believe that this assembly has spoken, I believe that it is time for us to move on to other matters.”

The Rev. Philip M. Larsen [Eastern North Dakota Synod] said, “I have been accused of not trusting the brothers and sisters in Christ who serve as bishops in this church. I received a letter before coming to the assembly that stated that 37 bishops of this church encouraged me to vote ‘yes’ on the *Concordat of Agreement*. In my calculations, my brother is the math teacher in our family, but in my calculations, that’s only 57 percent of the bishops. My question is, “Where do the other 28 bishops stand on the *Concordat of Agreement*? I’ve heard very few stand up and speak against the *Concordat*.”

Mr. Harlan Olson [South-Central Synod of Wisconsin] stated, “I urge us to reconsider this vote . . . I do not care whether it loses or wins by a hundred votes, but for us to take and say that we can just walk away from it, we are not doing the parishioners in our pews any favor. We have so many families that are multi-church, where one parent is from another denomination and because we do not come to an agreement as a church, the parent has the liberty to pull back away and not go to church. As Pastor Wangerin so aptly told us on Saturday night [speaking at the ELCA’s 10th anniversary banquet], we are to show Christ in us by setting an example. His communication was very difficult with his Grandpa but he learned to communicate with his Grandpa. We have families that are [Roman] Catholic and Lutheran . . .” Bishop Anderson reminded the speaker that it was not appropriate to get into argumentation on a position on the document at this time and asked that the speaker address whether he wished the assembly to bring the *Concordat* before the assembly at this time. Mr. Olson then said, “I would refer to our Rules of Order again. I would strongly recommend that we reconsider our actions because we are not doing anything out of the ordinary. We have 24 hours, a legitimate person who has concern in his own heart and has stood up and wanted us to reconsider it. That is the prime reason and we need to use our rules of parliamentary procedure to actually give ourselves a chance to reflect on this. I voted for the *Concordat*, but I think we owe our congregations and our sisters and brothers in The Episcopal Church that respect.”

Bishop Paull E. Spring [Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod] spoke against reconsideration stating, “Yesterday we voted. I thought we had a strong vote in favor of the *Concordat* though it fell short. There is division in this house. There is division and disharmony in community, but I sense already a spirit of willingness and consensus moving in more positive directions. There were very fine comments made in the newsletter distributed this morning by people who voted differently than I did. I think we could wait two more years—I would not want to go beyond—but I would not want us to reconsider it now. Let’s wait two more years and bring it up then.”

The Rev. Synde Manion [Southern California (West) Synod] asked the chair, “to consider if this motion to reconsider is passed if you would give us five or ten minutes to make sure our voting members are out of the bathrooms and on the

assembly floor. We do not have any breaks in our agenda to give people time to go do those things and I think it is fair to give them time to do that.”

Bishop Anderson responded, “Let me assure you. Actually this motion to reconsider is in the middle of the consideration of another motion and we will return to that motion once we dispose the parliamentary question [which is] whether the original *Concordat* proposal comes before us. If we agree to do that, it would then fall into place after we have disposed of the business we have.”

The Rev. Melinda J. Wagner [Rocky Mountain Synod] spoke in favor of reconsideration, because “it was a very close vote and I think that the opportunity to reconsider would give us a chance to clarify what our decision is. That is important to me as I go back to my congregation and to my synod. I also want to speak to the question of division among us. We have been elected to come here and enter into discernment which is never an easy process. There will be differences of opinion. I think that is part of what we are here for and I hope that we will have a chance to reconsider, to talk that out, and to clarify our decision.”

The Rev. Joe R. Haugstuen [Montana Synod] urged the assembly “not to pursue a shortcut. I think we have an opportunity to explore this now over the next two years. I think the real issues will surface. We can learn much from this, we can learn whether this two-thirds to one-third split within our assembly is representative of our whole church or whether there is more widespread support or more widespread opposition than this assembly reflects. I think also we have a chance to explore whether or not there were other opportunities in the negotiating process to bring a document to us that might have been acceptable. Perhaps those opportunities were overlooked or shunted aside and we need to know that. Give this process a chance to work, please.”

Mr. Jason Reed [Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod] spoke in favor of reconsideration. He said, “I rise with two cards. The green because I am in favor of reconsidering this. I think people had questions about the *Concordat* that were not officially answered and I think it would be good for this body to reconsider. The white card is a question I have for a member of the ecumenical dialogue or the chair or someone else who can answer this question. The *Concordat of Agreement* failed in its vote yesterday. What are the implications for that in terms of our conversation with the Episcopalians? Does this mean that we will have to start with new dialogue teams and form a new paper? Does this mean that the *Concordat* can be brought up two years from now? What sort of time line are we looking at? These are all questions that, I think, go to the very heart of this discussion.”

Bishops Anderson responded, “I think your argument for reconsideration includes that question in the sense that if the motion is reconsidered, the information you desire could then be brought before the assembly.”

The Rev. Susan R. Carloss [Western Iowa Synod] raised a question in regard to the assembly’s Rules of Organization and Procedure (*1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section I, page 19, “Actions that Cannot Be Amended or Rescinded.”) She said,

“My question is whether or not, in fact, this can be reconsidered. . . . As I understand the reason why we could not make amendments to the *Concordat* was because it was in the form of a contract of sorts that had already come to us in terms of our discussion to that point. I believe that last night—I am sure officially they [the Episcopal representatives] were informed through the context of your comments—that the Episcopalians were informed of our decision. I am asking the question whether this could possibly fall into this, that the authorization to enter into a contract could not be . . .” Bishop Anderson interrupted the speaker to clarify, “I would rule that we have not entered into a contract. We have essentially done the opposite. We have at this point informed The Episcopal Church that there is no agreement. So the short answer to your question is that the section you are talking about does not apply.”

The Rev. Cedric E. Gibb [South Carolina Synod] speaking against reconsideration said, “I too have several cards up here. I confess that I am in bondage to sin and cannot free myself. But that is not an admission of defeat, it just says I cannot free myself. God frees me and I thank God today that I sit in an assembly of priests because I know that at least one will give me absolution after my confession. The confession that I have is that I sometimes hate to pray. I hate to pray because I hate the response that God gives me at times. After we voted yesterday on the *Concordat*, I approached my bishop because I wanted to know about alternatives because, by God, my will be done! And, I went back to my room after we sang “The Church’s One Foundation” in God’s song—tears had come to my eyes—and I went back to my room angry and I started talking to God and then God asked me a question, ‘Who is God, you or I?’ Out of that experience, I began to wrestle with the confession I have to make, that I am chief among those who violate the first commandment. Because I often put another god before God, and that god is not the sun, the moon, the stars, or some item created by God or man, but that god that I often put before God is myself and I want my will to be done, I want my will to be done by God, and I want my will to be done by others. So I confess that I have fought and wanted this assembly to act according to my will. But I say to us, brothers and sisters, I believe that God’s will was done yesterday. I voted for [the *Concordat*] and I wanted it to be, and I believe that God said to me, ‘No. My will be done.’ So I urge you to not further divide our church with the hope that in dividing us further we can unite the larger church. Because as the church of Christ, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, we need to be healed, we need to be forgiven, we need to come together and if we could vote 98.2 [percent] on the initiatives afterward, if you could vote 97.1 [percent], if we could vote 87 percent; we can get a lot closer than 66 percent or 67 percent.”

Bishop Mark B. Herbener [Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod] commented, “Several days ago, I suggested to someone that there were not divisions among us but that there were differences. I was wrong. There are obviously deep, deep divisions. These do need to be addressed but while the divisions need to be addressed, ministry needs to go on. Churches need to be

started. I understood that several churches that were to be established with The Episcopal Church will not now be started in the next two years as had been planned. Mission and ministry are being hurt. Yesterday the Spirit spoke, but did the Spirit perhaps tell us that we had divisions to deal with; but would we let the Spirit also speak today. Just because the Spirit moved yesterday does not mean that the Spirit stopped moving. Shall we trust the Spirit and perhaps let that Spirit lead us into all truth.”

Mr. Albert Quie [Minneapolis Area Synod] spoke against reconsideration, “not because I voted on the prevailing side. I want to share with you an experience that I have had in 28 years of elective office. In situations like this, when there has been a rally and a reconsideration, it is something that is never forgotten, it is talked of in the body from that time on. I believe this church can in the next two years do two things: heal our differences and come together with The Episcopal Church. It has already happened to me. I realized that a majority of this church is open to the historic episcopate. It is up to us who are flatly opposed to the historic episcopate to start thinking and working as to how we can do this in an agreeable way. It cannot be done in one day of ramming through a reconsideration. It needs time. I am ready to help and bring this about so that the next time we meet in 1999, hopefully we can then come together with strong agreement on full communion with The Episcopal Church.”

The Rev. James B. Olson [South Dakota Synod] asked a question and asked for a ruling from the chair “whether it is appropriate to reconsider the motion. The text of the *Concordat* on Section IV, page 54 [1997 Pre-Assembly Report], ‘there shall be one binding vote to accept or reject, as a matter of verbal content as well as in principle.’” Bishop Anderson responded that “in usual parliamentary procedure, it is not over until it is over and as long as this assembly is sitting, it has parliamentary ways to deal with questions and therefore what we did yesterday was what we did yesterday. If this assembly takes further action by the rising of this assembly, that action will be the binding action.” Pastor Olson then asked, “Will that ruling be recorded in the Minutes, please?” Bishop Anderson stated, “Everything that is done is in the Minutes.” The assembly responded with laughter when Bishop Anderson added, “You can trust [Secretary] Lowell Almen on that.”

Ms. Krestie Utech [Upstate New York Synod] observed, “Being a faithful Trinitarian, I have three reasons [for speaking in favor of reconsideration]. First, I think that a second vote on this matter will be no more divisive than the first one was when almost two out of three of us went away very saddened by the outcome. Secondly, the educational process that Bishop Ullestad and others have talked about, which is very necessary, could happen just as well after a positive vote as it could after a negative vote. I do feel that we failed miserably in educating this church about this issue before we came here. However, I feel that the 1,045 of us who were elected to come here were elected to represent our many congregations and that we have been blizzarded with information and have read deeply and

thought rather extensively about it and we have the right to make this decision. That educational process, regardless of this vote, should go on seriously and extensively. Thirdly and most pragmatically, there were several people who missed the vote yesterday. If I had been one of them, I would have been deeply disappointed. I think that happened because we came to closure on the debate before some people anticipated that to happen. I would like to give them a chance to vote, too.”

Bishop David W. Olson [Minneapolis Area Synod] observed, “I would like to call the voting members’ attention to the fact that when the reconsideration motion was brought forward we were in the midst of fashioning a good response to the issue and we very much need to return to that. One of the difficulties that this body faced in dealing with this particular matter, in fact both of them [*A Formula of Agreement* and *Concordat of Agreement*], is that there was no opportunity for amendment, no opportunity for consensus-building among those who were one side or the other. We now have that process going forward by the various speakers making motions on amendments and we need to continue that because it builds consensus. Secondly, all of us need to know that there will be an enormous reaction if there is even reconsideration and especially if the vote turns, and it will probably turn on very few votes again, because the sense of betrayal about the one vote that Pastor Olson just mentioned, and the sense that a decision was made that appeared to be final and is not although Bishop Anderson has wisely ruled that it is an open matter for the voting members to pursue, he has also said that the matter is set and we should discover now how to follow God’s lead. The third point is that we are in the midst of something which, I think, can be very productive because, from my knowledge, people on both sides of this issue are ready to formulate a very helpful resolution. We should immediately return to that by voting down the reconsideration.”

Mr. Jeffrey L. Kane [New England Synod] spoke in favor of the motion to reconsider. He said, “A gentleman before me asked, ‘What price are we willing to pay? What will we sacrifice?’ First, let me say that I am willing to sacrifice everything for the sake of the Gospel and Christ, nothing less. The consideration of full communion is just that, and I will not allow fear of what the papers will say about me to influence my decision of reconsideration. For the Christian, I am in the world but not of it.”

Ms. Audrey Richardson [Northwestern Minnesota Synod] said, “We as an assembly have frankly and honestly discussed this issue for over six days now. I believe it is a mistake to reconsider regardless of the outcome of such a vote. My fear is that if we continue down this path with more discussion and have a vote, we as a church body will be further splintered and harmed since we do have a number of fellow ELCA members opposed to such a vote or move. The decision was difficult but let us unite together and move on to the ecumenical practices we all believe in and work toward the next steps for the 1999 [Churchwide] Assembly. I urge my fellow voting members to vote against this motion to reconsider.”

The Rev. Larry V. Smoose, a member of the Church Council, rose to call the previous question.

Bishop Anderson advised the assembly, “I would just remind you that if a vote is taken that we will reconsider, reconsideration will not occur immediately. We will return to the action that we were dealing with.” He then called for the vote on the motion to terminate debate.

MOVED;

Two-Thirds Vote Required

SECONDED;

Yes—879; No—137

CARRIED: To move the previous question.*

*[This motion subsequently was ruled out of order because the maker of the motion was an advisory member of the assembly, not a voting member, and therefore not eligible to make such a motion.]

Bishop E. Roy Riley [New Jersey Synod] stated, “This is an important consideration for us. Could we have a five-minute recess to talk among ourselves as voting members before we take this vote?”

Ms. Gloria J. Ware [Greater Milwaukee Synod] said, “I respectfully, Reverend Chair, ask that you lead us in a moment of prayer and give us 30 seconds for silent reflection.”

Bishop Anderson responded, “Bishop Riley, you can ask for a recess if you wish. I understand the motion of the last speaker and we will certainly enter on the period of prayer, but I would like the assembly to decide what to do with its time at this point.”

Bishop Riley then moved:

MOVED;

SECONDED;

Voice Vote

CARRIED: To recess for five minutes.

Bishop Anderson declared the assembly to be in recess for five minutes after which he called the assembly back to order.

He then stated, “The first thing that we have to do is that I need to report to you that the member who made the motion to close debate was not eligible to do that. I am going to ask whether someone who is eligible will make the motion and we can revote on the matter.”

The Rev. George E. Keck [Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod] called the question.

MOVED; *Two-Thirds Vote Required*
SECONDED; *Yes-896; No-108*
CARRIED: To move the previous question.

Bishop Anderson commented to the assembly, “As you know, we will now vote on reconsideration which will mean that we would debate at a later point in this assembly the *Concordat of Agreement* which we discussed yesterday.”

The Rev. Arlen J. Foss [Southwestern Minnesota Synod] asked, “What percentage will be needed to approve this?” Bishop Anderson answered, “A majority for reconsideration. It is a parliamentary action that is not an action on the main motion.” Pastor Foss then asked, “Then it does not reflect the vote itself, it would not be two-thirds?” Bishop Anderson responded, “No, it is not two-thirds.”

Bishop Anderson then led the assembly in prayer, “Almighty God, as we always do when we wonder about the way ahead, we turn to you and ask for your guidance. We know of many voices within us, help us to hear yours. In Christ’s name, we pray. Amen.”

He said, “We now proceed to vote on reconsideration. If you favor bringing back to discuss the matter of the *Concordat*, you will vote ‘yes.’ If you do not wish to bring it back for further discussion, you will vote ‘no.’” He then called for the vote.

MOVED;
SECONDED; *Yes-397; No-640*
DEFEATED: To reconsider the question of establishment of full communion with The Episcopal Church through the *Concordat of Agreement*, and to bring the matter back before the assembly for further discussion and vote.

Bishop Anderson announced, “The reconsideration fails. We are back on the main motion, which is the motion from the voting member from Montana [Ms. Katharine Kelker] listed in your material on page 64.1 [Supplemental Section IV, *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*].” He stated that consideration of this motion would continue following the presentation of the stained glass window.

Bishop Anderson called for the orders of the day. He then invited the Rev. Robert D. Machamer Jr. and other representatives of New Life Evangelical Lutheran Church, New Tripoli, Pa., to come to the dias for presentation of the faceted stained glass window. The artist, who had created the Dalle de Verre window with the assistance of assembly members, was Mr. Dennis Roberts of IHS Studios at Fredericksburg, Texas. Bishop Anderson noted, “The creation of such windows is beginning to become a tradition at our ELCA assemblies, a marvelous symbol of the many hands that join to plant new congregations and begin new ministries throughout our church.”

Bishop Anderson also asked Bishop David R. Strobel of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod and the Rev. Richard A. Magnus, executive director of the ELCA Division for Outreach, to join him on the dias “because the planting of new congregations is always a three-way partnership linking the expertise, resources, and commitment of people in the congregation with the synod and with the churchwide organization. This exciting and effective partnership is undergirded by the prayers and gifts of all members of our church. In our tenth anniversary year, we can celebrate the fact that 338 new congregations and ministries have been planted since the ELCA was formed!”

He recalled the founding of the New Life parish: the pastor-developer arrived in November 1989; the first worship service was held in January 1990; the congregation was organized in September 1991; and its first building was dedicated on July 27, 1997. Bishop Anderson said, “This window will go in the sanctuary of the church. On behalf of this assembly, the Division for Outreach, and the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, please receive this window along with the prayers and best wishes of the whole of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.”

Pastor Machamer said in his response, “When you placed your piece in [referring to voting members of the assembly building the window with pieces of stained glass], your commitment to prayer went into that window. When you placed your piece in, your commitment to Mission Partners and to Mission Builders and to benevolence dollars and to your synod staff and to your bishops and to all of the people who make up the ELCA, is now displayed in this window. One piece by itself does nothing but take up a spot, but all together, united together, put together and held together by the Spirit of God is the epoxy that does not give us opportunity to be one, does not give us potential to be one, but rather makes us one.” Ms. Marilyn Oswald, president of the congregation council of New Life Evangelical Lutheran Church, responded with words of appreciation on behalf of the congregation, saying, “Thank you for letting the light of heaven shine through you to us with the gift of this beautiful stained glass window.”

Presentation of Stained Glass Window

Ecumenical Proposals: The Episcopal Church (resumption)

Consideration of the main motion as amended, previously offered by Ms. Katharine Kelker [Montana Synod], resumed.

Bishop Anderson stated, “We have before us the proposed motion that is printed as page 64.1 [*Supplemental Section IV, 1997 Pre-Assembly Report*]. It has been amended with a new second paragraph on educational opportunities. The author in reading it to you, changed in the last paragraph from ‘*Concordat of Agreement*’ to ‘full communion agreement’ and hearing no objections, I am assuming that we are at peace with that part of the action.” He also reminded the assembly that earlier a voting member had served notice of an additional amendment.

MOVED;

SECONDED: RESOLVED, that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, in Churchwide Assembly, hereby:

1. Requests that the presiding bishop, Church Council, Department for Ecumenical Affairs, and the Conference of Bishops create opportunities for dialogue and teaching within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America concerning the possible avenues for full communion with The Episcopal Church;
2. requests that educational opportunities be created, in consultation with The Episcopal Church, for members of the faculties of ELCA colleges and seminaries, the Conference of Bishops, rostered persons and laity, specifically designed to communicate the history, theology, and ecclesiology of The Episcopal Church; and that study materials on the three-fold office of ministry and the rationale of our current Lutheran doctrine of ministry be made available to all of our congregations during this two-year period until the next ELCA Churchwide Assembly.
3. Requests that an incremental process for full communion with The Episcopal Church be continued during the 1997-1999 biennium; and
4. Aspires to ratification of a full communion agreement with The Episcopal Church at the 1999 ELCA Churchwide Assembly.

The Rev. John H. P. Reumann [Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod] then made the motion he had previously served notice on.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To amend paragraph four of the amended motion by deleting the phrase, “at the 1999 ELCA Churchwide Assembly.”

Pastor Reumann spoke to his motion, “Please note that deleting them does not preclude arriving at that goal by 1999. I think it unwise to be bound to it. As discussion on the reconsideration motion showed, division and differences are very great. I do not wish to be bound to two years and I would like to illustrate why the matter is so difficult by using as my text the *Concordat* document. One problem is that the issue, the historic episcopate, that particular Anglican way of speaking, was never defined. There is a reason for it because there are several views in Anglicanism and many nuances. We had a reflection of this in floor discussion as to whether the historic episcopate is essential (which has been said at times), or central, or necessary, or what. If you look at the literature, phrases are used such as ‘divinely given,’ ‘fact not doctrine,’ and even ‘revelation.’ Two things, though, clearly characterize it. That the fullness of grace, the grace of holy orders, resides in the bishop. That is why, on this view, bishops must ordain priests or pastors. That is why the bishop must confirm and not the pastor. So there is a sequence of bishop, priest, deacon, and laity. Further, it carries with it an understanding of authentic or valid ministry.” Bishop Anderson interrupted the speaker to recognize a point of order.

Bishop Stanley N. Olson [Southwestern Minnesota Synod] on a point of order said, “This is not to the point of the motion.” Bishop Anderson responded, “I think the speaker is trying to say why he thinks it is going to take so long.” Bishop Anderson ruled that Pastor Reumann has “three minutes, and I am going to be sure it is three minutes.”

Pastor Reumann continued, “The further problem is that it always carries with it connotations of other ministries being unauthentic. That is why, I think, we had difficult phrases to work with in the *Concordat* document such as the one on page 57, section three, the first paragraph [*1997 Pre-Assembly Report, Section IV*]. The second difficult area is [that] the biblical data was passed over all too readily. This is one area where some Lutherans might be further convinced if it could be shown that the historic episcopate is scriptural. There is a further reason, though, for Episcopalians. The preface to the Ordinal of the *Book of Common Prayer* says it is apparent ‘unto men diligently reading the Holy Scriptures and ancient authors, from the apostles’ time there have been three orders of ministers.’ That requires discussion.”

The Rev. Theodore F. Schneider [Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod] commented, “When I was in seminary the very thought of differing with the

esteemed John Reumann was something like chewing on razor blades. However, I am going to do it. I rise to speak against the proposed amendment because I have heard it said throughout this assembly in all of the debate that we really want to be ecumenical, that we really want to establish an agreement for full communion with The Episcopal Church. I sure hope so after 30 years of talking with them. I think it is necessary for us now to come out of this assembly with a date and a time line that says to our Anglican sisters and brothers that we really mean to deal with this, not talk about it, but we really hope to find ways to come to terms with it. If indeed we cannot do so by 1999, we can come here in fairness and say that. On the other hand, it is good to set upon us a time line and some hope that they could react to whatever we offer to them in their year 2000 assembly. Otherwise it could take ten or more years to get back to where we thought we were a few days ago.”

The Rev. James B. Olson [South Dakota Synod] observed, “I think the opportunity for dialogue and study among our people, congregations, and synods may require more time. Indeed, it may very well be that the Spirit will work within our church so that we would come and make a decision for full communion. But I simply do not want to program the Holy Spirit, so I speak in favor of deleting the date.”

The Rev. Marcia G. Carrier [Greater Milwaukee Synod] called the question.

MOVED; *Two-Thirds Vote Required*
SECONDED; *Yes-851; No-61*
CARRIED: To move the previous question on the amendment.
MOVED;
SECONDED; *Yes-262; No-673*
DEFEATED: To amend paragraph four of the amended motion by deleting the phrase, “at the 1999 ELCA Churchwide Assembly.”

Bishop Ralph A. Kempfski [Indiana-Kentucky Synod] offered the following amendments to the motion.

MOVED;
SECONDED: To amend the motion by adding the following preamble,
WHEREAS, there is disappointment that while a solid majority (66.1 percent) voted to adopt the *Concordat of Agreement*, it was not possible to adopt it by the required two-thirds majority, and there is a commitment to the ultimate goal of full communion with The Episcopal Church and other churches;

and;

and therefore, be it

To substitute the following for present number three to read:

3. That conversations be sought with The Episcopal Church with the goal of embodying the theological vision of the proposed *Concordat of Agreement* in a text which meets the concerns expressed within this assembly. Such a proposal should be developed as soon as possible, reports should be made by the Department for Ecumenical Affairs to each assembly of this church until such a proposal is ready.

Bishop Anderson then said, “Before you speak, let’s be clear that you are asking for a preamble and then I am trying to find where you want number three.” Bishop Kempfski responded, “I am a bit confused. I think old number two became number three and it is at that point.” Bishop Anderson asked, “Do you want to replace that?” Bishop Kempfski affirmed, “Yes, by substitution.”

Bishop Anderson proposed that the question be divided. He asked the assembly, “Can we do that by consent for clarity? First discuss the preface and vote on that and then discuss the substitution of number three? It seems to me that might be effective.”

Bishop Kempfski was then invited to speak to the preface. He said, “I certainly am in favor of the intention of the mover of the [main] motion, but I think [it important] to remind ourselves that we are moving from disappointment, no matter what side of the issue we voted on, and therefore the preamble merely sets the stage in which we have come to our resolution. It reminds succeeding generations in our heritage what we have been about.”

Bishop Anderson then announced the preface, the first half of Bishop Kempfski’s motion, was now on the screen and he read the following text to the assembly.

WHEREAS, there is disappointment that while a solid majority (66.1%) voted to adopt the *Concordat of Agreement*, it was not possible to adopt it by the required two-thirds majority, and there is a commitment to the ultimate goal of full communion with The Episcopal Church and other churches;

and;

and therefore, be it

The Rev. Darrell H. Jodock [Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod] commented, “At other actions in this assembly, we have only adopted the RESOLVES. Is it appropriate to vote on a WHEREAS?” Bishop Anderson responded, “I assume that in this case that we are not dealing with material that has been presented to us from other groups and therefore we have whatever action is put before us as a document.” Hearing no objection from the house he declared that the preface was in order.

Mr. Albert Quie [Minneapolis Area Synod] spoke against the amendment, stating, “What this does is to put in a document the pain that we feel here. I do not see that that adds anything to do. The resolution as it is being proposed now, it seems to me, is totally healing, and to dredge this up again so we make sure we remember this vote for two years, I do not think is helpful to our dialogue.”

The Rev. Fred S. Opalinski [Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod] stated, “In our voting yesterday, we voted to begin full communion with people who have never been to our table, and we said ‘no’ to people who have shared the body and blood of Christ with us for the last 15 years. I think that this preamble needs to express that pain.”

The Rev. Stephen Goodwin [Indiana-Kentucky Synod] said, “It may be an irregular matter for us to approve and vote upon a preamble, but we are in a rather irregular and unusual circumstance. The concern that I expressed to the assembly earlier of what might be perceived as rather—yes, let me speak rather freely—rather conceited of us to presume that having just said ‘no’ to the Episcopalians, we have then decided independently this, that, or some other course of action. I believe this preamble speaks authentically of the pain, the anguish, the reality. It speaks humbly to our Episcopal sisters and brothers and does so in a fashion that is so succinct that some of us are standing in admiration.”

The Rev. Fred W. Lee [Minneapolis Area Synod] spoke against inclusion of the preamble by saying, “As I shared with our delegation last evening as we talked about this, I shared a sadness. I did not share a disappointment with the outcome. What this [preface] does is to keep us in the division stage. Yes, I am sad because we are divided, but I too would speak against keeping that in this motion. Let us move on in a more positive vein.”

Mr. Y.T. Chiu [Northeastern Ohio Synod] called the question on all matters before the assembly.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To move the previous question on all matters before the assembly.

Bishop Anderson then clarified, “You moved the previous question on all matters before the assembly. That would move that we would close debate,

proceed first to a vote on the preface, next without debate to a vote on the new paragraph three, and finally [without debate] to a vote on the full resolution.”

Mr. Jason Reed [Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod] rose to a point of order and inquired, “Parliamentarily, is it possible to move the previous question for more than one matter at a time?” Bishop Anderson responded, “Yes, you can move everything, all matters before the house.”

The Rev. Franklin D. Fry [New Jersey Synod] served notice that if the motion was defeated, he would immediately move the previous question on only the vote on the preamble.

Bishop Anderson then invited the assembly to vote on the motion before the house.

MOVED;

Two-Thirds Vote Required

SECONDED;

Yes—584; No. 400

DEFEATED: To move the previous question on all matters before the assembly.

Pastor Fry then called the question.

MOVED;

Two-Thirds Vote Required

SECONDED;

Yes—945; No—35

CARRIED: To move the previous question on the proposed amendment (preamble).

MOVED;

SECONDED;

Yes—648; No—341

CARRIED: To amend the motion by adding the following preamble,

WHEREAS, there is disappointment that while a solid majority (66.1 percent) voted to adopt the *Concordat of Agreement*, it was not possible to adopt it by the required two-thirds majority, and there is a commitment to the ultimate goal of full communion with The Episcopal Church and other churches;

and;

and therefore, be it

Consideration of the second half of the proposed amendment, to substitute for paragraph three, ensued.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To substitute the following for present number three to read:

3. That conversations be sought with The Episcopal Church with the goal of embodying the theological vision of the proposed *Concordat of Agreement* in a text which meets the concerns expressed within this assembly. Such a proposal should be developed as soon as possible, reports should be made by the Department for Ecumenical Affairs to each assembly of this church until such a proposal is ready.

Bishop Anderson invited the maker of the motion, Bishop Ralph A. Kempfski [Indiana-Kentucky Synod], to speak to his motion. Bishop Kempfski said, "I believe most of the other amendments and the intent of this resolution was to address an internal need for communication and dialogue among ourselves. I believe that this amendment which I offer reopens the conversation with The Episcopal Church and the point of beginning that conversation is to express the concerns that we have had at this assembly in light of the proposed *Concordat of Agreement*. My concern also is that we not limit the time of that conversation to the year of 1999 or whatever it may be. I would certainly like to have it done as soon as possible, but I do not want to limit those who are part of that conversation. I would like this body and others to be aware of the progress and therefore opening the process of the [Department for] Ecumenical Affairs to report to us at each assembly in the future and when that final proposal is ready. I think it is more open-ended and less restrictive."

The Rev. Franklin D. Fry [New Jersey Synod] said, "Three things. One, I have been pushing for the past four years—strongly—for further information and discussion and educational materials for us to use throughout the church. I think yesterday's vote was both a protest that we had not received such assistance and also a plea for it. So I applaud that part. I also recall we have just voted not to leave this open ended but to be honorable enough to put a gun at our heads that two years from now, having done serious study and consideration, we will take some action. It might even be to then say we need two more years, but I do not want one of these things where you court for 20 years and you never get around to saying, 'Shall we do this or not?' I think we owe it to ourselves primarily not to dither and dather. We heard yesterday from persons who said they would really support working out this seriously and openly now with a terminal time. That is why I do not like the part that does not give us an ending date for a decision even if it is only, at that time, a decision to continue. We need that discipline laid upon us, I believe.

Then that leads me to the next to the last line [of the motion before the house], 'to each assembly of this church.' My question is does that mean synod assemblies? I hope so. If it means each Churchwide Assembly—it is not clear for me which definition of an assembly we have—then I cannot vote for it. If it means each Churchwide Assembly, I do not expect to live another 30 years that we can keep putting it off and putting it off and putting it off. It is about time we did our job for ourselves internally to work on this and then to make a decision. We will try every way we can to make a decision two years from now but in the meantime, please help our synods really work at this. So my question is about the ending and how I can accomplish making sure it is each synod assembly of this church until the Churchwide Assembly in 1999. Would that be the way to do it?"

Bishop Anderson responded, "You might ask someone to make that motion for you." Pastor Fry said, "I cannot because I have spoken before I made the motion." Bishop Anderson said, "That is correct."

The Rev. Heather Schaffer Lubold [Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod] requested clarification "as to which number we are substituting. Did we not vote to add an additional line, so we are substituting number four and not number three?" Bishop Anderson answered, "As I understand the speaker, substituting for what is on your printed material as number two, 'requests that an incremental process for full communion with The Episcopal Church be continued during the 1997-99 biennium; and' would be replaced by the material we are dealing with now."

Bishop David W. Olson [Minneapolis Area Synod] proposed the following amendment in order, he said, to test the assembly's will concerning establishment of a 1999 deadline:

MOVED;

SECONDED: To amend the motion to substitute by replacing the second sentence with the following: "Such a proposal should be prepared for presentation at the 1999 Churchwide Assembly, if possible."

Bishop Olson observed that it was his understanding "that 'each assembly' refers to synod assemblies or churchwide assemblies."

In speaking to his motion, Bishop Olson commented, "In the first place, I think we put ourselves under some discipline as Pastor Fry has said. Secondly, I recall something that you said yesterday, which is that in this process that we have been involved in, all of the other bodies had to go on line first and, in the view of some, we were the spoilers or we at least have the last word. I know that the Episcopal assembly will meet in the year 2000 and we will meet in the year 1999. I think it serves our intention toward The Episcopal Church well if we this time go on record

with some kind of agreement—all it says is a text—and then The Episcopal Church can respond the next year.”

An unidentified voting member questioned, “The words, ‘1999 Churchwide Assembly, if developed as soon as possible’ seems to me to be a bit tentative. . . . Who will make the determination when such a proposal would be brought before our church?”

Bishop Anderson explained, “The problem with the visual [the text appearing on the screen] is that there is a strike-through. We are trying to show it in a proper way—so as you can see there is a strike-through of the existing text [the words ‘developed as soon as’]. That’s why that was there. The amendment is what” [at this point the words ‘developed as soon as’ suddenly were no longer struck through but appeared in red print in the text on the screen. There was a chuckle from Bishop Anderson and applause from the assembly.]

Bishop Anderson then proposed, “I think we should take a moment and have our two folks stand. They have been doing great work here and we ought to recognize them, Randall Lee and Glenndy Sculley.” There was loud and prolonged applause from the assembly.

The unidentified voting member was invited to continue. He said, “I am still confused as to who will make the determination as to the readiness of this proposal to come before our church.”

Bishop David W. Olson [Minneapolis Area Synod] said, “I want to be sure that the amendment that I proposed is accurate in front of the body and on the screen.” Bishop Anderson asked that the text be displayed once again. Bishop Olson said, “The amendment is accurate if you omit the red letters.” Bishop Anderson explained, “The red letters are the existing text so that the people can see how your amendment would change it.”

Ms. Dorothy M. Scholz [Metropolitan New York Synod] sought to speak to Bishop Kempfski’s substitute motion. Bishop Anderson requested that she wait until action on the motion currently before the house was voted upon.

Bishop Richard F. Bansemer [Virginia Synod] commented, “I believe there was another word inserted when Bishop Olson spoke and it was ‘synodical’ assemblies of this church. I thought that was also part of the resolution. I think that is a friendly addition and if it is I would like to see it in the text. Bishop Anderson responded, “I did not take it as formal, he was kind of throwing that in, I believe. It was not on the written material we received. Bishop Bansemer asked, “Then could I move to amend it?” Bishop Anderson said, “I would suggest that you wait and do that as another amendment, because this amendment is localized in the text.”

The Rev. Harold S. Weiss [Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod] stated, “We are in the process of formulating a very important resolution by a thousand-plus membership. [This is] very, very difficult. I would recommend and if you would advise me to move, that you appoint a committee of interested parties to work

during the lunch period. I think we have a consensus of what needs to be said. I have presented to the chair an additional item that I think would do far better in clarifying that this is authorized to be referred to the [Church] Council for presentation back. And to allow this matter to be considered with a good text or at least a text that has some coherence during the afternoon meeting.”

Bishop Anderson asked Pastor Weiss to clarify his intent. Pastor Weiss then moved the following.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To postpone further discussion until this afternoon; and

To request that the chair appoint an *ad hoc* committee to develop a coherent statement during the lunch recess.

Mr. Sam Shapiro [Southern Ohio Synod] requested that, were the motion to be adopted, “that when that document is developed, it be printed and distributed to us to give us time for thoughtful, prayerful consideration.” Bishop Anderson responded, “The motion is to postpone. This matter is something we can certainly take into consideration in responding.”

Bishop Anderson announced, “If this [motion to postpone] is done, I will ask that persons who have submitted amendments to this document, that is, the maker, the persons who have submitted amendments: Bishop Kempfski, Bishop Olson, Bishop Bansemer who was going to make an amendment, and also if Pastor Harold Weiss would join that group. If others wish to come, all right, but try to get a group that will represent persons who are involved in this process. I will then try to set them a task.”

MOVED;

SECONDED;

Yes—779; No—185

CARRIED: To postpone further discussion until this afternoon; and

To request that the chair appoint an *ad hoc* committee to develop a coherent statement during the lunch recess.

Bishop Anderson stated, “We will bring this back this afternoon and, as I said, I will ask those persons who are most directly involved in drafting the present material to gather with me when we recess for lunch.”

The Rev. Kenneth D. Hanson [East-Central Synod of Wisconsin] advised, “Something to consider for the people who are doing this. Yesterday during the social statements discussion, we decided that we wanted to get information to the

churches at least 18 months prior to any action for the congregations to have plenty of time. My question is, do you think and will this committee consider if six months is enough time to develop the materials, get them out to the churches so that we will have that kind of time.”

Bishop Anderson responded, “If my memory is correct, the 18 months was on the social statement process.” Pastor Hanson commented, “I know that is a standard for important things within the church and I think this is very important.” Bishop Anderson said, “The committee that is meeting at lunch can consider that, but we will let them use their judgment.”

Statement on Sacramental Practices (continued)

Reference: 1997 Pre-Assembly Report, Section IV, pages 1-34 and pages 34.1-34.7; continued on *Minutes*, pages 90, 714.

Bishop Anderson indicated that consideration of the proposed statement on sacramental practices now would resume. He called attention to proposed amendments to the statement submitted by voting members prior to the deadline for such amendments, which had been distributed as *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section IV, pages 34.1 through 34.7.

Mr. Gerald Johnson [Florida-Bahamas Synod] rose, asking for a moment of personal privilege. He referred to an article from this day’s issue of *USA Today* concerning landmines. Mr. Johnson said, “The Churchwide Assembly moved to support the call for an international ban on the use, the production, the stockpiling, and the sale; or to transfer or export of anti-personnel landmines. We encouraged members of the ELCA to contact the President of the United States and their U.S. senators and representatives in support of an international treaty which bans landmines immediately. In this morning’s *USA Today* [it states], ‘The White House has reversed its course and gave its support to Canadian backed efforts to ban landmines around the world. The Clinton administration had opposed the so-called Ottawa Process. Increasing U.S. and international political pressure persuaded the president to switch his positions.’”

The Rev. Kathy F. Hlatshwayo [Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod] requested that copies of the 1991 “Social Statement on Abortion” be distributed to assembly members who lacked the text. Bishop Anderson suggested that at the point of discussion of that issue he would determine the need for further distribution and asked that persons who do not have a copy come to the distribution desk for a copy.

Ms. Gloria J. Ware [Greater Milwaukee Synod] moved to limit debate:

MOVED; *Two-Thirds Vote Required*
SECONDED; *Yes-669; No-165*

CARRIED: **To limit debate on the proposed statement on sacramental practices to two minutes per speech.**

The Rev. Rolf A. Jacobson [Saint Paul Area Synod] then moved:

MOVED; *Two-Thirds Vote Required*
SECONDED; *Yes-311; No-513*
DEFEATED: To amend the Rules of Procedure, Section I, page 13, at the end of the first paragraph by adding, “Speeches will be limited to three in favor and three opposed to each action on which the assembly will be voting.”

Following those actions, Bishop Anderson noted that the proposed statement on sacramental practices was introduced to assembly members on Friday afternoon, August 15, and that the text was considered during three open hearings. He also drew the attention of assembly members to a document containing the text of amendments proposed to this statement, which had been distributed to them. Bishop Anderson noted that the Church Council had recommended emendation of the text of Principle 7 on page six of the document, as indicated in the printed text. “If the assembly adopts the resolution before it without amendment, the change will be made in the final text,” he said.

The text of the recommendation of the Church Council was as follows.

MOVED;
SECONDED: To amend *A Proposed Statement on the Practice of Word and Sacrament—The Use of the Means of Grace* by deleting the word, “Sunday,” from principle number seven; and

To adopt *A Proposed Statement on the Practice of Word and Sacrament—The Use of the Means of Grace* for guidance and practice in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

The Rev. Terri K. Stagner [Southeastern Synod] inquired about the process the assembly would follow as it took up the statement and amendments to it. Bishop Anderson replied that it was his intention to consider the document page by page, calling for amendments accordingly.

Bishop Anderson then invited to the podium the Rev. M. Wyvetta Bullock, executive director of the Division for Congregational Ministries, and Mr. Richard

Moe, chair of the division's board, together with the Rev. Karen G. Bockelman, the Rev. Nancy I. Amacher, and the Rev. Gordon W. Lathrop, who were members of the task force that developed the proposed statement. Bishop Richard F. Bansemer [Virginia Synod] and Bishop Charles H. Maahs [Central States Synod] also participated in the development of the document. The Rev. Paul R. Nelson, director for worship, and the Rev. Michael R. Rothaar, director for planning and congregational studies in the Division for Congregational Ministries, also were present. Bishop Anderson thanked them for serving as resource persons for the discussion of the statement.

Bishop Anderson proceeded to clarify the process for discussion, which would treat both the recommendation of the Church Council and the text of the proposed statement itself. He indicated that ten minutes would be allotted to general discussion of the text after which specific amendments would be considered. The chair will proceed through the document page by page and for the sake of good order, Bishop Anderson asked that persons wishing to introduce amendments proceed to the microphones only when the relevant page was under discussion. He said, "All amendments that have been submitted are printed on the page that has been distributed. Persons making amendments need to clearly state their name, the page of the statement they are addressing, and the number assigned to their amendment. I underscore that having an amendment printed in the sheet does not necessarily mean that it is going to be considered. These sheets are printed just to give you [the voting members] full information. The amendments have status only when they are moved and seconded and then we go into the normal rules of debate." There was no objection to the process as outlined.

The Rev. Karen S. Parker [Rocky Mountain Synod] requested that copies of the amendments be distributed to those who lacked the text.

Pastor Bullock introduced the document. She expressed thanks and gratitude to the task force and the board of the Division for Congregational Ministries, the members of which had brought the document through the development process to the Church Council and to the Churchwide Assembly. Bishop Anderson then invited general discussion of the text. There being none, Bishop Anderson proceeded sequentially through the document, calling for amendments page by page.

Ms. Ida Marie Hakkarinen [Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod] moved the following:

MOVED;

SECONDED: To amend *A Proposed Statement on the Practice of Word and Sacrament—The Use of the Means of Grace*, page seven, Application Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod, by inserting the following

sentence at the beginning of the paragraph: "Ordained ministers and lay people participate in the Christian assembly."

Ms. Hakkarinen spoke to her amendment, "My intent is to have the sentence, 'Ordained ministers and lay people participate in the Christian assembly' to say that both ordained ministers and lay people participate in the Christian assembly and then the remainder states the way that lay people do that."

MOVED;

SECONDED;

Yes—343; No—431

DEFEATED: To amend *A Proposed Statement on the Practice of Word and Sacrament—The Use of the Means of Grace*, page seven, Application Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod, by inserting the following sentence at the beginning of the paragraph: "Ordained ministers and lay people participate in the Christian assembly."

Mr. Mark Borchers [Western Iowa Synod] sought to move to delete the word, "Sunday," and add the word, "weekly," in its place on page six, Principle 7. The Rev. Paul R. Nelson responded, "The original logic of this section of the document was to hold up Sunday in Principle 6 as a particularly important day for Christian worship. When Sunday has been proposed to disappear [the amendment suggested by the Church Council] out of Principle 7, the effect of that in some reader's mind is simply to affirm strongly that worship does not take place without the reading of Scriptures. This amendment seems to slightly change that question again to the regularity or the day regarding worship. That needs to be a decision that is made by the [Churchwide] Assembly." Bishop Anderson stated, "While the motion is technically in order now, I would invite the maker of the motion to do that again when we are done going through the document and come back to the main motion, because the main motion does have that specific item pulled out and it would help us keep focused." Mr. Borchers agreed.

Ms. Judith L. Garber [Lower Susquehanna Synod] moved the following:

MOVED;

SECONDED: To substitute for the last sentence of Principle 10, the sentence, "It confesses the Apostles', Nicene, or Athanasian Creed and none other."

Ms. Garber identified herself as a non-rostered lay person. She said, "When I worship at an unfamiliar ELCA congregation and I am asked to join in a creed

other than these three, I believe I am called on to ascertain the orthodoxy, the right doctrine of this new creed and I am not trained to do that. I do not wish to confess an unorthodox creed. The creeds have presented the faith of the church for hundreds of years and our mothers and fathers in the faith commend them to us. . . . We cannot improve on the creeds of the Church, the creeds which our own ELCA constitution accepts as true declarations of the faith of this church. What we say about God is important as we speak the Gospel clearly to believers and unbelievers alike. We should include this in our statement describing the normative practice of the church.”

The Rev. Waldemar E. Meyer Jr. [Florida-Bahamas Synod] objected that the amendment would eliminate some of the creative practices in his parish, such as “Martin Luther’s explanation of the First Article, and would eliminate one of the things that I have written and used every Christmas for worship I would like to be able to continue to use these and feel that I am orthodox.”

The Rev. Robert S. Jones [South Dakota Synod] concurred with Pastor Meyer, acknowledging that his congregation “in some of our contemporary worship we are utilizing the explanations from the Small Catechism, the Articles of the Creed, and we feel that’s a very useful and creative way of expressing our faith that is also truly orthodox.”

Speaking against the amendment, Ms. Carole M. Silvoy [Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod] stated that she was particularly against using the words “and no other.” She commented, “While I honor the orthodoxy and the history that is carried in the creeds that we do use, even the Athanasian Creed, there is an expression of our faith in contemporary worship and in translations to other languages which often need to have a cultural base that will carry the intent and the meaning. . . . The words are very important, but it is the meaning that is conveyed that is the most important.”

The Rev. Stephen L. Shriner [East-Central Synod of Wisconsin] concurred, observing that for the members of his congregation, the language of the traditional creeds was more than they could completely understand; he has paraphrased, therefore, the creeds in language they can understand more readily. Pastor Shriner denied that his congregation was acting in an unorthodox manner, but, he said, “to bind us to those three [creeds] would be to take something away from our American Indian people and other ethnic communities as well, and place them in that European mind set which is one of the things which has caused some problems within our church and our relationship to America’s native peoples.”

The Rev. George M. Minick [Lower Susquehanna Synod] spoke in favor of the amendment, saying, “I believe that words do mean things and we need to be careful about the words that we choose to identify the God who it is we are worshiping. It was important for the framers, the compilers of our *Book of Concord*. They put the creeds in the very beginning of the *Book of Concord* so that it could be established by the reformers that they were anchoring themselves in the things that

they believed, taught, and confessed in the ancient and apostolic faith We’ve not, to my understanding of American Lutheranism or Lutheranism anywhere in the world, subscribed to any other kind of creed and we need to be clear about that in the multiplicities of worship and all the other things that seem to be named as God in the American culture.”

The Rev. Hans O. Andrae [Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod], speaking in favor of the amendment, affirmed, “Our church, this church, confesses the Apostles’, Nicene, and the Athanasian creeds and none other. We lift up the ancient symbol of our faith, the faith of the Church catholic and apostolic.”

The Rev. Dennis E. Remenschneider [North/West Lower Michigan Synod] observed that the amendment was unnecessary and therefore spoke against the amendment. He said, “Because we have that statement already in our Confession of Faith [Chapter Two of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*] that we have agreed to as members of the ELCA, it is unnecessary to repeat it here.”

The Rev. Roger A. McKinstry [Northeastern Iowa Synod] inquired of the committee, “Why did they feel the sense of footnoting the Athanasian Creed rather than putting it as part of the Principle [10], even given the rarity of its use?” Pastor Bockelmann responded, “This particular principle speaks to the assembled congregation participating in proclaiming the Word of God with a common voice. Therefore, as some previous speakers have pointed out, there is nothing in this principle which would deny what is in our Confession of Faith as the ELCA. We wanted to focus on what happens with the assembled congregation Even among our congregations it is not every congregation that uses the Athanasian Creed even one Sunday a year.”

The Rev. John K. Stendahl [New England Synod] acknowledged that the intent of the proposed amendment—the concern to avoid confusion, the concern for the unity of the Church, the concern for heterodoxy—was admirable and understandable. But, he said, “this [amendment] also seems to me to violate the intent and tone of the document; it makes a juridical statement about what is permissible. The creed, after all, is a statement of faith But creed is also that which is confessed in worship. If we were to use Martin Luther’s paraphrase of the creed in his hymn, ‘We All Believe in One True God,’ would that be a violation? . . . If we speak with other words the one faith which unites us, we should not feel ourselves under the judgment of this document.”

Mr. Lloyd Gundvaldsen [South Dakota Synod] called the question:

MOVED;

Two-Thirds Vote Required

SECONDED;

Yes—830; No—29

CARRIED: To move the previous question.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

Yes-162; No-710

DEFEATED: To substitute for the last sentence of Principle 10, the sentence, “It confesses the Apostles’, Nicene, or Athanasian Creed and none other.”

Mr. Thomas F. Koch [New England Synod] moved the following

MOVED;

SECONDED: To amend page 13, Principle 20 by deleting the phrase, “the candidates and/or their family,” and substituting the phrase, “the candidates and, so far as possible, their family.”

Mr. Koch spoke to the amendment, stating that the amendment was “simply for the purpose of reducing the confusion that has crept in by the use of the construction ‘and/or’” and to clarify the meaning of that portion of the principle.

Ms. Joy Elizabeth Shoffner [North Carolina Synod] offered as a friendly amendment the following:

MOVED;

SECONDED: To substitute the phrase, “their respective families,” for the word, “family,” in the previous amendment.

Speaking to her amendment, Ms. Shoffner identified herself as an English teacher and suggested the editorial correction to the amendment.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

Yes-830; No-28

CARRIED: To substitute the phrase, “their respective families,” for the word, “family,” in the previous amendment.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

Yes-803; No-42

CARRIED: To amend page 13, Principle 20 by deleting the phrase, “the candidates and/or their family,” and substituting the phrase, “the candidates and, so far as possible, their respective families.”

The Rev. John H. P. Reumann [Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod] moved:

MOVED;

SECONDED: To amend on page 21, the title for Principle 35, substituting the word, “Regularly,” for the word, “Weekly.”

Pastor Reumann spoke to the amendment, noting, “This is an attempt to get at a question that confronts us in many ways by a more accurate presentation of the Lutheran confessions and the church situation today.” He suggested that the word “frequently” could also be used and referred to the 1978 and 1989 statements. Pastor Lathrop responded on behalf of the task force, noting that “the hope of the task force and of the division was to continue the counsel of the 1978 statement adopted again in 1989, not to change the momentum of ‘teaching and love’ which invites our congregations to find the Lord’s Supper as a weekly celebration of the congregation. While the task force and the division believes there is clear confessional teaching in this regard in Article XXIV of the *Apology to the Augsburg Confession*, the document does not mean at all to be coercive but simply to assert quite clearly with the word ‘weekly’ that in fact the celebration of the Lord’s Supper on the Lord’s Day is the norm of our church’s life and one we mean to move toward by teaching and love.”

The Rev. Stephen Goodwin [Indiana-Kentucky Synod] spoke in favor of the amendment. He said, “I am very sensitive to the fact that for a considerable period of time many of our congregations have not celebrated the sacrament weekly. . . . This amendment does nothing to undermine our confessions, it does nothing but affirm that growing trend toward weekly communion. I do feel that a title that says, ‘Holy Communion is Celebrated Weekly’ may reflect our confessions and our goal but not a practical reality [especially] for those congregations who sometimes feel that their practice is somehow not approved by the folks on the cutting edge. I believe this amendment speaks affirmation to all of the practices we share. . . . It may prove a very pastoral change.”

The Rev. Anthony R. Auer [Southern California (West) Synod] spoke against the amendment and stated that the *Augsburg Confession* indicated clearly that ‘Church’ is ‘Word and Sacrament.’ “That means if you have regular assembly on Sunday, you should be practicing both the preaching of the Word, the hearing of the Word, as well as the administering of the Sacrament.”

The Rev. Steven D. Olson [East-Central Synod of Wisconsin] observed that as the current document was written, he perceived the language to be legalistic and stated that ‘frequently’ is more accurate and helpful.

The Rev. Mary B. Zurell [Delaware-Maryland Synod] spoke in favor of the original terminology, because neither “regularly” nor “frequently” was precise. She commented, “If you look in the grand scope of things, ‘regularly’ and

‘frequently’ can be construed to mean once a year or once a century Weekly at least gives us a seven-day period.”

The Rev. Susan E. Nagle [New Jersey Synod] suggested that this amendment would “wisely” take this church in two directions. She said, “The first is that it is not necessary to commune at every occasion of attention to the Word of God in prayer; the other is that the answer to the question, ‘How often should one commune?’ seems to me to be as often as possible. . . . I would urge that we use the word ‘regularly’ rather than ‘weekly.’”

The Rev. William L. Hurst Jr. [Metropolitan New York Synod] spoke in opposition to the amendment. He said, “The fact is that the title of this section describes a fact. . . . This says that our churches will provide the means of grace in all their fullness weekly—by invitation, not by coercion.”

The Rev. Jerry L. Collell [Sierra Pacific Synod] spoke in favor of the amendment and observed, “The rest of this document purports to be descriptive—this feels very prescriptive.”

The Rev. Fred S. Opalinski [Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod] observed that one of the reasons for an increase in the number of congregations that celebrate weekly communion is that this church “has been unambiguous about the need to move in that direction to have the fullness of the church.” This is not the time to “waffle” on the issue, he said, as he spoke in opposition to the amendment.

The Rev. Jack E. Eggleston [Southeast Michigan Synod] called the question.

MOVED; *Two-Thirds Vote Required*
SECONDED; *Yes—864; No—38*
CARRIED: To move the previous question.

MOVED;
SECONDED; *Yes—321; No—577*
DEFEATED: To amend on page 21, the title for Principle 35, substituting the word, “Regularly,” for the word, “Weekly.”

The Rev. John H. P. Reumann [Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod] then moved:

MOVED;
SECONDED: To amend on page 21, Principle 35, to read, “Responding to abuses in doctrine and practice in the medieval Mass, the Augsburg Confession answered ‘that we do not abolish the Mass. . . . In our churches Mass is celebrated every Sunday and on other festivals

when the sacrament is offered to those who wish for it after they have been examined and absolved.’ Historically, Lutheran churches have varied in A.D. 1530 and since then, as to whether each congregation celebrated the sacrament weekly and as to the frequency of reception.”

Pastor Reumann spoke to his motion, stating that his amendment would “change the principle by actually quoting what the *Apology to the Augsburg Confession* says. . . . It is not something, incidentally, that is said in the same way in the *Augsburg Confession* itself. The addition [of his proposed amendment] then goes on to indicate that in 1530 Lutheran churches varied . . . in any case, Lutherans have varied considerably under orthodoxy, pietism, rationalism, the liturgical renewal, and now in the mega-churches. Finally, the last clause distinguishes . . . the frequency of celebration and frequency of reception. I present it in order to provide a more accurate description of what our confessional documents say and the history of the situation while still continuing to point towards regular, frequent, and in some cases, weekly celebration.”

Bishop Curtis H. Miller [Western Iowa Synod] observed that the amendment “was more a statement of background that might better be added as a section of background rather than substitute for a principle.”

Mr. Ted Beitelschees [Northwestern Ohio Synod] spoke against the proposed amendment, concurring that it provided background information and “I also fear that certain sections of it could be misinterpreted and counter to our ecumenical stance and commitment that we have made. In short, I feel these words are superfluous at best, inflammatory at worst.”

Ms. Gloria J. Ware [Greater Milwaukee Synod] called the question.

MOVED; *Two-Thirds Vote Required*
SECONDED; *Yes—841; No—60*
CARRIED: To move the previous question.

MOVED;
SECONDED; *Yes—152; No—765*
DEFEATED: To amend on page 21, Principle 35, to read, “Responding to abuses in doctrine and practice in the medieval Mass, the Augsburg Confession answered ‘that we do not abolish the Mass. . . . In our churches Mass is celebrated every Sunday and on other festivals when the sacrament is offered to those who wish for it after they have been examined and absolved.’ Historically, Lutheran churches

have varied in A.D. 1530 and since then, as to whether each congregation celebrated the sacrament weekly and as to the frequency of reception.”

Pastor Reumann then offered a further amendment:

MOVED;

SECONDED: To amend the proposed statement on sacramental practices by adding to page 22, Application 35b, the clause, “but not every service need be a Eucharist.”

Speaking to the motion, Pastor Reumann said that “the emphasis on weekly Eucharist services has often led to a misunderstanding that every service needs to be a Eucharist. That has sometimes led to problems in parishes It is also an important understanding that has already been voiced here that it is not unimportant in our outreach to the unchurched, to various ethnic groups, and with ecumenical partners who vary considerably on frequency of Eucharistic celebration.”

The amendment was adopted without further discussion.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

Yes—549; No—362

CARRIED: To amend the proposed statement on sacramental practices by adding to page 22, Application 35b, the clause, “but not every service need be a Eucharist.”

Pastor Reumann then moved:

MOVED;

SECONDED: To amend the proposed statement on sacramental practices, page 23, Background 37b, in the following manner: In line 10, omit the word, “Although.” Place a period in line 11 after the word, “infants.” Capitalize the first letter in the word, “Members.” At the end of the paragraph, after the word, “discussion,” add the clause, “but further study is needed.” The sentences thus would read “. . . school-age children. *A Statement on Communion Practices* precluded the communion of infants. Members . . . discussion, but further study is needed.”

Pastor Reumann said, “What I wish to raise is the infant communion question, first of all, by the items presented in this amendment. I do this because, while the committee has tried to walk a delicate line, it has sought to solve it by an appeal to congregationalism. I do not think that’s the right route to go—to have every congregation do what it and its pastor wish to do. Secondly, if there is to be a major change of this sort toward infant communion, and the report tries to nuance this but it moves in that direction, it deserves major and full debate rather than the method that is adopted by saying in effect, ‘Well, if some do it and families with infants come, then that practice ought to be extended to that congregation’ . . . [The amendment] is to raise this basic question and indicate my dissatisfaction with the appeal to congregationalism and not openly discussing the question.” Pastor Nelson responded on behalf of the task force by offering, “A point of what I hope is clarification. In the presentation on the floor of the assembly earlier, the task force tried to make the point that the principle of unity that was being advocated in this document was not a question related to age or developmental level as it had been before, but that it was resting on the question of mutual conversation where that happens most pastorally. That happens in congregations. What the effect of this document (as it stands prior to the amendment) would be to say that the place to look for unity is whether or not every congregation is involved in that pastoral conversation with every potential communicant—not whether the age is consistent within the congregation or between congregations.”

The Rev. Synde Manion [Southern California (West) Synod] requested Pastor Lathrop to provide additional background information on infant communion. Pastor Lathrop responded, “While in my younger years I might have used the words ‘infant communion,’ I think I might hesitate to do that today. What the document is about is the communion of the baptized and about the sense that a congregation gathers around the communion of the baptized. . . . Christ really acts in Holy Communion and at the same time always the Holy Communion is addressed to faith; always it calls for us to trust what Christ has given and in fact he gives us the very means for that trust. What I see the statement trying to do is to back off from the 1978 decision of a standard age based on educational principles only rather than theological principles and I see it saying that there is no principle in Scripture and the confessions for us to be able to decide this issue in a way that is only based on age. . . . Congregations are invited to see the principle we have available—the principle of mutual consultation and conversation.”

The Rev. Leon L. Stier [Southeastern Minnesota Synod] expressed concern about how “the folks back home” will feel about our decisions on this document and spoke in favor of the amendment. He said, “Weekly Holy Communion is not the practice in many congregations . . . but even less so is infant communion the practice. Granted this document is not coercive but we were told that this document as passed will determine how our church publishing house will present these matters in subsequent materials. With a clear biblical or confessional mandate, this body could and should go against common practice; but without such a clear

biblical or confessional mandate and with the wide disagreement on this matter, not only in congregations but also among many pastors and in our seminaries, I think it unwise to even begin in this way yet another divisive conversation in our church that is already so divided on so many things. . . . I think this document makes infant communion the normative practice in the several places it is mentioned.”

The Rev. Robert C. Reier [Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod] rose to query whether the motion had been seconded, to which Bishop Anderson replied affirmatively.

The Rev. Judith A. Spindt [Caribbean Synod] spoke against the amendment and remarked, “McDonalds has a hamburger university. I hope that we do not try to establish a franchise operation with a bread and wine university.”

The Rev. Kurt O. Handrich [South-Central Synod of Wisconsin] in opposition to the amendment noted, “We baptize infants because we believe over against others who say that you have to have an understanding that it is God who acts. It seems we have a contradiction if we make communion so that you have to have an understanding.”

The Rev. Wayne C. Pfannkuch [Northeastern Iowa Synod] spoke against the amendment, asking the assembly to “look at page 1 [1997 Pre-Assembly Report, Section IV, page 1 where it says,] ‘The purpose of this statement is to encourage common practice . . .’ and we seem to be moving toward ‘requiring’ in a lot of these amendments. I feel that we need to be speaking a word of grace, and I think the document does that, and not moving more and more toward ‘requiring’ and ‘restricting.’”

Mr. Ken A. Grant [North/West Lower Michigan Synod] observed that he opposed the amendment because “I believe this document is asking us to offer the possibility to those children and not saying you must. It is very important for us to be able to say to our congregations that we have the opportunity to share the grace of God as embodied in the Eucharist with all members of our community that are baptized.”

Ms. Judy J. Bultman [Southeastern Synod] shared a personal story, stating, “I came into the Lutheran church 28 years ago, and, after much discussion with my husband, decided to have my infant baptized. On the basis of many theological discussions, I came to the decision that it was not what I did or what my child did, but by the grace of God that I brought my child to him. My child could do nothing to earn this grace. He did not have to understand it, he did not have to believe, it was a gift of God. So it is very difficult for me after that to come to the realization that I could not bring my child to the Lord’s Table. . . . My children are grown now and I love my Lutheran church, but I beg of you to think about God’s children; to ‘suffer the little children to come unto him, for such is the kingdom of God.’”

The Rev. Franklin D. Fry [New Jersey Synod] spoke in favor of the amendment. Referring to the previous day’s vote on the *Concordat of Agreement*

with The Episcopal Church, he reminded voting members that during this Churchwide Assembly “we have found it impossible for us to act together on several other matters before this assembly, . . . because we did not think we had come to maturity of study and understanding sufficient to make such a major decision. I submit that was a far less significant question than this. Structural questions are hardly in the same rank as sacramental questions, especially for Lutherans. We certainly have need for further study as the amendment calls for before we make a definitive action on this matter. For example, is there an appropriate distinction between the two sacraments? Or could we just very fastly say, ‘Well, they are both by grace and that takes care of it.’ The tradition of the Christian Church has not said that, much less our own confessions.” He also drew attention to practical difficulties that may arise from differing congregational practice.

Mr. Donald Hanson [Western North Dakota] called the question:

MOVED;

Two-Thirds Vote Required

SECONDED;

Yes–844; No–90

CARRIED: To move the previous question.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

Yes–304; No–643

DEFEATED: To amend the proposed statement on sacramental practices, page 23, Background 37b, in the following manner: In line 10, omit the word, “Although.” Place a period in line 11 after the word, “infants.” Capitalize the first letter in the word, “Members.” At the end of the paragraph, after the word, “discussion,” add the clause, “but further study is needed.” The sentences thus would read “. . . school-age children. *A Statement on Communion Practices* precluded the communion of infants. Members . . . discussion, but further study is needed.”

The Rev. Terri K. Stagner [Southeastern Synod] moved:

MOVED;

SECONDED: To amend the proposed statement on sacramental practices, page 23, Applications 37d and 37e as follows:

To delete Application 37d;

To delete the second sentence of Application 37e, “When infants and young children are communed, the parents and sponsors receive instruction and the children are taught throughout their development.”

Pastor Stagner said that she offered the amendment “out of concern for congregational members and for local pastors. . . . In a matter which is so central to our theology, I am concerned with a shift from making confessionally-based churchwide decisions to making congregationally-based decisions. In such a confessionally-based issue, it seems haphazard to encourage individual congregations to determine appropriate age for admission to Holy Communion. Similarly, I feel that this proposal, while it calls for good order, the reciprocal nature of it in fact causes disorder. With the reciprocal nature of hospitality of the Table between congregations, this would in fact by default require pastors to respect the decisions to commune infants that would take place in other congregations upon receipt of new members. Finally, I am concerned for the lack of publicity and preparation of congregation members for a move toward infant communion being allowed and being encouraged and required because of reciprocity. If *The Lutheran* cover page had said, ‘Assembly to vote on infant communion’ how many of your phones would have been ringing off the hook? I have great concern for the lack of preparation of members that has happened prior to making this decision. Rather than create a crisis and then teach members, I propose that we teach and we study and we grow toward a shift in piety and practice.”

Pastor Bullock requested an opportunity for a response from the task force. Pastor Lathrop stated, “The division and the task force are insistent that this document does not mean to require or even to encourage infant communion. It does mean to allow it since it is in fact taking place. . . . The fact is that we have data in the history of the Church from the third century that children were being baptized, in the same data we have information that they were from their baptism brought to the Supper of Christ. . . . The point here is simply to say that congregations that have that ancient practice (and there are a few in our communion) are welcome to do so—not that we are required by any means or that the statement intends to encourage that that take place; but it does not forbid it.”

The Rev. Susan L. Engh [Minneapolis Area Synod] spoke against the amendment and observed that educational materials addressing this matter are readily available. She indicated that she has used them in her ministry, and they have been well received.

Bishop George P. Mocko [Delaware-Maryland Synod] observed, “Do we realize the significance of the action we are taking here? The Western church and the Eastern church have been different in their theology of sacrament. The Western church has said that we have some kind of response—Luther’s Large Catechism makes this pretty clear—the Eastern church has said nothing about response. When we have made these motions that accept infant communion we are placing ourselves within the sacramental theology of the Eastern church and not the Western.”

The Rev. Hans H. Wiersma [Sierra Pacific Synod] inquired, “Noting that we are now in full communion with three Reformed bodies and that a majority [of this assembly] still desires full communion with The Episcopal Church, will a decision to permit the communion of infants affect those full communion relationships in any negative way?” Pastor Nelson responded, “Since the decision [on this issue in the sacramental practices document] was not made when those full communion proposals were designed and when they were brought to you for a vote, it seems to me that we are on the edge now of one area of sacramental practice and theology where your voted commitment to full communion means that we are now committed, whatever your decision on this question is, to engage with the churches of those three Reformed bodies in serious theological conversation.”

The Rev. Maria E. Erling [New England Synod] requested clarification about Application 37d, and the comments about the Western and Eastern churches made by Bishop Mocko. She said, “I assume when I read this statement 37d [Application 37d] about infants and children communed for the first time during the service [in which they are baptized] that reference is being made to the practice of the Eastern Orthodox church in which a one time reception of the sacrament is allowed for an infant who is baptized; but that that does not necessarily continue immediately.” Pastor Bullock responded, “It would not necessarily be continued but it would be that the infant could be or may be communed at the time of baptism.” Pastor Paul Nelson added, “It might be helpful to recall that in both the Eastern church and the Western church this was shared sacramental policy for a number of centuries. In fact, it did not ‘bite the dust’ in the West until the Fourth Lateran Council in A.D. 1215. So for more than a thousand years this was shared practice or shared insight even if the practice was not as robust in churches of both the East and the West.”

The Rev. Scott S. Custead [Allegheny Synod] remarked that he hungered for a little uniformity of practice in this age of increased mobility, especially in larger congregations, where pastors may not know all the communicants. He said, “I do not oppose infant communion, but I hear the tenor of this [amendment] asking us to find some sort of common practice amongst ourselves so that the practice assists me as I deal with people. I would like infant communion but this drop to congregationalism—everybody doing what they want—is not helpful to me.”

Bishop Steven L. Ullestad [Northeastern Iowa Synod] called the question.

MOVED;

Two-Thirds Vote Required

SECONDED;

Yes-814; No-80

CARRIED: To move the previous question.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

Yes-251; No-684

DEFEATED: To amend the proposed statement on sacramental practices, page 23, Applications 37d and 37e as follows:

To delete Application 37d;

To delete the second sentence of Application 37e, "When infants and young children are communed, the parents and sponsors receive instruction and the children are taught throughout their development."

Bishop Anderson called for the order of the day.

Presentation: World Hunger Program, Lutheran World Federation, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, Lutheran World Relief

Bishop Anderson introduced the presentation by remarking that, in past assemblies, the assembly members had heard separately the reports of four significant ministries of this church that work to alleviate suffering and advocate justice throughout the world. At this assembly, those ministries would present a unified report. The names and acronyms of these ministries can sometimes be confusing to those who do not work regularly with these justice and service ministries, said Bishop Anderson. He continued, "It is a remarkable gift to us to have these organizations and the way they work together in a coordinated and complementary way. We are hoping that this presentation will help you understand the interdependence of these organizations and their dependence on you for your effective and strong stewardship efforts."

Bishop Anderson called to the dias the Rev. John L. Halvorson, coordinator for the ELCA World Hunger Program in the Division for Church in Society; Ms. Kathryn F. Wolford, executive director of Lutheran World Relief; Ms. Musimbi Kanyoro, executive secretary for women in church and society of the

Lutheran World Federation; and Mr. Ralston H. Deffenbaugh Jr., executive director of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service.

Pastor Halvorson acknowledged that "Thank you" was the message that he wanted to leave with assembly members. He expressed gratitude because the final Hunger Appeal income reached almost \$12 million in 1996; because the Hunger Appeal was able to channel \$12 million into international relief and development, domestic relief and development, hunger education and hunger advocacy; because the Hunger Appeal was able to give wings to \$.83 of every dollar offered." He stated that more than \$24 million go from ELCA congregations every year into local hunger and poverty ministries. He thanked assembly members for their aid in volunteer fund-raising, petition signing, and letter writing. Pastor Halvorson thanked the members of this church "even though 1996 contributions fell short of the program's goal; even though congregational giving declined more than \$400,000 during this biennium; even though there was considerable competition from other organizations for financial support; even though we know that 20-25 percent of all ELCA congregations contribute no offerings to the ELCA World Hunger Program. We thank you 'because of' and we thank you 'even though.' Thanks be to God for you. . . . Thank you, God; . . . thank you, ELCA; . . . thank you for being a channel for God's compassion and justice," he said.

Pastor Halvorson then introduced Ms. Wolford, who brought greetings from the board of directors and the staff of Lutheran World Relief (LWR). She said, "For over 50 years Lutherans have put faith into action through the ministry of LWR." The question, "Who is my neighbor?" provided a focus for Ms. Wolford's remarks. She highlighted as examples of neighbors the stories of persons that Lutheran World Relief had aided in Eritrea, Angola, the Philippines, and Kampuchea. Ms. Wolford also drew attention to the issue of the banning of landmines and the need for continuing advocacy on that issue. She concluded, "A good neighbor is the one who shows mercy and works for justice. Freed and empowered by God's grace in Jesus Christ, we are called to go forth joyfully and do likewise."

Ms. Kanyoro also began her comments with words of thanks. She recalled that in the Lutheran communion "we celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and of Lutheran World Relief, which rose out of the ashes of World War II, creating life out of that death." The assembly then viewed a video presentation on the organization's history, "The LWF at 50." Ms. Kanyoro highlighted the ongoing work of two LWF departments. The Department for Mission and Development sponsors more than 500 projects in mission, development, and communication, and strengthens church bodies, parishes, and church-related institutions as well as contributing to the well-being of the communities and the environment in areas served by the church. A clean water project for four communities in Bolivia, she said, represents an example of the fruits of an LWF partnership. The Department for World Service responds to

emergencies and provides relief, for example, in former Yugoslavia. In 1996, that department supplied in relief and development assistance \$90 million plus \$12 million in donated commodities. She explained that work with refugees is now coordinated through Action by Churches Together (ACT), saying, “This is a worldwide network of churches and their related agencies committed to meeting human need through a coordinated, imaginative response. ACT is organizationally based in the LWF as well as in the World Council of Churches (WCC).” A video describing ACT’s work with refugees in Bosnia was shown.

Ms. Kanyoro noted that after 50 years, working with refugees is still the trademark of the federation, a ministry that works in cooperation with Lutheran Immigration and Refugees Service.

Mr. Deffenbaugh advised that in another two years Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS) would celebrate its sixtieth anniversary. He identified the work of the LIRS as “our church’s ministry which brings new hope and new life to refugees and immigrants in the United States.” He highlighted the work of the organization among refugees from Bosnia, and said, “This past year, of the 7,640 refugees LIRS resettled in the U.S., more than 2,000 were Bosnians out of Croatia, Serbia, and Germany.” Working through local partner offices and working with church and community volunteers, the service aids refugees by providing housing, health screening, and food. LIRS helps them to learn English, acquire job skills, meet neighbors, and navigate public transportation. Mr. Deffenbaugh invited assembly members “to discover the joy of giving new hope and new life through LIRS whether as a sponsor, mentor, advocate, friend, or supporter.” He thanked this church for prayers and support, and expressed appreciation for the privilege of serving our Lord through Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service.

Recess

Bishop Anderson invited Secretary Almen to make several announcements. He announced that this day’s anniversary to be celebrated in the Heritage and Hope Village at 1:30 P.M. would be the 50th anniversary of the formation of the Lutheran World Federation.

Ms. Gloria J. Ware [Greater Milwaukee Synod] then moved:

MOVED; *Two-Thirds Vote Required*
SECONDED; *Yes—374; No—414*
DEFEATED: To begin Plenary Session Ten at 2:00 P.M., rather than at 2:30 P.M.

Bishop Theodore F. Schneider [Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod] rose to a point of personal privilege to thank the Lutheran World Federation for its report and to thank Ms. Kathryn F. Wolford for the campaign against landmines she had initiated when she addressed the triennial convention of Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America a year ago, specifically the petition campaign against the construction and use of landmines. He reminded assembly members that the signing of petitions was crucial and urged the assembly members to do so during the midday recess.

Bishop Guy S. Edmiston [Lower Susquehanna Synod] asked Bishop Anderson whether, in his judgment, there would be a need for an evening session of the assembly? Bishop Anderson replied that, if the assembly could complete action on the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* and on ecumenical relationships with The Episcopal Church, there would be no need for an evening session.

Mr. Charles W. Horn III [Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod] inquired about distribution of the results of the first common ballot for the filling of vacancies on the Church Council and other churchwide boards and committees. Bishop Anderson responded that the results of the first common ballot would be at the voting members’ seats when they returned from lunch.

Bishop Anderson then appointed the *ad hoc* committee concerning ecumenical relationships with The Episcopal Church. Membership would consist of Ms. Katherine Kelker [Montana Synod], Bishop Ralph A. Kempfski [Indiana-Kentucky Synod], Bishop Steven L. Ullestad [Northeastern Iowa Synod], Mr. Albert Quie [Minneapolis Area Synod], the Rev. William N. Esborn [Upper Susquehanna Synod], Bishop Peter Rogness [Greater Milwaukee Synod], the Rev. Franklin D. Fry [New Jersey Synod], the Rev. Harold S. Weiss [Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod], the Rev. Deborah Ann Taylor [Minneapolis Area Synod], and Bishop Charles H. Maahs [Central States Synod], chair. Bishop Anderson asked that the members meet first with him following the close of the plenary session.

Bishop Anderson introduced the Rev. David A. Andert, a member of the Church Council, who led assembly members in the hymn, “We Come to the Hungry Feast,” and the closing prayer.

At the conclusion of the hymn and prayer, the Churchwide Assembly recessed at 12:37 P.M.

Plenary Session Ten

Tuesday, August 19, 1997

2:30 P.M.—6:00 P.M.

The Rev. H. George Anderson, presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, called Plenary Session Ten to order at 2:34 P.M. on Tuesday, August 19, 1997.

Report of the Elections Committee

Reference: Report of the Elections Committee; Appendix A: Results of First Common Ballot; continued on *Minutes*, pages 411, 679, 789.

Bishop Anderson called upon Mr. Phillip H. Harris, ELCA general counsel and chair of the Elections Committee, to report the results of the first common ballot for filling vacancies on the Church Council and churchwide boards and committees. Mr. Harris noted that the printed report had been distributed to voting members for reference. There were 85 tickets on the first ballot; 62 of these resulted in elections. In 23 cases no candidate had received a majority of the ballots cast; therefore, a second common ballot would be distributed later in the afternoon for completion of the remaining elections. Bishop Anderson declared those who had received a majority of the ballots cast be elected to their respective positions as follows:

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

CA97.5.22 To receive the written report of the Elections Committee on the results of the first ballot for Church Council and churchwide board and committee vacancies, to dispense with the reading of the results, and to request that the chair hereby declare elected, in keeping with this church's bylaws, those persons receiving a majority of the votes cast.

Church Council

Pr. Fred S. Opalinski, Latrobe, Pa. (8B)

Pr. Karen S. Parker, Englewood, Colo. (2E)

Pr. Mario C. Miranda, Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico (9F)

Ms. Sally Young, Cedar Falls, Iowa (5F)

Ms. Ida Marie Hakkarinen, College Park, Md. (8G)

Ms. Lily R. Wu, Elmhurst (Queens), N.Y. (7C)

Mr. David F. Hagen, Dearborn Heights, Mich. (6A)

Division for Congregational Ministries

Pr. Carla J. Nelson, Detroit, Mich. (6A)

Ms. Jane Floy, Fairport, N.Y. (7D)

Mr. Timothy L. Barr, Rosenberg, Texas (4F)

Division for Ministry

Pr. J. Paul Rajashekar, Wyndmoor, Pa. (7A)

Ms. Phyllis C. Wiederhoeft, Madison, Wis. (5K)

Mr. Kevin J. Boatright, Madison, Wis. (5K)

Mr. John E. Fritschel, Littleton, Colo. (2E)

Mr. Vincent Peters, Roseville, Minn. (3H)

Division for Outreach

Pr. James P. Miller, Cincinnati, Ohio (6F)

Ms. Dorothy Baumgartner, Seattle, Wash. (1B)

Mr. James E. Byerly, Richmond, Va. (9A)

Mr. Aureo F. Andino, Guaynabo, Puerto Rico (9F)

Division for Higher Education and Schools

Pr. Stephen D. Samuelson, Racine, Wis. (5J)

Pr. Sherman G. Hicks, Washington, D.C. (8G)

Ms. Kristine F. Hughey, Media, Pa. (7F)

Ms. Donna A. Coursey, Philadelphia, Pa. (7F)

Mr. Dean Baldwin, Erie, Pa. (8A)

Mr. Jeffrey L. Kane, Natick, Mass. (7B)

Division for Church in Society

Pr. Carol A. Jensen, Seattle, Wash. (1B)

Ms. Gloria Strickert, Waverly, Iowa (5F)

Ms. Lestine Davis, Detroit, Mich. (6A)

Mr. Norman O. Aarestad, Denver, Colo. (2E)

Mr. Gerson David, Bellaire, Texas (4F)

Division for Global Mission

Pr. Esther Rajashekar, Philadelphia, Pa. (7F)
Pr. Wilma S. Kucharek, Torrington, Conn. (7G)
Ms. Carol LaHurd, Hickory, N.C. (9B)
Mr. Norris W. Hermsmeyer, Boulder, Colo. (2E)
Mr. David Y. P. Chou, Hickory, N.C. (9B)

Publishing House

Pr. Richard Rehfeldt, Des Moines, Iowa (5D)
Pr. Walter S. May Jr., Cedar Rapids, Iowa (5D)
Ms. Dorothy F. Ricks, Philadelphia, Pa. (7F)
Mr. Leonard G. Schultze, Seguin, Texas (4E)
Mr. Timothy I. Maudlin, Eden Prairie, Minn. (3G)
Mr. Herman S. Cage, Schaumburg, Ill. (5A)

Board of Pensions

Ms. Gwen W. Halaas, Minneapolis, Minn. (3G)
Pr. James S. Aull, Columbia, S.C. (9C)
Ms. Brenda A. Grandell, Brooklyn, N.Y. (7C)
**Ms. Barbara A. Swartling, Bainbridge Island,
Wash. (1B)**
Mr. Michael B. Unhjem, Fargo, N.D. (3B)
Mr. Gregory R. White, Salem, Ore. (1E)

Nominating Committee

Pr. George E. Keck, Harleysville, Pa. (7F)
Pr. Thomas M. Carlson, Willmar, Minn. (3F)
Ms. Mary Ann Shealy, Newberry, S.C. (9C)
Mr. Robert L. Anderson, Moline, Ill. (5B)

Committee on Appeals

Pr. Martha W. Clementson, Pittsburgh, Pa. (8B)
Pr. Paul M. Werger, Iowa City, Iowa (5D)
Ms. Amy E. Hackler, Olathe, Kan. (4B)

Committee on Discipline

Pr. Richard R. Campbell Sr., Charleston, S.C. (9C)
Pr. Grace C. Olson, Easton, Pa. (7E)
Pr. Thomas J. Wagner, Portage, Wis. (5K)
Ms. Lorraine (Lorrie) G. Bergquist, Redmond,

Wash. (1B)

Ms. Anne L. Burton, Summit, N.J. (7A)
Mr. Frank R. Riddle, Franklin, Pa. (8A)
Mr. Charles F. Ruthroff, Oakland, Calif. (2A)
Mr. C. Gary Fischer, Fargo, N.D. (3B)

Greetings: Lutheran Services in America

Bishop Anderson called upon representatives from Lutheran Services in America (LSA) to greet assembly members. He spoke of this day as a birthday—"the creation of Lutheran Services in America. Our Lutheran social ministry system is one of the best-kept secrets in our society and, I would say, even in our church. The creation earlier this year of Lutheran Services in America will help our church and The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, with whom we are in partnership in this new endeavor, to provide coordination among our agencies and to help our agencies learn from one another, to work more effectively, and to speak with a clearer and stronger voice to address government about the needs of those we serve."

Bishop Anderson introduced Ms. Joanne Negstad, president of LSA, who led voting members in a "stand-up" exercise to demonstrate awareness of the work of LSA agencies. She said that the organization was now four months and one day old and described it as "a mosaic of two million stories," a few of which she recounted. Ms. Negstad said, "LSA is two million stories, stories of people of all races, religions, and cultures. Lutheran Services in America delivers its hope and healing in 3,000 communities in this country from Alaska to the Virgin Islands, brings wholeness to the broken lives, brings healing to the pained. Among our member organizations is a wide diversity of services from a small community-service agency developing in an eastern city to the large Good Samaritan Society of 250 nursing homes. Altogether, Lutheran Services in America spends \$3 billion a year bringing that hope and healing to brokenness and pain. Lutheran Services in America is people serving people. . . . about 85,000 employees and 110,000 volunteers are being the arms, the legs, the hands of God. . . . Altogether they are carrying out our understanding that we are called people of God to serve human need and to seek justice, [for] social ministry is integral to the mission of the church. Lutheran Services in America is an alliance of the ELCA, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, and 280 organizations delivering these services across the country. We, as Lutherans, are going to be shy no more about our serving people in this world." Ms. Negstad then introduced the Rev. Nelson C. Meyer, chair of the

board of directors of Lutheran Services in America, who helped to spearhead the organization's development.

**Presentation: *Servus Dei* Medal
to Vice President Kathy J. Magnus**

Reference: "The *Servus Dei* Medal" brochure.

Bishop Anderson invited Vice President Kathy J. Magnus to come to the dias for a special presentation. He explained that the *Servus Dei* medal is "the award that recognizes in a formal way those servants of God whom we have elected to be our churchwide officers." Bishop Anderson noted that Ms. Magnus had served as vice president of this church for the past six years. He read a portion of the citation of the Church Council, which granted the award and praised the vice president for her leadership. Printed copies of the citation had been distributed to assembly members. Bishop Anderson shared his own personal testimony, saying, "I came on the Church Council two years before I was elected to this office. I would say, Kathy, that you were a mentor to me in your ability to chair and to lead. I knew a lot about parliamentary procedure, but you taught me how to be human and to the degree that I am learning that, I thank you for it."

**THE *SERVUS DEI* MEDAL
of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

In Honor

KATHY J. MAGNUS

Vice President

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

1991-1997

On September 1, 1991, Ms. Kathy J. Magnus was elected the second vice president of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. She completes her tenure in that office on August 20, 1997. In honor of her service as vice president of this church, the following citation was adopted by the Church Council:

The position of vice president of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, reserved for service by a lay member of this church, was established on April 30, 1987, when the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America was officially constituted.

Ms. Kathy J. Magnus was elected on Sunday, September 1, 1991, as the second person to hold the office of vice president of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. She undertook her duties with untiring energy and forthrightness of purpose, after having served since 1987 as a distinguished member of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

The primary responsibility of the vice president of this church is to chair the meetings of the Church Council and the council's Executive Committee. In fulfilling her duties, Ms. Magnus has served ably as an outstanding and articulate representative of this church in a wide variety of ways.

We are taught by Scripture that, "as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another." Further, we are told that we have "gifts that differ," yet all are summoned to serve (Romans 12:4-6).

In recognition of the service of Kathy J. Magnus as vice president of this church, the Church Council adopts the following citation:

With superb ability, diligent attention to detail, and a willingness to devote countless hours, days, and weeks to the responsibilities of office, Kathy J. Magnus has offered thoughtful leadership in the role of vice president. She has demonstrated forthright commitment to the faith of this church and has shown multifaceted competence in carrying out her duties as vice president.

She has served thoughtfully and graciously, always leading the governance and decision-making activities of the Church Council in constructive and productive ways. She has guided the members of the council in the fulfillment of their responsibilities as the board of directors of the churchwide organization. Further, she has summoned those who served on the council always to keep in constant focus the commitments of this church and their obligations to all the members of this church.

She has been a model of clarity in outlining the issues that came before the council and in guiding the deliberative processes of the council. She has presided with fairness and care for each member of the council. She has reflected untiring devotion to her tasks and fulfilled her responsibilities with generosity.

- * By remembering her work among us, we give thanks for her commitment to the faith that we believe, teach, and confess;
- * By expressing our gratitude for her endeavors, we affirm her diligence in service and graciousness in spirit; and
- * By conveying our appreciation, we underscore our heart-felt thanks for the contributions that she made to the life of this whole church by reason of her service as vice president.

As she undertakes new endeavors and passes her responsibilities as vice president to her successor, may God grant her abiding hope in the Gospel we proclaim and vivid remembrance of our profoundly felt gratitude for her distinguished service in our midst.

Upon action of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the *Servus Dei* Medal is conferred upon Ms. Kathy J. Magnus, vice president of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, November 1, 1991-August 20, 1997.

The assembly responded with a standing ovation. Vice President Magnus said, “Those of you who know me know that I am never at a loss for words; but I am—thank you so very much.”

Ecumenical Proposals—Response to the Action on the *Concordat of Agreement*

Reference: *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section IV, pages 49-64; continued on *Minutes*, pages 37, 125, 381, 413, 432, 600, 605, 621.

Bishop Anderson inquired, “Now I would like to find out what we know from the group that met over lunch to talk about the response to the action we took on the *Concordat*. As you remember, the action of this body was to postpone until this afternoon on this matter, so it needs to come up and I think the question before us will be, ‘Is the proposal in such a shape that we can deal with it now?’ If you deem it is not, then we will need to defer action either to later this afternoon or until tomorrow. Who will report from the committee?”

Bishop Charles H. Maahs [Central States Synod] reported, “We actually have two resolutions that we want to report to the assembly. The first would be addressing ourselves internally and then we have a second resolution that we would hope to address our ecumenical partner.” He then read the first resolution.

Resolution One:

RESOLVED, that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America seek conversations with The Episcopal Church, building on the degree of consensus achieved at this assembly and addressing concerns which emerged during consideration of the *Concordat of Agreement*. The aim of these conversations is to bring to the 1999 Churchwide Assembly a revised proposal for full communion; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the 1982 agreement for “Interim Eucharistic Sharing” continue to guide joint ministry efforts in worship, education, and mission; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the 1997 Churchwide Assembly direct the presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to communicate this request to the presiding bishop of The Episcopal Church.

Bishop Anderson then asked Bishop Maahs to read the other resolution. Bishop Maahs said, “This one is directed to us internally.”

Resolution Two:

WHEREAS, while a solid majority (66.1 percent) voted for the adoption of the *Concordat of Agreement*, this was not sufficient for the required two-thirds majority; and

WHEREAS, despite the sadness among us and within the church at large, our church remains committed to the ultimate goal of full communion with The Episcopal Church and other churches; and

WHEREAS, we recognize our need as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to understand our own doctrine, creeds, and polity and that of The Episcopal Church; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in Churchwide Assembly, hereby,

1. Request that the presiding bishop, Church Council, Department for Ecumenical Affairs, and Conference of Bishops create opportunities for dialogue and teaching within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America concerning the possible avenues for full communion with The Episcopal Church;
2. Request that educational opportunities be created in consultation with The Episcopal Church for members of the faculties of ELCA colleges and seminaries, the Conference of Bishops, clergy, and laity designed to communicate the history, theology, and ecclesiology of both The Episcopal Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. These materials will be made available to all ELCA congregations and rostered persons during the two-year period before the next Churchwide Assembly;
3. Calls for discussion in the 1997-1999 biennium within our church of the process toward full communion and the implications of full communion with The Episcopal Church; and
4. Aspires to ratification of an agreement for full communion with The Episcopal Church at the 1999 Churchwide Assembly.

Bishop Anderson asked the assembly, “Do you think you can work with those on the screen?” The assembly responded with applause of agreement. Bishop Anderson said, “Thank you for the report. I think we should put them up [the two resolutions] and consider them. Could we do the second one first? Does it make any difference to the committee?”

Bishop Theodore F. Schneider [Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod] asked, “It would help me in the discussion of these two separate motions now to know whether it would be out of order to ask that, as a courtesy, both resolutions would at least be shared with The Episcopal Church so that they would know not only the things we ask them again to do with us, but the significant discipline we are placing upon ourselves. It would be helpful, I think, should we pass these two, for them to know both of these actions.” Bishop Anderson responded, “Surely, I think that

could be done.” Bishop Maahs said, “That was part of our discussion in the group that met this noon and it is our understanding from the Rev. Daniel F. Martensen [director of the Department for Ecumenical Affairs] that that would be done, that is, both of the resolutions, if adopted, would be shared with our ecumenical partner.”

Bishop Anderson suggested, “that we deal with our own business first so that we see if we are of a common mind there; and if that’s the case, it would seem to be appropriate then to address The Episcopal Church.”

The Rev. Russell L. Meyer [Florida-Bahamas Synod] asked, “Given the spontaneous reception of the reading of these documents, is there a process by which this assembly could receive them and adopt them by consensus?” Bishop Anderson replied, “Well, there is, but I would prefer to allow persons who may not have been clapping to have a chance to come to a microphone.” Pastor Meyer said, “I agree. If they need conversation certainly, but afterwards if we might be able to consider that?” Bishop Anderson said, “We could certainly consider that. I would prefer though that we simply vote and see if we can reach consensus that way. It is hard otherwise to declare consensus because it puts a burden on persons who may not want to speak.”

Mr. Harlan Olson [South-Central Synod of Wisconsin] said, “It would be helpful for me if the motion we have on the table could be on the screen so that we could see what [we are dealing with].

Bishop Anderson then asked for a second to the following, moved by Bishop Maahs.

MOVED;

SECONDED: WHEREAS, while a solid majority (66.1 percent) voted for the adoption of the *Concordat of Agreement*, this was not sufficient for the required two-thirds majority; and

WHEREAS, despite the sadness among us and within the church at large, our church remains committed to the ultimate goal of full communion with The Episcopal Church and other churches; and

WHEREAS, we recognize our need as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to understand our own doctrine, creeds, and polity and that of The Episcopal Church; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in Churchwide Assembly, hereby,

1. Request that the presiding bishop, Church Council, Department for Ecumenical Affairs, and Conference of Bishops create

opportunities for dialogue and teaching within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America concerning the possible avenues for full communion with The Episcopal Church;

2. Request that educational opportunities be created in consultation with The Episcopal Church for members of the faculties of ELCA colleges and seminaries, the Conference of Bishops, clergy, and laity designed to communicate the history, theology, and ecclesiology of both The Episcopal Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. These materials will be made available to all ELCA congregations and rostered persons during the two-year period before the next Churchwide Assembly;
3. Calls for discussion in the 1997-1999 biennium within our church of the process toward full communion and the implications of full communion with The Episcopal Church; and
4. Aspires to ratification of an agreement for full communion with The Episcopal Church at the 1999 Churchwide Assembly.

An unidentified voting member raised a question “as it relates to a concern for the communication between the seminaries and colleges. The way we have that paragraph worded and the need for having that all come back to congregations, if that is the intent, it would seem that it could be a 10-year process at minimum.” Bishop Anderson replied, “It was not my impression that it had to go in a pipeline that way.” He reviewed item number two, “there will be opportunities created in consultation with the church for members of the faculties and so on, the Conference of Bishops, clergy, and laity to communicate these areas of both churches.” The voting member said, “There it says materials will be made available to ELCA congregations and rostered persons during the two-year period. In other words, if we are to assume that all the communications that are going to be transpiring from the universities back and forth, if all this has to be reported, we are talking about something that is not accomplishable.”

Bishop Anderson, having reviewed the text on the screen, said, “I see your point and I am a bit confused myself. They are talking about opportunities for communication and conversation, and then they speak of these materials.”

Bishop Steven L. Ullestad [Northeastern Iowa Synod] said, “If we go back to ‘Request that educational opportunities be created in consultation with The Episcopal Church,’ so that we are accurately reflecting their theology, ecclesiology, and so forth; that those opportunities be created for all of us. It is a statement about our own—an attempt at least to (in relative humility) say that we all need to learn more about The Episcopal Church. So the educational opportunities are for all of us in the church and the next phrase’s intent is to communicate the history,

theology, and ecclesiology of The Episcopate Church and our church both because there is ongoing conversation there. Then these materials—the intent was to say that this will not just be a conversation or educational process for seminaries, for colleges, for Conference of Bishops; but rather that materials would be available to all congregations and rostered persons in order to include everybody in the pews and pulpits around our church. Is the problem ‘these materials?’ I think it is a friendly amendment to simply drop the word ‘these.’ In my understanding of the committee’s work, that would be a friendly amendment.” Bishop Anderson suggested replacing ‘These materials’ with ‘and that materials.’ There was no objection to this friendly amendment and ‘These materials’ was replaced with ‘and that materials.’

The unidentified voting member then asked, “How would that read then?” The material was then on the screen with the change suggested by Bishop Anderson. The voting member then asked, “Educational opportunities for whom?”

Bishop Anderson said, “It is obvious this is going to be very difficult for us to do. I am witnessing here the kind of difficulty that frame by frame consideration produces. I am rather reluctant to proceed in this matter. I would look for at least some expression from the assembly as to whether this is the way you want to go.”

Ms. Kristin Barnett [Western Iowa Synod] sought to suspend the Rules of Organization and Procedure related to the deadline for closing of polls for the second common ballot and to extend that deadline to 7:00 P.M. She noted, “I see people around filling them out and I think we have important issues that need to be discussed and I also feel that the nominees deserve their proper respect to have us really look at the nominees.”

Bishop Anderson noted that a motion to suspend the rules would require a two-thirds vote. He asked Mr. Phillip H. Harris, chair of the Elections Committee, whether the proposed extension would make it difficult for the committee to complete its work. Mr. Harris noted that the balloting for the second Common Ballot had not begun. He said, “That balloting is not scheduled to begin until 4:00 P.M., and the ballots are to be dropped off between 4:00 P.M. and 6:00 P.M. today. I would request that balloting wait until we have instructed that the ballots be passed out and filled in. There are some special considerations concerning this ballot that we need to discuss.”

Bishop Anderson cautioned the assembly, “You are advised to observe those procedures.”

Bishop Paull E. Spring [Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod] commented, “I do not know whether I can respond to the question you raised before we just had that issue [regarding the voting procedure]. Was your concern whether or not we should proceed? I just wanted to make a general comment, but if you want to have discussion delayed until we can receive the material in printed form, then perhaps I should wait.” Bishop Anderson replied, “I called on you, you were at a microphone, and I thought we would proceed. There are others [at microphones]

and if someone has a white card [indicating a point of order or question] or wishes to do it when they get their chance.” Bishop Spring said, “Let somebody else speak.”

The Rev. Judith L. McCall [South-Central Synod of Wisconsin] asked, “First I need to make sure—are we talking about the balloting now or are we finished with that?” “I think that suspending the rules is probably not appropriate,” Bishop Anderson replied. Pastor McCall then said, “My question is—I want to make sure that I am clear and I believe I am—that what we are saying is that there will be educational opportunities given to the faculties for them to discern, and then there will also be materials given to congregations, not necessarily the same ones and not necessarily in a pipeline order. Is that accurate?” Bishop Anderson responded, “Indeed that the educational opportunities, as I read it, is extended to clergy and laity as well so it will be simultaneous activity.” Pastor McCall then asked, “In faculties and congregations?” Bishop Anderson replied in the affirmative.

Ms. Mitzi J. Budde [Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod] suggested that discussion of the motion be postponed until 4:00 P.M. “with copies of the two resolutions about Lutheran-Episcopal communication in front of us. I would like for us to keep this on the table today so that we can communicate to Episcopalians who are watching this with great interest and concern. I would not like us to delay until tomorrow, but perhaps we could delay it until four o’clock when we have materials before us.”

Bishop Anderson commented, “We had hoped to do the Bible Study at 4:10 P.M. and the copies cannot be ready that quickly. Perhaps a motion that would help us without setting a certain time, would be to ask you for general consent to postpone discussion until printed copies can be distributed and hope that we can do that still this afternoon.” Ms. Budde responded, “I think it is very important that we speak today if at all possible, so I would withdraw my comment about 4:00 o’clock.”

Bishop Anderson then advised the assembly, “I am asking here for general consent to postpone discussion until the printed copies can be distributed. If you wish to object, go to a microphone and say you object.”

The Rev. George Villa [Southern California (West) Synod] called the previous question.

MOVED; *Two-Thirds Vote Required*

SECONDED; *Yes—682; No—304*

CARRIED: To move the previous question.

The Rev. Sharon A. Worthington [Western Iowa Synod] asked, “I have a question concerning who will prepare the material since that is not indicated?” Bishop Anderson replied, “We will proceed with the vote and hope that someone can provide you with that information.”

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

Yes—930; No—79

CA97.5.23 WHEREAS, while a solid majority (66.1 percent) voted for the adoption of the *Concordat of Agreement*, this was not sufficient for the required two-thirds majority; and

WHEREAS, despite the sadness among us and within the church at large, our church remains committed to the ultimate goal of full communion with The Episcopal Church and other churches; and

WHEREAS, we recognize our need as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to understand our own doctrine, creeds, and polity and that of The Episcopal Church; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in Churchwide Assembly, hereby,

- 1. Request that the presiding bishop, Church Council, Department for Ecumenical Affairs, and Conference of Bishops create opportunities for dialogue and teaching within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America concerning the possible avenues for full communion with The Episcopal Church;**
- 2. Request that educational opportunities be created in consultation with The Episcopal Church for members of the faculties of ELCA colleges and seminaries, the Conference of Bishops, clergy, and laity designed to communicate the history, theology, and ecclesiology of both The Episcopal Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and that materials will be made available to all ELCA congregations and rostered persons during the two-year period before the next Churchwide Assembly;**
- 3. Calls for discussion in the 1997-1999 biennium within our church of the process toward full communion and the implications of full communion with The Episcopal Church; and**

4. Aspires to ratification of an agreement for full communion with The Episcopal Church at the 1999 Churchwide Assembly.

Following loud and prolonged applause, Bishop Anderson said, “Members of the drafting committee, you have received the thanks of this body and we have taken one more step now.”

Bishop David W. Olson [Minneapolis Area Synod] stated, “Since many people beyond this audience will be very interested in the exact wording, let’s make sure we all have copies as soon as possible.” Bishop Anderson responded, “We will do that.”

Bishop Anderson asked the assembly, “Do you want to see the other text now? Shall we look at that?” There was an audible consent from the assembly.

MOVED;

SECONDED: RESOLVED, that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America seek conversations with The Episcopal Church, building on the degree of consensus achieved at this assembly and addressing concerns which emerged during consideration of the *Concordat of Agreement*. The aim of these conversations is to bring to the 1999 Churchwide Assembly a revised proposal for full communion; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the 1982 agreement for “Interim Eucharistic Sharing” continue to guide joint ministry efforts in worship, education, and mission; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the 1997 Churchwide Assembly direct the presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to communicate this request to the presiding bishop of The Episcopal Church.

The Rev. Rachel Thorson Mithelman [La Crosse Area Synod] noted, “I voted against the passage of the *Concordat* as a matter of conscience. I simply could not vote for it. I find this proposal, this resolution, exceedingly acceptable and I encourage the assembly to make as close to an unanimous support of this as we can.”

The Rev. Ross S. Goodman [New England Synod] said, “I am happy with what we have just done but I am more worried about our partners in The Episcopal

Church. I am wondering if anyone can answer, from the group that put this piece together, whether or not the timeline that we have, 1999, is realistic. I am wondering since we are meeting in assembly we can still make decisions. The Episcopal Church does not meet in assembly again until the year 2000, and maybe they cannot even open this back up again until they meet again in general assembly. Does anyone know the answer to that?” Bishop Anderson responded, “I think you are right on the last part, . . . we have representatives of The Episcopal Church still with us. David Perry, would you want to respond to the question?”

Bishop Anderson asked Pastor Goodman to repeat the question. Pastor Goodman said, “I am just a little worried that we are just sort of talking in the wind. We can do all this and we have this expectation that we will be able to ratify something in 1999, but maybe we cannot get the conversation going in any official way until The Episcopal Church opens it back up again in the year 2000.” The Rev. Canon David W. Perry of The Episcopal Church responded, “I certainly am not in a position to speak for the General Convention, which is our legislative body. I think if the winds are blowing right, properly, that is to say the Holy Spirit, I think it could be accomplished by the time of our General Convention which meets in the summer of the year 2000.”

Bishop Theodore F. Schneider [Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod] commented, “I do not know whether we could do it in two years or not. But I do know that we need to say to our Episcopal brothers and sisters that we are not starting another 30-year cycle. That we are really going to place upon ourselves with immediate speed insofar as we are able. So if indeed we come to 1999 and are not ready, that we deal with ourselves. But we do need to say what our intentions are and what our timeline is.”

Mr. Anthony Reynolds Harris [Minneapolis Area Synod] called the previous question.

MOVED;

Two-Thirds Vote Required

SECONDED;

Yes—971; No—31

CARRIED: To move the previous question.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

Yes—995; No—15

CA97.5.24 RESOLVED, that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America seek conversations with The Episcopal Church, building on the degree of consensus achieved at this assembly and addressing concerns which emerged during

consideration of the *Concordat of Agreement*. The aim of these conversations is to bring to the 1999 Churchwide Assembly a revised proposal for full communion; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the 1982 agreement for “Interim Eucharistic Sharing” continue to guide joint ministry efforts in worship, education, and mission; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the 1997 Churchwide Assembly direct the presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to communicate this request to the presiding bishop of The Episcopal Church.

Responding to the overwhelming affirmation represented by votes on the two resolutions and the applause of the assembly, Bishop Anderson said, “To you our brothers and representatives here of The Episcopal Church, I wish to say that I think you have experienced the urgent and heartfelt desire of this assembly to bring our church into full communion with The Episcopal Church. We have asked for time to work on issues within our own church and have tried now to set ourselves an ambitious program so that we will move forward, and, in concert then with you, be able to find a way to achieve that which you have already committed yourselves to and to which we also aspire. I want to thank you for your leadership and cooperation. I first will recognize those of our own church body who worked long and hard, surfacing issues, attempting to resolve them, working out methodologies and embodying them in the proposal which we discussed here and worked on so carefully. If any of you are present in the room, I would appreciate your just standing as I mention your name. The Joint Coordinating Committee had as representatives from our church its chair, the Rev. Richard L. Jeske; the Rev. Paul J. Blom; the Rev. Susan L. Gamelin; the Rev. Daniel F. Martensen, staff; the Rev. William G. Rusch, who served as staff; the Rev. Merlyn E. Satrom; the Rev. Darlis J. Swan, staff; Sister Cecilia R. Wilson; and Ms. Sarah W. Wing. On behalf of everyone here, I want to thank you for the years of effort and the commitments which you made to bring us this far.” The assembly responded with thanks through its applause.

Bishop Anderson continued, “To you, the Rev. Canon David W. Perry, and the Rev. Canon J. Robert Wright, you have worried with us, you have prayed with us, you have suffered with us, you have borne with us. I think of that passage from 1

Corinthians 13 about bearing all things, enduring all things, hoping all things, and believing all things. Thank you for your partnership and we anticipate continued work, and communicate to you our dedication to carry this through in the Lord’s time, whenever that may be.” Again, the assembly responded with enthusiastic applause.

In response Father Perry said, “Dear sisters and brothers in Christ, Presiding Bishop Anderson, and all friends. First let me bring you the greetings and the prayers of our presiding bishop, Edmund Lee Browning. I think that when I call him in about three minutes, he’s going to be very much happier than he was sometime earlier this day. I’m going to have dinner with him tonight. I’m going up to New York shortly and this will be at the top of the feast of the banquet that we will share tonight.

“It must be time to go home for me. I had my hotel bill pushed under the door this morning, and, after I got over my heart attack, I realized that I did not have any more clean clothes. So this is it.

“I also realize that I need to think about what I am going to say to the friends back home. What am I going to say to The Episcopal Church? At the top of the list of the people I need to share things with is my 87-year-old mother-in-law, Florence Paulson Wood. She’s been praying with diligence for some time for our *Concordat* of full communion. She was born in Dell Rapids, South Dakota, baptized in the faith, a faithful Lutheran until she moved to Salem, Oregon, to be married. When she got to Salem, Oregon, she discovered that the parish congregation most like her Lutheran congregation in Dell Rapids was an Episcopal congregation. And so she has been for 60-some plus years a Lutheran communicant at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church. She reminds me constantly she is a Lutheran.

“I want to go home and I want to tell her the very good news of the actions you all have just taken now, but, more, I want to tell her and all of my brothers and sisters some important things about the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

“When they ask me about this meeting, I am going to tell them that the world’s largest roller coaster is located in Philadelphia. I am going to tell my friends that Lutherans like to meet morning, noon, night, overnight. I am going to tell them that the ELCA family is full of love and care, of heritage and hope. It is a church of generosity. It is a church of thanksgiving. It is a church of a hopeful future. I am going to tell them also that the ELCA has struggles. It has conflicts. It has pains. It has worries. It searches for the truth and it hopes for peace and unity.

“I’m going to tell them that I found the Spirit alive and well in Philadelphia, once again. In this space, when our General Convention met, this was our worship space and I can still detect the sweet, sweet Spirit in this place. I’m going to tell them that we have ties that already bind us together. And I’m going to tell them about the commitment of your family to walk in unity in Christ together. I’m going to tell them there’s a way ahead. I’m going to tell them there is hope. And I’m going to tell my mother-in-law, Florence Paulson Wood, that she needs to live a few years longer. Now, she is a South Dakota Lutheran Norwegian, and you know

how long those folks live. So, I'm going to tell her to live just a few years more [as we celebrate the] news that we are one in Christ.

"Thank you for your wonderful welcome and your hospitality and for walking with your brothers and sisters in the Episcopal family in Christ's way. Thank you."

Father Wright then addressed the assembly, saying, "Thank you very much, Bishop Anderson. Thank all of you. There remains very little for me to say. I think David has just about said it all. But I would just add, I agree entirely with what he has said. And, as for me personally, I find myself very, very hopeful about the texts of the resolutions that you have just passed. I hope that they will result in the picture of full communion that you want and that we want. I think it is now do-able.

"I would add one reminder of the difficulties that remain, and, without naming any of them by detail, I would just point out you're really going to have to help Bishop Anderson and your ecumenical office to survey your church accurately about your concerns, to appoint a team that represents the spectrum of diversity within your own church. And we're going to have to find a team that represents still the spectrum of diversity within our church.

"We're going to have to be prepared for disagreements to surface and, when they do, papers have to be addressed, research has to be done. I think of the comment of one of you earlier—the lawyer who said that this *Concordat*, he would never draw this up, it was too ambiguous, it had too many flaws in it, if he was doing it himself. But the *Concordat* was not drawn up by one person and this new agreement will not be drawn up by one person. It will be a committee document of people from both churches and committee documents are, no matter how hard you try, they're never very precise. You think you've got it when the drafting committee does it, and then people pick it over, and the results, you know, it is like a chicken that's been picked over and so forth and there's not too much meat left on it and you really wonder, it is just bare bones. So, we will work on this.

"I would urge for all of you, please, to get behind your presiding bishop and your ecumenical office, and I might say with the increased staff and funds that are going to be necessary, to get you ready for the year 1999 before our General Convention meets in 2000.

"But I think with these resolutions it is do-able. I think we're on the road now. And I do hope that you will apply yourselves to them towards the production of a better agreement of some sort that will be broadly acceptable to the vast aggregation of all or about all of the members in both our churches. We want to work with you on this as much as we can. Let us work for a portrait of full communion that will be acceptable to us all. Let us keep this vision now before us. Let us strive for it with all our might.

"I want to conclude with a few words that I addressed in a different context, a story, but also in support of full communion, that I addressed to our own general

convention about a month ago. And the story is that of John Ruskin in the National Gallery in London in the 1850s. John Ruskin was observing a Turner landscape of a sunset, together with a friend, and they were looking at this landscape by Turner, and the friend, in rather skeptical disbelief, remarked, "I've never seen a real sunset like that." To which Ruskin replied, "No, but do not you wish you could?" No, but do not you wish you could? By 1999, my friends, I hope you can. And, by the year 2000, I hope we can. Thank you and God love you all."

Bishop Anderson commented, "Well, you've done a fine job so far this afternoon and it is not even 3:45 [P.M.] yet."

Mr. Eric Peterson [Northwest Synod of Wisconsin] said, "I wish to thank everyone here for making such a tremendous effort this afternoon to bring our church back together and bring us together with The Episcopal Church again after yesterday morning. I wish to issue one challenge to this church right now. I ask us, if you will allow us, to sing a song, 'Shall We Gather At The River,' and I want it to be sung so loud and vibrant that the next thing you know, Bishop Anderson is going to be getting a call to get into full communion with the Baptists." Bishop Anderson responded, "Well, let's take one verse, is that O.K.? We'll do it in a minute. I want to see what the rest of these folks [standing at microphones] are up to here."

The Rev. Terry J. Frovik [Minneapolis Area Synod] stated, "It has been a difficult two days and I wish to ask the assembly gathered here to stand in acclamation of our presiding bishop who has led us calmly, clearly, and with grace through these moments. Thank you!" In response to this request, the assembly stood, applauded, cheered, and whistled in acclamation of Bishop Anderson's leadership.

The assembly remained standing while singing mightily one verse of "Shall We Gather At The River."

Mr. J. Everett Wick [Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod] said, "I would like to remind us before we take too much credit for ourselves of the role that the Holy Spirit just played on this floor." Bishop Anderson replied, "Yes, thank you, we rejoice in that and thank God for it."

Mr. John Prabhakar [Northern Illinois Synod], said, "I think it is maybe appropriate at this time that I request you to offer a prayer of praise and thanksgiving."

Bishop Anderson led the assembly in prayer. "Let us bow our heads. Great and wonderful are your works, O God, strong and perfect is your name. As we have struggled with these issues and try to find a way through, we remember the assurance that you have given us that you will build your church. We thank you for whatever progress in that way you have given us and allowed us to accomplish. For the power of your Holy Spirit and for the promise of leading into this future that we

do not know, we give you thanks and trust your name. Through Christ, our Lord. Amen.”

Lutheran-Roman Catholic Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification

Reference: *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section IV, pages 65-77, page 78 (rev.), Section V, pages 21-27, Section VI, pages 26-28; continued on *Minutes*, page 680, 928.

BACKGROUND

The *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* is a proposed international statement that addresses mutual understandings on justification between the Roman Catholic Church and churches of the Lutheran tradition. If approved, this statement would mark an important milestone for the ecumenical movement throughout the world.

The statement was developed jointly by Lutheran and Roman Catholic representatives. It is based on many years of intense U.S. and international ecumenical dialogues on justification and other topics. (Paragraph 3 in the “Preamble” notes particular reports that were crucial for the development of this declaration.)

The Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America will formulate a recommendation on this statement for possible action by the 1997 Churchwide Assembly. In the meantime, the statement has been distributed to the faculties of the ELCA seminaries for study and comment.

If endorsed or approved by the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, this statement, *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*, would not lead to “full communion” between the ELCA and the Roman Catholic Church. This statement addresses only mutual understandings on justification. Reception of this statement, however, will provide a solid theological foundation for future ecumenical study and steps.

The statement does not claim to have resolved all points related to the Lutheran and Roman Catholic understandings of justification. It does declare, however, that the remaining differences on justification are not church dividing.

The process for development of this statement has been long and thorough. Since the statement addresses the central issue of the Reformation, much care has been needed for this significant step with the Roman Catholic Church. The first version of this statement was sent to the participating churches in 1995. Responses were received by early 1996. Those responses were studied by the Lutheran Institute for Ecumenical Research at Strasbourg, France, together with Roman Catholic responses. A revised text was prepared in the summer of 1996 by an

international group of Lutheran and Roman Catholic theologians. The revised text was presented for consideration by the Council of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) in September 1996. At that time, the LWF council basically affirmed the text, but decided to ask for further modification at several points. Those changes were made in January 1997 and the 1997 text (below) was authorized by the LWF executive committee in February 1997 for distribution to member churches.

The Lutheran World Federation council—meeting September 24-October 1, 1996—asked that member churches respond by June 1, 1998, to this document. The council also agreed: to inform the LWF ninth assembly in July 1997 of the statement, *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*, and its development; to urge the assembly to encourage further reception of the statement; and to ask the assembly “to give thanks for our continuing progress toward a common confession of the Gospel of justification.”

If a “positive Lutheran consensus” is discerned through the responses from the 122 member churches of the Lutheran World Federation and if the Vatican of the Roman Catholic Church formally affirms the statement, a festival celebration will be planned to mark the occasion of Lutheran-Roman Catholic reception of this statement.

By embracing the statement, Roman Catholics and Lutherans would declare that the mutual “*anathemas*” (condemnations) drawn up in the sixteenth century on the teaching of justification no longer apply to these churches. Such a declaration would represent a major ecumenical step on the eve of a new millennium.

In the words of the statement, gratitude to God can be expressed “for this decisive step forward on the way to overcoming” past divisions and for seeking to reflect more visible unity.

The Lutheran World Federation has asked member churches to respond to the following question related to the proposed joint declaration:

Does [the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America] accept the conclusions reached in Section 40 and Section 41 of the Joint Declaration and thus join in affirming that, because of the agreement on the fundamental meaning and truth of our justification in Christ to which the Joint Declaration testifies, the condemnations regarding justification in the Lutheran Confessions do not apply to the teaching on justification of the Roman Catholic Church presented in the Joint Declaration?

The bishop of this church will bring to the Church Council’s pre-assembly meeting in August 1997 a recommendation for Churchwide Assembly action on the Joint Declaration. In the meantime, in order to make this document available to voting members in the pre-assembly mailings, Bishop H. George Anderson requested the following Church Council action, subsequently adopted by the council at its April 5-7, 1997, meeting:

To transmit the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification to the 1997 Churchwide Assembly for action. (CC97.4.30)

Bishop Anderson directed the attention of assembly members to the following recommendation of the Church Council:

**RECOMMENDATION OF
THE CHURCH COUNCIL**

WHEREAS, Lutherans and Roman Catholics, in dialogue for more than 30 years, have produced consensus statements on the doctrine of justification in 1972, 1983, 1986, and 1994; and

WHEREAS, the Lutheran World Federation has requested member churches to respond to *The Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* with an affirmative or a negative vote; be it

RESOLVED that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America accept the conclusion reached in paragraph 40 of the *Joint Declaration*¹ describing the consensus on the doctrine of justification; and be it further

RESOLVED that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America accept the conclusion reached in paragraph 41 of the *Joint Declaration*² affirming that the condemnations in regard to justification in the Lutheran Confessions do not apply to the present teaching of the Roman Catholic Church; and be it further

RESOLVED that the bishop of this church convey this resolution to the Lutheran World Federation.

¹ 40. The understanding of the doctrine of justification set forth in this Declaration shows that a consensus in basic truths of the doctrine of justification exists between Lutherans and Catholics. In light of this consensus the remaining differences of language, theological elaboration, and emphasis in the understanding of justification described in paragraphs 18 to 39 are acceptable. Therefore the Lutheran and the Catholic explications of justification are in their difference open to one another and do not destroy the consensus regarding basic truths.

² 41. Thus the doctrinal condemnations of the 16th century, in so far as they relate to the doctrine of justification, appear in a new light: The teaching of the Lutheran churches presented in this Declaration does not fall under the condemnations from the Council of Trent. The condemnations in the Lutheran Confessions do not apply to the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church presented in this Declaration.

Bishop Anderson said, “I would particularly call your attention to responses from our seminary faculties, all of whom were asked to study this document and offered the opportunity to respond if they wished.” He also asked the assembly to be aware of the synodical memorials regarding this issue.

Bishop Anderson commented, “This *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* is not something that we are solely responsible for here in this country. Although I am proud of our own role in beginning this route of joint declarations of justification, it now comes to us from the Lutheran World Federation which has distributed it to its churches and represents us in conversation with the Vatican on

this issue. We are being asked to state our opinion on this document and that then will be conveyed to the Council of the Lutheran World Federation which will collect responses from all over the world and make some determination if there is a consensus. They hope to do that by this time next year. To introduce you to this issue, I would ask the Rev. Harold C. Skillrud to perform that task. He served as chair of the Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue Team in the U.S. during its most recent round of discussions which included review of and commentary on this document. . . . Following his [Pastor Skillrud’s] introduction, we will hear from Brother Jeffrey Gros from the staff of the interfaith office of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops.”

Pastor Skillrud addressed the assembly, saying, “What a privilege to address the third ecumenical proposal on this wave of enthusiasm and gratitude. Recently, there appeared a new book on Martin Luther, his life, his work, and many of the original writings. The book was written and edited by [the Rev.] Eric W. Gritsch who is well recognized by many of us as a professor emeritus of Gettysburg Seminary. The fact that he wrote the book is not strange at all having seen a series of similar books in the past. But what made this book very unique is the fact that it was requested by, edited by, and published by a major Roman Catholic publisher and bore the enthusiastic endorsement of both Roman Catholic and Lutheran members of that dialogue. This, of course, is symptomatic of what has happened in recent years. If one were to review the titles published by Augsburg Fortress [Publishers], would see the same thing in reverse. Just a small indication of the change of climate which has occurred over the past several years and those of us who are a bit older and have been around for many, many years can certainly resonant with the statement Bishop Anderson made yesterday as our Roman Catholic bishop concluded his greeting. How wonderful to be alive in this day and age when we have passed through the tunnel of controversy and polemic and where we are seeking to work together in our common faith and life.

“It is sobering, however, to recognize that as we come to the end of this millennium, that in almost one-half of that millennium there has been a serious rift in Western Christendom. As we know so well, it all began 480 years ago with the posting of the 95 Theses. Luther questioned the church’s teaching on the crucial issue of how the sinner is reconciled to God. That rift was firmly established 30 years later when the Council of Trent issued its decree on justification. The wall was built, the mortar was hardened, the line was drawn. It was perfectly clear. Over the centuries since that time, disagreement on that issue has led to bitter disputes, warring factions, and alienation. But finally within the past three decades after all these years, Lutherans and Roman Catholics are now prepared to declare together a common statement on justification and that the condemnations that each side hurled against each other in the 16th century are no longer applicable to our partners. How in the world could this be? How could this happen? Well, as we all know, God does move in mysterious ways. For example, if I can make a reference to my part of the country in the South, people in the last century marveled at the

mighty act of God that in the form of a powerful earthquake actually reversed the course of the mighty Mississippi River near Memphis and established a new riverbed. But I say today we stand in awe of an even greater miracle. For once again a mighty act of God in the form of [the Second Vatican Council] and the years of dialogue which followed has reversed the course of polemic and disunity and established a new consensus in the faith between our two churches. As [the Rev.] Eugene L. Brand said at the 25th anniversary of the International Lutheran-Catholic Dialogue, ‘We want to thank God for having guided relations between our two communions along paths so radically different from those following the period of the Reformation.’ It is indeed a new era and God has seen to that.

“On December 11, 1995, twelve of us representatives of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in private audience with Pope John Paul II in the Vatican, listened as he too reflected gratitude for the intervention of God when he said, ‘Our ecumenical efforts must be marked with a deep sense of hope, for it is the Lord who calls us to unity. It is his grace which achieves results when human efforts fall short.’ He then went on to speak to us of *The Joint Declaration of Justification* in these words, ‘A very significant stage in the Lutheran-Catholic dialogue was reached when it became possible to consider the doctrine of justification. It must be our shared prayer that a common understanding of this central theme of our faith be attained.’

“This common understanding on the doctrine of justification had been building for a long time before that meeting. The joint declaration document calls our attention to many statements over the years—the first as long ago as 25 years when in 1972 a report of the Joint Lutheran-Roman Catholic Study Commission showed that a convergence was emerging on this central doctrine; in 1980 when we celebrated the 450th anniversary of the Augsburg Confession, another statement by this same group; in 1981, statements by the Joint Ecumenical Commission in Germany; in 1983, the monumental work on justification by faith following six years of dialogue here in this country chaired by our own presiding bishop [Bishop H. George Anderson]. I think many of us can remember with almost electrifying attention this marvelous statement in that publication, ‘We can wholeheartedly accept, as both Lutherans and [Roman] Catholics, that our entire hope of justification and salvation rests on Christ Jesus and on the Gospel whereby the Good News of God’s merciful action in Christ is made known. We do not place our ultimate trust in anything other than God’s promise and saving work in Christ. This excludes ultimate reliance on our faith, virtues, or merits even though we acknowledge God working in these by grace alone—*sola gratia*.’ Finally in 1986, the German dialogue concluded with its affirmations and its call for the removal of the condemnations in terms of their applicability, and in 1994 with the International Lutheran—[Roman] Catholic Dialogue, the third round on Church and justification made the same point.

“In other words, what we are dealing with today is not something new, and accompanying that common understanding of justification was the realization that the condemnations simply do not apply. As early as 17 years ago this summer, Lutheran Bishop Lohse of Germany and Cardinal Ratzinger of Rome issued a common statement, ‘This must not remain a merely private persuasion. It must be established by the churches in binding form.’ Consequently, the outgrowth of all of this was a Joint Lutheran-[Roman] Catholic Theological Commission which produced the first draft of *The Joint Declaration*. It was mailed in early 1995 to all Lutheran churches in the Lutheran World Federation and to the Associations of Catholic Bishops around the world. Our own ELCA bishops received it in March of 1995 and studied it at the Conference of Bishops, and consequently at many synod [assemblies] there were further deliberations. Meanwhile, since both the Lutheran World Federation and the Vatican requested responses from the national churches, we formed in this country a Joint Lutheran—[Roman] Catholic Coordinating Committee which met in 1995 and 1996 and issued a very supportive response, as did other churches around the world. Dr. Michael Root and the staff at the Ecumenical Institute in Strasbourg [France] collated these responses and helped to interpret them. On the basis of these responses further revisions were made until the final draft occurred which you have received and was sent out earlier this year. Hopefully, you have read this document thoroughly and prayerfully. Though it contains little that is new since it is based on the foundational agreements reached over the last 25 years, it is extremely significant. It means that we are seeking consensus that we have reached substantial agreement on what we as Lutherans consider to be the chief doctrine of the Christian faith, the article by which the church stands and falls.

“It does not, of course, resolve all issues between us. There remain many other kinds of questions that have arisen since the time of the Reformation that need to be discussed and clarified. But as the document asserts, we are convinced that the consensus we have reached offers a solid basis for this clarification. It is a major step toward the achievement of the goal of our official ELCA Statement on Ecumenism, ‘That the unity of the church as it is proclaimed in the Scriptures is indeed the gift and goal of God in Christ Jesus.’

“Specifically, what are we saying in *The Joint Declaration*? We are saying that in our 30 years of dialogue together we have studied together the Word of God in Scripture and are able to declare in one voice as we do, for example, in paragraph 15, ‘By grace alone, in faith in Christ’s saving work and not because of any merit on our part, we are accepted by God and receive the Holy Spirit, who renews our hearts while equipping and calling us to good works.’ We are also saying that this has come about because our modern investigations of the history of theology and dogma has led to a notable convergence concerning justification and in light of this consensus, the corresponding doctrinal condemnations of the 16th century simply do not apply to today’s partners. We acknowledge that some differences between us remain regarding some aspects of this doctrine and so in the section entitled,

‘Explicating the Common Understanding of Justification,’ the format in each instance first calls for a common statement of agreement clarifying what might be seen as differences in emphasis or understanding. Even in instances where there seem to be irreconcilable differences such as the condition of the sinner after baptism; whether in our Lutheran understanding, *simul justus et peccator*—at the same time righteous and sinner, or the [Roman] Catholic understanding of concupiscence, both of us agree that we are in daily need of conversion, repentance, and forgiveness and are indeed in Christ. Thus the difference is not seen to be church dividing.

“*The Joint Declaration*, finally, concludes with this prayer, ‘We give thanks to the Lord for this decisive step forward on the way to overcoming the division of the church. We ask the Holy Spirit to lead us further toward that visible unity which is Christ’s will.’ That prayer is going to be answered as we use this opportunity to teach and proclaim anew our belief that we are saved by grace alone through faith. First, think of this as a teaching opportunity around the world, for Roman Catholics and Lutherans together, to proclaim this glad news. Second, it will elevate future dialogues to a whole new level. Third, it will affirm rather than condemn the faith of each other. Fourth, we can use this common teaching as a basis to address social and ethical issues. And probably most important, the fifth, the local congregations of both churches can engage more readily in appropriate forms of common worship, evangelism, mission, catechetical instruction, Bible study, and Christian education. Hopefully, we shall begin the coming millennium with a new sense of unity in our common faith and mission with our Roman Catholic sisters and brothers in this country and around the world. *The Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* is meant to help us accomplish that goal. At the present time, with 124 Lutheran churches who belong to the Lutheran World Federation, our sisters and brothers around the world are reviewing with us this statement in order that they can respond to the Lutheran World Federation by June 1, 1998. The first church to take action and approve was the Church of Sweden, the largest of the Lutheran churches in the Lutheran World Federation. Obviously, the action of our church, the second largest of the Lutheran World Federation’s churches, will be seen as very significant by our Lutheran sisters and brothers around the world. Our presiding bishop and our Church Council have recommended positive action. It is hoped that sometime next year there will be significant enough consensus among the 124 Lutheran churches that the Lutheran World Federation and the Vatican can declare to the world and to our churches that *The Joint Declaration* has been formally approved—the first time that such an action has been taken since the days of the Reformation.”

Second Common Ballot

Reference: continued on *Minutes*, pages 411, 652, 789.

Bishop Anderson called on Mr. Phillip H. Harris, ELCA general council and chair of the Elections Committee, to instruct the assembly regarding the second common ballot. Mr. Harris said, “There are 23 tickets that remain to be decided; . . . on each of these tickets, there are only two remaining candidates, the two who received the highest numbers of votes on the first common ballot.” He then conveyed further instructions and announced that balloting would be open until 6:00 P.M. this day.

The Rev. Rebecca J. Bourret [New England Synod] advised the chair of an apparent error on the ballot. Secretary Almen responded, “The sheet that you are looking at was replaced by a subsequent one because of a withdrawal of a nominee at that point and a replacement submitted.” Mr. Harris then indicated that the correct sheet was identified as Section 7, page 15, revision 8/16.

Ms. Kristin Barnett [Western Iowa Synod] moved the following.

MOVED;

SECONDED: That the time for balloting on the second common ballot be extended to 7:00 P.M.

Ms. Barnett spoke to her motion, “Everything on the agenda, I assume, was put on there because it has importance. If it has importance, we should pay attention and I feel also we need to pay attention to the nominees and give time to look at them.”

MOVED;

Voice Vote

SECONDED;

CARRIED: That the time for balloting on the second common ballot be extended to 7:00 P.M.

Ms. Lynette M. Reitz [Upper Susquehanna Synod] asked that voting members pay attention to the order of the names of candidates as ballots are marked, not necessarily the order in which they are listed in the biographical information.

Lutheran-Roman Catholic Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification (continued)

Reference: 1997 *Pre-Assembly Report*, Section IV, pages 65-77, page 78 (rev.), Section V, pages 21-27, Section VI, pages 26-28; continued on *Minutes*, page 672, 928.

Bishop Anderson then introduced Brother Jeffrey Gros from the Interfaith Office of the National Conference of [Roman] Catholic Bishops.

Brother Gros stated, “I am very much in appreciation for this historic opportunity to be with you. To me, it is amazing to watch people struggle, under the Gospel, to be faithful to the Spirit in making decisions on behalf of a church at this point in its ten-year history. I feel graced to be with you in this moment and graced to be able to participate in bringing to you this important joint declaration. Harold [the Rev. Harold C. Skillrud] has given you the data that you need, you have all read the text, you have had some 30 years—those of you who have been attentive—to follow the fine work that has gone on here in the United States. We broke off a conversation in 1541, our two communities, and 30 years ago we have picked it up. We seem to have been more successful than our heritage at Regensburg. We hope we have. We certainly pray for the Spirit. I have three points I want to share with you and I will try not to repeat the things that Harold has brought to you so eloquently. First of all, the meaning of this statement for our church [the Roman Catholic Church]; second, where this fits in the Roman Catholic ecumenical program; and third, some of the follow-up for us together in the United States.

“First, the meaning. At the recent Lutheran World Federation assembly [in Hong Kong], Edward Cardinal Cassidy represented the Vatican’s Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity in speaking to the delegates of worldwide Lutheranism. This is what he said about the meaning of this joint declaration: ‘It will mean first of all, and above all, that we have honored Jesus Christ, the one mediator and Saviour between God and humanity; the Redeemer, the special anniversary of whose coming stands immediately before us at the year 2000. It will mean that in a profound way, in regard to this central issue [of justification by faith], we will have linked ourselves to, indeed entered with Christ into, the very prayer he uttered to his Father, as St. John’s Gospel tells us, when he prayed for the unity of his disciples. . . . Achieving our goal will also mean something significant for the whole ecumenical movement. . . . Since the disagreement over justification by faith was at the heart of Martin Luther’s conflict with church authorities in the sixteenth century, will it not be an enormous encouragement to the search for Christian unity, if by the end of the 20th century we Lutherans (at least ELCA Lutherans) and Roman Catholics are able to claim consensus on that doctrine?’ Indeed, for many of us in the United States, it is too slow. For many of us, as we have heard, these ecumenical proposals which have been on the table for some years, are moving too swiftly. Yet indeed we are on a pilgrimage together and we will need to discern together, by our separate processes, when the time is right for action. You have that opportunity before you today in the context of the communion which is the Lutheran World Federation. So the meaning of this, it seems to me, is clear—it is honoring the grace of God in Jesus Christ.

“Second, where does this fit within our Roman Catholic ecumenical program? As Harold mentioned, we have had nine rounds of dialogue with you, your predecessor bodies and The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in the United States. In 1983, under the co-chair-personship of Bishop Anderson, the U.S. dialogue produced a text on justification by faith. It has been quoted to you. In 1991, this church initiated with the Lutheran World Federation the process with which we are dealing today. For the Roman Catholic Church, this text will be the first joint declaration of this sort with any of the churches of the Reformation based on 30 years of our dialogue together. Pope John Paul II sent a letter to the Rev. Brakemeier [the Rev. Gottfried Brakemeier, president of the Lutheran World Federation] in Hong Kong and in this letter he made quite clear the Roman Catholic commitment. So while I might speak from the heart, it may be more interesting to you to hear what Pope John Paul II has to say. He says, ‘As together we give thanks to God for the ecumenical path on which he is leading us, I pray that with his grace, [Roman] Catholics and Lutherans will strive with even more commitment to overcome the obstacles which still impede our unity. We, as a church, at the highest level are committed to full communion in God’s time under the leading of the Holy Spirit with the Lutheran churches.’ The Holy Father goes on to say, and I will not quote him here, about how important this process is however long it takes for the Roman Catholic Church. Harold has mentioned how important it is for the Lutheran World Federation. Harold has given the details of where this fits in our common journey together and I only need say that our church [the Roman Catholic Church] is a worldwide church so we may need to move more slowly to bring about the healing among the Roman Catholics than you have to deal with in your relationship with The Episcopal Church. So if there are a few fits and starts with your Roman Catholic partners, you today had the experience of how to be patient and to listen to the Spirit work, moving to bring communion among your members. In Eastern Europe and Latin America, for example, these joint declarations are early on in the process of reception. So if it has taken us a long time to live through our alienation and come back to the table after 1541, then be patient with us.

“Third, where do we go from here? How do we implement these things? Harold said enough on that but I’d like to end with just a little exercise. Would all of you who happen to have a Roman Catholic spouse or Roman Catholic in your family, please stand up? Remain standing. Would all of you who have had a Roman Catholic student or a Roman Catholic faculty person or a Roman Catholic member of your confirmation class or had one of the members of your congregation in some Roman Catholic educational program, please stand up? I’m not sure that I have to quote the votes, but in terms of what you do—please sit down now, the circulation is moving again—in terms of asking pastorally what to do, you might want to turn to one another but I suspect 90 percent of this room had pastoral experience. There are two or three other questions in that sequence, but I will not bother you with them, I think the circulation is going. But, it was interesting that, at Hong Kong, Cardinal Cassidy (representing the worldwide Roman Catholic

Church) used examples from Roman Catholic-Lutheran relations in the United States—very specific examples—to demonstrate to worldwide Lutheranism what is possible pastorally. So indeed we have experiences here that are a witness to our ability to stand under the Gospel of Jesus Christ and minister together and work toward that day in which we can celebrate at that common Table the full communion for which we both pray together.”

Following Brother Gros’ address, Bishop Anderson recognized the Rev. Franklin D. Fry [New Jersey Synod], a member of both the Church Council and the advisory committee to this church’s Department for Ecumenical Affairs, who reflected upon the council’s recommendation. Pastor Fry commended *The Joint Declaration* as an “awesome gift of God, a totally unexpected gift of God, at least to me, for the action that is presented before us by the Church Council of the ELCA. The question the Lutheran World Federation addresses to us is [the first and second RESOLVEDs], Does the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America accept the conclusions reached in paragraphs 40 and 41 of *The Joint Declaration* and thus join in affirming that because of the agreement on the fundamental meaning and truth of our justification in Christ to which *The Joint Declaration* testifies, the condemnations regarding justification in the Lutheran Confessions do not apply to the teaching on justification of the Roman Catholic Church presented in *The Joint Declaration*.”

He then called attention to the full text of paragraphs 40 and 41 as footnoted following the recommendation of the Church Council. Pastor Fry continued, “My children are totally unable to understand the experiences of a Depression-age boy who was told at age nine by his father at the family dinner table, ‘How would you kids like to split all the money we have in the world?’ and being in the bondage of sin and greedy, we said, ‘Yeah.’ Whereupon he pulled out of his pocket a nickel and two pennies. He said, ‘That’s it.’ I said, ‘So you have money in the bank?’ He said, ‘No, that’s it.’ I had more in my piggy bank. So when you tell a 70-year-old, hardcore confessional Lutheran that this [*The Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*] was going to happen before he died is difficult for me to comprehend. It is only something in which I can rejoice. So now after the Hong Kong Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation, we are asked to respond to the question addressed to us by that assembly and by the LWF, can we affirm that joint study and statement on the doctrine of justification to lead within this year, we trust, before next June [1998]; can we affirm this? I think the Spirit has breathed on us so as to take my breath away. I would like to read to you a hymn [*Lutheran Book of Worship*, 491] that was sung at the memorial service for my wife and will be sung at mine. ‘Oh, God, I love thee; not that my poor love may win me entrance to thy heav’n above, nor yet that strangers to thy love must know the bitterness of everlasting woe. But, Jesus, thou art mine and I am thine; Clasp’d to thy bosom by thine arms divine, who on the cruel cross for me hast borne the nails, the spear, and man’s unpitying scorn. No thought can fathom and no tongue express thy griefs, thy toils, thine anguish measureless, thy death, O Lamb of God, the undefiled; And

all for me, thy wayward, sinful child. How can I choose but love thee, God’s dear Son, O Jesus, loveliest and most loving one! Were there no heav’n to gain, no hell to flee, for what thou art alone I must love thee. Not for the hope of glory or reward, but even as thyself hast loved me, Lord, I love thee, and will love thee and adore, who art my King, my God, forevermore.’ Do you know a hymn more evangelical? It is attributed to Francis Xavier, the leader of the counter-Reformation.”

Bishop Anderson then called upon Secretary Lowell G. Almen to read the Church Council’s recommendation which was before the assembly for discussion and action.

WHEREAS, Lutherans and Roman Catholics, in dialogue for more than 30 years, have produced consensus statements on the doctrine of justification in 1972, 1983, 1986, and 1994; and

WHEREAS, the Lutheran World Federation has requested member churches to respond to *The Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* with an affirmative or a negative vote; be it

RESOLVED that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America accept the conclusion reached in paragraph 40 of the *Joint Declaration*¹ describing the consensus on the doctrine of justification; and be it further

RESOLVED that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America accept the conclusion reached in paragraph 41 of the *Joint Declaration*² affirming that the condemnations in regard to justification in the Lutheran Confessions do not apply to the present teaching of the Roman Catholic Church; and be it further

RESOLVED that the bishop of this church convey this resolution to the Lutheran World Federation.

¹ 40. The understanding of the doctrine of justification set forth in this Declaration shows that a consensus in basic truths of the doctrine of justification exists between Lutherans and [Roman] Catholics. In light of this consensus the remaining differences of language, theological elaboration, and emphasis in the understanding of justification described in paragraphs 18 to 39 are acceptable. Therefore the Lutheran and the [Roman] Catholic explications of justification are in their difference open to one another and do not destroy the consensus regarding basic truths.

² 41. Thus the doctrinal condemnations of the 16th century, in so far as they relate to the doctrine of justification, appear in a new light: The teaching of the Lutheran churches presented in this Declaration does not fall under the condemnations from the Council of Trent. The condemnations in the Lutheran Confessions do not apply to the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church presented in this Declaration.

Ms. Linda Lockhart [South-Central Synod of Wisconsin] recalled an incident from her childhood as she explained why she favored the joint declaration. She

remembered that she was attending a Lutheran school in 1963 when President John F. Kennedy was assassinated. At the first news that the president had been shot, the school children prayed for the president. When word later came that he had died, she remembered that some of the children thought that since President Kennedy was Roman Catholic, maybe God did not hear their prayer. Ms. Lockhart said that today her children attend Roman Catholic schools. She commented, “We have found that the [Roman] Catholic education system is more compatible with our family’s understanding of the teachings of the Gospel, the school is more accepting of non-[Roman] Catholic children, and has embraced us fully and we are very grateful for that Christian educational opportunity for our family.”

The Rev. Stephen Goodwin [Indiana-Kentucky Synod] called the question.

MOVED; *Two-Thirds Vote Required*
SECONDED; *Yes—733; No—237*
CARRIED: To move the previous question.

Bishop Anderson requested that Secretary Almen lead the assembly in prayer before a vote was taken on the motion before the assembly. Secretary Almen offered a prayer of Saint Francis, “Lord, make us instruments of your peace. Where there is hatred, let us so love. Where there is injury, pardon. Where there is discord, union. Where there is doubt, faith. Where there is despair, hope. Where there is darkness, light. Where there is sadness, joy. Grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.”

ASSEMBLY
ACTION *Yes—958; No—25*

CA97.5.25 WHEREAS, Lutherans and Roman Catholics, in dialogue for more than 30 years, have produced consensus statements on the doctrine of justification in 1972, 1983, 1986, and 1994; and

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**Joint Declaration
On the
Doctrine of Justification**

1997

Preamble

1. The doctrine of justification was of central importance for the Lutheran Reformation of the sixteenth century. It was held to be the “first and chief article”¹ and at the same time the “ruler and judge over all other Christian doctrines.”² The doctrine of justification was particularly asserted and defended in its Reformation shape and special valuation over against the Roman Catholic Church and theology of that time, which in turn asserted and defended a doctrine of justification of a different character. From the Reformation perspective, justification was the crux of all the disputes. Doctrinal condemnations were put forward both in the Lutheran Confessions³ and by the Roman Catholic Church’s Council of Trent. These condemnations are still valid today and thus have a church-dividing effect.

2. For the Lutheran tradition, the doctrine of justification has retained its special status. Consequently it has also from the beginning occupied an important place in the official Lutheran-Roman Catholic dialogue.

3. Special attention should be drawn to the following reports: “The Gospel and the Church” (1972)⁴ and “Church and Justification” (1994)⁵ by the Lutheran-Roman Catholic Joint Commission, “Justification by Faith” (1983)⁶ of the Lutheran-Roman Catholic dialogue in the USA, and *The Condemnations of the Reformation Era-Do They Still Divide?* (1986)⁷ by the Ecumenical Working Group of Protestant and Catholic theologians in Germany. Some of these dialogue reports have been officially received by the churches. An important example of such reception is the binding response of the United Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Germany to the *Condemnations* study, made in 1994 at the highest possible level of ecclesiastical recognition together with the other churches of the Evangelical Church in Germany.⁸

¹ The Smalcald Articles, II,1; Book of Concord, 292.

² “Rector et iudex super omnia genera doctrinarum,” Weimar Edition of Luther’s Works (WA), 39, I, 205.

³ It should be noted that some Lutheran churches include only the Augsburg Confession and Luther’s Small Catechism among their binding confessions. These texts contain no condemnations about justification in relation to the Roman Catholic Church.

⁴ Report of the Joint Lutheran-Roman Catholic Study Commission, published in *Growth in Agreement* (New York: Geneva, 1984), pages 168-189.

⁵ Published by the Lutheran World Federation (Geneva, 1994).

⁶ Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue VII (Minneapolis, 1985).

⁷ Minneapolis, 1990.

⁸ “Gemeinsame Stellungnahme der Arnoldshainer Konferenz, der Vereinigten Kirche und des Deutschen Nationalkomitees des Lutherischen Weltbundes zum Dokument ‘Lehrverurteilungen— kirchentrennend?’,” *Ökumenische Rundschau* 44 (1995): 99-102; including the position papers which underlie this resolution, cf. *Lehrverurteilungen im Gespräch, Die ersten offiziellen Stellungnahmen aus den evangelischen Kirchen in Deutschland* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993).

4. In their discussion of the doctrine of justification, all the dialogue reports as well as the responses show a high degree of agreement in their approaches and conclusions. The time has therefore come to take stock and to summarize the results of the dialogues on justification so that our churches may be informed about the overall results of this dialogue with the necessary accuracy and brevity, and thereby be enabled to make binding decisions.

5. The present Joint Declaration has this intention: namely, to show that on the basis of their dialogue the subscribing Lutheran churches and the Roman Catholic Church⁹ are now able to articulate a common understanding of our justification by God’s grace through faith in Christ. It does not cover all that either church teaches about justification; it does encompass a consensus on basic truths of the doctrine of justification and shows that the remaining differences in its explication are no longer the occasion for doctrinal condemnations.

6. Our Declaration is not a new, independent presentation alongside the dialogue reports and documents to date, let alone a replacement of them. Rather, as the appendix of sources shows, it makes repeated reference to them and their arguments.

7. Like the dialogues themselves, this Joint Declaration rests on the conviction that in overcoming the earlier controversial questions and doctrinal condemnations, the churches neither take the condemnations lightly nor do they disavow their own past. On the contrary, this Declaration is shaped by the conviction that in their respective histories our churches have come to new insights. Developments have taken place which not only make possible, but also require the churches to examine the divisive questions and condemnations and see them in a new light.

1. Biblical Message of Justification

8. Our common way of listening to the Word of God in Scripture has led to such new insights. Together we hear the Gospel that “God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life” (John 3:16). This good news is set forth in Holy Scripture in various ways. In the Old Testament we listen to God’s Word about human sinfulness (Psalm 51:1-5; Daniel 9:5f.; Ecclesiastes/Qoheleth 8:9f.; Ezra 9:6f.) and human disobedience (Genesis 3:1-19; Nehemiah 9:16f., 26) as well as of God’s “righteousness” (Isaiah 46:13; 51:5-8; 56:1 [cf. 53:11]; Jeremiah 9:24) and “judgment” (Ecclesiastes/Qoheleth 12:14; Psalm 9:5f.; 76:7-9).

⁹ The word, “church,” is used in this Declaration to reflect the self-understandings of the participating churches, without intending to resolve all the ecclesiological issues related to this term.

9. In the New Testament diverse treatments of “righteousness” and “justification” are found in the writings of Matthew (5:10; 6:33; 21:32), John (16:8-11), Hebrews (5:1-3; 10:37-38), and James (2:14-26).¹⁰ In Paul’s letters also, the gift of salvation is described in various ways, among others: “for freedom Christ has set us free” (Galatians 5:1-13; cf. Romans 6:7), “reconciled to God” (2 Corinthians 5:18-21; cf. Romans 5:11), “peace with God” (Romans 5:1), “new creation” (2 Corinthians 5:17), “alive to God in Christ Jesus” (Romans 6:11, 23), or “sanctified in Christ Jesus” (cf. 1 Corinthians 1:2; 1:31; 2 Corinthians 1:1). Chief among these is the “justification” of sinful human beings by God’s grace through faith (Romans 3:23-25), which came into particular prominence in the Reformation period.

10. Paul sets forth the Gospel as the power of God for salvation of the person who has fallen under the power of sin, as the message that proclaims that “the righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith” (Romans 1:16-17) and that grants “justification” (Romans 3:21-31). He proclaims Christ as “our righteousness” (1 Corinthians 1:30), applying to the risen Lord what Jeremiah proclaimed about God himself (23:6). In Christ’s death and resurrection all dimensions of his saving work have their roots for he is “our Lord, who was put to death for our trespasses and raised for our justification” (Romans 4:25). All human beings are in need of God’s righteousness, “since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 2:23; cf. Romans 1:18-3:22; 11:32; Galatians 3:22). In Galatians (3:6) and Romans (4:3-9), Paul understands Abraham’s faith (Genesis 15:6) as faith in the God who justifies the sinner and calls upon the testimony of the Old Testament to undergird his gospel that this righteousness will be reckoned to all who, like Abraham, trust in God’s promise. “For the righteous will live by faith (Habakkuk 2:4; cf. Galatians 3:11; Romans 1:17). In Paul’s letters, God’s righteousness is also power for those who have faith (Romans 1:17; 2 Corinthians 5:21). In Christ he makes it their righteousness (2 Corinthians 5:21). Justification becomes ours through Christ Jesus “whom God put forward as a sacrifice of atonement by his blood, effective through faith” (Romans 3:25; see 3:21-28). “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God—not the result of works” (Ephesians 2:8-9).

11. Justification is the forgiveness of sins (cf. Romans 3:23-25; Acts 13:39; Luke 18:14), liberation from the dominating power of sin and death (Romans 5:12-21) and from the curse of the law (Galatians 3:10-14). It is acceptance into communion with God: already now, but then fully in God’s coming kingdom (Romans 5:1-2). It unites with Christ and with his death and resurrection (Romans

6:5). It occurs in the reception of the Holy Spirit in baptism and incorporation into the one body (Romans 8:1-2, 9-11; 1 Corinthians 12:12-13). All this is from God alone, for Christ’s sake, by grace, through faith in “the Gospel of God’s Son” (Romans 1:1-3).

12. The justified live by faith that comes from the Word of Christ (Romans 10:17) and is active through love (Galatians 5:6), the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22). But since the justified are assailed from within and without by powers and desires (Romans 8:35-39; Galatians 5:16-21) and fall into sin (1 John 1:8, 10), they must constantly hear God’s promises anew, confess their sins (1 John 1:9), participate in Christ’s body and blood, and be exhorted to live righteously in accord with the will of God. That is why the Apostle says to the justified: “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure” (Philippians 2:12-13). But the good news remains: “there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1), and in whom Christ lives (Galatians 2:20). Christ’s “act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all” (Romans 5:18).

2. The Doctrine of Justification as Ecumenical Problem

13. Opposing interpretations and applications of the biblical message of justification were in the sixteenth century a principal cause of the division of the Western church and led as well to doctrinal condemnations. A common understanding of justification is therefore fundamental and indispensable to overcoming that division. By appropriating insights of recent biblical studies and drawing on modern investigations of the history of theology and dogma, the post-Vatican II ecumenical dialogue has led to a notable convergence concerning justification, with the result that this Joint Declaration is able to formulate a consensus on basic truths concerning the doctrine of justification. In light of this consensus, the corresponding doctrinal condemnations of the sixteenth century do not apply to today’s partner.

3. The Common Understanding of Justification

14. The Lutheran churches and the Roman Catholic Church have together listened to the good news proclaimed in Holy Scripture. This common listening, together with the theological conversations of recent years, has led to a shared understanding of justification. This encompasses a consensus in the basic truths; the differing explications in particular statements are compatible with it.

15. In faith we together hold the conviction that justification is the work of the triune God. The Father sent his Son into the world to save sinners. The foundation

¹⁰ Cf. “Malta Report,” paragraphs 26-30; “Justification by Faith,” paragraphs 122-147. At the request of the U.S. dialogue on justification, the non-Pauline New Testament texts were addressed in *Righteousness in the New Testament*, by John Reumann, with responses by Joseph A. Fitzmyer and Jerome D. Quinn (Philadelphia; New York: 1982), pages 124-180. The results of this study were summarized in the dialogue report “Justification by Faith” in paragraphs 139-143.

and presupposition of justification is the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Christ. Justification thus means that Christ himself is our righteousness, in which we share through the Holy Spirit in accord with the will of the Father. Together we confess: By grace alone, in faith in Christ's saving work and not because of any merit on our part, we are accepted by God and receive the Holy Spirit, who renews our hearts while equipping and calling us to good works.¹¹

16. All people are called by God to salvation in Christ. Through Christ alone are we justified, when we receive this salvation in faith. Faith is itself God's gift through the Holy Spirit who works through Word and Sacrament in the community of believers and who, at the same time, leads believers into that renewal of life which God will bring to completion in eternal life.

17. We also share the conviction that the message of justification directs us in a special way towards the heart of the New Testament witness to God's saving action in Christ: it tells us that as sinners our new life is solely due to the forgiving and renewing mercy that God imparts as a gift and we receive in faith, and never can merit in any way.

18. Therefore the doctrine of justification, which takes up this message and explicates it, is more than just one part of Christian doctrine. It stands in an essential relation to all truths of faith, which are to be seen as internally related to each other. It is an indispensable criterion, which constantly serves to orient all the teaching and practice of our churches to Christ. When Lutherans emphasize the unique significance of this criterion, they do not deny the interrelation and significance of all truths of faith. When Catholics see themselves as bound by several criteria, they do not deny the special function of the message of justification. Lutherans and Catholics share the goal of confessing Christ, who is to be trusted above all things as the one Mediator (1 Timothy 2:5-6) through whom God in the Holy Spirit gives himself and pours out his renewing gifts [cf. Sources, section 3].

4. Explicating the Common Understanding of Justification

4.1 Human Powerlessness and Sin in Relation to Justification

19. We confess together that all persons depend completely on the saving grace of God for their salvation. The freedom they possess in relation to persons and the things of this world is no freedom in relation to salvation, for as sinners they stand under God's judgment and are incapable of turning by themselves to God to seek

deliverance, of meriting their justification before God, or of attaining salvation by their own abilities. Justification takes place solely by God's grace. Because Catholics and Lutherans confess this together, it is true to say:

20. When Catholics say that persons "cooperate" in preparing for and accepting justification by consenting to God's justifying action, they see such personal consent as itself an effect of grace, not as an action arising from innate human abilities.

21. According to Lutheran teaching, human beings are incapable of cooperating in their salvation, because as sinners they actively oppose God and his saving action. Lutherans do not deny that a person can reject the working of grace. When they emphasize that a person can only receive (mere passive) justification, they mean thereby to exclude any possibility of contributing to one's own justification, but do not deny that believers are fully involved personally in their faith, which is effected by God's Word.

4.2 Justification as Forgiveness of Sins and Making Righteous

22. We confess together that God forgives sin by grace and at the same time frees human beings from sin's enslaving power and imparts the gift of new life in Christ. When persons come by faith to share in Christ, God no longer imputes to them their sin and through the Holy Spirit effects in them an active love. These two aspects of God's gracious action are not to be separated, for persons are by faith united with Christ, who in his person is our righteousness (1 Corinthians 1:30): both the forgiveness of sin and the saving presence of God himself. Because Catholics and Lutherans confess this together, it is true to say that:

23. When Lutherans emphasize that the righteousness of Christ is our righteousness, their intention is above all to insist that the sinner is granted righteousness before God in Christ through the declaration of forgiveness and that only in union with Christ is one's life renewed. When they stress that God's grace is forgiving love ("the favor of God"¹²), they do not thereby deny the renewal of the Christian's life. They intend rather to express that justification remains free from human cooperation and is not dependent on the life-renewing effects of grace in human beings.

¹¹ "All Under One Christ," paragraph 14, in *Growth in Agreement*, pages 241-247.

¹² Cf. *Luther's Works*; American Edition 32:227; Weimar Edition 8:106.

24. When Catholics emphasize the renewal of the interior person through the reception of grace imparted as a gift to the believer,¹³ they wish to insist that God's forgiving grace always brings with it a gift of new life, which in the Holy Spirit becomes effective in active love. They do not thereby deny that God's gift of grace in justification remains independent of human cooperation [cf. Sources, section 4.2].

4.3 Justification by Faith and through Grace

25. We confess together that sinners are justified by faith in the saving action of God in Christ. By the action of the Holy Spirit in baptism, they are granted the gift of salvation, which lays the basis for the whole Christian life. They place their trust in God's gracious promise by justifying faith, which includes hope in God and love for him. Such a faith is active in love and thus the Christian cannot and should not remain without works. But whatever in the justified precedes or follows the free gift of faith is neither the basis of justification nor merits it.

26. According to Lutheran understanding, God justifies sinners in faith alone (*sola fide*). In faith they place their trust wholly in their Creator and Redeemer and thus live in communion with him. God himself effects faith as he brings forth such trust by his creative Word. Because God's act is a new creation, it affects all dimensions of the person and leads to a life in hope and love. In the doctrine of "justification by faith alone," a distinction but not a separation is made between justification itself and the renewal of one's way of life that necessarily follows from justification and without which faith does not exist. Thereby the basis is indicated from which the renewal of life proceeds, for it comes forth from the love of God imparted to the person in justification. Justification and renewal are joined in Christ, who is present in faith.

27. The Catholic understanding also sees faith as fundamental in justification. For without faith, no justification can take place. Persons are justified through baptism as hearers of the Word and believers in it. The justification of sinners is forgiveness of sins and being made righteous by justifying grace, which makes us children of God. In justification the righteous receive from Christ faith, hope, and love and are thereby taken into communion with him.¹⁴ This new personal relation to God is grounded totally on God's graciousness and remains constantly dependent on the salvific and creative working of this gracious God, who remains true to himself, so that one can rely upon him. Thus justifying grace never becomes a human possession to which one could appeal over against God. While Catholic teaching

emphasizes the renewal of life by justifying grace, this renewal in faith, hope, and love is always dependent on God's unfathomable grace and contributes nothing to justification about which one could boast before God (Romans 3:27). [See Sources, section 4.3.]

4.4 The Justified as Sinner

28. We confess together that in baptism the Holy Spirit unites one with Christ, justifies, and truly renews the person. But the justified must all through life constantly look to God's unconditional justifying grace. They also are continuously exposed to the power of sin still pressing its attacks (cf. Romans 6:12-14) and are not exempt from a lifelong struggle against the contradiction to God within the selfish desires of the old Adam (cf. Galatians 5:16; Romans 7:7-10). The justified also must ask God daily for forgiveness as in the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:12; 1 John 1:9), are ever again called to conversion and penance, and are ever again granted forgiveness.

29. Lutherans understand this condition of the Christian as a being "at the same time righteous and sinner." Believers are totally righteous, in that God forgives their sins through Word and Sacrament and grants the righteousness of Christ which they appropriate in faith. In Christ, they are made just before God. Looking at themselves through the law, however, they recognize that they remain also totally sinners. Sin still lives in them (1 John 1:8; Romans 7:17, 20), for they repeatedly turn to false gods and do not love God with that undivided love which God requires as their Creator (Deuteronomy 6:5; Matthew 22:36-40 pr.). This contradiction to God is as such truly sin. Nevertheless, the enslaving power of sin is broken on the basis of the merit of Christ. It no longer is a sin that "rules" the Christian for it is itself "ruled" by Christ with whom the justified are bound in faith. In this life, then, Christians can in part lead a just life. Despite sin, the Christian is no longer separated from God, because in the daily return to baptism, the person who has been born anew by baptism and the Holy Spirit has this sin forgiven. Thus this sin no longer brings damnation and eternal death.¹⁵ Thus, when Lutherans say that justified persons are also sinners and that their opposition to God is truly sin, they do not deny that, despite this sin, they are not separated from God and that this sin is a "ruled" sin. In these affirmations, they are in agreement with Roman Catholics, despite the difference in understanding sin in the justified.

30. Catholics hold that the grace of Jesus Christ imparted in baptism takes away all that is sin "in the proper sense" and that is "worthy of damnation" (Romans

¹³ Cf. Denzinger-Schönmetzer, *Enchiridion Symbolorum* 1528.

¹⁴ Cf. Denzinger-Schönmetzer, *Enchiridion Symbolorum* 1530.

¹⁵ Cf. Apology II:38-45; *Book of Concord*, 105f.

8:1).¹⁶ There does, however, remain in the person an inclination (concupiscence) which comes from sin and presses toward sin. Since, according to Catholic conviction, human sin always involves a personal element and since this element is lacking in this inclination, Catholics do not see this inclination as sin in an authentic sense. They do not thereby deny that this inclination does not correspond to God's original design for humanity and that it is objectively in contradiction to God and remains one's enemy in lifelong struggle. Grateful for deliverance by Christ, they underscore that this inclination in contradiction to God does not merit the punishment of eternal death¹⁷ and does not separate the justified person from God. But when individuals voluntarily separate themselves from God, it is not enough to return to observing the commandments, for they must receive pardon and peace in the Sacrament of Reconciliation through the word of forgiveness imparted to them in virtue of God's reconciling work in Christ. [See Sources, section 4.4.]

4.5 Law and Gospel

31. We confess together that persons are justified by faith in the Gospel "apart from works prescribed by the law" (Romans 3:28). Christ has fulfilled the law and by his death and resurrection has overcome it as a way to salvation. We also confess that God's commandments retain their validity for the justified and that Christ has by his teaching and example expressed God's will which is a standard for the conduct of the justified also.

32. Lutherans state that the distinction and right ordering of Law and Gospel is essential for the understanding of justification. In its theological use, the law is demand and accusation. Throughout their lives, all persons, Christians also, in that they are sinners, stand under this accusation, which uncovers their sin so that, in faith in the Gospel, they will turn unreservedly to the mercy of God in Christ, which alone justifies them.

33. Because the law as a way to salvation has been fulfilled and overcome through the Gospel, Catholics can say that Christ is not a lawgiver in the manner of Moses. When Catholics emphasize that the righteous are bound to observe God's commandments, they do not thereby deny that through Jesus Christ God has mercifully promised to his children the grace of eternal life.¹⁸ [See Sources, section 4.5.]

4.6 Assurance of Salvation

¹⁶ Cf. Denzinger-Schönmetzer, *Enchiridion Symbolorum* 1515.

¹⁷ Cf. Denzinger-Schönmetzer, *Enchiridion Symbolorum* 1515.

¹⁸ Cf. Denzinger-Schönmetzer, *Enchiridion Symbolorum* 1545.

34. We confess together that the faithful can rely on the mercy and promises of God. In spite of their own weakness and the manifold threats to their faith, on the strength of Christ's death and resurrection they can build on the effective promise of God's grace in Word and Sacrament and so be sure of this grace.

35. This was emphasized in a particular way by the Reformers: in the midst of temptation, believers should not look to themselves but look solely to Christ and trust only him. In trust in God's promise they are assured of their salvation, but are never secure looking at themselves.

36. Catholics can share the concern of the Reformers to ground faith in the objective reality of Christ's promise, to look away from one's own experience, and to trust in Christ's forgiving Word alone (cf. Matthew 16:19; 18:18). With the Second Vatican Council, Catholics state: to have faith is to entrust oneself totally to God,¹⁹ who liberates us from the darkness of sin and death and awakens us to eternal life.²⁰ In this sense, one cannot believe in God and at the same time consider the divine promise untrustworthy. No one may doubt God's mercy and Christ's merit. Every person, however, may be concerned about his salvation when he looks upon his own weaknesses and shortcomings. Recognizing his own failures, however, the believer may yet be certain that God intends his salvation. [See Sources, section 4.6.]

4.7 The Good Works of the Justified

37. We confess together that good works—a Christian life lived in faith, hope, and love—follow justification and are its fruits. When the justified live in Christ and act in the grace they receive, they bring forth, in biblical terms, good fruit. Since Christians struggle against sin their entire lives, this consequence of justification is also for them an obligation they must fulfill. Thus both Jesus and the apostolic Scriptures admonish Christians to bring forth the works of love.

38. According to Catholic understanding, good works, made possible by grace and the working of the Holy Spirit, contribute to growth in grace, so that the righteousness that comes from God is preserved and communion with Christ is deepened. When Catholics affirm the "meritorious" character of good works, they wish to say that, according to the biblical witness, a reward in heaven is promised to these works. Their intention is to emphasize the responsibility of persons for their actions, not to contest the character of those works as gifts, or far less to deny that justification always remains the unmerited gift of grace.

¹⁹ Cf. *Dei Verbum* 5.

²⁰ Cf. *Dei Verbum* 4.

39. The concept of a preservation of grace and a growth in grace and faith is also held by Lutherans. They do emphasize that righteousness as acceptance by God and sharing in the righteousness of Christ is always complete. At the same time, they state that there can be growth in its effects in Christian living. When they view the good works of Christians as the fruits and signs of justification and not as one's own "merits," they nevertheless also understand eternal life in accord with the New Testament as unmerited "reward" in the sense of the fulfillment of God's promise to the believer. [See Sources, section 4.7.]

5. The Significance and Scope of the Consensus Reached

40. The understanding of the doctrine of justification set forth in this Declaration shows that a consensus in basic truths of the doctrine of justification exists between Lutherans and Catholics. In light of this consensus the remaining differences of language, theological elaboration, and emphasis in the understanding of justification described in paragraphs 18 to 39 are acceptable. Therefore the Lutheran and the Catholic explications of justification are in their difference open to one another and do not destroy the consensus regarding basic truths.

41. Thus the doctrinal condemnations of the 16th century, in so far as they relate to the doctrine of justification, appear in a new light: The teaching of the Lutheran churches presented in this Declaration does not fall under the condemnations from the Council of Trent. The condemnations in the Lutheran Confessions do not apply to the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church presented in this Declaration.

42. Nothing is thereby taken away from the seriousness of the condemnations related to the doctrine of justification. Some were not simply pointless. They remain for us "salutary warnings" to which we must attend in our teaching and practice.²¹

43. Our consensus in basic truths of the doctrine of justification must come to influence the life and teachings of our churches. Here it must prove itself. In this respect, there are still questions of varying importance which need further clarification. These include, among other topics, the relationship between the Word of God and church doctrine, as well as ecclesiology, authority in the church, ministry, the sacraments, and the relation between justification and social ethics. We are convinced that the consensus we have reached offers a solid basis for this clarification. The Lutheran churches and the Roman Catholic Church will continue

to strive together to deepen this common understanding of justification and to make it bear fruit in the life and teaching of the churches.

44. We give thanks to the Lord for this decisive step forward on the way to overcoming the division of the church. We ask the Holy Spirit to lead us further toward that visible unity which is Christ's will.

²¹ *Condemnations of the Reformation Era*, 27.

APPENDIX
To
Joint Declaration on Justification

Resources
Regarding the Joint Declaration
On the Doctrine of Justification

Between the Lutheran World Federation And the Roman Catholic Church

In parts 3 and 4 of the “Joint Declaration,” reference is made to formulations from different Lutheran-Catholic dialogues. They are the following documents:

- ! “All Under One Christ,” statement on the Augsburg Confession by the Roman Catholic-Lutheran Joint Commission, 1980, in: “Growth in Agreement,” edited by Harding Meyer and Lukas Vischer, New York/Ramsey, Geneva, 1984, 241-247.
- ! Comments of the Joint Committee of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Germany and the LWF German National Committee regarding the document, *The Condemnations of the Reformation Era—Do They Still Divide?*, in “*Lehrverurteilungen im Gespräch*” [“Condemnation Tenets in Dialogue”], Göttingen, 1993 (hereafter: VELKD).
- ! Denzinger-Schönmetzer, *Enchiridion Symbolorum . . .*, 32nd to 36th edition (hereafter: DS).
- ! Denzinger-Hünemann, *Enchiridion Symbolorum . . .*, since the 37th edition (hereafter: DH).
- ! Evaluation of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity of the Study, *Lehrverurteilungen— kirchentrennend?* [Condemnation Tenets—Church Dividing?], Vatican, 1992, unpublished document (hereafter: PCPCU).
- ! “Justification by Faith,” *Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue VII*, Minneapolis, 1985 (hereafter: USA).
- ! *The Condemnations of the Reformation Era—Do they Still Divide?*, edited by Karl Lehmann and Wolfhart Pannenberg, Minneapolis, 1990 (hereafter: LV:E).

To [part] 3: The Common Understanding of Justification (paragraphs 14 and 18) [LV:E 68f.; VELKD 95]:

- ! “. . . a faith centered and forensically conceived picture of justification is of major importance for Paul and, in a sense, for the Bible as a whole, although it is by no means the only biblical or Pauline way of representing God’s saving work” [USA, no. 146].
- ! “Catholics as well as Lutherans can acknowledge the need to test the practices, structures, and theologies of the church by the extent to which they help or hinder ‘the proclamation of God’s free and merciful promises in Christ Jesus, which can be rightly received only through faith’ (para. 28)” [USA, no. 153].

Regarding the “fundamental affirmation” [USA, no. 157; cf. 4] it is said:

- ! “This affirmation, like the Reformation doctrine of justification by faith alone, serves as a criterion for judging all church practices, structures, and traditions precisely because its counterpart is ‘Christ alone’ (*solus Christus*). He alone is to be ultimately trusted as the one mediator through whom God in the Holy Spirit pours out his saving gifts. All of us in this dialogue affirm that all Christian teachings, practices, and offices should so function as to foster ‘the obedience of faith’ (Rom. 1:5) in God’s saving action in Christ Jesus alone through the Holy Spirit, for the salvation of the faithful and the praise and honor of the heavenly Father” [USA, no. 160].
- ! “For that reason, the doctrine of justification—and, above all, its biblical foundation—will always retain a special function in the Church. That function is continually to remind Christians that we sinners live solely from the forgiving love of God, which we merely allow to be bestowed on us, but which we in no way—in however modified a form—‘earn’ or are able to tie down to any preconditions or postconditions. The doctrine of justification, therefore, becomes the touchstone for testing at all times whether a particular interpretation of our relationship to God can claim the name of ‘Christian.’ At the same time, it becomes the touchstone for the Church, for testing at all times whether its proclamation and its praxis correspond to what has been given to it by its Lord” [LV:E 69].
- ! “An agreement on the fact that the doctrine of justification is significant not only as one doctrinal component within the whole of our church’s teaching, but also as the touchstone for testing the whole doctrine and practice of our churches, is—from a Lutheran point of view—fundamental progress in the ecumenical dialogue between our churches. It cannot be welcomed enough” [VELKD 95; cf. 157].
- ! “For Lutherans and Catholics, the doctrine of justification has a different status in the hierarchy of truth; but, both sides agree that the doctrine of justification has its specific function in the fact that it is ‘the touchstone for testing at all times whether a particular interpretation of our relationship to God can claim

the name of “Christian.” At the same time, it becomes the touchstone for the Church, for testing at all times whether its proclamation and its praxis correspond to what has been given to it by its Lord’ [LV:E 69]. The criteriological significance of the doctrine of justification for sacramentology, ecclesiology, and ethical teachings still deserves to be studied further” [PCPCU 96].

To [part] 4.1: Sin and Human Powerlessness in Relation to Justification (paragraphs 19-21) [LV:E 42ff.; 46; VELKD 77-81; 83f.]:

- ! “Those in whom sin reigns can do nothing to merit justification, which is the free gift of God’s grace. Even the beginnings of justification, for example, repentance, prayer for grace, and desire for forgiveness, must be God’s work in us” [USA, no. 156.3].
- ! “Both are concerned to make it clear that . . . human beings cannot . . . cast a sideways glance at their own endeavors . . . But, a response is not a ‘work.’ The response of faith is itself brought about through the uncoercible Word of promise, which comes to human beings from outside themselves. There can be ‘cooperation’ only in the sense that in faith the heart is involved, when the Word touches it and creates faith” [LV:E 46f].
- ! “Where, however, Lutheran teaching construes the relation of God to his human creatures in justification with such emphasis on the divine ‘monergism’ or the sole efficacy of Christ in such a way, that the person’s willing acceptance of God’s grace—which is itself a gift of God—has no essential role in justification, then the Tridentine canons 4, 5, 6 and 9 still constitute a notable doctrinal difference on justification” [PCPCU 22].
- ! “The strict emphasis on the passivity of human beings concerning their justification never meant, on the Lutheran side, to contest the full personal participation in believing; rather it meant to exclude any cooperation in the event of justification itself. Justification is the work of Christ alone, the work of grace alone” [VELKD 84, 3-8].

To [part] 4.2: Justification as Forgiveness of Sins and Making Righteous (paragraphs 22-24) [USA, nos. 98-101; LV:E 47ff.; VELKD 84ff.; cf. also the quotations to 4.4]:

- ! “By justification we are both declared and made righteous. Justification, therefore, is not a legal fiction. God, in justifying, effects what he promises; he forgives sin and makes us truly righteous” [USA, no. 156,5].
- ! “Protestant theology does not overlook what Catholic doctrine stresses: the creative and renewing character of God’s love; nor does it maintain . . . God’s

impotence toward a sin which is ‘merely’ forgiven in justification but which is not truly abolished in its power to divide the sinner from God” [LV:E 49].

- ! “The Lutheran doctrine has never understood the ‘crediting of Christ’s justification’ as without effect on the life of the faithful, because Christ’s Word achieves what it promises. Accordingly the Lutheran doctrine understands grace as God’s favor, but nevertheless as effective power . . . ‘for where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation’” [VELKD 86, 15-23].
- ! “Catholic doctrine does not overlook what Protestant theology stresses: the personal character of grace, and its link with the Word; nor does it maintain . . . grace as an objective ‘possession’ (even if a conferred possession) on the part of the human being—something over which he can dispose” [LV:E 49].

To [part] 4.3: Justification by Faith and through Grace (paragraphs 25-27) [USA, nos. 105ff.; LV:E 49-53; VELKD 87-90]:

- ! “If we translate from one language to another, then Protestant talk about justification through faith corresponds to Catholic talk about justification through grace; and on the other hand, Protestant doctrine understands substantially under the one word, ‘faith,’ what Catholic doctrine (following 1 Cor. 13:13) sums up in the triad of ‘faith, hope, and love’” [LV:E 52].
- ! “We emphasize that faith in the sense of the first commandment always means love to God and hope in him and is expressed in the love to the neighbour” [VELKD 89, 8-11].
- ! “Catholics . . . teach as do Lutherans, that nothing prior to the free gift of faith merits justification and that all of God’s saving gifts come through Christ alone” [USA, no. 105].
- ! “The Reformers . . . understood faith as the forgiveness and fellowship with Christ effected by the Word of promise itself. This is the ground for the new being, through which the flesh is dead to sin and the new man or woman in Christ has life (*sola fide per Christum*). But even if this faith necessarily makes the human being new, the Christian builds his confidence, not on his own new life, but solely on God’s gracious promise. Acceptance in Christ is sufficient, if ‘faith’ is understood as ‘trust in the promise’ (*fides promissionis*)” [LV:E 50].
- ! Cf. The Council of Trent, Session 6, Chap. 7: “Consequently, in the process of justification, together with the forgiveness of sins a person receives, through Jesus Christ into whom he is grafted, all these infused at the same time: faith, hope and charity” [*Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, vol. 2, London/Washington, D.C., 1990, 673].

- ! “According to Protestant interpretation, the faith that clings unconditionally to God’s promise in Word and Sacrament is sufficient for righteousness before God, so that the renewal of the human being, without which there can be no faith, does not in itself make any contribution to justification” [LV:E 52].
- ! “As Lutherans, we maintain the distinction between justification and sanctification, of faith and works, which, however, implies no separation” [VELKD 89, 6-8].
- ! “Catholic doctrine knows itself to be at one with the Protestant concern in emphasizing that the renewal of the human being does not ‘contribute’ to justification, and is certainly not a contribution to which he could make any appeal before God. Nevertheless, it feels compelled to stress the renewal of the human being through justifying grace, for the sake of acknowledging God’s newly creating power; although this renewal in faith, hope, and love is certainly nothing but a response to God’s unfathomable grace” [LV:E 52f].
- ! “Insofar as the Catholic doctrine stresses that ‘the personal character of grace, and its link with the Word’, this renewal . . . is certainly nothing but a response effected by God’s Word itself and that ‘the renewal of the human being does not contribute to justification, and is certainly not a contribution to which a person could make any appeal before God’ our objection no longer applies” [VELKD 89, 12-21].

To [part] 4.4: The Justified as Sinners (paragraphs 28-31) [USA, nos. 102ff.; LV:E 44ff.; VELKD 81ff.]:

- ! “For however just and holy, they fall from time to time into the sins that are those of daily existence. What is more, the Spirit’s action does not exempt believers from the lifelong struggle against sinful tendencies. Concupiscence and other effects of original and personal sin, according to Catholic doctrine, remain in the justified, who, therefore, must pray daily to God for forgiveness” [USA, no. 102].
- ! “The doctrines laid down at Trent and by the Reformers are at one in maintaining that original sin, and also the concupiscence that remains, are in contradiction to God . . . object of the lifelong struggle against sin . . . After baptism, concupiscence in the person justified no longer cuts that person off from God; in Tridentine language, it is ‘no longer sin in the real sense’; in Lutheran phraseology, it is *peccatum regnatum*, ‘controlled sin’” [LV:E 46].
- ! “The question is how to speak of sin with regard to the justified without limiting the reality of salvation. While Lutherans express this tension with the term, ‘controlled sin,’ (*peccatum regnatum*), which expresses the teaching of the Christian as ‘being justified and sinner at the same time’ (*simul iustus et*

peccator), Roman Catholics think the reality of salvation can only be maintained by denying the sinful character of concupiscence. With regard to this question, a considerable rapprochement is reached, if LV:E calls the concupiscence that remains in the justified a ‘contradiction to God’ and thus qualifies it as sin” [VELKD 82, 29-39].

To [part] 4.5: Law and Gospel (paragraphs 32-34):

- ! According to Pauline teaching, it refers to the Jewish law as means of salvation. This was fulfilled and overcome in Christ. This statement and the consequences from it have thus to be understood.
- ! With reference to Canons 19f. of the Council of Trent the VELKD (89, 28-36) says as follows: “The ten commandments, of course, apply to Christians as stated in many places of the confessions. If Canon 20 stresses that a ‘person . . . is bound to keep the commandments of God,’ this does not apply to us; if, however, Canon 20 affirms that faith has salvific power only on condition of keeping the commandments, this applies to us. Concerning the reference of the Canon regarding the commandments of the church, there is no difference between us, if these commandments are only expressions of the commandments of God; otherwise it would apply to us.”
- ! The last paragraph is related factually to [part] 4.3, but emphasizes the ‘convicting function’ of the law, which is important to Lutheran thinking.

To [part] 4.6: Assurance of Salvation (paragraphs 35-37) [LV:E 53-56; VELKD 90ff.]:

- ! “The question is: How can, and how may, human beings live before God in spite of their weakness, and with that weakness?” [LV:E 53].
- ! “The foundation and the point of departure (of the Reformers) . . . are: the reliability and sufficiency of God’s promise, and the power of Christ’s death and resurrection; human weakness, and the threat to faith and salvation, which that involves” [LV:E 56].
- ! The Council of Trent also emphasizes that “it is necessary to believe that sins are not forgiven, nor have they ever been forgiven, save freely by the divine mercy on account of Christ;” and that we must not doubt “the mercy of God, the merit of Christ, and the power and efficacy of the sacraments; so it is possible for anyone, while he regards himself and his own weakness and lack of dispositions, to be anxious and fearful about his own state of grace” [Council of Trent, Session 6, Chapter 9, 674].
- ! “Luther and his followers go a step farther: They urge that the uncertainty should not merely be endured. We should avert our eyes from it and take

seriously, practically, and personally the objective efficacy of the absolution pronounced in the sacrament of penance, which comes ‘from outside.’ . . . Since Jesus said, ‘Whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven’ (Matt. 16: 19), the believer . . . would declare Christ to be a liar . . . , if he did not rely with a rock-like assurance on the forgiveness of God uttered in the absolution . . . that this reliance can itself be subjectively uncertain—that the assurance of forgiveness is not a security of forgiveness (*securitas*), but, this must not be turned into yet another problem, so to speak: the believer should turn his eyes away from it, and should look only to Christ’s Word of forgiveness” [LV:E 54f.].

! “Today Catholics can appreciate the Reformer’s efforts to ground faith in the objective reality of Christ’s promise, ‘whatsoever you loose on earth . . .’ and to focus believers on the specific word of absolution from sins. . . . Luther’s original concern to teach people to look away from their experience, and to rely on Christ alone and his word of forgiveness [is not to be condemned]” [PCPCU 24].

! A mutual condemnation regarding the understanding of the assurance of salvation “can even less provide grounds for mutual objection today—particularly, if we start from the foundation of a biblically renewed concept of faith. For a person can certainly lose or renounce faith, and self-commitment to God and his Word of promise. But, if he believes in this sense, he cannot at the same time believe that God is unreliable in his Word of promise. In this sense it is true today also that—in Luther’s words—faith is the assurance of salvation” [LV:E 56].

! With reference to the concept of faith of Vatican II, see *Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation*, no. 5: “‘The obedience of faith’ . . . must be given to God, who reveals an obedience by which man entrusts his whole self freely to God, offering ‘the full submission of intellect and will to God who reveals,’ and freely assenting to the truth revealed by Him.”

! “The Lutheran distinction between the certitude (*certitudo*) of faith, which looks alone to Christ and earthly security (*securitas*), which is based on the human being, has not been dealt with clearly enough in the LV [*The Condemnations of the Reformation Era—Do they Still Divide?*]. . . . Faith never reflects on itself, but depends completely on God, whose grace is bestowed through Word and Sacrament, thus from outside (*extra nos*)” [VELKD 92, 2-9].

To [part] 4.7: The Good Works of the Justified (paragraphs 38-40) [LV:E 66ff., VELKD 90ff.]:

! “But the Council excludes the possibility of earning grace—that is, justification—[can. 2; DS 1552] and bases the earning or merit of eternal life

on the gift of grace itself, through membership in Christ [can. 32: DS 1582]. Good works are ‘merits’ as a gift. Although the Reformers attack ‘Godless trust’ in one’s own works, the Council explicitly excludes any notion of a claim or any false security [cap. 16: DS 1548f]. It is evident . . . that the Council wishes to establish a link with Augustine, who introduced the concept of merit, in order to express the responsibility of human beings, in spite of the ‘bestowed’ character of good works” [LV:E 66].

! If we understand the language of “cause” in Canon 24 in more personal terms, as it is done in Chapter 16 of the Decree on Justification, where the idea of communion with Christ is emphasized, then we can describe the Catholic doctrine on merit as it is done in the first sentence of the second paragraph of 4.7: growth in grace, perseverance in righteousness received by God and a deeper communion with Christ.

! “Many antitheses could be overcome, if the misleading word, ‘merit,’ were simply to be viewed and thought about in connection with the true sense of the biblical term, ‘wage,’ or reward” [LV:E 67].

! “The Lutheran confessions stress that the justified person is responsible not to lose the grace received but to live in it . . . Thus, the confessions can speak of a preservation of grace and a growth in it. If ‘righteousness’ in Canon 24 is understood in the sense that it effects human beings, then it does not apply to us. But, if ‘righteousness’ in Canon 24 refers to the Christian’s acceptance by God, it applies to us; because this righteousness is always perfect; compared with it the works of Christians are only ‘fruits’ and ‘signs’” [VELKD 94, 2-14].

! “Concerning Canon 26, we refer to the Apology where eternal life is described as reward: ‘. . . We grant that eternal life is a reward, because it is something that is owed—not because of our merits but because of the promise’” [VELKD 94, 20-24].

Brother Gros returned to the platform and said, “A very quick and unprepared word of thank you as you get on with your business. But, sincerely out of the depths of my heart, having sat through the Commission for a New Lutheran Church and seeing you after 10 years, it is amazing the quantity and quality of ecumenical decisions you are able to make. This one warms my heart particularly. In 1963 in St. Louis, Missouri, reading in *Time* magazine that my church believed in the priesthood of all believers and the ecumenical movement, I walked across the street to Concordia Seminary, ended up in the office of the Rev. Arthur Carl Piepkorn and was handed a reprint from one of his articles, ‘A Hermeneutical Approach to the Symbolic Books.’ That, of course, included the Nicene Creed as well as the Lutheran Confessions. It is on the basis of those kinds of hermeneutical tools that you all have produced that our churches together come to this agreement. I am very

much in appreciation and I would like to give thanks also to those saints who I feel free under the Gospel to pray to, Arthur Carl Piepkorn, Paul Empie, Warren Quanbeck, who stand now in heaven as a response to God's grace."

In response, Bishop Anderson read a portion of paragraph 15 from *The Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*, "Together we confess: By grace alone, in faith in Christ's saving work and not because of any merit on our part, we are accepted by God and receive the Holy Spirit, who renews our hearts while equipping and calling us to good works." He concluded, "Thanks be to God" and invited assembly members to sing the hymn, "Now Thank We all Our God."

Bible Study: Session III

Bishop Anderson introduced the Rev. James K. Echols, newly elected president of the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, to lead the third part of the assembly's Bible study on 1 Corinthians.

Pastor Echols opened the Bible study with a hymn of invocation, "Kum Ba Yah." Pastor Echols began the study of 1 Corinthians, chapters 11 through 14, by sharing two common sayings: "It's *deja vu* all over again," attributed to Yogi Berra, and "The more things change, the more they stay the same," which is often quoted by an African American woman he called Aunt Jane.

Pastor Echols affirmed, "There is nothing more important and central to the life of the Church than corporate worship. Amid all that we have done here these days, and we have done a lot, nothing has been more important than worship. It is no mere accident that the first of Bishop Anderson's seven key initiatives calls us to deepen our worship life. You see, in worship the redeemed of every time and of every place have gathered around Word and Sacrament, in praise and thanksgiving for the grace and love of God revealed in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus who is the Christ. Indeed, it is worship's central importance that invariably leads to controversy in the church. Sometimes benign; at other times malignant. Where worship is concerned, controversy never seems far away." He confided that controversies over worship exist in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America—controversies "concerning such things as trinitarian language, shall we begin worship in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit or is it acceptable to begin worship in the name of the Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier of us all; shall we or shall we not commune infants? Controversy is never far away—worship as authentic engagement versus worship as 'pop' entertainment. Is applause in worship an acceptable form of sacred praise? Where is the line to be drawn and who will draw it? Controversy is never far away."

Given our familiarity with controversy about worship, said Pastor Echols, "It is no surprise when we find Paul and the congregation at Corinth struggling with worship practices. 'It's *deja vu* all over again' and 'The more things change, the

more they stay the same.' The focus of Paul's concern in chapters 11-14 of 1 Corinthians was corporate worship," Pastor Echols said. "Taken together they [chapters 11-14] reveal to us three things. First, they reveal the reality of fierce controversy that threatened the unity of the worshiping community at Corinth. It is clear that 'worship wars' were well underway when the Apostle penned these chapters. Secondly, these chapters reveal the apostle's concern to seek and to move toward an inclusive consensus that would build up rather than tear down the community, that would bring order from chaos, and that would preserve the integrity of the community's witness to the world. Finally, these chapters reveal that the gift of God's love, *agape*, was for the Apostle an indispensable resource for the Christians at Corinth."

The controversies in Corinth extended to several areas. One was the role of women in worship. The immediate issue concerning women in worship was the wearing of head coverings in public worship. Pastor Echols cited Mary Hayter in *The New Eve in Christ* as one of the many contemporary theologians who believe that what was *not* in dispute in Corinth was the equality of women and men in Christ. To be sure, said Pastor Echols, the continuing impact of patriarchy should not be underestimated; it manifested itself in different ways. But, in his opinion, "the apostle's words were not intended to foster feelings of female inferiority and female subordination since that would have contradicted the Apostle Paul's own writing in Galatians 3:28: 'There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female, for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.' While the apostle was concerned about what women wore on their heads, he was not at all concerned about their public praying in worship. In the synagogue, women were prohibited from such public activity—a clear reflection of their unequal status. The Apostle Paul knew well the traditions of Judaism. If Paul wanted to continue that tradition," stated Pastor Echols, "he would have challenged the public praying of women. What was in dispute concerning women in worship involved some women who began attending worship with uncovered heads contrary to the tradition in the synagogue; or unbound hair, reminiscent of prostitutes from pagan cults with orgiastic rituals. We see in Corinthians a controversy in search of consensus." He also spoke of controversy resulting from the development over time of "a superabundance of speech with some of the saints, likely both women and men, talking out of turn, talking too much, talking when they should have been listening, disrupting worship and creating chaos rather than contributing to order in the assembly. It would seem that some laid this breach of order squarely at the feet of some of the women . . . in order to restore order something had to be done The Church found itself in controversy in search of consensus."

Pastor Echols highlighted a second broad area of controversy at Corinth, which concerned the celebration of the Lord's Supper when some members of the congregation participated in the *agape* meal without waiting for others, and some would become drunk. "Table fellowship was an important occasion for both Jews and Gentiles alike at the time," said Pastor Echols, "because the *agape* feast

brought together members of the Christian community for several purposes. These feasts provided Christians with additional opportunities for fellowship in an era marked by persecution. Furthermore, these feasts served as occasions for members of the community to minister to its poor and to its widows. . . . These *agape* feasts which provided bread to nourish the body served as a fitting prelude to the Lord's Supper which provided the bread of life to nourish the spirit." They were supposed to embody unity, but at Corinth they revealed divisions. He said, "It would seem that the failure of Christian charity and the lack of sharing prevailed. . . . The church found itself split in the midst of controversy in search of consensus."

The third area of controversy, stated Pastor Echols, focused on the appropriate use of spiritual gifts in worship. He said, "The apostle felt constrained to inform the saints at Corinth concerning spiritual gifts. In part, this was due to a controversy that was underway concerning the manifestation of tongues in the assembly. Here the Apostle Paul was not referring to the manifestation of those discernible languages that the Spirit placed in the mouths of believers at Pentecost. The subject of the apostle's concern on this occasion was *glossolalia*, unrecognizable patterns of speech that emanated from a person's mouth without warning—patterns of speech understood to be brought on by spirit-possession." Some were claiming it a superior gift, to be given free reign and priority in the assembly and this claim led to controversy, he said, and inevitably to chaos and confusion. Pastor Echols commented, "The church found itself in confusion and chaos in the midst of controversy in search of consensus."

"Do you get the picture?" Pastor Echols asked. "The role of women in worship, the proper celebration of the Lord's Supper, the appropriate use of spiritual gifts in the assembly—the church at Corinth was steeped in controversy. It was a congregation in crisis; it was a congregation in desperate need of conflict resolution. It was a church that needed a consensus, a worship practices statement that would help to shape its life of corporate worship—it's *deja vu* all over again. The more things change, the more they stay the same." The apostle did not hesitate to communicate advice and counsel to restore unity and to focus the church on its calling of making Christ known. The Apostle Paul hoped his advice would bring consensus to a church deeply divided. He thought his advice to be of "purely local and temporary significance, not to be invoked at all times in places for all purposes," stated Pastor Echols quoting William Barkley. The context for his advice is unity. The apostle offered the Corinthians practical advice that he hoped would serve as the basis for consensus in a church deeply divided, he said.

For God is a God not of disorder, but of peace, stated Pastor Echols. "The Apostle Paul prefaced this practical, liturgical counsel with theological insights that have held enduring revelational significance for the Church. . . . The apostle informed the church at Corinth that there were indeed a variety of gifts conferred by the same Spirit of God on each and every member of the church for the common good. As such all these gifts—wisdom and knowledge, faith and healing miracles, prophecy, speaking in tongues and the interpretation of tongues—all these gifts were

to be positively regarded and appropriately used in making Christ known. . . . The apostle sought to unite the church around mutual recognition and appreciation of the diverse gifts of the whole people of God. It was in service of this theological insight and the concern for the unity of the church that the apostle inserted in the middle of Chapter 12 in verses 12-26 an exposition of the Church as the body of Christ. . . . The church at Corinth found itself deeply divided over these issues, seeking a first-century statement on worship practices that could guide its common life. In these chapters, we find the apostle attempting to provide the beginnings of such a statement."

Pastor Echols commented, "In *A Good Time to Be the Church*, Bishop [H. George] Anderson reflected on how the Lutheran understanding of the Christian as both saint and sinner can be an indispensable resource in the midst of church fights. I commend it to you. It is on page 53. . . . Like Bishop Anderson, the apostle called the attention of the church at Corinth to yet another indispensable resource for them in the midst of their church fight over worship. We find that in Chapter 13 [of 1 Corinthians] where the apostle spoke of love, using the Greek word *agape* to refer not to human love, but to God's sacrificial self-giving love, a love disclosed on the cross, a love that was and is through Jesus Christ the gracious gift to us as the church. . . . The apostle reminded the whole community that whatever the position they assumed, God's inclusive, forgiving, reconciling love was an indispensable, sustaining, undergirding resource for them. For the Apostle, the church's journey from a potentially debilitating controversy to a healthy consensus needed to be leavened by the gift of God's love active in the hearts of the saints."

Pastor Echols concluded, "So whether the church at Corinth in the first century or the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in the 20th century (or for that matter, any other church), the truth is—and we have seen it here—that controversy and church fights about worship and a whole host of other things are never far away. They are constantly with us. So Yogi was right, 'It's *deja vu* all over again.' Aunt Jane was right, 'The more things change, the more they stay the same.' The good news is that our God is a God of reconciliation and of peace, . . . incorporating us into God's consensus of grace, calling us through our baptism to be agents of reconciliation, ambassadors of unity and builders of consensus within the community of faith. God used the Apostle Paul to move the church at Corinth toward a consensus that he hoped would seem good to the Holy Spirit and to them. May God also use us in this way and may we trust that the love with which we have been loved in Christ will be active within this community of faith to build up the body, freeing us and empowering us for the mission of making Christ known." Pastor Echols closed the Bible study with prayer.

Bishop Anderson thanked Pastor Echols for his insights. He then entertained a motion that the time for recess be extended to 6:30 P.M., in order to allot time for

consideration of the budget proposal and the proposed statement on sacramental practices.

The Rev. Franklin D. Fry [New Jersey Synod] then proposed the following motion. Pastor Fry said, “May I tell you the price of it [this motion]? Ninety seconds for us to stand up and then sit down.” Bishop Anderson replied, “I think that is a bargain I cannot refuse. Why do you not stretch and then we will vote.” The suggestion was appreciatively received.

MOVED;

Two-Thirds Vote Required

SECONDED;

Yes— 492; No—108

CARRIED: To extend the time of this plenary session to complete consideration and take action on the budget proposal and proposed sacramental practices statement.

1998-1999 Budget Proposal

Reference: 1997 Pre-Assembly Report, Section IV, pages 135-180; continued on *Minutes*, page 378.

Bishop Anderson called upon the Rev. Stephen M. Youngdahl, chair of the Church Council’s Budget and Finance Committee, and the Rev. Robert N. Bacher, executive for administration, to introduce the 1998 and 1999 budget proposals. Pastor Youngdahl announced that one amendment to the budget had been proposed; however, it would not affect the original proposal in terms of dollars. The amendment would move allocations within a particular unit. The assembly would address that matter subsequently as part of the report of the Committee of Reference and Counsel.

MOVED;

SECONDED: *1998 Budget Proposal:*

To approve a 1998 fiscal year current operating fund income proposal of \$77,575,000, including an initial Mission Operating Fund allocation of \$1,000,000 and Expanded Ministry Fund of \$200,000;

To approve a 1998 World Hunger income proposal of \$12,400,000; and

To authorize the Church Council to establish a spending authorization after review of 1997 revised income estimates.

1999 Budget Proposal:

To approve a 1999 fiscal year current operating fund income proposal of \$78,275,000, including an initial Mission Operating Fund allocation of \$750,000 and Expanded Ministry Fund of \$200,000;

To approve a 1999 World Hunger income proposal of \$12,600,000; and

To authorize the Church Council to establish a spending authorization after review of 1997 actual income and 1998 revised income estimates.

Ms. Dawna M. Svaren [Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod] asked whether there were funds allocated to support continuing discussions with The Episcopal Church. Pastor Bacher rephrased Ms. Svaren’s question: “How are we going to follow through with the plans adopted regarding The Episcopal Church?” He assured assembly members that there was money in the “budget of the Department for Ecumenical Affairs related to following up the proposals whatever they were going to be. I think the question we will have to ask now is whether it is sufficient. It is impossible to answer that now until we do some more specific work on just what has to be done to implement those resolutions that were passed.” But the budget provides for more flexibility than formerly was the case, due to slight increases in giving, Pastor Bacher said.

Mr. James O. Hillis [Metropolitan New York Synod], identifying himself as a member of his synod’s budget committee, commented, “I think we should recognize and commend the [churchwide] staff for absorbing the reductions they have made over the years. . . . Your budget assumptions appear reasonable and, especially in light of your experience, the administration of your salary plan is reasonable in light of what you have shown us in your reports, and your ability and your practice of periodic review and adjustment are prudent and to be commended. I recommend approval of the budget as written.”

The Rev. L. Wayne Kendrick [Saint Paul Area Synod] remarked that from data provided by the ELCA, “the largest segment of ELCA congregations are in communities in which the population is increasing but the congregation itself in those areas is declining. Would it be possible to request that a study or project be initiated, if such is not the case already, that addresses the possibility of affecting that major trend within these congregations that opens up the possibility of helping congregations, in those communities especially, to address the issue of their

congregational decline? I note that there is a Mission Operating Fund and an Expanded Ministry Fund. Would it be possible to at least ask for consideration of such a project? Bishop Anderson replied that it was possible to ask for consideration of such a project, but that it would require a separate motion from the one specifically related to the adoption of the budget.

The Rev. George Villa [Southern California (West) Synod] called the question.

MOVED; *Two-Thirds Vote Required*
SECONDED; *Yes-721; No-33*
CARRIED: To move the previous question.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION *Yes-803; No-3*

CA97.5.26 1998 Budget Proposal:

To approve a 1998 fiscal year current operating fund income proposal of \$77,575,000, including an initial Mission Operating Fund allocation of \$1,000,000 and Expanded Ministry Fund of \$200,000;

To approve a 1998 World Hunger income proposal of \$12,400,000; and

To authorize the Church Council to establish a spending authorization after review of 1997 revised income estimates.

1999 Budget Proposal:

To approve a 1999 fiscal year current operating fund income proposal of \$78,275,000, including an initial Mission Operating Fund allocation of \$750,000 and Expanded Ministry Fund of \$200,000;

To approve a 1999 World Hunger income proposal of \$12,600,000; and

To authorize the Church Council to establish a spending authorization after review of 1997 actual income and 1998 revised income estimates.

Acknowledgment of Retiring Bishops

Bishop Anderson called upon assembly members to recognize those synodical bishops who, since 1995, had completed their terms in office, or would complete such service by the end of August 1997. Bishop Anderson asked those synodical bishops present to stand and receive the gratitude of the assembly as he read their names:

The Rev. James S. Aull [South Carolina Synod];
The Rev. L. Alexander Black [West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod].
The Rev. Lowell O. Erdahl [Saint Paul Area Synod];
The Rev. Lavern G. Franzen [Florida-Bahamas Synod];
The Rev. Sherman G. Hicks [Metropolitan Chicago Synod];
The Rev. Reginald H. Holle [North/West Lower Michigan Synod];
The Rev. E. Harold Jansen [Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod];
The Rev. Robert W. Kelley [Northeastern Ohio Synod];
The Rev. Gerhard I. Knutson [Northwest Synod of Wisconsin];
The Rev. Robert D. Lynne [Western North Dakota Synod];
Mr. Mark W. Menees [North Carolina Synod], who resigned from office and from the roster of ordained ministers effective May 25, 1996;
The Rev. Roger L. Munson [Northeastern Minnesota Synod];
The Rev. Arthur V. Rimmereid [Northwestern Minnesota Synod];
The Rev. Kenneth H. Sauer [Southern Ohio Synod];
The Rev. Harold C. Skillrud [Southeastern Synod];
The Rev. James E. Sudbrock [Metropolitan New York Synod];
The Rev. Gregory J. Villalón [Caribbean Synod];
The Rev. Harold S. Weiss [Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod]; and
The Rev. Paul M. Werger [Southeastern Iowa Synod].

Statement on Sacramental Practices (continued)

Reference: 1997 Pre-Assembly Report, Section IV, pages 1-34 and pages 34.1-34.7; continued on *Minutes*, pages 90, 631.

The text of the recommendation of the Church Council as amended by earlier action of the Assembly was as follows.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To amend *A Proposed Statement on the Practice of Word and Sacrament—The Use of the Means of Grace* by deleting the word, “Sunday,” from principle number seven; and

To amend *A Proposed Statement on the Practice of Word and Sacrament—The Use of the Means of Grace*, Principle 20, by deleting the phrase, “the candidates and/or their family,” and substituting the phrase, “the candidates and, so far as possible, their respective families.”; and

To amend *A Proposed Statement on the Practice of Word and Sacrament—The Use of the Means of Grace*, by adding to Application 35b, the clause, “but not every service need be a Eucharist.”; and

To adopt *A Proposed Statement on the Practice of Word and Sacrament—The Use of the Means of Grace*, as amended, for guidance and practice in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Bishop Anderson indicated that discussion of the proposed statement on sacramental practices would now resume. He stated that he would continue to move through the document page by page giving voting members an opportunity to propose amendments and pointed out that the assembly had previously worked through pages 1-23.

The Rev. Michael L. Burk [Northeastern Iowa Synod] commented, “Given actions already taken by this assembly, there seems to be no sense or desire to establish some common acceptable age for first communion, or any desire to preclude infant communion. I respectfully request the chair to rule items 12 and 15 as proposed amendments to be no longer germane to the business before this assembly.” Bishop Anderson responded, “In our process they are not before us until the maker goes to the microphone. If the person does not, we will not consider them. Thank you for calling our attention to that.”

Bishop Anderson ruled proposed amendment 13, *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section IV, page 34.5, out of order since “it does not seem to fit into the process we are engaged in now.”

The Rev. Walton F. Berton [Southern California (West) Synod] suggested that, because proposed amendments 14, 21, and 22 all concerned the same topic and had received the recommendation of the Division for Congregational Ministry, the assembly consider them *en bloc*. Bishop Anderson concurred that, if no objections were raised, the assembly could take one action on all of them after consideration of the other proposed amendments. He said, “I would suggest at this time we just note those and perhaps come back to them at the end and take one action on all of them.” No objections were raised.

The Rev. John H. P. Reumann [Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod] introduced the following amendment to Application 37g (*1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section IV, page 24). If seconded, he requested a response from the Division for Congregational Ministries and then an opportunity to speak to his motion.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To amend application 37g of the proposed statement on sacramental practices by inserting after the word, “praised,” the words, “But 1 Corinthians 11:28-32 emphasizes that the presence of Christ brings need for self-examination and discernment, and God’s judgment.”

Pastor Bullock spoke on behalf of the division, saying, “The division’s response is that we believe that the content here in this motion is covered in an amendment that we do recommend later, the Roth [the Rev. Martin M. Roth] motion, and that it adequately covers this without introducing a note of judgment at a point where we are trying to be forgiving.”

Pastor Reumann explained the need for the proposed amendment, referring to a former professor of his who has written on “the judgment theme in the Sacraments. It reminds us of the simple truth that where Christ is present, there is both the possibility of salvation and judgment. I find that latter emphasis missing and this is a point where it could be inserted. It is a matter of balance from the New Testament on. It is a matter of Law and Gospel. It is a matter of avoiding cheap grace. It is a matter of justice and judgment.” Referring to the Bible study earlier this day, Pastor Reumann said, “The warrant or support for Paul’s appeal for justice at the Table of the Lord against social discrimination lies precisely in the fact that Christ is always judge as well as Savior. This is the note that ought to be heard somewhere in this statement.” In response, the Rev. Gordon W. Lathrop, responding on behalf of the task force, agreed that “a theme of judgment in relationship to the Sacraments is an important theme. I think the response of the division is quite simply that theme is not appropriate at this place in the document.”

The Rev. Judith L. McCall [South-Central Synod of Wisconsin] spoke against the amendment because she believed “that the judgment balance is included when we act on the Roth amendment which ‘invites us to learn the faith of the church, be

baptized, and thereafter faithfully receive the Holy Communion.’ We will learn about our need to examine ourselves.”

The Rev. Stephen Goodwin [Indiana-Kentucky Synod] stated, “The question of infant communion is not one of ecclesiology; it is not one of emotional response to the needs of small children. I do believe, however, that our confessions have something to say.” He then read the conclusion of the Large Catechism regarding the Lord’s Supper. Pastor Goodwin said he firmly believed that this church has an ongoing practice of “both/and,” not “either/or.” He commented, “I believe if we can come to terms with our diversity, and acknowledge that our confessions and the theology that we embrace is one that will enable a rationale for those who maintain a practice of waiting until an age of discernment, as well as for those who would embrace a practice of communing the youngest, the smallest of the baptized.” He therefore opposed the amendment.

The Rev. Hans O. Andrae [Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod] thanked the members of the task force, affirming, “It’s a fantastic document.” Nonetheless, he supported the amendment, because it addressed the age-old requirement of self-examination. He made reference to 1 Corinthians 11:28 and to paragraph 37c of the document. Infants and babies cannot examine themselves, he observed.

The Rev. Paul R. Messner [Upstate New York Synod] contradicted a previous speaker by declaring that he did not recognize the judgment theme explicitly in the Roth amendment. He asked whether Pastor Lathrop might indicate where the judgment theme might appropriately be inserted into the document. Pastor Lathrop responded that he did not immediately see such a place, and “that it is important to remember that this particular section about which you are speaking deals with the occasional instance of the coming of an unbaptized person to the Table, who in fact may find themselves standing at the Table and eating and drinking the gift of Christ. The counsel of the division and the task force was that this ought not be an occasion for shame—just as tax collectors and sinners were gathered to Christ at supper and so came closer to what grace was, so also John Wesley, for example, the great founder of Methodism who learned so much from Lutheranism, sometimes spoke about the Lord’s Supper as a ‘converting’ sacrament. It may be that sometimes the order of things may go other than baptism leading to the Table—it may be that the Table may sometimes lead to baptism. I think the Roth amendment is a splendid pastoral advice that in fact counsels a clearer process that when somebody who is unbaptized communes, they then be helped into a process that leads them back to the Table by learning more about Christ, then through coming to the water.”

Ms. Gail Longfield [Upper Susquehanna Synod] called the question.

MOVED;

Two-Thirds Vote Required

SECONDED;

Yes—810; No—60

CARRIED: To move the previous question.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

Yes—259; No—617

DEFEATED: To amend application 37g of the proposed statement on sacramental practices by inserting after the word, “praised,” the words, “But 1 Corinthians 11:28-32 emphasizes that the presence of Christ brings need for self-examination and discernment, and God’s judgment.”

The Rev. Thomas J. Wagner [South-Central Synod of Wisconsin] moved:

MOVED;

SECONDED: To amend Application 44c (*1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section IV, page 28) by addition of the following sentence: “Congregations may choose to offer non-alcoholic wine to all who receive the sacrament.”

The Rev. Karen G. Bockelman responded on behalf of the task force that such a decision would be allowed by the present document and “it would not be necessary to amend it [the document] in order for congregations to make such a decision pastorally.”

Pastor Wagner noted, “It needs to be very clear that non-alcoholic wine could be offered to all those present. I have had the experience at this assembly of not being able to locate that cup [non-alcoholic wine]. We live in an alcoholic world that fights some addictions.” He commented that he would like to see it stated very clearly.

Mr. Kenneth E. Walstrom [East-Central Synod of Wisconsin] asked about the distinction between non-alcoholic wine and grape juice. The Rev. Paul R. Nelson, director for worship in the Division for Congregational Ministries, replied that grape juice is a non-fermented product of grapes, whereas de-alcoholized wine is a product made from fermented juice of grapes that has undergone a process that removes virtually all, but not clinically all, of the alcohol from the fermentation process.

The Rev. Wayne A. Matthias-Long [Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod] asked, “The response given a few moments ago—that the statement covers this question—if that could be pointed to specifically in what place in the proposed statement does not preclude the use of de-alcoholized wine? Pastor Bockelman replied, “One of the basic principles that we have operated under in the preparation of this statement is to have it open and to not preclude things, and while I could not point to a

specific sentence, basically I would say that since congregations might decide to use non-wheat bread or non-alcohol wine or grape juice, that they might also be open to deciding to make that available to all communicants.”

The Rev. Donna M. Wright [Nebraska Synod] asked for clarification regarding proposed amendment 18. Bishop Anderson replied that the motion before the assembly sought to replace it with a substitute emendation.

The Rev. Byron C. Bunge [East-Central Synod of Wisconsin] spoke in favor of the amendment. “It is very important to the chemically dependent and those who may be on medication that may be adversely affected by alcohol that they have this option. I think it sends a strong message to those people who wish to be included in our communion services to provide this as a written and viable and intentional option,” he said.

The Rev. Donna J. Dohrmann [Western North Dakota Synod] added her personal experience to the discussion. She recently discovered that her sinus headaches were really migraines, which can be caused by red wine. She was grateful that grape juice has been available to her at Holy Communion.

Mr. Roy Johnson [Southern Ohio Synod] objected to the amendment, because, he observed, that the original “Application 44c adequately describes and gives the latitude for the items that we are discussing, to give the latitude to the congregations to do what we are talking about [offering grape juice or de-alcoholized wine].”

Mr. Gregory C. Berger [Upper Susquehanna Synod] called the question.

MOVED; *Two-Thirds Vote Required*
SECONDED; *Yes-873; No-30*
CARRIED: To move the previous question.

MOVED;
SECONDED; *Yes-436; No-475*
DEFEATED: To amend Application 44c (*1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section IV, page 28) by addition of the following sentence: “Congregations may choose to offer non-alcoholic wine to all who receive the sacrament.”

The Rev. Martin M. Roth [Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod] inquired about the intended disposition of proposed amendment 14. Bishop Anderson indicated that the assembly had agreed to consider proposed amendments 14, 21, and 22 *en bloc* following consideration of the other amendments.

The Rev. John K. Stendahl [New England Synod] moved:

MOVED;
SECONDED: To amend the proposed statement on sacramental practices, by substituting for the last sentence of Application 47a (*1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section IV, page 29) the following: “In the rare event that more of either element is needed during distribution, words of blessing and remembrance over it are appropriate but need not include a full repetition of the Words of Institution.”

Pastor Stendahl admitted that the proposed document does not rule out the alternative presented in his amendment, but the amendment would address another problem. He was concerned that “this rather curt sentence that reads, ‘it is not necessary to repeat the Words of Institution’ can be (and has been) heard as slightly officious and demissive. . . . This amendment is truer to the generous and inclusive tone of the statement. The original sentence is good in that its intent is to guard against the necessity of a mechanical or mechanistic reliance on particular words as consecratory. As readers of *The Lutheran* may know, the statement has been taken as a denial of the reality and the particularity that is involved in what we sometimes call consecration.”

Bishop Paul E. Spring [Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod] asked Pastor Stendahl, “What would be words of blessing and remembrance, if not the words of institution? What does one say? That would be helpful for me.”

Pastor Stendahl replied with an example, “Dear God, blessed Father, grant that these, your gifts, may, like what we now already share at this table, be joined in the remembrance of the One who gave himself, saying, ‘Take and eat, this is my body.’”

Ms. Gloria J. Ware [Greater Milwaukee Synod] called the question.

MOVED; *Two-Thirds Vote Required*
SECONDED; *Yes-856; No-34*
CARRIED: To move the previous question.

MOVED;
SECONDED; *Yes-302; No-597*
DEFEATED: To amend the proposed statement on sacramental practices, by substituting for the last sentence of Application 47a (*1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section IV, page 29) the following: “In the rare event that more of either element is needed during distribution, words of blessing and remembrance over it are appropriate but need not include a full repetition of the Words of Institution.”

Mr. Thomas F. Koch [New England Synod] sought to move a further amendment to Application 47a. Bishop Anderson asked how this amendment was different in substance from the amendment the assembly had just considered and defeated. Mr. Koch replied, “I believe that it is more inclusive. I believe the other was directed toward a particular theology that led us away from the words of institution and this [amendment] is intended to include an advocacy of the words of institution as well as what the committee has proposed and as well as what Pastor Stendahl was advocating.”

MOVED;

SECONDED: To amend the last sentence of Application 47a (*1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section IV, page 29) by substituting the following: “In the rare event that more of either element is needed during the distribution, and it is desired that the additional elements be explicitly consecrated, the Words of Institution may be repeated, or a separate prayer of consecration may be said.”

Mr. Koch explained that the language of his amendment was based on discussion during the open hearings on the proposed statement. He said, “I heard people saying that they felt that if additional elements were needed, we should repeat the Words of Institution once again. The committee’s response is that that is not precluded. But it is not advocated by the language of the committee either. . . . Pastor Stendahl’s advocacy of a slightly difference position and words of blessing is something that we could include. We have to recognize that we have diversity in the church on this issue, we should not only recognize it but embrace it.”

Ms. Gloria J. Ware [Greater Milwaukee Synod] moved:

MOVED;

Two-Thirds Vote Required

SECONDED;

Yes-476; No-421

DEFEATED: To limit all speeches regarding this debate and others to one-minute [per speech].

The Rev. Deborah Taylor [Minneapolis Area Synod] spoke in support of the amendment, stating, “Our congregations have a wide variety of practice and preference on many issues but certainly those issues include our practice in celebration of the Sacrament of Holy Communion. This amendment allows for a wide variety of practice, and gives intentional affirmation of those traditions which various congregations in parts of our church hold dear.”

The Rev. Franklin D. Fry [New Jersey Synod] objected to the amendment, because it introduced the term, “consecrated,” and he said, “that is a very heavily loaded word,” and then shared a personal experience.

The Rev. John K. Stendahl [New England Synod] inquired about the use of the word, “consecration,” within the proposed statement, asking, “Is there a comment [from the division] about the appropriateness of this [consecration] language with other parts of the document?” Pastor Nelson responded, “The process in the task force was one of essentially trying to maintain continuity with the 1978 statement. That is really the linguistic touchstone that the task force was working from. This was not regarded as a particularly controversial issue . . . and so the language that is introduced here produces a specific focus which does not reflect adequately the task force’s discussion.”

The Rev. Hans O. Andrae [Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod] inquired whether the motion before the assembly was a new amendment. Bishop Anderson indicated that the motion currently under discussion was amendment 20 in the *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section IV, page 34.7, Application 47a. Bishop Anderson reminded the assembly that no floor amendments to the proposed statement were permitted according to the Rules of Organization and Procedure adopted by the assembly.

Mr. Thomas F. Koch [New England Synod] advised the assembly, “On page 27, a title does appear that reads, ‘The Holy Communion is Consecrated by the Word of God and Prayer.’ I looked very carefully to make sure that that word was already contained in the committee’s work before I used it in this proposed amendment.”

The Rev. Judith Lewis Copeland [North Carolina Synod] called the question:

MOVED;

Two-Thirds Vote Required

SECONDED:

Yes-854; No-46

CARRIED: To move the previous question.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

Yes-292; No-606

DEFEATED: To amend the last sentence of Application 47a (*1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section IV, page 29) by substituting the following: “In the rare event that more of either element is needed during the distribution, and it is desired that the additional elements be explicitly consecrated, the Words of Institution may be repeated, or a separate prayer of consecration may be said.”

Bishop Anderson asked that the remaining three items be moved: proposed amendments 14, 21, and 22 which had been suggested to be received *en bloc*.

The Rev. Lawrence J. Clark [Metropolitan Chicago Synod] sought to move the previous question. Bishop Anderson indicated that no motions presently were before the assembly.

The Rev. Stephen Goodwin [Indiana-Kentucky Synod] then moved proposed amendments 14, 21, and 22 *en bloc*:

MOVED;

SECONDED: To adopt the following amendments to the proposed statement on sacramental practices *en bloc*:

To amend the last sentence of Application 37g (1997 Pre-Assembly Report, Section IV, page 24) to read, “That person is invited to learn the faith of the Church, be baptized, and thereafter faithfully receive Holy Communion”;

To remove the second sentence in Application 47b (1997 Pre-Assembly Report, Section IV, page 29); and

To substitute the word, “received,” for the word, “taken,” in line 11, Background 51a (1997 Pre-Assembly Report, Section IV, page 32).

The Rev. J. Howard Mettee [Southeastern Synod] observed, referring to the last item of the motion, that *collections* are neither taken, nor received; rather, *offerings* are received. He asked if substitution of the word, “offerings,” might be received as a friendly amendment? Pastor Lathrop responded, “To call the collection an offering is to call it by a theological term; it is in fact a metaphor—an interesting metaphor but it is a metaphor. The money that we are gathering for our mission and for the needs of people in need is literally collected, but we call it an offering. So, in fact, the word literally is that we make a collection and that is the word that is used here. . . . There is some danger in calling it an offering because an offering sounds like we are giving something to God and carries with it all the danger of offering language and offering theology. . . . In the Christian community, offering is given to our neighbor not to God, but in God’s name to our neighbor and that’s how we give it to God. . . . We simply named it what it is, a collection.”

Bishop Anderson ruled that friendly amendments were not in order, because the assembly was considering the three proposed amendments *en bloc*.

The Rev. Paul R. Messner [Upstate New York Synod] asked the members of the task force to comment on the second item in the *en bloc* amendment dealing with Application 47b. He asked, “What was the rationale for putting that sentence

in and now what is the rationale for removing it?” Pastor Nelson responded that the document’s drafters had tried “to provide illustrations that were not distracting to the essential principle that was being affirmed and were not regarded as exhaustive of the range of permissible practices. The two examples that were given—‘other traditional means’ not the ‘only traditional means,’ were not exhaustive—were designed to be helpful and in the course of the amendment process, the task force members and board members as well began to recognize what was written there was not as helpful as they had thought originally.”

Bishop Paul J. Blom [Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod] called the question:

MOVED;

Two-Thirds Vote Required

SECONDED;

Yes—844; No—42

CARRIED: To move the previous question.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

Yes—783; No—111

CARRIED: To adopt the following amendments to the proposed statement on sacramental practices *en bloc*:

To amend the last sentence of Application 37g (1997 Pre-Assembly Report, Section IV, page 24) to read, “That person is invited to learn the faith of the Church, be baptized, and thereafter faithfully receive Holy Communion”;

To remove the second sentence in Application 47b (1997 Pre-Assembly Report, Section IV, page 29); and

To substitute the word, “received,” for the word, “taken,” in line 11, Background 51a (1997 Pre-Assembly Report, Section IV, page 32).

Bishop Anderson brought forth for discussion the recommendation of the Church Council concerning the Statement on Sacramental Practices, found in the 1997 *Pre-Assembly Report*, Section IV, page 2, as amended by actions of the Assembly.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To amend *A Proposed Statement on the Practice of Word and Sacrament—The Use of the Means of Grace* by deleting the word, “Sunday,” from principle number seven; and

To amend *A Proposed Statement on the Practice of Word and Sacrament—The Use of the Means of Grace*, Principle 20, by deleting the phrase, “the candidates and/or their family,” and substituting the phrase, “the candidates and, so far as possible, their respective families.”; and

To amend *A Proposed Statement on the Practice of Word and Sacrament—The Use of the Means of Grace*, by adding to Application 35b, the clause, “but not every service need be a Eucharist.”; and

To amend *A Proposed Statement on the Practice of Word and Sacrament—The Use of the Means of Grace*, by changing the last sentence of Application 37g to read, “That person is invited to learn the faith of the Church, be baptized, and thereafter faithfully receive Holy Communion”; and

To amend *A Proposed Statement on the Practice of Word and Sacrament—The Use of the Means of Grace*, by removing the second sentence in Application 47b; and

To amend *A Proposed Statement on the Practice of Word and Sacrament—The Use of the Means of Grace*, by substituting the word, “received,” for the word, “taken,” in line 11, Background 51a; and

To adopt *A Statement on the Practice of Word and Sacrament—The Use of the Means of Grace*, as amended, for guidance and practice in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Mr. Ron Knopp [Pacifica Synod] called the question.

Mr. William O. Sowers [Lower Susquehanna Synod] sought to inquire about another amendment to the statement on sacramental practices saying, “There was a gentleman earlier who had wanted to make an amendment to principle number seven and you had asked him to wait until the full issue came to the floor [relating to the Church Council proposed amendment]. Perhaps we could extend that privilege to him now if he is still interested.” Bishop Anderson thanked Mr. Sowers for the reminder but “the assembly now needs to take that as information as they decide now whether to close debate.”

MOVED;

Two-Thirds Vote Required

SECONDED;

Yes—692; No—201

CARRIED: To move the previous question.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

Yes—857; No—44

CA97.5.27 To amend *A Proposed Statement on the Practice of Word and Sacrament—The Use of the Means of Grace* as follows:

By deleting the word, “Sunday,” from principle number seven;

By deleting the phrase in Principle 20, “the candidates and/or their family,” and substituting the phrase, “the candidates and, so far as possible, their respective families.”;

By adding to Application 35b, the clause, “but not every service need be a Eucharist.”;

By changing the last sentence of Application 37g to read, “That person is invited to learn the faith of the Church, be baptized, and thereafter faithfully receive Holy Communion”;

By removing the second sentence in Application 47b;

By substituting the word, “received,” for the word, “taken,” in line 11, Background 51a; and

To adopt *A Statement on the Practice of Word and Sacrament—The Use of the Means of Grace*, as amended, for guidance and practice in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

The Use of the Means of Grace

**A Statement on the
Practice of Word And Sacrament
Adopted for Guidance and Practice**

Preface

The Triune God and the Means of Grace

The Triune God Acts in the Means of Grace

Principle

- 1 Jesus Christ is the living and abiding Word of God. By the power of the Spirit, this very Word of God, which is Jesus Christ, is read in the Scriptures, proclaimed in preaching, announced in the forgiveness of sins, eaten and drunk in the Holy Communion, and encountered in the bodily presence of the Christian community. By the power of the Spirit active in Holy Baptism, this Word washes a people to be Christ's own Body in the world. We have called this gift of Word and Sacrament by the name "the means of grace." The living heart of all these means is the presence of Jesus Christ through the power of the Spirit as the gift of the Father.**

Background

- 1a "We believe we have the duty not to neglect any of the rites and ceremonies instituted in Scripture, whatever their number. We do not think it makes much difference if, for purposes of teaching, the enumeration varies, provided what is handed down in Scripture is preserved. For that matter, the Fathers did not always use the same enumeration."¹

Background

- 1b In Christ's flesh, in his death and resurrection, all people are invited to behold and to receive the fullness of God's grace and truth.²

The Triune God Creates the Church

Principle

- 2 God gives the Word and the sacraments to the Church and by the power of the Spirit thereby creates and sustains the Church among us.³ God establishes the sacraments "to awaken and confirm faith."⁴ God calls the Church to exercise care and fidelity in its use of the means of grace, so that all people may hear and believe the Gospel of Jesus Christ and be gathered into God's own mission for the life of the world.**

Background

- 2a In a world of yearning, brokenness, and sin, the Church's clarity about the Gospel of Jesus Christ is vital. God has promised to come to all through the means of grace: the Word and the sacraments of Christ's institution. While the Church defines for itself customary practices that reflect care and fidelity, it is these means of grace that define the Church.

Background

- 2b Yet even the Church itself is threatened should it fail to claim the great treasures of the Gospel. Either careless practice or rigid uniformity may distort the power of the gift. This statement is one way in which we, in the Church, can give counsel to one another, supporting and sustaining one another in our common mission.

Background

- 2c We are people whose lives are degraded by sin. This estrangement from God manifests itself in many ways, including false values and a sense of emptiness. Many in our time are deprived or depriving, abusing or abused. All humanity, indeed all creation is threatened by sin that erupts in greed, violence, and war. In the midst of isolation, lovelessness, and self-absorption, the Church is tempted to turn in on itself, its own needs, and preferences. As a church in this time, we seek to give and receive God's Word and sacraments as full and reliable signs of Christ.

What is the Church?

Principle

- 3 "It is also taught among us that one holy Christian church will be and remain forever. This is the assembly of all believers among whom the**

¹ Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article XIII. Note: all citations of confessional material are from the *Book of Concord*, translated and edited by Theodore G. Tappert (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959).

² John 1:14-16.

³ The Small Catechism, The Creed, The Third Article.

⁴ Augsburg Confession, Article XIII.

Gospel is preached in its purity and the holy sacraments are administered according to the Gospel.”⁵

Background

3a The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is committed by its statement of purpose to “worship God in proclamation of the Word and administration of the sacraments and through lives of prayer, praise, thanksgiving, witness, and service.”⁶ The Scriptures and our Confessions establish this purpose. We believe that “through the Word and the sacraments, as through means, the Holy Spirit is given, and the Holy Spirit produces faith, where and when it pleases God, in those who hear the Gospel.”⁷

This Statement Encourages Church Unity Amid Diversity

Principle

4 The gift of Word and Sacrament is from God. This statement on sacramental practices seeks to encourage unity among us in the administration of the means of grace and to foster common understanding and practice. It does not seek to impose uniformity among us.

Background

4a This statement grows out of this church’s concern for healthy pastoral action and strong congregational mission. It does not address our practice of Word and Sacrament out of antiquarian or legalistic interests but rather to ground the practice of our church in the Gospel and to encourage good order within our church.

Application

4b Our congregations receive and administer the means of grace in richly diverse ways. This diversity in practice is well grounded in the Confessions. “It is not necessary for the true unity of the Christian church that ceremonies of human institution should be observed uniformly in all places.”⁸ We are united in one common center: Jesus Christ proclaimed in

Word and sacraments amidst participating assemblies of singing, serving, and praying people.

Part One

The Proclamation of the Word and the Christian Assembly

What is the Word of God?

Principle

5 Jesus Christ is the Word of God incarnate. The proclamation of God’s message to us is both Law and Gospel. The canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the written Word of God.⁹ Through this Word in these forms, as through the sacraments, God gives faith, forgiveness of sins, and new life.

Application

5a Proclamation of the Word includes the public reading of Scripture, preaching, teaching, the celebration of the sacraments, confession and absolution, music, arts, prayers, Christian witness and service. The congregation’s entire educational ministry participates in the proclamation of the Word.

Sunday Provides a Day for Assembly Around Word and Sacrament

Principle

6 Sunday, the day of Christ’s resurrection and of the appearances to the disciples by the crucified and risen Christ, is the primary day on which Christians gather to worship. Within this assembly, the Word is read and preached and the sacraments are celebrated.

Application

6a Sunday is the principal festival day of Christians. “The Holy Communion” is one name for the Sunday service of Word and Sacrament in which the congregation assembles in God’s presence, hears the word of life, baptizes and remembers Baptism, and celebrates the Holy Supper. The service of Word and Sacrament is also celebrated on other great festivals of the year, according to the common Christian calendar received in our churches. The Christian community may gather for proclamation and the Lord’s Supper

⁵ Augsburg Confession, Article VII.

⁶ *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, 1995, 4.02.

⁷ Augsburg Confession, Article V.

⁸ Augsburg Confession, Article VII.

⁹ *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, 2.02.

at other times as well, as, for example, on other days of the week, and when the services of marriage or of the burial of the dead are placed within the context of the Holy Communion.¹⁰

The Scriptures Are Read Aloud

Principle

7 The public reading of the Holy Scriptures is an indispensable part of worship, constituting the basis for the public proclamation of the Gospel.

Application

7a The use of ELCA-approved lectionaries serves the unity of the Church, the hearing of the breadth of the Scriptures, and the evangelical meaning of the church year. The Revised Common Lectionary and the lectionaries in *Lutheran Book of Worship* make three readings and a psalm available for every Sunday and festival.

Application

7b The use of a Bible or lectionary of appropriate size and dignity by those who read the Scriptures aloud, the use of this book in liturgical processions, and its placement on the reading desk or pulpit may bring the centrality of the Word to visible expression.

The Baptized People Proclaim God's Word

Principle

8 All the baptized share responsibility for the proclamation of the Word and the formation of the Christian assembly.

Application

8a One of the ways lay people exercise the public proclamation of the Word is as assisting ministers. Among these assisting ministers will be readers of Scripture and also cantors and leaders of prayer.¹¹

Application

¹⁰ *Lutheran Book of Worship*, Ministers Edition (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, and Philadelphia: Board of Publication, Lutheran Church in America, 1978), 36-37.

¹¹ *Lutheran Book of Worship*, Ministers Edition, 25. See also *Principle* 41.

8b Musicians serve the assembly by illuminating the readings and the sacraments, by the congregation's participation in song.

Application

8c There are varieties of ways beyond the assembly in which the public ministry of the Word is exercised. Some of these include the work of catechists, evangelists, and teachers.

God's Word is Preached

Principle

9 The preaching of the Gospel of the crucified and risen Christ is rooted in the readings of the Scriptures in the assemblies for worship. Called and ordained ministers bear responsibility for the preached Word in the Church gathered for public worship.¹²

Application

9a Preaching is the living and contemporary voice of one who interprets in all the Scriptures the things concerning Jesus Christ.¹³ In fidelity to the readings appointed for the day, the preacher proclaims our need of God's grace and freely offers that grace, equipping the community for mission and service in daily life. "Only under extraordinary circumstances would the sermon be omitted" from the Sunday and festival service of Holy Communion.¹⁴

Application

9b While other persons may sometimes preach, the called pastor of a congregation has responsibility for this preaching, ordinarily preparing and delivering the sermon and overseeing all public ministry of the Word in the congregation. In congregations without a called pastor, the synodical bishop assumes this responsibility, often by providing an interim pastor. All Christians, however, bear responsibility to speak and teach the Gospel in daily life.

The Common Voice of the Assembly Speaks the Word

¹² See *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry. Faith and Order Paper No. 111*, (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1982), Ministry, 8; Augsburg Confession, Article XIV; also *The Study of Ministry Report to the 1991 Assembly: Study Edition* (Chicago: Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Division for Ministry, 1991).

¹³ Luke 24:27.

¹⁴ *Lutheran Book of Worship*, Ministers Edition, 27.

Principle

10 The assembled congregation participates in proclaiming the Word of God with a common voice. It sings hymns and the texts of the liturgy. It confesses the Nicene or Apostles' Creed.¹⁵

Application

10a Hymns, the liturgy, and the creeds are means for the community itself to proclaim and respond to the Word of God.¹⁶ This witness should be valued, taught, and taken to heart. The treasury of music is ever-expanding with new compositions and with songs from the churches of the world.

The Arts Serve the Word

Principle

11 Music, the visual arts, and the environment of our worship spaces embody the proclamation of the Word in Lutheran churches.

Application

11a Music is a servant of the Gospel and a principal means of worshiping God in Lutheran churches. Congregational song gathers the whole people to proclaim God's mercy, to worship God and to pray, in response to the readings of the day and in preparation for the Lord's Supper.

Application

11b In similar ways the other arts also are called to serve the purposes of the Christian assembly. The visual arts and the spaces for worship assist the congregation to participate in worship, to focus on the essentials, and to embody the Gospel.

Application

11c In these times of deeper contact among cultures, our congregations do well to make respectful and hospitable use of the music, arts, and furnishings of many peoples. The Spirit of God calls people from every nation, all tribes, peoples, and languages to gather around the Gospel of Jesus Christ.¹⁷

¹⁵ The Athanasian Creed is also a confession of the Church, but is rarely used in public worship.

¹⁶ Colossians 3:16.

¹⁷ Revelation 7:9.

Confession and Absolution Proclaim the Word

Principle

12 The Gospel also is proclaimed in Confession and Absolution (the Office of the Keys and in the mutual conversation and consolation of the brothers and sisters).¹⁸ Our congregations are called to make faithful use of corporate and individual confession of sins and holy absolution.

Application

12a Absolution is a speaking and hearing of the Word of God and a return to Baptism. The most important part of confession and forgiveness is the "work which God does, when he absolves me of my sins through a word placed in the mouth" of a human being.¹⁹ Liturgical patterns for corporate and individual confession and forgiveness are given in Lutheran worship books.

On Other Occasions Christians Assemble Around the Word

Principle

13 Assemblies for worship are not limited to Sunday or to celebrations of Word and Sacrament. Christians gather for worship on other days of the week, for morning or evening prayer, for services of the Word or devotions, to mark local and national festivals, and for important life occasions such as weddings and funerals. Christians also gather in their own homes for prayer, Bible reading, and devotions.

Application

13a Every opportunity for worship is valued and encouraged. The communal observance of morning and evening prayer and the celebration of weddings and funerals within services of Word and Sacrament in the congregation are appropriate traditions. Morning and evening prayers and mealtime blessings in the household are also an extension of corporate worship.

Part Two

Holy Baptism and the Christian Assembly

¹⁸ Smalcald Articles, III., 4.

¹⁹ The Large Catechism, A Brief Exhortation to Confession, 15.

What is Baptism?

Principle

14 In Holy Baptism the Triune God delivers us from the forces of evil, puts our sinful self to death, gives us new birth, adopts us as children, and makes us members of the body of Christ, the Church. Holy Baptism is received by faith alone.

Background

14a By water and the Word in Baptism, we are liberated from sin and death by being joined to the death and resurrection of Jesus. In Baptism God seals us by the Holy Spirit and marks us with the cross of Christ forever.²⁰ Baptism inaugurates a life of discipleship in the death and resurrection of Christ. Baptism conforms us to the death and resurrection of Christ precisely so that we repent and receive forgiveness, love our neighbors, suffer for the sake of the Gospel, and witness to Christ.

Application

14b Baptism is for the sake of life in Christ and in the body of Christ, the Church. It also may be given to those who are close to death, and is a strong word of promise in spite of death. Individuals are baptized, yet this Baptism forms a community. It is for children. It is for adults. It is done once, yet it is for all of our life.

Jesus Christ Has Given Holy Baptism

Principle

15 Baptism was given to the Church by Jesus Christ in the “great commission,” but also in his own baptism by John and in the baptism of the cross.

Background

15a One great source of the teaching and practice of the Church regarding Baptism is the “great commission”: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”²¹

Background

²⁰ Cf. *Lutheran Book of Worship* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, and Philadelphia: Board of Publication, Lutheran Church in America, 1978), 121, 124.

²¹ Matthew 28:19-20.

15b Other passages are also part of the biblical tradition of the origin and meaning of Baptism. Another source is the account of Jesus’ own baptism at the River Jordan. While Jesus is the eternal Son of God, all who are baptized into him are adopted as beloved children of God. With Jesus all the baptized are anointed by the outpoured Spirit. Because of Jesus we are, through Baptism, gathered and included in the life of the Triune God.

Background

15c In two places in the New Testament where Jesus speaks of his own baptism,²² he refers not to his being washed in the Jordan River, but to his impending death.²³ It is that death to which we are joined in Baptism, according to the witness of Paul.²⁴

Baptism is Once for All

Principle

16 A person is baptized once. Because of the unfailing nature of God’s promise, and because of God’s once-for-all action in Christ, Baptism is not repeated.

Background

16a Baptism is a sign and testimony of God’s grace, awakening and creating faith. The faith of the one being baptized “does not constitute Baptism but receives it....” “Everything depends upon the Word and commandment of God....”²⁵

Application

16b “Re-baptism” is to be avoided²⁶ since it causes doubt, focusing attention on the always-failing adequacy of our action or our faith. Baptized persons who come to new depth of conviction in faith are invited to an Affirmation of Baptism in the life of the congregation.²⁷

Application

16c There may be occasions when people are uncertain about whether or not they have been baptized. Pastors, after supportive conversation and

²² Luke 12:50; Mark 10:38.

²³ *The Confirmation Ministry Task Force Report*, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 1993, 4.

²⁴ Romans 6:3.

²⁵ The Large Catechism, Baptism, 53.

²⁶ *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, Baptism, 13.

²⁷ The Large Catechism, Baptism, 47-63.

pastoral discernment, may choose to proceed with the baptism. The practice of this church and its congregations needs to incorporate the person into the community and its ongoing catechesis and to proclaim the sure grace of God in Christ, avoiding any sense of Baptism being repeated.

Baptism Involves Daily Dying and Rising

Principle

17 By God’s gift and call, all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus are daily put to death so that we might be raised daily to newness of life.²⁸

Background

17a Believers are at the same time sinners and justified. We experience bondage to sin from which we cannot free ourselves and, at the same time, “rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.”²⁹ The baptismal life is expressed each time the baptized confess their sins and receive forgiveness. “Repentance, therefore, is nothing else than a return and approach to Baptism....”³⁰

Application

17b There are many ways to encourage this daily dying to sin and being raised to live before God. They include confession and absolution, the reading of the Scriptures, preaching, the mutual comfort and consolation of the sisters and brothers,³¹ daily prayer and the sign of the cross, the remembrance of the catechism, and the profession of the creed.

Application

17c Christians continue in the covenant God made with them in Baptism by participation in the community of faith, by hearing the Word and receiving Christ’s Supper, by proclaiming the good news in word and deed, and by striving for justice and peace in all the world.³²

Baptism is for All Ages

²⁸ The Small Catechism, The Sacrament of Holy Baptism, part four, 12. See also Romans 6.

²⁹ Titus 3:5.

³⁰ The Large Catechism, Baptism, 75-90.

³¹ Smalcald Articles, III., 4.

³² *Lutheran Book of Worship*, p.201.

Principle

18 God, whose grace is for all, is the one who acts in Baptism. Therefore candidates for Baptism are of all ages. Some are adults and older children who have heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ, declare their faith, and desire Holy Baptism. Others are the young or infant children of active members of the congregation or those children for whom members of the congregation assume sponsorship.

Application

18a Since ancient times, the Christian Church has baptized both infants and adults.³³ Our times require great seriousness about evangelization and readiness to welcome unbaptized adults to the reception of the faith and to Baptism into Christ. Our children also need this sign and means of grace and its continued power in their lives. In either case, Baptism is God’s gift of overwhelming grace. We baptize infants as if they were adults, addressing them with questions, words, and promises that their parents, sponsors, and congregation are to help them know and believe as they grow in years. We baptize adults as if they were infants, washing them and clothing them with God’s love in Christ.

Baptism Includes Catechesis

Principle

19 Baptism includes instruction and nurture in the faith for a life of discipleship.

Application

19a When infants and young children are baptized, the parents and sponsors receive instruction and the children are taught throughout their development. With adults and older children, the baptismal candidates themselves are given instruction and formation for faith and ministry in the world both prior to and following their baptism. The instruction and formation of sponsors, parents, and candidates prior to Baptism deals especially with faith in the triune God and with prayer. In the case of adults and older children this period of instruction and formation is called “the catechumenate.” Occasional Services includes an order for the enrollment of candidates for Baptism.³⁴

³³ *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, Baptism, 11-12.

³⁴ *Occasional Services: A Companion to Lutheran Book of Worship* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House and Philadelphia: Board of Publication, Lutheran Church in America, 1982), 13-15.

Application

19b The parish education of the congregation is part of its baptismal ministry. Indeed, all of the baptized require life-long learning, the daily re-appropriation of the wonderful gifts given in Baptism.

Sponsors Assist Those Being Baptized

Principle

20 Both adults and infants benefit from having baptismal sponsors. The primary role of the sponsors is to guide and accompany the candidates and, so far as possible, their families in the process of instruction and Baptism. They help the baptized join in the life and work of the community of believers for the sake of the world.

Application

20a Congregations are encouraged to select at least one sponsor from among the congregational members for each candidate for Baptism.³⁵ Additional sponsors who are involved in the faith and life of a Christian community may also be selected by parents of the candidate or by the candidate. Choosing and preparing sponsors requires thoughtful consideration and includes participation by pastors or other congregational leaders.

Background

20b The sponsors of children are often called “godparents.” They may fulfill a variety of social roles in certain cultures. These roles may be regarded as an elaboration of the central baptismal role they have undertaken. Such sponsors take on a lifelong task to recall the gifts of Baptism in the life of their godchild.

Background

20c The sponsor provided by the congregation is, in the case of the baptism of an infant, especially concerned to accompany the family as it prepares for Baptism and, as a mentor, to assist the integration of the child into the community of faith as it grows in years. In the case of the baptism of an adult, this sponsor accompanies the candidate throughout the catechumenate, in prayer and in mutual learning, assisting the newly baptized adult to join in the ministry and mission of this community.

³⁵ *Statement on Sacramental Practices*, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, 1991.

Application

20d The entire congregation prays for those preparing for Baptism, welcomes the newly baptized, and provides assistance to sponsors.

Baptism Takes Place in the Assembly

Principle

21 Candidates for Holy Baptism, sponsors, and an ordained minister called by the Church gather together with the congregation for the celebration of Baptism within the corporate worship of the Church.

Application

21a When pastoral considerations require Baptism to take place outside of corporate worship, if at all possible representatives of the congregation gather for Baptism. In such a case a public announcement of the baptism is made at the service the following Sunday.

Application

21b Baptism may take place at varying points in the worship service. When the Baptism follows the Liturgy of the Word, it helps to emphasize Baptism’s connection to the promise of the Gospel and faith in that promise and leads the baptized to the altar. When infants are baptized in a service where adults are not, the Baptism may be part of the entrance rite. This emphasizes that their instruction is to follow and reminds the whole congregation of the baptismal nature of the order for Confession and Forgiveness. At the Vigil of Easter, baptisms are placed between the Service of Readings and the proclamation of the Easter texts. This helps Christians to remember their burial with Christ into death, and rising with him to new life.

A Pastor Presides at Baptism

Principle

22 An ordained minister presides at Holy Baptism.³⁶

Application

22a God is the one who acts in Baptism. The pastor, congregation, candidates, and sponsors gather around the font to administer the sacrament. The

³⁶ *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, Baptism, 22.

pastor presides in the midst of a participating community. Ordinarily this presider is the pastor of the congregation where the Baptism is being celebrated. The pastor acts as baptizer, but does so within a congregation of the Church which actively assents and responds.

Baptism May Occur Before an Imminent Death

Principle

23 In cases of imminent death, a person may be baptized by any Christian. Should sudden death prevent Baptism, we commend the person to God with prayer, trusting in God's grace.

Application

23a Counsel for such a baptism at the time of imminent death may be found in *Occasional Services* and should be widely known in the Christian community.³⁷ A dead person, child or adult, is not baptized. Prayers at such a death may include naming, signing with the cross, anointing for burial, and commendation to God. Prayers and commendations may be offered in the event of a stillbirth or of the early loss of a pregnancy.

Application

23b When a person who was baptized in imminent danger of death survives, *Occasional Services* provides for a Public Recognition of the Baptism at corporate worship.³⁸

We Baptize in the Name of the Triune God

Principle

24 Holy Baptism is administered with water in the name of the triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Baptism into the name of the triune God involves confessing and teaching the doctrine and meaning of the Trinity. The baptized are welcomed into the body of Christ. This is the community which lives from "the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit"³⁹

Background

³⁷ *Occasional Services* (1982), 16-22.

³⁸ *Occasional Services* (1982), 17-22.

³⁹ 2 Corinthians 13:13.

24a The Church seeks to maintain trinitarian orthodoxy while speaking in appropriate modern language and contexts. While a worldwide ecumenical discussion is now under-way about such language, we have no other name in which to baptize than the historic and ecumenically received name.⁴⁰

Background

24b It is in the crucified Jesus that we meet the God to whom he entrusted all, who raised him from the dead for us, and who poured out the Spirit from his death and resurrection. Washing with water in this name is much more than the use of a "formula." The name is a summary of the power and presence of the triune God and of that teaching which must accompany every Baptism. Without this teaching and without the encounter with the grace, love, and communion of the triune God, the words may be misunderstood as a magic formula or as a misrepresentation of the one God in three persons, "equal in glory, coeternal in majesty."⁴¹ What "Father" and "Son" mean, in biblical and credal perspective, must also be continually reexamined. The doctrine of God teaches us the surprising theology of the cross and counters "any alleged Trinitarian sanction for sinful inequality or oppression of women in church and society."⁴²

Application

24c Some Christians, however, are received into our congregations from other churches in which they were baptized "in the name of Jesus Christ."⁴³ There are some whose Baptisms were accompanied by trinitarian examination and confession of faith,⁴⁴ and whose Baptisms have occurred within the context of trinitarian life and teaching. We will do well to avoid quarrels over the validity of these Baptisms.

Application

24d Outside the context of trinitarian life and teaching no Christian Baptism takes place, whatever liturgical formula may be used.

Baptism is a Public Sign

Principle

⁴⁰ *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, Baptism, 17.

⁴¹ Athanasian Creed.

⁴² Action of the Conference of Bishops, March 8-11, 1991, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

⁴³ Acts 2:38.

⁴⁴ Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus, 21.

25 We seek to celebrate Baptism in such a way that the celebration is a true and complete sign of the things which Baptism signifies.⁴⁵

Background

25a “The pedagogical force of practice is considerable.”⁴⁶ A strong baptismal theology calls for a strong baptismal practice, teaching and showing forth the meaning of Baptism and inviting Christians to discover continually its importance for their daily lives. Those who plan baptisms attend to the use of faithful words and gracious actions, to including the event within the Sunday service, to the architectural or natural setting, to the regular preparation of candidates, sponsors, parents, and congregation for Baptism, to post-baptismal teaching that strengthens us for mission, and to the possibility of great festivals as times for Baptism.

Application

25b “It is appropriate to designate such occasions as the Vigil of Easter, the Day of Pentecost, All Saints’ Day, and the Baptism of Our Lord for the celebration of Holy Baptism. Baptismal celebrations on these occasions keep Baptism integrated into the unfolding of the story of salvation provided by the church year.”⁴⁷ The Vigil of Easter is an especially ancient and appropriate time for Baptism, emphasizing the origin of all baptism in Christ’s death and resurrection.

Water is Used Generously

Principle

26 Water is a sign of cleansing, dying, and new birth.⁴⁸ It is used generously in Holy Baptism to symbolize God’s power over sin and death.

Application

26a A variety of modes may be used; for example, both immersion and pouring show forth God’s power in Baptism. Immersion helps to communicate the dying and rising with Christ. Pouring suggests cleansing from sin. We have taught that it is not the water which does such great

things, but the Word of God connected with the water.⁴⁹ God can use whatever water we have. Yet, with Martin Luther, we wish to make full use of water, when it is possible. “For baptism . . . signifies that the old man [self] and the sinful birth of flesh and blood are to be wholly drowned by the grace of God. We should therefore do justice to its meaning and make baptism a true and complete sign of the thing it signifies.”⁵⁰

A Font is Located in the Assembly

Principle

27 A baptismal font filled with water, placed in the assembly’s worship space, symbolizes the centrality of this sacrament for faith and life.

Application

27a As congregations are able, they may consider the creation of fonts of ample proportions filled with flowing water, or baptismal pools which could allow immersion. “The location of the font within the church building should express the idea of entrance into the community of faith, and should allow ample space for people to gather around.”⁵¹

Other Signs Proclaim the Meanings of Baptism

Principle

28 The laying on of hands and prayer for the Holy Spirit’s gifts, the signing with the cross, and the anointing with oil help to appropriate the breadth of meanings in Baptism. Other symbolic acts also are appropriate such as the clothing with a baptismal garment and the giving of a lighted candle.

Background

28a These interpretive signs proclaim the gifts that are given by the promise of God in Baptism itself. Some keys to their interpretation are given in the Holy Scriptures. The laying on of both hands with the prayer for the gifts of the Holy Spirit is a sign of the pouring out of the Spirit of God to empower the people of God for mission. The sign of the cross marks the Christian as united with the Crucified. The use of oil is a sign of anointing with the Spirit and of union with Jesus Christ, the anointed one of God.

⁴⁵ Martin Luther, “The Holy and Blessed Sacrament of Baptism,” 1, in *Luther’s Works* 35:29.

⁴⁶ *The Sacrament of the Altar and Its Implications*, United Lutheran Church in America, 1960, C.5.

⁴⁷ *Lutheran Book of Worship*, Ministers Edition, 30; cf. *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, Baptism, 23.

⁴⁸ *Lutheran Book of Worship*, p.122.

⁴⁹ The Small Catechism, part four.

⁵⁰ Martin Luther, “The Holy and Blessed Sacrament of Baptism,” 1, *Luther’s Works*, 35:29.

⁵¹ *Lutheran Book of Worship*, Ministers Edition, 30.

Baptism Incorporates into the Church

Principle

29 In Baptism people become members not only of the Church universal but of a particular congregation. Therefore all baptisms are entered into the permanent records of the congregation and certificates are issued at the time of the administration of the sacrament.

Application

29a The time of the presentation of this certificate may be at the Baptism itself or at a post-baptismal visit or during post-baptismal formation. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America keeps a roster from the baptismal ministry of its military chaplains.

Baptism is Repeatedly Affirmed

Principle

30 The public rite for Affirmation of Baptism may be used at many times in the life of a baptized Christian. It is especially appropriate at Confirmation and at times of reception or restoration into membership.

Application

30a “When there are changes in a Christian’s life, rites of affirmation of Baptism and intercessory prayer could mark the passage.”⁵² “Moving into a nursing home, beginning parenthood or grandparenthood, choosing or changing an occupation, moving out of the parental home, the diagnosis of a chronic illness, the end of one’s first year of mourning, the ending of a relationship, and retirement are all examples of life’s transitions that could be acknowledged by these rites.”⁵³ Other examples include adoption and the naming of an already baptized child, release from prison, reunion of an immigrant family, and new life after abuse or addiction.

Application

30b Every Baptism celebrated in the assembly is an occasion for the remembrance and renewal of baptism on the part of all the baptized. The Easter Vigil especially provides for a renewal of baptism.⁵⁴

Part Three

⁵² *The Confirmation Ministry Task Force Report*, 9-10.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Lutheran Book of Worship*, Ministers Edition, 152.

Holy Communion and the Christian Assembly

What is Holy Communion?

Principle

31 At the table of our Lord Jesus Christ, God nourishes faith, forgives sin, and calls us to be witnesses to the Gospel.

Background

31a Here we receive Christ’s body and blood and God’s gifts of forgiveness of sin, life, and salvation to be received by faith for the strengthening of faith.⁵⁵

Jesus Christ Has Given the Holy Communion

Principle

32 The Lord’s Supper was instituted by Jesus Christ on the night of his betrayal.⁵⁶

Background

32a In numerous places in the Gospels, the early Church also recognized the eucharistic significance of other meals during Christ’s ministry and after his resurrection.⁵⁷

Jesus Christ is Truly Present in this Sacrament

Principle

33 In this sacrament the crucified and risen Christ is present, giving his true body and blood as food and drink. This real presence is a mystery.

Background

33a The Augsburg Confession states: “It is taught among us that the true body and blood of Christ are really present in the Supper of our Lord under the form of bread and wine and are there distributed and received.”⁵⁸ The Apology of the Augsburg Confession adds: “We are talking about the

⁵⁵ The Small Catechism, and Augsburg Confession XIII.2.

⁵⁶ Matthew 26:26-29 and parallels; 1 Corinthians 11:23-24.

⁵⁷ See, for example, Mark 6:30-52 and parallels, Luke 24:13-35.

⁵⁸ Augsburg Confession, Article X.

presence of the living Christ, knowing that ‘death no longer has dominion over him.’”⁵⁹

Background

33b “The ‘how’ of Christ’s presence remains as inexplicable in the sacrament as elsewhere. It is a presence that remains ‘hidden’ even though visible media are used in the sacrament. The earthly element is... a fit vehicle of the divine presence and it, too, the common stuff of our daily life, participates in the new creation which has already begun.”⁶⁰

The Celebration of Holy Communion Includes both Word and Sacramental Meal

Principle

34 The two principal parts of the liturgy of Holy Communion, the proclamation of the Word of God and the celebration of the sacramental meal, are so intimately connected as to form one act of worship.

Application

34a Our congregations are encouraged to hold these two parts together, avoiding either a celebration of the Supper without the preceding reading of the Scriptures, preaching, and intercessory prayers or a celebration of the Supper for a few people who remain after the dismissal of the congregation from a Service of the Word. The Holy Communion is not simply appended to the offices of Morning or Evening Prayer.

Application

34b The simple order of our liturgy of Holy Communion, represented in the worship books of our church, is that which has been used by generations of Christians. We gather in song and prayer, confessing our need of God. We read the Scriptures and hear them preached. We profess our faith and pray for the world, sealing our prayers with a sign of peace. We gather an offering for the poor and for the mission of the Church. We set our table with bread and wine, give thanks and praise to God, proclaiming Jesus Christ, and eat and drink. We hear the blessing of God and are sent out in mission to the world.

The Holy Communion is Celebrated Weekly

⁵⁹ Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article XXIV.

⁶⁰ *The Sacrament of the Altar and Its Implications*, United Lutheran Church in America, 1960.

Principle

35 According to the Apology of the Augsburg Confession,⁶¹ Lutheran congregations celebrate the Holy Communion every Sunday and festival. This confession remains the norm for our practice.

Background

35a The Church celebrates the Holy Communion frequently because the Church needs the sacrament, the means by which the Church’s fellowship is established and its mission as the baptized people of God is nourished and sustained.⁶² This practice was reaffirmed in 1989 by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. We continue to need “consistent pastoral encouragement and instruction relating to Holy Communion,..pointing up Christ’s command, his promise, and our deep need.”⁶³ For a variety of historical reasons, Lutherans in various places moved away from the weekly celebration of the sacrament.

Application

35b All of our congregations are encouraged to celebrate the Lord’s Supper weekly, but not every service need be a Eucharist.

Application

35c Participation in the sacramental meal is by invitation, not demand. The members of this church are encouraged to make the sacrament a frequent rather than an occasional part of their lives.

The Holy Communion Has a Variety of Names

Principle

36 A variety of names demonstrate the richness of Holy Communion. Those names include: Lord’s Supper, Holy Communion, Eucharist, Mass, the Sacrament of the Altar, the Divine Liturgy, the Divine Service.

Background

⁶¹ Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article XXIV.

⁶² The Grace-full Use of the Means of Grace: Theses on Worship and Worship Practices,” Lutheran members of the North American Academy of Liturgy, 1994, 28.

⁶³ *A Statement on Communion Practices*, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 1989, II.B.2. (Identical to 1978 statement of predecessor church bodies.)

36a Each name has come to emphasize certain aspects of the sacrament. The “Lord’s Supper” speaks of the meal which the risen Lord holds with the Church, the meal of the Lord’s Day, a foretaste of the heavenly feast to come. “Holy Communion” accentuates the holy *koinonia* (community established by the Holy Spirit as we encounter Christ and are formed into one body with him and so with each other. “Eucharist” calls us to see that the whole meal is a great thanksgiving for creation and for creation’s redemption in Jesus Christ. “Divine Liturgy” says the celebration is a public action, carried out by a community of people. Yet, “Divine Service” helps us to see that the primary action of our gathering is God’s astonishing service to us; we are called to respond in praise and in service to our neighbor. The term “Mass” is probably derived from the old dismissal of the participants at the end of the service and the sending away of the bread and the cup to the absent: it invites us into mission. “Sacrament of the Altar” invites each one to eat and drink from the true altar of God, the body and blood of Christ given and shed “for you.”⁶⁴

The Holy Communion is Given to the Baptized

Principle

37 Admission to the Sacrament is by invitation of the Lord, presented through the Church to those who are baptized.⁶⁵

Application

37a When adults and older children are baptized, they may be communed for the first time in the service in which they are baptized. Baptismal preparation and continuing catechesis include instruction for Holy Communion.

Background

37b Customs vary on the age and circumstances for admission to the Lord’s Supper. The age for communing children continues to be discussed and reviewed in our congregations. When “A Report on the Study of Confirmation and First Communion”⁶⁶ was adopted, a majority of congregations now in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America separated confirmation and reception of Holy Communion and began inviting children to commune in the fifth grade. Since that time a number

⁶⁴ “The Grace-full Use of the Means of Grace: Theses on Worship and Worship Practices, 27.

⁶⁵ *A Statement on Communion Practices*, 1989, I.L.A.2.

⁶⁶ “A Report on the Study of Confirmation and First Communion by Lutheran Congregations,” Joint Lutheran Commission on the Theology and Practice of Confirmation. (Philadelphia: Lutheran Church in America, 1969).

of congregations have continued to lower the age of communion, especially for school age children. Although *A Statement on Communion Practices*⁶⁷ precluded the communion of infants, members and congregations have become aware of this practice in some congregations of this church, in historical studies of the early centuries of the Church, in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, and in broader ecumenical discussion.

Application

37c Baptized children begin to commune on a regular basis at a time determined through mutual conversation that includes the pastor, the child, and the parents or sponsors involved, within the accepted practices of the congregation. Ordinarily this beginning will occur only when children can eat and drink, and can start to respond to the gift of Christ in the Supper.

Application

37d Infants and children may be communed for the first time during the service in which they are baptized or they may be brought to the altar during communion to receive a blessing.

Application

37e In all cases, participation in Holy Communion is accompanied by catechesis appropriate to the age of the communicant. When infants and young children are communed, the parents and sponsors receive instruction and the children are taught throughout their development.

Background

37f Catechesis, continuing throughout the life of the believer, emphasizes the sacrament as gift, given to faith by and for participation in the community. Such faith is not simply knowledge or intellectual understanding but trust in God’s promises given in the Lord’s Supper (“for you” and “for the forgiveness of sin” for the support of the baptized.

Application

⁶⁷ *A Statement on Communion Practices*, 1989, I.L.A.2.

37g When an unbaptized person comes to the table seeking Christ's presence and is inadvertently communed, neither that person nor the ministers of Communion need be ashamed. Rather, Christ's gift of love and mercy to all is praised. That person is invited to learn the faith of the Church, be baptized, and thereafter faithfully receive Holy Communion.

The Age of First Communion May Vary

Principle

38 Common mission among the congregations of this church depends on mutual respect for varied practice in many areas of church life including the ages of first Communion.

Background

38a "In faithful participation in the mission of God in and through this church, congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization--as interdependent expressions of this church--shall be guided by the biblical and confessional commitments of this church. Each shall recognize that mission efforts must be shaped by both local needs and global awareness, by both individual witness and corporate endeavor, and by both distinctly Lutheran emphases and growing ecumenical cooperation."⁶⁸

Background

38b There is no command from our Lord regarding the age at which people should be baptized or first communed. Our practice is defined by Christ's command ("Do this", Christ's twin promises of his presence for us and for our need, and the importance of good order in the Church. In all communion practices congregations strive to avoid both reducing the Lord's Supper to an act effective by its mere performance without faith and narrowing faith to intellectual understanding of Christ's presence and gifts. Congregations continually check their own practices and statements against these biblical and confessional guides.

Application

38c Congregations of this church may establish policies regarding the age of admission to Holy Communion. They also may grant pastoral exceptions to those policies in individual cases which honor and serve the interdependence (*koinonia*) of congregations of this church.

Application

38d Out of mutual respect among congregations, children who are communing members of a congregation of this church who move to a congregation with a different practice should be received as communing members (perhaps as a pastoral exception to the congregation's general policy). They and their parents also should be respectful of the traditions and practices of their new congregation. Even if transferring children have received education appropriate to their age in a former parish, the new congregation's program of instruction is also to be followed.

The Holy Communion Takes Place in the Assembly

Principle

39 The gathered people of God celebrate the sacrament. Holy Communion, usually celebrated within a congregation, also may be celebrated in synodical, churchwide, and other settings where the baptized gather.

Application

39a Authorization for all celebrations of Communion in a parish setting where there is a called and ordained minister of Word and Sacrament is the responsibility of the pastor in consultation with the Congregation Council.

Application

39b In established centers of this church--e.g., seminaries, colleges, retreat centers, charitable institutions, and administrative centers--authorization for the celebration of Holy Communion shall be given, either for a limited or unlimited time, by the presiding bishop of this church or, where only one synod is concerned, by the bishop of that synod.

Application

39c In institutions not formally associated with this church e.g., hospitals, retirement homes, colleges and universities, or military bases, where there is a called pastor or chaplain authorization for the celebration of Holy Communion rests with the pastor in consultation with the appropriate calling-sending expression of this church.⁶⁹

Background

⁶⁸ Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 8.16.

⁶⁹ A Statement on Communion Practices, 1989, I.L.A.6. See also churchwide continuing resolution 7.44.A96. on the "Table of Sources of Calls for Ordained Ministers."

39d The authorizing role of bishops is a sign of our interconnectedness. This church provides for ministry in many settings. Chaplains, for example, bring the means of grace to people in institutions on behalf of the whole Church.

A Pastor Presides at the Holy Communion

Principle

40 In witness that this sacrament is a celebration of the Church, serving its unity, an ordained minister presides in the service of Holy Communion and proclaims the Great Thanksgiving. Where it is not possible for an extended period of time to provide ordained pastoral leadership, a synodical bishop may authorize a properly trained lay person to preside for a specified period of time and in a given location only.⁷⁰

Background

40a “In the celebration of the eucharist, Christ gathers, teaches and nourishes the church. It is Christ who invites to the meal and who presides at it. He is the shepherd who leads the people of God, the prophet who announces the Word of God, the priest who celebrates the mystery of God. In most churches, this presidency is signified by an ordained minister. The one who presides at the eucharistic celebration in the name of Christ makes clear that the rite is not the assembly’s own creation or possession; the eucharist is received as a gift from Christ living in his church. The minister of the eucharist is the ambassador who represents the divine initiative and expresses the connection of the local community with other local communities in the universal Church.”⁷¹

Lay Assisting Ministers Serve in Many Roles

Principle

41 Designated and trained lay persons serve in a variety of leadership roles in the Eucharist. Among these assisting ministers will be readers, interpreters, cantors, musicians and choir members, servers of communion, acolytes, leaders of prayer, those who prepare for the meal, and those who offer hospitality.⁷²

Background

⁷⁰ *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, 7.61.01.

⁷¹ *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, Eucharist, 29.

⁷² See also *Application* 8a

41a “The liturgy is the celebration of all who gather. Together with the pastor who presides, the entire congregation is involved. It is important, therefore, that lay persons fulfill appropriate ministries within the service.”⁷³

Preparation is Recommended

Principle

42 Forms of preparation for Holy Communion focus the community of faith both on the breadth of creation’s need for redemption and the depth of God’s redemptive actions. Such forms of preparation are recommended, but not required, for that person “is worthy and well prepared who believes these words, ‘for you’ and ‘for the forgiveness of sins.’”⁷⁴

Application

42a Opportunities for corporate and individual confession and absolution, including the use of the Brief Order for Confession and Forgiveness, are especially appropriate. Helpful forms of personal preparation may include self-examination, prayer, fasting, meditation, and reconciliation with others through the exchange of peace.

Background

42b In considering preparation for Holy Communion many people in our congregations have turned for counsel to Paul’s admonition to the Corinthians: “Examine yourselves, and only then eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For all who eat and drink without discerning the body eat and drink judgment against themselves.”⁷⁵ Paul’s words are addressed to those in the community who are eating and drinking while excluding from the meal others who belong to Christ. “Do you show contempt for the church of God,” he says, “and humiliate those who have nothing?”⁷⁶ The body that Christians need to discern is the body of Christ which is the Church⁷⁷ and that is the body which is being ignored by the exclusions in Corinth.

The Holy Communion is Consecrated by the Word of God and Prayer

Principle

⁷³ *Lutheran Book of Worship*, Ministers Edition, 25.

⁷⁴ The Small Catechism, Article VI. Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration VII.68-69.

⁷⁵ 1 Corinthians 11:28-29.

⁷⁶ 1 Corinthians 11:22.

⁷⁷ 1 Corinthians 12.

43 The biblical words of institution declare God’s action and invitation. They are set within the context of the Great Thanksgiving. This eucharistic prayer proclaims and celebrates the gracious work of God in creation, redemption, and sanctification.

Application

43a Our worship books provide several options for giving thanks at the table of the Lord. All of them begin with the dialogue of invitation to thanksgiving and conclude with the Lord’s Prayer. Most of them include the preface and the *Sanctus* after the dialogue. Many continue with an evangelical form of the historic prayer after the *Sanctus*. The full action, from dialogue through the Lord’s Prayer, including the proclamation of the words of institution, is called the “Great Thanksgiving.” Our congregations, synods, and churchwide organization are encouraged to use these patterns of thanksgiving.⁷⁸

Bread and Wine are Used

Principle

44 In accordance with the words of institution, this church uses bread and wine in the celebration of the Lord’s Supper. Communicants normally receive both elements, bread and wine, in the Holy Communion.

Application

44a A loaf of bread and a chalice are encouraged since they signify the unity which the sacrament bestows. The bread may be leavened or unleavened. The wine may be white or red.

Background

44b The use of leavened bread is the most ancient attested practice of the Church and gives witness to the connection between the Eucharist and ordinary life. Unleavened bread underscores the Passover themes which are present in the biblical accounts of the Last Supper.

Application

44c For pressing reasons of health, individuals may commune under one element. In certain circumstances, congregations might decide to place

⁷⁸ Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article XXIV., 76.

small amounts of non-wheat bread or non-alcoholic wine or grape juice on the altar. Such pastoral and congregational decisions are delicate, and must honor both the tradition of the Church and the people of each local assembly.

Background

44d Some communicants suffer from allergic reactions or are recovering from alcoholism. As suggested by the 1989 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America *A Statement on Communion Practices*,⁷⁹ it is appropriate for them to receive only one of the elements. Their pastor may assure them that the crucified and risen Christ is fully present for them in, with, and under this one element. While our confessions speak against Communion “in one form,”⁸⁰ their intent is to protest the practice of withholding the cup from the whole assembly. The confessional concern is to make both the bread and the wine of the sacrament available to the faithful, and not to inhibit them.

Communion Practices Reflect Unity and Dignity

Principle

45 Practices of distributing and receiving Holy Communion reflect the unity of the Body of Christ and the dignity and new life of the baptized.

Application

45a The promise of Christ is spoken to each communicant by those distributing the Sacrament: “The Body of Christ given for you;” “The Blood of Christ shed for you.” Ordinarily the bread is placed in the communicant’s hand and the chalice is guided by the communicant or carefully poured by the minister of communion.

Application

45b Continuous communion of the whole congregation, with the post-communion blessing given after all have communed, underscores the aspects of fellowship and unity in the sacrament. Either standing or kneeling is appropriate when receiving Communion.⁸¹ Ministers of Communion will need to facilitate the communion of those who have

⁷⁹ *A Statement on Communion Practices*, 1989, ILC.3.

⁸⁰ See Smalcald Articles, III., 6.

⁸¹ *A Statement on Communion Practices*, 1989, ILC.3.

difficulty moving, kneeling, standing, holding the bread, or guiding the chalice.

Application

45c Common devotion during the distribution of Communion is served both by music and by silence.

Leaders Commune at Each Service

Principle

46 As a sign of unity, and out of their own need for grace, the presiding minister and assisting ministers may commune at each Eucharist.

Application

46a “It is appropriate within the Lutheran tradition that the presiding minister commune himself/herself or receive the Sacrament from an assistant.”⁸²
This reception may be before or after the congregation communes.

The Bread and Wine are Handled with Reverence

Principle

47 The bread and wine of Communion are handled with care and reverence, out of a sense of the value both of what has been set apart by the Word as a bearer of the presence of Christ and of God’s good creation.

Application

47a The food needed for the sacramental meal is placed on the table before the Great Thanksgiving. This is done so that the gathered assembly may see the full sign of the food it is to share, and so that we may give thanks and proclaim God’s promise in conjunction with the use of this very bread and wine. Nonetheless, in the rare event that more of either element is needed during distribution, it is not necessary to repeat the words of institution.⁸³

Application

47b Any food that remains is best consumed by the presiding and assisting ministers and by others present following the service.

Congregations Provide Communion for the Absent

Principle

48 Congregations provide for communion of the sick, homebound, and imprisoned.

Application

48a *Occasional Services* provides an order for the Distribution of Communion to Those in Special Circumstances. As an extension of the Sunday worship, the servers of Communion take the elements to those unable to attend.⁸⁴

Application

48b When pastors celebrate a service of Word and Sacrament in a home, hospital, or other institution, the corporate nature of the gift is strengthened by including others from the congregation. *Occasional Services* provides an order for the Celebration of Holy Communion with Those in Special Circumstances.⁸⁵

We Practice Eucharistic Hospitality

Principle

49 Believing in the real presence of Christ, this church practices eucharistic hospitality. All baptized persons are welcomed to Communion when they are visiting in the congregations of this church.

Application

49a Admission to the sacrament is by invitation of the Lord, presented through the Church to those who are baptized.⁸⁶ It is a sign of hospitality to provide a brief written or oral statement in worship which teaches Christ’s presence in the sacrament. This assists guests to decide whether they wish to accept the Lord’s invitation. In the exercise of this hospitality, it is wise for our congregations to be sensitive to the eucharistic practices of the churches from which visitors may come.

⁸² *A Statement on Communion Practices*, 1989, II.C.3.

⁸³ *A Statement on Communion Practices*, 1989, II.C.2.

⁸⁴ *Occasional Services* (1982), 76-82.

⁸⁵ *Occasional Services* (1982), 83-88.

⁸⁶ *A Statement on Communion Practices*, 1989, II.A.2.

Application

49b When a wedding or a funeral occurs during a service of Holy Communion, Communion is offered to all baptized persons.

Lutherans Long for Unity at Christ’s Table

Principle

50 Because of the universal nature of the Church, Lutherans may participate in the eucharistic services of other Christian churches.

Background

50a This church’s ongoing ecumenical dialogues continue to seek full communion with other Christian churches.

Application

50b When visiting other churches Lutherans should respect the practices of the host congregation. A conscientious decision whether or not to commune in another church is informed by the Lutheran understanding of the Gospel preached and the sacraments administered as Christ’s gift.

Application

50c For Lutheran clergy to be involved as presiding or assisting ministers in the celebration of Holy Communion in other churches, a reciprocal relationship between the denominations involved should prevail.⁸⁷

Part Four

The Means of Grace and Christian Mission

The Means of Grace Lead the Church to Mission

Principle

51 In every celebration of the means of grace, God acts to show forth both the need of the world and the truth of the Gospel. In every gathering of Christians around the proclaimed Word and the holy sacraments, God acts to empower the Church for mission. Jesus Christ, who is God’s living

⁸⁷ A Statement on Communion Practices, 1989, II.A.7.

bread come down from heaven, has given his flesh to be the life of the world.⁸⁸ This very flesh, given for the life of all, is encountered in the Word and sacraments.

Background

51a Baptism and baptismal catechesis join the baptized to the mission of Christ. Confession and absolution continually reconcile the baptized to the mission of Christ. Assembly itself, when that assembly is an open invitation to all peoples to gather around the truth and presence of Jesus Christ, is a witness in the world. The regular proclamation of both Law and Gospel, in Scripture reading and in preaching, tells the truth about life and death in all the world, calls us to faith in the life-giving God, and equips the believers for witness and service. Intercessory prayer makes mention of the needs of all the world and of all the Church in mission. When a collection is received, it is intended for the support of mission and for the concrete needs of our neighbors who are sick, hurt, and hungry. The holy Supper both feeds us with the body and blood of Christ and awakens our care for the hungry ones of the earth. The dismissal from the service sends us in thanksgiving from what we have seen in God’s holy gifts to service in God’s beloved world.

Application

51b In the teaching and practice of congregations, the missional intention for the means of grace needs to be recalled. By God’s gift, the Word and the sacraments are set in the midst of the world, for the life of the world.⁸⁹

Baptism Comes to Expression in Christian Vocation

Principle

52 Christians profess baptismal faith as they engage in discipleship in the world. God calls Christians to use their various vocations and ministries to witness to the Gospel of Christ wherever they serve or work.

Background

52a “As baptized people, we see our daily life as a place to carry out our vocation, our calling. All aspects of life, home and school, community and nation, daily work and leisure, citizenship and friendship, belong to God.

⁸⁸ John 6:51.

⁸⁹ John 1:14; Matthew 28:19; John 10:10.

All are places where God calls us to serve. God’s Word and the church help us to discover ways to carry out our calling.”⁹⁰

Application

52b Teaching about vocation and opportunities for witness and service play an important role in the preparation of adults for Baptism and in post-baptismal catechesis for both adults and children.

The Word of God Leads Christians to Lived Prayer

Principle

53 Because of the living Word of God, Christian assemblies for worship are occasions for intercessory prayer. On the grounds of the Word and promise of God the Church prays, in the power of the Spirit and in the name of Jesus Christ, for all the great needs of the world.

Application

53a Intercessory prayer is one of the ways that Christians exercise the priesthood of all the baptized. In the Sunday service, such prayer is appropriately led by a lay assisting minister. This prayer is also lived. Christians are called and empowered by the triune God to be a presence of faith, hope, and love in the midst of the needs of the community and the world.

The Holy Communion Strengthens Us to Witness and to Work for Justice

Principle

54 As a means of grace Holy Communion is that messianic banquet at which God bestows mercy and forgiveness, creates and strengthens faith for our daily work and ministry in the world, draws us to long for the day of God’s manifest justice in all the world, and provides a sure and certain hope of the coming resurrection to eternal life.

Background

54a Christian eschatology, the teaching that God has an intention and a goal for all the beloved created universe, belongs to the celebration of Holy Communion and to the catechesis of all communicants. This Supper forms the Church, as a community, to bear witness in the world. Our need to be

⁹⁰ *The Confirmation Ministry Task Force Report, 5; Together for Ministry: Final Report and Recommendations of the Task Force on the Study of Ministry, 1993, 15-16.*

nourished and sustained in this mission is one principal reason for the frequent celebration of the sacrament.

Application

54b “When you have partaken of this sacrament, therefore, or desire to partake of it, you must in turn share the misfortunes of the fellowship,... Here your heart must go out in love and learn that this is a sacrament of love. As love and support are given to you, you in turn must render love and support to Christ in his needy ones. You must feel with sorrow all the dishonor done to Christ in his holy Word, all the misery of Christendom, all the unjust suffering of the innocent, with which the world is everywhere filled to overflowing. You must fight, work, pray, and—if you cannot do more—have heartfelt sympathy.... It is Christ’s will, then, that we partake of it frequently, in order that we may remember him and exercise ourselves in this fellowship according to his example.”⁹¹

Bishop Anderson expressed appreciation to all those who had participated in the development of the document, *A Statement on the Practice of Word and Sacrament—The Use of the Means of Grace*.

Bishop Anderson invited Pastor Bockelman, chair of the task force, to address the assembly. She said, “On behalf of the members of the sacramental practices task force, I want to thank you for the privilege and honor of being invited to serve our church in this way. I want to thank you for the seriousness and graciousness with which you have given attention to and reception of our work. And I want to thank you most of all for your passion for the Gospel of Jesus Christ and for the faithful use of the means of grace.” Pastor Bockelman also thanked the members of the task force both past and present and the staff and board of the Division for Congregational Ministries both past and present, especially the Rev. Ralph F. Smith, former assistant professor of liturgics at Wartburg Theological Seminary, whose untimely death had ended his tenure on the task force. She completed her remarks by stating, “Most of all, I want to say thank you to God and to bring our work to an end in the same spirit in which we began—*Soli deo gloria*.”

Hymn and Prayer

Bishop Anderson called upon Secretary Lowell G. Almen for announcements. Bishop Anderson then invited Ms. Cynthia P. Johnson, a member of the Church

⁹¹ Martin Luther, “The Blessed Sacrament of the Holy and True Body of Christ, and the Brotherhoods,” 9, 12. *Luther’s Works*, 35:54, 56-57.

Council, to lead the assembly in the concluding prayer and the hymn, “Christ Is Alive!”

The assembly recessed at 6:46 P.M.

Plenary Session Eleven

Wednesday, August 20, 1997

8:00 A.M.—12:00 A.M.

The Rev. H. George Anderson, presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, called Plenary Session Eleven to order on Wednesday, August 20, 1997, at 8:00 A.M., Eastern Daylight Time. He called upon Mr. William H. Engelbrecht, a member of the Church Council, to lead the assembly in Morning Prayer. The gathering hymn was “Gather Us In;” the psalm, “All People That on Earth” from Psalm 100; and the closing hymn, “Christ is the King.”

Ms. Addie J. Butler, the newly elected vice president of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, was then installed into office by Bishop Anderson. Ms. Butler was joined on the podium by her mother, Ms. Elisha Joiner. The assembly rose to greet them with applause.

Bishop Anderson drew attention to a video recording, which had been distributed to assembly members as a remembrance of their participation at this assembly. The five-minute video, highlighting assembly events, was produced by the ELCA Department for Communication.

Bishop Anderson recognized the many people “who have helped to make this a wonderful and edifying assembly.” He then invited the Rev. Lowell G. Almen, secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, to thank the members of his staff and the hundreds of volunteers for their combined efforts in facilitating the operation of the assembly. In particular, Secretary Almen recognized the assembly manager, Ms. Mary Beth Nowak, who was greeted by a standing ovation. He also named Ms. Alpha E. Ekstrom, the official timer for this assembly and who in September would mark 41 years of service to this church and its predecessor church bodies. Secretary Almen also recognized the Rev. Randall R. Lee and Ms. Glenndy L. Sculley, who had assisted him at the dais. Secretary Almen said, “From the bottom of my heart, I am grateful for all of those, my staff and the staff of other churchwide units, and the hundreds and hundreds of volunteers from this synod and from throughout our church who have made this event proceed in the way that it has. Without their diligent efforts and untiring commitments, we would not have had the kind of assembly we’ve had. To all of them I say my personal word of thanks.” He then shared some poetry which, he said, supposedly comes out of a late night during the negotiations of the Treaty of Versailles: “And now as the great ones go off to their dinner, the secretary remains growing thinner and thinner as he tries to construct from out of his head, what he thinks they think they ought to have said.” Bishop Anderson thanked the secretary for his work related to the assembly. Secretary Almen also was acknowledged by the assembly with a standing ovation.

Bishop Anderson then recognized the many others who had contributed to the work of this assembly and its related events: the Rev. Eric C. Shafer, director of the Department for Communications, and the staff of the department and its numerous volunteers; Lutheran Brotherhood, Minneapolis, Minn., and Aid Association for Lutherans (AAL), Appleton, Wis., for financial support, noting that many of the things that made this hard-working assembly enjoyable were made possible because of their financial assistance; and all churchwide staff and volunteers under the coordination of the Rev. Kurt A. Reichardt, associate director for internal communication in the Department for Communion, who had contributed to the assembly's interactive display area, the Heritage and Hope Village. Bishop Anderson then invited "one more round of applause for all who had helped to make this assembly run."

Bishop Richard J. Foss [Eastern North Dakota Synod], in a moment of personal privilege, said, "I serve as bishop in the frozen, flooded Red River Valley. On behalf of all the people who have had a year they do not want to repeat, we wish to give thanks to God for all of you. I cannot tell you how embracing it has been. Not only the formal expressions of this church—the ELCA domestic disaster response—but all of the people, congregations, synods, and agencies of this church that have been a lifeline for us. We are still trying to figure out how to say thank you."

Reflections on the Assembly Theme

Bishop Anderson called upon Secretary Lowell G. Almen to share some reflections on this church's heritage in keeping with the Assembly theme, "Alive in our Heritage and Hope." Secretary Almen introduced a video presentation celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Lutheran World Federation by asking, "Did you know that we as members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America are a part of one big family? Through the Lutheran World Federation, 57.3 million of the world's 61 million Lutherans are united. The 124 member churches of the Lutheran World Federation are in full communion with one another."

Report of the Credentials Committee

Reference: *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section I, pages 23-36.

Secretary Lowell G. Almen, speaking on behalf of the Credentials Committee, presented the committee's final report.

Voting Members:

Lay Members	Female	335	
	Male	<u>296</u>	
	<i>TOTAL</i>		631
Ordained Ministers	Female	104	
	Male	<u>305</u>	
	<i>TOTAL</i>		409
<i>ELCA Officers:</i>			<u>4</u>
<i>TOTAL VOTING MEMBERSHIP</i>			1,044

Secretary Almen reported that of the 1,044 registered voting members, 107 persons were identified as persons of color or persons whose primary language is other than English.

Bishop Anderson thanked assembly members for their constant attendance during the plenary sessions of the assembly.

Introduction of Board Chairs and Directors and Executive Directors of Churchwide Units

Bishop Anderson invited the chairs of boards, steering committees, and advisory committees and the executive directors and directors of the various churchwide units to stand in place and be recognized as he read their respective names. He also recognized other staff related to his office: the Rev. Robert N. Bacher, executive for administration, and Ms. Lita Brusick Johnson, executive assistant to the bishop, who also served as chair of the 1997 Churchwide Assembly planning committee.

Division for Congregational Ministries

Board Chair: Mr. Richard Moe

Executive Directors: The Rev. M. Wyvetta Bullock;

The Rev. Mark R. Moller-Gunderson

Lutheran Laity Movement for Stewardship

Board President: Mr. Michael Linder

Lutheran Men in Mission

President: Mr. Charlie Schwartz

Division for Ministry

Board Chair: Mr. Nelvin Vos
Executive Director: The Rev. Joseph M. Wagner

Division for Outreach

Board Chair: The Rev. Gary A. Marshall
Executive Director: The Rev. Richard A. Magnus

Division for Higher Education and Schools

Board Chair: Ms. Mary Ann Shealy
Executive Director: The Rev. W. Robert Sorensen

Division for Church in Society

Board Chair: Ms. Ingrid Christiansen
Executive Director: The Rev. Charles S. Miller

Division for Global Mission

Board Chair: The Rev. Nancy L. Maeker
Executive Director: The Rev. Bonnie L. Jensen

Commission for Multicultural Ministries

Steering Committee Chair: The Rev. W. Arthur Lewis
Executive Director: The Rev. Frederick E. N. Rajan

Commission for Women

Steering Committee Chair: The Rev. Ann M. Tiemeyer
Executive Director: Ms. Joanne Chadwick

Church Periodical, *The Lutheran*

Advisory Committee Chair: The Rev. Robert E. Allen
Executive Director and Editor: The Rev. Edgar R. Trexler

ELCA Foundation

Executive Director: The Rev. Donald M. Hallberg

Publishing House of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

[Augsburg Fortress, Publishers]
Board Chair: Mr. Alan T. Seagren
President: The Rev. Marvin L. Roloff

Board of Pensions

Chair of Board of Trustees: Mr. Ralph J. Eckert
President: Mr. John G. Kapanke

Mission Investment Fund Board

Chair of Board of Trustees: Mr. Frank R. Jennings

Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

President: Ms. Sharroll Bernhahl
Interim Executive Director: Ms. Terry L. Bowes
Executive Director-Elect: Ms. Catherine I. H. Braasch

Department for Communication

Director: The Rev. Eric C. Shafer

Department for Ecumenical Affairs

Director: The Rev. Daniel F. Martensen

Department for Human Resources and Management Services

Interim Director: Mr. Tom Vaaler

Department for Research and Evaluation

Director: Mr. Kenneth W. Inskip

Department for Synodical Relations

Director: The Rev. Michael L. Cooper-White

Assembly members recognized them with applause.

Report of the Memorials Committee (continued)

Reference: *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section VI; continued on *Minutes*, pages 139, 394, 490.

Bishop Anderson called upon Ms. Sandra G. Gustavson, chair of the Memorials Committee, to continue the committee's report.

**Category 27: Ordination of Openly
Gay and Lesbian Persons (continued)**

Reference: *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section VI, pages 71-75; continued on *Minutes*, page 394, 490.

Ms. Gustavson directed assembly members to *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section VI, pages 71-75: Category 27, Ordination of Openly Gay and Lesbian Persons, which comprised memorials from the Sierra Pacific Synod and Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod. She indicated that discussion of the committee's recommendation now would resume following its deferment in Plenary

Session Six. The recommendation of the Memorials Committee, as amended by actions of the Assembly, was as follows.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To acknowledge the concerns that are expressed in the memorials of the Sierra Pacific Synod and the Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod on the ordination of gay and lesbian persons—concerns that are part of the context of this church’s ongoing dialogue related to human sexuality;

To decline to take action at this assembly to make the changes in church policy and practice requested by these memorials;

To refer these memorials instead to the Division for Ministry as the division carries out its responsibility for recommending standards for rostered ministries and as it participates in the development and use of models for conversation and continuing moral deliberation on this sensitive and important subject;

To affirm the work of the Division for Church in Society as it assists this church to explore models of conversation and continuing moral deliberation that can serve this church in its commitment to continuing dialogue on issues related to human sexuality, including homosexuality; and

To request that a status report on the learnings of these conversations be brought through the Church Council to the 1999 Churchwide Assembly.

Ms. Gustavson noted that the following amendment, proposed by Mr. Mark Kremen [Northwest Washington Synod] and amended twice, remained before the house at the conclusion of deliberations on this matter during Plenary Session Six. The text of that amendment, as amended, follows.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To amend the recommendation of the Memorials Committee by deleting paragraphs 3, 4, and 5 and replacing them with the following:

To refer these memorials to the Division for Ministry and the Division for Church in Society, requesting that these divisions develop a recommendation for action at the 1999 Churchwide

Assembly regarding the ordination, consecration, and commissioning of non-celibate gay and lesbian persons.

The Rev. George E. Keck [Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod] moved:

MOVED;

SECONDED: To amend the proposed amendment by striking the words, “that these divisions,” and inserting the words, “the Division for Ministry to,” so that it would read: “To refer these memorials to the Division for Ministry and the Division for Church in Society, requesting the Division for Ministry to . . .”

Pastor Keck spoke to the amendment, stating that it was offered without prejudice, to clarify the proper responsibility of the Division for Ministry. The Rev. Joseph M. Wagner, executive director of the Division for Ministry, said that the proposed emendation would be considered to be a friendly suggestion, since that division has responsibility for standards for rostered persons.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

Yes—740; No—96

CARRIED: To amend the proposed amendment by striking the words, “that these divisions,” and inserting the words, “the Division for Ministry to,” so that it would read: “To refer these memorials to the Division for Ministry and the Division for Church in Society, requesting the Division for Ministry to . . .”

The Rev. John K. Stendahl [New England Synod] spoke in opposition to the proposed amendment, stating “that its understandable intent is to settle this vexing question for our church and so to make it go away. But it is unlikely that the question will go away unless we can make those who live with the question go away; unless we would have those who struggle with these questions in their own lives and their families, their friends, their pastors; those who are convinced that immorality and abuse and shame and the destruction of human lives are perhaps more fostered than prevented by the ostracism and the rejection of gay and lesbian people. This is a tough question. It is not one on which Bible believers are on one side and proponents of change for the sake of ease are on the other. We are engaged in a difficult discussion and that goes on. To set a deadline to have it over with would mean the elimination of the life and the integrity of much and many in our church.”

Ms. Gloria J. Ware [Greater Milwaukee Synod] sought to move to amend the last paragraph of the recommendation of the Memorials Committee. Bishop Anderson indicated that the motion was out of order at the present time, but that notice might be served of her intention to introduce the amendment.

Mr. Nelvin Vos [Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod] spoke against the amendment, noting that “this church is not standing still, it has not stood still, and in the next biennium, as the current memorial indicates, two divisions will be working very intentionally at this, which is in contrast to the past, in moral deliberation. The board of the Division for Ministry has committed itself to that and I have been aware, too, that through the Division for Church in Society there are several organizations, including the Faith and Life Forum, which will have this issue for discussion. That is the point at which this church is and we should give them an opportunity to really work with one another on this very sensitive and important issue. It will not go away, but we must continue to work deliberately at this and intentionally.”

Mr. J. Everett Wick [Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod] spoke against the amendment, stating, “The purview of the study should be the entire issue of the ordination of people with alternate sexual orientation. This church should decide whether this orientation is sufficient to preclude them from discharging their duties and responsibilities in their ministries as an ordained person. To subdivide it limits the purview of this study and if subdivision is necessary, it should be the commission that would make that decision and include it in their recommendation.”

Mr. Mark Kremen [Northwest Washington Synod] recalled that the issue had been brought to three churchwide assemblies and that a decision had been postponed each time. He urged that a decision be made, in order that this church might “move on.”

MOVED;

SECONDED;

Yes—323; No—511

DEFEATED: To amend the recommendation of the Memorials Committee by deleting paragraphs 3, 4, and 5 and replacing them with the following:

To refer these memorials to the Division for Ministry and the Division for Church in Society, requesting the Division for Ministry to develop a recommendation for action at the 1999 Churchwide Assembly regarding the ordination, consecration, and commissioning of non-celibate gay and lesbian persons.

Ms. Gloria J. Ware [Greater Milwaukee Synod] then moved:

MOVED;

SECONDED: To amend by addition the final resolve to read: “To request that a final status report on the learnings of these conversations be brought through the Church Council to the 1999 Churchwide Assembly for consideration of a possible vote.”

Ms. Ware spoke to the amendment, indicating that she was “simply trying to speed up the process of this very fragile concern of our assembly. I would like the word ‘final’ to be inserted so that at least we can act on it and not have further studies in the years to come.”

The Rev. Darrell H. Jodock [Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod] asked that the chair rule the amendment out of order because it was so similar to the previous amendment. Bishop Anderson said he would test the assembly and hearing no support for consideration of Ms. Ware’s motion to amend, he ruled that it would not be considered.

Mr. Timothy L. Barr [Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod] moved to amend as follows:

MOVED;

SECONDED: To amend the recommendation of the Memorials Committee by adding at the end of the motion the following two paragraphs:

To encourage the ELCA through the Division for Church in Society to examine committed gay relationships in light of the Lutheran approach to interpreting Scripture as part of the continuing moral deliberation and conversations; and

To report on these ongoing discussions at each Churchwide Assembly, providing time for discussion and reaction by voting members.

Mr. Barr said, “Some of you may be aware that at the 1997 Lutheran Youth Organization [LYO] convention earlier this summer, the voting members to that convention passed a resolution asking the Division for Congregational Ministries and the LYO to investigate the possibility of a pre-gathering for gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth. I tell you this only to say that the youth are challenging this church. . . . We, the ELCA, cannot close our eyes and make gays and lesbians disappear. . . . This is a hot topic in our society. Why have the majority of our 11,000 congregations stopped struggling [with this issue]? Why have the discussions stopped? Are we afraid? We, as the ELCA, need to move forward. We need to go somewhere at least, but how can we do this if we are silent? These memorials relate to the ordination of homosexuals, but first we must get to the heart of the matter: how do we as a church relate to gay and lesbian people?”

The Rev. Robin K. Nice [Northwestern Minnesota Synod] spoke against the amendment, saying, “It is appropriate to make clear once again that the ELCA is not in denial of this situation. I draw a distinction, and remind you of a distinction, between ministering to homosexual persons within our congregations and allowing them ordination rites in the ministry of Word and Sacrament. I speak by no means in judgment of homosexual persons. I speak rather in opposition to a proposed change in our established statements that would allow the ordination of [non-celibate] homosexual persons to the office of ministry. . . .I draw a distinction between homosexual persons within the church and [homosexual persons] in ordained ministry. I do not see any need to deviate or amend or send on to further councils or assemblies our positions as they stand in our documents.”

The Rev. Charles S. Miller, executive director of the Division for Church in Society, inquired of Mr. Barr, “his purpose in the words, ‘to examine.’ My reason for asking this is on behalf of the Division for Church in Society, and the possible budgetary implications that could result from such an examination. We do not currently have plans to do this and my understanding of the rules of procedure is that should a motion before the assembly have budgetary implications not currently contained in the unit’s plans, this would be referred to the budget and finance committee. I need first to know what is intended by the words, ‘to examine.’” Mr. Barr responded, “By saying ‘examine,’ I mean ‘to look into it.’ I did not think of the budgetary concerns, but I would ask that as much as possible, in terms of money and resources, would be put into formulating something for discussion.”

Mr. Bruce Tillberg [Northeastern Ohio Synod] commented, “There are already dialogues going on in the church and in society so it would not necessarily take additional funds. I encourage everyone to consider this issue. There are many resources that are out there now. Lutherans Concerned is an important resource This is an important issue not only to gay and lesbian pastors but also to all gay and lesbian persons because as long as we are excluded from being in the ordained office, it tells us that we are not fully a part of this church.”

The Rev. Leon L. Stier [Southeastern Minnesota Synod] called the question on all matters before the house.

MOVED; *Two-Thirds Vote Required*
SECONDED; *Yes-762; No-134*
CARRIED: To move the previous questions on all matters pending.

MOVED;
SECONDED; *Yes-414; No-506*
DEFEATED: To amend the recommendation of the Memorials Committee by adding at the end of the motion the following two paragraphs:

To encourage the ELCA through the Division for Church in Society to examine committed gay relationships in light of the Lutheran approach to interpreting Scripture as part of the continuing moral deliberation and conversations; and

To report on these ongoing discussions at each Churchwide Assembly, providing time for discussion and reaction by voting members.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

Yes-814; No-110

CA97.6.28 To acknowledge the concerns that are expressed in the memorials of the Sierra Pacific Synod and the Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod on the ordination of gay and lesbian persons—concerns that are part of the context of this church’s ongoing dialogue related to human sexuality;

To decline to take action at this assembly to make the changes in church policy and practice requested by these memorials;

To refer these memorials instead to the Division for Ministry as the division carries out its responsibility for recommending standards for rostered ministries and as it participates in the development and use of models for conversation and continuing moral deliberation on this sensitive and important subject;

To affirm the work of the Division for Church in Society as it assists this church to explore models of conversation and continuing moral deliberation that can serve this church in its commitment to continuing dialogue on issues related to human sexuality, including homosexuality; and

To request that a status report on the learnings of these conversations be brought through the Church Council to the 1999 Churchwide Assembly.

**Category 10b: Fair Labor Practices–Employment
Non-Discrimination Act (continued)**

Reference: *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section VI, pages 44-45; continued on *Minutes*, page 153.

Ms. Gustavson directed the attention of assembly members to Category 10b: Fair Labor Practices–Employment Non-Discrimination Act on pages 44-45 of Section VI of the *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*. She reminded the assembly, “This is the memorial that was debated earlier in the assembly and was then referred back to the Memorials Committee for additional analysis by legal counsel of the proposed Employment Non-Discrimination Act. That analysis was completed and a one-page summary was distributed as *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section IV, page 79.” She announced that the analysis was consistent with the background information that was originally presented and the recommendation of the Memorials Committee, therefore, was unchanged.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To respond to the memorial of the Southeastern Synod by expressing support for the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, while acknowledging that the act provides for a broad religious exemption; and

To affirm the advocacy of synods and the Division for Church in Society in support of laws barring discrimination against individuals on the basis of their sexual orientation.

Ms. Martha Stott [Indiana-Kentucky Synod] said, “I know that there are several people who feel like this is an extension of the Title VII Civil Rights Act; but I do not feel that homosexual behavior should receive special protection under the act.” It was not certain, she observed, that religious and volunteer groups would be exempted from the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, and the government’s action on this matter was indefinite. She said, “I do stand for equal rights for all people, no more nor no less, but I am concerned that some workers’ biblical views may be suppressed by the government in the name of tolerance.”

Mr. Mark Borchers [Western Iowa Synod] said, “I am disappointed that our assembly is bringing something before them that they will never have to live with. I, as an employer, will have to live with something that the church never has to worry about but they walk down the street to my place of business, and I cannot say ‘yes’ or ‘no.’ I think that this topic should not even be debated because the church is already exempt and has nothing to ever live with by voting it up or down.”

Mr. Kenneth E. Walstrom [East-Central Synod of Wisconsin] said that he shared Mr. Borchers’ concern. He said, “I certainly am in favor of the resolution; on the other hand, I think that there is a certain degree of cynicism when many people here made ‘darn sure’—that’s a theological term—that the church would not have to live under that law.”

Mr. Charles W. Horn III [Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod] recalled that this church already had gone on record “supporting equal rights for gay and lesbian persons and that is all this act that is before Congress is asking for—equal rights, not special privileges.”

Mr. James C. Bailey [Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod] said that an earlier version of the proposed legislation had been passed in the House of Representatives last summer and failed by one vote in the Senate, and that President Clinton had indicated that he would sign the legislation were it to cross his desk. Mr. Bailey said that this act “protects reliable workers who are doing good jobs from getting fired from their jobs simply because they are gay or lesbian. It does just that and no more. . . . This act does not protect or even pertain to any type of sexual activity or behavior.”

Mr. Kirk Howard Betts [Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod] urged assembly members to read the exemption section, noting that it has the potential of being applied indirectly to this church through its related organizations.

The Rev. Stephen Goodwin [Indiana-Kentucky Synod] said that if we do not stand with those who are oppressed, “we are just whistling ‘Dixie’.”

Ms. Annita Madden [Pacifica Synod] spoke in support of the resolution. She noted that the issue can be divisive within this church and its congregations. “As a church we have the responsibility to uphold the civil rights of all people. It is important that we set an example in support of our rights as Americans and as brothers and sisters in Christ.”

Ms. Anneka E. Anderson [South-Central Synod of Wisconsin] called the question:

MOVED;

Two-Thirds Vote Required

SECONDED;

Yes—823; No—53

CARRIED: To move the previous question.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

Yes—712; No—180

CA97.6.29 To respond to the memorial of the Southeastern Synod by expressing support for the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, while acknowledging that the act provides for a broad religious exemption; and

To affirm the advocacy of synods and the Division for Church in Society in support of laws barring discrimination against individuals on the basis of their sexual orientation.

Category 11: Abortion

Reference: 1997 Pre-Assembly Report, Section VI, pages 45-48; ELCA Statement on Abortion.

A. South Dakota Synod (3C) [1996 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the adopted ELCA *Social Statement on Abortion* (1991, p. 7) recognizes abortion only as an option of last resort in the following situations:

- *where the life of the mother is threatened,
- *where the pregnancy resulted from rape or incest,
- *where the embryo or fetus has lethal abnormalities incompatible with life; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the South Dakota Synod urge that steps be taken to effect changes in existing medical insurance policies, such that only those induced abortions are paid for that meet the criteria of moral responsibility set forth in the 1991 ELCA statement on that subject.

B. Northeastern Minnesota Synod (3E) [1997 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America adopted at its 1991 Churchwide Assembly a *Social Statement on Abortion*; and

WHEREAS, according to that statement, the Church lives under the “presumption to preserve and protect life”; and

WHEREAS, in regards to individuals or couples faced with a pregnancy which (broadly outlined on page 7, in the above-named statement) may cause them to decide to proceed with an abortion, this synod recognizes that under such conditions a decision for an abortion may be considered a morally responsible decision; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA’s Board of Pensions, acting on an interpretation of the *Social Statement on Abortion* by the church’s Division for Church in Society, proposed in May of 1995 to limit reimbursement of expenses for elective abortions under the Medical and Dental Benefits Plan to cases in which the mother’s life is threatened, where the pregnancy resulted from non-consensual sexual intercourse, or where the embryo or fetus had lethal abnormalities incompatible with life; and

WHEREAS, in November 1995, the ELCA Church Council rejected the Board of Pensions’ proposal, with the result that the cost of elective abortions carried out on behalf of members, or the eligible dependents of members, of the ELCA Major Medical Plan will be reimbursed for such a procedure without consideration of the reason for such an elective abortion; and

WHEREAS, such a position is incompatible with the basic principles of the ELCA’s *Social Statement on Abortion* of 1991; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Northeastern Minnesota Synod declare its support of the fundamental principles of the *Social Statement on Abortion* of 1991 affirming that, “Human life in all phases of its development is God-given and, therefore, has intrinsic value, worth, and dignity,” and that, “. . . human beings are called to respect and care for the life that God gives,” and that such fundamental principles move this church to the “presumption to preserve and protect life;” and be it further

RESOLVED, that in practice, the medical plan of the ELCA must be in conformity with the principles of the church’s *Social Statement on Abortion*, which recognizes that there are reasons both for accepting decisions for elective abortion in the broadly outlined areas of the statement that would qualify for reimbursement under the medical plan, as well as instances where elective abortion is not acceptable to this church and should, for that very reason, not be reimbursed if carried out (example: “This church *opposes* ending intrauterine life when a fetus is developed enough to live outside a uterus with the aid of reasonable and necessary technology,” page 7, emphasis added); and be it further

RESOLVED, that this synod memorialize the 1997 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to instate the above-mentioned proposal of the Board of Pensions of May, 1995.

C. Central/Southern Illinois Synod (5C) [1997 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees of the Board of Pensions has recommended an amendment to the medical plan and the ELCA Church Council, on April 16, 1997, approved that amendment as requested by the council; and

WHEREAS, that amendment excludes coverage for late-term abortions, except where the life of the mother is threatened or when the fetus has lethal fetal abnormalities indicating death is imminent; and

WHEREAS, it is understood that in the administration of this plan, late-term is understood as any pregnancy beyond 20 weeks; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Central/Southern Illinois Synod memorialize the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to adopt the Board of Pensions proposed amendment to the ELCA health care plan.

D. Lower Susquehanna Synod (8D) [1996 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the ELCA Health Plan will continue in the future to pay for any and all abortions; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA Church Council (November 1995) has chosen not to give approval to new regulations that would have limited payments for abortion to exceptional cases (serious health problems of the mother, or pregnancy that results from rape or incest, or where the embryo or fetus has lethal abnormalities incompatible with life); therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that we, of the Lower Susquehanna Synod, bear witness to our disagreement with the Church Council and express our deep sorrow in this testimony:

1. Abortion is destroying one and a half million of God's children every year—children whom God has created “to fear, love, and trust God above everything else” (*Small Catechism*).
2. God wants those children to be baptized into his Church and to sit at his table and to be guided throughout their lives by his Word.
3. The Son of God welcomes all those children into his Church and his kingdom, saying, “Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such that the kingdom of heaven belongs;” and he laid his hands on them (Matthew 19:14-15a).
4. In contrast, the ELCA Church Council silences the Fifth Commandment in the church as it speaks to the health plan to protect and help those children and their parents.
5. The Church Council, by its action, is serving the world's idolatry of “choice” and “privacy” in matters of vital concern to the whole church—the lives of children and the welfare of families, which are not private matters.
6. The Church Council is not acting in good faith with the 1991 *Social Statement on Abortion* when it exempts the health plan from putting into practice the statement's principles.
7. The Church Council action is divisive, as it separates the ELCA from fellowship with the historic Christian Church in its teaching and practice—which condemns abortion, in nearly all instances, as a serious sin.

8. Even if no one chooses to exercise the “right” to have the church pay for abortion, the fact that the church is prepared to pay for death, with no questions asked, remains a blot on the church's conscience.
9. Finally, the destruction of unborn children, with the church in partnership, is absolutely out of harmony with the Eucharist and is in contradiction to the life-giving communion in the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, the fruit of Mary's womb. (St. Irenaeus, b. 130 A.D. stated the principle: “Our teaching is in harmony with the Eucharist, and the Eucharist confirms our teaching”); and be it further

RESOLVED, that we, of the Lower Susquehanna Synod, do hereby confess our remorse and troubled conscience; we publicly dissociate ourselves from the Church Council in its handling of this matter; and we appeal to God the Father for a spirit of repentance, and for pardon of our sins through the Son, and for amendment of life from the Holy Spirit, “the Lord and Giver of *Life*;” and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Lower Susquehanna Synod Assembly memorialize the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to direct the Board of Pensions to enact regulations that would limit payment for abortions to those exceptional cases that involve serious health problems for the mother, pregnancy that results from rape or incest, or fetal abnormalities that are incompatible with life.

BACKGROUND

Both the Board of Pensions and the Church Council have addressed the issue of abortion coverage under the ELCA health plan. The following response summarizes the actions that have been taken to date. As the plan sponsor, the Church Council has the responsibility for making the determination as to what further actions, if any, should be taken in this matter.

At its May 11-12, 1995, meeting, the Board of Trustees of the Board of Pensions developed proposed amendments to the ELCA health plan that would restrict coverage of induced abortions under the plan to the following three situations:

- Where the life of the mother is threatened;
- Where the pregnancy resulted from rape or incest;
- Where the embryo or fetus has lethal abnormalities incompatible with life.

At its July 1995 meeting, the Executive Committee of the ELCA Church Council acknowledged the board's action and endorsed the appointment of a nine-member work group to examine the implications of the *Social Statement on Abortion* on medical plan administration and to explore options on this matter. Two

members of the Board of Trustees of the Board of Pensions served on the work group.

The work group, which met in October 1995, explored various options for putting this statement into practice. What was found was that permitting only abortions involving rape, incest, threat to the life of the mother, or life-ending fetal abnormalities, as suggested initially by the Board of Pensions in May 1995, would not have embraced adequately or fully the content of the *Social Statement on Abortion*. That approach would not have provided coverage for certain abortions that are deemed “morally responsible,” according to the *Social Statement on Abortion*. The work group’s recommendation to the Church Council and the Board of Trustees of the Board of Pensions was affirmed by all members of the work group except the two trustees of the Board of Pensions, who abstained. [Those two trustees abstained because the ELCA, as Plan Sponsor, is to determine the standard under which abortions are covered under its health plan. The trustees indicated that, “as trustees of the Board of Pensions, we believe strongly that it is important to maintain a clear line of distinction between the roles of Plan Sponsor (the ELCA) and Plan Administrator (the Board of Pensions).”] The work group recommended the following:

“[T]o continue the current language and administrative practice of the ELCA’s medical plan and to provide for the education of ELCA plan participants and all members of the ELCA through a communication that reflects the full range of concerns in the *Social Statement on Abortion*, not only for a specific abortion decisions but also for the creation of a general ethos of responsibility. Should the Church Council accept this recommendation, [the work group] further urge[s] that the education process address the various moral concerns being raised in this church regarding these matters.”

When the proposed 1995 plan amendments and the report of the work group were presented to the Church Council at its November 1995 meeting, the council decided to continue the previously existing practice under the ELCA health plan—which is the same approach that was taken for many years by The American Lutheran Church, the Lutheran Church in America, and the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches.

In doing so, the Church Council sought to reflect accurately and clearly the commitments made in this church’s *Social Statement on Abortion*. The *Social Statement on Abortion* declares that “abortion ought to be an option only of last resort Because of the Christian presumption to preserve and protect life, this church, in most circumstances, encourages women with unintended pregnancies to continue the pregnancy.”

Yet this church also acknowledges in its *Social Statement on Abortion* instances in which an abortion might be morally responsible, including situations in which the physical life of the woman is threatened, cases in which both parties do not willingly participate in sexual intercourse (including situations in which

“women are so dominated and oppressed that they have no choice regarding sexual intercourse and little access to contraceptives”), and when extreme fetal abnormalities are detected that will result in severe suffering and very early death of an infant. Recognizing the complexity of specific situations, the statement says that “what is determined to be a morally responsible decision in one situation may not be in another.”

As the result of the November 1995 Church Council action, staff of the Board of Pensions continued its practice of considering all abortions as “medically necessary” covered services under the ELCA health plan. To assist in further educating plan members, a brochure was sent to all members of the ELCA health plan; this brochure urges members to be aware of the affirmations and concerns expressed in the ELCA’s *Social Statement on Abortion* and offers advice on where families struggling with ethical questions related to a pregnancy can seek help. A congregational study guide also has been prepared by the Division for Congregational Ministries to assist members to study the implications of the social statement on abortion. In addition, a volume on “how Lutherans do ethics,” which explores the broader context for the discussion on abortion, will be available from the Division for Church in Society next year.

At its November 1996 meeting, the ELCA Church Council requested the Board of Pensions to develop amendments restricting coverage of late-term abortions under the ELCA health plan, in keeping with the *Social Statement on Abortion*. The council also asked the Board of Pensions to investigate a program that would allow for “relief of conscience” on the premiums paid by employers for plan participation who request such an exclusion.

At its February 1997 meeting, the Board of Trustees of the Board of Pensions developed amendments to the ELCA health plan that would exclude coverage of late-term abortions except when (1) the life of the mother is threatened, or (2) the fetus has lethal abnormalities indicating death is imminent. These amendments were adopted by the Church Council at its April 1997 meeting. The amendments became effective April 7, 1997.

At its May 1997 meeting, the Board of Trustees of the Board of Pensions discussed the implications to the ELCA health plan of a “relief of conscience” fund. Based on implications related to the decision-making and communications process and lack of any visible support for the establishment of such a fund by the Conference of Bishops and the Church Council, the Board of Trustees voted to recommend that a “relief of conscience” fund not be established and to forward this recommendation to the Church Council for consideration at its August 1997 meeting.

Ms. Gustavson drew the attention of voting members to Category 11: Abortion, relative to the ELCA medical benefits plan that is administered by the Board of Pensions. She noted that lengthy background was provided, and that voting members also should have the ELCA *Social Statement on Abortion*, which

had been distributed to voting members. She then read the following recommendation of the Memorials Committee.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To express this church's continuing concern about the number of abortions in this country;

To commend the *Social Statement on Abortion*, which was adopted by the 1991 Churchwide Assembly, as a resource to our pastors and members dealing with this issue;

To encourage continuing moral deliberation throughout this church on abortion;

To request that the Board of Pensions and the Division for Church in Society provide a joint report to the Church Council's April 1998 meeting related to plans to continue educational efforts on abortion, in support of the members of the ELCA health plan and all members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and

To acknowledge the complex issues related to plan administration and to recognize the Church Council's actions at its November 1995 and April 1997 meetings as an appropriate response to the concerns raised in the memorials of the South Dakota Synod, Northeastern Minnesota Synod, Central/Southern Illinois Synod, and Lower Susquehanna Synod.

Ms. Judith L. Garber [Lower Susquehanna Synod] moved:

MOVED;

SECONDED: To amend the recommendation of the Memorials Committee by substituting the following for paragraph five:

To express to the Church Council that the spirit of this Churchwide Assembly is that the ELCA Health Plan should pay for induced abortion of pregnancy only in cases that involve pregnancy that results from the violence of rape or incest, or serious threats to the physical health of the mother, or abnormalities of the embryo or fetus that are incompatible with life.

Ms. Garber said, "At present the ELCA health plan pays for any induced abortion before about the 20th week. In 1995, the Board of Pensions approved amendments to bring the health plan in line with our social statement for paying

only for abortions in the conditions described in this amendment. The Board of Pensions does not set policy, however, and sought the will of the Church Council. Ultimately the council rejected the amendment. At its April 1997 meeting, the council did amend the plan to refuse to pay for late-term abortions except for exceptional cases. However, the vast majority of abortions are induced earlier in pregnancy. If the Church Council would enact changes, those insured under our health plan would not be prevented from obtaining elective induced abortions, but like orthodontic treatment for example, our church-sponsored plan would not fund it. No action we choose protects us from error or sin. By refusing to pay for abortions except in these tragic circumstances, we may err by not paying for an induced abortion which is ethically responsible, or we may, regrettably, cause more pain to a girl or a woman who meets the criteria and has an abortion covered by the plan but not until after she has answered painful questions. Let us express to the Church Council that we are willing to risk this so that we are not guilty of the greater error of denying life to an embryo or fetus which God intends to become a fully human life."

The Rev. Leon L. Stier [Southeastern Minnesota Synod] observed that he had called the Board of Pensions and "asked about getting a complete physical. They said since I was 40 years old, I could get one physical every two years and the plan would pay for up to but not over \$100; in other words, there were limits to what they would pay for. Not long ago I called to ask about a surgical procedure that my ophthalmologist was strongly recommending. I described the procedure and the person from the Board of Pensions said they would probably cover it but they could not guarantee it—I would have to get more information and ask more people. These are limits and procedures I do not oppose. I do not want our medical plan to pay for everything for everybody. Our congregations could not afford such a plan. But then I am wondering why are there no limits and no questions asked when it comes to paying for abortions except the one now limiting payments on those abortions after the 20th week? This is, in fact, a rather limited limit—only one percent of the abortions done nationwide are done after the 20th week—and even this limit was added only after strong objections were raised. Why is there such easy access to a procedure that is so controversial as abortion? I am not satisfied with the decision by the Church Council or the recommendation of the Memorials Committee." He spoke in support of the motion.

Kathy J. Magnus, ELCA vice president, noted that the Church Council had "spent significant time on these discussions in this last biennium. Following the action of the Board of Pensions, we did meet, and determined it was important to set up a work group to look into this situation very carefully to make sure that we were living by the content of the *Social Statement on Abortion* that this church had already passed. It was determined, after significant discussion, to continue the previously existing practice under the ELCA health plan, which is the same approach that was taken for many years by The American Lutheran Church, the Lutheran Church in America, and the Association of Evangelical Lutheran

Churches. I think it is important to remember that we do have a standing policy in that social statement and this is where the Church Council ended up.”

The Rev. Robert A. Waite [South Dakota Synod] spoke in favor of the motion, saying, “The decision of the Church Council is one that was taken and we respect that, however, there is a difference of opinion on whether or not this does indeed reflect the social statement and that is what we are talking about now. This amendment does not say to those who seek abortion that they can or cannot. . . . However, there is a very large number of people in this Lutheran church who are opposed to that and, aside from myself or someone else removing themselves from the church’s health plan and seeking a health plan otherwise, we have no other way—we are forced into abiding by this decision which is, in my opinion, contrary to the social statement of the ELCA.”

Ms. Deborah S. Yandala [Northeastern Ohio Synod], a member of the Church Council and also a member of the work group of the Church Council that studied the issue, spoke against the amendment. She recounted the work group and council’s deliberation, saying, “We looked at this issue from a variety of perspectives. We considered medical coding realities. We studied carefully the social statement that was approved by this church in 1991. I would especially like to highlight in that social statement, section 4, part B, ‘We recognize that conscientious decisions need to be made in relation to difficult circumstances that vary greatly. What is determined to be a morally responsible decision in one situation may not be in another.’ It was because of that that we came to the conclusion that it really is up to plan members to be educated on the issue, to know what our social statement says. We found that it was difficult at best to adequately address any individual’s decision because of the variety of moral and physical situations that might lead to this decision.”

The Rev. Mark A. Graham [Virginia Synod] spoke in favor of the amendment, commending this church for its adoption of the social statement on abortion that was, he said, one of the better documents this church has adopted. He commented, “It clearly delineates those exceptional cases where it is morally and biblically acceptable to permit abortion This amendment gives us as the voting members, an ideal opportunity to bring our policy in line with our social teaching on abortion.”

The Rev. Synde Manion [Southern California (West) Synod] spoke against the amendment, stating that social statements are meant to be persuasive and not coercive. “Therefore,” she asked, “How will the Board of Pensions determine the nature of conception? If it is a situation of force or violence? My guess is that they will ask a doctor to fill out a form of medical necessity which means the doctor then has to ask the woman how she became pregnant. That is a non-medical question in almost all cases and our doctors should not be required to ask our plan members non-medical questions which are emotionally-based issues when many physicians do not handle that kind of non-medical information very sensitively There is

a great deal of research that shows that many teen-age girls have as their first sexual encounter one of date rape or violence, and yet they are not able to identify all the issues related to that intimation and violence until maybe weeks, months, or even years later.”

Ms. Kristin Barnett [Western Iowa Synod] inquired about the meaning of the phrase, “incompatible with life.”

The Rev. David B. Hunter [South Carolina Synod] spoke in favor of the amendment, stating, “This is a matter [because the synodical memorials have asked it] on which the assembly must speak. The act of abortion is very painful and troubling to me personally and to many people in our churches. To be responsible, our pension plan must match our social commitments in this area.”

Ms. Garber responded to Ms. Barnett’s question and indicated that the phrase, “incompatible with life,” was quoted from the social statement on abortion, page 7, “There are circumstances of extreme fetal abnormality which would result in severe suffering and very early death of an infant.”

Ms. Joyce Opjorden [Southern California (West) Synod] said that while she was opposed to abortion, she also realizes that we “live in a sinful world. Let me remind you that children are getting pregnant. Young girls who think they would never engage in that kind of behavior become pregnant. I have seen in the emergency rooms in the greater Los Angeles area the results of this. Self-induced abortions still exist.”

The Rev. Steven J. Solberg [Northeastern Iowa Synod] said that he and his wife had struggled with a miscarriage and “after the procedure that was done following the miscarriage, it was very painful to see on the records that she had had an abortion performed. How is the coding done and how is the communication done?” Mr. John Kapanke, president of the Board of Pensions, responded, “The medical term, as it applies to abortions, really relates to situations of miscarriage, induced-therapeutic, and induced-elective procedures. There are actually 58 different diagnoses, and 13 different procedures that relate to abortion, so the Board of Pensions in the administration of a claim simply relates to what that diagnosis is on the health claim.”

Mr. Y. T. Chiu [Northeastern Ohio Synod] identified himself as a physician and said, “I am pro-life, but I am also pro-choice. I was there [at the 1991 Churchwide Assembly] when the social statement on abortion was adopted. It was a painful process. We recognized the diversity and we recognized a lot of unusual circumstances.” He commented on the inadequacies of coding practices and explained, “You have only so many numbers that you can use . . . and you have to pick a number.” Mr. Chiu offered a word of caution, saying, “Gentlemen, you are compassionate people. A lot of you are pastors. Behind the door, you talk to your constituency and that is between you two. Please leave the medical problems in the consultation room between the person and the doctor. I see most of the people who

come up here [to speak on this issue] are male—very righteous about it. What do you know about the females’ problems and their pain?”

The Rev. Kent S. Stoutenburg [Southwestern Washington Synod] drew attention to the time limitation on speeches. He noted that in accordance with the assembly’s Rules of Organization and Procedure, the limit should be three minutes, rather than the two minutes being allowed at this time. Bishop Anderson, following research of the motion regarding the change in time limits, said, “The motion was to limit speakers to two minutes, and was not limited to sacramental practices [debate]. So the timing has been in accordance with what our records shows the action was yesterday.”

Ms. Kristin Barnett [Western Iowa Synod] opposed the amendment, stating that she did not understand how and by whom decisions of life and death are made as it relates to the phrase, “‘incompatible with life’ and the definition of ‘circumstances of extreme fetal abnormality which would result in severe suffering and very early death of an infant.’”

The Rev. Franklin D. Fry [New Jersey Synod] quoted Mark Twain, who said, “For every complicated question there is a simple answer and it is always wrong.” Pastor Fry shared a story about rape and quoted the victim’s doctor, “‘There are some things that need to be a confidential matter between the person and physician;’ and with the help of the counsel of the pastor, I hope.” He opposed the motion because of extenuating circumstances experienced by those who become pregnant as a result of violence.

Ms. Kay Freeberg [Southern Ohio Synod] called the question:

MOVED; *Two-Thirds Vote Required*
SECONDED; *Yes-861; No-39*
CARRIED: To move the previous question.

MOVED;
SECONDED; *Yes-271; No-651*
DEFEATED: To amend the recommendation of the Memorials Committee by substituting the following for paragraph five:

To express to the Church Council that the spirit of this Churchwide Assembly is that the ELCA Health Plan should pay for induced abortion of pregnancy only in cases that involve pregnancy that results from the violence of rape or incest, or serious threats to the physical health of the mother, or abnormalities of the embryo or fetus that are incompatible with life.

Bishop Howard E. Wennes [Grand Canyon Synod] said, “This church should try to protect the conscience of individuals on both sides of issues. I am disappointed that our Church Council has not found a means to provide some sort of relief of conscience option for those who believe that some of their dollars are used to support an action that they consider immoral. I would ask that someone from the Church Council would speak to why they have found that so difficult.” Ms. Kathy J. Magnus, vice president and chair of the Church Council, responded, “The council did ask the Board of Pensions to look into the possibility of a relief of conscience kind of plan. It was also discussed with the Conference of Bishops. In bringing back some conversation, the Conference of Bishops, it is my understanding, did not support such a plan; and in conversation in the Church Council we found that it would be a difficult plan to administer. There was not a lot of interest in moving forward with it.”

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

Yes-809; No-121

CA97.6.30 To express this church’s continuing concern about the number of abortions in this country;

To commend the *Social Statement on Abortion*, which was adopted by the 1991 Churchwide Assembly, as a resource to our pastors and members dealing with this issue;

To encourage continuing moral deliberation throughout this church on abortion;

To request that the Board of Pensions and the Division for Church in Society provide a joint report to the Church Council’s April 1998 meeting related to plans to continue educational efforts on abortion, in support of the members of the ELCA health plan and all members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and

To acknowledge the complex issues related to plan administration and to recognize the Church Council’s actions at its November 1995 and April 1997 meetings as an appropriate response to the concerns raised in the memorials of the South Dakota Synod, Northeastern Minnesota Synod, Central/Southern Illinois Synod, and Lower Susquehanna Synod.

Bishop Anderson then announced that the remainder of the memorials would be addressed at a later time in this plenary session.

Women and Children Living in Poverty

Reference: *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section V, pages 47-50.

Bishop Anderson invited the Rev. Charles S. Miller, executive director of the Division for Church in Society, to present a progress report on Women and Children Living in Poverty. Bishop Anderson said, “The 1993 Churchwide Assembly committed our church to intensifying its work with the women and children living in poverty over the remainder of this decade. That assembly also requested that reports on this subject be brought to each subsequent churchwide assembly during the ‘90s.” Pastor Miller introduced a video, following which Ms. Tina Dabney, newly appointed project director for the Women and Children Living in Poverty program under the auspices of the Division for Church in Society, addressed assembly members.

Ms. Dabney based her comments on 1 John 3:16-18. She explained that the project team includes persons from the divisions for: Church in Society, Congregational Ministries, Higher Education and Schools, Ministry, and Outreach; the commissions for: Multicultural Ministries and Women; the departments for: Communication and Synodical Relations; the Office of the Treasurer; and the Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. She called attention to the report and recommendation of the 1993 Churchwide Assembly entitled, *Women and Children Living in Poverty: A Plan to Listen and Act*. She asked, “In the era of welfare reform, how will the church create a stable future for women and children living in poverty? . . . The project team for women and children living in poverty developed five areas of coordination, each of which provides a format of strategy to assist this impoverished group.” The five areas are: 1) becoming sensitized to the specific issues that deal with women and children living in poverty; 2) evangelize; 3) serving women and children living in poverty; 4) challenging policies whose structural inequities leave poor or low income women and children trapped in perpetual poverty; 5) developing the leadership and empowerment skills that will enable women and children living in poverty to move beyond their circumstances. In each of these areas, you and I who are the church must move beyond just giving lip service in addressing these issues. We must move beyond window dressing. We must truly move beyond a cursory call to action. We must move into the geographic, racial, and ethnic trenches that have traditionally separated us from our poverty-stricken brothers and sisters.” She challenged voting members to go back to their congregations, synods, and communities and advocate for justice on issues of health care, education, racism, hunger, homelessness,

employment, and other issues that will have an impact on the 34 million people living in poverty in the United States.

Mr. William E. Diehl [Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod] said that he had heard the word, “interfaith,” only once during the presentation. He shared information about his synod’s coalition which works in this area and urged that this church work through ecumenical and interfaith coalitions, which would lend itself to greater credence with the government.

Elections: Results of Second Common Ballot

Reference: *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section VII. Report of Elections Committee: Results of Second Ballot; continued on *Minutes*, pages 411, 652, 679.

Mr. Phillip H. Harris, ELCA general counsel and chair of the Elections Committee, indicated that the printed report of the results of the second common ballot for filling vacancies on the Church Council and churchwide boards and committees had been distributed to assembly members and that elections had occurred in all of the 23 positions being voted on this ballot. He said, “I would ask that in those 23 elections where one of the nominees received a majority, that nominee be declared the winner with the necessity of reading the results of the second common ballot.” Bishop Anderson declared that the following persons, who had received a majority vote, were duly elected.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

CA97.6.31 To receive the written report of the Elections Committee on the results of the second ballot for filling vacancies on the Church Council, and churchwide boards and committees, to dispense with the reading of the report, and to request that the chair hereby declare elected, in keeping with this church’s bylaws, those persons receiving a majority of the votes cast.

Church Council

Pr. Karen L. Soli, Virginia, Minn. (3E)

Ms. Eva Kiyutelluk Leonard, Anchorage, Alaska (1A)

Mr. Brian D. Rude, Coon Valley, Wis. (5L)

Mr. George E. Friedline, New Martinsville, W.Va. (8H)

Division for Congregational Ministries

Pr. E. Earl Okerlund, Cherry Hill, N.J. (7A)
Ms. Judy Rehmel, Richmond, Ind. (6C)
Ms. Karen Walhof, Minneapolis, Minn. (3G)
Mr. Robert A. Sandoval, Albuquerque, N. Mex. (2E)

Division for Ministry

Pr. Terrence G. Baeder, Rockford, Ill. (5B)
Ms. Phyllis Carlson, Kennewick, Wash. (1D)

Division for Outreach

Pr. Donald B. Green, Pittsburgh, Pa. (8B)
Pr. Richard W. Owens, Bismarck, N. D. (3A)
Ms. Leisha DeHart-Davis, Atlanta, Ga. (9D)

Division for Higher Education and Schools

Mr. Raymond (Ray) E. Bailey, Fort Collins, Colo. (2E)

Division for Church in Society

Pr. Denver W. Bitner, Rockford, Ill. (5B)
Pr. Timothy J. Swenson, Upham, N. D. (3A)

Division for Global Mission

Pr. Joel S. Bjerkestrand, Fountain Hills, Ariz. (2D)
Ms. Mary Sagar, Kalamazoo, Mich. (6B)

Publishing House

Ms. Mary E. Hughes, Columbus, Ohio (6F)

Board of Pensions

Pr. Larry C. Kassebaum, Mesa, Ariz. (2D)

Nominating Committee

Pr. Susan E. Tjornehoj, St. Paul, Minn. (3H)
Ms. Barbara L. Price, Pasadena, Calif. (2B)

Committee on Appeals

Mr. Wayne W. Becker, Moorestown, N.J. (7A)

Bishop Anderson directed the attention of assembly members to the proposed amendments to the *Constitutions, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* as recommended by the Church Council. Secretary Lowell G. Almen declared, “The proposed constitutional and bylaw amendments are before you by recommendation of the Church Council. The Church Council recommends adoption of those constitutional and bylaw amendments as found in *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section IV, pages 129-134. The rationale for many of those amendments is provided in the italic type. Voting members in accord with the rules of this assembly and by the appropriate deadline, requested the removal from *en bloc* action by this assembly of the following: Bylaw 7.41.17.; Proposed Constitutional Provision 8.71.; and Proposed Constitutional Provision 8.72.”

ELCA Bylaw 7.41.17.

Reference: *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section IV, pages 129.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To amend churchwide bylaw 7.41.17. to clarify the policy and procedures that apply to the determination of the roster status as provided in these bylaws:

7.41.17. Retirement. Pastors as ordained ministers may retire upon attainment of age 60, or after 30 years on the roster of ordained ministers of this church or one of its predecessor bodies, or upon disability, and continue to be listed on the roster of ordained ministers of this church, upon endorsement by the synodical bishop, by action of the Synod Council in the synod in which the ordained minister is listed on the roster. The policies and procedures for granting retired status or for designation of disability on the roster of ordained ministers shall be developed by the Division for Ministry, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council.

The Rev. Ray J. Miller [Western Iowa Synod] inquired about the policies and procedures in place now and in the future regarding who would “determine whether those disabilities would disqualify them for ministry at that time? Also if a person is dismissed from a congregation, do they retain their status as a minister, and if so how long without having a call? . . . I heard in the [hearing on] the Division for Ministry that there are about 1000 people who are not under call right now but would be eligible for a call. How would they fit into this situation?” Secretary

**Amendments to ELCA Constitutions, Bylaws,
and Continuing Resolutions**

Reference: *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section IV, pages 129-134.

Almen responded, “Ordained ministers on the roster of this church—that is, not retired—under the existing bylaws of this church, which appear in another section, may be retained on the roster of ordained ministers by annual action of the Synod Assembly in which rostered, for a maximum of three years. In the case of ordained ministers granted study leave the maximum would be six years. The 1993 Churchwide Assembly adopted a provision in that ‘on leave’ provision that allows synods to petition an extension on those limits in accord with the mission and ministry needs of the synod. As to the question related to the determination of disability status, that is a decision that is made in relation to the roster by the synod of roster. Usually that determination is coordinated with such disability benefits through the Board of Pensions. The granting of retired status on the roster would be done by the respective synod in accord with the bylaw provision that provides for such retired status, namely, this one [7.41.17.], upon reaching the age of 60 or after 30 years on the roster.”

The Rev. Deborah Taylor [Minneapolis Area Synod] said as she spoke against the proposed bylaw amendment, “For pastors who have reached an acceptable age of retirement or who have served for 30 years in the church, remaining on the roster ought to be a given and should in no way require the approval of a bishop or Synod Council.” Secretary Almen clarified, “This is not an issue of a pastor who is entitled to remain on the roster in retired status remaining on the roster. The proposed bylaw amendment provides a process for the transfer of such ordained ministers and also provides an orderly process in the synod for granting that status, namely, it is a decision of the Synod Council in accord with what you see above in that bylaw provision which is not underlined at this point.”

The Rev. George Villa [Southern California (West) Synod] sought to call the question. Bishop Anderson, however, noting that no one remained at the microphones waiting to speak, called for the vote on the proposed amendment.

ASSEMBLY

Two-Thirds Vote Required

ACTION

Hand Vote

CA97.6.32 To amend churchwide bylaw 7.41.17. to clarify the policy and procedures that apply to the determination of the roster status as provided in these bylaws:

7.41.17. Retirement. Pastors as ordained ministers may retire upon attainment of age 60, or after 30 years on the roster of ordained ministers of this church or one of its predecessor bodies, or upon disability, and continue to be listed on the roster of ordained ministers of this church,

upon endorsement by the synodical bishop, by action of the Synod Council in the synod in which the ordained minister is listed on the roster. The policies and procedures for granting retired status or for designation of disability on the roster of ordained ministers shall be developed by the Division for Ministry, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council.

Implementation of Ecumenical Decisions: 8.71.01-

Reference: 1997 Pre-Assembly Report, Section IV, page 134.

Secretary Lowell G. Almen introduced the following amendment, which would designate the present bylaw 8.71.01. as constitutional provision 8.71. He stated, “This particular bylaw [8.71.01.] was adopted by the 1995 Churchwide Assembly. In view of the significance of such decisions, the Church Council is recommending that that particular bylaw be designated as a constitutional provision [8.71.]

MOVED;

SECONDED: *To designate churchwide bylaw 8.71.01. as constitutional provision 8.71.*

~~8.71.01-~~ This church may establish official church-to-church relationships and agreements. Establishment of such official relationships and agreements shall require a two-thirds vote of the voting members of the Churchwide Assembly.

The Rev. Paul N. Hanson [South Dakota Synod] sought to amend proposed constitutional provision 8.72. Secretary Almen stated, “8.71. is before us. Because it is a constitutional provision and because of the requirements on constitutional provisions, we are unable to amend those on the floor of the assembly.”

ASSEMBLY

Two-Thirds Vote Required

ACTION

Hand Vote

CA97.6.33 *To designate churchwide bylaw 8.71.01. as constitutional provision 8.71.*

8.71.01. **This church may establish official church-to-church relationships and agreements. Establishment of such official relationships and agreements shall require a two-thirds vote of the voting members of the Churchwide Assembly.**

Interim Policies and Procedures: New 8.72.

Secretary Almen indicated that adoption of a new constitutional provision 8.72. was proposed in order to implement *A Formula of Agreement* between this church, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Reformed Church in America, and the United Church of Christ.

MOVED;

SECONDED: *To add a new constitutional provision 8.72. to read:*

8.72. If official church-to-church relationships and agreements are approved at the 1997 Churchwide Assembly under bylaw 8.71., as adopted by the 1995 Churchwide Assembly, interim policies and procedures to implement such approval(s) may be recommended by the appropriate officer or the board of the appropriate division, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council, notwithstanding any other provisions of the constitutions and bylaws of this church to the contrary. This provision 8.72. shall expire at the 1999 Churchwide Assembly.

Mr. William E. Diehl [Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod] stated, "I'm not sure what it says. . . . It talks about the procedure for working through the implementing needs for ecumenical decisions, but at the end it says that these things will be adopted 'notwithstanding any other provisions of the constitutions and bylaws of this church to the contrary.' That sounds to me like we are suspending the constitution of this church for two years to deal with whatever kind of implementing [policies], bylaws, or constitutional provisions might be necessary. We are elevating this to a constitutional provision." Secretary Almen responded, "The clearest example of where this particular constitutional provision would apply,

if adopted, would involve the privilege of voting at synod assemblies in the case of pastors from the Reformed traditions serving, for example, yoked parishes that include a Lutheran congregation. This particular constitutional provision would allow for the policies to be put in place that would permit synods to grant such voting privileges." He said that the reason for this provision came in part from memorials, resolutions, or inquiries from five synods. Mr. Diehl reiterated his objection to suspension of the "constitution for anything that may come up with respect to transition," and suggested that perhaps the provision should have some limitations. "In the discussion in the preparation and recommendation of this action," Secretary Almen explained, "there was the understanding that this particular provision would allow for the immediate implementation of the full communion commitments that have been made by this assembly. Without such provision, which relates specifically to church-to-church relationships and is not an omnibus suspension of the constitution, we would in effect be required to delay aspects of the implementation of the Lutheran-Reformed *A Formula of Agreement* until after the decisions of the 1999 Churchwide Assembly. Mr. Dale V. Sandstrom, chair of the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee of the Church Council, further explained the rationale. He said, "The intention of the Church Council and the committee was simply to provide authority to implement *A Formula of Agreement* as proposed in the interim until the next churchwide assembly. As Secretary Almen has indicated, some of the items are also items permitting clergy to serve our churches and the like. The intent is simply to implement what this body enacted by an overwhelming vote."

Mr. Charles Kurfess [Northwestern Ohio Synod] sought to amend the proposed provision to insert the word, "necessary," before the words, "interim policies and procedures," which, he said, would narrow the provision's application. Secretary Almen reiterated that proposed constitutional provisions cannot be amended from the floor. He said, "The dilemma related to constitutional provisions is that for adoption of such provisions at one meeting of the Churchwide Assembly, a minimum of six months notice must be given to the respective synods for such changes. That presents to us then the text of proposed constitutional amendments that need to be considered without amendment. In the case of bylaws, there is a process for amending those in the course of the assembly, but under our Articles of Incorporation and the laws that relate to those articles, we face the need to address what is presented in the notice that is distributed to the synods under the six-month provision. Otherwise we would be dealing with the two-step process of constitutional amendments—first reading at one assembly, and then consideration for adoption at the subsequent assembly."

Mr. Robert Frey [Pacifica Synod] asked why the provision was to expire at the 1999 Churchwide Assembly? He inquired, "If the 1999 Churchwide Assembly were to approve an additional full communion relationship, for instance, would a similar constitutional provision have to be adopted again so that they could continue to work until the 2001 assembly?" Secretary Almen said that the Church Council

would propose constitutional and bylaw amendments as necessary. He advised, “The reason for the ‘sunset’ provision in 8.72. is to allow then for the regular consideration and adoption of the necessary constitutional and bylaw changes.”

Ms. Delphia Hawkins [Arkansas-Oklahoma Synod] shared her concern that this church move forward in interchurch cooperation. She said, “There are moments, there are times, there have been times, and there probably will be times of emergency where interfaith actions are needed. I speak in particular about Oklahoma City and the disaster that happened with us As the church, we need to be able to serve each other.”

The Rev. Bradley C. Jenson [Northwestern Minnesota Synod] inquired, “Given what Secretary Almen has shared about the necessary six months, would a resolution be in order to make an amendment if it was acted on as a referral to the Church Council for action in 1999?” Bishop Anderson responded, “I would suspect you would have to vote this down and then you would have to make some germane motion afterwards.” Secretary Almen commented, “A request could be made for consideration and action by the Church Council in terms of the sense of this assembly. If the intention of the assembly were to allow for the full implementation during this biennium of *A Formula of Agreement*, this provision would allow for that implementation.” Pastor Jenson requested permission to state his concern and asked for assistance in how this concern might be addressed. He said, “What I would like to do is to find a way to process this amendment: ‘Episcopal priests may serve ELCA congregations who 1) subscribe to the Lutheran confessions; 2) are in accord with *Visions and Expectations*; and 3) go through the appropriate synodical candidacy processes.’ The reason I would like to find a way to get that before the Church Council is that if we cannot agree on the historic episcopate, at least we as Lutherans could do our best at moving toward full communion. Then The Episcopal Church would need, to the best that they could, to find out if ELCA pastors could serve in Episcopal churches.” Bishop Anderson responded, “It would seem to me that that would be of a significant nature and would need to come through the regular memorial process from synods to the Church Council.”

Mr. Arnold R. Mickelson [Minneapolis Area Synod] spoke against adoption of the proposed provision, observing, “I believe it is an unnecessary extension of the authority of this assembly and that there are adequate provisions to take care of interim actions with the ecumenical proposals that have been proposed without adding a constitutional amendment even for two years.”

The Rev. William A. Hartfelder Jr. [Southern Ohio Synod] speaking in favor of the proposed provision, commented, “On several occasions we have risen as a body and applauded the leadership of our church as trustworthy leadership who have vision and responsibility to our church body. I see in this motion a process that is outlined with internal checks and balances that anything that would be proposed would go from the appropriate division, etc. and reviewed by the Conference of Bishops and adopted by the Church Council—we have checks and

balances. It is for a period of two years and I see this as a proposal entrusting our trusted leaders with some flexibility to do what is appropriate, to act on the actions of this body.”

Mr. David Kaufman [South Carolina Synod] called the previous question:

MOVED; *Two-Thirds Vote Required*
SECONDED; *Hand Vote.*
CARRIED: To move the previous question.

ASSEMBLY *Two-Thirds Vote Required*
ACTION *Hand Vote*

CA97.6.34 *To add a new constitutional provision 8.72. to read:*
8.72. If official church-to-church relationships and agreements are approved at the 1997 Churchwide Assembly under bylaw 8.71.01., as adopted by the 1995 Churchwide Assembly, interim policies and procedures to implement such approval(s) may be recommended by the appropriate officer or the board of the appropriate division, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council, notwithstanding any other provisions of the constitutions and bylaws of this church to the contrary. This provision 8.72. shall expire at the 1999 Churchwide Assembly.

The amendment was adopted by a greater than two-thirds majority vote of the assembly.

***En Bloc* Disposition of Proposed Amendments to Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions**

Reference: *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section IV, pages 129-134.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

Hand Vote

CA97.6.35 *To simplify all references to “a pastor as an ordained minister” and “pastors as ordained ministers,” replacing such phrasing as appropriate with “ordained minister” and “ordained ministers” throughout this church’s governing documents.*

To amend churchwide bylaw 7.52.24. to clarify the policy and procedures that apply to the determination of the roster status as provided in these bylaws:

7.52.24. Retirement. Associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers may retire upon attainment of age 60, or after 30 years on a roster of this church or one of its predecessor bodies, or upon disability, and continue to be listed on the roster of associates in ministry, deaconesses, or diaconal ministers of this church, upon endorsement by the synodical bishop, by action of the Synod Council in the synod in which the associate in ministry, deaconess, or diaconal minister is listed on the roster. The policies and procedures for granting retired status or for designation of disability on the official rosters of laypersons shall be developed by the Division for Ministry, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council.

To amend churchwide bylaws 7.41.18. and 7.52.25. to provide a more accurate description of records specified in the bylaws:

7.41.18. Retention of Personnel Roster Records. When an ordained minister is removed from that roster of this church, the personnel roster record shall be retained by the secretary of this church and the synodical bishop shall invite the person at the time of removal to provide,

annually, appropriate current information for the personnel roster record.

7.52.25. Retention of Personnel Roster Records. When an associate in ministry, deaconess, or diaconal minister is removed from the roster of this church, the personnel roster record shall be retained by the secretary of this church and the synodical bishop shall invite the person at the time of removal to provide, annually, appropriate current information for the personnel roster record.

To amend churchwide constitutional provision 7.42.h. to clarify the process for possible transfer of the roster status of an ordained minister who is retired or disabled:

7.42. Each pastor on the roster of ordained ministers of this church shall be related to that synod:

[a. through g. unchanged]; or

h. on whose roster the ordained minister, if permanently disabled, was listed when last called or the synod of current address, if retired or disabled upon application by the ordained minister for transfer and the mutual agreement of the synodical bishops involved after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church; or

i. on whose roster the ordained minister, if granted retired status, was listed when last called or the synod of current address, upon application by the ordained minister for transfer and the mutual agreement of the synodical bishops involved after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church.

To eliminate the examples from churchwide bylaw 7.42.01. because they no longer apply in view of previously approved amendments to the Table of Sources of Calls:

7.42.01. If the service of a pastor as an ordained minister who receives and accepts a letter of call from this church, under 7.42.c., would be enhanced through transfer of roster status from the previous synod of roster to the synod of current address, ~~such as an ordained minister who is president of a college or university of this church or a chaplain in an educational or social service institution~~, such a transfer may be authorized upon mutual agreement of the synodical bishops involved after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church.

To amend churchwide bylaw 7.51.05.a. to make explicit the entry rite designated elsewhere for diaconal ministers:

7.51.05.a. . . . the candidate shall be ~~designated consecrated~~, according to the service orders of this church. . . .

To amend churchwide bylaw 7.52.22. to clarify the process for preparation of policy related to “on-leave-from-call” status:

7.52.22. On Leave from Call. An associate in ministry, deaconess, or diaconal minister of this church, serving under a regularly issued letter of call, who leaves the work of that call without accepting another regularly issued letter of call, may be retained on the roster of associates in ministry, deaconesses, or diaconal ministers of this church, upon endorsement by the synodical bishop, by action of the Synod Council in the synod of which a member, under policy developed by the Division for Ministry, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council. [The remainder of the bylaw remains unchanged.]

To renumber bylaw 8.11.01. as constitutional provision 8.17.

To amend churchwide bylaw 8.33.01. to reflect the development of Lutheran Services in America:

8.33.01. Through its Division for Church in Society and its membership in Lutheran Services in America, this church shall, with ~~church-affiliated agencies and institutions~~ affiliated social ministry organizations, develop criteria for their ministries, establish affiliations ~~both and~~ alliances within this church and within society, and carry out a comprehensive social ministry outreach witness.

To amend churchwide bylaw 12.41.12. and †S8.32.d. in the Constitution for Synods to reflect the actual need for submission of the list of voting members for each regular Churchwide Assembly:

12.41.12. The secretary of each synod shall submit to the secretary of this church at least ~~four~~ nine months before ~~the~~ each regular Churchwide Assembly a certified list of the ~~regular and alternate~~ voting members elected by the Synod Assembly.

†S8.32.d. Submit to the secretary of this church at least ~~four~~ nine months before ~~the~~ each regular Churchwide Assembly a certified list of the ~~regular and alternate~~ voting members elected by the Synod Assembly.

To amend churchwide bylaw 17.31.01. to conform to the provision for board membership as stipulated in the corporate bylaws that govern the Endowment Fund of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:

17.31.01. The Endowment Fund of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, operating as the ELCA Foundation, shall have a board of trustees of at least nine and not more than 13

members, elected by the Church Council from a slate of nominees submitted by the council's nomination process. ~~To ensure geographical distribution, there shall be one member of the committee from each region.~~ Board members shall be elected for one six-year term with no consecutive reelection and with approximately one-third elected every two years. The bishop of this church or the bishop's designated representative, a representative with stewardship responsibilities in the Division for Congregational Ministries, the treasurer of this church, and a synodical bishop elected by the Conference of Bishops shall serve as advisory members of the board with voice but not vote.

To mark S15.31. in the Constitution for Synods as a required provision to be consistent practice throughout the synods:

‡S15.31. This synod shall arrange to have an annual audit of its financial records conducted by a certified public accountant firm selected by the Synod Council. The audited annual financial report shall be submitted by this synod to the churchwide Office of the Treasurer and to the congregations of this synod. The financial reports shall be in the format approved from time to time by the churchwide Office of the Treasurer.

*To amend *C7.04. and *C17.02. in the Model Constitution for Congregations to specify the requirement for such meetings:*

*C7.04. If a two-thirds majority of the voting members of this congregation present at a regularly legally called... *[with the remainder of the provision unchanged].*

*C17.02.a. A proposed amendment to this constitution shall:

- a. Be approved at a properly legally called meeting... *[with the remainder of the provision unchanged].*

*To amend *C9.12. in the Model Constitution for Congregations to clarify the meaning of the provision:*

*C9.12. The pastor of this congregation:

- a. shall keep accurate parochial records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, communicants, members received, members dismissed, or members excluded from the congregation; ~~and~~
- b. shall submit a summary of such statistics annually to the synod; and. ~~The pastor~~
- c. shall become a member of the this congregation upon receipt and acceptance of that has extended the letter of call. In a parish of multiple congregations, the pastor shall hold membership in one of the congregations.

To amend C12.01. to provide the option of either a specific number or a maximum number for definition of the membership of the Congregation Council:

C12.01. The voting membership of the Congregation Council shall consist of the pastor(s), the officers of the congregation, and [members] [not more than _____ members] of the congregation... *[with the remainder of the provision unchanged].*

To add the following language at the end of C12.01. in the Model Constitution for Congregations:

C12.01. Consistent with the laws of the state in which the congregation is incorporated, the

congregation may adopt procedures for the removal of a member of the Congregation Council in other circumstances.

To amend C12.04.h. in the Model Constitution for Congregations to correct the reference in regard to the churchwide organization:

C12.04.h. To emphasize partnership with the synod and churchwide ~~units~~ organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America...
[with the remainder of the provision unchanged].

*To add the following language at the end of *C15.01. in the Model Constitution for Congregations and in churchwide bylaw 20.41.02. preceding the final sentence:*

***C15.01. and**

20.41.02. If for any reason, the pastor is unable to administer the admonitions required by a. and b. hereof, the president (if not the pastor) or vice president shall administer such admonitions.

*To amend *C15.02. in the Model Constitution for Congregations to clarify the intended meaning:*

***C15.02.** *[First sentence unchanged.] . . .* A member charged with the offense shall appear before the Congregation Council after having received a written notice, at least 10 days prior to the meeting, specifying the exact charges that have been made against the member; at least 10 days prior to the meeting.

To add a new chapter on indemnification to the Model Constitution for Congregations and to list Chapter 19 in churchwide constitutional provision 9.25. as a required section of the Model Constitution for Congregations:

Chapter 19 INDEMNIFICATION

***C19.01.** Consistent with the provisions of the laws under which this congregation is incorporated, this congregation may adopt provisions providing indemnification for each person who, by reason of the fact that such person is or was a Congregation Council member, officer, employee, agent, or other member of any committee of this congregation, was or is threatened to be made a party to any threatened, pending or completed civil, criminal, administrative, arbitration, or investigative proceeding.

To adopt the following amendments of churchwide constitutional provisions 13.11., 13.21., and other related provisions and bylaws:

13.11. This church shall have as its officers the presiding bishop . . . *[with the remainder of the provision unchanged].*

13.20. Presiding Bishop

13.21. This church shall have a presiding bishop . . . *[with the remainder of the provision unchanged].*

13.22. The presiding bishop shall be elected . . . *[with the remainder of the provision unchanged].*

13.22.01. The presiding bishop shall be elected . . . *[with the remainder of the bylaw unchanged].*

13.22.02. The presiding bishop shall be a full-time, salaried position; *and*

To permit the addition of the designation, “presiding,” before the word, “bishop,” when editorially appropriate elsewhere in the governing documents in reference to the bishop of this church.

To add a new chapter regarding parishes to the Model Constitution for Congregations as required provisions when a congregation is part of a parish:

Chapter 20 PARISH AUTHORIZATION [* Required provisions when congregation is part of a parish]

***C20.01. This congregation may unite in partnership with one or more other congregations recognized by the synod named in *C6.01. to form a parish. Except as provided in *C20.02. and *C20.03., a written agreement, developed in consultation with the synod and approved by the voting members of each congregation participating in the parish, shall specify the powers and responsibilities that have been delegated to a Parish Council.**

***C20.02. Whenever a letter of call is being recommended for extension to an ordained minister to serve the congregations of a parish, such letter of call shall be first approved by a two-thirds vote at congregational meetings of each of the congregations forming the parish. If any congregation of the parish should fail to approve extending this call, the other congregation(s) in the same parish shall have the right to terminate the parish arrangement.**

***C20.03. Any one of the congregations of a parish may terminate the call of a pastor as provided in †S14.13.d. of the Synod Constitution of the synod named in *C6.01. In such case, the other congregation(s) in the same parish shall have the right to terminate the parish arrangement.**

Secretary Almen advised the assembly that in response to the earlier inquiry related to ordained ministers of one of the partner churches serving within a congregation or other ministry setting of this church, examples on that matter are provided in Section V, page 3, question 8.

Bishop Anderson then invited assembly members to stand to sing the hymn, “Amazing Grace.”

Bishop Anderson reported that subsequent to his previous ruling, it was determined that the two-minute limitation on speeches applied only to discussion of the *Statement on Sacramental Practices*. The three-minute limitation specified in the assembly’s Rules of Organization and Procedure now would be in effect.

Report of the Memorials Committee (continued)

Reference: 1997 Pre-Assembly Report, Section VI; continued on *Minutes*, pages 139, 394, 490, 767.

Bishop Anderson invited Ms. Sandra G. Gustavson, chair of the Memorials Committee, to continue the committee’s report.

Category 13: Lump-Sum Survivor Benefits

Reference: 1997 Pre-Assembly Report, Section VI, pages 49-51.

A. New Jersey Synod (7A) [1996 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the ELCA’s Lump Sum Death Benefit is based on age and salary level one year prior to death; and

WHEREAS, this results in surviving families of under-compensated clergy (whose financial needs are at least equal to those of clergy who receive higher compensation) receiving significantly lower benefits amounts; and

WHEREAS, salary inequities in life therefore can follow a pastor and family even in death; and

WHEREAS, the former Lutheran Church in America based its lump sum death benefit solely on age, with no salary differential and was, therefore, both more equitable in this regard and more in keeping with ELCA’s “Concept of Sharing” as practiced in the computation of medical benefits premium; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the New Jersey Synod memorializes the ELCA to urge the Board of Pensions to remove the salary level factor in computing the lump sum death benefit, thereby equalizing the benefit.

BACKGROUND

The ELCA Survivor Benefits Plan provides two main benefits to the survivors of plan members (both lay and clergy) who die prior to retirement. The first is the lump sum survivor benefit—a multiple of 1 to 24 times monthly salary (depending on age), with a minimum of \$4,000 and a maximum of \$50,000. The second is the augmented pension for surviving spouse—a monthly lifetime benefit payable if the surviving spouse benefit based on the member’s pension accumulation at the time of death is less than a stated percent of salary. This benefit is reduced whenever the surviving spouse is eligible for Social Security.

Board of Pensions staff recently completed a thorough review of the ELCA Survivor Benefits Plan and recommended a number of changes. These recommendations were approved by the Board of Trustees of the Board of Pensions at its May 1997 meeting, and were forwarded to the ELCA Church Council for action in August 1997. These changes will become effective January 1, 1998.

As part of the plan review, staff conducted two surveys: a survey of the survivor benefits provided by other major church plans and a survey of plan members. Analysis of the church plan survey showed that the ELCA lump sum survivor benefits are well below average, but that total ELCA survivor benefits (lump sum, plus survivor income, plus pension) are well above average. This led the Board of Pensions to recommend increasing significantly the lump sum survivor benefit, while modestly decreasing the survivor income benefit.

The survey of plan members completed in 1996 revealed concern about the level of lump sum benefits, particularly the \$4,000 minimum benefit. There was considerable support, however, for continuing to base the lump sum survivor benefit on both age and salary. More specifically, 67 percent of respondents favored continuing to base the benefit on salary, while only 33 percent favored providing a uniform benefit for all members or basing the benefit on age alone. Even among those earning less than \$30,000, respondents favored retaining salary as a determinant of the lump sum by a margin of 63 percent to 37 percent.

Based on these findings, staff recommended retaining a schedule of lump sum survivor benefits based on both age and salary, but increasing the minimum benefit from \$4,000 to \$6,000 and increasing the multiples of salary at most ages. Staff recommended retaining the \$50,000 maximum lump sum survivor benefit.

While these recommended changes do not produce equal lump sum survivor benefits for all plan members, the increase in multiples with no corresponding increase in the maximum benefit does tend to favor lower salaried members. The following table illustrates the impact of the proposed changes in lump sum survivor benefits at selected ages:

ELCA Lump Sum Survivor Benefits					
Age at Death	LSSB as a Multiple of Annual Defined Compensation		Percent of increase in LSSB at selected salary levels		
	Current	Proposed	\$18,000	\$24,000	\$30,000
30	2.00	2.00	0%	0%	0%
35	1.75	2.00	14%	14%	0%
40	1.58	2.00	26%	26%	5%
45	1.33	2.00	50%	50%	25%
50	1.17	1.75	50%	50%	43%
55	0.92	1.50	64%	64%	64%
60	0.75	1.25	67%	67%	67%

65 0.50 1.00 100% 100% 100%

Age at Death	Multiple of Annual Salary	Current Plan		
		LSSB Amount at Selected Salary Levels		
		\$18,000	\$24,000	\$30,000
30	2.00	\$36,000	\$48,000	\$50,000
35	1.75	\$31,500	\$42,000	\$50,000
40	1.58	\$28,500	\$38,000	\$47,500
45	1.33	\$24,000	\$32,000	\$40,000
50	1.17	\$21,000	\$28,000	\$35,000
55	0.92	\$16,500	\$22,000	\$27,500
60	0.75	\$13,500	\$18,000	\$22,500
65	0.50	\$9,000	\$12,000	\$15,000

Age at Death	Multiple of Annual Salary	Proposed Plan		
		LSSB Amount at Selected Salary Levels		
		\$18,000	\$24,000	\$30,000
30	2.00	\$36,000	\$48,000	\$50,000
35	2.00	\$36,000	\$48,000	\$50,000
40	2.00	\$36,000	\$48,000	\$50,000
45	2.00	\$36,000	\$48,000	\$50,000
50	1.75	\$31,500	\$42,000	\$50,000
55	1.50	\$27,000	\$36,000	\$45,000
60	1.25	\$22,500	\$30,000	\$37,500
65	1.00	\$18,000	\$24,000	\$30,000

Age at Death	Current Increase		
	LSSB Amount at Selected Salary Levels		
	\$18,000	\$24,000	\$30,000
30	\$-0-	\$-0-	\$-0-
35	\$4,500	\$6,000	\$-0-
40	\$7,500	\$10,000	\$2,500
45	\$12,000	\$16,000	\$10,000
50	\$10,500	\$14,000	\$15,000
55	\$10,500	\$14,000	\$17,500
60	\$9,000	\$12,000	\$15,000
65	\$9,000	\$12,000	\$15,000

Ms. Gustavson introduced the following recommendation of the Memorials Committee. She said, “The Board of Pensions just completed a major review of this particular program [the ELCA Lump-Sum Survivor Benefits] and recommended the changes that are illustrated in the tables on pages 50 and 51 of the *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*. Those changes do not exactly reflect what the New Jersey Synod memorial requests, but they do result in an increase in death benefits at many different salary levels.” She also noted that the Church Council at its August 1997 meeting had adopted the recommendation of the Board of Pensions.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To acknowledge the action taken by the ELCA Church Council at its August 1997 meeting on ELCA Lump-Sum Survivor Benefits to be the response of the 1997 Churchwide Assembly to the memorial of the New Jersey Synod on this topic.

Ms. Gloria J. Ware [Greater Milwaukee Synod] moved:

MOVED; *Two-Thirds Vote Required*

SECONDED; *Hand Vote*

CARRIED: **To limit speeches to two minutes for the remainder of this assembly.**

The following recommendation of the Memorials Committee was adopted without further discussion.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION *Hand Vote*

CA97.6.36 To acknowledge the action taken by the ELCA Church Council at its August 1997 meeting on ELCA Lump-Sum Survivor Benefits to be the response of the 1997 Churchwide Assembly to the memorial of the New Jersey Synod on this topic.

Category 14: Pension Equalization

Reference: *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section VI, pages 51-53; Section V, page 45.

A. Southwestern Washington Synod (1C) [1997 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and its professional leadership is called to be a model for justice and servanthood; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA Board of Pensions currently bases its Retirement Plan for professional leaders on percentage of salary accrued during their years of service; and

WHEREAS, those professional leaders who serve in small parishes or in other settings where financial resources are limited are penalized in their retirement because of this policy; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA Board of Pensions does use a principle of equalization for payment of Health Benefit premiums for professional leaders; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Southwestern Washington Synod does hereby memorialize the Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to direct the Board of Pensions to examine its policies and adopt alternative methods to bring into equalization pensions of professional leaders based on years of service.

B. Oregon Synod (1E) [1997 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and its professional leadership is called to be a model for justice and servanthood; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA Board of Pensions currently bases its Retirement Plan on percentage of salary and those clergy and professional leaders who serve small parishes with limited finances are penalized in their retirement because of this policy; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA Board of Pensions currently does use a principle of equalization for payment of health benefit premiums for the clergy and lay professional leaders; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Oregon Synod does hereby memorialize the Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to direct the Board of Pensions to examine its policies and adopt alternative methods to bring into equalization pensions of professional leaders based on years of service.

C. Northern Great Lakes Synod (5G) [1997 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and its professional leadership is called to be a model for justice and servanthood; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA Board of Pensions currently bases its Retirement Plan on percentage of salary and those clergy and professional leaders who serve small parishes with limited finances are penalized in their retirement because of this policy; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA Board of Pensions currently does use a principle of equalization for payment of Health Benefit Premiums for the clergy and lay professional leaders; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Northern Great Lakes Synod does hereby memorialize the Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to direct the Board of Pensions to examine

its policies and adopt alternative methods to bring into equalization pensions of professional leaders based on years of service.

BACKGROUND

The synodical memorials ask the ELCA to consider changing the goal of the ELCA Pension Plan from income replacement to providing equal dollar pensions that vary only with service. These memorials arise out of a concern for pastors whose history of low compensation continues into retirement with relatively low pensions.

The current ELCA Regular Pension Plan is an individual account plan to which sponsoring employers contribute a specified percentage of the salary of each sponsored member each year. The stated objective of the plan is to provide income replacement so that, in combination with Social Security, a plan member receiving an average salary, who retires at the Social Security normal retirement age with at least 35 years of plan participation, will be able to maintain his or her pre-retirement standard of living. While ELCA pension contributions are a uniform percentage of salary, resulting benefits (as a percentage of final salary) tend to favor plan members with slower year-to-year salary growth. For example, if two plan members have the same starting salaries but different ending salaries, the pension for the lower salaried member, although lower in dollar terms, would be a higher percentage of final salary than the pension for the higher salaried member. Social Security also replaces a larger percentage of income for persons at lower salary levels than it does for persons at higher salary levels. Therefore, the combination of the ELCA pension and Social Security produces considerably higher percentage income replacement at lower salary levels than at higher salary levels.

Past churchwide assemblies have addressed issues related to equal compensation or equalized compensation; a number of synod memorials were referred to the Division for Ministry at past assemblies. As a result of such action in 1991, a substantial research project was conducted on issues of compensation related to various factors in congregational practice. The results of this project were reported to the 1993 Churchwide Assembly in *Reports and Records, Volume 1, Part 2, pp. 289; 575ff.* This report indicated that clergy compensation is related to the vitality of congregational life, to basic geographical and sociological factors, and to the obvious factor of the size of the congregations. These issues are germane to the current memorials coming to the 1997 Churchwide Assembly because, according to present practice in the ELCA, pension benefits are directly connected to compensation levels. Thus, in order to effect an equalizing of pension benefits, many of the same factors that were evaluated earlier related to equalizing compensation benefits would need to be considered.

In research conducted for the 1993 assembly report, the Division for Ministry tested whether it would be possible, through the redistribution of compensation, to arrive at an equalized compensation level that would be realistic across the church.

Upon analysis of the figures, it became clear that the amount of money being paid through compensation to the higher-compensated pastors, should it be redistributed to those in the lower-compensated group, would not be sufficient to move the pastors in the lower category to an acceptable level. In other words, there is a disproportionately larger number of persons who are “under-compensated” than there are those who are “overcompensated.” These same rough conclusions would likely apply to the proposal to equalize pension benefits. There is not enough money in the present compensation pool to equalize salaries at an acceptable common level, even if the monumental issue of gaining acceptance of such a plan were somehow solved.

Having received this report, the 1993 Churchwide Assembly voted:

To establish in consultation with the ELCA Board of Pensions a special fund to provide both for additional pension contributions for pastors in situations of low compensation, and for pensioners who are receiving at or near the minimum pension. This will be a churchwide program to encourage support throughout the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America . . . [CA83.8.100].

The assembly also encouraged ongoing work by churchwide units and the Conference of Bishops to address the underlying and interconnected issues of congregational mission and ministry, particularly as they relate to compensation of rostered persons.

Since the Churchwide Assembly took action in 1993 to create the Special Needs Retirement Fund, it has grown to \$400,000; benefits totaling over \$85,000 have been distributed to 50 retirees and surviving spouses during 1997.

RATIONALE OF THE MEMORIALS COMMITTEE

Having reviewed the past history of study and action related to this issue, the Memorials Committee does not recommend the creation of an equalized pension plan for the ELCA for the following reasons: (1) there is not sufficient funding in the existing plan to equalize pension benefits at an adequate level for all; (2) the memorials raise questions related to how such a plan would be implemented (e.g., for rostered persons only? for professional church workers? for all church workers?); and (3) the Special Needs Retirement Fund is beginning to provide an increasingly useful resource to assist those who have seriously deficient retirement income.

At the same time, the committee recognizes the seriousness of the problem of low pensions for church workers. The committee recommends an intensification of the effort to raise funds for the Special Needs Retirement Fund and continuation and intensification of synod efforts to achieve minimum standards of compensation for rostered persons.

Ms. Gustavson introduced the following recommendation of the Memorials Committee:

MOVED;

SECONDED: To acknowledge the serious concern expressed in the memorials of the Southwestern Washington Synod, the Oregon Synod, and the Northern Great Lakes Synod about inadequate pensions for certain rostered persons;

To call upon congregations, synods, the churchwide organization, and related agencies and institutions to address this issue by providing adequate compensation and retirement benefits to church workers, achieving at least the minimum standards established by synods;

To call upon the Church Council, the Conference of Bishops, the Department for Synodical Relations, and the Board of Pensions to continue and intensify efforts to build up the Special Needs Retirement Fund; and

To call upon all members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America—including the voting members of the 1997 Churchwide Assembly—to learn about and give generously to the Special Needs Retirement Fund.

Mr. Owen E. Peterson [Northern Great Lakes Synod] observed that the United Methodist Church has set a precedent in providing equalized pensions for its employees. He asked, “Will this cost our congregations more money? Not necessarily. This is an issue that the Board of Pensions can be directed to deal with as a mandate from the Churchwide Assembly. It is in many ways more a question of distribution of resources rather than a shortage of funds. How those funds are distributed is more the fundamental question. . . . At some of the smaller rural congregations or outposts or campus ministries, people do choose to go there and work in this situation. I would assume that these ministries are just as important as in the big cities and therefore the equalized pension plan would be more fair.”

Bishop David C. Wold [Southwestern Washington Synod] stated that, while he supported the recommendation of the Memorials Committee, he was in favor of working toward a more equitable plan. In the long run, he said, a voluntary fund will not prove adequate. He called upon this church to be generous in supporting the Special Needs Retirement Fund, and urged that this church “rethink how we are going to strategize toward the future to appropriately compensate those who have served this church so well.”

Mr. Earl L. Mummert [Lower Susquehanna Synod], a trustee of the Board of Pensions, observed, “This is one of my greatest concerns in my capacity as a trustee of that board—the Special Needs [Retirement] Fund. Our hands are tied at the Board of Pensions level in terms of addressing this need, and so we have to come before the church to request these funds. It is important that all the voting members here be aware of this situation and carry this message back to your congregations. The needs that we are addressing here are for those retired persons who are members of the Board of Pensions program who have income—from all sources—of less than \$1000 a month or, for couples, less than \$1250 a month, and assets less than \$15,000. These people are living in poverty and as a church body, we have a moral obligation to do better. The only way that we can do that is through your contributions to the Special Needs [Retirement] Fund.”

Ms. Bethany Dohnal [Southern Ohio Synod] called the question:

MOVED;

Two-Thirds Vote Required

SECONDED;

Hand Vote

CARRIED: To move the previous question.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

Hand Vote

CA97.6.37 To acknowledge the serious concern expressed in the memorials of the Southwestern Washington Synod, the Oregon Synod, and the Northern Great Lakes Synod about inadequate pensions for certain rostered persons;

To call upon congregations, synods, the churchwide organization, and related agencies and institutions to address this issue by providing adequate compensation and retirement benefits to church workers, achieving at least the minimum standards established by synods;

To call upon the Church Council, the Conference of Bishops, the Department for Synodical Relations, and the Board of Pensions to continue and intensify efforts to build up the Special Needs Retirement Fund; and

To call upon all members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America—including the voting members of the

1997 Churchwide Assembly—to learn about and give generously to the Special Needs Retirement Fund.

Category 15: Churchwide Staff for Rural Ministries

Reference: 1997 Pre-Assembly Report, Section VI, pages 53-56.

A. Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod (1D) [1997 Memorial]

WHEREAS, rural and small town churches have been and continue to be an integral and vital part of this church; and

WHEREAS, 54 percent of the congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America at this time identify themselves as rural and small town churches; and

WHEREAS, a majority of these congregations are in crisis because of declining population and changing economics and are facing struggles beyond their local resources; and

WHEREAS, the desk designated to serve these congregations, known as “Director for Rural Ministries and Community Involvement”—Dr. Merle Boos—under the Division for Outreach, was replaced by a Small Town and Rural Team, composed of regional staff members with no *continual* presence in Chicago; and

WHEREAS, a detached team cannot adequately serve the needs and provide the resources, direction, and advocacy for the many small town and rural churches; and

WHEREAS, not only Division for Outreach, but nearly every unit of the churchwide organization is involved with congregations in rural and small town settings; and

WHEREAS, the 1989 Churchwide Assembly unanimously voted to affirm, support and develop resources for small congregations rural and urban, with the 1993 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA overwhelmingly voting 918 “yes,” 5 “no” with 4 abstentions that this church affirm its commitment to ministries in the rural setting; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod memorialize the 1997 Churchwide Assembly to establish a rural and small town desk at the ELCA churchwide offices. This staff person would be directly responsible to the presiding bishop. The person staffing this desk would be responsible for providing direction and directing resources to congregations and synods in small town and rural settings, establishing and coordinating an inter-unit team at church headquarters to address concerns specific to rural and small towns across the church, as well as enhancing working relationships with other denominations.

B. Western North Dakota Synod (3A) [1997 Memorial]

WHEREAS, rural and small town churches have been and continue to be an integral and vital part of this church; and

WHEREAS, 54 percent of the congregations of this church at this time identify themselves as rural and small town churches; and

WHEREAS, a majority of these congregations are in crisis because of declining population and changing base economics and are facing struggles beyond their local resources; and

WHEREAS, the desk designated to serve these congregations known as Director for Rural Ministries and Community Involvement, Dr. Merle Boos, under the Division for Outreach was vacated and replaced by a StaR (Small Town and Rural Ministry) team, composed of regional staff members with no continued presence in Chicago; and

WHEREAS, a detached team cannot adequately serve the needs and provide the resources, direction, and advocacy for the many small town and rural churches; and

WHEREAS, not only Division of Outreach but nearly every unit of the churchwide organization is involved with congregations in rural and small town settings; and

WHEREAS, the 1989 Churchwide Assembly unanimously voted to affirm, support and develop resources for small congregations, rural and urban. The 1993 ELCA Churchwide Assembly overwhelmingly voted 918 yes, 5 no, 4 abstentions that this church affirm its commitment to ministries in the rural setting; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that this synod assembly memorialize the Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to request the ELCA Church Council to establish a rural and small town desk at the ELCA churchwide offices; and be it further

RESOLVED, the person staffing this desk be experienced in rural and small town ministry and be responsible for providing direction and directing resources to congregations and synods in small town and rural settings, establishing and coordinating an inter-unit team at church headquarters to address concerns that are specifically rural and small towns across the church, and establishing and maintaining working relationships with rural desks in other denominations.

BACKGROUND

Following consultation with a broad spectrum of persons doing ministry in small town and rural settings, the Division for Outreach developed a resolution on rural ministry, which was affirmed first by the ELCA Church Council and then by the 1993 Churchwide Assembly. This resolution focused on the areas of leadership, congregational development, community issues, and care of creation; it made the following commitments on behalf of the ELCA—“that

1. this church affirm its commitment to ministries in the rural setting;
2. this church assist congregations to move beyond congregational independence and biases toward better communication and cooperation among ministries in related communities, including ecumenical possibilities; and assist in developing creative responses to changing situations;
3. the seminaries of this church use instruction by extension and other instructional methods as ways for developing pastors and lay leaders in

rural ministry, and that synods coordinate communication of Lutheran and ecumenical opportunities for continuing education events related to rural ministry, and to inform rostered persons serving in rural ministries of those opportunities;

4. synods, in cooperation with churchwide units, develop and train teams of indigenous lay leaders to serve and provide leadership for worship, evangelism, community service, and Christian care;
5. resource materials in evangelism for and with rural congregations be developed;
6. this church provide resources to assist multi-point congregations in the development of “articles of agreement” for well-defined operations and relationships;
7. the publications of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, synods, and other entities of this church recognize and tell the story of multi-point parishes;
8. this church give encouragement to rural congregations to become more inclusive and to understand what Gospel inclusivity and cultural diversity mean in the rural setting;
9. this church has an opportunity to foster a sense of community in the rural setting and should assist congregations in developing skills in the areas of community and economic development;
10. this church assist rural congregations to become active participants in working with others of good will on environmental issues and to be advocates for the care of creation;
11. this church assist in the formation of partnerships of prayer, presence, understanding, and resource sharing between rural and urban congregations in particular; and
12. this church advocate for people suffering the effects of economic and social conditions that exist throughout the countryside [CA93.3.5].”

Churchwide units—including the Division for Outreach, the Division for Congregational Ministries, and the Division for Church in Society—have engaged in a variety of activities as they sought to implement this resolution. As part of its response, the Division for Outreach obtained a fraternal grant to hold a Consultation on Small Town and Rural Ministry in February 1995. The recommendations of this consultation, along with relevant parts of the assembly’s action, were assigned to the Small Town and Rural Ministry Team of the Division for Outreach for implementation.

An assessment of needs was subsequently done by the Small Town and Rural Ministry Team. This led to the recruitment and training of a network of rural ministry practitioners who would be available to assist synods and congregations

in small town and rural settings. The Division for Outreach has in place a coordinator for the Small Town and Rural Ministry Network and continues to work with the synods and ministries in small town and rural settings through its Mission Directors.

The Small Town and Rural Team also has attempted to coordinate the work of the various churchwide units as it pertains to small town and rural ministry. Additional work needs to be done in this area, and the team has recommended that a task group be appointed to explore ways to improve churchwide coordination of rural ministry across unit lines. This task group would be comprised of representatives from the rural context (a synod bishop, rural pastors, and lay members) and churchwide staff. Such a task group would help to address one of the concerns of the memorial from the Western North Dakota Synod: that rural people be involved in designing a solution that will provide accessibility to persons in small town and rural synods and congregations.

RATIONALE OF THE MEMORIALS COMMITTEE

The Memorials Committee recommends that the Churchwide Assembly not approve the request that an additional staff person in rural ministries be mandated in this fashion, but that additional time be provided to accomplish the goals set by the 1995 Churchwide Assembly. The thinking of the committee was also shaped by its affirmation of the following principle, which was articulated by the Memorials Committee of the 1995 Churchwide Assembly:

“The ELCA budget development process is a series of inter-related decisions, with each appropriate decision affecting resources available to meet other needs. Synod resolutions and memorials are an important part of the information which guides this process. Memorials should not be used by the ELCA Churchwide Assembly to make budget decisions independent of the budget process and which lead to budget appropriations that fail to take into account strategic planning, available resources and other budget needs.” [When such requests for additional staff/budget resources were reviewed by the committee, the 1995 Memorials Committee recommended *referral* of these memorials to the appropriate division. That committee suggested to the assembly that such an action would allow the concerns raised in such memorials to be addressed thoroughly and in a coordinated fashion through the ELCA’s budget-development process.]

Ms. Gustavson introduced the following recommendation of the Memorials Committee:

MOVED;

SECONDED: To reaffirm the commitment to ministry in small town and rural settings that was set forth by the 1993 Churchwide Assembly;

To express deep appreciation for the ongoing and faithful work of synods, congregations, and their members who do ministry in small town and rural settings;

To express appreciation for the counsel, support, consultants, and resources that support small town and rural ministries, which have been provided by synods, synodical outreach committees, and churchwide units;

To refer the request for a rural ministries “desk” (found in the memorials of the Western North Dakota Synod and Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod) to the Division for Outreach, as it works for increased churchwide coordination of the activities that support small town and rural ministry;

To encourage the Division for Outreach, as part of its ongoing work, to consult with persons who minister in small towns and rural settings and with staff members of other churchwide units, and to develop with them a plan for improving the coordination and effectiveness of those ministries;

To request that a report and possible recommendations for action be transmitted to the Church Council no later than its November 1998 meeting; and

To request that the secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America convey this report and the Church Council’s response to the Western North Dakota Synod and Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod.

The Rev. David E. Moreland [Southern Ohio Synod] moved:

MOVED;

SECONDED: To amend the recommendation of the Memorials Committee by deleting paragraph six and substituting the following:

To develop a plan for establishing a rural and small town ministries “desk” at the ELCA churchwide offices. This plan

shall be presented to the Church Council for action no later than at its spring 1998 meeting.

Pastor Moreland said, “The memorials from the two synods expressed the concern of having a more specific focal point and voice in the churchwide offices. Without the rural desk, there is no presence in our Chicago office to represent the concerns of small towns and rural congregations.” He spoke of his experience in serving a small two-congregation parish and said, “I know first-hand of the blessings that intimate community, that is, the church, in that place provides. I know also of the challenges and limitations of few numbers, limited resources, and geographic separation. As there are a great number of our congregations in this setting and the passage of time creates greater challenges, I urge the support of this amendment and would expect the board of the Division for Outreach to examine budget [requirements] and make needed adjustments to fund this position.”

Bishop Steven L. Ullestad [Northeastern Iowa Synod] spoke against the amendment, by virtue of the service provided to his synod by the team approach of the Division for Outreach. “It has been a wonderful partnership,” he said, “and I affirm the strategy that the Division for Outreach has developed.”

Ms. Dawna M. Svaren [Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod] spoke in support the amendment, citing the statistic that “of the 110 congregations in the [Eastern Washington-Idaho] synod, the majority of them are rural congregations. There are many times when these congregations feel that they are out in the middle of nowhere with no support.” She felt that such a rural desk at the churchwide offices would provide visible support to rural congregations and the pastors who serve such congregations.

The Rev. Roger H. Johnson [Eastern North Dakota Synod] commented, “I am part of a growing minority. In the 1996 churchwide analysis, small congregations consisted of 54 percent of the ELCA. That also relates to about 21 percent of the total baptized membership of the ELCA. We will be getting down to about the 10 percent mark pretty soon. . . . [The church] is the message of hope for the people [whose lives] are changing dramatically in the rural areas. The church needs to continue to address and to minister to those people. The ELCA does have policies on rural ministries but it is very difficult to have a coordinated effort when there is no one person in the churchwide offices that we can call and say, ‘This is what we need.’ We need an advocate in Chicago.”

Ms. Mary Lou Blomquist [Northern Great Lakes Synod] spoke against the motion, because she feared that this church was being divided increasingly into factions. She said, “We just passed a proposal for an urban ministry project so there must have been a feeling that the focus of the ELCA was too rural or that proposal would not have been necessary. So next do we have a suburban ministries desk, and a middle-city ministries desk? I feel like we are becoming separated rather than one.”

Bishop Richard N. Jessen [Nebraska Synod] favored the amendment and said, “I am a bishop who has met with the Great Plains Rural Ministry Coalition for the last six or seven years. Every year this issue has come up. It is one in which I have tried to explain that the church is responding with the STAR–Small Town and Rural Ministry Team—and the work of that team is much appreciated; but all of those people have other responsibilities as well. Those who are in rural ministry are looking for someone who can be their advocate, someone who can be their representative, at the churchwide offices.”

Mr. Lee Grippen [La Crosse Area Synod] called the question:

MOVED; *Two-Thirds Vote Required*
SECONDED; *Hand Vote*
CARRIED: To move the previous question.

MOVED;
SECONDED; *Hand Vote*
CARRIED: To amend the recommendation of the Memorials Committee by deleting paragraph six and substituting the following:

To develop a plan for establishing a rural and small town ministries “desk” at the ELCA churchwide offices. This plan shall be presented to the Church Council for action no later than at its spring 1998 meeting.

With no additional persons requesting to speak, Bishop Anderson called for the vote on the recommendation of the Memorials Committee as amended.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION *Hand Vote*

CA97.6.38 To reaffirm the commitment to ministry in small-town and rural settings that was set forth by the 1993 Churchwide Assembly;

To express deep appreciation for the ongoing and faithful work of synods, congregations, and their members who do ministry in small town and rural settings;

To express appreciation for the counsel, support, consultants, and resources that support small town and rural ministries, which have been provided by synods, synodical outreach committees, and churchwide units;

To refer the request for a rural ministries “desk” (found in the memorials of the Western North Dakota Synod and Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod) to the Division for Outreach, as it works for increased churchwide coordination of the activities that support small-town and rural ministry;

To encourage the Division for Outreach, as part of its ongoing work, to consult with persons who minister in small towns and rural settings and with staff members of other churchwide units, and to develop with them a plan for improving the coordination and effectiveness of those ministries;

To develop a plan for establishing a rural and small town ministries “desk” at the ELCA churchwide offices. This plan shall be presented to the Church Council for action no later than at its spring 1998 meeting.

To request that the Secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America convey this report and the Church Council’s response to the Western North Dakota Synod and Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod.

Category 7: Immigration

Reference: 1997 Pre-Assembly Report, Section VI, pages 36-38.

A. Metropolitan Chicago Synod (5A) [1997 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the biblical witness enjoins the people of God, themselves aliens and exiles (Exodus 23:9; Leviticus 19:34; 1 Peter 2:11), repeatedly to provide generous hospitality to the stranger and alien, vulnerable members of society; and

WHEREAS, most of the inhabitants of this nation are descended from immigrants, and the ELCA, through its predecessors, came to this nation as an immigrant church; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA, in its social statement, *For Peace in God's World* (1995), calls upon its members to "support a generous policy of welcome for refugees and immigrants" and pledges "to continue our church's historic leadership in caring for refugees and immigrants," and in its social statement, *Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity, and Culture* (1993), states, "We of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America will advocate for just immigration policies, including fairness in visa regulations and in admitting and protecting refugees. We will work for policies that cause neither undue repercussions with immigrant communities nor bias against them"; and

WHEREAS, among some Americans there is a resurgence of xenophobia, evidenced by tightened barriers placed on those who seek asylum our country, by legislation that makes legal immigrants ineligible for social services, and by legislative proposals to deny provisions of basic human rights such as education and health care for children of undocumented persons, actions that have created great uncertainty for many immigrants and that threaten their future well-being; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the congregations of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod be strongly encouraged to engage in the study of 1) biblical teaching on hospitality to strangers; and 2) the relation of that teaching to the current realities of immigration in our society, utilizing materials such as those prepared by Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, particularly *A Statement of Concern and Commitment: Who Is My Neighbor* or by other Christian bodies; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Chicago Synod, its congregations, and pastors continue to support, through various ministries, immigrants, refugees, and "undocumented persons," and to advocate for just laws for immigrants; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Chicago Synod memorialize the 1997 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to underscore the urgency of the issues surrounding immigration by directing the appropriate churchwide units to make available usable material for congregations to assist people in the immigration process and with changes in the law.

B. New Jersey Synod (7A) [1996 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the biblical witness reminds us that God's people have been (Exodus 23:9, Leviticus 19:34), and are always (1 Peter 2:11), aliens and exiles; and

WHEREAS, the great majority of the inhabitants of this nation are descended from immigrants; and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, through its predecessors, came to North America as an immigrant Church; and

WHEREAS, the biblical witness enjoins us repeatedly to provide generous hospitality toward the stranger and alien, as being among the most vulnerable members of society (with the poor, the widows, and the orphans); and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, in its social statement, *For Peace in God's World* (adopted by the Churchwide Assembly, August 20, 1995) calls upon its members to "support a generous policy of welcome for refugees and immigrants" and

pledges "to continue our Church's historic leadership in caring for refugees and immigrants"; and in its social statement, *Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity, and Culture* (adopted by the Churchwide Assembly, August 31, 1993) states that "The Church (meaning the ELCA) that pursues justice will face and address difficult social, political, and economic problems such as...how race and ethnicity figure in political decisions on immigration..." and, also, "We of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America will advocate for just immigration policies, including fairness in visa regulations and in admitting and protecting refugees. We will work for policies that cause neither undue repercussions within immigrant communities nor bias against them"; and

WHEREAS, our state of New Jersey has been, and remains, one of the leading destinations of immigrant people seeking refuge, haven, and opportunity for a better life; and is located closest to the symbol of liberty proclaiming an invitation to, "your tired...your poor, your huddled masses, yearning to breathe free...the homeless, the tempest tossed" to enter by our "golden door"; and

WHEREAS, among some Americans there is a resurgence of xenophobia, evidenced by tightened barriers placed on those who seek asylum in our country, by legislative proposals to remove basic human rights such as education and health care from the children of undocumented persons, and by legislative proposals to make legal immigrants ineligible for social services; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the congregations of the New Jersey Synod be strongly encouraged to engage in the study of: (1) biblical teaching on hospitality to strangers; and (2) the relation of that teaching to the current realities of immigration in our society, utilizing materials such as those prepared by Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, the Church World Service and Witness Unit of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA, and the US (Roman Catholic) Bishops' Committee on Migration; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the New Jersey Synod memorialize the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Churchwide Assembly in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, August 1997, to give attention to the issues of immigration in the form of a social statement by 1999, being guided in the interim and informed in the preparation by *A Statement of Concern and Commitment: Who Is My Neighbor?* of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the New Jersey Synod, its congregations and pastors, continue to support, through various ministries, immigrants, refugees, and "undocumented persons"; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the New Jersey Synod in Assembly, express to the President of the United States of America, to the New Jersey congressional delegation, Senators and Representatives, to the Governor of New Jersey and members of the New Jersey Legislature, its opposition:

1. to the denial of vital services, including health and education, to immigrant people; and
2. to unreasonable obstacles, and unattainable standards of proof of persecution, for those seeking asylum within the United States of America.

C. Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod (8G) [1997 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the biblical witness enjoins the people of God, themselves aliens and exiles (Exodus 23:9, Leviticus 19:34), repeatedly to provide generous hospitality to the stranger and alien, vulnerable members of society; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA is in a position, because of its heritage, to recognize both the basic human needs of the aliens among us, and the value of supportive sponsorship of these brothers and sisters; and

WHEREAS, most of the inhabitants of this nation are descended from immigrants, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, through its predecessors, came to this nation as an immigrant church; and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, in its social statement, *For Peace in God's World* (1995), calls upon its members to "support a generous policy of welcome for refugees and immigrants" and pledges "to continue our church's historic leadership in caring for refugees and immigrants"; and

WHEREAS, the social statement, *Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity, and Culture* (1993), states, "We of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America will advocate for just immigration policies, including fairness in visa regulations and in admitting and protecting refugees. We will work for policies that cause neither undue repercussions within immigrant communities nor bias against them"; and

WHEREAS, among some Americans there is a resurgence of xenophobia, evidenced by tightened barriers placed on those who seek asylum in our country, by legislation that makes legal immigrants ineligible for social services, and by legislative proposals to deny provisions of basic vital services such as education and health care for children of undocumented persons, actions that have created great uncertainty for many immigrants and that threaten their future well-being; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the congregations of the Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod be strongly encouraged to engage in the study of: 1) biblical teaching on hospitality to strangers; and 2) the relation of that teaching to the current realities of immigration in our society, using relevant social statements, materials prepared by Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, particularly *A Statement of Concern and Commitment: Who is My Neighbor*, or materials from other Christian bodies; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod, its congregations, and its pastors continue to support immigrants, refugees, and "undocumented persons" through various ministries, and advocate for just laws for immigrants; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod memorialize the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Churchwide Assembly in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, August 1997, to underscore the urgency of the issues surrounding immigration by directing the appropriate churchwide units to make available usable materials for congregations to assist people in the immigration process and with changes in the law and to continue to advocate for just laws for immigrants; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod memorialize the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Churchwide Assembly in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, August 1997, to direct the Presiding Bishop of the ELCA to encourage the Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs and state public policy advocacy ministries to voice this church's support: 1) to develop positive strategies to engage and assist sponsors of immigrants to carry out their pledged responsibilities; and 2) to encourage and support federal, state and local government's compassionate public policy that underscores our country's heritage as a nation primarily of immigrants; and assures the provision of public benefits that address the basic human needs of food, shelter, health care and education; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod memorialize the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Churchwide Assembly in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, August 1997 to direct the Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, as well as the Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs and state public policy advocacy ministries, to voice this church's opposition: 1) to denial of vital services, including health and education, to immigrant people; and 2) to unreasonable obstacles, and unattainable standards of proof of persecution, for those seeking asylum within the United States of America.

BACKGROUND

There are approximately 16 million recognized refugees in the world today, and an additional 23 million internally displaced persons. Several proposals have been made recently which would undermine the fundamental U.S. commitment to providing asylum, particularly to those needing protection in our region of the world. The U.S. asylum system was, at one time, overwhelmed by an increasing number of applicants; however, the Immigration and Naturalization Service took steps to remedy this problem by introducing a set of reforms into the asylum system. As a result of these and other changes, applications for asylum dropped by 57 percent in the last year. New restrictions were placed on the asylum process in the 104th Congress.

Additionally, 1996 welfare reform legislation targeted undocumented and legal immigrants, reducing access to government services for legal, taxpaying immigrants. Legal immigrants who have lived in the U.S. for years will not have equal access to the programs their taxes fund.

The concern for immigrants and refugees is part of a long legacy of this church and its predecessor church bodies. The basic policy positions related to immigration have been set forth in two ELCA social statements: *Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity, and Culture* (1993) and *For Peace in God's World* (1995).

The Division for Church in Society, in collaboration with the Division for Congregational Ministries, the Department for Communication, and the Division for Outreach, have produced four printed resources, three in Spanish and one in

English. The following resources are available from the churchwide offices to help people in the immigration process and with changes in the law:

“Immigrants y la Nueva Ley de Bienestar Público (Welfare)”

“Cómo Obtener la Ciudadanía de los Estados Unidos”

“Pedido de Visas de Residencia y Cambio de Estado Legal Migratorio para Familiares”

“Immigrants and the New Welfare Law.”

The presiding bishop is in the process of sending a letter to the church alerting our members of its concern for the issues confronting immigrants and refugees and the availability of resources.

In addition, the Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs, in cooperation with Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, will make special efforts to enable local persons to encourage elected officials not to enact legislation that discriminates or adversely affects Latinos, Asian Americans, and other persons of color who are current immigrant communities. Efforts will be made to reach out to states and localities to find mechanisms to provide relief for communities impacted by large numbers of newcomers.

RATIONALE OF THE MEMORIALS COMMITTEE

In view of the projects to which staff and budget are already committed within the Division for Church in Society, it is difficult to see how it would be possible to develop a social statement on this topic for consideration at the 1999 Churchwide Assembly. Staff of the division are in the process of developing a social statement on economic life, which is scheduled for consideration by the 1999 Churchwide Assembly.

Normally, a minimum of three or four years is needed before a proposed social statement is brought to a churchwide assembly. Given the proposed plan for addressing social concerns through four spheres of activity—a plan that the 1997 Churchwide Assembly will be asked to affirm—the Division for Church in Society suggests that an appropriate response to this memorial would be for the division to develop either a resource for deliberation on attitudes regarding immigrants or a resource to interpret and apply ELCA policy related to immigration.

Ms. Gustavson introduced the following recommendation of the Memorials Committee, subsequently adopted by the Churchwide Assembly without discussion:

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

Hand Vote

CA97.6.39 To reaffirm the commitment of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to service and advocacy on behalf of refugees and immigrants;

To express appreciation to ELCA members, congregations, social service agencies, and Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service for their ongoing service in this area;

To join the Metropolitan Chicago Synod, the New Jersey Synod, and the Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod in encouraging congregations and their members to engage in study of the biblical teaching on hospitality to strangers and the relationship between that teaching and the current realities of immigration in our society;

To decline to initiate a social statement on immigration but to refer to the Division for Church in Society the requests of the three synods concerning the development of materials related to this topic, including a resource for deliberation on attitudes regarding immigrants and a resource to interpret and apply ELCA policy related to immigration;

To direct the Division for Church in Society to bring to the November 1997 meeting of the Church Council a recommended plan of action for addressing the concerns articulated in these memorials; and

To call on the presiding bishop, rostered leaders, and lay members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to contact the President of the United States, appropriate federal agencies, and both Houses of Congress to oppose the denial of vital services, including health and education, to immigrant people and the creation of unreasonable obstacles and unattainable standards of proof of persecution for those seeking asylum within the United States of America.

Category 25: Model Constitution for Congregations

Reference: 1997 Pre-Assembly Report, Section VI, pages 68-70.

A. Northeastern Minnesota Synod (3E) [1997 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the constituting documents of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America allowed for congregations to keep their congregational constitution in force on December 31, 1987; under the following ELCA constitutional provision: “*The governing documents of congregations recognized at the establishment of this church shall continue to govern such congregations. When a congregation wishes to amend a particular provision of its governing documents, the provision to amend shall be consistent with the governing documents of this church.*”; and

WHEREAS, when a congregation amended a particular provision of their grandparented constitution, only that provision so amended would need to be consistent with the ELCA’s governing documents; and

WHEREAS, the 1993 Churchwide Assembly amended the above churchwide constitutional provision to read as follows: “*The governing documents of congregations recognized at the establishment of this church shall continue to govern such congregations. When such a congregation wishes to amend any provision of its governing documents, the governing documents of that congregation shall be so amended to conform to 9.25.b. The synod responsible for the review of such amendments may permit, for good cause, a congregation to retain particular unamended provisions in the congregation’s governing documents that were in force at the establishment of this church.*”; and

WHEREAS, the action of the 1993 Churchwide Assembly has made it impossible for congregations to make any amendment to its grandparented constitution without at the same time making a *de facto* adoption of the mandatory provisions of the ELCA model; and

WHEREAS, the significance of this ELCA constitutional change was not explained to congregations in advance of the 1993 Churchwide Assembly; and

WHEREAS, the provision was passed *en bloc* without any explanation other than what was written in the preassembly information; and

WHEREAS, the only written explanation was as follows “to make clear which provisions prevail at the point of amendment”; and

WHEREAS, the above phrase was misleading because the proposal was not so much a *clarification* as it was a *substantive* change in a congregation’s power to amend, thereby forcing a congregation to choose between (a) never amending its constitution or (b) being forced to adopt the ELCA Model; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the 1997 Northeastern Minnesota Synod Assembly reaffirm the commitment made to congregations that desire to continue with their constitution which was in force prior to the establishment of the ELCA; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the 1997 Northeastern Minnesota Synod Assembly memorialize the 1997 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to begin the process of restoring to congregations, whose constitutions predate the establishment of the ELCA, the power and freedom to amend their constitution insofar as a given

amendment is consistent with the governing documents of the ELCA; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the 1997 Northeastern Minnesota Synod Assembly request the amendment of ELCA Constitution 9.52 to read as follows: “The governing documents of congregations recognized at the establishment of this church shall continue to govern such congregations. When such a congregation wishes to amend any particular provision of its governing documents, the provision so amended shall be consistent with the governing documents of this church. The synod responsible for the review of such amendments may permit, for good cause, a congregation to retain particular unamended provisions in the congregation’s governing documents that were in force at the beginning of this church. (This amendment shall be retroactive to September 1, 1993.);” and be it further

RESOLVED, that the 1997 Northeastern Minnesota Assembly instruct the Northeastern Minnesota Synod Council to forward this resolution to the ELCA Church Council and transmit this resolution to the ELCA Conference of Bishops.

BACKGROUND

The following information was provided by the Secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as points of information that would be helpful in addressing the concerns reflected in this memorial.

1. The 1993 Churchwide Assembly approved the designation of certain provisions in the *Model Constitution for Congregations* as required at the point of amendment for a congregation in conformity with the governing documents of this church and in response to expressed needs throughout this church.
2. The action of the 1993 Churchwide Assembly occurred after a study by the Church Council of the need for required provisions. Such a study was undertaken at the request of the 1991 Churchwide Assembly. That assembly action emerged from numerous requests of congregations and synods in the initial years of the ELCA for clarification of which provisions are required to conform to the governing documents of this church, as stipulated by ELCA churchwide constitutional provisions 9.21., 9.22., and 9.52.
3. The required provisions do not involve sections related to the internal governance and operation of a congregation but rather are those that concern matters of faith, unity, doctrine, and practice that affect the interrelatedness of the three primary expressions of this church, namely, congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization.
4. Congregations may freely adopt bylaws, in addition to the required constitutional provisions. Such bylaws may reflect the congregation’s practice and history so long as those bylaws are not in conflict with any

of the required constitutional provisions, if such provisions have been adopted by the congregation.

5. Each congregation is free to determine its pattern of internal governance and organizational structures.
6. Constitutions of congregations in effect prior to January 1, 1988, were “grandparented” into the ELCA under churchwide constitutional provision 9.52. Three key aspects of churchwide constitutional provision 9.52. are:
 - a. The grandparenting step: “The governing documents of congregations recognized at the establishment of this church [that is, January 1, 1988] shall continue to govern such congregations.”
 - b. A pattern to be followed after September 1, 1993, when a congregation amends previously existing provisions: “When such a congregation wishes to amend any provision of its governing documents, the governing documents of that congregation shall be so amended to conform” to the list of required provisions provided above.
 - c. A possibility for an exemption: “The synod responsible for the review of such amendments may permit, for good cause, a congregation to retain particular unamended provisions in the congregation’s governing documents that were in force at the establishment of this church.”
 - (1) In relation to required provisions for congregations that existed prior to January 1, 1988, the *two options* are:
 - (a) use of the text of the required provision without alteration or amendment of the text in any manner (neither additions nor deletions); or
 - (b) retention of the text of a particular provision, in an unamended manner, as that provision existed in the congregation’s constitution on December 31, 1987.
 - (2) For the sake of consistency and common understanding, use of the required provisions in the text of the *Model Constitution for Congregations* is highly recommended, rather than retention of various previously existing documents.
7. In certain matters where a congregation’s constitution differs from the processes required in this church, the synodical or churchwide provisions prevail under the authority of churchwide constitutional provision 9.22. (“All congregations of this church shall abide by...”). The primary example is the process required for the calling or terminating of the call of a pastor in a congregation. The required process for termination of a

call to a pastor is provided in †S14.13. of the Constitution for Synods. Because pastors are on the roster of ordained ministers of this church, equitable provisions and policies apply to all ordained ministers, regardless of the particular congregational setting of service.

8. The *Model Constitution for Congregations* was formulated by the uniting churches prior to the establishment of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to fit most situations. It has been amended, at points, based on experience in the life of this church. That model provides for the adoption of constitutional provisions (Chapter 17) and bylaws (Chapter 16) to fit local circumstances.
9. At the same time as churchwide constitutional provision 8.52. (subsequently renumbered 9.52.) was adopted in its original version, continuing resolution 8.52.A87. was adopted. That continuing resolution called for a process for review of governing documents of congregations and encouraged congregations to resolve significant conflicts between their governing documents and the *Model Constitution for Congregations*. These steps were to be taken within four years of the establishment of this church. As the end of this four-year period was approaching, the 1991 Churchwide Assembly, in response to a synodical memorial, referred to the Church Council for review and possible action on the issue of which provisions of the *Model Constitution for Congregations* should be mandatory [CA91.7.79]. The council was directed to report to the 1993 Churchwide Assembly on the matter. Written notice of the proposed amendment was given to each synod by memorandum from the secretary of this church, dated December 29, 1992.
10. The flexibility sought by the memorial already exists (see item six above) under churchwide constitutional provision 9.52., which permits “grandparenting” of sections or chapters of a congregation’s previously existing constitution, even while other chapters are amended, in accord with the *Model Constitution for Congregations*.

RATIONALE OF THE MEMORIALS COMMITTEE

The Memorials Committee recognizes the existing differences among congregational constitutions that were in existence at the beginning of the life of this church. The committee agrees that changes in congregational constitutions should move toward consistency with the governing documents of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The committee also recognizes the intent expressed in 1989 that future changes should be made consistent with the *Model Constitution for Congregations*. The committee notes, however, that ELCA 9.52. provides synods flexibility in interpreting this matter, taking into consideration local context.

Ms. Gustavson introduced the following recommendation of the Memorials Committee, subsequently adopted by the Churchwide Assembly without discussion:

ASSEMBLY

ACTION *Hand Vote*

CA97.6.40 To request the Secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to be in conversation with the Northeastern Minnesota Synod about its memorial on the Model Constitution for Congregations prior to the Church Council's November 1997 meeting;

To refer the memorial of the Northeastern Minnesota Synod on the Model Constitution for Congregations as information for the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee of the Church Council at its November 1997 meeting; and

To request that the Secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America share with the Northeastern Minnesota Synod the response of the Church Council's Legal and Constitutional Review Committee.

**En Bloc Resolution for Disposition
of the Report of the Memorials Committee**

ASSEMBLY

ACTION *Hand Vote*

CA97.6.41 To approve en bloc the following responses to 1996 and 1997 synodical memorials printed in the Report of the Memorials Committee (1997 Pre-Assembly Report, Section VI, pages as listed):

Category 1: Decisions on Full Communion

BACKGROUND

Acting on behalf of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the 1997 Churchwide Assembly will decide whether to approve *A Formula of Agreement* [with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Reformed Church in America, and the United Church of Christ] and the *Concordat of Agreement* [with The Episcopal Church]—thereby entering into a relationship of full communion with these church bodies. Voting members received a preliminary mailing conveying *A Formula of Agreement* and the *Concordat of Agreement*; the *Pre-Assembly Report* contains additional information related to these two decisions.

Assembly action in 1997 has been anticipated for several years. The 1993 and 1995 Churchwide Assemblies concurred with the ELCA Church Council's recommendation that a decision on full communion with the Reformed churches be brought to the 1997 Churchwide Assembly, at the same time as the decision on full communion with The Episcopal Church. Anticipating the 1997 decisions, the 1995 Churchwide Assembly also adopted a new bylaw, ELCA 8.71.01., which defines the required margin for the establishment of church-to-church relations:

This church may establish official church-to-church relationships and agreements. Establishment of such official agreements shall require a two-thirds vote of the voting members of the Churchwide Assembly.

The proposed *Rules of Organization and Procedure* for the 1997 Churchwide Assembly provide for separate "up or down votes" on the two full communion proposals. The assembly's agenda provides for hearings and full plenary question-and-answer and general discussion sessions to precede consideration of the proposed full communion resolutions.

During the past biennium, a number of synod assemblies have taken the opportunity to study, debate, and take action in regard to *A Formula of Agreement* and *Concordat of Agreement*. These memorials, together with the resolutions directed by synod assemblies to the Church Council this year, are included in this section; they come as advice to the 1997 Churchwide Assembly as it discusses the ecumenical proposals.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION *En Bloc*

CA97.6.42 To acknowledge the action of the 1997 Churchwide Assembly on

! the Formula of Agreement between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Reformed Church in America, and the United Church of Christ and

! the Concordat of Agreement between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and The Episcopal Church

as the response of this assembly to the memorials on this subject from the synods listed in Categories 1a, 1b, and 1c of the Report of the Memorials Committee to the 1997 Churchwide Assembly.

Category 1a: Formula of Agreement (Lutheran-Reformed)

A. Grand Canyon Synod (2D) [1997 Memorial]

WHEREAS, God calls the followers of Jesus Christ into unity in the one Lord and the Church into a single mission to the world in God's name; and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America adopted a commitment to greater ecumenical relations with other Christians, leading to full communion, in *Ecumenism: The Vision of the ELCA* [1991 Churchwide Assembly]; and

WHEREAS, thirty years of mutual dialog and conversation with The Episcopal Church, and with the Reformed Church in America, the United Church of Christ, and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), has led the ELCA to acknowledge that we proclaim and administer the same Gospel and Sacraments; and

WHEREAS, the mission challenges of the Church in our time call us to closer partnership and mutual accountability with other Christians; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Grand Canyon Synod, meeting in assembly, supports the proposal for full communion before the 1997 Churchwide Assembly, *A Formula of Agreement* with the Reformed Church in America, the United Church of Christ, and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.); and be it further

RESOLVED, that this support be communicated by our bishop to the Office of the Bishop, the Conference of Bishops, and the ELCA Church Council.

B. Eastern North Dakota Synod (3B) [1997 Memorial]

WHEREAS, full communion, as defined in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) statement on *Ecumenism: The Vision of the ELCA*, is now being proposed with the Reformed Church in America, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and the United Church of Christ; and

WHEREAS, the conclusions and recommendations for full communion with those churches were first published and disseminated in 1993 in *A Common Calling*; and

WHEREAS, there has been insufficient time allowed for the reception of these conclusions, responses by seminaries, theologians, pastors, institutions and congregations of the ELCA; and

WHEREAS, no interim or intermediary steps have been proposed or pursued for the ELCA before entering into a full communion relationship with these churches; and

WHEREAS, by comparison, full communion with The Episcopal Church is only now being proposed after thirteen years of interim sharing of the Eucharist and congregational study; and

WHEREAS, the implications of full communion with these churches have not been explored in the same depth; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Eastern North Dakota Synod, ELCA, memorialize the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to postpone action on full communion with the Reformed Church in America, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and the United Church of Christ; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Eastern North Dakota Synod Assembly request the 1997 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to recommend to the Department of Ecumenical Affairs that future action on full communion with the Reformed Churches be considered only after appropriate interim eucharistic hospitality has been adopted by the ELCA and practiced by ELCA congregations and congregations in the Reformed tradition.

C. South Dakota Synod (3C) [1997 Memorial]

WHEREAS, full communion is defined in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's statement, *Ecumenism: The Vision of the ELCA*; and

WHEREAS, full communion, on the basis of *A Formula of Agreement* is now being proposed with the Reformed Church in America, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the United Church of Christ; and

WHEREAS, the full implications of full communion with these churches have not been explored in sufficient depth; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the 1997 South Dakota Synod Assembly memorialize the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to:

- a) postpone action on the proposed *Formula of Agreement* and full communion with the above named churches; and
- b) recommend to the Department for Ecumenical Affairs that any future action on full communion with the Reformed churches be considered only after appropriate interim eucharistic hospitality has been adopted by the ELCA and practiced by ELCA congregations and congregations in the Reformed tradition;
- c) express appreciation for our ongoing partnership in the Gospel with the Reformed Church in America; the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and the United Church of Christ.

D. Northwestern Minnesota Synod (3D) [1997 Memorial]

WHEREAS, *A Formula of Agreement* proposes full communion between the ELCA and the Reformed Church in America, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and the United Church of Christ; and

WHEREAS, ELCA congregations have had little time for study and no history of interim eucharistic hospitality; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Northwestern Minnesota Synod memorialize the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to affirm the unity in Christ and partnership in the Gospel it now enjoys with the Reformed Church in America, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and United Church of Christ; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Northwestern Minnesota Synod memorialize the 1997 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to delay action on *A Formula of Agreement* until after the ELCA has implemented interim eucharistic hospitality with these churches.

E. Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod (4D) [1997 Memorial]

RESOLVED, that this assembly memorialize the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to adopt the recommendation that is being proposed by the November 1996 ELCA Church Council to authorize full communion with the Presbyterian Church in the (U.S.A.), the Reformed Church in America, and the United Church of Christ.

F. Western Iowa Synod (5E) [1997 Memorial]

WHEREAS, Christ, the head of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church, mandates oneness; and

WHEREAS, after years of careful, painstaking discussions between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Reformed traditions [Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Reformed Church in America, and the United Church of Christ] a consensus for full communion has been reached; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Western Iowa Synod, meeting in Assembly, endorses *A Formula of Agreement* with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Reformed Church in America, and the United Church of Christ; and be it further

RESOLVED, the ELCA-Western Iowa Synod Assembly give its commitment to implementing full communion with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Reformed Church in America, and the United Church of Christ; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Western Iowa Synod Assembly direct the Western Iowa Synod Council to forward this resolution to the Church Council's Executive Committee for proper referral and disposition under the bylaws and continuing resolutions of this church.

G. East-Central Synod of Wisconsin (5I) [1997 Memorial]

WHEREAS, our confession of faith has long been understood to be an integral part of our identity as a Lutheran Church; and

WHEREAS, the Reformed churches have no mutually agreed confessional stance; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that we recommend rejection of the proposed *A Formula of Agreement* with the Reformed Churches; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we continue to enjoy and further develop the fellowship we now have together as Lutheran and Reformed Churches, and be it further

RESOLVED, that the East-Central Synod [of Wisconsin] Assembly memorialize the voting members of the 1997 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to fully consider the strong position of the East-Central Synod as they cast their ballots.

H. New England Synod (7B) [1997 Memorial]

RESOLVED, that this New England Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America assembly endorse *A Formula of Agreement* for full communion with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Reformed Church in America, and the United Church of Christ.

I. New England Synod (7B) [1997 Memorial]

RESOLVED, that the New England Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America memorialize the Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to affirm the *Introduction to A Formula of Agreement* as this church's understanding of the doctrinal consensus shared by churches adopting *A Formula of Agreement*.

J. Slovak Zion Synod (7G) [1997 Memorial]

RESOLVED, that this Slovak Zion Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Assembly endorse *A Formula of Agreement* for full communion with the Reformed Church in America, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and the United Church of Christ; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this endorsement be memorialized to the ELCA Churchwide Assembly.

K. Virginia Synod (9A) [1997 Memorial]

RESOLVED, that the Virginia Synod express support for the proposed *Formula of Agreement* between the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Reformed Church in America, the United Church of Christ, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

En Bloc

CA97.6.43 To acknowledge the action of the 1997 Churchwide Assembly on the *Formula of Agreement* between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Reformed Church in America, and the United Church of Christ as the response of this assembly to the memorials on this subject from the synods listed in Category 1a of the Report of the Memorials Committee to the 1997 Churchwide Assembly.

Category 1b: *Concordat of Agreement* (Lutheran-Episcopal)

A. Northwest Washington Synod (1B) [1997 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America will be asked to vote on the proposed *Concordat of Agreement* between the ELCA and The Episcopal Church; and

WHEREAS, there is to be “one binding vote to accept or reject . . . the full set of agreements” set forth in the *Concordat*, and the 1997 Churchwide Assembly therefore does not have the ability to modify the *Concordat*; and

WHEREAS, the proposed *Concordat* therefore requires a broad and deep consensus among the pastors and laity of the ELCA and the bishops, priests, deacons, and laity of The Episcopal Church; and

WHEREAS, opinion within the ELCA is divided on the advisability of the *Concordat*; and

WHEREAS, there are conflicting interpretations as to what actions the ELCA is called upon to take under the “agreements” set forth in the *Concordat*, and the meaning of such actions; and

WHEREAS, confusion regarding the meaning of the *Concordat* may disrupt rather than promote our ecumenical relations with The Episcopal Church; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Northwest Washington Synod Assembly memorialize the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to acknowledge the proposed *Concordat* with thanks for its efforts on behalf of Christian unity; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Northwest Washington Synod Assembly memorialize the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to affirm the unity in Christ and partnership in the Gospel we now enjoy with The Episcopal Church; and be it further

RESOLVED that the Northwest Washington Synod Assembly memorialize the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to affirm the current agreement for *Interim Sharing of the Eucharist* between the ELCA and The Episcopal Church; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Northwest Washington Synod Assembly memorialize the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to direct the ELCA Department for Ecumenical Affairs to prepare jointly with The Episcopal Church a revised *Concordat* that does not require the historic episcopate for full communion and focuses our resources and our unity in mission and outreach.

B. Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod (1D) [1997 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America will be asked to vote on the proposed *Concordat of Agreement* (*Concordat*) between the ELCA and The Episcopal Church; and

WHEREAS, there is to be “one binding vote to accept or reject...the full set of agreements” set forth in the *Concordat*, and the 1997 Churchwide Assembly does not have the ability to modify the *Concordat* at all; and

WHEREAS, the proposed *Concordat* therefore requires a broad and deep consensus among the pastors and laity of the ELCA and the bishops, priests, deacons and laity of The Episcopal Church; and

WHEREAS, opinion within the ELCA and The Episcopal Church is divided on the advisability of the *Concordat*; and

WHEREAS, there are conflicting interpretations as to what actions the ELCA is called upon to take under the “agreements” set forth in the *Concordat*, and the meaning of such action; and

WHEREAS, confusion regarding the meaning of the *Concordat* may disrupt rather than promote our ecumenical relations with The Episcopal Church; and

WHEREAS, the doctrine of the historic episcopate is irrelevant to the mission and ministry of the ELCA, and that the introduction of this doctrine into our Lutheran understanding of the Church would be theologically alien to the ELCA, and that it would neither serve or further the work of the Gospel; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod memorialize the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to receive the proposed *Concordat* with thanks; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod memorialize the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to affirm the unity in Christ and partnership in the Gospel we now enjoy with The Episcopal Church; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod memorialize the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to affirm the current agreement for *Interim Sharing of the Eucharist* between the ELCA and The Episcopal Church; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod memorialize the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to direct the ELCA Department for Ecumenical Affairs to prepare jointly with The Episcopal Church a revised *Concordat* that does not require the historic episcopate for full communion and focuses our resources and our unity in mission and outreach; and be it further

RESOLVED, that voting members representing the Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod at the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA be free to vote their conscience, nevertheless that this resolution be given due weight as these members cast their vote.

C. Grand Canyon Synod (2D) [1997 Memorial]

WHEREAS, God calls the followers of Jesus Christ into unity in the one Lord and the Church into a single mission to the world in God's name; and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America adopted a commitment to greater ecumenical relations with other Christians, leading to full communion, in *Ecumenism: The Vision of the ELCA* [1991 Churchwide Assembly]; and

WHEREAS, 30 years of mutual dialog and conversation with The Episcopal Church, and with the Reformed Church in America, the United Church of Christ, and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), has led the ELCA to acknowledge that we proclaim and administer the same Gospel and Sacraments; and

WHEREAS, the mission challenges of the Church in our time call us to closer partnership and mutual accountability with other Christians; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Grand Canyon Synod, meeting in assembly, supports the proposal for full communion before the 1997 Churchwide Assembly, the *Concordat of Agreement* with The Episcopal Church; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this support be communicated by our bishop to the Office of the Bishop, the Conference of Bishops, and the ELCA Church Council.

D. Western North Dakota Synod (3A) [1997 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA will be asked to vote on the proposed *Concordat of Agreement* between the ELCA and The Episcopal Church; and

WHEREAS, there is to be "one binding vote to accept or reject...the full set of agreements" set forth in the *Concordat*, and the 1997 Churchwide Assembly therefore does not have the ability to modify the *Concordat*; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA Churchwide Assembly in 1993 specifically affirmed that the "pastoral office" of Word and Sacrament is one ministry that includes both pastors and bishops; bishops should be elected and installed to six-year terms, with eligibility for re-election, subject to term limits; membership in the Conference of Bishops should be limited to those serving in office; any pastor can be authorized by a bishop to perform ordinations; the ministry of the baptized includes the ability of lay persons "in unusual circumstances, to administer the sacraments of baptism and holy communion"; and

WHEREAS, the proposed *Concordat* potentially permits alterations, modifications and changes to the actions of the 1993 Churchwide Assembly, along with constitutional and canonical changes on the part of the ELCA including, three-fold ministry of bishops, presbyters, and deacons in historic succession "will be the future pattern of the one ordained ministry of Word and Sacrament"; option of installation or ordination of bishops for life; membership in the Conference of Bishops shall be open to all bishops because of possible lifetime tenure; future ordinations of pastors and bishops be done only by bishops; possible prohibition of the ability of lay persons to administer the sacraments of baptism and holy communion in unusual circumstances; and

WHEREAS, there is divided opinion within the ELCA on these matters, as well as on the *Concordat*; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA Presiding Bishop Anderson and the ELCA Church Council has not informed the ELCA members of potential constitutional and canonical changes that the ELCA will, or may make to achieve full communion with The Episcopal Church, nor provided study documents on such changes; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Western North Dakota Synod Assembly memorialize the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to receive the proposed *Concordat* with thanks; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Western North Dakota Synod Assembly memorialize the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to affirm the unity in Christ and partnership in the Gospel we now enjoy with The Episcopal Church; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Western North Dakota Synod Assembly memorialize the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to affirm the current agreement for Interim Sharing of the Eucharist between the ELCA and The Episcopal Church; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Western North Dakota Synod Assembly memorialize the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to vote "no" on the *Concordat*; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Western North Dakota Synod Assembly request the Western North Dakota Synod Council to encourage the ELCA Church Council to prepare study documents for use throughout the church relating to potential constitutional and canonical changes that may result for the ELCA, if the *Concordat* is approved in the future.

E. Eastern North Dakota Synod (3B) [1997 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) will be asked to vote on the proposed *Concordat of Agreement (Concordat)* between the ELCA and The Episcopal Church; and

WHEREAS, there is to be "one binding vote to accept or reject...the full set of agreements" set forth in the *Concordat*, and the 1997 Churchwide Assembly therefore does not have the ability to modify the *Concordat*; and

WHEREAS, the proposed *Concordat* therefore requires a broad and deep consensus among the pastors and laity of the ELCA and the bishops, priests, deacons and laity of The Episcopal Church; and

WHEREAS, opinion within the ELCA and The Episcopal Church is divided on the advisability of the *Concordat*; and

WHEREAS, there are conflicting interpretations as to what actions the ELCA is called upon to take under the “agreements” set forth in the *Concordat*, and the meaning of such actions; and

WHEREAS, confusion regarding the meaning of the *Concordat* may disrupt rather than promote our ecumenical relations with The Episcopal Church; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Eastern North Dakota Synod Assembly memorialize the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to acknowledge the proposed *Concordat* with thanks for its efforts on behalf of Christian unity; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Eastern North Dakota Synod Assembly memorialize the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to reject the *Concordat* with the Episcopal Church USA; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Eastern North Dakota Synod Assembly memorialize the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to affirm the unity in Christ and partnership in the Gospel we now enjoy with the Episcopal Church; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Eastern North Dakota Synod Assembly memorialize the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to affirm the current agreement for *Interim Sharing of the Eucharist* between the ELCA and The Episcopal Church; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Eastern North Dakota Synod Assembly memorialize the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to direct the ELCA Department for Ecumenical Affairs to prepare jointly with The Episcopal Church a revised *Concordat* that does not require the historic episcopate for full communion and focuses our resources and our unity in mission and outreach.

F. South Dakota Synod (3C) [1997 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is asked to vote on the proposed *Concordat of Agreement* (hereinafter *Concordat*) between the ELCA and The Episcopal Church; and

WHEREAS, there is to be “one binding vote to accept or reject...the full set of agreements” set forth in the *Concordat*; and

WHEREAS, neither the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA nor the General Convention of The Episcopal Church will have the ability to modify the *Concordat*; and

WHEREAS, the *Concordat* calls for broad and deep consensus among pastors and laity of the ELCA, and bishops, priests, deacons, and laity of The Episcopal Church; and

WHEREAS, opinion within the ELCA and The Episcopal Church is divided on the advisability of the *Concordat*; and

WHEREAS, the interpretations and implications of the ELCA’s required actions under the *Concordat* are unclear; and

WHEREAS, confusion regarding the meaning of the *Concordat* may disrupt rather than promote our mutual ecumenical relations; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the 1997 South Dakota Synod Assembly memorialize the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to

- a) receive the proposed *Concordat* with thanks;
- b) affirm the unity in Christ and partnership in the Gospel we now enjoy with The Episcopal Church;
- c) continue to affirm the current agreement between the ELCA and The Episcopal Church (i.e., Interim Sharing of the Eucharist);
- d) direct the ELCA Department for Ecumenical Affairs to prepare jointly with The Episcopal Church a revised *Concordat* which focuses our resources and our unity in mission and outreach and does not require the historic episcopate for full communion; and
- e) direct the ELCA Department for Ecumenical Affairs to solicit input from all ELCA congregations prior to the submission of another *Concordat* with The Episcopal Church.

G. Northwestern Minnesota Synod (3D) [1997 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA will vote on the *Concordat of Agreement* between the ELCA and The Episcopal Church; and

WHEREAS, the *Concordat* has the potential to create deep divisions within the ELCA; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Northwestern Minnesota Synod, in Assembly, ask its 1997 Churchwide Assembly members:

1. to move that the 1997 Churchwide Assembly refer the *Concordat of Agreement* to the Division for Ecumenical Affairs until such time as the requirement that the ELCA implement the historic episcopate is removed from the *Concordat*; and
2. to vote against the *Concordat of Agreement* if the motion to refer is not approved; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Northwestern Minnesota Synod memorialize the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA:

1. to affirm the unity in Christ and partnership in the Gospel we now enjoy with The Episcopal Church, and
2. to affirm and extend the current agreement for Interim Sharing of the Eucharist between the ELCA and The Episcopal Church, and
3. to reject the *Concordat of Agreement*.

H. Northeastern Minnesota Synod (3E) [1997 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA will be asked to vote on the proposed *Concordat of Agreement* (“*Concordat*”) between the ELCA and The Episcopal Church; and

WHEREAS, the historic episcopate is not necessarily a gift that would strengthen the mission of the ELCA, as suggested in the introduction to the *Concordat* (p. 5), but could even hinder the development of more innovative ministries of pastoral oversight (*episkope*) required by the American mission field; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA and The Episcopal Church already cooperate in mission endeavors and mutual participation in the Lord’s Supper, as highlighted in the November 1996 issue of *The Lutheran* magazine; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Northeastern Minnesota Synod memorialize the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to affirm the unity in Christ and partnership in the Gospel we now enjoy with The Episcopal Church; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Northeastern Minnesota Synod memorialize the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to vote “no” on the *Concordat*.

I. Southwestern Minnesota Synod (3F) [1997 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) will be asked to vote on the proposed *Concordat of Agreement* between the ELCA and The Episcopal Church; and

WHEREAS, there is to be “one binding vote to accept or reject . . . the full set of agreements” set forth in the *Concordat*, and the 1997 Churchwide Assembly therefore does not have the ability to modify the *Concordat*; and

WHEREAS, the proposed *Concordat* therefore requires a broad and deep consensus among the pastors and laity of the ELCA and the bishops, priests, deacons, and laity of The Episcopal Church; and

WHEREAS, opinion within the ELCA and The Episcopal Church is divided on the advisability of the *Concordat*; and

WHEREAS, there are conflicting interpretations as to what actions the ELCA is called upon to take under the “agreements” set forth in the *Concordat*, and the meaning of such actions; and

WHEREAS, confusion regarding the meaning of the *Concordat* may disrupt rather than promote our ecumenical relations with The Episcopal Church; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Southwestern Minnesota Synod Assembly memorialize the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to acknowledge the proposed *Concordat* with thanks; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southwestern Minnesota Synod Assembly memorialize the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to affirm the unity in Christ and partnership in the Gospel we now enjoy with The Episcopal Church; and be it further

RESOLVED that the Southwestern Minnesota Synod Assembly memorialize the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to affirm the current agreement for *Interim Sharing of the Eucharist* between the ELCA and The Episcopal Church; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southwestern Minnesota Synod Assembly memorialize the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to direct the ELCA Department for Ecumenical Affairs to prepare jointly with The Episcopal Church a revised *Concordat* that does not require the historic episcopate for full communion and focuses our resources and our unity in mission and outreach.

J. Minneapolis Area Synod (3G) [1997 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) will be asked to vote on the proposed *Concordat of Agreement* (*Concordat*) between the ELCA and The Episcopal Church; and

WHEREAS, there is to be “one binding vote to accept or reject...the full set of agreements” set forth in the *Concordat*, and the 1997 Churchwide Assembly therefore does not have the ability to modify the *Concordat*; and

WHEREAS, the proposed *Concordat* therefore requires a broad and deep consensus among the pastors and laity of the ELCA and the bishops, priests, deacons and laity of The Episcopal Church; and

WHEREAS, opinion within the ELCA and The Episcopal Church is divided on the advisability and future implications of the *Concordat*; and

WHEREAS, there are conflicting interpretations as to what actions the ELCA is called upon to take under the “agreements” set forth in the *Concordat*, and the meaning of such actions; and

WHEREAS, confusion regarding the meaning of certain stipulations found within the *Concordat* may disrupt rather than enhance our ecumenical relations with The Episcopal Church and other Christian denominations; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Minneapolis Area Synod memorialize the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to receive the proposed *Concordat* with thanks; and be further

RESOLVED, that the Minneapolis Area Synod memorialize the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to affirm the unity in Christ and partnership in the Gospel we now enjoy with The Episcopal Church; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Minneapolis Area Synod memorialize the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to affirm the current agreement for *Interim Sharing of the Eucharist* between the ELCA and The Episcopal Church; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Minneapolis Area Synod memorialize the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to vote “NO” on the *Concordat*; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Minneapolis Area Synod memorialize the 1997 Churchwide Assembly to direct the ELCA Department for Ecumenical Affairs to

prepare jointly with The Episcopal Church a revised *Concordat* that does not require the historic episcopate for full communion and focuses our resources and our unity in mission and outreach.

K. Saint Paul Area Synod (3H) [1997 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA will be asked to vote on the proposed *Concordat of Agreement* between the ELCA and The Episcopal Church; and

WHEREAS, there is to be “one binding vote to accept or reject . . . the full set of agreements” set forth in the *Concordat*, and the 1997 Churchwide Assembly therefore does not have the ability to modify the *Concordat*; and

WHEREAS, the proposed *Concordat* therefore requires a broad and deep consensus among the pastors and laity of the ELCA and the bishops, priests, deacons, and laity of The Episcopal Church; and

WHEREAS, opinion within the ELCA and The Episcopal Church is divided on the advisability of the *Concordat*; and

WHEREAS, there are conflicting interpretations as to what actions the ELCA is called upon to take under the “agreements” set forth in the *Concordat*, and the meaning of such actions; and

WHEREAS, confusion regarding the meaning of the *Concordat* may disrupt rather than promote our ecumenical relations with The Episcopal Church; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Saint Paul Area Synod memorialize the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to receive the proposed *Concordat* with thanks; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Saint Paul Area Synod memorialize the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to affirm the unity in Christ and partnership in the Gospel we now enjoy with The Episcopal Church; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Saint Paul Area Synod memorialize the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to affirm the current agreement for *Interim Sharing of the Eucharist* between the ELCA and The Episcopal Church; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Saint Paul Area Synod memorialize the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to direct the ELCA Department for Ecumenical Affairs to prepare jointly with The Episcopal Church a revised *Concordat* that does not require the historic episcopate for full communion and focuses our resources and our unity in mission and outreach.

L. Southeastern Minnesota Synod (3I) [1997 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America will be asked to vote on the proposed *Concordat of Agreement (Concordat)* between the ELCA and The Episcopal Church; and

WHEREAS, there is to be “one binding vote to accept or reject...the full set of agreements” set forth in the *Concordat [p. 7]*, and the 1997 Churchwide Assembly therefore does not have the opportunity to modify the *Concordat*; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA Churchwide Assembly in 1993 specifically affirmed that:

- the “pastoral office” of Word and Sacrament is one ministry that includes both pastors and bishops,
- bishops should be elected and installed to six-year terms, with eligibility for re-election, subject to term limits,
- membership in the Conference of Bishops should be limited to those serving in office,
- any pastor can be authorized by a bishop to perform ordinations,
- the ministry of the baptized includes the ability of laypersons “in unusual circumstances, to administer the sacraments of baptism and Holy Communion;” and

WHEREAS, the proposed *Concordat* potentially permits alterations, modifications and changes to the actions of the 1993 Churchwide Assembly, along with constitutional and canonical changes on the part of the ELCA including:

- three-fold ministry of bishops, presbyters, and deacons in historic succession “will be the future pattern of the one ordained ministry of Word and Sacrament” (p. 9);
- option of installation or ordination of bishops for life,
- membership in the Conference of Bishops shall be open to all bishops because of possible lifetime tenure,
- future ordinations of pastors and bishops be done only by bishops,
- inhibits in the future the ability of laity to administer the sacraments of baptism and Holy Communion in unusual circumstances,
- under “full communion” the ELCA would surrender the licensing of the laity to perform Word and Sacrament ministry (hospital, nursing home chaplains, etc.); and

WHEREAS, there is divided opinion within the ELCA on these matters, as well as the *Concordat*; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA Presiding Bishop Anderson and the ELCA Church Council has not informed ELCA members of potential constitutional and canonical changes that the ELCA will, or may, make to achieve full communion with The Episcopal Church, nor provided study documents of such changes; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Minnesota Synod memorialize the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to:

- 1) receive the proposed *Concordat* with thanks;
- 2) affirm the unity in Christ and partnership in the Gospel we now enjoy with The Episcopal Church;
- 3) affirm the current agreement for *Interim Sharing of the Eucharist* between the ELCA and The Episcopal Church; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Minnesota Synod memorialize the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to vote “No” on the *Concordat*; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Minnesota Synod request the ELCA Church Council to prepare study documents for use throughout the church relating to potential constitutional and canonical changes that may result for the ELCA if the *Concordat* is reconsidered in the future; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the ELCA Synod Assemblies and ELCA Churchwide Assembly debate and take action on these changes prior to any vote on the *Concordat*.

M. Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod (4D) [1997 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and its predecessor church bodies have been in interim eucharistic fellowship with The Episcopal Church for nearly fifteen years; and

WHEREAS, there has been continuing and in-depth dialogue between Episcopalians and Lutherans in which we have discovered again and again that we are churches that “preach the Gospel in conformity with a pure understanding of it and administer the sacraments in accordance with the Divine Word”; and

WHEREAS, we can see no compelling reason why our two churches should not be in full communion with one another; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Northern Texas–Northern Louisiana Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America urge the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to adopt the *Concordat of Agreement* which would establish full communion with The Episcopal Church.

N. Western Iowa Synod (5E) [1997 Memorial]

WHEREAS, Christ, the head of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church, mandates oneness; and

WHEREAS, after years of careful, painstaking discussions between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and The Episcopal Church a consensus for full communion has been reached; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Western Iowa Synod, meeting in Assembly, endorses the *Concordat of Agreement* with The Episcopal Church; and be it further

RESOLVED, the ELCA-Western Iowa Synod Assembly give its commitment to implementing full communion with The Episcopal Church; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Western Iowa Synod Assembly direct the Western Iowa Synod Council to forward this resolution to the Church Council’s Executive Committee for proper referral and disposition under the bylaws and continuing resolutions of this church.

O. Northwest Synod of Wisconsin (5H) [1997 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA will be asked to vote on the proposed *Concordat of Agreement* between the ELCA and The Episcopal Church; and

WHEREAS, there shall be “one binding vote to accept or reject, as a matter of verbal content as well as in principle, and without separate amendment, the full set of agreements to follow” set forth in the “*Concordat*,” (Ecumenical Proposals, pg 7, Text 1, Para. 1) and

the 1997 Churchwide Assembly, therefore does not have the ability to modify the *Concordat*; and

WHEREAS, the proposed *Concordat* therefore requires a broad and deep consensus among the pastors and laity of the ELCA and the bishops, priests, deacons and laity of The Episcopal Church; and

WHEREAS, opinion within the ELCA and The Episcopal Church is divided on the advisability of the *Concordat*; and

WHEREAS, there are conflicting interpretations as to what actions the ELCA is called upon to take under the “agreements” set forth in the *Concordat*, and the meaning of such actions; and

WHEREAS, confusion regarding the meaning of the *Concordat* may disrupt rather than promote our ecumenical relations with The Episcopal Church; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin memorialize the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to receive the proposed *Concordat* with thanks; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin memorialize the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to affirm the unity in Christ and partnership in the Gospel we now enjoy with The Episcopal Church; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin memorialize the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to affirm the current agreement for *Interim Sharing of the Eucharist* between the ELCA and The Episcopal Church; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin memorialize the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to direct the ELCA Department for Ecumenical Affairs to prepare jointly with The Episcopal Church a revised *Concordat* that does not require the historic episcopate for full communion and focuses our resources and our unity in mission and outreach.

P. East-Central Synod of Wisconsin (5I) [1997 Memorial]

WHEREAS, as it is presently proposed, the *Concordat of Agreement*—despite its own protestations (section E.14)—does not “fully acknowledge the authenticity of each other’s ordained ministries.” Rather, it proposes that the “historic succession of bishops” become mandatory for both church bodies. The suggestion is that anything other than this is not proper ordination. While the proposal graciously agrees to accept as valid the ordinations of those thousands of men and women now serving the Lutheran Church as pastors and bishops, the implication is that theirs is an inferior or improper ordination; and

WHEREAS, the *Concordat*’s requirement of a “threefold ministry of bishops, presbyters, and deacons in historic succession” (section A.3) is in direct contradiction to the *Statement of Ministry* adopted at the 1993 ELCA Assembly, which affirms one ordained ministry, not three; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA agrees to make an exception “for ordained ministers of The Episcopal Church from its ordination requirement of acceptance of the unaltered Augsburg Confession and the other confessional writings in the Book of Concord in order to permit

full interchangeability and reciprocity” (section C.9), thus permitting Episcopal bishops to serve as bishops, and Episcopal priests to serve as pastors in the ELCA without subscribing to the Lutheran confessions; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that we recommend rejection of the proposed *Concordat of Agreement* with The Episcopal Church, and be it further

RESOLVED, that we continue to enjoy and further develop the fellowship we now have with one another as Lutherans and Episcopalians; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the East-Central Synod [of Wisconsin] Assembly memorialize the voting members of the 1997 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to fully consider the strong position of the East-Central Synod as they cast their ballots.

Q. New Jersey Synod (7A) [1997 Memorial]

WHEREAS, there has been an historic relationship between the Lutheran and Episcopal (Anglican) churches since the Reformation in Europe and colonial days in the United States of America; and

WHEREAS, our times enable these communions/confessions in the United States to expand this relationship in order to enhance mission and ministry; and

WHEREAS, we are already benefitting from the close relationship between Lutheran and Episcopal parishes; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the 1997 New Jersey Synod Assembly memorialize the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, to adopt the *Concordat of Agreement* between The Episcopal Church and the ELCA.

R. New England Synod (7B) [1997 Memorial]

RESOLVED, that this New England Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America assembly endorse the *Concordat of Agreement* for full communion with The Episcopal Church.

S. Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod (7E) [1997 Memorial]

WHEREAS, in 1982, The Episcopal Church, the American Lutheran Church, the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches, and the Lutheran Church in America entered into an *Agreement on Eucharistic Sharing*, which recognized each other as churches “in which the Gospel is preached and taught,” and which called for further dialogue toward the goal of full communion; and

WHEREAS, this dialogue has led to substantial agreement in the doctrines of the faith; and

WHEREAS, full communion is a commitment of Lutherans throughout the world as resolved by the Lutheran World Federation at its Eighth Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation in Curitiba in February 1990, “that the LWF renew its commitment to the goal of full communion with the churches of the Anglican Communion, and that it urge LWF member churches to take appropriate steps towards its realization... that the LWF note with

thanksgiving the steps towards church fellowship with national/regional Anglican counterparts which LWF member churches have been able to take already and that it encourage them to proceed”: and

WHEREAS, in 1996, a similar agreement on full communion has already been declared in *The Porvoo Common Statement* by the Church of Denmark, the Church of England, the Estonian Evangelical-Lutheran Church, the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland, the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Iceland, the Church of Ireland, the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Latvia, the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Lithuania, the Church of Norway, the Scottish Episcopal Church, the Church of Sweden and the Church in Wales; and

WHEREAS, we recognize that the issue of the historic episcopate may be the most difficult concern in the *Concordat* we also recognize the openness of our confessional documents on that issue in the *Apology to the Augsburg Confession*, Article XIV: “On this matter we have given frequent testimony in the assembly to our deep desire to maintain the church polity and various ranks of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, although they were created by human authority...Thus the cruelty of the Bishops is the reason for the abolition of canonical government in some places, despite our earnest desire to keep it. . . . Furthermore, we want at this point to declare our willingness to keep the ecclesiastical and canonical polity, provided that the bishops stop raging against our churches”; and

WHEREAS, this openness was affirmed by the Lutheran World Federation in 1983: “Lutheran churches can be open to the historic succession of bishops and can see in it a sign of and service to the continuity and unity of the Church. Such an openness is seen within the Lutheran communion itself where some churches have retained or accepted the historic succession of bishops without this becoming divisive” (*Episcopal Office 9*), and by the Lutheran Council in the USA in 1984: “When the ‘historic episcopate’ faithfully proclaims the Gospel and administers the sacraments, it may be accepted as symbol of the Church’s unity and continuity throughout the centuries, provided that it is not viewed as a necessity for the validity of the church’s ministry”; and

WHEREAS, The Episcopal Church in the *Concordat* recognizes the full authority of the ordained ministries presently existing within the ELCA, which removes this obstacle to full communion; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod memorialize the 1997 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to act favorably on the *Concordat of Agreement*.

T. Slovak Zion Synod (7G) [1997 Memorial]

RESOLVED, that this Slovak Zion Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, endorse the *Concordat of Agreement* for full communion with The Episcopal Church; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this endorsement be memorialized to the ELCA Churchwide Assembly.

U. Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod (8A) [1997 Memorial]

RESOLVED, that the 1997 synod assembly of the Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod reaffirm its 1996 action in endorsing the *Concordat of Agreement* between

the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and The Episcopal Church; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod memorialize the 1997 Churchwide Assembly to act favorably on the *Concordat of Agreement*.

V. Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod (8B) [1997 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod of the ELCA and the Pittsburgh Diocese of The Episcopal Church have affirmed an official covenant and have enjoyed special relationships over the past several years; and

WHEREAS, Bishop Donald McCoid and Bishop Alden Hathaway have demonstrated a particularly congenial and collegial friendship, thus giving visible and loving witness to the Church's unity; and

WHEREAS, for the sake of witness to an increasingly skeptical and secular world in the latter years of the twentieth century, the Church cannot afford the luxury of remaining visibly divided; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod in Assembly memorialize the ELCA in assembly to approve the *Concordat* between the ELCA and The Episcopal Church.

W. Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod (8G) [1997 Memorial]

WHEREAS, Article VII of the Augsburg Confession states:

Our churches also teach that one holy church is to continue forever. The church is the assembly of saints in which the Gospel is taught purely and the sacraments are administered rightly. For the true unity of the church it is enough to agree concerning the teaching of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments. It is not necessary that human traditions or rites and ceremonies, instituted by men, should be alike everywhere. It is as Paul says, "One faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all . . ."; and

WHEREAS, historically Anglicans and Lutherans have been in dialogue in Europe, North America, and throughout the world; recently, international dialogue has taken place under the auspices of the Lutheran World Federation and the various expressions of the Anglican Communion; and

WHEREAS, in September 1982, the *Lutheran-Episcopal Agreement on an Interim Sharing of the Eucharist* went into force, all three of our predecessor churches—The American Lutheran Church, the Lutheran Church in America, and the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches—being parties to that agreement; and

WHEREAS, in 1988 the Evangelical Church in Germany and the Church of England agreed in steps to closer relations based on the Meissen Declaration; and

WHEREAS, most of the Nordic and Baltic Lutheran and the British and Irish Anglican churches entered into full communion based on the *Porvoo Common Statement* in 1996; and

WHEREAS, we rejoice in the fellowship that the Holy Spirit has brought to the Evangelical Lutheran Church and The Episcopal Church; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod Assembly supports adoption of the *Concordat of Agreement* between The Episcopal Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America by the 1997 ELCA Churchwide Assembly and supports changes to the ELCA constitution and bylaws necessary to bring the *Concordat* into force; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Bishop of the ELCA Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod transmit copies of this resolution to the bishops of The Episcopal Church's Dioceses of Virginia and Washington.

X. Virginia Synod (9A) [1997 Memorial]

RESOLVED, that the Virginia Synod express support for the proposed *Concordat of Agreement* between The Episcopal Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

En Bloc

CA97.6.44 To acknowledge the action of the 1997 Churchwide Assembly on the *Concordat of Agreement* between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and The Episcopal Church as the response of this assembly to the memorials on this subject from the synods listed in Category 1b of the Report of the Memorials Committee to the 1997 Churchwide Assembly.

Category 1c: Full Communion—Both Proposals

A. Montana Synod (1F) [1996 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the ELCA does not live in denominational isolation, but has frequently witnessed its scriptural, confessional and constitutional commitments to manifest the unity of the Church in "one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all" (Eph. 4:6); and

WHEREAS, Lutherans teach the Office of Ministry is divinely instituted for the Gospel proclamation of saving faith (*Augsburg Confession*, Art. 5); and that "For the true unity of the church it is enough (*satis est*) to agree concerning the teaching of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments" (*Augsburg Confession* Art. 7), thereby declaring that the

unity of the church is freed of human conditions and not surrendered to important but secondary concerns (e.g., polity, forms of ministry, a particular ethic); and

WHEREAS, agreement on the Gospel (*satis est*) provides a truly evangelical and empowering point of departure for “full communion” which transcends the muddle and tension of “ministerial order” that has often been church dividing and even now is unconvincingly resolved in the *Concordat*; and

WHEREAS, the Gospel cannot be completely identified with any earthly embodiments (e.g., a particular institution, tradition, person, document) since it transcends these as their condition and ground; and at the same time the Gospel frees the church to sustain and reform its heritage (e.g., forms of ministry, worship and evangelism). The breadth and depth of this evangelical spirit is witnessed by the reformers of the 16th Century in their “deep desire to ecclesiastical hierarchy, although they were *created by human authority*” (italics added; *Apology to the Augsburg Confession*, Art. 14.1). This spirit is also reflected in the World Council of Churches document *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (1982), declaring that the episcopate “is a sign, though not a guarantee, of the continuity and unity of the church” (M38); and

WHEREAS, the ELCA has declared agreement on the Gospel with The Episcopal Church (*Concordat of Agreement*), and the Reformed Churches [the Reformed Church in America, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the United Church of Christ (*A Common Calling*, 65-67)]; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Montana Synod memorialize the Church Council of the ELCA and the 1997 Churchwide Assembly to direct the Department for Ecumenical Affairs to:

- 1) Provide intermediate steps for issue resolution beyond 1997 to better prepare proposals for full communion with The Episcopal Church and the Reformed Church in America.
- 2) With The Episcopal Church, define in unequivocal language an understanding of the church’s “official public ministry” which affirms its creation by God, while granting that its forms may vary according to the freedom of each church under the Gospel to develop leadership in different times and places. This permits the adaptation of a three-fold form of ministry while not requiring it. This also entails the achievement of clarity about the following concerns:
 - (a) Is the episcopate “essential” to the unity and continuity of the church or does it perform a jurisdictional and institutional role serving the well-being of the church? Ensure that the terminology of proposals and commentary is clear and consistent!
 - (b) Can we recognize the exchange of clergy without requiring mutual adherence to the historic episcopate? Does not agreement on the Gospel suffice?
 - (c) Can Episcopalians embrace this understanding of exchangeability and still serve the spirit of the Preface to the Ordinal of 1662 and the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral of 1886-88 which direct that

Episcopalians allow as priests and bishops only those included in the historic episcopate?

- 3) With the Reformed churches further define theological consensus and divergence on authority, the Lord’s Supper and Christology. Discuss the implications for full communion when social, ethical, or other teachings are differently defined (e.g., homosexual ordinations, theological foundations for dialogue with non-Christian faith traditions).
- 4) Outline succinctly issues of ministry and ecclesiology between Lutheran, Reformed and Episcopal Churches, delineating areas of consensus and divergence.
- 5) Intensify communication to “grass roots” members about the benefits of full communion for doctrine and life, and why shared worship, study and service are part of the Christian calling.
- 6) In consultation that includes the presiding bishop of the ELCA, the Conference of Bishops, the Lutheran Ecumenical Representatives Network, theologians and our ecumenical partners, present renewed proposals for full communion at churchwide judicatory assemblies in 1999, or as soon thereafter as prudent. Though desirable, it shall not be mandatory that proposals regarding each church be presented at the same assembly.

B. Southwestern Minnesota Synod (3F) [1996 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA will be asked to vote on proposals seeking further unity of the ELCA, the Roman Catholic Church, The Episcopal Church and three Reformed churches; and

WHEREAS, the proposals under consideration require a broad and deep consensus among the people and ministers of the participating churches and global communions involved; and

WHEREAS, opinion is divided on these proposals within in the ELCA, the Roman Catholic Church, The Episcopal Church, and participating Reformed churches in the United States; and

WHEREAS, fundamental theological questions remain unresolved and practical consequences of such actions continue to be controversial; and

WHEREAS, the final draft of the Roman Catholic proposal is not yet available and information on the Episcopal and Reformed proposals has not yet been widely discussed within the congregations of the ELCA; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Southwestern Minnesota Synod memorialize the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to receive these proposals with thanks; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southwestern Minnesota Synod memorialize the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to affirm the unity in Christ and partnership in the Gospel we now enjoy with these churches; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southwestern Minnesota Synod memorialize the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to postpone action until further consultation, deliberation and consensus can be achieved among the people and ministers of the participating churches and their global communions; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southwestern Minnesota Synod Secretary be instructed to send a copy of this resolution to the executive director of the Department for Ecumenical Affairs, the ELCA Church Council, and the Conference of Bishops for careful and prayerful consideration.

C. Southwestern Minnesota Synod (3F) [1997 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the oneness of the Church is given and supported by Christ and never completely evidenced in the church as human institution; and

WHEREAS, we celebrate our God-given unity, seek to build on it, and open it for the world to see, that all may believe; and

WHEREAS, appropriate advances in ecumenical relations enhance not only Christian oneness among denominations but also unity in Christ within the denominations involved; and

WHEREAS, the *Concordat of Agreement* and the *Formula of Agreement* are the products of many years of dialog and have been extensively discussed in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America since the documents were published in their original and revised forms; and

WHEREAS, this discussion has not led to anything approaching consensus in the ELCA, as evident informally from conversation and publications and formally in actions by conference and synod assemblies; and

WHEREAS, these differences of opinion are not experienced as peripheral but as important and these differences have not been diminished by honest and direct debate; and

WHEREAS, a vote on these proposals at the 1997 ELCA Churchwide Assembly could deepen and solidify these divisions whatever the outcome; and

WHEREAS, the unity of the ELCA and our oneness with these partner churches could be better strengthened by substituting an affirmation of the aspects of the *Formula* and the *Concordat* about which there is consensus and by leaving for later those aspects which themselves cause division at present; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Southwestern Minnesota Synod memorialize the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to adopt the following ecumenical actions:

1. We affirm The Episcopal Church, the Reformed Church in America, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and the United Church of Christ as members with us in the “one holy catholic and apostolic church,” and embrace their

members as brothers and sisters in the faith. We acknowledge that the gospel which we proclaim in our church is also proclaimed in these churches.

2. We declare sacramental hospitality with these other churches. We regard as valid the sacrament of Holy Baptism in these churches. The members of these partner churches are welcome at our altars, and we gratefully accept the invitation of these churches to our members to be welcomed at their altars.

3. We accept as valid the ordination and ministry of ministers in these churches. We encourage the mutual use of each others’ clergy as mission needs call, and we agree to make each others’ clergy available within our own churches in accordance with appropriate procedures within each body.

4. We commit ourselves to joint mission planning between our churches, especially as it may allow us to strengthen efforts beyond what any of us could accomplish alone.

5. We invite these partner churches to continue to converge in mission with us, and to continue in dialogue and consultation about these matters where that which is distinctive about us can be further examined, shared and reformed.

D. Central States Synod (4B) [1997 Memorial]

RESOLVED, that the Central States Synod Assembly affirm our support for the *Formula of Agreement* between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Reformed Church in America, and the United Church of Christ; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Central States Synod Assembly affirm our support for the *Concordat of Agreement* between The Episcopal Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Central States Synod Assembly affirm our support for the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* between the Lutheran World Federation and the Roman Catholic Church; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the voting members from the Central States Synod to the Churchwide Assembly give prayerful consideration to the discussions that take place among our congregations and here at this assembly.

E. Northwest Synod of Wisconsin (5H) [1997 Memorial]

WHEREAS, presently there exists no consensus in the ELCA regarding the doctrine of the Ministry and the doctrine of the Church or the authority of the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin affirm the position that the ELCA should enter into no ecumenical agreements until such time as some substantial consensus has been reached on these crucial and essential matters; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin memorialize the ELCA to adopt that same position.

F. Greater Milwaukee Synod (5J) [1997 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the unity of the church is given and supported by Christ and never completely evidenced in the church as human institutions; and

WHEREAS, we celebrate our God-given unity, seek to build on it, and open it for the world to see, that all may believe; and

WHEREAS, appropriate advances in ecumenical relations enhance not only Christian unity among denominations but also unity in Christ within the denominations involved; and

WHEREAS, the *Concordat of Agreement* and the *Formula of Agreement* are the products of many years of dialogue, and have been extensively discussed in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America since the documents were published in their original and revised forms; and

WHEREAS, this discussion has not led to anything approaching consensus in the ELCA, as is evident informally from conversation and publications and formally in actions by conference and synod assemblies; and

WHEREAS, these differences of opinion are experienced not as peripheral but as important and have not been much diminished by honest and direct debate; and

WHEREAS, a vote on these proposals at the August 1997 ELCA Churchwide Assembly could deepen and solidify these divisions whatever the outcome; and

WHEREAS, the unity of the ELCA and our unity with these partner churches might be better strengthened by substituting an affirmation of the aspects of the *Formula* and *Concordat* about which there is consensus, and by leaving for later those aspects which themselves cause division at this time; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Greater Milwaukee Synod memorialize the 1997 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to adopt the following ecumenical actions:

1. We affirm The Episcopal Church, the Reformed Church in America, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and the United Church of Christ as members with us in the “one holy catholic and apostolic Church,” and embrace their members as brothers and sisters in the faith. We acknowledge that the gospel which we proclaim in our church is also proclaimed in these other churches.
2. We declare sacramental hospitality with these other churches. We regard as valid the sacrament of Holy Baptism in these churches. The members of these partner churches are welcome at our altar, and we gratefully accept the invitation of these churches to our members to be welcomed at their altars.
3. We accept as valid the ordination and ministry of ministers in these churches. We encourage the mutual use of each others’ clergy as mission needs call, and we agree to make each others’ clergy available within our

own church in accordance with appropriate procedures within each church body.

4. We commit ourselves to joint mission planning between our churches, especially as it may allow us to strengthen efforts beyond what any of us could accomplish alone.
5. We invite these partner churches to continue to converge in mission with us, and to continue in dialogue and consultation about those matters where that which is distinctive about us can be further examined, shared, and reformed.

G. North/West Lower Michigan Synod (6B) [1997 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the Lord of the Church blesses unity (Psalm 33) and prays for the unity of those who will believe in him (John 17); and

WHEREAS, the reformers from whose work developed our Lutheran traditions sought diligently to maintain the unity of the Church (Preface to the Augsburg Confession, Paragraph 11); and

WHEREAS, the vision of our Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in reference to ecumenism is to “pursue the goal of full communion” and to “rejoice in all movement toward that goal” (*Vision for Ecumenism*, p. 15); and

WHEREAS, through study, prayer and conversations, the Holy Spirit has shown us, Lutherans of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, that our brothers and sisters in The Episcopal Church and in the Reformed Churches [Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), United Church of Christ and the Reformed Church in America] share in a common understanding of the Gospel and administer the sacraments in accordance with that Gospel; and

WHEREAS, our participation in the dialogues propose adoption of the agreements on full communion; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that this assembly of the North/West Lower Michigan Synod encourage the adoption of the two proposals for full communion with The Episcopal Church and the Reformed Churches [Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), United Church of Christ, and the Reformed Church in America] at the 1997 Churchwide Assembly; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the congregations of our synod cooperate in ministries with neighboring congregations of these partners; and be it further

RESOLVED, that our synod mission strategy reflect the principles of full communion recognizing the congregations of these traditions as a presence of the Gospel in those places where they serve.

H. Upstate New York Synod (7D) [1997 Memorial]

WHEREAS, we are the body of Christ, and our decision making is enriched by the whole body of Christ under the guidance of the Holy Spirit; and

WHEREAS, at the moment we have the opportunity to give visible expression to the unity with other Christians that we already have in Jesus Christ; and

WHEREAS, there is some division on the body as to how we express that visible unity vis-a-vis the Episcopal and Reformed communions; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the voting members of the Upstate New York Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in assembly at Oswego, New York, 1997, be polled to express their approval or disapproval of the *Concordat of Agreement* and *A Formula of Agreement*.

*

MOVED: that the Upstate New York Synod endorse the *Concordat of Agreement* for Full Communion between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and The Episcopal Church; therefore be it further

RESOLVED, that we communicate the result of this vote to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

*

MOVED, that the Upstate New York Synod endorse *A Formula of Agreement* for full communion between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Reformed Church in America, and the United Church of Christ; therefore be it further

RESOLVED, that we communicate the result of this vote to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

I. Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod (7F) [1997 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has been in dialogue with the Reformed Church in America and The Episcopal Church; and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America at its 1997 Churchwide Assembly will be voting on proposals to enter into full communion with the Reformed Church in America and The Episcopal Church; and

WHEREAS, those remaining differences between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and these church bodies need not be church dividing differences; and

WHEREAS, the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod in assembly desires to hear our Lord's prayer that "all might be one," and to work toward a more visible witness of our Christian unity; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod in assembly memorialize the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America 1997 Churchwide Assembly to vote in favor of both the ecumenical proposals that would establish full communion with The Episcopal Church and the Reformed Church in America.

J. North Carolina Synod (9B) [1997 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America may vote on ecumenical proposals of historic importance; and

WHEREAS, voting members of the Churchwide Assembly from North Carolina are called to represent both themselves and the North Carolina Synod; and

WHEREAS, voting members of the Churchwide Assembly are not constitutionally bound by a vote of the synod assembly; and

WHEREAS, knowledge of the will of the synod assembly on historic ecumenical proposals may be both an aid and means of guidance to voting members of the Churchwide Assembly; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the North Carolina Synod Assembly 1997, shall take a non-binding straw vote recording the sense of the assembly in favor of and opposed to each:

- a. the *Concordat of Agreement* with The Episcopal Church and the ELCA (up to 3/4 in favor, with "opposed" and "not at this time" equally divided);
- b. the *Formula of Agreement* among three reformed churches and the ELCA (up to 2/3 in favor, with "opposed" and "not at this time" equally divided);
- c. the *Joint Declaration of the Doctrine for Justification* between the Lutheran World Federation and the Roman Catholic Church (up to 3/4 in favor, with "opposed" and "not at this time" about equally divided); and be it

RESOLVED, that the results of this non-binding straw vote be communicated to the ELCA Church Council and to the ELCA Department for Ecumenical Affairs as soon as possible after this synod assembly.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

En Bloc

CA97.6.45 To acknowledge the action of the 1997 Churchwide Assembly on the proposals for full communion as the response of this assembly to the memorials on this subject from the synods listed in Category 1c of the Report of the Memorials Committee to the 1997 Churchwide Assembly.

Category 2: Lutheran-Roman Catholic Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification

A. Sierra Pacific Synod (2A) [1997 Memorial]

. . . that we [the Synod Assembly of the Sierra Pacific Synod] recommend that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America at its 1997 Churchwide Assembly

endorse the proposed Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification. [*see also Category 1c, B.*].

B. Grand Canyon Synod (2D) [1997 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the forthcoming 1997 ELCA Churchwide Assembly will not only consider the *Concordat of Agreement* [Episcopal], and the *Formula of Agreement* [United Church of Christ, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Reformed Church in America], but will also make a decision on the Lutheran-Roman Catholic proposal entitled, *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Grand Canyon Synod, meeting in assembly, supports the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this support be communicated by our bishop to the Office of the Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Conference of Bishops, and the ELCA Church Council.

C. Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod (4D) [1997 Memorial]

WHEREAS, there has been continuing dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Lutheran Churches in the United States and around the world; and

WHEREAS, these dialogues have shown a growing theological consensus between Lutherans and Roman Catholics; and

WHEREAS, for Lutherans the teaching by which the church stands or falls is the teaching regarding Justification; and

WHEREAS, through the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* it appears that Churches of the Lutheran World Federation and the Roman Catholic Church are at the point of agreement in this most important teaching; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Northern Texas–Northern Louisiana Synod urge the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to support the actions of the Lutheran World Federation, which would effectively lift the condemnations against the Roman Catholic Church regarding the teaching of Justification.

D. New England Synod (7B) [1997 Memorial]

RESOLVED, that this New England Synod Assembly endorse the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* and recommend its approval at the Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this New England Assembly give thanks to God for what has been accomplished by the *Joint Declaration* in progress toward reconciliation with the Roman Catholic Church and agreement in the doctrine of the Gospel; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the New England Assembly memorialize the Churchwide Assembly to resume the USA Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue by representatives of the Roman Catholic Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and provide sufficient funding in order “to deepen this common understanding of justification,” thereby making “it bear fruit in the life and teaching of the churches”; and be it further

RESOLVED, that special thanks be accorded by the New England Synod assembly to those of our church who served us on the USA Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue and the international dialogue under the sponsorship of the Lutheran World Federation for their outstanding theological work in the cause of Christian unity; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this New England Synod assembly recommend to the ELCA’s Department for Ecumenical Affairs that the *Joint Declaration* be shared with those churches with whom we declare full communion, and also with others with whom we engage in dialogue in the interest of furthering a common understanding on justification.

E. Upstate New York Synod (7D) [1997 Memorial]

RESOLVED, that the Upstate New York Synod endorse the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*, lifting mutual condemnations between Lutherans and Roman Catholics regarding justification, and that we communicate our endorsement to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

F. Slovak Zion Synod (7G) [1997 Memorial]

RESOLVED, that this Slovak Zion Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, assembly endorse the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* with the Roman Catholic Church; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this endorsement be memorialized to the ELCA [Churchwide] Assembly.

G. Virginia Synod (9A) [1997 Memorial]

RESOLVED, that the Virginia Synod express support for the proposed *Joint Declaration on Justification* between the Roman Catholic Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

BACKGROUND

The *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* is printed in Section IV, pages 67-78, of the *1997 Pre-Assembly Report* for the 1997 Churchwide Assembly. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, like other member churches of the

Lutheran World Federation, has been asked to determine whether it accepts the conclusions reached in this document. After receiving advice from ELCA seminaries on this matter, Bishop H. George Anderson will bring to the Church Council's pre-assembly meeting a report and recommendation for action on the *Joint Declaration*. The Church Council will convey to the assembly this report and its recommendation for action by the 1997 Churchwide Assembly.

Since this is an item that is scheduled to be discussed by the assembly, these memorials come as advice to the 1997 Churchwide Assembly.

[See also Category 1c: Memorial B from the Southwestern Minnesota Synod (3F), Memorial D from the Central States Synod (4B).]

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

En Bloc

CA97.6.46 To acknowledge the action of the 1997 Churchwide Assembly on the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* as the response of this assembly to the memorials on this subject from the Grand Canyon Synod, Southwestern Minnesota Synod, Central States Synod, Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod, New England Synod, Upstate New York Synod, Slovak Zion Synod, and Virginia Synod.

Category 3: Campaign Jubilee 2000

A. Minneapolis Area Synod (3G) [1996 Memorial]

WHEREAS, many third world countries are trapped under a mountain of debt they can never repay; and

WHEREAS, this debt fuels the drug trade as poor farmers grow cocaine instead of food; and

WHEREAS, this debt contributes to the death of half a million children each year because of cutbacks in health services and education (spending for which has declined 50 percent and 25 percent respectively); and

WHEREAS, rainforests are being destroyed to provide timber and beef to earn foreign currency to repay debt, throwing development in reverse; and

WHEREAS, this debt means many countries can't afford imports, causing global recession with a rise in Western unemployment, as rich nations take back \$3.00 in debt for every \$1.00 they gave in aid; and

WHEREAS, Africa now spends four times more on interest on its loans than on health care; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Minneapolis Area Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America instruct its board for church in society to study the advisability of supporting Campaign Jubilee 2000, and make a recommendation to the 1997 joint Synod Assembly; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, at its next assembly, be memorialized to study the advisability of supporting Campaign Jubilee 2000.

BACKGROUND

Jubilee 2000 is a worldwide grass-roots movement aimed at creating a fresh start for impoverished nations as our world enters a new millennium. The movement is premised on the belief that a comprehensive new approach is essential if developing nations are to be able to move from beneath their present crushing debt burdens to a position of sound economic growth and stability. In spite of previous efforts to re-structure loans and interest schedules, many of the world's poorest debtor nations face continuing, massive repayment efforts that drain scarce resources and assets. The debt burden diverts funds, which are needed for health care, education, and clean water. Related to the worldwide campaign are a number of parallel, national Jubilee 2000 efforts, within such creditor nations as the United Kingdom, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and Sweden. The Jubilee 2000/USA Campaign is now taking shape under the leadership of the Religious Working Group on the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. That group includes representatives from a variety of denominational and advocacy groups, including the Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs.

A policy base for the Jubilee 2000 proposal may be found in the social statement *For Peace in God's World*, adopted by the fourth Churchwide Assembly (Minneapolis, 1995), including the following statements:

- ! "We also advocate an earthly peace that . . . defends and enhances the life of people who are poor and powerless. . . . Because we are created as whole persons, building earthly peace encompasses all the dimensions of human society. These dimensions include . . . the structures and practices that sustain life (economics) . . . " (page 7).
- ! "Nations should seek their own common good in the context of the global common good. International bodies should work for the welfare of all nations. . . . For the sake of a greater good or for reasons of conscience, citizens may need to oppose a prevailing understanding or practice of national identity and interest" (page 10).
- ! "Massive hunger and poverty, alongside abundance and wealth, violate the bonds of our common humanity. Such economic disparities are a cause of conflict and war and spur our efforts to build just economic relationships necessary for peace. Justice points toward an economy ordered in ways that

respect human dignity, provide the necessities of life, distribute goods and burdens fairly and equitably, and are compatible with a life-sustaining ecosystem.

! “International trade and financial agreements should help to increase partnerships, prevent commercial wars among nations, protect the environment, provide assistance with debt management, check abuse by multinational companies, and protect poorer nations. Developing countries need better opportunities to foster capital investment through fair and open trade” (pages 15-16).

Participation in Jubilee 2000 involves circulating petitions calling upon national elected officials, commercial banks, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, regional development banks, and other financial institutions to write off debts of impoverished nations by the year 2000 in ways that will benefit ordinary people and “without conditions that perpetuate or deepen poverty and environmental degradation.”

RATIONALE OF THE MEMORIALS COMMITTEE

The Memorials Committee recommends to the Churchwide Assembly that the endorsement of and participation in Jubilee 2000 be referred to the Division for Church in Society for research and study in preparation for a recommendation to the division’s board in September 1997 and subsequent recommendation to the Church Council in November 1997. The reason for this approach is that the campaign will have practically run its course, were a recommendation to wait until the 1999 Churchwide Assembly. The concerns raised in the memorial on Jubilee 2000 will also be addressed in the unit’s ongoing advocacy work and in its work to develop a social statement on economic life, which will be brought to the 1999 Churchwide Assembly.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

En Bloc

CA97.6.47 To affirm the concern expressed in the memorial of the Minneapolis Area Synod about the crushing debt burdens of many developing countries and the need for comprehensive international action to assist them to move to a position of sound economic growth and stability; and To refer to the Division for Church in Society the matter of ELCA participation in Jubilee 2000 and instruct the division to bring a report and recommendation through its

board to the November 1997 meeting of the Church Council.

Category 5: Religious Persecution

A. New Jersey Synod (7A) [1997 Memorial]

WHEREAS, it has been documented by the U.S. Congress and other sources that the persecution of religious minorities has emerged as one of the most compelling human rights issues; it is also noted that the world wide persecution and martyrdom of Christians persists at alarming levels; and

WHEREAS, the rights of Christians and other groups to practice their religion freely irrespective of the culture and customs of an area is recognized in the universal declaration of human rights (1948); and

WHEREAS, the ELCA Social Statement, *For Peace in God’s World* affirms the declaration of human rights, consistent with our understanding of humanity being created in God’s image; and

WHEREAS, this portion of the Church, “continues to teach about human rights, protest their violation, advocate their international codification, and support effective ways to monitor and ensure compliance with them”; and

WHEREAS, as citizens of the United States of America, we, as the baptized, recognize our citizenship as responsibility that requires us to speak out on behalf of the powerless and the oppressed of the world; and

WHEREAS, the Executive Council of the General Convention of The Episcopal Church, and the 208th assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Southern Baptist Convention, the General Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church, as well as the National Association of Evangelicals, have all passed statements or resolutions regarding the persecution of Christians around the world; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the New Jersey Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in assembly May 1997, memorialize the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America at the 1997 Churchwide Assembly to:

- (1) Urge prayer for persecuted Christians and their persecutors and oppressors; and
- (2) Direct the Division for Church in Society, along with the Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs and the Lutheran Office for World Community, to study this issue and to assist the church to sensitively and effectively respond to this violation of human rights; and
- (3) Continue to encourage respect and an understanding of other faiths, so that the political tyranny against Christians persons is not interpreted as relevant to those faiths or their teachings or their traditions; and
- (4) Communicate to the President of the United States, the State Department and both Houses of Congress, this Church’s concern for Christians experiencing

persecution in other parts of the world, conveying our conviction that such human rights violations are against the international community's understanding of religious liberty.

B. New England Synod (7B) [1997 Memorial]

RESOLVED, that this New England Synod memorialize the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to declare its opposition to governmental persecution of religious groups that are no threat to themselves, their fellow human beings, or nation; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the 1997 Churchwide Assembly direct the appropriate unit of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to initiate or join coalitions to work against persecution, asking governments, which discriminate against religious minorities, to desist and respect the rights of people to worship according to their conscience; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the New England Synod ask the appropriate unit of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to prepare materials for congregational study and action on this critical issue; and be it further

RESOLVED, that New England Synod seek to mobilize or join any ecumenical or inter-faith coalition formed to come to the aid of persecuted religious minorities.

BACKGROUND

In response to growing concern about religious persecution, the U.S. Department of State established in November 1996 an Advisory Committee on Religious Freedom Abroad. Among the members of this committee are representatives of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. (of which the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is a member), the National Association of Evangelicals, several Christian denominations including the Orthodox Church in America, the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the Roman Catholic Church, the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, academicians as well as representatives of the Jewish, Muslim, and Baha'i communities. The Advisory Committee has the following goals: fostering greater dialogue between religious communities and the U.S. government; increasing the flow of information to the U.S. government concerning the conditions of religious minorities facing persecution around the world; and informing interested groups and individuals about the U.S. government's efforts to address issues of religious persecution and religious freedom. Religious discrimination and persecution are often closely intertwined with other social, economic, and political issues; often religious discrimination receives little media attention. Among the groups experiencing religious discrimination throughout the world are Baha'is in Iran, Christians and moderate Muslims in Southern Sudan, Muslim fundamentalists in Egypt; Catholics, Protestants, and Jehovah's Witnesses in Greece, Christians in Indonesia,

and a variety of religious groups in China (*Human Rights Watch: 1997 World Report*).

In the 105th Congress, Senator Arlen Specter (R-PA) and Representative Frank Wolf (R-VA) introduced the *Freedom from Religious Persecution Act* (S.772/H.R.1685), which has been referred to several committees and is not expected to be reported quickly to the floor of either chamber. While this legislation is meant to protect all people from religious persecution, the debate has focused largely around the situation of Christians. Given the commitment of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to religious freedom for all, churchwide staff have worked to broaden the scope of the discussion. A coalition of religious organizations in Washington, D.C., has begun to study the legislation and develop a strategy on religious freedom for oppressed communities in various countries. In the coalition, concerns have been raised about the provision in the legislation to create an "Office of Religious Persecution Monitoring" that would duplicate efforts of the Advisory Committee on Religious Freedom Abroad and the State Department's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. Some Washington offices of religious organizations have raised questions about the sections in the legislation relating to Sudan and to refugees and asylum seekers.

The Lutheran World Federation, in a statement on Human Rights at its Sixth Assembly in 1977, said, in part: "We affirm that it is our task as Christians to promote, together with those who have different beliefs, the realization of full freedom of thought, conscience and religion; and we emphasize the right to practice the community of faith across national borders. We explicitly declare that freedom of conscience includes the right not to adhere to any religion."

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, adopted by the United Nations in 1966, and ratified by the United States in 1992, includes Article 18:

- (1) Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right shall include freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice, and freedom, either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching.
- (2) No one shall be subject to coercion, which would impair his freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice.
- (3) Freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs may be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary to protect public safety, order, health, or morals or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others.
- (4) The State Parties to the present Covenant undertake to have respect for the liberty of parents and, when applicable, legal guardians, to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions.

In its social statement, *For Peace in God's World*, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America affirmed human rights as “a common universal standard of justice for living with our differences, and they give moral and legal standing to the individual in the international community.” It also committed the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America “to teach about human rights, protest their violation, advocate their international codification, and support effective ways to monitor and ensure compliance with them.” The statement included religious persecution among the ELCA’s priorities in the area of human rights.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

En Bloc

CA97.6.48 To respond to the memorials of the New Jersey Synod and New England Synod by calling upon members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to pray for all victims of religious persecution, both Christians and non-Christians, and for their oppressors;

To direct the Division for Church in Society to continue its work with other appropriate churchwide units to study the matter of religious persecution and religious freedom and assist this church to respond effectively and sensitively to violations of the human right of freedom of thought, conscience, and religion;

To call on members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to continue to foster respect, tolerance, and understanding of other faiths, including an examination of the causes and manifestations of religious extremism in a variety of religious contexts; and

To call on members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to communicate to the President of the United States, the Department of State, and both Houses of Congress, their concern for all victims of religious persecution in other parts of the world, conveying their conviction that such human rights violations are contrary to the international community’s standards for freedom of conscience and religion.

Category 6: Hunger

BACKGROUND

Information on the ELCA World Hunger Program. At the 1987 Constituting Convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the World Hunger Program was established, in part, “to foster the education of the members of this church to understand and confront the reality and underlying causes of hunger” and “to encourage members of this church to practice responsible stewardship of their lives and their financial resources toward the prevention and alleviation of hunger.” Subsequent churchwide assemblies have raised up the church’s concern about hunger in various ways, including the 1993 Churchwide Assembly’s response to a memorial from the Indiana-Kentucky Synod that encouraged all synods to increase their Hunger Appeal giving by five percent and to establish a three-year plan to reach \$5.00 for each confirmed member.

In spite of this historic emphasis on the World Hunger Program, the 1996 Hunger Appeal fell short of its \$12 million goal by one percent. Congregational giving was down.

While it is true that giving to the Hunger Appeal is a little over \$2.00 for each baptized member, many ELCA congregations do more in combating hunger than through the Hunger Appeal. Six years ago, congregational parochial reports showed that congregations then gave \$24 million to local hunger and social ministries. Additionally, Habitat for Humanity, Bread for the World, Church World Service/CROP, Heifer Project, and other organizations are receiving direct support in money and in-kind gifts from ELCA congregations and individuals.

In light of the decline in 1996 giving, the 1997 ELCA World Hunger Appeal is bolstering its efforts by:

- ! Working with the 20 percent of ELCA congregations that do not contribute;
- ! Encouraging additional hunger designated gifts;
- ! Contacting synod bishops to improve communication and coordinate activities;
- ! Meeting with 85 synod hunger leaders from 56 synods in a churchwide event in Washington, D.C., in June 1997;
- ! Designing materials for the 1997-98 hunger resource packet that will help congregations strengthen their fundraising, education, Bible study, and advocacy efforts aimed at hunger. These materials also will highlight the 50 years of service of the Lutheran World Federation, a key hunger program partner.

Since 1997 is the tenth year of the ELCA World Hunger Program, the Office of the Bishop, with the help of the Department for Research and Evaluation, is conducting a broad-based evaluation of the Hunger Program; recommendations

resulting from this review will go to selected unit boards and the Church Council by the fall of 1998.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

En Bloc

CA97.6.49 To receive the information concerning the ELCA World Hunger Program as presented in the report of the Memorials Committee.

Category 6a: Hunger—*Status Confessionis*

A. Pacifica Synod (2C) [1997 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the World Hunger Appeal, initiated in 1974, is currently under evaluation by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and

WHEREAS, 800 million people worldwide are hungry and chronically undernourished, and 90,000 children die daily of hunger-related diseases; and God has provided sufficient food to feed every man, woman and child living on this planet; and

WHEREAS, the biblical mandate to feed the hungry is very clear (i.e., Jesus' words in Matthew 25:35f, "I was hungry and you gave me food."); and

WHEREAS, Lutherans have responded to this God-given mandate by giving \$12 million, or an average of \$2 per member per year to the World Hunger Appeal; and

WHEREAS, in 1968 W.A. Visser 't Hooft (long time general secretary of the World Council of Churches) declared: "It must become clear that church members who deny in fact their responsibilities for the needy in any part of the world, are just as much guilty of heresy as those who deny this or that article of faith."; and

WHEREAS, Professor Craig L. Nesson (Wartburg Theological Seminary) in an article in *Lutheran Partners*, May/June 1997, pp. 33f., entitled, "Stopping Hunger: A Matter of Status Confessionis?" declares, "The time has come for all churches to acknowledge both their biblical heritage and the scandal of hunger in the contemporary world. Adopting confessional status for ending hunger is a dramatic strategy—a peculiar recourse for elevating the discussion to the priority it deserves. Here is an issue of utmost urgency, literally a matter of life and death. In short, the hunger program of the church would be lifted up from its status as one concern among many and be privileged among the pressing issues of Christian conscience today."; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Pacifica Synod assembly, believe that the issue of hunger, both in our nation and throughout the world, is so urgent and so basic a concern for the people of God that we support raising the task of ending the scandal of hunger in this contemporary world, including the possibility of raising this issue to the level of confessional status in the church. We memorialize the ELCA

Churchwide Assembly to urgently set a course for the study of this action, and we call upon all congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to make this a matter of priority and urgency for study and for ministry.

BACKGROUND

Information on *Status Confessionis*. *Status Confessionis* or "a time for confession" is when Christians feel compelled, as a last resort, to disobey secular authority or even the church's own authority in order to witness, by personal suffering if necessary, that for the Church of Jesus Christ his Gospel is sufficient authority and must not be encumbered with other requirements. *Status Confessionis* implies that there are opponents with superior power and authority who seek to exercise their authority where they have no right to exercise it, i.e. where the Gospel has authority. At the time of the Reformation, these authorities included clergy, bishops, and pope who practiced a secular type of authority but with salvific claims. Social injustice may and often does result from this, but social injustice *per se* is not enough to constitute "a time for confession"—it is when social injustice is connected with a usurping of the authority of the Gospel by other powers. Disobedience in this case is to affirm the uniqueness of churchly authority. At a time of *status confessionis* the distinction between Christ's kingdom and the political realm is confused, and the one who assumes *status confessionis* seeks to "recover their radical difference" and show how they might, as expressions of the way God governs in righteousness, relate while remaining distinct (Based on "Confessing as Re-defining Authority: Ethical Implications of Augsburg's 'Time for Confessing'" by Robert Bertram. *The Debate on Status Confessionis*. Department of Studies, LWF, 1983. Pages 95-104.).

The most recent example of the declaration of *status confessionis* occurred in 1977 when the Lutheran World Federation supported the church in South Africa in its determination that the governmentally-imposed *apartheid* system usurped the authority of the Gospel and impeded the exercise of the Gospel in that country. An earlier application of *status confessionis* by the "Confessing Church" occurred in opposition to the Hitler regime in Nazi Germany.

RATIONALE OF THE

MEMORIALS COMMITTEE

The Memorials Committee advises against the ELCA Churchwide Assembly calling for a "course of study" regarding the possibility of raising hunger to the level of *status confessionis* in the church.

Status confessionis arises when the church's very identity is threatened or when conditions exist that prevent it from living out its calling (which was the effect that *apartheid* had on the church in South Africa). While hunger is a crucial social challenge, it is difficult to see how it threatens the church in this way. Even social

statements, which are the most authoritative means by which the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America addresses social issues, are not new confessions. To raise hunger to the level of *status confessionis* is to raise the question of the confessional base of the church. This is not something that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America should do by itself but is a matter for the Lutheran communion to address through the Lutheran World Federation.

In addition, to focus this church's energies on an extensive, potentially divisive study to determine theologically whether or not this church should raise hunger to *status confessionis* could have the unintended affect of distracting the church from putting its energy and resources into addressing the realities of hunger in the world today. Rather, the Memorials Committee recommends the approach described in the following response:

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

En Bloc

CA97.6.50 To respond to the memorial of the Pacifica Synod assembly on world hunger by:

- ! expressing the ELCA's urgent concern for the well-being of persons who hunger and whose basic needs go unmet—individuals who have been created in God's image;
- ! renewing this church's commitment to understanding the causes and consequences of hunger, providing food and care for those who are hungry, and changing the conditions that cause hunger, both in our nation and throughout the world; and
- ! recommitting this church to the task of ending the scandal of hunger in our world and achieving a sufficient, sustainable livelihood for all;

To express deep appreciation for the faithful response that ELCA members have made through this church's World Hunger Appeal and through many other channels as they address the reality of hunger in their communities and throughout the world;

To decline to engage in a study of the application of *status confessionis* as the church's response to the tragedy of hunger in this world;

To engage, instead, in the intentional strengthening of our church's commitment to a comprehensive response to world hunger and its causes through the ELCA World Hunger Program;

To use the current process for evaluating the World Hunger Program, undertaken through the Office of the Bishop, as an opportunity for many voices in the church to address how the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America might take this commitment more seriously and develop an even stronger World Hunger Program;

To encourage individuals and congregations to increase their awareness of hunger in this country and throughout the world and to increase their financial support of the World Hunger Program through regular contributions and designated gifts;

To encourage individuals and congregations to participate in the current ELCA study on economic life, which addresses the complex factors that give rise to hunger and explores the Biblical and confessional basis for the church's response to this situation; and

To request the Division for Church in Society to explore with the Conference of Bishops and the ELCA Church Council ways that this commitment can be strengthened among all ELCA congregations and their members, synods, and the churchwide organization, and this church's agencies and institutions.

Category 6b: Hunger—Childhood Hunger

A. East-Central Synod of Wisconsin (51) [1997 Memorial]

WHEREAS, childhood hunger in the United States is preventable and unacceptable; and

WHEREAS, more than one in four U.S. children under age 12 is hungry or at risk of hunger; and

WHEREAS, good nutrition in childhood saves money by preventing nutrition-related medical, education and future welfare costs; and

WHEREAS, the nation's nutrition programs, including the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), school lunch and breakfast meals, summer and child care meals, and food stamps, have significantly improved children's nutrition, have bipartisan support and will continue to undergo change to make them more effective; and

WHEREAS, churches and charities have responded generously to growing hunger, but do not have the capacity to replace public programs; and

WHEREAS, while all sectors must do their part to overcome widespread childhood hunger in our richly blessed nation, the federal government has a legitimate and necessary role in setting nutrition standards and providing resources to assure that all children in the United States have access to a nutritionally adequate diet; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the East-Central Synod of Wisconsin support the commitment to end childhood hunger encouraged by Bread for the World, a nonpartisan Christian citizens' movement; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Synod Council write to President Clinton, and the Senators and Representatives whose districts are in the East-Central Synod of Wisconsin, of our support to end childhood hunger in the USA, and be it further

RESOLVED, that the East-Central Synod of Wisconsin memorialize the ELCA Churchwide Assembly to support the efforts to end childhood hunger in the USA.

BACKGROUND

The Division for Church in Society through its Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs is deeply involved in advocacy directed at ending childhood hunger. Such advocacy reflects ELCA action and predecessor church body social statements (including their social statements on *Poverty, Human Rights, Economic Justice, and Toward Fairness in Public Taxing and Spending*).

The Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs, on behalf of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, endorsed the Campaign to End Childhood Hunger in 1991, as did fourteen Lutheran state public policy offices; it is also working for passage of the "Hunger Has A Cure" legislation. The priorities for this legislative campaign are:

- (1) to work with other organizations to improve the federal food stamp and child nutrition programs, especially in light of provisions in the recently passed welfare law;
- (2) to work with other organizations to promote policies and avenues, which truly help families achieve greater economic security;
- (3) to support the work of charitable organizations that serve the poor, and

- (4) to strengthen the knowledge and capacity of local organizations engaged in state policy and advocacy efforts in the areas of hunger and poverty, ranging from welfare policy to coordinating food assistance with other interventions for the poor.

The Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs participates in the Food Policy Working Group of the religious community in Washington, D.C. Both Bread for the World and the Food Research and Action Center, which the Division for Church in Society helps to fund, are part of this working group, as are representatives of the Roman Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish communities. In conjunction with this group, there has been a Lutheran presence on Capitol Hill almost weekly on hunger issues.

The office also sent action alerts on the Budget Resolution, which included issues on hunger and the WIC (Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children) program to members of the office's hunger/poverty network in March 1997. It included a briefing paper on "Preventing Hunger in the U.S." in that mailing.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

En Bloc

CA97.6.51 To affirm the commitment of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to support efforts to end childhood hunger in America, within the context of the churchwide initiative, "Help the Children";

To express appreciation to those members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America who have been active advocates on behalf of children in need;

To affirm the leadership provided in this area by the ELCA's Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs, this church's state public policy offices, Lutheran social service agencies, and other religious and secular partners in this work;

To encourage ELCA members to become active participants in the hunger and poverty network sponsored by the Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs and in other local, state, and national networks, such as Bread for the World, that are working to end childhood hunger in America; and

To encourage the presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, other rostered leaders, and lay members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to advocate with the President of the United States, appropriate federal agencies, and members of both Houses of Congress on this important issue.

Category 8: Burning of African-American Churches

A. West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod (8H) [1996 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the people of the West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America are disturbed by the recent and continued destruction by arson of African-American churches in a number of states; and

WHEREAS, we await a stronger response on the part of the Christian community at large to these shameful acts; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod declares in the strongest possible terms its condemnation of these horrible acts; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this synod memorializes the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and that our synod council calls upon the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to take a position in sympathy and solidarity with these Christian brothers and sisters; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the churchwide and synodical expressions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America seek out appropriate methods to address this deplorable state of affairs.

BACKGROUND

The Division for Church in Society, acting on behalf of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, played an active role in the Burned Churches Project of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., both in the initial organizing stages and in the assessment process that was required for the distribution of resources. These activities were performed by the division through a seconded staff person (ELCA director for community-development services). The Division for Church in Society has also developed networking and bridge building between Lutheran congregations and the congregations with burned church buildings.

These national efforts complemented the responses of congregations and individuals who engaged in volunteer activities and gave generously to assist in the

rebuilding efforts. Approximately \$175,000 in designated gifts was received from ELCA sources by the ELCA Disaster Response Fund for burned churches. In addition, approximately twice that amount was sent directly by ELCA congregations and organizations to burned churches.

The Division for Church in Society plans to play an active role in supporting interfaith efforts that address racism and race relations in the communities in which these burnings took place, nationally, and in our congregations and communities. In this regard, the division is an active member of the NCCC Burned Churches Program Committee, which is developing a strategy to create healthy communities in terms of race relations. The division, together with the Commission for Multicultural Ministries, stand ready to respond to calls from communities that have expressed a concern or asked for help organizing or facilitating town hall meetings on race relations.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

En Bloc

CA97.6.52 To join the West-Virginia-Western Maryland Synod in expressing deep concern about the burning of African-American Churches;

To affirm the commitment of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to assist in rebuilding efforts and to address the racism expressed through some of these burnings;

To express appreciation to individuals, congregations, synods, and social ministry organizations that assisted in the rebuilding efforts, through volunteer activities or through financial support;

To commend the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. and the Division for Church in Society for their work with the Burned Churches Project; and

To declare the intent of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to participate actively in the NCCC Burned Churches Project and related anti-racism projects in the coming biennium.

Category 9: Crazy Horse Defense Project

A. Northeastern Minnesota Synod (3E) [1997 Memorial]

WHEREAS, cultural images, symbols, identities, personalities and spirituality of individuals, tribes and nations indigenous to the Western Hemisphere continue to be misused for commercial purposes by economic institutions; and

WHEREAS, the Hornell Brewing Company under the ownership of Mr. John Ferolito and Mr. Don Vultaggio, and its associated brewers, bottlers and marketers, such as the G. Heileman Brewing Company and the Stroh Brewing Company, have misappropriated the name of Lakota leader Tasunke Witko, a.k.a. Crazy Horse, persistently since 1992, successfully resisting efforts in Congress, some state legislatures, courts and regulatory bodies to halt their action; and

WHEREAS, their continued use of the name Crazy Horse on a malt liquor is particularly offensive to the memory, the descendants and the culture of Crazy Horse who is remembered as having warned his people specifically against the use of intoxicating beverages; and

WHEREAS, attempts are continuing to construct a legislative solution that will withstand court tests, and a lawsuit is proceeding in behalf of Tasunke Witko's descendants, but a popular economic initiative against the offending companies might be most influential; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Northeastern Minnesota Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America express its support of the efforts of the Crazy Horse Defense Project to halt the commercial use of this revered leader's name without authorization or consent by his descendants, and that this expression of support be communicated by the bishop of this synod to the leadership of the Crazy Horse Defense Project; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Northeastern Minnesota Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America indicate its support of a boycott of AriZona Ice Tea and the AriZona line of products owned and bottled by Hornell Brewing Company, and any products associated with companies owned or operated by Ferolito, Vultaggio & Sons until such action is taken by them to remove American Indian names and cultural symbols from their products, and that the bishop of this synod communicate the action of this assembly to these companies; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Board of Church in Society provide information to help congregations better understand this issue, including a listing of product lines and companies included in the boycott, and invite congregational members to participate in the boycott; and be it further

RESOLVED, that congregational members participating in the boycott be encouraged to inform local retailers of their actions and the reasons for it; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this assembly, utilizing the advocacy and educational resources available through the Lutheran Coalition for Public Policy in Minnesota, urge the Minnesota Legislature to enact legislation to prohibit the use of the names or images of respected American Indian leaders without their consent or that of their heirs or estate; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Northeastern Minnesota Synod assembly forward this resolution to the 1997 Churchwide Assembly to be received as information, and for possible action by synods and congregations.

BACKGROUND

The Crazy Horse Defense Project, organized in collaboration with descendants of Tasunke Witko, popularly known as Crazy Horse, was initiated by South Dakota's Pine Ridge community, and the project receives financial support from three other tribal communities. This project came to the attention of the Minnesota Indian Ecumenical Ministry Committee and, through it, to the Minnesota Council of Churches, which adopted a resolution in support of the Crazy Horse Defense Project in May 1997.

The resolution clearly states that the issue is the widespread commercial exploitation of symbols, identities, and leaders of indigenous American peoples. This practice is considered offensive to many of the people so characterized. It deprives Native American youth of their own culture. Naming an alcoholic beverage after a Lakota spiritual and political leader is offensive, especially since he warned his people against the use of intoxicating beverages.

A boycott of popular products is being encouraged because reason, persuasion, and legal solutions have thus far been ineffective.

Rationale of the Memorials Committee. In November 1989, the Church Council adopted policies and procedures on economic boycotts. These policies and procedures reference this church's constitutional commitment to work for justice in society (4.03.g, 1); they describe boycotts as a final form of private sector advocacy that may be taken after other steps are exhausted and after there has been careful deliberation. These same policies and procedures spell out ethical, procedural, and pastoral considerations that should be part of the deliberation leading up to ELCA endorsement of a boycott. In keeping with the sense of this memorial, the Memorials Committee recommends referral of this matter to the Division for Church in Society, which will distribute information on this issue to synods, as appropriate. This action is taken with the concurrence and support of staff of the ELCA's Commission for Multicultural Ministries.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

En Bloc

CA97.6.53 To refer the memorial of the Northeastern Minnesota Synod on the Crazy Horse Defense Project to the Division for Church in Society; and

To request that the Division for Church in Society, following consultation with the Minnesota Council of Churches, distribute this memorial together with relevant information to appropriate ELCA synods.

Category 10: Fair Labor Practices

BACKGROUND

In 1993, the Division for Church in Society commissioned a task force to prepare a draft of guidelines for affiliated social ministry organizations pertaining to employee/employer relations, including but not limited to the matters of union organizing and collective bargaining. Members of the task force included staff of the division, human resource and executive personnel from social ministry organizations, a union official, and the director of the Institute for Mission, based in Columbus, Ohio.

After review of several drafts from the task force by the executive director of the Division for Church in Society, a division board sub-committee, and groups of human resource directors and executives from social ministry organizations, the executive director of the division determined that a change of course was needed in order to fulfill the original expectations of the project.

There were a number of reasons for this determination. A “guidelines” paper, naturally prescriptive in character, was questioned as the best medium for addressing employee/employer relations. Federal law prescribes the regulations and procedures for union organizing and collective bargaining, including the rights and responsibilities of employers and employees alike. It was deemed unnecessary to repeat this extensive body of law. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is already on record regarding its commitment to collective bargaining and the rights of striking workers; and the ELCA’s criteria for affiliation of social ministry organizations include many rubrics regarding employee/employer relations, such as equal opportunity, affirmative action, personnel policies that reflect just and equitable treatment of employees, and promotion of established professional codes of ethics with staff and board.

Further, the development by the division of a social statement on economic life provides the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America an opportunity to speak within the context of economic issues pertaining to all persons in the American workforce, including those who are employed by the church’s expressions and ministries.

And, finally, to develop guidelines for such relations would require an extensive prescriptive interpretation, not just recitation, of the social policy of the

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and its predecessor church bodies where the policy speaks to human rights, institutional life, social welfare, and economic justice. The division determined that this would be a project beyond the means of the division to do well.

Upon this analysis, the division elected to change course without abandoning much of the original intent. Two steps are currently planned. With the inauguration of Lutheran Services in America (LSA), the first step is to ask LSA to prepare a series of papers addressing models for healthy, quality relations between employees and their organizations. There is much to learn by sharing the many policies and activities already in place in the social ministry organizations. The second step, to be undertaken by the division, is preparation of a study paper for the organizations that will encompass an overview of this church’s social policy regarding its institutions and their stakeholders (i.e., staff, board, residents, clients, volunteers, etc.). The paper will provide suggestions of questions, which can be employed in study of this policy, as well as a bibliography of other resources available to assist users of the material.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

En Bloc

CA97.6.54 To acknowledge and affirm the work being done by the Division for Church in Society, in conjunction with Lutheran Services in America, relating to fair labor practices in social ministry organizations affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Category 10a: ELCA Social Ministry Organizations

A. Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod (8A) [1997 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America includes advocacy for the just and fair treatment of those who are vulnerable and lack fair and appropriate voice in matters relating to their own welfare, including those who are poor, the working poor, and those engaged in daily labor; and

WHEREAS, such advocacy has been expressed in several existing social statements and resolutions adopted by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and its predecessor bodies (e.g., the investment objectives pertaining to fair labor and employment practices adopted by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Church Council in 1990 and the resolution on “Workers Rights” adopted at the Second Biennial Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, August 28-September 4, 1991); and

WHEREAS, the relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, its synods, and congregations affords many blessings to the social ministry organizations recognized and supported by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, its synods and congregations; and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's advocacy for fair labor practices must be seen as congruent with its own internal practices; and

WHEREAS, a process initiated by the Division for Church in Society in 1993 resulted in the production of proposed guidelines ("Principles for Considering Employee/Employer Relationships in Social Ministry Organizations affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America"), but neither these nor any other guidelines were ever adopted; and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Coalition for Mission in Appalachia (ELCMA), meeting in assembly, April 21-23, 1997, approved a resolution calling on its member synods to memorialize the 1997 Churchwide Assembly to encourage the Board of the Division for Church in Society, along with the division itself, to adopt guidelines for the guidance of its social ministry organizations in matters relating to fair labor practices, and

WHEREAS, the Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod is a member synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Coalition for Mission in Appalachia; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America call on the Division for Church in Society to adopt guidelines and standards relating to fair labor practices on the part of social ministry organizations recognized by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod memorialize the 1997 Churchwide Assembly to encourage the board of the Division for Church in Society, along with the division itself, to adopt guidelines for the guidance of its social ministry organizations regarding fair labor practices.

B. Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod (8B) [1997 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America includes advocacy for the just and fair treatment of those who are vulnerable and lack fair and appropriate voice in matters relating to their own welfare, including those who are poor, the working poor, and those engaged in daily labor; and

WHEREAS, such advocacy has been expressed in several existing social statements and resolutions adopted by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and its predecessor bodies on behalf of the important role played by unions and "collective bargaining" in the workplace (e.g., the investment objectives pertaining to fair labor and employment practices adopted by the ELCA Church Council in 1990 and the resolution on "Workers Rights" adopted at the 1991 ELCA Churchwide Assembly); and

WHEREAS, notwithstanding the blessings afforded to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America by those Social Ministry Organizations in covenant relationship with it through its Division for Church in Society, dialogue concerning the welfare of their employees and their rights to consider engaging in collective bargaining has on occasion been unnecessarily adversarial; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA's advocacy for fair labor practices, union representation and collective bargaining must be seen as congruent with its commitment in respect to its own internal practices; and

WHEREAS, a process initiated by the Division for Church in Society in 1993 resulted in the production of proposed guidelines Principles for Considering Employer/Employee Relationship in Social Ministry Organizations Affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, but the process was altered and the proposed guidelines removed from discussion prior to its reception and consideration by the board of the division, to the possible detriment of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and its missional directives; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America express its concern to the Division for Church in Society and request that the division ask its board to consider the document prepared under its own auspices as quickly as practical; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America request the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America at its 1997 Churchwide Assembly to encourage the board of the Division for Church in Society, along with the division staff itself, to adopt the proposed guidelines or similar guidelines for the guidance of its Social Ministry Organizations in matters relating to fair labor practices, such as when employees are considering union representation.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

En Bloc

CA97.6.55 To refer the memorials of the Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod and the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod on this subject to the Division for Church in Society;

To request the Division for Church in Society to be in further conversation with these two synods as part of its ongoing response to this concern; and

To request that the Division for Church in Society bring a report on this matter to the Church Council at its April 1998 meeting.

Category 10b: Employment Non-Discrimination Act

A. Southeastern Synod (9D) [1997 Memorial]

WHEREAS, we are called by the Gospel to promote justice among all people; and

WHEREAS, the 1993 ELCA Churchwide Assembly declared “support for the civil rights of all persons regardless of their sexual orientation;” and

WHEREAS, there are 41 states of the United States where it is legal to be refused employment or to be fired simply because a person is perceived to be gay or lesbian; and

WHEREAS, the four states of the Southeastern Synod (ELCA) are among those 41 states, which offer no legal protection in employment for gay and lesbian people; and

WHEREAS, the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) would prohibit such discrimination; and

WHEREAS, ENDA was only one vote away from passage when voted on by the U.S. Senate in 1996; and

WHEREAS, this legislation does not require employers to provide benefits to partners of gay employees and prohibits hiring quotas based on sexual orientation; and

WHEREAS, the legislation exempts small businesses, the armed forces, and religious institutions; and

WHEREAS, the voice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America calling for justice for all people could help make a difference in the passage of this legislation when it is voted on again; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Synod (ELCA) memorialize the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to endorse passage of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act by the Congress of the United States. Such endorsement shall be in effect as long as it takes to secure passage of legislation to secure the employment rights of all people regardless of their sexual orientation.

BACKGROUND

The proposed Employment Non-Discrimination Act would prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in employment. The legislation exempts small businesses and does not require an employer to provide benefits for the same-sex partner of an employee; it prohibits quotas and preferential treatment, provides for a broad religious exemption, and would not apply to members of the Armed Forces.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and its predecessor church bodies have gone on record affirming the civil rights of homosexual persons. The 1993 Churchwide Assembly voted to “commend the Church Council for its action in adopting the resolution, ‘Harassment, Assault, and Discrimination Due to Sexual Orientation,’ and, as the assembly of this church, to affirm that action” [CA93.3.4]. That resolution stated that

. . . the historical position of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is:

- (1) Strong opposition to all forms of verbal or physical harassment or assault of persons because of their sexual orientation; and

- (2) Support for legislation, referendums, and policies to protect the civil rights of all persons, regardless of their sexual orientation, and to prohibit discrimination in housing, employment, and public services and accommodations. . . .

On the basis of this action, the Division for Church in Society has actively advocated for the passage of the proposed Employment Non-Discrimination Act.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

En Bloc

CA97.6.56 To respond to the memorial of the Southeastern Synod by expressing support for the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, while acknowledging that the act provides for a broad religious exemption; and

To affirm the advocacy of synods and the Division for Church in Society in support of laws barring discrimination against individuals on the basis of their sexual orientation.

Category 12: Mental Health Services

A. Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod (8B) [1997 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the ELCA health benefits plan seeks the health and well-being of pastors, associates in ministry, other church workers and their families, and

WHEREAS, the mental and spiritual health of church personnel and their families is of great importance to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and

WHEREAS, Lutheran Social Service agencies are called into being to provide, among other things, counsel and support; and

WHEREAS, the commonwealth of Pennsylvania is one of the very few states, which does not license either professional counselors or marriage and family therapists; and

WHEREAS, it unduly restricts access to the services of Lutheran Social Service agencies for the Board of Pension to exclude the services of non-licensed counselors, especially in states like Pennsylvania; and

WHEREAS, the exception to the licensing requirement made for Diplomats and Fellows of the American Association of Pastoral Counselors has a very small numerical impact; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the assembly of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod memorialize the ELCA [Churchwide] Assembly to recommend to the Board of Pensions that the counseling staff of all Lutheran Social Service agencies, which are recognized by the Division for Church in Society, be included as providers of mental health services under the Board of Pensions health plan.

BACKGROUND

Prior to July 1, 1994, the ELCA Medical and Dental Benefits Plan limited psychotherapy or chemical dependency treatment to:

Treatment for nervous and emotional disorders or chemical or substance abuse by a duly licensed psychiatrist or duly licensed or certified psychologist who has a doctorate degree in psychology and a declared competence in psychotherapy [or by a psychotherapist, psychiatric worker or pastoral counselor (certified by the American Association of Pastoral Counselors) acting under the written orders and supervision of such a psychiatrist or doctorate-level psychologist].

Under this definition, treatment by other than licensed psychiatrist or licensed doctorate-level psychologists (such as therapy performed by pastoral counselors) was covered only if provided under the direct orders and supervision of a licensed psychiatrist or licensed doctorate-level psychologist.

The appropriateness of the supervisory requirement was questioned by pastoral counselors, other mental health professionals, and plan members.

Effective July 1, 1994, the definition of an eligible outpatient mental health provider was revised to eliminate the supervisory requirement. Therapy provided by the following therapists is eligible for consideration under the ELCA health plan:

- ! Licensed Psychiatrists
- ! Licensed doctoral-level psychologists (Ph.D.; Ed.D.; Psy.D.)
- ! Pastoral Counselors (A.A.P.C. Diplomates; A.A.P.C. Fellows)
- ! Masters-prepared therapists, provided the therapist possesses:
 - ! A degree in social work or counseling from an accredited institution; and
 - ! A license as a mental health clinician from a state that licenses or a certificate as a mental health clinician from a state that certifies rather than licenses; and
 - ! A minimum of two years of full-time clinical experience, or its equivalency.

Rationale of the Memorials Committee. The Board of Pensions recognizes that treatment of mental health conditions is an evolving science. The current definition of an eligible mental health provider addresses the majority of the concerns that had been raised about the prior definition. Nevertheless, the board acknowledges that the definition of a mental health therapist should be reviewed periodically and

revised, if appropriate. Therefore, upon recommendation of the Board of Pensions, the Memorials Committee encourages review of the definition of a covered mental health provider by means of the following referral to the Board of Pensions.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

En Bloc

CA97.6.57 To refer the memorial of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod on Mental Health Services to the Board of Pensions for review; and

To request that the Board of Pensions bring a report and possible recommendations for action to the November 1997 meeting of the Church Council.

Category 16: Urban Ministries

A. Minneapolis Area Synod (3G) [1997 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the Minneapolis Area Synod in assembly in 1995 requested the ELCA Division for Outreach to develop an urban initiative; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA Division for Outreach Urban Team has presented the report entitled *In the City for Good* for action at the ELCA Churchwide Assembly in 1997; and

WHEREAS, the Churchwide Assembly will be asked to implement a decade-long emphasis on urban ministry from 1998 to 2008; and

WHEREAS, the Churchwide Assembly will further consider the establishment of a fund “to support and strengthen the ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in urban settings,” committing \$500,000 to the fund annually during the decade; and

WHEREAS, we believe the future ministry of the church in our cities requires clear strategy, commitment and creative, effective proclamation of the Gospel; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Minneapolis Area Synod memorialize the 1997 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to adopt the *In the City for Good* initiative; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Minneapolis Area Synod memorialize the 1997 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to commit at least \$500,000 annually during the decade 1998 to 2008 to this urban initiative.

B. Saint Paul Area Synod (3H) [1997 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the ELCA Division for Outreach Urban Team has presented the report entitled “In the City for Good” for action at the ELCA Churchwide Assembly in 1997; and the Churchwide Assembly will be asked to implement a decade-long emphasis on urban ministry from 1998 to 2008; and

WHEREAS, the Churchwide Assembly will further consider the establishment of a fund “to support and strengthen the ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in urban settings,” committing \$500,000 to the fund annually during the decade; and

WHEREAS, we believe the future of Lutheran Ministry in our cities requires clear strategy, commitment and proclamation of the Gospel in creative, effective ways; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Saint Paul Area Synod memorialize the 1997 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to adopt the “In the City for Good” initiative; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Saint Paul Area Synod memorialize the 1997 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to commit at least \$500,000 annually during the decade 1998 to 2008 to this urban initiative

BACKGROUND

The urban strategy (*In the City for Good*), which was developed by the Division for Outreach and commended to the 1997 Churchwide Assembly by the ELCA Church Council, is printed in Section IV, pages 79-86 of the *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*.

Since this is an item that is scheduled to be discussed by the 1997 Churchwide Assembly, the memorials of the Minneapolis Area Synod and the Saint Paul Area Synod that addresses this concern are received as advice to the 1997 Churchwide Assembly.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

En Bloc

CA97.6.58 To acknowledge the action of the 1997 Churchwide Assembly on the urban strategy, *In the City for Good*, as the response of this assembly to the memorials on this subject from the Minneapolis Area Synod and Saint Paul Area Synod.

Category 17: Deaf Ministry

A. Southeastern Minnesota Synod (3I) [1997 Memorial]

WHEREAS, at present Deaf Ministry does not have sufficient support from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America on a national level; and

WHEREAS, the former American Lutheran Church had a national Ephphatha office, which helped fund several churches and ministries throughout the U.S.; and

WHEREAS, when the three Lutheran church bodies became the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Deaf Ministry was not included under the “disability” part of the Church in Society Division; and

WHEREAS, this has resulted in the closing of ministries with the deaf throughout the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, depriving many hearing impaired people of the grace of the Gospel of Jesus Christ; and

WHEREAS, closed captioning videos or signing, curriculum adapted for the deaf, recommendations for building design that facilitate ability to see a speaker, for lip reading or for signing are ways the ministry of Jesus Christ can be made more accessible; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Minnesota Synod memorialize the ELCA Churchwide Assembly to set up a national office for ministry with the deaf under the Division for Outreach as a multicultural ministry; therefore, be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Minnesota Synod memorialize the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to include hearing impairment as an accessibility issue in the design of church programs and structures under the Division for Church in Society.

B. Metropolitan New York Synod (7C) [1997 Memorial]

WHEREAS, American Sign Language (ASL) is not only the language of the Deaf Community in America, but part of their heritage and a source of pride in their culture; and

WHEREAS, American Sign Language is recognized as a foreign language by the Board of Regents of the State of New York and others with respect to second language requirements for high school graduation, and by over 70 colleges and universities including Harvard, Yale, Georgetown, Brown, MIT, the State University of New York and the University of Minnesota as a foreign language for college admissions; and

WHEREAS, linguists and other language specialists have acknowledged that ASL meets the requirements necessary to qualify as a distinct language; and

WHEREAS, the implied intent of the sections of the constitutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America referring to committee membership and delegate body diversity, which references “persons whose primary language is other than English,” is to include persons of differing cultures and to make the church more inclusive; and

WHEREAS, Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America at both the Second and Third Triennial Conventions affirmed their support of a constitutional change, which would include ASL as a “Language other than English in issues with respect to committee memberships and delegates, but was informed that the Women of the Evangelical Lutheran

Church in America constitution must be parallel to the constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and

WHEREAS, Metropolitan New York Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America at its convention held September 21, 1996, adopted a resolution requesting the Metropolitan New York Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to memorialize the church for constitutional change; and

WHEREAS, some congregations of Metropolitan New York Synod have Deaf Ministries, which seek to include deaf persons in the total life of the church; and

WHEREAS, inclusion of American Sign Language as an acceptable language in the definition of the constitution's references to "primary language other than English" would not mandate the inclusion of members of the Deaf community, but rather make them eligible for inclusion in a group of persons whose culture and language differs from the majority; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America memorialize the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for constitutional change to insert American Sign Language in its definition of language other than English.

C. Virginia Synod (9A) [1997 Memorial]

WHEREAS, American Sign Language (ASL) is not only the language of deaf community in America, but part of their heritage and a source of pride in their culture; and

WHEREAS, linguists and other language specialists have acknowledge that ASL meets the requirements necessary to qualify as a language; and

WHEREAS, because of difficulties in communication and other different issues, the deaf community is a unique and special community; and

WHEREAS, there are congregations in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America whose main mission is to minister to the deaf community; and

WHEREAS, Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America recognizes the deaf community as a unique culture and American Sign Language as a language other than English; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Virginia Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, recognize the deaf community as unique culture and American Sign Language as a language other than English; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Virginia Synod provide for American Sign Language at Virginia Synod assemblies and other synod events whenever indication of such need arises; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Virginia Synod communicate this action to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for review and further action.

BACKGROUND

A number of the issues raised in the memorials of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod, Metropolitan New York Synod, and Virginia Synod were raised in

memorials that came to the 1989 Churchwide Assembly, which called for ministry with the deaf to be placed within the Commission for Multicultural Ministries. (The ELCA's governing documents assigned this ministry to the Division for Social Ministry Organizations, now the Division for Church in Society.) The 1989 Churchwide Assembly referred this matter to the Commission for Multicultural Ministries and the Division for Social Ministry Organizations, in consultation with the ELCA Church Council.

Upon recommendation of the two units, and following consultation with the deaf community, the ELCA Church Council affirmed at its April 1991 meeting that:

- ! the deaf are to be viewed as having a unique culture with its own language (American Sign Language);
- ! the Division for Congregational Ministries, Division for Ministry, Division for Outreach, the Division for Higher Education and Schools, the Commission for Multicultural Ministry, and the Division for Church in Society share churchwide responsibility for deaf ministry;
- ! a multi-unit approach to deaf ministry is necessary because deaf issues touch the responsibilities of these various units; and
- ! to coordinate these efforts, the Division for Church in Society is to serve as the lead unit.

The 1993 Churchwide Assembly referred to the Church Council a similar resolution, which requested that the deaf community be one of the communities served by the Commission for Multicultural Ministries. The Church Council, having reviewed this matter again, reaffirmed its 1991 position. This action was reported to the 1995 Churchwide Assembly.

The multi-unit approach has resulted in the following actions:

- ! The Evangelical Lutheran Deaf Association (ELDA) has been formed, which brings together approximately 50 deaf ELCA members every two years to advise the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- ! In 1995, the board of the Division for Outreach developed a Strategy for Deaf Ministries to guide its actions in working with synods and congregations as they support and develop deaf ministries and congregations in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. This document was reviewed by the deaf community at its regular meeting and was reviewed by the ELDA board. The division recognizes the need to affirm the deaf community and its leadership; the division has adopted a policy to receive input and recommendations from the board of the Evangelical Lutheran Deaf Association on funding levels and evaluations of deaf ministries that are supported, in part, through the Division for Outreach. (No deaf ministry has been closed since the beginning of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; two ministries in Pennsylvania have been yoked together and are now served by a single pastor.)

- ! Deaf ELCA leaders provide leadership training to other deaf members.
- ! Training is provided to ELCA pastors and lay ministers engaged in deaf ministry.
- ! The ELCA's first culturally-deaf candidate for ministry is only one year from ordination. (She currently consults regarding new deaf ministry starts, serves as advisor to the Evangelical Lutheran Deaf Association, and serves as solo staff to our deaf congregation in West Chester, Pennsylvania.)

The distinction between the needs of culturally deaf persons (ministering within a minority culture) and hard-of-hearing persons (accessibility to hearing-culture ministry) has been recognized by the churchwide units engaged in ministry with the deaf. The Division for Church in Society makes this distinction in its work and addresses the needs of hard-of-hearing persons as an accessibility issue.

The Division for Church in Society, the Division for Multicultural Ministry, and the Division for Outreach support the continuation of the current structure for deaf ministry. They rely on input from the culturally deaf community in making ministry decisions about deaf ministry, particularly through the use of deaf consultants. The current inter-unit approach effectively addresses the issues raised in these memorials; the units involved are committed to continuing communication and strengthening relationships with the deaf community.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

En Bloc

CA97.6.59 To affirm that the deaf have a unique culture and language (American Sign Language) and to express the commitment of this church to be in ministry with the deaf community;

To affirm the current multi-unit approach to ministry with the deaf, with continued emphasis upon the development of deaf leadership and recognition of the distinctiveness of deaf culture;

To refer the request of the memorial of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod, concerning the placement of deaf ministries within the churchwide structure, to the Office of the Bishop, in consultation with the Division for Church

in Society, the Commission for Multicultural Ministries, and the Division for Outreach; and

To request that the Office of the Bishop, in consultation with the deaf community, including the Evangelical Lutheran Deaf Association, bring a report to the April 1998 meeting of the Church Council, through the council's Program and Structure Committee.

Category 18: Mission Outreach

A. Alaska Synod (1A) [1997 Memorial]

WHEREAS, Jesus reminds us that "the harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few" (Matthew 9:37); and

WHEREAS, the Alaska Synod is eager to start new ministries as we have opportunity and to support existing ministries as they have need, and

WHEREAS, the ELCA Division for Outreach appears to be cutting back support to new and existing congregations in Alaska due to a "lack of available money"; and

WHEREAS, the Mission Investment Fund of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has been slow and hesitant in loaning funds to mission congregations in Alaska; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the voting members of the Alaska Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America meeting in assembly June 5-8, 1997, memorialize the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to

- (1) have an ingathering of forty million dollars (\$40,000,000) in funds above and beyond our regular budget over the next three years in celebration and thanksgiving to God for our first ten years as a church; and
- (2) re-commit the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to a mission outreach program of starting new ministries, and raising up leaders to staff such ministries with the use of these funds; and
- (3) use these funds to provide money in direct support of existing ministries and to guarantee, as needed, loans made to new and existing congregations with Mission Investment Fund monies; and
- (4) move our church back to a "benevolent" mentality rather than a "banking" mentality when we start new ministries, support existing ministries or make loans for land and buildings for new and existing ministries.

BACKGROUND

The Memorials Committee conveys to the assembly the following information and observations that were shared with the committee by the Division for Outreach:

- ! The cutback in starting new congregations is a churchwide issue, not limited to Alaska.
- ! There is no record of decreased support to congregations in Alaska due to a lack of available money.
- ! The Mission Investment Fund has made loans to mission congregations in Alaska; sites have been purchased, and parsonages have been purchased.
- ! The Mission Investment Fund has a fiduciary responsibility to manage the resources of that fund in ways that are in keeping with good business practice. The Mission Investment Fund does make “risk” loans; and, therefore, even greater responsibility must be taken by those who manage the fund as they carry out their responsibilities.
- ! The functions of the Division for Outreach and the Mission Investment Fund should not be confused. If there were to be an in-gathering of \$40 million for mission outreach over a three-year period, that would probably be used to start new congregations and to assist established congregations that would qualify to receive grants. The Mission Investment Fund has adequate financial resources to make loans, purchase parsonages and sites, in keeping with its mandate.

RATIONALE OF THE MEMORIALS COMMITTEE

The Memorials Committee chose not to make any judgments related to the particulars of the relationship between the Alaska Synod and the Division for Outreach as described in the “whereas” paragraphs of the Alaska Synod Memorial. That is a matter of ongoing consultation and conversation between the synod and the division. The committee chose instead to focus on the RESOLVED sections of this resolution—specifically the call for a major churchwide appeal.

The committee notes that the Office of the Bishop and the Church Council have begun a major review of the budget for 1999 and succeeding years, and issues related to funding of mission outreach will be addressed as part of that study. It also notes that the 1993 Churchwide Assembly affirmed a stewardship strategy, which questioned the cost-effectiveness of large, churchwide fund-raising campaigns; the study also noted that such campaigns do not tend to build good relationships among various parts of the church. In addition, the experience of major churchwide “appeals” carried out by other mainline denominations has not been positive.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has made slow but steady progress in undergirding mission outreach through the basic means of

congregational mission support, and through the complementary activities of Vision for Mission, Mission Partners, and Mission Founders. In addition, several ELCA synods have launched synodical in-gatherings; others have undertaken intentional development efforts, in cooperation with the ELCA Foundation.

The request from the Alaska Synod comes at a time when the 1997 Churchwide Assembly will be asked to launch a new “Fund for Leaders in Mission” to support theological education (see *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section IV, pages 181-202). While there is a need for additional financial resources in regard to all areas of the work of the churchwide organization, this would not appear to be an appropriate time to undertake such an additional fundraising campaign.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

En Bloc

CA97.6.60 To acknowledge the shortage of resources for outreach, as noted by the memorial of the Alaska Synod;

To affirm mission support as a primary means by which congregations can support the mission outreach of this church;

To encourage individuals and congregations to use such means as Mission Partners, Mission Founders, and Vision for Mission to increase the resources available to the church in this critical area; and

To refer the memorial of the Alaska Synod on mission outreach to the Office of the Bishop, as it, in consultation with the ELCA Church Council, undertakes the thorough review of the churchwide budget that is scheduled for this fall.

Category 19: Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs

A. Alaska Synod (1A) [1997 memorial]

WHEREAS, the Alaska Synod encompasses the geographic area known as the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge; and

WHEREAS, the Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs released an *Action Alert* regarding the Arctic National Wilderness Bill (S531 and HR900), which includes a prohibition of oil drilling and development in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, and

WHEREAS, the social statement, *Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope and Justice*, calls for consultation with the people directly affected by proposed legislative action and the response of the church to that; and

WHEREAS, the people of the Alaska Synod have many informed opinions regarding oil exploration and drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge; and

WHEREAS, the Alaska Federation of Natives has expressed an opinion in favor of oil development in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, therefore, be it

RESOLVED that the voting members of the Alaska Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, meeting in assembly, 1997, memorialize the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to respond to the *Action Alert* of the Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs regarding oil development in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, including:

- (a) protesting the recent *Action Alert*; and
- (b) reminding the Division for Church and Society and the Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs of its obligation to consult with people directly affected by proposed legislative action prior to intervention; and
- (c) provision of accurate information to the Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs; and
- (d) seeking a mailing to all recipients of the recent *Action Alert* with comprehensive information regarding oil drilling and development in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, which follows the provisions of the document, *Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope and Justice*.

BACKGROUND

At issue in the memorial of the Alaska Synod are various attempts, through federal legislation and through federal budget amendments, either to prohibit or to allow oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, a section of Alaska's North Slope. The refuge is the only part of the North Slope in which oil drilling is now prohibited; it comprises less than 10 percent of the North Slope.

In November 1995, the Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs sent out an *Action Alert* under the title, "Congress Set to Destroy Arctic National Wildlife Refuge." Based on factors involving (1) the expectation of a relatively small amount of oil beneath the refuge; (2) the threat that the opening to development of the refuge would pose to the resident Gwich'in Indians; (3) the threat that development would pose to the Porcupine Caribou herd, which uses the refuge as its annual calving ground and whose existence is integrally linked with the Gwich'ins, the alert urged the president to veto any bill allowing drilling in the refuge. The alert was sent to the environmental network of the Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs.

That mailing was preceded by several letters to members of Congress, stating opposition to drilling. One letter was a joint effort of the Lutheran office and counterparts from the United Methodist Church, the Church of the Brethren, the Unitarian Universalist Association, the United Church of Christ, the Friends Committee on National Legislation, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, and The Episcopal Church. These letters followed and were informed by similar appeals from the Gwich'in Steering Committee and the National Congress of American Indians. This legislative activity was reported to the board of the Division for Church in Society in September 1996.

In May 1997, prompted by the introduction to the 105th Congress of bills to accomplish the same protections as in the earlier efforts, the Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs again issued an *Action Alert* on the subject. The mailing was brought to the attention of the Alaska Synod in assembly, which passed this memorial.

The actions taken on behalf of the church with regard to the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge are based on the social statement, *Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope, and Justice*. Of particular importance are the sections addressing the ELCA's response to the "unprecedented threats" faced by "living creatures, and the air, soil, and water that support them," and the statement's call to justice, particularly "justice through solidarity," stressing the need to stand with the land and its inhabitants (pages 3, 6).

RATIONALE OF THE MEMORIALS COMMITTEE

The memorial of the Alaska Synod bases its objections to the action taken by the Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs on (1) the belief that people directly affected by the legislation were not consulted prior to action, as called for in the social statement; (2) the "many informed opinions" on the issue among members of the Alaska Synod; and (3) the opinion of the Alaska Federation of Natives, which favors oil development in the refuge. Two related questions are relevant to this discussion: How and with whom shall local consultation take place? How does the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America then determine its position on specific issues when consultation reveals divergent opinions, which are based on the same social statements? These questions, still to be resolved, are addressed in the following resolution, which is recommended by the Memorials Committee for assembly action.

ASSEMBLY ACTION

En Bloc

CA97.6.61 To refer the memorial of the Alaska Synod on the Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs to the Division for Church in Society for action, in consultation with the Office of the Bishop and the Alaska Synod;

To instruct the division to engage in dialogue with the Alaska Synod related to the position taken by the Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs on the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge;

To affirm the plan of the Division for Church in Society
! to develop criteria and guidelines for future local consultations on public policy issues; and
! to formulate a plan to enhance communication between various expressions of this church on public policy issues; and

To request the division to bring to the April 1998 meeting of the Church Council a report on this matter.

Category 20: ELCA Policy Statements and Ecumenical Agreements

A. Southeastern Minnesota Synod (31) [1997 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the 1989 Churchwide Assembly agreed that the agreements and policy statements of the predecessor churches of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall continue in effect until formally changed, and directed that any proposed change and the reason for it be made available to the church; and

WHEREAS, since its inception the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has proposed and is now preparing to propose numerous agreements and policy statements including ecumenical agreements on ministry, sexuality, sacramental practices, the economy and peace; and

WHEREAS, several of these agreements and statements have proposed or made significant changes from agreements and statements of the predecessor churches but have not clearly identified such changes or the reasons for such changes; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Minnesota Synod memorialize the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to direct the ELCA Church Council to ensure that each proposed agreement or policy statement includes a clear summary of existing ELCA policy and its rationale, and a precise identification of proposed policy changes and the rationale for such changes; and, therefore, be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Minnesota Synod memorialize the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA Church Council to establish meaningful standards and procedures, including designation of specific staff members and boards who shall be accountable for implementing such standards and procedures, to ensure that such information is made available to ELCA members on a timely basis; and, therefore, be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Minnesota Synod memorialize the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to direct the ELCA Church Council that no proposed policy statement or agreement shall be presented to a Churchwide Assembly unless such information shall have been made available to ELCA members, congregations and synodical assemblies on a timely basis.

BACKGROUND

The Memorials Committee received the following information from the Division for Church in Society.

The ELCA's first procedural document on social statements (*Social Statements in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America: Policies and Procedures*), approved by the first Churchwide Assembly in 1989, set forth the 1987 constituting convention's understanding of policy documents of predecessor church bodies when it stated:

The constituting convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America resolved to "receive the social statements of the existing churches as historical documents." The board of the Commission for Church in Society voted "that the term *historical documents* in the resolution of the constituting convention to the Commission for Church in Society regarding AELC, ALC, and LCA social statements be interpreted to mean that common elements of the former statements be utilized as the interim *contextual basis and guiding principles* for present advocacy work until such time as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America develops and adopts new social statements" (minutes of board meeting, September 17-19, 1986, page 4, footnote 4, emphasis added).

This same procedural document sets forth the importance of these "historical documents" for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in 1989 when it states:

The rich legacy of concern for social issues that we have received from the church bodies that united to form the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America strengthens our calling. As a confessional church with an historical sense, this church continues to look to the social statements of The American Lutheran Church and the Lutheran Church in America *for guidance*, while it develops its own social statements. These historical documents, too, summon this

church to a coherent, responsible and prophetic public witness (page 4, emphasis added).

In almost exactly similar words, the proposed procedural document that is on the agenda of the 1997 Churchwide Assembly (*Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns*) expresses this view of predecessor church social statements (*1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section IV, pages 119-128).

When a task force, under the auspices of the Division for Church in Society, prepares a new social statement, it studies what the historical documents say, but it is not bound to them, but rather to Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions.

There are several practical reasons why differences between new statements and old ones are not listed:

- (1) The context for a social statement changes over time. A statement drafted on a subject in the 1990s, may take a different approach or give a different emphasis than a statement drafted in the 1960s because there is a different set of social, economic, and political realities at work.
- (2) Predecessor church bodies' social documents do not always agree. For example, the ALC and the LCA took different positions on the death penalty.
- (3) The documents of predecessor church bodies showed internal differences, possibly resulting from these statements being approved at different times.
- (4) These "historical documents" have been viewed as offering the context and guidance for previous policy statements rather than establishing "canon law" or legal precedent.

The 1997 Churchwide Assembly will be asked to review *Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns*, which was developed by the Division for Church in Society and commended to the assembly by the ELCA Church Council. The new procedures, developed over a two-year period, detail four spheres of activity to improve the ELCA's engagement with social issues: (1) equipping and nurturing members; (2) encouraging learning and moral discourse; (3) the development and enactment of social policy; and (4) interpreting and applying social policy.

The memorial of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod calls for greater standardization of processes among ELCA units than has been followed thus far. The Department for Ecumenical Affairs, the Division for Congregational Ministries, and the Division for Church in Society have followed similar procedures in developing policy statements and agreements but have adapted them to their respective needs, in consultation with the Church Council.

This memorial of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod may reflect a new view of social policy statements. While it may seek greater accountability to former policy statements, it raises the possibility that these come to be understood as canon

law or legal precedent for new statements. This is not the spirit in which the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has operated. Typically, boards and the Church Council use pertinent historical documents in their evaluation of new material. They have sought to respect tradition, while listening to new realities and maintaining inclusive dialogue in the church.

The Department for Ecumenical Affairs reports that many of the elements described above also apply as ecumenical statements and agreements of predecessor church bodies (and the Lutheran Council in the U.S.A.) are used within the current ELCA context.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

En Bloc

CA97.6.62 To refer the memorial of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod to the Division for Church in Society, the Department for Ecumenical Affairs, and the Division for Congregational Ministries as information, as they develop statements for consideration by this church;

To encourage members and congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to make use of the various study documents that are available for discussion as the church deliberates on a range of matters that affect its life and work; and

To acknowledge the action of the 1997 Churchwide Assembly on *Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns* as the response of this assembly to the memorial of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod on this matter.

Category 21: Committee on Appeals

A. Metropolitan New York Synod (7C) [1997 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the constitution, bylaws and continuing resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America provide that the process of discipline governing ordained ministers, persons on other official rosters, and congregations shall assure due process and due protection for the accused, other parties and this church;

WHEREAS, “due process” is defined in these documents to include the right to be treated with fundamental procedural fairness and “fundamental procedural fairness” is defined in these documents to include “impartiality of the committee, which considers the charges” and “the right to be treated in conformity with the governing documents of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America”;

WHEREAS, the Metropolitan New York Synod assembly duly elected its six members of the Committee on Discipline in accordance with the constitution and by-laws of this church;

WHEREAS, the Churchwide Assembly duly elected its 36 members of the churchwide Committee on Discipline in accordance with the constitution and bylaws of this church;

WHEREAS, the Discipline Hearing Committee in the Matter of the Disciplinary Proceedings Against the Reverend Aubrey N. Bougher was convened in the Metropolitan New York Synod and carried out its deliberations in accordance with the constitution and by-laws of this church;

WHEREAS, this duly constituted and conducted Discipline Hearing Committee was unanimous in its determination that Pastor Bougher should not be removed from the clergy roster of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;

WHEREAS, the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America provide, concerning the appeal of a discipline hearing committee’s decision, that “the discipline hearing committee’s Determination must be sustained if reasonable people can disagree as to it propriety, and further specifically state that “the committee’s Determination may not be reversed simply because the Committee on Appeals, had it been the discipline hearing committee, would have reached a different conclusion”; and

WHEREAS, on appeal the Committee on Appeals found that “the Discipline Hearing Committee’s Determination in the matter of the Reverend Aubrey Bougher was one with which no reasonable person, acting objectively, could agree”; and

WHEREAS, the nine persons, four men and five women, serving on the Discipline Hearing Committee were six churchwide elected members and three elected from this synod; and included among their numbers four pastors, two of whom were women and another who is an eminent teacher and theologian of the church, also several persons presently on or retired from the staffs of their synods and others in or retired from responsible professional secular employment, all nine of whom could not fairly be presumed to be unreasonable, biased or lacking objectivity in the absence of convincing specific evidence;

WHEREAS, the Committee on Appeals has reversed the decision of the discipline hearing committee and removed Pastor Bougher from the clergy roster of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America without providing convincing evidence of how and why the nine duly elected and selected members of this committee acted unreasonably;

WHEREAS, the Committee on Appeals bases its decision almost completely on its own unique definition of “reasonable” and on its own identification of the purpose of the Committee on Appeals, neither of which can be found in any of the governing documents of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;

WHEREAS, many reasonable people familiar with the facts of this case, in addition to all nine of the members of the discipline hearing committee and two members of the 11 member Committee on Appeals itself, do in fact agree with the determination that Pastor Bougher should not be removed from the clergy roster of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;

WHEREAS, the decision of the Committee on Appeals represents an abuse of its discretion and undermines the confidence of ordained ministers, persons on other official

rosters, and congregations in the fundamental procedural fairness of the disciplinary processes of this church;

WHEREAS, the Office of the Secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America says that the decision of the Committee on Appeals is always final and that nothing further can be done about its decision; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod memorialize the ELCA Churchwide Assembly to request that a task force be formed to review the function of the ELCA Committee on Appeals and its “due process” and that a report be made to the Church Council with recommendations, if any, for procedural and constitutional reform.

BACKGROUND

The Memorials Committee chose not to make any determination on the particular case to which the memorial of the Metropolitan New York Synod refers. The committee notes that the Churchwide Assembly has received the report of the Committee on Appeals on this case (*1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section II, pages 35-40).

However, the RESOLVED clause of the memorial urges the review of the function of the Committee on Appeals, with report to be made to the Church Council with recommendations, if any, for procedural or constitutional reform. Because this RESOLVED clause can be considered apart from the WHEREAS clauses without either endorsing or adopting those clauses or without attempting to detail inaccuracies, if any, in the WHEREAS clauses, the Memorials Committee chose to address this alone.

The following information helped to shape the recommendation of the Memorials Committee. At every one of the Churchwide Assemblies of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, significant revisions in some aspect of the disciplinary process have been considered and adopted. In 1989 Rules for the Committee on Appeals and the process for removal of synod officers were approved. In 1991 major revisions were made clarifying the role and function of the consultation committee, providing for the hearing officers, clarifying the hearing process, extending the right of appeal to accusers, and providing for appellate review of substance as well as procedural aspects of Discipline Hearing Committee decisions. In 1993, the discipline process for ordained ministers was extended to associates in ministry, consistent with the Study for Ministry recommendations. In 1995, an alternative process for lesser offenses was introduced and provisions for stays of Discipline Hearing Committee decisions pending appeal was approved.

In addition, other aspects of the disciplinary process have been reviewed by the Church Council following action by the Churchwide Assembly requesting review. [See Review of burden of proof [CA 93.8.109] and (CC 94.4.11)].

The discipline process is continually under review. The issue is not whether, but how, the continuing review of the church’s disciplinary process should be

undertaken, specifically with regard to the appellate function. In this regard, it should be noted that all prior revisions in the disciplinary process made or recommended by the Church Council have been based upon recommendations of its Legal and Constitutional Review Committee. In formulating recommendations, this committee has always first sought the advice and counsel of the Conference of Bishops.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

En Bloc

CA97.6.63 To request that, in accordance with its continuing review of the discipline process, the Church Council review, without prejudice, the appellate function in this church's disciplinary process either by its Legal and Constitutional Review Committee or by a process designed by such committee and approved by the Church Council;

To request that such review include consultation with the Conference of Bishops and the Committee on Appeals;

To authorize the Church Council to act on recommendations resulting from this review, if any, by amending the Rules of the Committee on Appeals (ELCA 20.61.) and Rules Governing Disciplinary Proceedings (ELCA 20.21.16.) or by making recommendations for constitutional or bylaw revisions to the Churchwide Assembly; and

To request the secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to convey to the Metropolitan New York Synod the outcome of this review.

Category 22: Role of the Conference of Bishops

A. Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod (8B) [1996 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America have the opportunity to recover and strengthen the historic teaching and oversight ministries of the episcopal office; and

WHEREAS, the bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America are in fact directly accountable to congregations and pastors; and

WHEREAS, strengthening the authority of the Conference of Bishops would have the effect of actually increasing representation and enfranchisement in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and would, therefore, promote both unity and healing in this church; and

WHEREAS, an expanded role of the Conference of Bishops would be more readily comprehensible to the wider Christian community and would, therefore, promote ecumenical relationships; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod in assembly memorialize the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to amend its governing documents and operation in such a way as to expand and strengthen the calling of the Conference of Bishops by giving it specifically defined roles in the shepherding of the churchwide organization, the formation of social statements and teaching documents, the drafting of statements of faith and preparation of liturgies and hymnody; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod in assembly memorialize the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to amend its governing documents and operation in such a way that the Division for Ministry would become staff for the Conference of Bishops to aid them in performing their additional duties; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod in assembly memorialize the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to amend its Continuing Resolutions in such a way that the faculties of ELCA theological seminaries would serve in an advisory capacity to the Conference of Bishops for mutual consultation and education.

BACKGROUND

The teaching role of the Conference of Bishops is receiving added attention throughout the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. For example, members of the conference responded favorably to a recent suggestion by Bishop H. George Anderson to develop and issue a pastoral teaching document on the occasion of the forthcoming millennium. Discussion is occurring within the conference regarding possible changes in meeting format to offer the bishops more time for mutual reflection and developing further their collective teaching role within the life of this church. In addition to regular meetings of the conference, the vast majority of bishops participate in the annual Academy for Bishops, a forum for continuing education and mutual reflection on topics vital to the life of this church, the broader ecumenical community, and society.

Existing documents and present working relationships result in a strong partnership between the Conference of Bishops and the Division for Ministry. All standards for ministry and policies governing rostered leaders are developed according to the provision of ELCA 7.31.11., which states that such documents be "developed by the Division for Ministry, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council." The partnership of the Conference of Bishops

and Division for Ministry is further carried out by means of a liaison committee to the division, consisting of bishops elected by the Conference of Bishops. A shared-deployed staff person in each region is accountable to both the Division for Ministry and Department for Synodical Relations; these staff work in close partnership with bishops in their regions and assist the Conference of Bishops in the first call assignment process, mobility, and pastoral care for rostered persons.

In its recent unit review of the work of the Division for Ministry, the Church Council has called for a thorough review of the constitutional provisions that delineate the respective responsibilities of the Division for Ministry and Conference of Bishops. The intent of this review is to clarify some areas where there are overlapping responsibilities and lack of clarity as to primary responsibility.

At the most recent meeting of the Conference of Bishops (March 1997), all eight seminary presidents were invited for dialogue regarding matters of mutual concern. The Conference of Bishops plans to continue inviting seminary presidents to future meetings as resource persons to the work of the conference. Seminary faculty are regularly invited as presenters and Bible Study leaders at meetings of the conference and at the annual Academy for Bishops.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

En Bloc

CA97.6.64 To refer the memorial of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod on the role of the Conference of Bishops to the Church Council for consideration in the ongoing clarification of the respective roles and responsibilities of the Division for Ministry and Conference of Bishops; and

To refer this memorial to the Conference of Bishops for its ongoing reflection about its teaching role and broader responsibilities within the life of this church.

Category 24: Strategy for the Millennium

A. Grand Canyon Synod (2D) [1997 Memorial]

WHEREAS, 1999 and 2000 mark a major time in history for religion and culture to intersect, thus, being an opportune [*kairos*] time to proclaim our Lutheran witness; and

WHEREAS, the Roman Catholic Church has announced the year 2000 as a Jubilee year; and

WHEREAS, other Protestant denominations (i.e., Presbyterian, Methodist, Southern Baptist) have already developed a strategy for congregational witness during the time of religious fervor; and

WHEREAS, some religious groups and cults of various end times [eschatological] viewpoints (i.e., Haven's Gate, etc.) are already receiving wide media attention; and

WHEREAS, some ELCA congregations are already planning and searching for ways to witness to the unchurched as well as lift up a Lutheran view of eschatology during this "kairos" time of 1999-2000; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Grand Canyon Synod memorialize the 1997 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to request the ELCA Division for Congregational Ministries to develop instructional and thematic materials for the intent of assisting ELCA congregations in their timely witness and outreach efforts for the years 1999 and 2000—a time when the culture and religion will meet; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Grand Canyon Synod participate in and encourage the witness of "one holy, apostolic, catholic church" during the [*kairos*] time through activities with the ecumenical organizations in Arizona and Nevada, and the Lutheran, Anglican, Roman Catholic, and Orthodox (LARCO) Covenant churches.

BACKGROUND

At the March 1997 meeting of the Conference of Bishops, Bishop H. George Anderson explored with synodical bishops the possibility of the conference developing a pastoral letter related to the millennium, which would provide advice and assistance to members and congregations. As this initiative unfolds, the Office of the Bishop and the Conference of Bishops could work with both the Division for Congregational Ministries and the Division for Church in Society, which could assist in this effort.

In addition, a variety of ecumenical activities related to the millennium are being planned, on the international, national, regional, and local levels; individuals and congregations may wish to participate in such activities.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

En Bloc

CA97.6.65 To refer the memorial of the Grand Canyon Synod on a "strategy for the millennium" to the Office of the Bishop and the Conference of Bishops, in consultation with the Division for Church in Society, Division for Congregational Ministries, and the Department for Ecumenical Affairs, as plans for a teaching resource related to this topic are developed; and

To encourage congregational participation in ecumenical activities on this issue.

Category 26: Churchwide Assembly

A. Slovak Zion Synod (7G) [1997 Memorial]

WHEREAS, 80 percent of the members of every ELCA Churchwide Assembly are people who never attended an assembly before; and

WHEREAS, there is little continuity in the membership of successive assemblies; and

WHEREAS, the real power to set agendas and to present resolutions to the assembly resides with boards and divisions, which have little actual accountability to the Churchwide Assembly, which according to the constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is the highest authority in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Slovak Zion Synod in assembly memorialize the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America that the ELCA Churchwide Assembly be reduced to half its current size (to c.650); and be it further

RESOLVED, that voting members be elected to six years terms and be eligible to a second term; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the ELCA Church Council be composed of members of the assembly; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the divisions and boards of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America have their work reviewed by committees composed of assembly members.

BACKGROUND

According to ELCA bylaw 12.41.11.:

Each synod shall elect one voting member of the Churchwide Assembly for every 6,500 baptized members in the synod. In addition, each synod shall elect one voting member for every 50 congregations in the synod. The synod bishop, who is ex officio a member of the Churchwide Assembly, shall be included in the number of voting members so determined. There shall be at least two voting members from each synod.

In recent years, this formula has resulted in churchwide assemblies having between 1,000-1,100 voting members. Each voting member of the assembly must be a voting member of a congregation of this church (ELCA 12.41.13.). The entire membership of each churchwide assembly (excluding synod bishops and

churchwide officers) is elected at synod assemblies, generally the year prior to the Churchwide Assembly.

Thirty-three of the members of the ELCA Church Council are elected at the Churchwide Assembly and serve six-year terms; the officers of this church also serve as members of the Church Council. Elected members of the Church Council are not eligible for re-election (ELCA 14.31. and 14.32.).

The memorial of the Slovak Zion Synod proposes a major shift in the way the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is governed. In order to study this proposal with the care such a change warrants, the following referral is proposed.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

En Bloc

CA97.6.66 To refer the memorial of the Slovak Zion Synod on the composition and size of the ELCA Churchwide Assembly to the Church Council; and

To request that the Church Council, following consultation with the Conference of Bishops, bring to the 1999 Churchwide Assembly a report and possible recommendations on this matter.

Category 28: Associates in Ministry and Diaconal Ministers

A. Northeastern Ohio Synod (6E) [1997 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the current practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is to recruit and operationally define Diaconal Ministers for the traditional roles of service within the church, and

WHEREAS, ELCA foundational documents defining the office articulate a vision and expectation that this office of service will function in non-traditional ways beyond congregational boundaries, and

WHEREAS, current ELCA practice is to enroll Diaconal Ministers to serve within congregations as Associates in Ministry do, and

WHEREAS, this practice confuses the office of Associate in Ministry in the congregation and Diaconal Minister so that they are indistinguishable except by academic requirement, and

WHEREAS, specific, tangible and serious harms arise from this confusion including, but not limited to:

- (1) The confusion of potential candidates for both offices within the church regarding the appropriate office for their service.
- (2) The confusion of incumbents in these offices regarding the appropriate office and vocational trajectory for themselves.
- (3) The inability to recruit effectively persons for either office with clarity resulting in a substantial decline of specialized lay professionals available to the church.
- (4) The serious confusion of candidacy committees within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in granting guidance and direction for potential candidates in both of these and other offices.
- (5) The unfortunate ambiguity of definition in this office of Word and service in the larger ecumenical conversations and cooperation resulting in misunderstanding for those who have traditional or biblical definitions of the office of deacon; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that we memorialize the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in assembly to clarify its understanding of the offices of Diaconal Minister and Associate in Ministry and to enforce consistency upon the Division for Ministry between its documents regarding Diaconal Ministry and its practice in filling this office.

BACKGROUND

The 1993 Churchwide Assembly took action “To direct the Division for Ministry to study the relationship between associates in ministry and diaconal ministers, with the results and any recommendations emerging from such a study to be presented to the 1995 Churchwide Assembly” [CA93.6.17]. The Division for Ministry’s response to this request was submitted to the 1995 Churchwide Assembly (*1995 Pre-Assembly Report, Vol. 2, pp. 719-723*). This report outlines the commonalities and the distinctive differences between associates in ministry and diaconal ministers. (See attached chart.) This report was developed following consultation with synodical bishops, ELCA seminaries, and other leaders throughout this church.

The Northeastern Ohio Synod’s memorial points out that there are certain areas in which both associates in ministry and diaconal ministers can serve in very similar positions. However, their training is different, and diaconal ministers both relate to their own diaconal community and have a special focus upon extending this church’s ministry of witness and care into the world to address societal needs. This focus is part of the ministry of diaconal ministers, whether they serve primarily in congregational settings or in other more secular settings.

In cooperation with the Eastern Cluster of seminaries and Gettysburg Seminary, the Division for Ministry has conducted three diaconal ministry formation events over the past three summers. Approximately 90 persons have participated in these events and are in the process of preparing for consecration as diaconal ministers. As of early June 1997, nine persons have been consecrated as diaconal ministers. The Division for Ministry is aware of the similarities between these two ordered ministries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, but

it is also convinced of the importance of their distinctive differences. It is further committed to interpret carefully to synodical candidacy committees and potential candidates the differences between associates in ministry and diaconal ministers. Deployed staff report that these distinctions are being more clearly understood and that substantial numbers of candidates continue to seek to become rostered ministers, either as associates in ministry or as diaconal ministers. During these early years, the division is especially committed to the consistency of interpretation that is suggested by the resolution.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

En Bloc

CA97.6.67 To refer the memorial of the Northeastern Ohio Synod to the Division for Ministry, for response directly to the synod; and

To request that the division bring a report of this consultation to the April 1998 meeting of the Church Council.

Bishop Anderson thanked Ms. Gustavson and the members of the Memorials Committee for their work on behalf of the Churchwide Assembly.

Report of the Committee of Reference and Counsel

Reference: *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section X; continued on *Minutes*, page 456.

Bishop Anderson also thanked the members of the Committee of Reference and Counsel and its chair, Mr. William H. Engelbrecht, for the committee’s counsel.

The Rev. Darrell H. Jodock [Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod] made the following two motions.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

Hand Vote

CARRIED: To dispense with the reading of the remaining recommendations of the Committee of Reference and Counsel.

MOVED;

Two-Thirds Vote Required

SECONDED;

Hand Vote

CARRIED: To adopt *en bloc* the remaining recommendations of the Committee of Reference and Counsel.

Mr. William H. Engelbrecht, chair of the Committee of Reference and Counsel, reviewed briefly the recommendations of the committee on the respective motions prior to their adoption *en bloc*. Chair Engelbrecht also reported that the Rev. Frederick J. Schumacher [Metropolitan New York Synod] had submitted a motion related to a decision rendered by the churchwide Committee on Appeals. An identical motion previously had been ruled out of order by the chair. The Committee of Reference and Counsel, therefore, had declined to consider Pastor Schumacher's motion.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION *Hand Vote*

CA97.6.68 To adopt *en bloc* the following recommendations of the Committee of Reference and Counsel:

Motion F: Youth Voting Members on Church Council

**A. Submitted by: Andrea DeGroot-Nesdahl,
South Dakota Synod (3C)**

Whereas, the constitution of the ELCA currently states that the ELCA Church Council shall be composed of 37 voting members (ELCA 14.31.) and 11 advisory members (14.32.01. and 14.32.02); and

Whereas, the constitution of the ELCA currently designates as advisory members two youth members, who have voice but no vote; and

Whereas, there are approximately 1.8 million members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America the age of 18 or under; and

Whereas, the current ELCA Church Council has no voting member younger than 38 years of age; and

Whereas, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has a historical commitment to include the youth of our church as full participants in all experiences of this church's structure (on the congregation, synodical, and churchwide levels); therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the two youth advisory members of the ELCA Church Council be granted the status of voting members; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this resolution be referred to the ELCA Church Council to develop the necessary constitutional changes to implement the change.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION *En Bloc*

CA97.6.69 To approve in principle that the Church Council include in its membership two youth or young adult voting members; and

To request that the Church Council present to the 1999 ELCA Churchwide Assembly appropriate changes in the governing documents to accomplish this result.

Motion G: Funding of Ministry in Daily Life Program

**A. Submitted by: Bonnie L. Block,
South-Central Synod of Wisconsin (5K)**

RESOLVED, that the proposed budget be amended by adding \$100,000 to the Ministry in Daily Life program in the Division for Ministry; and that we decrease the seminary relations line item by that same amount.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION *En Bloc*

CA97.6.70 To refer the following resolution, submitted by Ms. Bonnie L. Block [South-Central Synod of Wisconsin] to the Division for Ministry:

That the proposed budget be amended by adding \$100,000 to the Ministry in Daily Life program in the Division for Ministry, and that we decrease the seminary-relations line item by that same amount;

and

To request that the Division for Ministry report its action to the April 1998 meeting of the Church Council.

Motion H: Persons with Disabilities

**A. Submitted by: Sunshine B. Keiser,
Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod (8B)**

WHEREAS, persons without disabilities generally are not aware or do not understand the challenging realities faced each and every day by persons with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, the voice of persons with disabilities is not adequately represented in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and

WHEREAS, the board of the Lutheran Youth Organization is the only churchwide board to provide a seat for persons with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, there are seats provided for persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English on all churchwide councils, committees, boards, or other organizational units, but not for persons with disabilities; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the 1997 Churchwide Assembly strongly encourage that at least one person with a disability be included on all churchwide councils, committees, boards, or other organizational units.

**B. Submitted by: Mr. Jeffrey Kane,
New England Synod (7B)**

WHEREAS, persons without disabilities are not generally aware or do not understand the challenging realities faced each and every day by persons with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, the voice of persons with disabilities is not adequately represented in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America nor are people with disabilities full partner or participants with equal opportunity within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Churchwide Assembly direct the Church Council to:

- ! Review the work of ministry with people with disabilities that has occurred over the last ten years in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and
- ! Study the possibility and need for establishing a churchwide commission for people with disabilities; and
- ! Bring a recommendation back to the 1999 Churchwide Assembly for action.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

En Bloc

CA97.6.71 To approve in principle the following resolutions regarding persons with disabilities:

(1) Submitted by Sunshine B. Keiser [Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod]:

WHEREAS, persons without disabilities generally are not aware or do not understand the challenging realities faced each and every day by persons with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, the voice of persons with disabilities is not adequately represented in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and

WHEREAS, the board of the Lutheran Youth Organization is the only churchwide board to provide a seat for persons with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, there are seats provided for persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English on all churchwide councils, committees, boards, or other organizational units, but not for persons with disabilities; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the 1997 Churchwide Assembly strongly encourage that at least one person with a disability be included on all churchwide councils, committees, boards, or other organizational units.

and

(2) Submitted by Mr. Jeffrey Kane [New England Synod]:

WHEREAS, persons without disabilities are not generally aware or do not understand the challenging realities faced each and every day by persons with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, the voice of persons with disabilities is not adequately represented in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America nor are people with disabilities full partner or participants with equal opportunity within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Churchwide Assembly direct the Church Council to:

- ! Review the work of ministry with people with disabilities that has occurred over the last ten years in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and

- ! Study the possibility and need for establishing a churchwide commission for people with disabilities; and
- ! Bring a recommendation back to the 1999 Churchwide Assembly for action.

and

To request that the Church Council bring a recommendation for action to the 1999 ELCA Churchwide Assembly.

Motion I: Acclamation of Presiding Bishop H. George Anderson

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

En Bloc

CA97.6.72 It is with great appreciation and gratitude that we, the members of the 1997 Churchwide Assembly, on behalf of the members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, receive the report of the Rev. H. George Anderson, presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

We are thankful for his informed and careful leadership. We appreciate his sensitivity to the needs of this assembly to discuss fully and thoroughly the issues before it. We have been blessed by his deep and thoughtful listening to us during these two years since his election as presiding bishop.

We are encouraged by his insistent reminder that this “is a good time to be the church.” We celebrate with joy the broad smile and sense of humor he so generously shares with a church he loves. (We marvel at his ability to read, remember, categorize, access, and utilize the data he collects from bumper stickers throughout this country.) We are uplifted by his straight forward proclamation of the grace and love of God that is “the driver” for our sense of mission and outreach.

It is our collective intent to respond to his initiative and leadership by:

- ! remembering him, his staff, and co-workers in the churchwide office in prayer that he might be strengthened in his task and might daily find joy in the tasks committed to him;
- ! committing ourselves to lives of prayer and study of the Scriptures that we might daily be formed and reformed by the Holy Spirit for lives of witness and service;
- ! receiving the seven initiatives he has set before us as commendable objectives for our synods, congregations, churchwide units, and church-related agencies and institutions so that they might, by the power of the Holy Spirit stir us to new life and hope as the body of Christ; together we pledge to:
 - ! encourage study of these initiatives in each of our synods and congregations;
 - ! develop synodical and congregational responses that will enable us to realize the full scope of the vision they contain; and
 - ! pray that the Holy Spirit call forth from each of us the “will” to be used as instruments in bringing these objectives to fruition;
- ! taking seriously the call to live and act in ecumenical partnership locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally in order to give clear witness to the world of the oneness we have in Christ; and
- ! facing our future with the confidence that God is among us to stir us to new life and lead us through the darkness of our own doubts and fears towards a tomorrow that is alive with the presence and power of God.

Motion J: Acclamation of Vice President Kathy J. Magnus

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

En Bloc

CA97.6.73 We praise God for his good and faithful servant, Ms. Kathy J. Magnus.

We acknowledge with thankfulness her talents, contributions, and energetic administration as vice president of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for the past six years.

We acknowledge with appreciation her leadership that has inspired and challenged the direction, deliberations, and activities of the Church Council.

We acknowledge with grateful hearts her enthusiastic commitment and joyful participation as a co-worker with us in the vineyards and acknowledge the accomplishments of the Church Council for the good of this church and the Gospel we proclaim.

We sincerely thank Ms. Kathy J. Magnus for her time, talents, and treasures as a good and faithful servant of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and for a job well done.

We wish her God's rich blessings in her future endeavors as she leaves a legacy of salutary service in the office of vice president and moves on to serving God in new arenas.

Motion K: Acclamation of Secretary Lowell G. Almen

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

En Bloc

CA97.6.74 As we celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as members of the 1997 Churchwide Assembly and on behalf of this whole church,

we give thanks to God for the gift of the Rev. Lowell G. Almen as secretary of this church since its inception.

We are grateful for his devoted and faith-filled attention to his extensive constitutionally assigned responsibilities (as outlined in section ELCA 13.40.).

We have enjoyed and appreciate his creative audiovisual presentation of the secretary's report as he shared an inspirational overview of our history, as well as carefully crafted vignettes of our heritage.

We give thanks to God for the gift of Secretary Almen's wonderful wit, and his patience and sensitive attention to the multitude of concerns that come before him in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

We will remember that "a twisted cord of many threads will not easily break." We thank God for one of those beautiful threads in the cord of Christ's church, our Secretary, the Rev. Lowell G. Almen.

Motion L: Acclamation of Treasurer Richard L. McAuliffe

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

En Bloc

CA97.6.75 We express deep appreciation to ELCA Treasurer Richard L. McAuliffe and his staff in the Office of the Treasurer for the faithful performance of their duties.

We recognize the work that the Office of the Treasurer does to be a good steward of the gifts presented to the churchwide organization from the synods and congregations.

We express appreciation for the clarity of presentation of the financial report to the assembly. We feel that the clarity of the budget and financial reports has helped elicit the confidence of synods, congregations, and members of

this church in the ministries of the churchwide organization. This confidence has facilitated the growth of mission support and trust in the churchwide organization.

We express thanksgiving that our treasurer performs his duties with fidelity and fiduciary responsibility.

We acknowledge the continued labors of the Office of the Treasurer, in cooperation with the Office of the Bishop, in the preparation and presentation of the 1998 and 1999 budgets.

Motion M: Staff Recognition

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

En Bloc

CA97.6.76 WHEREAS, we, the voting members of the fifth biennial Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America have gathered together alive in our heritage and hope; and

WHEREAS, this assembly has accomplished the tasks set before us in an orderly fashion; and

WHEREAS, these tasks could not have been done without the help and support of the staff members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America with their many diverse gifts; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that we, the voting members of the fifth biennial Churchwide Assembly give thanks to God for those who have worked to help this church live out its heritage and hope in this assembly.

Motion N: General Thanksgiving

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

En Bloc

CA97.6.77 WHEREAS, the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has celebrated its tenth anniversary in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, the birthplace of independence; our nation's first capital; the city of brotherly and sisterly love; and

WHEREAS, after a week of discussion, debate, and final resolution on issues that will affect the future of this church, we now prepare to return home knowing that God goes with each one of us. We acknowledge that it will be our responsibility to carry the message of this assembly to our own congregations, and to interpret the results of voting on various documents; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that we give thanks to God for our brothers and sisters in Christ and to the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod for being such excellent hosts; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the 1997 ELCA Churchwide Assembly give thanks to all who have worked so hard to ensure the smooth running of this assembly and planning the ELCA tenth anniversary celebration with the inspiring presentation by the Rev. Walter M. Wangerin Jr.; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the 1997 Churchwide Assembly extend special thanks to Bishop Roy G. Almquist of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, all our speakers and presenters, the local arrangements committees, the ELCA churchwide-staff planning committee, the many subcommittees, and all the volunteers who have given so generously of their time and have remained so cheerful and welcoming—thanks be to God for all these people; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the 1997 ELCA Churchwide Assembly express its gratitude to all those involved in the worship of this assembly: planners, participants, and musicians; we

have been blessed as God's Word has been proclaimed and the Sacrament celebrated; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the 1997 Churchwide Assembly express its deep thankfulness to the youth of this church for the passion they engender, who continue to both challenge and inspire us; we recognize with confidence that they are the ones who will lead us into the future; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the 1997 ELCA Churchwide Assembly pray for God's blessing on this assembly and for the gift of the Holy Spirit as we carry the decisions made at the assembly into the 21st century, and that as a church, we will be "alive in our heritage and hope."

Bishop Anderson observed, "The decision of this assembly to adopt these matters *en bloc* does not diminish the thanks or the enthusiasm with which those resolutions are laden, but rather underlines the unanimous and unequivocal support of those resolutions." Assembly members affirmed his observation with applause.

Recognition of Former General Counsel David J. Hardy

Mr. Engelbrecht requested that Mr. David J. Hardy, former general counsel to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, join him on the dais. Mr. Engelbrecht paid tribute to Mr. Hardy, saying, "He has devoted much of his professional life as legal counsel of the ELCA and [to the work of its] predecessor church bodies. I doubt if there is any synod representative in this assembly or any bishop of the various synods, past or present, who have not sought and benefitted from his wise advice and counsel. David now continues in semi-retirement to serve this church as 'of counsel' so that we might continue to benefit from his long experience as senior counsel for this church. We have indeed been blessed by the life and work of David Hardy in our midst. This is the time to say thank you and I ask you to join me in a standing expression of our deep appreciation." Assembly members stood and thanked Mr. Hardy with applause. In response, Mr. Hardy said, "I'd take early retirement from a law firm any day when one can have sixty-six clients such as those clients that I have had—working with the bishops of this church. It has sometimes been said of me that the only thing I talk about is sex. I want to assure

you that that is only when I am with the bishops. They have a hard task in dealing with an issue [clergy sexual misconduct] that affects not only our church but all other major denominations in this country. Your prayers to support them as they deal with this often-times unpleasant subject are needed and are appreciated by them and by me. Thank you for the opportunity to serve the church, even though it be on the dark and unseemly side."

Bishop Anderson again thanked the members of the Committee of Reference and Counsel for their work.

Ecumenical Proposals: Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification (continued)

Reference: *1997 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section IV, pages 65-77, page 78 (rev.), Section V, pages 21-27, Section VI, pages 26-28; continued on *Minutes*, page 672, 680.

Mr. Charles Kurfess [Northwestern Ohio Synod] commented that "the action on the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* is deemed by some here as the most momentous of the actions in this assembly. For clarification or to refresh our understanding, could we be advised of future actions of Lutheran bodies required to effectuate this declaration? And what actions of entities of the Roman Catholic Church have been taken or need yet to be taken to effectuate the *Declaration*?"

The Rev. Robert S. Jones [South Dakota Synod] urged assembly members to take the text of the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* home, read it, study it, share it with Roman Catholic brothers and sisters, and to celebrate it.

The Rev. Daniel F. Martensen, director of the Department for Ecumenical Affairs, introduced the Rev. Eugene L. Brand, former assistant general secretary for ecumenical affairs of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), who reviewed the process for adoption and implementation of the proposed *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* between the Roman Catholic Church and churches of the Lutheran tradition, which was ratified by this church body earlier during this assembly [CA97.5.25]. Pastor Brand said, "In the Lutheran World Federation's process, the deadline for responses from member churches, such as the one you have taken, is May 1, 1998. When those responses are received from the 124 member churches [of the LWF], they are to be sent to the Institute for Ecumenical Research in Strasbourg [France] for analysis. That analysis will then go to the newly elected Council of the Lutheran World Federation, and the Council has the job of determining whether or not, in its judgement, a consensus exists among the Lutheran churches. We have no preconceived formula for how that is to happen because we have felt all along that the responses have to first be received and judged and analyzed before one can make such a judgement. If the Council determines that a consensus does in fact exist, then that is the end of the process as

far as the Lutherans are concerned in a sort of procedural way. But the [LWF] Assembly in Hong Kong passed a resolution about the *Joint Declaration* which also says that when the process has been successfully completed that some sort of appropriate festival occasion be found where this can be declared in a solemn and joyous way. In the Roman Catholic Church, if I understand things correctly and I do not think they have changed, the document has been officially submitted by the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, that is, the Congregation which Cardinal [Joseph] Ratzinger heads. Together these two dicasteries in the Vatican will determine what sort of response the Roman Catholic Church will make. They are being advised, as you have heard several times, by Roman Catholic Conferences of Bishops in several parts of the world. We expect that that answer also will come before the end of 1998. It will probably be in the form of a solemn declaration by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith since they are the people in the Roman Curia who have the responsibility for deciding on matters that have to do with faith. The pope must be, however, involved in that process so that when that declaration is finished it will be clear that the pope has also agreed to it.” He concluded, “Your vote yesterday afternoon was immensely gratifying to those of us who have been working on this document for so long and I think it will be a marvelous signal to the other member churches of the Lutheran World Federation when the second largest church [the ELCA], and the church with which this process originated, has voted in such an overwhelming kind of way for it. So thank you very much for that vote.”

Bishop Anderson thanked Pastor Brand and all those who served on the dialogue teams that worked on this issue over the decades it has taken to arrive at this vote.

Points of Personal Privilege

The Rev. Mark J. Asleson [Northwestern Minnesota Synod] requested a moment of personal privilege. He said, “You have heard from Eastern North Dakota Synod. Also in our community the floods [in the Red River Valley] came through. . . . I want to thank the ELCA, our brothers and sisters, who have sent vacuum cleaners, and cleaning supplies, and prayers, and busloads of youth and adults. It has meant a great deal to the people of the [Red River] Valley. Thank you ELCA!”

Bishop Paul W. Egertson [Southern California (West) Synod] commented, “We celebrated ten years of the ELCA at this assembly and move into another decade. I would like to invite you to join me in reviewing again Luther’s explanation to the eighth commandment, and see if we can teach one another to carry forward the manner in which we have spoken to and about each other at this assembly into the way in which we speak to and about each other throughout this

church. It is time for us now to speak with positivity, affirmation, and appreciation even in the midst of disagreements and affirm ourselves as this church.”

The Rev. Harold S. Weiss [Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod] drew attention to a brochure that had been distributed to assembly members announcing a series of events in 1998 celebrating 250 years of the establishment of Lutheran organized church bodies in this country. He invited assembly members to attend a symposium, “Roots for New Plantings,” to be held August 7-9, 1998, at Allentown, Pennsylvania.

Mr. Larry D. Moeller [Sierra Pacific Synod] expressed appreciation to those who had provided translation of assembly proceedings into American Sign Language (ASL). Assembly members thanked them with applause.

The Rev. Kathy F. Hlatshwayo [Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod] suggested that those with money remaining from meal allowances might offer them to the ELCA Domestic Disaster Response program. Bishop Anderson concurred.

The Rev. Herbert C. Spomer [Lower Susquehanna Synod] commended the worship staff and asked that assembly members show their appreciation, especially to Mr. Scott Weidler, associate director for worship and music in the Division for Congregational Ministries, who served as music coordinator and organist for this assembly.

Ms. Johanna M. Christianson [Northwestern Minnesota Synod] asked permission to “share a secret.” She said, “I did not really want to come here. The reason was because of all the controversy and I do not like controversy. However, I am so glad and so thankful to God that I did, because in the midst of the controversy, I really had to get in touch with my prayers to God and only rely on God through all my decisions. I feel my faith has been strengthened by being here at this assembly. I have a greater appreciation of the larger church—many, many members but one body. Along with that I realize my responsibility as a voting member as I return to my synod, my conference, and my congregation in the way I relay my message. . . . As I was leaving Chicago for the last part of my trip to Philadelphia, I was in the airplane and everything was ready to go according to the stewardess except for one minor detail—the pilot was missing. As we leave this assembly, let’s not leave without our pilot. May we all take with us God in our hearts and a love for all people as we address the issues of this church.”

Mr. George S. Edwards [Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod] asked that the voting members of his synod to rise and to express appreciation that Philadelphia had been selected as the site of this 1997 Churchwide Assembly.

Evaluation

Bishop Anderson invited assembly members to complete evaluation forms.

Concluding Remarks: Presiding Bishop H. George Anderson

Bishop Anderson stated, “I would just like to reflect . . . on what I have seen this church do and how I feel as I leave this assembly. I have come to the conviction (not that I doubted it, but it certainly has been affirmed here), that this is a church with a future. That began for me with [the Rev.] Fred W. Meuser’s sermon on Sunday, reminding us of Christ’s promise, ‘I will build my Church.’ The Bible study and the worship here has indeed, I think, linked us with that ongoing work of Jesus Christ as the Church is built, as it is extended generation after generation, as it faces the same problems over and over again. Yet, God somehow is with it, and by the power of the Holy Spirit it does move forward.

“You put into action, however, that same confidence and hope in the future when you adopted a series of initiatives that will move us in critical areas forward in the days to come. You did not just adopt it and then say, ‘Let somebody work on it.’ You then put legs under it. You adopted a sacramental practices statement that can help us to deepen our worship life. When it comes to strengthening our witness to the world and showing God’s action in the world, you adopted an urban strategy and a multicultural strategy. When you talk about working together, strengthening one another for mission, I think about the way the strategic plan for American Indian and Alaska Native ministry was formulated—it came by working together with the persons involved. Our youth and young-adult ‘convo’ here demonstrated to us that they are ready to help us to connect with youth and young adults—they are eager to be a part of that process. And in terms of preparing leaders for the future, I certainly commend you for your interest in the statement on the ministry of the baptized—on ministry in daily life; for your helping those who are called to leadership in this church through life-long learning opportunities; and above all for establishing the possibility now a fund for leaders in mission.

“I am sure, in most of our minds, though, our commitment to the future was most vividly and most fervently expressed in our reaching out now to partners with whom we have not had the official relationship that we established here since the time of the Reformation. And [we have] reached out to a church which (again, since the time of the Reformation) has been the source of much controversy and theological debate; and somehow there, too, we are able to establish a bridge never before constructed. It truly has been an assembly with confidence in the future. As a symbol of that, you have said, ‘we’re not done yet,’ and we now want to work toward extending that same future-looking, ecumenical, respectful, and deep full communion to The Episcopal Church as well.

“Finally, I have had with me since I came a little paragraph from a letter that Luther wrote to his friend George Spalatin during the Augsburg Diet. Luther was not there; he was watching the ‘Churchwide Assembly,’ so to speak, from a distance. He was very frustrated at the lack of mail; he could not keep up. But, he wrote to his friend Spalatin, ‘He, however, who has begun this work certainly has

begun it without our counsel and effort, and until now, he has protected and guided his work above and aside from our counsel and effort. It is he who will complete and close it outside and beyond our counsel and effort. Concerning this,’ says Luther, ‘I have not the slightest doubt.’ And, I say, ‘This is most certainly true.’”

Announcement of 1999 Churchwide Assembly

A brief video, narrated by Secretary Lowell G. Almen, was shown, announcing the date and site of the Sixth Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, August 16-22, 1999, at Denver, Colorado.

Concluding Worship and Adjournment

Bishop Anderson invited assembly members to join in the Order for the Closing of Assembly, which included singing, “We All Are One in Mission.”

At 11:47 A.M. Presiding Bishop H. George Anderson declared the Fifth Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America closed, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Exhibit A

Members of the Churchwide Assembly

Voting Members

Officers

Bp. H. George Anderson,
presiding bishop
Ms. Kathy J. Magnus,
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Mr. Marwin Wrolstad
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Pr. Richard G. Deines (8/19-8/20)
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Pr. Carol J. Hegland
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Ms. Carolyn Lien
Mr. John Lindberg
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Mr. Ronald Lawrence
Pr. Rachel Thorson Mithelman
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Ms. Doris Dunsmore
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Pr. Robert S. Gant
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Pr. Gary W. Anderson

Ms. Gretchen Enoch
Mr. John Gaylor
Ms. Nancy R. Gaylor (8/18-8/20)
Pr. Stephen Goodwin
Pr. W. Gene Lancaster
Ms. Shirley McConnell (8/16-8/18)
Mr. Christopher J. Mehling
Mr. Donald E. Neuhouser
Mr. Dale F. Oelker
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Mr. Robert Bartholomew
Mr. Ted A. Beitelchees
Ms. Marilyn Bloom
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Pr. James C. Couser
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 Mr. Ray T. Sunderland
 Mr. David H. Taylor
 Mr. Nelvin Vos
 Ms. Carol L. Weiser
 Mr. Leonard Weiser
 Pr. Harold S. Weiss
 Ms. Janice C. Weitzel

Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod (7F)

Bp. Roy G. Almquist
 Pr. Barbara Berry-Bailey
 Mr. Robert F. Blanck
 Ms. Addie J. Butler
 Ms. Shai Celeste
 Ms. Patricia Davenport
 Ms. Deborah Dawson
 Mr. George S. Edwards
 Mr. Paul Engstrom
 Mr. Charles W. Horn III
 Pr. George E. Keck
 Mr. Brian T. Keim
 Pr. Rosa M. Key

Pr. D. Craig Landis
 Pr. Charles R. Leonard
 Ms. Heather Moyer
 Mr. James D. Murphy
 Ms. Susan M. Pursch
 Pr. John H. P. Reumann
 Pr. Eric R. Royer
 Mr. J. Everett Wick

Slovak Zion Synod (7G)

Bp. Juan Cobrda
 Mr. Milan R. Busha
 Ms. Ellen I. Hinlicky
 Pr. Andrew J. Mazak

Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod (8A)

Bp. Paull E. Spring
 Ms. Nancy C. Fricke
 Mr. C. Carlyle Haaland
 Pr. Kathy F. Hlatshwayo
 Mr. James Judy
 Ms. Bonita O. Karr
 Ms. Deborah Kreger Jacobson
 Pr. Martin M. Roth

Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod (8B)

Bp. Donald J. McCoid
 Pr. Hans O. Andrae
 Ms. Sheila Barr
 Pr. Kirk W. Bish
 Mr. John R. Brown Jr.
 Ms. Andrea L. Dubler
 Pr. Herbert D. Dubler
 Ms. April Fennell
 Mr. Gene O. Fozard
 Mr. Robert N. Harris
 Ms. Sunshine B. Keiser
 Pr. Sandra J. Kessinger
 Pr. Heather Schaffer Lubold
 Pr. Caroline M. Mendis
 Pr. Fred S. Opalinski
 Ms. Cynthia A. Pock

Ms. Barbara A. Ravenstahl
Mr. Edward W. Sites
Mr. Andre C. Walker
Mr. Albert J. Zimmerman

Allegheny Synod (8C)

Bp. Gregory R. Pile
Ms. Michelle D. Cavender
Pr. Scott S. Custead
Pr. Katherine E. Douglass
Ms. Donna D. Frazier
Mr. Larry C. Hoover
Ms. Ruth C. Kistler
Pr. Carl E. Miller
Mr. Richard L. Steuernagle
Ms. Susan J. Williamson

Lower Susquehanna Synod (8D)

Bp. Guy S. Edmiston
Ms. Fae E. Appleby
Mr. Robert K. Bowman
Ms. Patricia T. Campbell
Mr. Christopher R. Cowan
Pr. Barry R. Folmar
Mr. Frederick S. Frantz
Ms. Judith L. Garber
Mr. Ronald K. Good
Ms. Mary P. Hafer
Mr. Barry R. Herr
Pr. Danny P. Kingsborough (8/19-8/20)
Ms. Mary Anne Kingsborough
Pr. Brenda J. Kiser
Pr. George M. Minick (8/14-8/18)
Mr. Earl L. Mummert
Ms. Betty L. Myers
Ms. Dorothy K. Peterman
Pr. Patrick J. Rooney
Ms. Mary-Margaret Ruth
Mr. William O. Sowers
Pr. Herbert C. Spomer
Pr. Kurt S. Strause
Ms. Elizabeth V. Sweitzer
Pr. Dennis L. Trout

Mr. Terry K. Urich
Pr. Alan C. Wenrich
Pr. Yvonne E. Wesley-Rohrbaugh
Pr. George W. Yoder

Upper Susquehanna Synod (8E)

Bp. A. Donald Main
Pr. A. Bruce Amme
Mr. Gregory C. Berger
Pr. Jeffrey G. Bohan
Pr. Robert L. Driesen
Pr. William N. Esborn
Mr. T. Lewis Hetrick
Ms. Gail A. Longfield
Ms. Lynette M. Reitz
Pr. Adrian J. Shearer
Ms. Ann M. Zimmerman

Delaware-Maryland Synod (8F)

Bp. George P. Mocke
Mr. George Bowden
Pr. Eleanor S. Doub
Pr. Marina C. Flores
Mr. James T. Frantz III
Mr. Gerry Grant
Pr. Donald A. Haas
Ms. Beverly J. Harris
Ms. Shirley Z. Lewis
Mr. John Lisch
Ms. Meredith Lovell
Ms. Viola M. Noffsinger
Mr. Robert H. Orem
Pr. John D. Ranney
Ms. Harriet Seltzer
Mr. Joseph J. Sonntag
Pr. Alan D. Traher
Pr. G. Neale Wirtanen Jr.
Pr. Mary B. Zurell

**Metropolitan Washington, D.C.,
Synod (8G)**

Bp. Theodore F. Schneider
Ms. Sofia Amare
Mr. Kirk H. Betts

Ms. Mitzi J. Budde
Ms. Ida M. Hakkarinen
Pr. Thomas A. Prinz
Mr. Jason Reed
Pr. Leah K. Schafer

**West Virginia-Western Maryland
Synod (8H)**

Bp. L. Alexander Black
Pr. Ralph W. Dunkin
Ms. Dorcas L. Friedline
Mr. George E. Friedline
Ms. Arlene G. Leitzke
Mr. Clarence E. Liske

Virginia Synod (9A)

Bp. Richard F. Bansemer
Pr. Jean Bozeman (8/19-8/20)
Ms. Judith Ann Cobb
Ms. Martha Edwards
Pr. Mark A. Graham
Mr. Matthew Greenshields
Mr. George Kegley
Ms. Adrienne Lumpkin
Pr. George L. Sims (8/14-8/18)
Pr. Joseph M. Vought
Mr. James F. Wilson

North Carolina Synod (9B)

Bp. Leonard H. Bolick
Ms. Faith Ashton
Ms. Kaye Beaty
Mr. Dale Blade
Mr. Bill D. Brittain
Mr. Bachman S. Brown Jr.
Ms. Sandra R. Cline
Pr. Rachel L. Connelly
Pr. Judith Lewis Copeland
Mr. Hubert D. Fry Jr.
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Pr. Louise C. Hilbert
Ms. Diana R. Keck
Mr. Warren Keyes
Pr. Billy B. Mims Jr.

Mr. Sol Bird Mockicin
Ms. Bonnie R. Sanford
Pr. C. Peter Setzer
Ms. Joy Elizabeth Shoffner

South Carolina Synod (9C)

Bp. David A. Donges
Mr. Tony R. Bouknight
Mr. David W. Coffman
Pr. Cedric E. Gibb
Pr. David B. Hunter
Pr. Timothea S. Lewis
Mr. H. Wayne Lominick
Ms. Sandra J. Olson
Pr. Al Potter
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Ms. Christie C. Whitaker

Southeastern Synod (9D)

Bp. Ronald B. Warren
Mr. W. D. Alderfer
Ms. Judy J. Bultman
Mr. Herman A. Fischer III
Mr. David L. Hansen
Mr. Carl A. Ludemann
Pr. J. Howard Mettee
Pr. Katherine J. Pasch
Ms. Georgette V. Peterson
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Ms. Beth Smith
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Florida-Bahamas Synod (9E)

Bp. William B. Trexler
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Ms. Patricia K. Hitchcock
Mr. Gerald Johnson
Ms. Karen A. Johnson
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Pr. Russell L. Meyer

Pr. Waldemar E. Meyer Jr.
Mr. Dale T. Nettin
Mr. William C. Phillippi
Pr. Charles A. S. Robertson
Ms. Carol W. Schickel
Mr. Thomas H. Seaman
Ms. N. Marie Segre
Ms. Lois B. Steketee
Ms. Diane Vetter

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Ms. Mayra Carrillo-Cotto
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Mr. Elroy Sprauve

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Pr. Marvin L. Roloff
Mr. Dale V. Sandstrom
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St. Paul, Minn.
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Exhibit B

Report of the Elections Committee

First Ballot

Note: Those persons elected on this ballot are indicated in bold face print. (PC/L) is used to indicate persons of color or whose primary language is other than English. An asterisk (*) indicates an eligible incumbent.

Church Council / Ticket 1 / Clergy-Region 8 Reserved

- a. **Pr. Fred S. Opalinski, Latrobe, Pa. 8B**
VOTES **438**
PERCENT **57.1%**
- b. Pr. Richard D. Niewoehner, Warren, Pa. 8A
VOTES 327
PERCENT 42.6%

Invalid Ballots
VOTES 2
PERCENT 0.3%

Total Ballots
VOTES 767
PERCENT 100.0%

Church Council / Ticket 2 / Clergy - Region 3 Reserved

- a. Pr. Mark Solyst, St. Peter, Minn. 3F
VOTES 156
PERCENT 19.6%
- b. Pr. Steven J. Knudson, Willmar, Minn. 3F
VOTES 307
PERCENT 38.6%
- c. Pr. Karen L. Soli, Virginia, Minn. 3E
VOTES 333
PERCENT 41.8%

Total Ballots
VOTES 796
PERCENT 100.0%

Church Council / Ticket 3 / Clergy

a. Pr. Cynthia Ganzkow-Wold, Middleton, Wis. 5K	
VOTES	366
PERCENT	45.4%
b. Pr. Karen S. Parker, Englewood, Colo. 2E	
VOTES	435
PERCENT	53.9%
Invalid Ballots	
VOTES	6
PERCENT	0.7%
Total Ballots	
VOTES	807
PERCENT	100.0%

Church Council / Ticket 4 / Clergy (PC/L)

a. Pr. Lenier L. Gallardo, Miami, Fla. 9E	
VOTES	329
PERCENT	42.2%
b. Pr. Mario C. Miranda, Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico 9F	
VOTES	451
PERCENT	57.8%
Total Ballots	
VOTES	780
PERCENT	100.0%

Church Council / Ticket 5 / Lay Female

a. Ms. Sally Young, Cedar Falls, Iowa 5F	
VOTES	448
PERCENT	59.3%
b. Ms. Solveig Gregory, Cedar Falls, Iowa 5F	
VOTES	305
PERCENT	40.3%
Invalid Ballots	
VOTES	3
PERCENT	0.4%
Total Ballots	
VOTES	756
PERCENT	100.0%

Church Council / Ticket 6 / Lay Female

a. Ms. June C. Ericsson, Washington, D.C. 8G	
VOTES	332
PERCENT	42.8%

b. Ms. Ida Marie Hakkarinen, College Park, Md. 8G

VOTES	443
PERCENT	57.1%
Invalid Ballots	
VOTES	1
PERCENT	0.1%
Total Ballots	
VOTES	776
PERCENT	100.0%

Church Council / Ticket 7 / Lay Female (PC/L)

a. Ms. Eva Kiyutelluk Leonard, Anchorage, Alaska 1A	
VOTES	362
PERCENT	44.9%
b. Ms. Linda Smith, Puyallup, Wash. 1C	
VOTES	243
PERCENT	30.1%
c. Ms. Rebecca K. Rank, Portland, Ore. 1E	
VOTES	199
PERCENT	24.7%
Invalid Ballots	
VOTES	2
PERCENT	0.2%
Total Ballots	
VOTES	806
PERCENT	100.0%

Church Council / Ticket 8 / Lay Female (PC/L)

a. Ms. Juliet Hsia, Honolulu, Hawaii 2C	
VOTES	367
PERCENT	46.0%
b. Ms. Lily R. Wu, Elmhurst (Queens), N.Y. 7C	
VOTES	427
PERCENT	53.6%
Invalid Ballots	
VOTES	3
PERCENT	0.4%
Total Ballots	
VOTES	797
PERCENT	100.0%

Church Council / Ticket 9 / Lay Male - Region 5 Reserved

a. Mr. Brian D. Rude, Coon Valley, Wis. 5L	
VOTES	276
PERCENT	34.6%

b.	Mr. Ralph B. K. Peterson, Escanaba, Mich. 5G	
	VOTES	270
	PERCENT	33.9%
c.	Mr. DeQuan K. Kuntu, Chicago, Ill. 5A	
	VOTES	250
	PERCENT	31.4%
Invalid Ballots		
	VOTES	1
	PERCENT	0.1%
Total Ballots		
	VOTES	797
	PERCENT	100.0%

Church Council / Ticket 10 / Lay Male - Region 8 Reserved

a.	Mr. George E. Friedline, New Martinsville, W.Va. 8H	
	VOTES	278
	PERCENT	36.4%
b.	Mr. Richard L. Steuernagle, DuBois, Pa. 8C	
	VOTES	272
	PERCENT	35.6%
c.	Mr. Gregory A. Krohn, Lewisburg, Pa. 8E	
	VOTES	213
	PERCENT	27.9%
Total Ballots		
	VOTES	763
	PERCENT	100.0%

Church Council / Ticket 11 / Lay Male - Region 6 Reserved

a.	Mr. Theodore A. Rosky, Louisville, Ky. 6C	
	VOTES	370
	PERCENT	49.0%
b.	Mr. David F. Hagen, Dearborn Heights, Mich. 6A	
	VOTES	384
	PERCENT	50.9%
Invalid Ballots		
	VOTES	1
	PERCENT	0.1%
Total Ballots		
	VOTES	755
	PERCENT	100.0%

Division for Congregational Ministries / Ticket 12 / Clergy

a.	Pr. E. Earl Okerlund, Cherry Hill, N.J. 7A	
	VOTES	334
	PERCENT	42.8%

b.	Pr. William F. Scholl, Jacksonville, Fla. 9E	
	VOTES	220
	PERCENT	28.2%
c.	Pr. Cedric E. Gibb, Orangeburg, S.C. 9C	
	VOTES	225
	PERCENT	28.8%
Invalid Ballots		
	VOTES	1
	PERCENT	0.1%
Total Ballots		
	VOTES	780
	PERCENT	100.0%

Division for Congregational Ministries / Ticket 13 / Clergy

a.	Pr. Margaret A. Krych, Springfield, Pa. 7F	
	VOTES	356
	PERCENT	45.4%
b.	Pr. Carla J. Nelson, Detroit, Mich. 6A	
	VOTES	425
	PERCENT	54.1%
Invalid Ballots		
	VOTES	4
	PERCENT	0.5%
Total Ballots		
	VOTES	785
	PERCENT	100.0%

Division for Congregational Ministries / Ticket 14 / Lay Female

a.	Ms. Judy Rehmel, Richmond, Ind. 6C	
	VOTES	267
	PERCENT	33.7%
b.	Ms. Jan Krakow, Ogden, Utah 2E	
	VOTES	162
	PERCENT	20.5%
c.	Ms. Fran Burnford, North Hollywood, Calif. 2B	
	VOTES	146
	PERCENT	18.4%
d.	Ms. Sunshine B. Keiser, Greensburg, Pa. 8B	
	VOTES	217
	PERCENT	27.4%
Total Ballots		
	VOTES	792
	PERCENT	100.0%

Division for Congregational Ministries / Ticket 15 / Lay Female

a.	Ms. Doris E. Hanson, Clearwater, Fla. 9E	
	VOTES	225
	PERCENT	28.8%
b.	Ms. Karen Walhof, Minneapolis, Minn. 3G	
	VOTES	363
	PERCENT	46.4%
c.	Ms. Jean G. Oswald, Plano, Texas 4D	
	VOTES	192
	PERCENT	24.6%
Invalid Ballots		
	VOTES	2
	PERCENT	0.3%
Total Ballots		
	VOTES	782
	PERCENT	100.0%

Division for Congregational Ministries / Ticket 16 / Lay Female - Region 7 Reserved

a.	Ms. Linda K. Walker, Summit, N.J. 7A	
	VOTES	367
	PERCENT	49.5%
b.	Ms. Jane Floy, Fairport, N.Y. 7D	
	VOTES	373
	PERCENT	50.3%
Invalid Ballots		
	VOTES	2
	PERCENT	0.3%
Total Ballots		
	VOTES	742
	PERCENT	100.0%

Division for Congregational Ministries / Ticket 17 / Lay Male

a.	Mr. Timothy L. Barr, Rosenberg, Texas 4F	
	VOTES	401
	PERCENT	51.7%
b.	Mr. Haldon (Hal) C. Dick, Corvallis, Ore. 1E	
	VOTES	218
	PERCENT	28.1%
c.	Mr. Gavin Hall, Los Angeles, Calif. 2B	
	VOTES	156
	PERCENT	20.1%
Total Ballots		
	VOTES	775
	PERCENT	100.0%

Division for Congregational Ministries / Ticket 18 / Lay Male (PC/L)

a.	Mr. Robert A. Sandoval, Albuquerque, N.Mex. 2E	
	VOTES	349
	PERCENT	45.7%
b.	Mr. Harold M. Light, St. Louis, Mo. 4B	
	VOTES	241
	PERCENT	31.5%
c.	Mr. Paul E. Lumpkin, Newburgh, N.Y. 7C	
	VOTES	174
	PERCENT	22.8%
Total Ballots		
	VOTES	764
	PERCENT	100.0%

Division for Ministry / Ticket 19 / Clergy

a.	Pr. Terrence G. Baeder, Rockford, Ill. 5B	
	VOTES	296
	PERCENT	38.0%
b.	Pr. Dennis H. Dickman, Waverly, Iowa 5F	
	VOTES	189
	PERCENT	24.3%
c.	Pr. Charles W. Spiedel, Boise, Idaho 1D	
	VOTES	93
	PERCENT	11.9%
d.	Pr. Rolf A. Nestigen, Eau Claire, Wis. 5H	
	VOTES	200
	PERCENT	25.7%
Invalid Ballots		
	VOTES	1
	PERCENT	0.1%
Total Ballots		
	VOTES	779
	PERCENT	100.0%

Division for Ministry / Ticket 20 / Clergy (PC/L)

a.	Pr. J. Paul Rajashekar, Wyndmoor, Pa. 7A	
	VOTES	428
	PERCENT	54.8%
b.	Pr. Margaret E. Herz-Lane, Camden, N.J. 7A	
	VOTES	352
	PERCENT	45.1%
Invalid Ballots		
	VOTES	1
	PERCENT	0.1%

Total Ballots
 VOTES 781
 PERCENT 100.0%

Division for Ministry / Ticket 21 / Lay Female

- a. Ms. Phylis Carlson, Kennewick, Wash. 1D
 VOTES 241
 PERCENT 31.7%
- b. Ms. Ardith Senft, Phoenix, Ariz. 2D
 VOTES 201
 PERCENT 26.4%
- c. Ms. Agnes McClain, Los Angeles, Calif. 2B
 VOTES 164
 PERCENT 21.6%
- d. Ms. Carol L. Schickel, Jacksonville, Fla. 9E
 VOTES 154
 PERCENT 20.3%

Total Ballots
 VOTES 760
 PERCENT 100.0%

Division for Ministry / Ticket 22 / Lay Female

- a. **Ms. Phyllis C. Wiederhoeft, Madison, Wis. 5K**
 VOTES 413
 PERCENT 53.6%
- b. Ms. Doris E. Pagelkopf, Minneapolis, Minn. 3G
 VOTES 356
 PERCENT 46.2%

Invalid Ballots
 VOTES 1
 PERCENT 0.1%

Total Ballots
 VOTES 770
 PERCENT 100.0%

Division for Ministry / Ticket 23 / Lay Male

- a. **Mr. Kevin J. Boatright, Madison, Wis. 5K**
 VOTES 447
 PERCENT 60.7%
- b. Mr. Clinton P. Schroeder, Johnston, Iowa 5D
 VOTES 289
 PERCENT 39.2%

Invalid Ballots
 VOTES 1
 PERCENT 0.1%

Total Ballots
 VOTES 737
 PERCENT 100.0%

Division for Ministry / Ticket 24 / Lay Male

- a. ***Mr. John E. Fritschel, Littleton, Colo. 2E**
 VOTES 381
 PERCENT 51.6%
- b. Mr. John E. Dellis, Seguin, Texas 4E
 VOTES 357
 PERCENT 48.4%

Total Ballots
 VOTES 738
 PERCENT 100.0%

Division for Ministry / Ticket 25 / Lay Male (PC/L)

- a. Mr. Douglas (Bud) Miyamoto, La Crosse, Wis. 5L
 VOTES 344
 PERCENT 45.4%
- b. **Mr. Vincent Peters, Roseville, Minn. 3H**
 VOTES 412
 PERCENT 54.4%

Invalid Ballots
 VOTES 1
 PERCENT 0.1%

Total Ballots
 VOTES 757
 PERCENT 100.0%

Division for Outreach / Ticket 26 / Clergy

- a. Pr. Donald B. Green, Pittsburgh, Pa. 8B
 VOTES 266
 PERCENT 35.3%
- b. Pr. Gerry F. Rickel, Baltimore, Md. 8F
 VOTES 192
 PERCENT 25.5%
- c. Pr. Paul E. Christ, Vero Beach, Fla. 9E
 VOTES 183
 PERCENT 24.3%

d. Pr. Paul M. Cornell, Schwenkewille, Pa. 7F
 VOTES 112
 PERCENT 14.9%
 Total Ballots
 VOTES 753
 PERCENT 100.0%

Division for Outreach / Ticket 27 / Clergy

a. *Pr. Richard W. Owens, Bismarck, N.D. 3A
 VOTES 334
 PERCENT 45.3%
 b. Pr. Helen M. Johnson, Viroqua, Wis. 5L
 VOTES 220
 PERCENT 29.8%
 c. Pr. Dale T. Gregoriew, Allen, Texas 4D
 VOTES 184
 PERCENT 24.9%
 Total Ballots
 VOTES 738
 PERCENT 100.0%

Division for Outreach / Ticket 28 / Clergy

a. Pr. Albert W. Gibson, Freehold, N.J. 7A
 VOTES 305
 PERCENT 41.0%
 b. **Pr. James P. Miller, Cincinnati, Ohio 6F**
 VOTES **436**
 PERCENT **58.7%**
 Invalid Ballots
 VOTES 2
 PERCENT 0.3%
 Total Ballots
 VOTES 743
 PERCENT 100.0%

Division for Outreach / Ticket 29 / Lay Female

a. Ms. Leisha DeHart-Davis, Atlanta, Ga. 9D
 VOTES 297
 PERCENT 40.1%
 b. Ms. Kay S. Pedrotti, Jonesboro, Ga. 9D
 VOTES 211
 PERCENT 28.5%

c. Ms. Carrie Waller, Rockford, Ill. 5B
 VOTES 232
 PERCENT 31.4%
 Total Ballots
 VOTES 740
 PERCENT 100.0%

Division for Outreach / Ticket 30 / Lay Female

a. **Ms. Dorothy Baumgartner, Seattle, Wash. 1B**
 VOTES **466**
 PERCENT **63.0%**
 b. Ms. Mary A. Johnson, Avon Park, Fla. 9E
 VOTES 273
 PERCENT 36.9%
 Invalid Ballots
 VOTES 1
 PERCENT 0.1%
 Total Ballots
 VOTES 740
 PERCENT 100.0%

Division for Outreach / Ticket 31 / Lay Male

a. Mr. Norman W. Kettner, Salt Lake City, Utah 2E
 VOTES 330
 PERCENT 45.0%
 b. **Mr. James E. Byerly, Richmond, Va. 9A**
 VOTES **401**
 PERCENT **54.7%**
 Invalid Ballots
 VOTES 2
 PERCENT 0.3%
 Total Ballots
 VOTES 733
 PERCENT 100.0%

Division for Outreach / Ticket 32 / Lay Male

a. **Mr. Aureo F. Andino, Guaynabo, Puerto Rico 9F**
 VOTES **488**
 PERCENT **65.9%**
 b. Mr. William S. Christensen, Williston, N.D. 3A
 VOTES 253
 PERCENT 34.1%

Total Ballots
 VOTES 741
 PERCENT 100.0%

Division for Higher Education and Schools / Ticket 33 / Clergy

a. **Pr. Stephen D. Samuelson, Racine, Wis. 5J**
 VOTES **383**
 PERCENT **51.1%**

b. Pr. Dennis J. Johnson, St. Peter, Minn. 3F
 VOTES 366
 PERCENT 48.9%

Total Ballots
 VOTES 749
 PERCENT 100.0%

Division for Higher Education and Schools / Ticket 34 / Clergy - (PC/L) Reserved

a. **Pr. Sherman G. Hicks, Washington, D.C. 8G**
 VOTES **479**
 PERCENT **61.3%**

b. Pr. Edmond Yee, Berkeley, Calif. 2B
 VOTES 301
 PERCENT 38.5%

Invalid Ballots
 VOTES 2
 PERCENT 0.3%

Total Ballots
 VOTES 782
 PERCENT 100.0%

Division for Higher Education and Schools / Ticket 35 / Lay Female

a. Ms. Donna Keiser, Gothenburg, Neb. 4A
 VOTES 339
 PERCENT 46.6%

b. **Ms. Kristine F. Hughey, Media, Pa. 7F**
 VOTES **388**
 PERCENT **53.4%**

Total Ballots
 VOTES 727
 PERCENT 100.0%

Division for Higher Education and Schools / Ticket 36 / Lay Female (PC/L)

a. **Ms. Donna A. Coursey, Philadelphia, Pa. 7F**
 VOTES **508**
 PERCENT **70.9%**

b. Ms. Barbara M. Hines, Aberdeen, N.J. 7A
 VOTES 209
 PERCENT 29.1%

Total Ballots
 VOTES 717
 PERCENT 100.0%

Division for Higher Education and Schools / Ticket 37 / Lay Male

a. **Mr. Dean Baldwin, Erie, Pa. 8A**
 VOTES **440**
 PERCENT **58.4%**

b. Mr. John (Jack) M. Parkins, Mankato, Minn. 3I
 VOTES 313
 PERCENT 41.6%

Total Ballots
 VOTES 753
 PERCENT 100.0%

Division for Higher Education and Schools / Ticket 38 / Lay Male - Reserved Age 25 and Under

a. Mr. Patrick Hansen, Foxboro, Mass. 7B
 VOTES 312
 PERCENT 43.3%

b. **Mr. Jeffrey L. Kane, Natick, Mass. 7B**
 VOTES **409**
 PERCENT **56.7%**

Total Ballots
 VOTES 721
 PERCENT 100.0%

Division for Higher Education and Schools / Ticket 39 / Lay Male

a. Mr. Dennis R. Gengenbach, Smithfield, Neb. 4A
 VOTES 211
 PERCENT 29.1%

b. Mr. Raymond (Ray) E. Bailey, Fort Collins, Colo. 2E
 VOTES 239
 PERCENT 32.9%

c. Mr. John D. Litke, Huntington Station, N.Y. 7C
 VOTES 135
 PERCENT 18.6%

d. Mr. Philip E. Winger, Selinsgrove, Pa. 8E
 VOTES 141
 PERCENT 19.4%

Total Ballots
 VOTES 726
 PERCENT 100.0%

Division for Church in Society / Ticket 40 / Clergy

- a. Pr. Denver W. Bitner, Rockford, Ill. 5B
 VOTES 298
 PERCENT 39.9%
- b. Pr. Robert J. L. Zimmer, Sarasota, Fla. 9E
 VOTES 224
 PERCENT 30.0%
- c. Pr. Bruce H. Davidson, Summit, N.J. 7A
 VOTES 225
 PERCENT 30.1%

Total Ballots
 VOTES 747
 PERCENT 100.0%

Division for Church in Society / Ticket 41 / Clergy

- a. Pr. Timothy J. Swenson, Upham, N.D. 3A
 VOTES 261
 PERCENT 34.8%
- b. Pr. Robert W. Dahlen, Goodridge, Minn. 3D
 VOTES 187
 PERCENT 24.9%
- c. Pr. Richard J. Niebanck, Delhi, N.Y. 7D
 VOTES 122
 PERCENT 16.3%
- d. Pr. Kenneth C. Senft, Harrisburg, Pa. 8D
 VOTES 180
 PERCENT 24.0%

Total Ballots
 VOTES 750
 PERCENT 100.0%

Division for Church in Society / Ticket 42 / Clergy

- a. **Pr. Carol A. Jensen, Seattle, Wash. 1B**
 VOTES **451**
 PERCENT **60.1%**
- b. Pr. P. Kempton Segerhammar, Palo Alto, Calif. 2A
 VOTES 299
 PERCENT 39.9%

Total Ballots
 VOTES 750
 PERCENT 100.0%

Division for Church in Society / Ticket 43 / Lay Female

- a. Ms. Janet E. Franzen, Pittsburgh, Pa. 8B
 VOTES 357
 PERCENT 48.9%
- b. Ms. Gloria Strickert, Waverly, Iowa 5F**
 VOTES **371**
 PERCENT **50.8%**

Invalid Ballots
 VOTES 2
 PERCENT 0.3%

Total Ballots
 VOTES 730
 PERCENT 100.0%

Division for Church in Society / Ticket 44 / Lay Female (PC/L)

- a. Ms. Adrienne M. Lumpkin, Portsmouth, Va. 9A
 VOTES 334
 PERCENT 46.1%
- b. Ms. Lestine Davis, Detroit, Mich. 6A**
 VOTES **390**
 PERCENT **53.9%**

Total Ballots
 VOTES 724
 PERCENT 100.0%

Division for Church in Society / Ticket 45 / Lay Male - Region 2 Reserved

- a. **Mr. Norman O. Aarestad, Denver, Colo. 2E**
 VOTES **521**
 PERCENT **73.5%**
- b. Mr. John P. Timmerwilke, Orange, Calif. 2C
 VOTES 186
 PERCENT 26.2%

Invalid Ballots
 VOTES 2
 PERCENT 0.3%

Total Ballots
 VOTES 709
 PERCENT 100.0%

Division for Church in Society / Ticket 46 / Lay Male (PC/L)

a. Mr. Douglas Miller, Bowler, Wis. 5I	
VOTES	328
PERCENT	45.9%
b. Mr. Gerson David, Bellaire, Texas 4F	
VOTES	387
PERCENT	54.1%
Total Ballots	
VOTES	715
PERCENT	100.0%

Division for Global Mission / Ticket 47 / Clergy

a. Pr. Joel S. Bjerkestrand, Fountain Hills, Ariz. 2D	
VOTES	280
PERCENT	37.2%
b. Pr. L. Paul Bartling, Seattle, Wash. 1B	
VOTES	238
PERCENT	31.6%
c. Pr. Bill G. Willms, Long Beach, Calif. 2B	
VOTES	97
PERCENT	12.9%
d. Pr. Margay Whitcock, Kearny, N.J. 7A	
VOTES	135
PERCENT	18.0%
Invalid Ballots	
VOTES	2
PERCENT	0.3%
Total Ballots	
VOTES	752
PERCENT	100.0%

Division for Global Mission / Ticket 48 / Clergy

a. Pr. Esther Rajashekar, Philadelphia, Pa. 7F	
VOTES	461
PERCENT	63.1%
b. Pr. Angela Shannon, Houston, Texas 4F	
VOTES	270
PERCENT	36.9%
Total Ballots	
VOTES	731
PERCENT	100.0%

Division for Global Mission / Ticket 49 / Clergy

a. Pr. Wilma S. Kucharek, Torrington, Conn. 7G	
VOTES	447
PERCENT	62.4%
b. Pr. David L. Jones, East Pittsburgh, Pa. 7G	
VOTES	268
PERCENT	37.4%
Invalid Ballots	
VOTES	1
PERCENT	0.1%
Total Ballots	
VOTES	716
PERCENT	100.0%

Division for Global Mission / Ticket 50 / Lay Female

a. Ms. Carol LaHurd, Hickory, N.C. 9B	
VOTES	537
PERCENT	71.4%
b. Ms. Hermino Meyer, Kendrick, Ind. 1C	
VOTES	212
PERCENT	28.2%
Invalid Ballots	
VOTES	3
PERCENT	0.4%
Total Ballots	
VOTES	752
PERCENT	100.0%

Division for Global Mission / Ticket 51 / Lay Female

a. Ms. Arvella E. Lang, Detroit Lakes, Minn. 3D	
VOTES	179
PERCENT	23.5%
b. Ms. Marie Benson, St. Peter, Minn. 3F	
VOTES	212
PERCENT	27.9%
c. Ms. Mary Sagar, Kalamazoo, Mich. 6B	
VOTES	220
PERCENT	28.9%
d. Ms. N. Marie Segre, Ft. Lauderdale, Fla. 9E	
VOTES	150
PERCENT	19.7%
Total Ballots	
VOTES	761
PERCENT	100.0%

Division for Global Mission / Ticket 52 / Lay Male - Region 2 Reserved

a. Mr. Harry K. Clark, Durango, Colo. 2E
VOTES 293
PERCENT 42.1%

b. Mr. Norris W. Hermsmeyer, Boulder, Colo. 2E
VOTES 401
PERCENT 57.6%

Invalid Ballots
VOTES 2
PERCENT 0.3%

Total Ballots
VOTES 696
PERCENT 100.0%

Division for Global Mission / Ticket 53 / Lay Male

a. Mr. David Y. P. Chou, Hickory, N.C. 9B
VOTES 425
PERCENT 59.2%

b. Mr. Charles N. Mohn, Hershey, Pa. 8D
VOTES 293
PERCENT 40.8%

Total Ballots
VOTES 718
PERCENT 100.0%

Publishing House / Ticket 54 / Clergy

a. Pr. Richard Rehfeldt, Des Moines, Iowa 5D
VOTES 431
PERCENT 59.3%

b. Pr. Henry Schulte Jr., Boerne, Texas 4E
VOTES 295
PERCENT 40.6%

Invalid Ballots
VOTES 1
PERCENT 0.1%

Total Ballots
VOTES 727
PERCENT 100.0%

Publishing House / Ticket 55 / Clergy (PC/L)

a. Pr. William E. Wong, Davis, Calif. 2A
VOTES 326
PERCENT 43.3%

b. Pr. Walter S. May Jr., Cedar Rapids, Iowa 5D

VOTES 427
PERCENT 56.7%

Total Ballots
VOTES 753
PERCENT 100.0%

Publishing House / Ticket 56 / Lay Female

a. Ms. Sue Hermodson, West Lafayette, Ind. 6C
VOTES 255
PERCENT 34.1%

b. Ms. Mary E. Hughes, Columbus, Ohio 6F
VOTES 349
PERCENT 46.7%

c. Ms. Karen Alber-Sigler, Bloomsburg, Pa. 8E
VOTES 144
PERCENT 19.3%

Total Ballots
VOTES 748
PERCENT 100.0%

Publishing House / Ticket 57 / Lay Female (PC/L)

a. Ms. Charlene L. Limenih, Los Angeles, Calif. 2B
VOTES 307
PERCENT 42.6%

b. Ms. Dorothy F. Ricks, Philadelphia, Pa. 7F
VOTES 413
PERCENT 57.3%

Invalid Ballots
VOTES 1
PERCENT 0.1%

Total Ballots
VOTES 721
PERCENT 100.0%

Publishing House / Ticket 58 / Lay Male - Region 4 Reserved

a. Mr. William J. Strait, Hondo, Texas 4E
VOTES 227
PERCENT 33.5%

b. Mr. Leonard G. Schultze, Seguin, Texas 4E
VOTES 450
PERCENT 66.5%

Total Ballots
 VOTES 677
 PERCENT 100.0%

Publishing House / Ticket 59 / Lay Male

a. **Mr. Timothy I. Maudlin, Eden Prairie, Minn. 3G**
 VOTES **495**
 PERCENT **70.6%**

b. Mr. William D. Wilkening, Edina, Minn. 3G
 VOTES 206
 PERCENT 29.4%

Total Ballots
 VOTES 701
 PERCENT 100.0%

Publishing House / Ticket 60 / Lay Male (PC/L)

a. Mr. William T. Billings, Dearborn Heights, Mich. 6A
 VOTES 325
 PERCENT 44.3%

b. **Mr. Herman S. Cage, Schaumburg, Ill. 5A**
 VOTES **408**
 PERCENT **55.7%**

Total Ballots
 VOTES 733
 PERCENT 100.0%

Board of Pensions / Ticket 61 / Plan Participants

a. **Ms. Gwen W. Halaas, Minneapolis, Minn. 3G**
 VOTES **454**
 PERCENT **62.4%**

b. Pr. Patricia L. Holman, Aurora, Colo. 2E
 VOTES 274
 PERCENT 37.6%

Total Ballots
 VOTES 728
 PERCENT 100.0%

Board of Pensions / Ticket 62 / Plan Participants

a. **Pr. James S. Aull, Columbia, S.C. 9C**
 VOTES **440**
 PERCENT **58.9%**

b. Pr. Lawrence W. Wick, Omaha, Neb. 4A
 VOTES 307
 PERCENT 41.1%

Total Ballots
 VOTES 747
 PERCENT 100.0%

Board of Pensions / Ticket 63 / Plan Participants

a. Pr. Larry C. Kassebaum, Mesa, Ariz. 2D
 VOTES 360
 PERCENT 49.2%

b. Pr. Jon R. Lee, Dallas, Tex. 4D
 VOTES 214
 PERCENT 29.2%

c. Pr. Synde Manion, Woodland Hills, Calif. 2B
 VOTES 158
 PERCENT 21.6%

Total Ballots
 VOTES 732
 PERCENT 100.0%

Board of Pensions / Ticket 64 / Lay Female

a. Ms. Karen (Schaaf) Southward, Columbus, Ohio 6F
 VOTES 342
 PERCENT 48.6%

b. **Ms. Brenda A. Grandell, Brooklyn, N.Y. 7C**
 VOTES **360**
 PERCENT **51.1%**

Invalid Ballots
 VOTES 2
 PERCENT 0.3%

Total Ballots
 VOTES 704
 PERCENT 100.0%

Board of Pensions / Ticket 65 / Lay Female

a. **Ms. Barbara A. Swartling, Bainbridge Island, Wash. 1B**
 VOTES **359**
 PERCENT **52.1%**

b. Ms. Jane C. Von Seggern, Atlanta, Ga. 9D
 VOTES 330
 PERCENT 47.9%

Total Ballots
 VOTES 689
 PERCENT 100.0%

Board of Pensions / Ticket 66 / Lay Male

a. Mr. Michael B. Unhjem, Fargo, N.D. 3B	
VOTES	361
PERCENT	51.6%
b. Mr. Kenneth G. Bash, Scottsdale, Ariz. 2D	
VOTES	338
PERCENT	48.4%
Total Ballots	
VOTES	699
PERCENT	100.0%

Board of Pensions / Ticket 67 / Lay Male (PC/L)

a. Mr. Daniel W. Joy, Jamaica, N.Y. 7C	
VOTES	338
PERCENT	48.8%
b. Mr. Gregory R. White, Salem, Ore. 1E	
VOTES	354
PERCENT	51.2%
Total Ballots	
VOTES	692
PERCENT	100.0%

Nominating Committee / Ticket 68 / Clergy

a. Pr. Paul J. Olson, Geneseo, Ill. 5B	
VOTES	353
PERCENT	47.4%
b. Pr. George E. Keck, Harleysville, Pa. 7F	
VOTES	389
PERCENT	52.3%
Invalid Ballots	
VOTES	2
PERCENT	0.3%
Total Ballots	
VOTES	744
PERCENT	100.0%

Nominating Committee / Ticket 69 / Clergy

a. Pr. Susan E. Tjornehoj, St. Paul, Minn. 3H	
VOTES	332
PERCENT	45.9%
b. Pr. Gerald E. Wahl, New Hope, Minn. 3G	
VOTES	269
PERCENT	37.2%

c. Pr. Kenneth C. Bowman, Rothsay, Minn. 3D	
VOTES	122
PERCENT	16.9%
Total Ballots	
VOTES	723
PERCENT	100.0%

Nominating Committee / Ticket 70 / Clergy

a. Pr. Rolland H. Bockbrader, Cloquet, Minn. 3E	
VOTES	307
PERCENT	45.0%
b. Pr. Thomas M. Carlson, Willmar, Minn. 3F	
VOTES	374
PERCENT	54.8%
Invalid Ballots	
VOTES	1
PERCENT	0.1%
Total Ballots	
VOTES	682
PERCENT	100.0%

Nominating Committee / Ticket 71 / Lay Female

a. Ms. Frances C. Holman, Baltimore, Md. 8F	
VOTES	236
PERCENT	32.9%
b. Ms. Mary Ann Shealy, Newberry, S.C. 9C	
VOTES	479
PERCENT	66.8%
Invalid Ballots	
VOTES	2
PERCENT	0.3%
Total Ballots	
VOTES	717
PERCENT	100.0%

Nominating Committee / Ticket 72 / Lay Female

a. Ms. Patricia E. Swanson, Kennedy, Minn. 3D	
VOTES	253
PERCENT	34.7%
b. Ms. Diane McNully Forsyth, Winona, Minn. 3I	
VOTES	200
PERCENT	27.4%

c. Ms. Barbara L. Price, Pasadena, Calif. 2B
 VOTES 277
 PERCENT 37.9%

Total Ballots
 VOTES 730
 PERCENT 100.0%

Nominating Committee / Ticket 73 / Lay Male

a. **Mr. Robert L. Anderson, Moline, Ill. 5B**
 VOTES **411**
 PERCENT **60.2%**

b. Mr. Merle E. Michaelson, River Falls, Wis. 5H
 VOTES 270
 PERCENT 39.5%

Invalid Ballots
 VOTES 2
 PERCENT 0.3%

Total Ballots
 VOTES 683
 PERCENT 100.0%

Committee on Appeals / Ticket 74 / Clergy

a. **Pr. Martha W. Clementson, Pittsburgh, Pa. 8B**
 VOTES **486**
 PERCENT **69.3%**

b. Pr. Richard O. Johnson, Grass Valley, Calif. 2A
 VOTES 215
 PERCENT 30.7%

Total Ballots
 VOTES 701
 PERCENT 100.0%

Committee on Appeals / Ticket 75 / Clergy

a. Pr. Kenneth H. Sauer, Columbus, Ohio 6F
 VOTES 322
 PERCENT 42.7%

b. **Pr. Paul M. Werger, Iowa City, Iowa 5D**
 VOTES **432**
 PERCENT **57.3%**

Total Ballots
 VOTES 754
 PERCENT 100.0%

Committee on Appeals / Ticket 76 / Lay Female

a. Ms. Carol D. Gaskamp, Wichita, Kan. 4B
 VOTES 210
 PERCENT 31.1%

b. **Ms. Amy E. Hackler, Olathe, Kan. 4B**
 VOTES **464**
 PERCENT **68.6%**

Invalid Ballots
 VOTES 2
 PERCENT 0.3%

Total Ballots
 VOTES 676
 PERCENT 100.0%

Committee on Appeals / Ticket 77 / Lay Male

a. Mr. Bruce R. Howe, Dickinson, N.D. 3A
 VOTES 285
 PERCENT 39.2%

b. Mr. Wayne W. Becker, Moorestown, N.J. 7A
 VOTES 273
 PERCENT 37.6%

c. Mr. Robert F. Blanck, Oreland, Pa. 7F
 VOTES 168
 PERCENT 23.1%

Invalid Ballots
 VOTES 1
 PERCENT 0.1%

Total Ballots
 VOTES 727
 PERCENT 100.0%

Committee on Discipline / Ticket 78 / Clergy

a. **Pr. Richard R. Campbell Sr., Charleston, S.C. 9C**
 VOTES **456**
 PERCENT **64.7%**

b. Pr. Donald J. Hillerich, Sarasota, Fla. 9E
 VOTES 248
 PERCENT 35.2%

Invalid Ballots
 VOTES 1
 PERCENT 0.1%

Total Ballots
 VOTES 705
 PERCENT 100.0%

Committee on Discipline / Ticket 79 / Clergy

a. Pr. Grace C. Olson, Easton, Pa. 7E	
VOTES	411
PERCENT	56.2%
b. Pr. Vicki R. Hultine, Zumbrota, Minn. 3I	
VOTES	319
PERCENT	43.6%
Invalid Ballots	
VOTES	1
PERCENT	0.1%
Total Ballots	
VOTES	731
PERCENT	100.0%

Committee on Discipline / Ticket 80 / Clergy

a. Pr. Robert C. Toso, Tomah, Wis. 5L	
VOTES	278
PERCENT	40.3%
b. Pr. Thomas J. Wagner, Portage, Wis. 5K	
VOTES	411
PERCENT	59.7%
Total Ballots	
VOTES	689
PERCENT	100.0%

Committee on Discipline / Ticket 81 / Lay Female

a. Ms. Lorraine (Lorrie) G. Bergquist, Redmond, Wash. 1B	
VOTES	470
PERCENT	64.2%
b. Ms. Nancy Nielsen, San Jose, Calif. 2A	
VOTES	262
PERCENT	35.8%
Total Ballots	
VOTES	732
PERCENT	100.0%

Committee on Discipline / Ticket 82 / Lay Female

a. Ms. Anne L. Burton, Summit, N.J. 7A	
VOTES	417
PERCENT	60.5%
b. Ms. Cheryl Mader, Prairie du Chien, Wis. 5L	
VOTES	272
PERCENT	39.5%

Total Ballots

VOTES	689
PERCENT	100.0%

Committee on Discipline / Ticket 83 / Lay Male

a. Mr. William H. Engelbrecht, Waverly, Iowa 5F	
VOTES	331
PERCENT	47.8%
b. Mr. Frank R. Riddle, Franklin, Pa. 8A	
VOTES	362
PERCENT	52.2%
Total Ballots	
VOTES	693
PERCENT	100.0%

Committee on Discipline / Ticket 84 / Lay Male

a. Mr. Charles F. Ruthroff, Oakland, Calif. 2A	
VOTES	504
PERCENT	71.7%
b. Mr. Walter L. Johnson, South San Francisco, Calif. 2A	
VOTES	199
PERCENT	28.3%
Total Ballots	
VOTES	703
PERCENT	100.0%

Committee on Discipline / Ticket 85 / Lay Male

a. *Mr. C. Gary Fischer, Fargo, N.D. 3B	
VOTES	418
PERCENT	60.6%
b. Mr. Charles A. Adamson, Mankato, Minn. 3I	
VOTES	272
PERCENT	39.4%
Total Ballots	
VOTES	690
PERCENT	100.0%

Second Ballot

Church Council / Ticket 2 / Clergy - Region 3 Reserved

b. Pr. Steven J. Knudson, Willmar, Minn. 3F	
VOTES	418
PERCENT	46.2%

c. Pr. Karen L. Soli, Virginia, Minn. 3E
 VOTES 486
 PERCENT 53.8%
 Total Ballots
 VOTES 904
 PERCENT 100.0%

Church Council / Ticket 7 / Lay Female (PC/L)

a. Ms. Eva Kiyutelluk Leonard, Anchorage, Alaska 1A
 VOTES 585
 PERCENT 63.4%
b. Ms. Linda Smith, Puyallup, Wash. 1C
 VOTES 337
 PERCENT 36.6%
 Total Ballots
 VOTES 922
 PERCENT 100.0%

Church Council / Ticket 9 / Lay Male - Region 5 Reserved

a. Mr. Brian D. Rude, Coon Valley, Wis. 5L
 VOTES 460
 PERCENT 51.9%
b. Mr. Ralph B. K. Peterson, Escanaba, Mich. 5G
 VOTES 427
 PERCENT 48.1%
 Total Ballots
 VOTES 887
 PERCENT 100.0%

Church Council / Ticket 10 / Lay Male - Region 8 Reserved

a. Mr. George E. Friedline, New Martinsville, W.Va. 8H
 VOTES 433
 PERCENT 50.3%
b. Mr. Richard L. Steuernagle, DuBois, Pa. 8C
 VOTES 427
 PERCENT 49.7%
 Total Ballots
 VOTES 860
 PERCENT 100.0%

Division for Congregational Ministries / Ticket 12 / Clergy

a. Pr. E. Earl Okerlund, Cherry Hill, N.J. 7A
 VOTES 488
 PERCENT 54.7%

c. Pr. Cedric E. Gibb, Orangeburg, S.C. 9C
 VOTES 404
 PERCENT 45.3%
 Total Ballots
 VOTES 892
 PERCENT 100.0%

Division for Congregational Ministries / Ticket 14 Lay Female

a. Ms. Judy Rehmel, Richmond, Ind. 6C
 VOTES 475
 PERCENT 53.4%
d. Ms. Sunshine B. Keiser, Greensburg, Pa. 8B
 VOTES 414
 PERCENT 46.6%
 Total Ballots
 VOTES 889
 PERCENT 100.0%

Division for Congregational Ministries / Ticket 15 / Lay Female

a. Ms. Doris E. Hanson, Clearwater, Fla. 9E
 VOTES 426
 PERCENT 46.8%
b. Ms. Karen Walhof, Minneapolis, Minn. 3G
 VOTES 484
 PERCENT 53.2%
 Total Ballots
 VOTES 910
 PERCENT 100.0%

Division for Congregational Ministries / Ticket 18 / Lay Male (PC/L)

a. Mr. Robert A. Sandoval, Albuquerque, N.Mex. 2E
 VOTES 573
 PERCENT 65.2%
b. Mr. Harold M. Light, St. Louis, Mo. 4B
 VOTES 306
 PERCENT 34.8%
 Total Ballots
 VOTES 879
 PERCENT 100.0%

Division for Ministry / Ticket 19 / Clergy

a. Pr. Terrence G. Baeder, Rockford, Ill. 5B
 VOTES 510
 PERCENT 57.2%

d. Pr. Rolf A. Nestigen, Eau Claire, Wis. 5H
 VOTES 381
 PERCENT 42.8%
 Total Ballots
 VOTES 891
 PERCENT 100.0%

Division for Ministry / Ticket 21 / Lay Female

a. **Ms. Phyllis Carlson, Kennewick, Wash. 1D**
 VOTES **494**
 PERCENT **57.6%**
 b. Ms. Ardith Senft, Phoenix, Ariz. 2D
 VOTES 364
 PERCENT 42.4%
 Total Ballots
 VOTES 858
 PERCENT 100.0%

Division for Outreach / Ticket 26 / Clergy

a. **Pr. Donald B. Green, Pittsburgh, Pa. 8B**
 VOTES **518**
 PERCENT **59.9%**
 b. Pr. Gerry F. Rickel, Baltimore, Md. 8F
 VOTES 347
 PERCENT 40.1%
 Total Ballots
 VOTES 865
 PERCENT 100.0%

Division for Outreach / Ticket 27 / Clergy

a. ***Pr. Richard W. Owens, Bismarck, N.D. 3A**
 VOTES **521**
 PERCENT **59.6%**
 b. Pr. Helen M. Johnson, Viroqua, Wis. 5L
 VOTES 353
 PERCENT 40.4%
 Total Ballots
 VOTES 874
 PERCENT 100.0%

Division for Outreach / Ticket 29 / Lay Female

a. **Ms. Leisha DeHart-Davis, Atlanta, Ga. 9D**
 VOTES **487**
 PERCENT **56.6%**

c. Ms. Carrie Waller, Rockford, Ill. 5B
 VOTES 374
 PERCENT 43.4%
 Total Ballots
 VOTES 861
 PERCENT 100.0%

Division for Higher Education and Schools / Ticket 39 / Lay Male

a. Mr. Dennis R. Gengenbach, Smithfield, Neb. 4A
 VOTES 361
 PERCENT 41.8%
 b. **Mr. Raymond (Ray) E. Bailey, Fort Collins, Colo. 2E**
 VOTES **502**
 PERCENT **58.2%**
 Total Ballots
 VOTES 863
 PERCENT 100.0%

Division for Church in Society / Ticket 40 / Clergy

a. **Pr. Denver W. Bitner, Rockford, Ill. 5B**
 VOTES **480**
 PERCENT **55.0%**
 c. Pr. Bruce H. Davidson, Summit, N.J. 7A
 VOTES 392
 PERCENT 45.0%
 Total Ballots
 VOTES 872
 PERCENT 100.0%

Division for Church in Society / Ticket 41 / Clergy

a. **Pr. Timothy J. Swenson, Upham, N.D. 3A**
 VOTES **505**
 PERCENT **60.6%**
 b. Pr. Robert W. Dahlen, Goodridge, Minn. 3D
 VOTES 328
 PERCENT 39.4%
 Total Ballots
 VOTES 833
 PERCENT 100.0%

Division for Global Mission / Ticket 47 / Clergy

a. **Pr. Joel S. Bjerkestrand, Fountain Hills, Ariz. 2D**
 VOTES **464**
 PERCENT **53.3%**

b. Pr. L. Paul Bartling, Seattle, Wash. 1B
 VOTES 407
 PERCENT 46.7%
 Total Ballots
 VOTES 871
 PERCENT 100.0%

Division for Global Mission / Ticket 51 / Lay Female

b. Ms. Marie Benson, St. Peter, Minn. 3F
 VOTES 361
 PERCENT 41.4%
 c. **Ms. Mary Sagar, Kalamazoo, Mich. 6B**
 VOTES **510**
 PERCENT **58.6%**
 Total Ballots
 VOTES 871
 PERCENT 100.0%

Publishing House / Ticket 56 / Lay Female

a. Ms. Sue Hermodson, West Lafayette, Ind. 6C
 VOTES 337
 PERCENT 38.0%
 b. **Ms. Mary E. Hughes, Columbus, Ohio 6F**
 VOTES **550**
 PERCENT **62.0%**
 Total Ballots
 VOTES 887
 PERCENT 100.0%

Board of Pensions / Ticket 63 / Plan Participants

a. **Pr. Larry C. Kassebaum, Mesa, Ariz. 2D**
 VOTES **534**
 PERCENT **60.7%**
 b. Pr. Jon R. Lee, Dallas, Tex. 4D
 VOTES 346
 PERCENT 39.3%
 Total Ballots
 VOTES 880
 PERCENT 100.0%

Nominating Committee / Ticket 69 / Clergy

a. **Pr. Susan E. Tjornehoj, St. Paul, Minn. 3H**
 VOTES **482**
 PERCENT **54.6%**

b. Pr. Gerald E. Wahl, New Hope, Minn. 3G
 VOTES 401
 PERCENT 45.4%
 Total Ballots
 VOTES 883
 PERCENT 100.0%

Nominating Committee / Ticket 72 / Lay Female

a. Ms. Patricia E. Swanson, Kennedy, Minn. 3D
 VOTES 411
 PERCENT 47.0%
 c. **Ms. Barbara L. Price, Pasadena, Calif. 2B**
 VOTES **464**
 PERCENT **53.0%**
 Total Ballots
 VOTES 875
 PERCENT 100.0%

Committee on Appeals / Ticket 77 / Lay Male

a. Mr. Bruce R. Howe, Dickinson, N.D. 3A
 VOTES 422
 PERCENT 47.7%
 b. **Mr. Wayne W. Becker, Moorestown, N.J. 7A**
 VOTES **462**
 PERCENT **52.3%**
 Total Ballots
 VOTES 884
 PERCENT 100.0%

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