

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
2005 Churchwide Assembly

Reports and Records: Assembly Minutes

August 8-14, 2005
Orlando, Florida

Published by the
Office of the Secretary
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
8765 West Higgins Road
Chicago, Ill. 60631

The Rev. Lowell G. Almen
Secretary

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Introduction

You have before you the historic record of the official minutes of the ninth Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The assembly was held August 8 through 14, 2005, under the theme “Marked with the Cross of Christ Forever.” The site for the assembly was the Orlando World Center in Orlando, Florida.

Work of the Churchwide Assembly

The Churchwide Assembly is “. . . the highest legislative authority of the churchwide organization. . . .” According to the *Constitutions, 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 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

This volume, *2005 Reports and Records: Assembly Minutes*, was prepared to be a complete and conveniently useable official record of the Churchwide Assembly. Therefore, approved documents have been printed in the text of these 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 *2005 Pre-Assembly Report*. Included in the *2005 Pre-Assembly Report* were summaries of minutes of the Church Council held during the 2003–2005 biennium, reports of churchwide units, and printed documentation from the officers.

The *2005 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, *2005 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, financial audits for fiscal years 2003 and 2004 are appended to these minutes in Exhibit E.

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, 2005; thus, “CA05.” 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 CA05.04.09 signifies that the ninth action of the assembly occurred on the fourth day of the 2005 Churchwide Assembly.

References to actions of various ELCA governing bodies also are cited by a code. For example, CC03.11.61 refers to the action taken by the Church Council (CC) at the council’s November (11th month) meeting in 2003 (03), which represented the sixty-first action (61) 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 8.31.01. (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, 16.31.A05.

Reprint of Governing Documents

Various amendments to the governing documents of this church were adopted by the 2005 Churchwide Assembly. As a convenience to readers and for historical documentation, the full text of the 2005 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. Four teams of two persons each carried out that task: the Rev. Susan L. Gamelin (High Point, N.C.); the Rev. James G. Krauser (Port Jefferson, N.Y.); the Rev. Thomas E. McKee (Lower Susquehanna Synod staff); the Rev. Richard E. Mueller (Florissant, Mo.); the Rev. Karl J. Nelson (Sheboygan, Wis.); the Rev. Leslie G. Svendsen (Sioux Falls, S.D.); the Rev. William J. Sappenfield (Austin, Tex.); and Ms. Carolyn Thomas (Rocky Mountain Synod staff, Denver, Colo.). I am deeply grateful to each of them.

The monumental challenge of editing and preparing the minutes for publication was accomplished by Mr. N. Keith Fry, the Rev. Paul A. Schreck, and the Rev. Ruth E. Hamilton, 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 Mr. Fred More and Ms. Susan More. 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 78 of these minutes. I thank all of those who contributed conscientiously and faithfully to the work of the assembly.

Marked with the Cross of Christ Forever

Even as the themes of our previous churchwide assemblies have called this church to sing with “Many Voices, One Song” (1989), to “See, Grow, and Serve to the Glory of God” (1991), to be “Rooted in the Gospel for Witness and Service” (1993), to serve with vigor and love in “Making Christ Known” (1995), to be “Alive in Our Heritage and Hope” (1997), to express our “Hope for a New Century” (1999), to continue “Sharing Faith in a New Century” (2001), to pray and work “For the Healing of the World” (2003), so this assembly challenged the members, congregations, synods, and churchwide ministries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to witness to the world that, by God’s grace, we are “Marked with the Cross of Christ Forever.”

THE REV. LOWELL G. ALMEN, *Secretary*
Festival of Pentecost
June 4, 2006

Ninth Churchwide Assembly
of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Minutes

August 8-14, 2005
Orlando, Florida

**Marked with the cross of Christ forever,
we are claimed, gathered, and sent for the sake of the world.**



Claimed by God's grace for the sake of the world,
we are a new creation through God's living Word
by the power of the Holy Spirit;

Gathered by God's grace for the sake of the world,
we will live among God's faithful people, hear God's Word,
and share Christ's supper;

Sent by God's grace for the sake of the world,
we will proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed,
serve all people following the example of our Lord Jesus,
and strive for justice and peace in all the world.

Plenary Session One

Monday, August 8, 2005

7:30 P.M. – 11:40 P.M.

Order for the Opening of an Assembly and Welcome

The ninth Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America was called to order at 7:33 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time by the Rev. Mark S. Hanson, presiding bishop, at the Orlando World Center, Orlando, Florida. Presiding Bishop Hanson stated that the members of the assembly had come together, more than a thousand voting members plus resource members and visitors from all 65 synods of this church, to “breathe life into these binders [of documents] before us.”

Presiding Bishop Hanson invited all those present to rise to participate in the Order for Opening of an Assembly. The assembly sang the hymn, “What is This Place?” followed by a litany and prayer. The presiding bishop then declared the assembly to be in session and asked the assembly to join in singing “A Mighty Fortress.”

The presiding bishop informed the assembly that each morning session would begin with the sound of a bell as a call to silence, followed by an order for Morning Prayer, and that each evening session would end with the sound of a bell, followed by silence and an order for Evening Prayer.

Presiding Bishop Hanson called attention to the many people who had worked to make the assembly possible, mentioning in particular the roles of certain persons who undergirded the work of the Churchwide Assembly in special ways:

- All those who were upholding the assembly and this church in prayer, especially three congregations in the Florida-Bahamas Synod: St. John in Jacksonville; Calvary in Apollo Beach; and Príncipe de Paz in Miami. Bishop Hanson noted that the ELCA Web site invited people to pray and that the Churchwide Assembly itself would stop to pray periodically throughout the week, particularly before major votes, and would be led by a prayer team that included synodical vice presidents, synodical bishops, and members of the Church Council.
- The parliamentarian, Mr. David D. Swartling of Seattle, Washington. Mr. Swartling is a partner in the Seattle law firm of Mills, Meyers, and Swartling and had previously served the ELCA in a number of capacities, including congregation president, synodical vice president, chair of the Region 1 Council, chair of the board of the ELCA Foundation, and parliamentarian of a number of synodical assemblies. Presiding Bishop Hanson pointed out that Mr. Swartling brought his expertise to this assembly as a much-appreciated volunteer and that, before the assembly was completed, all would be grateful for his help.

Report of the Credentials Committee

Reference: 2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section I, pages 9 and 33.

Bylaw 12.41.11. of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* provides a formula to determine the number of voting members of the Churchwide Assembly. The Church Council and the Rev. Lowell G. Almen, secretary of the ELCA, determined that 1,018 was the number of voting members for this assembly. This number included the churchwide officers. Secretary Almen, *ex*

officio chair of the Credentials Committee, reported that, as of 7:05 P.M., 977 voting members had registered with the Credentials Committee. On the basis of that report, Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson declared the presence of a quorum.

Greetings: Florida-Bahamas Synod

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson called upon the Rev. Edward R. Benoway, bishop of the Florida-Bahamas Synod, to bring greetings on behalf of the host synod. Bp. Benoway welcomed the voting members to Florida, saying that he hoped they would enjoy the sunshine, beaches, and all that Florida has to offer, but warned that volunteers were on hand at those places to direct voting members back to the plenary sessions. He described Florida as a place of fun but also a mission field, reporting that the previous year the Florida-Bahamas Synod had organized three new congregations, completed two re-starts, and established one satellite congregation. In 2005, he said, the synod had organized five new congregations, four of which were Latino, completed one re-start, and established another satellite congregation. In addition, the synod was tracking thirty additional sites for potential mission starts.

The previous year at this time, Bp. Benoway reminded the assembly, Florida had been bracing itself for the first of four hurricanes that struck the state. He thanked everyone for their prayers and material support, much of which came through Lutheran Disaster Response, while some came from other synods and from work teams that had come from all over the country to help rebuild. He called attention to gifts that had been provided for voting members by the synod: palm tree seedlings as a reminder of the resiliency of the Church in the face of all kinds of forces and bags of fair-trade coffee as a reminder of the many persons in other parts of the world who had not fared as well as those in the Florida-Bahamas Synod. He cited Haiti as one example. Bp. Benoway encouraged the assembly to use equal-exchange, fair-trade coffee as a means of supporting developing nations. He concluded by stating that the Florida-Bahamas Synod was pleased to host this important assembly, and asked God's blessings on its work.

Introduction to Electronic Voting Procedures

Reference: *2005 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section I, pages 9–10.

For those new to the Churchwide Assembly, as well as for returning voting members, Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson gave a demonstration of the electronic voting system, then had voting members respond to several practice questions. He announced that most votes would be taken using the electronic system but that on occasion he would call for a voice vote. He reminded members that proxy voting was not permitted under the governing documents of this church and instructed them that they were to use only the voting keypad located at their assigned seat. He acknowledged a generous grant from Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, which had made this equipment available to the assembly.

Adoption of the “Rules of Organization and Procedure”

Reference: *2005 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section I, pages 5–20.

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson asked voting members to turn to the “Rules of Organization and Procedure” in Section I of the *2005 Pre-Assembly Report* and briefly highlighted a few of the rules, giving particular attention to the deadlines and procedures for filing various items of assembly business. He pointed out that the deadlines were listed both

in the “Rules of Organization and Procedure” in the Program, and in the proposed “Order of Business,” which would serve as the agenda for the plenary sessions.

He declared that only voting members with appropriate credentials could come onto the floor of the assembly; that speeches during debate would be limited to three minutes; that voting members were to refrain from applause; that a person speaking in favor of a motion was to be followed by one speaking against it; that those speaking in favor of a motion should go to a green microphone while those speaking against should go to a red microphone; and that voting members who were rising to offer a motion or amendment or who wished to rise to a point of order or personal privilege were to go to any microphone and hold up a white card. The chair called special attention to the note on page 8 of the *2005 Pre-Assembly Report* that explained appropriate uses of white cards. He asked members to use their cards to offer only motions that were properly in order, and stressed that members needed to wait their turn in line if they were offering motions or amendments. He further explained that white cards could be used to interrupt debate for matters of an urgent nature, such as to rise for a point of order, to make a parliamentary inquiry, to raise a matter of privilege, or to call for the orders of the day. He gave examples of parliamentary inquiries, points of order, and points of privilege. He ended by stating that uses of white cards for other purposes would be ruled out of order.

He also reminded those who wished to make motions that they should first state the motion, and they would then be offered an opportunity to speak in favor of their motion. He warned that if members spoke to motions before making them, the motions would be ruled out of order.

Presiding Bishop Hanson then gave a general overview of the proposed rules, specifically mentioning the following deadlines and procedures:

- A resolution that was new business to this assembly would need to be presented to Secretary Lowell G. Almen in writing no later than 10:45 A.M., Thursday, August 11, for referral to the Committee of Reference and Counsel. Each form would need to be signed by the maker of the motion and one other voting member.
- In order to assure accuracy, all amendments would need to be presented in writing to the secretary’s deputy, the Rev. Ruth E. Hamilton, who was seated at a table to the assembly’s left of the podium.
- Substitute motions on a resolution being debated would be voted on only after the original motion was “perfected.” Then any amendments to the substitute would be entertained, and the substitute voted on. Any vote on the main motion would follow, should the substitute not prevail.
- Memorials from synod assemblies would be handled in two ways: Most of the 196 memorials that had been received would be voted on *en bloc*, or in a group; others would be considered separately. The presiding bishop pointed out that the recommendations of the Memorials Committee for *en bloc* and separate consideration were listed on page 1 of Section VI of the *2005 Pre-Assembly Report*. Anyone who wished to have particular memorials removed from *en bloc* consideration or to submit a substitute proposal would need to inform the secretary or his deputy in writing by 10:45 A.M., Tuesday, August 9. The Memorials Committee would then remove those memorials from *en bloc* consideration and would schedule debate on the proposals. Such requests would need to be submitted on the appropriate form, and would require the signature of 10 other voting members. Proposals for resolutions on topics similar to those already

under consideration would not be considered before the scheduled debate for those memorials already under consideration.

- Any proposed amendments to the governing documents would need to be submitted first to the Committee of Reference and Counsel.
- Nominations for various boards, committees, and the Church Council would need to be submitted to the Nominations Desk by 2:25 P.M., Wednesday, August 10. Nominations would be considered in the order in which they were filed at the Nominations Desk.
- Proposed amendments to the budget were to be submitted by 8:30 A.M., Friday, August 12.
- Requests to consider separately any of the proposed changes to the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* recommended by the Church Council were to be submitted in writing, with the support of 10 other voting members, to the secretary or his deputy by 10:45 A.M., Wednesday, August 10.
- Amendments to the governing documents occasioned by the proposed restructuring of the churchwide organization would be voted on *en bloc*, and would not be considered separately. The chair pointed out that many of these were minor editorial changes, while others were substantive. Proposals for separate consideration would require the support of 10 other voting members, and would need to be submitted by 10:45 A.M., Wednesday, August 10.
- Constitutional amendments presented by the Church Council for final vote could not be amended by this assembly. Any proposed changes would need to be submitted as a main motion and would be referred to the Committee of Reference and Counsel. This assembly would be asked to consider them for a first reading, with action reserved for a future Churchwide Assembly.
- Any new amendments to the governing documents would follow the procedures outlined on pages 16 and 17 of Section I, *2005 Pre-Assembly Report*. Such proposed amendments would need to be delivered in writing to the secretary by 8:45 A.M., Wednesday, August 10.

Presiding Bishop Hanson stated that the proposed “Rules of Organization and Procedure” were being presented for adoption as a whole. He explained, however, that if any member wished to amend a particular provision in the proposed rules of procedure, add a new rule, or even discuss a particular rule, those provisions would be considered separately from the rest and in sequential order, following approval of the remainder of the rules.

He also noted that the “Rules of Organization and Procedure” required a two-thirds vote for passage, but that under *Robert’s Rules of Order* a motion to amend an individual rule required only a majority vote. Therefore, each amendment would require two votes: one to amend (majority vote) and one to approve the rule as amended (two-thirds vote). Finally, Presiding Bishop Hanson said, if a given proposed rule were *not* adopted, the ELCA governing documents provided that on that particular subject the assembly would be governed by *Robert’s Rules of Order*.

Presiding Bishop Hanson then called upon Secretary Lowell G. Almen to present the motion for the adoption of the “Rules of Organization and Procedure” in the “Order of Business.”

Secretary Almen presented the motion.

MOVED;

SECONDED:

To adopt the “Rules of Organization and Procedure” for the 2005 Churchwide Assembly (exclusive of quoted and highlighted constitutional provisions and bylaws that already are in force); and

To include the following rule that was part of the “Rules” adopted by previous Churchwide Assemblies, but that was inadvertently not included in “Part Three: Procedure and Quorum” of the printed text of the 2005 *Pre-Assembly Report* as the result of a typesetting error:

Departing from Agenda

With the consent of a majority of the voting members, the chair shall have the authority to call items of business before the assembly in whatever order he or she considers most expedient for the conduct of the assembly’s business.

A motion to alter the agenda shall require for adoption a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting.

Presiding Bishop Hanson stated that, if any voting member wished to discuss any rule separately, at this juncture the assembly would simply identify the rule, but that the language for any proposed amendment would then need to be brought in writing to the secretary’s deputy.

Mr. Steven R. Chapman [Northwest Washington Synod] identified Part Ten, “Vote to Adopt Certain Recommendations from Task Force Reports,” paragraphs 2 through 6, for individual consideration and amendment by paragraph.

The Rev. Stacie R. Fidler [Northern Illinois Synod] identified Part Eighteen, “Hearings,” paragraph 1.

Mr. Paul Basting [Sierra Pacific Synod] identified Part Ten, “Vote to Adopt Certain Recommendations from Task Force Reports,” paragraph 2.

The chair reminded voting members that if a rule had already been identified for separate discussion, there was no need to exclude it a second time, and those voting members who had intended to propose paragraphs already mentioned could return to their seats. He also pointed out that there was a new microphone queuing system being used that would allow voting members to log in when they went to the microphone so that members could be given the floor in the order in which they had presented themselves. He asked members who decided to withdraw to please notify the monitor at each microphone so that their names could then be removed from the queue.

A point of order was raised about how one could abstain using the voting machines. Presiding Bishop Hanson called upon Secretary Almen to respond. The secretary informed the assembly that the electronic system was not capable of recording anything other than “yes” or “no” votes, so any voting members who wanted abstentions recorded on particular votes would need to submit their names to the secretary’s deputy.

The Rev. Marshall E. Hahn [Northeastern Iowa Synod] asked three questions about Part 10, “Amendments to and Votes on Major Statements, Deadline for Submission”: To which committee did the chair intend to refer motions and amendments, to the Committee of Reference and Counsel or to an *ad hoc* committee? Would movers of motions be welcome to sit in with the committee considering their motion? And would the committee be looking at process only or also at possible substantive changes to the motions?

The presiding bishop explained that he had discretion to appoint an *ad hoc* committee if in his judgment such a committee could help the assembly do its work. He announced his intention to form an *ad hoc* committee to deal with any amendments or substitutes to the three recommendations dealing with the ELCA Studies on Sexuality. He explained that past practice had been that the *ad hoc* committee would seek to convene the makers of motions to learn intent, gain clarification, and, in those cases where there were multiple amendments and substitute motions aimed at the same ends through different means, attempt to reduce those motions to one or two to avoid overwhelming the assembly. The committee's goal would be to help perfect motions, consolidating them where possible. Where that would not be possible, the committee would help to clarify the motions so the assembly could better perform its work. He described the committee's efforts as "consultative and collaborative."

The Rev. Steven E. King [Southwestern Minnesota Synod] asked to separate from the motion the rule adopted by previous Churchwide Assemblies, "Departing from Agenda," that had inadvertently not been included in Part Three, "Procedure and Quorum," of the printed text of the *2005 Pre-Assembly Report* as the result of a typesetting error.

The Rev. William C. "Chris" Boerger, bishop of the Northwest Washington Synod, gave notice that he wanted to amend the process of adopting standing rules and offer an amendment to Part Ten. The chair asked him to clarify if his intent was to offer an amendment that would then become a new rule. Bp. Boerger confirmed that he was proposing a new rule on the process of adopting rules and that he was also proposing an amendment to Part Ten.

Seeing no further speakers, Presiding Bishop Hanson declared that the rules to be removed from *en bloc* consideration had been identified. Before moving to discussion of these, he stated that the assembly would consider the motion to adopt the proposed rules that remained *en bloc*. Because a portion of the main motion itself had been marked for separate consideration (the paragraph concerning "Departing from Agenda"), the chair consulted with the parliamentarian. After this consultation, Presiding Bishop Hanson asked Secretary Lowell G. Almen to read the motion on the floor.

Secretary Almen clarified that the motion on the floor was to adopt the rules of organization and procedure, exclusive of quoted and highlighted constitutional provisions and bylaws that were already in force, and exclusive of sentences 2 and following on pages 12 and 13, in the subsection entitled "Vote to Adopt Certain Recommendations from Task Force Reports"; and exclusive of the first paragraph in Part Eighteen, "Hearings," on page 20; and exclusive of the proposed addition, "Departing from Agenda," all of which were to receive separate consideration.

The chair offered the assembly another opportunity to seek clarification of the matter on which they were voting. He reminded members that a two-thirds vote was required to adopt the rules.

Mr. David E. Laden [Saint Paul Area Synod] rose to a point of order to state that a previous speaker had asked for Part Ten to be excluded for separate consideration. The presiding bishop explained that this had been included in Secretary Almen's restatement of the motion, but had been referred to by section title rather than by number. The chair confirmed that Mr. Laden was correct that this section was to be considered separately. He then called for the vote, noting that a two-thirds majority was required.

ASSEMBLY

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

Action

Yes-905; No-57

CA05.01.01 To adopt the “Rules of Organization and Procedure” for the 2005 Churchwide Assembly (exclusive of quoted and highlighted constitutional provisions and bylaws that are already in force, and the material removed for separate consideration).

**Rules of Organization and Procedure
for the 2005 Churchwide Assembly**

PART ONE: Authority and Duties

Authority of the Churchwide Assembly

The legislative function of the churchwide organization shall be fulfilled by the Churchwide Assembly (ELCA churchwide constitutional provision 11.31.).

The Churchwide Assembly shall be the highest legislative authority of the churchwide organization and shall deal with all matters which are necessary in pursuit of the purposes and functions of this church. The powers of the Churchwide Assembly are limited only by the provisions of the Articles of Incorporation, this constitution and bylaws, and the assembly’s own resolutions (ELCA 12.11.).

Any matter for which adoption by a vote of two-thirds of those voting in a prior Churchwide Assembly was required by the constitution or bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall require a two-thirds vote to be amended or repealed by a subsequent Churchwide Assembly (ELCA 12.12.).

Duties of the Churchwide Assembly

The Churchwide Assembly shall:

- a. Review the work of the churchwide officers, and for this purpose require and receive reports from them and act on business proposed by them.
- b. Review the work of the churchwide units, and for this purpose require and receive reports from them and act on business proposed by them.
- c. Receive and consider proposals from synod assemblies.
- d. Establish churchwide policy.
- e. Adopt a budget for the churchwide organization.
- f. Elect officers, board members, and other persons as provided in the constitution or bylaws.
- g. Establish churchwide units to carry out the functions of the churchwide organization.
- h. Have the sole authority to amend the constitution and bylaws.
- i. Fulfill other functions as required in the constitution and bylaws.
- j. Conduct such other business as necessary to further the purposes and functions of the churchwide organization (ELCA 12.21.).

Assembly Presiding Officer

The presiding bishop shall preside at the Churchwide Assembly (ELCA 13.21.c.).

The vice president shall serve . . . in the event the bishop is unable to do so, as chair of the Churchwide Assembly (ELCA 13.31.).

Assembly Secretary

The secretary shall be responsible for the minutes and records of the Churchwide Assembly (ELCA 13.41.02.a.).

Notice of Meeting

The secretary shall give notice of the time and place of each regular assembly by publication thereof at least 60 days in advance in this church's periodical (ELCA 12.31.02.).

Written notice shall be mailed to all voting members not more than 30 days nor less than 10 days in advance of any meeting (ELCA 12.31.02.).

Agenda

The presiding bishop shall provide for the preparation of the agenda for the Churchwide Assembly (ELCA 13.21.c.).

Program and Worship

The arrangements for agenda, program, and worship shall be under the supervision of the presiding bishop (ELCA 12.31.04.).

Arrangements

Physical arrangements for churchwide assemblies shall be made by the secretary or by an assembly manager working under the secretary's supervision. Such committees as may be necessary to facilitate the planning for and operation of the assembly may be established by the secretary in consultation with the presiding bishop (ELCA 12.31.05.).

PART TWO: Members of Assembly

Assembly Voting Members

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. The secretary shall notify each synod of the number of assembly members it is to elect (ELCA 12.41.11.).

The officers of this church and the bishops of the synods shall serve as ex officio members of the Churchwide Assembly. They shall have voice and vote (ELCA 12.41.21.).

The total number of voting members at the 2005 Churchwide Assembly is 1,018.

Eligibility to Serve as Voting Member

Each voting member of the Churchwide Assembly shall be a voting member of a congregation of this church and shall cease to be a member of the assembly if no longer a voting member of a congregation of this church. The criterion for voting membership in the congregation from which the voting member is elected shall be in effect regarding minimum age for that voting member (ELCA 12.41.13.).

Certification of Voting Members

The secretary of each synod shall submit to the secretary of this church at least nine months before each regular Churchwide Assembly a certified list of the voting members elected by the Synod Assembly (ELCA 12.41.12.).

Seating of Alternate Voting Members

If a voting member elected by the Synod Assembly is unable to serve, the name of an eligible person chosen by the Synod Council shall be submitted by the secretary of

the synod to the secretary of this church. If a vacancy occurs or exists within 30 days or less of the convening of the Churchwide Assembly or during the meeting of the Churchwide Assembly, the synodical bishop may submit the name of an eligible person to the secretary of this church. The individual whose name is submitted to the secretary of this church shall be registered and seated by the Credentials Committee as a voting member from the synod (ELCA 12.41.12.).

Inclusive Representation

Except as otherwise provided in this constitution and bylaws, the churchwide organization, through the Church Council, shall establish processes that will ensure that at least 60 percent of the members of its assemblies...be laypersons; that as nearly as possible, 50 percent of the lay members of these assemblies... shall be female and 50 percent shall be male, and that, where possible, the representation of ordained ministers shall be both female and male. At least 10 percent of the members of these assemblies...shall be persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English (ELCA 5.01.f.).

The term, “persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English,” shall be understood to mean African American, Black, Arab and Middle Eastern, Asian and Pacific Islander, Latino, American Indian, and Alaska Native people. This definition, however, shall not be understood as limiting this church’s commitment to inclusive participation in its life and work (ELCA 5.01.C00.).

Additional Members Provided

Additional voting members have been allocated by the Church Council as follows:

Synod	Additional Members
Caribbean	3
Stipulation: All three persons must be persons of color or whose primary language is other than English (total voting members from synod would be five: three clergy, including bishop, one lay woman and one lay man)	
Alaska	2
Stipulation: At least one must be an Alaska Native person	
Arkansas-Oklahoma	3
Stipulation: At least one must be a person of color or a person whose primary language is other than English	
West Virginia-Western Maryland	3
Stipulation: None	
Slovak Zion	2
Stipulation: None	
Eastern Washington-Idaho	1
Stipulation: Must be a person of color or a person whose primary language is other than English	
Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana	1
Stipulation: Must be a person of color or a person whose primary language is other than English	
Northern Great Lakes	1
Stipulation: Must be a person of color or a person whose primary language is other than English	
La Crosse Area	1
Stipulation: Must be a person of color or a person whose primary language is other than English	
Northwestern Pennsylvania	1
Stipulation: Must be a person of color or a person whose primary language is other than English	
Metropolitan Washington, D.C.	1
Stipulation: Must be a person of color or a person whose primary language is other than English	

Assembly Properly Constituted

Each assembly . . . of the churchwide organization . . . shall be conclusively presumed to have been properly constituted, and neither the method of selection nor the composition of any such assembly . . . may be challenged in a court of law by any person or be used as the basis of a challenge in a court of law to the validity or effect of any action taken or authorized by any such assembly . . . (ELCA 5.01.j.).

Advisory Members

Members of the Church Council and board chairpersons or their designees, unless elected as voting members, shall serve as advisory members of the Churchwide Assembly. Executive directors of churchwide units, the executive for administration, and executive assistants to the presiding bishop shall serve as advisory members of the Churchwide Assembly (ELCA 12.41.31.). Advisory members shall have voice but not vote (ELCA 12.41.32.).

Other Members

Other categories of non-voting members may be established by the Churchwide Assembly (ELCA 12.41.41.).

Presidents of the colleges, universities, and seminaries of this church, unless elected as voting members of the assembly, shall have voice but not vote (ELCA 12.41.A89.).

In addition, a faculty member of each seminary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, appointed by the president, shall serve as resource persons with voice but not vote.

An individual whose term of office as a bishop of a synod commences within one month of the assembly, unless elected as a voting member of the assembly, shall have the privilege of seat and voice, but not vote, during the assembly.

An individual whose term of office as a bishop of a synod either commences or expires during the course of the assembly shall have the privilege of seat and voice, but not vote, during that portion of the assembly before commencement or after termination of such term.

An individual who served as a churchwide or presiding bishop in a predecessor church body or this church, unless elected as a voting member of the assembly, shall have voice but not vote.

Resource Members

Resource members shall be persons recommended by the presiding bishop of this church or by the Church Council who, because of their position or expertise, can contribute to the work of the Churchwide Assembly. Resource members shall have voice only with respect to matters within their expertise, but not vote.

Official Visitors

Official visitors shall be persons invited by the presiding bishop of this church or the Church Council to address the Churchwide Assembly. They shall not have vote.

Access to Seating

A person will be admitted to restricted seating areas only upon display of proper credentials.

Assembly Costs

The churchwide organization shall be responsible for the costs of the Churchwide Assembly, including the reasonable costs for travel, housing, and board for voting and advisory members (ELCA 12.31.06.).

PART THREE: Procedure and Quorum

Parliamentary Procedure

The Churchwide Assembly shall use parliamentary procedures in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order, latest edition, unless otherwise ordered by the assembly (ELCA 12.31.09.).

(Note: the 10th edition of Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, is, therefore, the governing parliamentary law of this church, except as otherwise provided.)

No motion shall be out of order because of conflict with federal, state, or local constitutions or laws.

Proxy and Absentee Voting Precluded

Proxy and absentee voting shall not be permitted at a Churchwide Assembly (ELCA 12.31.08.).

Obtaining the Floor

In plenary sessions of the Churchwide Assembly, the voting members, including the ex officio members, always have prior right to obtain the floor. Advisory members shall be entitled to obtain the floor, if it does not prevent voting members from being heard. Resource members shall be entitled to the floor only with respect to matters within their expertise, if it does not prevent the voting members from being heard. Official visitors may address the assembly when requested to do so by the chair.

Speeches

Unless otherwise determined by a majority vote of the assembly, all speeches during discussion shall be limited to three minutes. A signal shall be given one minute before the speaker's time ends. A second signal shall be given one minute later, and the speaker shall then sit down.

Alternating Speeches

Insofar as is possible during discussion, a speaker on one side of the question shall be followed by a speaker on the other side.

To facilitate alternating speeches, assembly members awaiting recognition at the floor microphones shall approach the appropriate microphone (marked green for those in favor of the pending matter on the floor; marked red for those opposed to the pending matter on the floor).

A white card in the registration packet of voting members is to be used to identify a member who wishes to offer an amendment to the pending matter, or some other motion that would be in order.

Motion to Rescind or Amend Something Previously Adopted at This Assembly

A two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting shall be required to rescind or to amend something previously adopted during this Churchwide Assembly.

Suspending or Revising the Rules

After the adoption of the Rules of Organization and Procedure and any amendments thereto offered prior to the adoption of the Rules, any further amendment to, revision in, or suspension of, the Rules shall always require for adoption a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting.

Moving the Previous Question

A member who has spoken on the pending question(s) may not move the previous question(s).

Applause

In the give-and-take of debate on issues before the Churchwide Assembly, members of the assembly and visitors shall refrain from applause.

Unfinished Business

When the orders of the day are called for adjournment of the Churchwide Assembly, all remaining unfinished items of business shall be referred to the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for disposition.

Quorum

At least one-half of the persons elected as voting members must be present at a meeting to constitute a quorum for the legal conduct of business. If such a quorum is not present, those voting members present may adjourn the meeting to another time and place, provided that only those persons eligible to vote at the original meeting may vote at the adjourned meeting (ELCA 12.31.07.).

Absence of Members

Members shall not absent themselves from any session of the assembly without valid excuse, under penalty of forfeiture of the per diem allowance for the day of absence and proportionate reimbursement of travel expenses.

Audit of Credentials Report

At the request of the chair of the Credentials Committee or of the assembly, the chair may order an audit of the report of the Credentials Committee. When so ordered, the Credentials Committee will provide the bishop of each synod with a list of the registered voting members from such synod. Each bishop (or other voting member duly appointed by the bishop) shall then make appropriate corrections on such list and certify the accuracy of the list with such corrections as may be indicated. Each bishop (or other voting member duly appointed by the bishop) shall promptly return the certified list to the chair of the Credentials Committee.

PART FOUR: Committees of Assembly

Mandated Committees

The Churchwide Assembly shall have a Reference and Counsel Committee, a Memorials Committee, and a Nominating Committee (ELCA 12.51.).

Reference and Counsel Committee

A Reference and Counsel Committee, appointed by the Church Council, shall review all proposed changes or additions to the constitution and bylaws and other items submitted which are not germane to items contained in the stated agenda of the assembly (ELCA 12.51.11.).

Memorials Committee

A Memorials Committee, appointed by the Church Council, shall review memorials from synod assemblies and make appropriate recommendations for assembly action (ELCA 12.51.21.).

Nominating Committee

A Nominating Committee, elected by the Churchwide Assembly, shall nominate two persons for each position for which an election will be held by the Churchwide Assembly and for which a nominating procedure has not otherwise been designated in the constitution and bylaws of this church (ELCA 12.51.31.).

The Nominating Committee shall strive to ensure that at least two of the voting membership of the Church Council shall have been younger than 30 years of age at the time of their election (ELCA 19.21.A98.).

The Church Council shall place in nomination the names of two persons for each position [on the Nominating Committee] (ELCA 19.21.01.).

Other Committees

The Churchwide Assembly may authorize such other committees as it deems necessary (ELCA 12.51.).

Such committees as may be necessary to facilitate the planning for and operation of the assembly may be established by the secretary in consultation with the presiding bishop (ELCA 12.31.05.).

Elections Committee

The Elections Committee shall oversee the conduct of elections in accordance with election procedures approved by the Churchwide Assembly.

In the election for presiding bishop, vice president, or secretary, the Elections Committee shall report the results of any balloting by announcing the number of votes received by each nominee and the names of those nominees qualified to remain on the next ballot or the name of the nominee who is elected.

The Elections Committee shall report the results of balloting in other elections by announcing the name of the person elected or by announcing the names of nominees qualified to remain on the ballot. Vote totals shall be reported to the secretary of this church and recorded in the minutes of the assembly. Based on the written report of the Elections Committee, the chair shall declare elected those who received the required number of votes.

A written report showing the results of a ballot shall be distributed to the voting members concurrently with, or as soon as possible after, the announced report of the Elections Committee.

Credentials Committee

The Credentials Committee shall oversee the registration of voting members and shall report periodically to the Churchwide Assembly the number of voting members registered.

PART FIVE: Voting Procedures

Voting by Electronic Device

Voting generally shall occur through use of an electronic device at each voting member's seat.

Each member shall vote only by the electronic device at his or her assigned seat.

The vote by electronic device shall be recorded by entering #1 for yes, #2 for no.

On each vote by electronic device, the member must select her or his vote by entering the appropriate key number, which number will then be shown on the display panel of the device.

A member's vote by electronic device shall be recorded before the chair orders the voting closed.

A member's vote by electronic device can be recorded and transmitted only when the green light on the device is illuminated.

While the green light on the electronic device remains illuminated and prior to transmission of the vote, a member can change his or her vote by pressing the clear-erase key.

The member's vote by electronic device will be shown on the display panel of the device prior to the transmission of the vote. Once the vote is transmitted, it cannot be changed or corrected.

Any member who has an electronic device on which the green light does not illuminate when the chair has called for members to test their electronic devices should notify immediately the Elections Committee.

Any member who because of a physical limitation has difficulty in using the electronic device or in seeing the visual display on which voting instructions are projected should contact the Elections Committee for assistance.

Voting by electronic device shall be in accordance with instructions from the chair or the Elections Committee.

Division of the House

When a division of the house is ordered, the vote shall be by electronic device, by standing vote, or by written ballot as directed by the chair. No division of the house is in order when a vote has been taken by electronic device, by a counted standing vote, or by written ballot.

Various Methods of Voting

As directed by the chair, voting (other than in elections) may be by electronic device, or by voice, by show of hands, by standing, or by written ballot.

Each voting member's registration packet contains a ballot pad of numbered ballots. Each voting member is responsible for this pad. No replacement of ballot pads or of any numbered ballot will be made. When directed by the chair, one of the numbered ballots from the ballot pad shall be used. The chair will announce the number of the ballot from the ballot pad that is to be used for a particular vote. Failure to use the correctly numbered ballot will result in an invalid ballot. These ballots should not be folded and will be collected at the voting member's table in accordance with instructions from the Elections Committee or from the chair.

When a vote is taken by standing, those persons voting affirmative shall rise when requested by the chair and remain standing until counted and told to be seated by the chair. Thereafter, those voting negatively shall respond in the same manner followed by those who wish to abstain.

PART SIX: Relation of Assembly to the Church Council and Unit Boards

Relationship to Church Council

This church shall have a Church Council which shall be the board of directors of this church and shall serve as the interim legislative authority between meetings of the Churchwide Assembly (ELCA 14.11.).

"Interim legislative authority" is defined to mean that between meetings of the Churchwide Assembly, the Church Council may exercise the authority of the Churchwide Assembly so long as:

- a. the actions of the Church Council do not conflict with the actions of and policies established by the Churchwide Assembly; and
- b. the Church Council is not precluded by constitutional or bylaw provisions from taking action on the matter (ELCA 14.13.).

Responsibilities of Church Council

The Church Council shall act on the policies proposed by churchwide unit boards subject to review by the Churchwide Assembly (ELCA 14.21.01.).

The Church Council shall review all recommendations from churchwide units for consideration by the Churchwide Assembly (ELCA 14.21.03.).

The Church Council, upon recommendation of the presiding bishop, shall submit budget proposals for approval by the Churchwide Assembly and authorize expenditures within the parameters of approved budgets (ELCA 14.21.04.).

The Church Council shall arrange the process for all elections to boards of churchwide units to assure conformity with established criteria (ELCA 14.21.08.).

The Church Council shall report its actions to the Churchwide Assembly (ELCA 14.21.14.).

Status of Church Council Recommendations

The recommendation of the Church Council with respect to any proposal by a churchwide unit or any other matter shall be treated as a motion made and seconded, unless the Church Council shall otherwise determine.

Relationship to Boards of Churchwide Units

Each board shall be responsible to the Churchwide Assembly and will report to the Church Council in the interim. The policies, procedures, and program of each division shall be reviewed by the Church Council in order to assure conformity with the governing documents of this church and with Churchwide Assembly actions (ELCA 16.11.11.; see also 17.21.04.; 17.31.04.; 17.41.03.; 17.51.02.; 17.61.05.; 17.61.A91.g.; 17.71.03.).

Relationship to Commissions

Action of the Churchwide Assembly is required to establish a commission or to determine that a commission's mandate has been fulfilled (ELCA 16.21.).

Relationship to the Board of Pensions

The Churchwide Assembly shall:

- a. authorize the creation of the governance structure for this program;
- b. approve the documents establishing and governing the program;
- c. refer any amendments to the program initiated by the Churchwide Assembly to the Board of Pensions for recommendation before final action by the Church Council, assuring that no amendment shall abridge the rights of members with respect to their pension accumulations;
- d. direct the establishment of an appeal process within the Board of Pensions to enable participants in the plans to appeal decisions (ELCA 17.61.01.).

The Church Council shall refer, as it deems appropriate, proposed amendments [to the church pension and other benefits plans] to the Churchwide Assembly for final action (ELCA 17.61.02.d.).

[The Board of Pensions] shall manage and operate the pension and other benefits plans for this church within the design and policy adopted by the Churchwide Assembly and shall invest assets according to its best judgment (ELCA 17.61.A91.a.).

[The Board of Pensions] shall report to the Churchwide Assembly through the Church Council, with the Church Council making comments on all board actions needing approval of the Churchwide Assembly (ELCA 17.61.A91.g.).

PART SEVEN: Motions and Resolutions

Written Motions Required

Substantive motions or resolutions, or amendments to either, must be presented in writing to the secretary of this church immediately after being moved. A form is provided for this purpose. This form is included in each voting member's registration packet; other forms are available at the tables of voting members.

Nature of Motions

►**Germane Resolutions:** A resolution that is germane to the matter before the assembly may be offered by any voting member from the floor by going to a microphone and being recognized by the chair.

►**Non-Germane Resolutions:** Any resolution not germane to the matter before the Churchwide Assembly or on the assembly agenda must be submitted to the secretary of this church in writing no later than 10:45 A.M., Thursday, August 11, 2005. Each resolution must be supported in writing by one other voting member. At least 24 hours must elapse before such resolution may be considered in plenary session. The secretary shall refer such resolution to the Committee of Reference and Counsel, which may:

- (a) Recommend approval;
- (b) Recommend referral to a unit of this church;
- (c) Recommend a substitute motion to the assembly; or
- (d) Recommend that assembly decline the proposed resolution.

►**Same or Similar Subjects:** The Committee of Reference and Counsel may group together in a single recommendation resolutions on the same or similar subjects. A resolution on the same subject as a recommendation already on the agenda of the assembly, such as a memorial, will not be submitted to the assembly for separate action by the Committee of Reference and Counsel. The chair of the committee will inform the voting member of the committee's decision.

►**Beyond Deadline for Submission:** Any resolution not germane to the matter before the Churchwide Assembly or on the assembly agenda that might be submitted by a voting member,

because of circumstances that develop during the assembly and cannot be submitted to the secretary of this church before 10:45 A.M., Thursday, August 11, 2005, must be submitted to the secretary in writing and supported in writing by one other voting member. The secretary shall refer such resolutions to the Committee of Reference and Counsel , which may:

- (a) Decline to refer the resolution to the assembly;
- (b) Recommend approval;
- (c) Recommend referral to a unit of this church;
- (d) Recommend a substitute motion to the assembly; or
- (e) Recommend that the assembly decline the proposed resolution.

►On Societal Issues: In its recommendation, the Reference and Counsel Committee, following consultation with the Division for Church in Society, shall inform the Churchwide Assembly when a resolution requires action on a societal issue for which this church does not have an established social policy. Should such motion or resolution be adopted by the Churchwide Assembly, the matter shall be referred to the Division for Church in Society, which shall bring to the next regular meeting of the Church Council a plan for appropriate implementation.

Substitute Motions

When a substitute motion is made, secondary amendments may be offered first to the original motion. After all secondary amendments to the original motion have been disposed of, secondary amendments to the substitute motion may be offered. When all amendments to the substitute motion have been disposed of, the vote shall be taken on whether the substitute motion is to be substituted or rejected.

PART EIGHT: Memorials from Synodical Assemblies

Status of Committee's Recommendations

When the Memorials Committee has recommended the passage of a memorial considered by the committee, the committee's recommendation and text of the memorial recommended for passage shall be the main motion before the assembly.

When the Memorials Committee has recommended the adoption of a substitute recommendation for the memorial(s) on a subject, the committee's recommendation shall be the main motion before the assembly.

When the Memorials Committee has recommended referral of a memorial(s), the committee's recommendation shall be the main motion before the assembly.

When the Memorials Committee has recommended that the assembly decline a memorial(s) without the committee making any other recommendation related to the same or closely related subject, the memorial, if then moved by a voting member from the synod originating the memorial and seconded, shall be the main motion, and the committee's recommendation shall be received as information.

En Bloc Resolution for Responses to Certain Memorials

The responses to the synod memorials, as recommended by the Memorials Committee in a printed report distributed to assembly members prior to, or at, the first business session of the assembly, may be approved by *en bloc*¹ resolutions when so proposed by the Memorials Committee.

If a voting member desires the assembly to discuss a synodical memorial or the Memorials Committee's response that is proposed for *en bloc* consideration, she or he may request that it be removed from the proposed *en bloc* resolution, provided the member's request is supported by ten other voting members. Such request shall be made in accordance with the following paragraph. The assembly then will consider and vote separately on the proposed response of the

¹Adoption of several motions by a single assembly resolution; sometimes known as an omnibus bill or resolution.

Memorials Committee. After removals, the *en bloc* resolution shall be voted upon without amendments or debate.

►**Separate Consideration:** To call for such separate consideration, a voting member must submit written notification to the secretary of this church or the secretary's deputy no later than 10:45 A.M., Tuesday, August 9, 2005, on the form entitled Notice Related to Recommendations of the Memorials Committee. A copy of that form is included on page three of the Report of the Memorials Committee. Additional forms will be available from the secretary's deputy.

►**Substitute Proposal:** With respect to any recommendation made by the Memorials Committee in a printed report distributed to the assembly members prior to, or at the first business session of the assembly, a voting member of the assembly may offer a substitute motion to the committee's recommendation only if such member has given written notice by the deadline. For such written notice, a voting member who desires to offer a substitute to the recommendation of the Memorials Committee must complete the form, Notice Related to Recommendations of the Memorials Committee, and submit it to the secretary of this church or the secretary's deputy no later than 10:45 A.M., Tuesday, August 9, 2005. In addition, the text of the proposed substitute should be submitted on a Motion Form to the secretary or the secretary's deputy.

Consultation with at least one of the co-chairs of the Memorials Committee is required when a substitute will be moved and is recommended when any other amendment will be proposed to the response recommended by the Memorials Committee.

Recommendation on Same Matter

A voting member's motion or resolution dealing with the same or similar matter that is a subject being reported by the Memorials Committee cannot be considered prior to the Memorials Committee's recommendation and motion with respect to that matter. This rule does not apply to a motion or resolution that proposes an amendment to a constitutional provision, bylaw, or continuing resolution.

PART NINE: Recommendations of the Committee of Reference and Counsel

Status of Committee's Recommendations

When the Committee of Reference and Counsel has recommended the approval of a resolution considered by the committee, the committee's recommendation and text of the resolution recommended for passage shall be the main motion before the assembly.

When the Committee of Reference and Counsel has recommended the adoption of a substitute recommendation for the resolution(s) on a subject, the committee's recommendation shall be the main motion before the assembly.

When the Committee of Reference and Counsel has recommended referral of a resolution(s), the committee's recommendation shall be the main motion before the assembly.

When the Committee of Reference and Counsel has recommended that the assembly decline a proposed resolution without the committee making any other recommendation related to the same or closely related subject, the voting member's resolution, if then moved by that voting member and seconded, shall be the main motion and the committee's recommendation shall be received as information.

PART TEN: Amendments to and Votes on Major Statements

Deadline for Submission

Any amendment to a major statement must be submitted in writing to the secretary of this church prior to the hour and date indicated:

<u>Major Statement</u>	<u>Deadline</u>
Renewing Worship	5:30 P.M., Tuesday, August 9, 2005
Sexuality Studies	10:45 A.M., Wednesday, August 10, 2005

Voting members who submit amendments may be requested to meet with the staff of the unit that developed the statement.

If in the opinion of the chair of the assembly the amendments to a major statement are either too voluminous or too complex for the assembly to consider expeditiously, all amendments may be referred by the chair to either the Committee of Reference and Counsel or to an ad hoc committee appointed by the chair with the consent of the assembly for its recommendations for the consideration of the statement and the proposed amendments by the assembly.

If a voting member wishes to offer a substantive amendment that was not submitted prior to the deadline, the assembly, by a simple majority vote, may consent to the consideration of such an amendment.

Vote to Adopt Social Statements

A two-thirds vote of the voting members of the Churchwide Assembly shall be required for adoption of a social statement.

Voting on Ecumenical Proposals for Church-to-Church Agreements

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 (ELCA 8.71.).

Vote to Adopt Certain Recommendations from Task Force Reports

A two-thirds majority vote of the voting members of the Churchwide Assembly present and voting shall be required to adopt recommendations from a task force report that require amendment of a constitution or bylaw provision for implementation.

[Paragraphs 2–6 removed for separate consideration by the assembly.]

PART ELEVEN: Nominations

Nominations Desk

Nominations from the floor at the Churchwide Assembly shall be made at the Nominations Desk, which shall be maintained under the supervision of the secretary of this church (ELCA 19.61.B98.a.).

A nomination from the floor shall be made by using the form provided by the secretary of this church. Nomination forms may be obtained from the Nominations Desk at times prescribed in the assembly's Rules of Organization and Procedure. This form also is included in each voting member's registration materials (ELCA 19.61.B98.b.).

Information and additional forms may be obtained from the Nominations Desk on Monday, August 8, 2005, from NOON to 4:30 P.M. and from 6:00 P.M. to 7:30 P.M., on Tuesday, August 9, 2005, from 8:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M., and on Wednesday, August 10, 2005, from 8:00 A.M. to 2:25 P.M.

Congregational Membership

Each nominee for an elected or appointed position in this church shall be a voting member of a congregation of this church (ELCA 19.05.).

Term Limit

Other than elections of officers and executive directors of units, elections shall be for one six-year term, without consecutive reelection, and with one-third of the members of the Church Council and of each board elected each biennium (ELCA 19.04.).

Nominations Form

The required form to be used in making nominations from the floor shall include the nominee's name, address, phone number, gender, lay or clergy status, white or person of color or primary language other than English status, congregational membership, synodical membership, and affirmation of willingness to serve, if elected; the name, address, and synodical membership of the voting member who is making the nomination; and such other information as the secretary of this church shall require (ELCA 19.61.B98.c.).

For purposes of nomination procedures, "synodical membership" means:

- 1) In the case of a layperson, the synod that includes the congregation in which such person holds membership, and
- 2) In the case of an ordained minister, the synod on whose roster such ordained minister's name is maintained (ELCA 19.61.B98.d.).

Making Floor Nominations

Floor nominations for positions on a board of a churchwide unit require, in addition to the nominator, the written support of at least 10 other voting members. Floor nominations for the Church Council, the Nominating Committee, or other churchwide committee to be elected by the Churchwide Assembly require, in addition to the nominator, the written support of at least 20 other voting members (ELCA 19.61.C98.a.).

A nomination from the floor for any position (other than bishop, vice president, and secretary) shall be made by filing the completed nomination form with the Nominations Desk at times prescribed in the assembly's Rules of Organization and Procedure (ELCA 19.61.C98.b.).

Nominations from the floor for any position (other than presiding bishop, vice president, secretary, and editor of The Lutheran) shall be made by filing the completed prescribed form with the Nominations Desk on Tuesday, August 9, 2005, from 8:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M., or on Wednesday, August 10, 2005, from 8:00 A.M. to 2:25 P.M.

Nominations will be considered made in the order in which filed at the Nominations Desk (ELCA 19.61.C98.c.).

For Boards: Restrictions on Nominations

The Nominating Committee shall nominate two persons for each board or committee position for which an election will be held by the Churchwide Assembly.

Nominations from the floor also shall be permitted, but each floor nomination shall be presented as an alternative to a specific category named by the Nominating Committee and shall therefore meet the same criteria as the persons against whom the nominee is nominated. In the materials provided in advance to each member of the assembly, the Nominating Committee shall set forth the criteria applicable to each category that must be met by persons nominated from the floor (ELCA 19.21.02.).

It shall be the responsibility of the Church Council to make certain that every synod has at least one person serving on the churchwide boards. Among those persons elected by the assembly, no more than two persons from any one synod shall serve on any one board (ELCA 19.21.04.).

Nominations from the floor for positions on the churchwide boards shall comply with criteria and restrictions established by the Nominating Committee and set forth in materials provided to each voting member of the assembly (ELCA 19.61.D98.a.).

A former full-time or part-time employee of the churchwide organization shall not be eligible, for a minimum of six years subsequent to such employment, for nomination or election to the board or committee related to the churchwide unit in which the employee served (ELCA 19.61.J00.).

So long as the number of incumbent members from a given synod serving on a board with terms not expiring plus the number of positions on the same board to which individuals from the same synod already have been nominated (whether by the Nominating Committee or from the floor) total less than the maximum number of two individuals from the same synod who may

serve on that board, an individual from the same synod may be nominated for another position on that board, provided other criteria and restrictions are met. Individuals from the same synod may be nominated for a position on a board to which individuals from the same synod already have been nominated, provided other criteria and restrictions are met (ELCA 19.61.D98.b.).

For Church Council: Restrictions on Nominations

Each biennium the Church Council shall determine how this church's commitment to inclusive representation will affect the next election to the Church Council. The Nominating Committee shall then nominate persons who fulfill the categories assigned by the Church Council. Excluding the churchwide officers, there shall not be more than one member of the Church Council from a synod nor shall more than two-thirds of the synods in a region have members on the Church Council at the same time. The Church Council shall have at least one member from each region. The terms of office of persons elected to regular terms on the Church Council by the Churchwide Assembly shall begin at the conclusion of the Churchwide Assembly at which such persons were elected (ELCA 19.02.).

The Nominating Committee shall nominate two persons for each council position for which an election will be held by the Churchwide Assembly. Nominations from the floor also shall be permitted, but each floor nomination shall be presented as an alternative to a specific category named by the Nominating Committee and shall therefore meet the same criteria as the persons against whom the nominee is nominated. In the materials provided in advance to each member of the assembly, the Nominating Committee shall set forth the criteria applicable to each category that must be met by persons nominated from the floor (ELCA 19.21.02.).

Nominations from the floor for positions on the Church Council shall comply with criteria and restrictions established by the Church Council and Nominating Committee and set forth in materials provided in advance to each voting member of the assembly (ELCA 19.61.E03.a.).

So long as other criteria and restrictions are met, an individual may be nominated at a Churchwide Assembly for a Church Council position, unless someone from the same synod is serving on the Church Council with a term not expiring at the same assembly. In addition to meeting other criteria and restrictions, individuals from one synod can be nominated only for one position on the Church Council (ELCA 19.61.E03.b.).

So long as the number of incumbent members from a given region serving on the Church Council with terms not expiring at a Churchwide Assembly plus the number of Church Council positions to which individuals from the same region have already been nominated (whether by the Nominating Committee or from the floor) at the same assembly total less than the maximum number of individuals from the same region who may serve on the Church Council, an individual from the same region may be nominated for another Church Council position, provided other criteria and restrictions are met. Provided other criteria and restrictions are met, individuals may be nominated for a Church Council position for which someone from the same region already has been nominated (ELCA 19.61.E03.c.).

For Nominating Committee: Restrictions on Nominations

The Church Council shall place in nomination the names of two persons for each position. The committee shall consist of at least one member but no more than three members from any region. Nominations from the floor shall also be permitted, but each floor nomination shall be presented as an alternative to a specific category named by the Church Council and shall therefore meet the same criteria as the persons against whom the nominee is nominated. In the materials provided in advance to each member of the assembly, the Church Council shall set forth the criteria applicable to each category that must be met by persons nominated from the floor (ELCA 19.21.01.).

Nominations from the floor for positions on the Nominating Committee shall comply with criteria and restrictions established by the Church Council and set forth in materials provided to each voting member of the assembly (ELCA 19.61.F98.a.).

So long as the number of incumbent members from a given region serving on the Nominating Committee with terms not expiring plus the number of Nominating Committee positions to which individuals from the same region have already been nominated (whether by the Church Council or from the floor) total less than the maximum number of three individuals from the same region who may serve on the Nominating Committee, an individual from the same region may be nominated for another Nominating Committee position, provided other criteria and restrictions are met. Provided other criteria and restrictions are met, individuals may be nominated for a Nominating Committee position for which someone from the same region has already been nominated (ELCA 19.61.F98.b.).

PART TWELVE: Election Procedures

Election Procedures Utilizing the Common Ballot

The common ballot is used in those elections when the ecclesiastical or nominating ballot is not used (ELCA 19.61.G02.a.).

In each case in which there are floor nominations, there shall be a preliminary ballot that shall include the names of the nominees presented by the Nominating Committee or the Church Council, and the person or persons nominated from the floor. The names of the two persons receiving the highest number of votes cast shall be placed on the final ballot (ELCA 19.21.03.).

For the first common ballot, the exact number of ballot forms equal to the number of voting members from each synod will be given to the bishop of that synod. The bishop of the synod, or his or her designee, will be responsible for distributing the ballot forms to each of the voting members from the synod (ELCA 19.61.G02.b.).

Upon recommendation of the chair and with the consent of the assembly, the second common ballot may be conducted by electronic device. Unless the second common ballot is conducted by electronic device, the distribution of ballot forms for the second common ballot will be in the same manner as the first common ballot (ELCA 19.61.G02.c.).

Any discrepancy between the number of ballots given to a synodical bishop and the number of voting members (including the synod bishop) from such synod must be reported by the synodical bishop to the Elections Committee (ELCA 19.61.G02.d.).

Each ticket for which an election is held will be considered a separate ballot (ELCA 19.61.G02.e.).

A voting member may vote for only one nominee on each ticket (ELCA 19.61.G02.f.).

Failure to vote for a nominee for every ticket does not invalidate a ballot for the tickets for which a nominee is marked (ELCA 19.61.G02.g.).

Ballots must be marked in accordance with the instructions presented in plenary session (ELCA 19.61.G02.h.).

Ballot forms shall not be folded (ELCA 19.61.G02.i.).

Marked ballot forms must be deposited at the designated Ballot Stations at certain exits of the hall in which plenary sessions are held (ELCA 19.61.G02.j.).

If a ballot is damaged so that it cannot be scanned, a replacement ballot may be obtained at the Ballot Station upon surrender of the damaged ballot (ELCA 19.61.G02.k.).

Unless otherwise ordered by the assembly, polls for the first common ballot close at the time designated in the assembly's Rules of Organization and Procedure (ELCA 19.61.G02.l.).

Unless otherwise ordered by the assembly, polls for the first common ballot close at 2:00 P.M. on Thursday, August 11, 2005.

On each ticket for which balloting is conducted by electronic device, the polls will remain open for a reasonable time, as determined by the chair, to permit members to record their votes (ELCA 19.61.G02.m.).

Unless the second ballot is conducted by electronic device, polls for the second common ballot close at the time designated in the assembly's Rules of Organization and Procedure or as otherwise ordered by the assembly (ELCA 19.61.G02.n.).

Unless either otherwise ordered by the assembly or the second ballot is conducted by electronic device, polls for the second common ballot close at 6:00 P.M. on Saturday, August 13, 2005.

On the second ballot, whether by common ballot or by electronic device, the first position on each ticket shall be given to the nominee who received the greatest number of votes on the first ballot. If two nominees are tied for the highest vote, the first position on the ticket shall be determined by draw by the chair of the Elections Committee (ELCA 19.61.G02.o.).

Majority Required for Election

Other than in elections of presiding bishop, vice president, and secretary, a majority of votes cast on the first ballot shall be necessary for election. If an election does not occur on the first ballot, the names of the two persons receiving the highest number of votes cast shall be placed on the second ballot. On the second ballot, a majority of legal votes cast shall be necessary for election (ELCA 19.11.01.b.).

Breaking Ties

On the first common ballot, the blank ballots of the treasurer and vice president shall be held by the chair of the Elections Committee to be presented to the treasurer for her or his vote only in those elections where a tie would otherwise exist, and to be presented to the vice president for his or her vote only in those elections to break a tie remaining after the ballot of the treasurer has been counted (ELCA 19.61.I98.b.).

On the second common ballot, the marked ballot of the treasurer shall be held by the chair of the Elections Committee and shall be counted only where necessary to break a tie that would otherwise exist (ELCA 19.61.I98.c.).

PART THIRTEEN: Budget Proposals

Budget Procedures

The presiding bishop shall provide for the preparation of the budget for the churchwide organization (ELCA 13.21.f.).

At the direction of the presiding bishop, the executive for administration shall develop the budget for the churchwide organization and report to the Church Council and the Churchwide Assembly through the Budget and Finance Committee of the Church Council with regard to the preparation of the budget (ELCA 15.11.A03.d.).

A Budget and Finance Committee shall be composed of members of the Church Council elected by the council and the treasurer of this church as an ex officio member with voice but not vote in the committee. This committee shall have staff services provided by the Office of the Presiding Bishop and the Office of the Treasurer (ELCA 14.41.A91.).

The Church Council, upon recommendation of the presiding bishop, shall submit budget proposals for approval by the Churchwide Assembly and authorize expenditures within the parameters of approved budgets (ELCA 14.21.04.).

The Churchwide Assembly shall adopt a budget for the churchwide organization (ELCA 12.21.e.).

Each synod shall remit to the churchwide organization a percentage of all donor unrestricted receipts contributed to it by the congregations of the synod, such percentage to be determined by the Churchwide Assembly. Individual exceptions may be made by the Church Council upon request of a synod (ELCA 10.71.).

Proposed amendments to the budget must be submitted to the secretary of this church in writing no later than 8:30 A.M. on Friday, August 12, 2005. Each amendment must be supported in writing by one other voting member. The secretary shall refer such proposed amendments to the Budget and Finance Committee. During the consideration of the budget by the assembly, the Budget and Finance Committee shall report on the implication of each proposed amendment.

Any amendment to the budget that increases a current program proposal of, or adds a current program proposal to, a churchwide unit must include a corresponding decrease in some other current program proposal of the same or another churchwide unit(s) and/or increase in revenues. Any amendment to the budget that proposes an increase in revenues shall require an affirmative vote by at least two-thirds of those present and voting.

The assembly may refer to the Church Council for final action any amendment to the budget that has been presented in accordance with these Rules of Organization and Procedure. Such referral shall not preclude the assembly from acting on other budget amendments or from adopting the budget.

Appropriations

When a motion calling for an appropriation comes before the Churchwide Assembly from any source other than the Church Council or a memorial from a synod, it shall be referred at once to the Reference and Counsel Committee. The Reference and Counsel Committee shall refer the proposed appropriation to the Budget and Finance Committee of the Church Council. The Budget and Finance Committee may consult with the churchwide unit(s) affected by the proposed appropriation. The Budget and Finance Committee may conclude that it cannot evaluate adequately the proposed appropriation prior to assembly adjournment and may request that the Church Council be designated to receive the evaluation later and to determine whether or not the proposed appropriation shall be authorized. The findings of the Budget and Finance Committee shall be forwarded to the Reference and Counsel Committee, which shall then make its recommendation to the Churchwide Assembly. If the report of the Reference and Counsel Committee is negative, a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting shall be required for adoption.

A proposed appropriation that originates with a synod through a memorial will be handled in the same way as in this preceding rule, except that reference shall be to the Memorials Committee rather than to the Reference and Counsel Committee.

New Studies or Research Proposals

Each proposal by a voting member for a study or research project shall be made as a main motion and shall be referred to the Reference and Counsel Committee. The Reference and Counsel Committee shall refer the proposal to the Department for Research and Evaluation. This department, in consultation with the churchwide unit to which the proposal is directed, will seek to determine the purpose, relationship to existing studies and research projects or current programs, potential value, overall costs including staff requirements, and availability of budget and staff. The Department for Research and Evaluation may conclude that it cannot evaluate adequately the proposal prior to the assembly adjournment and request that the Church Council be designated to receive the evaluation at a later time and determine whether or not the study or research project should be initiated. The findings of the Department for Research and Evaluation shall be submitted to the Reference and Counsel Committee, which may make its recommendation to the assembly. If the recommendation calls for a new appropriation, the matter also shall be referred at once to the Budget and Finance Committee for consideration and report to the Reference and Counsel Committee. If the report of the Reference and Counsel Committee is negative, a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting shall be required for adoption.

A proposal that originates with a synod through a memorial shall be handled the same way, except that reference shall be to the Memorials Committee, rather than to the Reference and Counsel Committee.

Process for Initiation or Reconsideration of Social Statements

The process for initiating the preparation of a social statement or commencing a revision or removal of a social statement adopted at a prior Churchwide Assembly shall be governed by

the document, "Policy and Procedures for Addressing Social Concerns," which was adopted by the 1997 Churchwide Assembly (CA97.05.21).

PART FOURTEEN: Amendments to Governing Documents

Constitutional Amendments

The constitution of this church may be amended only through either of the following procedures:

- a) The Church Council may propose an amendment, with an official notice to be sent to the synods at least six months prior to the next regular meeting of the Churchwide Assembly. The adoption of such an amendment shall require a two-thirds vote of the members of the next regular meeting of the Churchwide Assembly present and voting.
- b) An amendment may be proposed by 25 or more members of the Churchwide Assembly. The proposed amendment shall be referred to the Committee of Reference and Counsel for its recommendation, following which it shall come before the assembly. Adoption of such an amendment shall require passage at two successive regular meetings of the Churchwide Assembly by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting (ELCA 22.11.).

A constitutional amendment may only be proposed by a main motion.

A proposed constitutional amendment must be submitted in writing to the secretary of this church prior to 10:45 A.M. on Wednesday, August 10, 2005.

Bylaw Amendments

Bylaws not in conflict with the constitution may be adopted or amended at any regular meeting of the Churchwide Assembly when presented in writing by the Church Council or by at least 15 members of the assembly. An amendment proposed by members of the assembly shall immediately be submitted to the Committee of Reference and Counsel for its recommendation. In no event shall an amendment be placed before the assembly for action sooner than the day following its presentation to the assembly. A two-thirds vote of the members present and voting shall be necessary for adoption (ELCA 22.21.).

A bylaw amendment may be proposed only by a main motion.

A proposed bylaw amendment must be submitted in writing to the secretary of this church prior to 10:45 A.M. on Wednesday, August 10, 2005. The secretary first shall report to the assembly any bylaw amendments so submitted and the amendments then shall be referred to the Committee of Reference and Counsel.

Any floor amendment that is to be offered to a bylaw amendment proposed by the Church Council must be submitted in accordance with the requirement for bylaw amendments that are proposed by voting members.

Continuing Resolutions

Provisions relating to the administrative functions of this church shall be set forth in the continuing resolutions. Continuing resolutions may be adopted or amended by a majority vote of the Churchwide Assembly or by a two-thirds vote of the Church Council (ELCA 22.31.).

Should the board or standing committee in question disagree with the action of the Church Council in amending a continuing resolution, it may appeal the decision to the Churchwide Assembly (ELCA 15.31.04.; 16.11.41.; 16.22.17.; 17.21.21.; 17.31.06.; 17.41.08.; 17.51.04.; 17.61.07.).

A continuing resolution amendment may be proposed only by a main motion.

Amendments to the Constitution for Synods

The Constitution for Synods contains mandatory provisions that incorporate and record therein provisions of the constitution and bylaws of this church. Amendments to mandatory provisions incorporating constitutional provisions of this church shall be made in the same manner as prescribed in ELCA Chapter 22 for amendments to the constitution of this church. Amendments to mandatory provisions incorporating bylaw provisions of this church and amendments to non-mandatory provisions shall be made in the same manner as prescribed in ELCA Chapter 22 for amendments to the bylaws of this church. Non-mandatory provisions shall not be inconsistent with the constitution and bylaws of this church (ELCA 10.13.).

An amendment to the Constitution for Synods may be proposed only by a main motion.

Amendments to the Model Constitution for Congregations

A Model Constitution for Congregations shall be provided by this church. Amendments to the Model Constitution for Congregations shall be made in the same manner as prescribed in ELCA Chapter 22 for amendments of the bylaws of this church (ELCA 9.53.02.).

An amendment to the Model Constitution for Congregations may be proposed only by a main motion.

En Bloc Resolution for Amendments to Governing Documents

Amendments to the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions as recommended by the Church Council in a printed report distributed to assembly members prior to, or at, the first business session of the assembly, may be approved by *en bloc*² resolutions when so proposed by the Church Council.

If a voting member desires the assembly to discuss a particular amendment that is included in the *en bloc* resolutions, she or he may request that the particular amendment be removed from the proposed *en bloc* resolutions, provided the member's request is supported by ten other voting members. Such request shall be made in accordance with the following paragraph. The assembly then will consider and vote separately on the particular proposed amendment. After removals, the *en bloc* resolutions shall be voted upon without amendments or debate.

To call for such separate consideration, a voting member, with the support of ten other voting members, must submit written notification to the secretary of this church or the secretary's deputy no later than 10:45 A.M. on Wednesday, August 10, 2005, on the form entitled *Notice Related to Proposed Amendment to the Governing Documents*. This form may be obtained from the secretary's deputy seated to the left of the speakers' platform.

Notice shall be given by the secretary of this church to the assembly of which constitutional provisions or bylaw proposals have been removed from the *en bloc* resolutions by specific voting members.

Reconsideration or Rescission Prohibited

After the adoption by the assembly of a constitutional or bylaw amendment, a motion for reconsideration or a motion to rescind such action is not in order.

PART FIFTEEN: Elections of Officers and Editor

Election Procedures

Set forth hereafter are the procedures for the elections of the presiding bishop, the vice president, the secretary, and the editor of The Lutheran, whether or not there will be an election

²Adoption of several motions by a single assembly resolution; sometimes known as an omnibus bill or resolution.

at this assembly for any of these positions. Elections are required because of completion of the specified term for a position or when a vacancy otherwise occurs.

Restrictions on Nominations for Officers

The presiding bishop shall be an ordained minister of this church. The presiding bishop may be male or female, as may other officers of this church (ELCA 13.21.).

The presiding bishop shall be elected by the Churchwide Assembly to a six-year term (ELCA 13.22.).

The presiding bishop shall be a full-time, salaried position (ELCA 13.22.02.).

The vice president of this church shall be a layperson (ELCA 13.31.).

The vice president shall be elected by the Churchwide Assembly to a six-year term and shall be a voting member of a congregation of this church (ELCA 13.32.).

The vice president shall serve without salary (ELCA 11.33. and 13.32.02.).

The secretary shall be elected by the Churchwide Assembly to a six-year term and shall be a voting member of a congregation of this church (ELCA 13.42.).

The secretary shall be a full-time, salaried position (ELCA 13.42.02.).

The secretary may be either a layperson or an ordained minister.

Ecclesiastical Ballot Defined

An “ecclesiastical ballot” for the election of officers (other than treasurer) of the churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is an election process:

- a. In which on the first ballot the name of any eligible individual may be submitted for nomination by a voting member of the assembly;
- b. Through which the possibility of election to office exists on any ballot by achievement of the required number of votes cast by voting members of the assembly applicable to a particular ballot;
- c. That precludes spoken floor nominations;
- d. In which the first ballot is the nominating ballot if no election occurs on the first ballot;
- e. In which the first ballot defines the total slate of nominees for possible election on a subsequent ballot, with no additional nominations;
- f. That does not preclude, after the reporting of the first ballot, the right of persons nominated to withdraw their names prior to the casting of the second ballot;
- g. In which any name appearing on the second ballot may not be subsequently withdrawn;
- h. That does not preclude an assembly’s adoption of rules that permit, at a defined point in the election process and for a defined period of time, speeches to the assembly by nominees or their representatives and/or a question-and-answer forum in which the nominees or their representatives participate; and
- i. In which the number of names that appear on any ballot subsequent to the second ballot shall be determined in accordance with provisions of the governing documents (ELCA 19.61.A94.).

Election Procedures Utilizing the Ecclesiastical Ballot

For each election by ecclesiastical or nominating ballot, the exact number of appropriate ballot sets equal to the number of voting members from each synod will be given to the bishop of that synod. The bishop of the synod, or his or her designee, will be responsible for distributing the ballot sets to each of the voting members from the synod (ELCA 19.61.H98.a.).

Unless otherwise ordered by the chair, one of the numbered ballots from the appropriate ballot set is to be used on each ballot for elections determined by ecclesiastical or nominating ballot. The chair will announce the number of the ballot from the appropriate ballot set that is to be used for each ballot. Failure to use the correct numbered ballot will result in an illegal ballot (ELCA 19.61.H98.b.).

On the first two ballots for each office being selected by ecclesiastical or nominating ballot, both the first and last names of a nominee should be used. Members should endeavor to use correct spelling and should provide any additional accurate information identifying the nominee, such as title, synod, residence, etc. (ELCA 19.61.H98.c.)

On the third and subsequent ballots conducted by written ballot, only the last name of the nominee need be used, provided there is no other nominee with the same or similar name (ELCA 19.61.H98.d.).

A member may vote for only one nominee on each ballot (ELCA 19.61.H98.e.).

Ballots should not be marked prior to the time the chair advises the voting members to do so (ELCA 19.61.H98.f.).

Written ballots shall not be folded (ELCA 19.61.H98.g.).

Written ballots will be collected from the voting members in accordance with instructions from the Elections Committee or from the chair (ELCA 19.61.H98.h.).

When the results of the first ballot are presented, the chair will announce when and how persons nominated may withdraw their names prior to the casting of the second ballot (ELCA 19.61.H98.i.).

Whenever the number of names of nominees that will appear on a ballot is nine or less, on recommendation of the chair and with the consent of the assembly, voting may be by means of electronic device (ELCA 19.61.H98.j.).

When voting by electronic device, the first position on each ballot shall be given to the nominee who received the greatest number of votes on the immediately preceding ballot, with the remaining positions assigned to the other nominees in descending order of the number of votes received on the immediately preceding ballot. If two or more nominees were tied with the same vote on the immediately preceding ballot, their respective positions shall be determined by draw by the chair of the Elections Committee (ELCA 19.61.H98.k.).

On each ticket for which balloting is conducted by electronic device, the polls will remain open for a reasonable time, as determined by the chair, to permit voting members to record their votes (ELCA 19.61.H98.l.).

Election of the Presiding Bishop

The presiding bishop shall be elected by the Churchwide Assembly by ecclesiastical ballot. Three-fourths of the votes cast shall be necessary for election on the first ballot. If no one is elected, the first ballot shall be considered the nominating ballot. Three-fourths of the votes cast on the second ballot shall be necessary for election. The third ballot shall be limited to the seven persons (plus ties) who received the greatest number of votes on the second ballot, and two-thirds of the votes cast shall be necessary for election. The fourth ballot shall be limited to the three persons (plus ties) who receive the greatest number of votes on the third ballot, and 60 percent of the votes cast shall be necessary for election. On subsequent ballots, a majority of the votes cast shall be necessary for election. These ballots shall be limited to the two persons (plus ties) who receive the greatest number of votes on the previous ballot (ELCA 19.31.01.a.).

Prior to the third ballot for presiding bishop, biographical data will be distributed for the seven persons (plus ties) who receive the greatest number of votes on the second ballot.

Prior to the third ballot for presiding bishop, a forum shall be held in which the seven persons (plus ties) who receive the greatest number of votes on the second ballot are invited to respond to questions submitted by voting members. From the questions submitted by voting members, the Executive Committee of the Church Council, excluding officers, shall select a sample of questions and determine the process to be followed in the forum. An individual nominee may choose to respond to those questions he or she wishes to address. Each response shall be no longer than 90 seconds. The forum shall be limited to 60 minutes.

Prior to the third ballot for presiding bishop, the seven persons (plus ties) receiving the greatest number of votes on the second ballot will be invited to address the assembly, with each

speech limited to five minutes. If any such person is not present at the assembly, the bishop of the synod of such person's roster shall, in consultation with such person, if possible, designate an alternate to speak on behalf of such person.

Prior to the fourth ballot for presiding bishop, the three persons (plus ties) receiving the greatest number of votes on the third ballot will be invited to participate in a question and answer period moderated by an individual appointed by the Executive Committee of the Church Council.

Election of the Vice President

The vice president shall be elected by the Churchwide Assembly. The election shall proceed without oral nominations. If the first ballot for vice president does not result in an election, it shall be considered a nominating ballot. On the first ballot, three-fourths of the votes cast shall be required for election. Thereafter only such votes as are cast for persons who received votes on the first or nominating ballot shall be valid. On the second ballot, three-fourths of the votes cast shall be required for election. On the third ballot, the voting shall be limited to the seven persons (plus ties) receiving the greatest number of votes on the second ballot and two-thirds of the votes cast shall be necessary for election. On the fourth ballot, voting shall be limited to the three persons (plus ties) receiving the greatest number of votes on the previous ballot and 60 percent of the votes cast shall elect. On subsequent ballots, voting shall be limited to two persons (plus ties) receiving the greatest number of votes on the previous ballot and a majority of votes cast shall elect (ELCA 19.31.01.b.).

Prior to the third ballot for vice president, biographical data will be distributed for the seven persons (plus ties) who receive the greatest number of votes on the second ballot.

Prior to the fourth ballot for vice president, the three persons (plus ties) receiving the greatest number of votes on the third ballot will be invited to address the assembly, with each speech limited to five minutes. If any such person is not available to address the assembly, the bishop of the synod of such person's congregation membership shall, in consultation with such person, if possible, designate an alternate to speak on behalf of such person.

Election of the Secretary

The secretary shall be elected by the Churchwide Assembly. The election shall proceed without oral nominations. If the first ballot for secretary does not result in an election, it shall be considered a nominating ballot. On the first ballot, three-fourths of the votes cast shall be required for election. Thereafter only such votes as are cast for persons who received votes on the first or nominating ballot shall be valid. On the second ballot, three-fourths of the votes cast shall be required for election. On the third ballot, the voting shall be limited to the seven persons (plus ties) receiving the greatest number of votes on the second ballot and two-thirds of the votes cast shall be necessary for election. On the fourth ballot, voting shall be limited to the three persons (plus ties) receiving the greatest number of votes on the previous ballot and 60 percent of the votes cast shall elect. On subsequent ballots, voting shall be limited to the two persons (plus ties) receiving the greatest number of votes on the previous ballot and a majority of the votes cast shall elect (ELCA 19.31.01.c.).

Prior to the third ballot for secretary, biographical data will be distributed for the seven persons (plus ties) who receive the greatest number of votes on the second ballot.

Prior to the fourth ballot for secretary, the three persons (plus ties) receiving the greatest number of votes on the third ballot will be invited to address the assembly, with each speech limited to five minutes. If any such person is not present at the assembly, the bishop of the synod of such person's roster of ordained ministers, or such person's congregation membership, shall, in consultation with such person, if possible, designate an alternate to speak on behalf of such person.

Majority Required for Election

On the final ballot for the election of presiding bishop, vice president, and secretary of this church, when only two names appear on the ballot, a majority of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election (ELCA 19.11.01.e).

Breaking Ties

On the ballot for the election of the presiding bishop, vice president, and secretary, when only two names appear, the marked ballot of the treasurer shall be held by the chair of the Elections Committee and shall be counted only where necessary to break a tie that would otherwise exist (ELCA 19.61.198.a).

Nomination and Election of the Editor of The Lutheran

The advisory committee of *The Lutheran*, in consultation with the presiding bishop and the Church Council, shall nominate the editor for the church periodical (ELCA 17.21.01.).

The Churchwide Assembly shall elect the editor of the church periodical. If the first nominee nominated by the advisory committee is not elected, the advisory committee shall nominate another person. The editor shall be elected to a four-year term (ELCA 17.21.02.).

The editor of the church periodical shall be elected to a four-year term (ELCA 19.51.04.).

For the position of editor of *The Lutheran*, a majority of legal votes cast shall be necessary for election (ELCA 19.11.01.b.).

PART SIXTEEN: Status of Reports

Assembly Reports

At least 20 days prior to an assembly the secretary shall prepare and distribute to each congregation and to the voting members-elect a pre-assembly report (ELCA 12.31.03.).

Reports of the Presiding Bishop and Secretary of This Church

Following presentation, the presiding bishop's report and the secretary's report shall be referred to the Reference and Counsel Committee.

Status of Reports

All reports published in the Pre-Assembly Report shall be treated as having been received by the assembly without formal vote.

Distribution of Materials

Materials may be distributed on the floor of the assembly only with the written consent of the secretary of this church. In cases where the secretary does not consent, appeal may be made to the Committee of Reference and Counsel. That committee's decision shall be final.

PART SEVENTEEN: Special Committees and Officials for Assembly

►Agenda: The Agenda Committee shall assist the presiding bishop in the preparation of the agenda of the Churchwide Assembly.

►Arrangements: The Physical Arrangements Committee shall assist the secretary of this church in the physical arrangements for the Churchwide Assembly.

►Program and Worship: The Program and Worship Committee shall assist the presiding bishop in the preparation for the program and worship at the Churchwide Assembly.

►Minutes: The Minutes Committee shall review minutes of the Churchwide Assembly prepared under the supervision of the secretary of this church, and periodically provide preliminary minutes of sessions, as distributed. The presiding bishop and secretary shall have the authority to approve the minutes on behalf of the Churchwide Assembly and shall deposit in the archives of this church the protocol copy of the assembly's minutes.

Additional Appointments

Additional officials or committees (sergeants-at-arms, parliamentarians, chairs for hearings, chairs for unit lunches, tellers, pages, etc.) of the Churchwide Assembly shall be appointed by the presiding bishop.

PART EIGHTEEN: Hearings

[First paragraph removed for separate consideration by the assembly.]

The chair of the hearing shall endeavor to maintain decorum and order and may call upon the assistance of sergeants-at-arms. Insofar as is possible during discussion, a speaker on one side of the question shall be followed by a speaker on the other side.

PART NINETEEN: Other Matters

College Corporation Meetings

The voting members of the Churchwide Assembly also constitute the voting members of certain college corporations that hold meetings as part of the agenda of the assembly. The assembly will recess to conduct the corporation meeting(s) and reconvene at the conclusion of the corporation meeting(s), or at the beginning of the next scheduled session of the assembly. Quorum requirements for college corporation meetings are specified in the governing documents of each college. The quorum requirement for the Churchwide Assembly does not apply to college corporation meetings.

Electronic Devices

Use of cell phones in the plenary hall during assembly sessions is precluded. Cell phones, beepers, and other such electronic devices must be turned off or be in a silent mode in the plenary hall and worship center throughout the course of the assembly.

The main body of the rules being adopted, Presiding Bishop Hanson announced that the assembly would next address those rules that had been identified for amendment or that had been removed for separate consideration, moving through the original document in the *2005 Pre-Assembly Report* in the order in which the rules appeared. He stated that the body would first act on the proposed amendment to the rules, then on Part Ten, followed by Part Eighteen, and then the addendum.

The Rev. William C. "Chris" Boerger, bishop of the Northwest Washington Synod, moved to amend the rules.

MOVED;

SECONDED:

To amend the process by which the standing rules are adopted to require a two-thirds vote of members present and voting to amend a proposed rule or to bring a substitute motion for a proposed rule.

Bp. Boerger addressed his amendment, saying, “I stand to make this amendment because, as the chair pointed out, as we currently stand, it requires a two-thirds vote to adopt the rule, but only a simple majority to amend the rule. Hypothetically, then, 54 percent of the assembly could move to amend, but, not reaching the two-thirds platform, we then would not be able to adopt the rule if the assembly decided not to vote at that time. So, for purposes of consistency, it strikes me that the two-thirds principle should go across the board, both to make the amendment or substitution, as well as final adoption, so that we can be sure to have rules to operate from.”

The chair then opened the floor to further speaking on the amendment.

Mr. Timothy J. Mumm [South-Central Synod of Wisconsin] spoke against the amendment, saying, “The rules have been stated, and I’m not comfortable right now with changing to a two-thirds majority. It feels like we’ve already started this process, and we just need to move ahead.”

Mr. Douglas M. Wenzel [Minneapolis Area Synod] rose in opposition, asserting that *Robert’s Rules of Order* had served the assembly well for many years and that he saw no reason to change that.

The chair pointed out that it would be necessary to alternate speaking for and against motions, so he called upon the Rev. Henry Schulte Jr. [Southwestern Texas Synod], who wished to speak in favor of the amendment. Pr. Schulte stated his support, then continued by saying, “I could envision an assembly in the future, if this becomes a precedent, where preparation has been made, that a group could seek to take control of a particular action by end runs. I think that this would be a good way for the assembly to handle its rules of order.”

Mr. Tim Fisher [Minneapolis Area Synod] opposed the amendment. He said, “This section of the rules has never appeared in the eight prior assemblies of the ELCA. In previous assemblies, in addressing subjects similar to the ordination of otherwise qualified persons in same-gender relationships, a two-thirds majority was not required. So I have to ask, ‘Why now? Why the special rules now?’ This amendment to the rule as proposed has the effect of elevating the statements of the predecessor bodies to the same level as the Churchwide Assembly.”

Ms. Stephanie Olson [East-Central Synod of Wisconsin] spoke in favor of the amendment, asserting that it would bring clarity and consistency to the proceedings.

Mr. Thomas Salber [Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod] spoke in opposition, reiterating the earlier contention that there had never been an issue with such a rule at previous assemblies. He suggested that, rather than set a two-thirds majority for both amendment and approval, the assembly should set a simple majority for both as the rule.

Ms. Brittani A. Seagren [Nebraska Synod] spoke against the amendment, stating, “Proper parliamentary procedure requires that only the main motion has to have a two-thirds vote, not the amendment.”

Mr. Benjamin W. Lei [New Jersey Synod] spoke in favor of the amendment, then called the question.

Presiding Bishop Hanson ruled Mr. Lei’s call for the question out of order because he had spoken in favor of the amendment, and explained that someone else would need to call the question.

The Rev. Marcia Cox [Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod] called the previous question.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To end debate.

The chair reminded voting members that a motion to end debate was not itself debatable and that a two-thirds vote would be required.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

CARRIED: To end debate.

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

YES-821; NO-149

Presiding Bishop Hanson explained that the assembly would proceed to vote on the proposed amendment, which would require a two-thirds vote for passage because it was a new rule. He asked Secretary Almen to read the proposed amendment before the vote.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

DEFEATED:

To amend the process by which the standing rules are adopted to require a two-thirds vote of members present and voting to amend a proposed rule or to bring a substitute motion for a proposed rule.

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

YES-510; NO-461

The amendment was defeated. The chair announced that the assembly would next address Part Ten, pages 12–13, the section entitled “Vote to Adopt Certain Recommendations from Task Force Reports,” paragraph 2.

Mr. Steven R. Chapman [Northwest Washington Synod] moved to amend the paragraph as follows.

MOVED;

SECONDED:

To amend the “Rules of Organization and Procedure,” Section I, Part Ten, pages 12 and 13, titled “Vote to Adopt Certain Recommendations from Task Force Reports,” paragraph 2, so that it would read:

A two-thirds majority vote of the voting members of the Churchwide Assembly present and voting shall be required to adopt recommendations from a task force that would establish for this church a new practice or policy that is contrary to a social statement of this church on the subject of the policy, ~~or social statements received from the immediate predecessor bodies of this church that have not been replaced or superseded by social statements or decisions of this church.~~

Mr. Chapman, speaking to his amendment, said, “This section of the rules has never appeared in prior assemblies of the ELCA. In previous assemblies addressing similar topics such as the ordination of otherwise qualified persons in same-gender relationships, a two-thirds majority was never required. Why now? At its constituting convention in 1987, the ELCA adopted CA 87.30.13., which stated that the Commission for a New Lutheran Church had determined that the social statements of the predecessor bodies were not sufficiently similar to provide social statements for the constituting convention. Furthermore, the 1987 convention resolved to receive these social statements as ‘historical documents only’ and to

instruct the then-Commission for Church and Society to set priorities in regard to the issues to be studied toward new social statements for the ELCA.

“In the 18 years since that constituting convention, there has been considerable discussion over the agreement or lack of agreement of the various social statements of the predecessor bodies, especially those concerning sexuality. As we all know, we have no social statement on sexuality now, and we are not voting on one at this assembly. Neither predecessor body statement on sexuality had anything to say directly about internal standards for ordination. The Lutheran Church in America (LCA) statement is 35 years old. The American Lutheran Church (ALC) statement is 25 years old. ‘Historical documents’ give us advice and guidance, but do not set policy for this church. As with our situation today, our historical documents show the disagreement then, already present on several subjects. Since those documents were received as history, it makes no sense that this assembly would require a two-thirds majority to depart from those historical, non-policy-setting documents. The rule as proposed has the effect of elevating the statements of the predecessor bodies to the same level as a social statement adopted by this church. Therefore, the language referencing the predecessor body statements should be deleted.”

The Rev. James R. Crumley [South Carolina Synod] spoke in opposition, saying, “There is enough confusion that has existed through the years about the social statements from predecessor bodies that it is unclear at the present time. As a matter of fact, the very confusion would seem to indicate to me that the two-thirds practice ought to be continued in this instance. The Commission for a New Lutheran Church suggested that the existing social statements of the present church bodies be passed on to the new church, the ELCA, as information *until such time as* the ELCA was able to adopt its own social statements. We have been in a position where we were unable to adopt a social statement on sexuality. While it is true that it is difficult to nail down in any of those exhibits exactly where the predecessor body was or where the ELCA is, the confusion itself ought to indicate to us that we ought to require at least a two-thirds vote of the assembly to change something that has been passed on to us for use until we could do a new thing with it, and we have not done a new thing with it. Therefore, I contend that the LCA statement and the ALC statement, which on this particular issue are very close together, ought not to be ruled out so easily on such an important question.”

The Rev. Paul A. Tidemann [Saint Paul Area Synod] spoke in favor of the amendment, saying that in his reading of section 87.30.13, the guidance of the constituting convention was that the social statements of the predecessor bodies were in fact historical documents and that he saw nothing there that suggested they would have any force in the ELCA. He expressed his feeling that the LCA and ALC statements were considerably different one from the other, and therefore were a source of confusion for the assembly until such time as the ELCA adopted a social statement on human sexuality for itself. He ended by stating his opinion that, “It would be unfair for us to change the rules this late in the game to require a two-thirds majority on something that in the past would have required a majority.”

Ms. Stephanie Olson [East-Central Synod of Wisconsin] spoke against the amendment, expressing her opinion that it would be inconsistent with other critical decisions made in the ELCA, including “Called to Common Mission” and other full-communion agreements. She urged the assembly not “to so easily discard the rich history and scriptural traditions of our church,” and called for a two-thirds majority requirement.

The Rev. Ann M. Tiemeyer [Metropolitan New York Synod] spoke in favor of the amendment. She asserted her understanding of the predecessor body social statements as

historical, informational documents, and expressed her belief that to require a two-thirds vote, such as would be required for a constitutional or bylaw change, would serve to confuse the status of those historical documents.

Mr. Louis M. Hesse [Eastern-Washington-Idaho Synod] asked for clarification, saying, “I believe that the ELCA social statement on abortion defines marriage as strictly between a man and a woman. Would that apply in this case, where we have an actual social statement of the ELCA that this proposal would be in opposition to, I would think?”

Presiding Bishop Hanson responded that he did not have the text of the social statement committed to memory, so he called upon the Rev. Rebecca S. Larson, executive director of the Division for Church in Society, to advise the assembly.

Pr. Larson stated that she had come to the microphone before Mr. Hesse made his inquiry, so she did not have the social statement on abortion in hand, but she did have a document from the 1997 Churchwide Assembly called “Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns.” She explained that this is the document that directs the Division for Church in Society in its judgment regarding the status of the social statements of the predecessor church bodies. She said that this policy document referred to the action of the constituting convention, where social statements of the predecessor church bodies were named “historical documents.” She said the document went on to point to the 1987 action of the board of what was then the Commission on Church in Society that interpreted what “historical documents” means. She stated that the interpretation was that, absent the existence of an ELCA social statement on a particular issue, where there are predecessor church body social statements, and at the points at which there are agreements, that would form social policy for the ELCA. That, she said is the basis upon which the Division for Church in Society operated.

The chair, acknowledging that the reply had not directly responded to Mr. Hesse’s question, asked him if he would like to speak again.

Mr. Hesse restated his question, saying, “I just would like to answer the question of whether that social statement applies to this debate, because it seems to me that we’re setting up a conflict between what we’re proposing and what has been passed as a social statement of this church.”

Presiding Bishop Hanson directed the request to Pr. Larson, asking her to explore whether the social statement on abortion contained language that would be applicable in the context of this debate. With Mr. Hesse’s concurrence, the chair moved to other speakers while the question was researched.

The Rev. Bryan S. Anderson [Northwest Synod of Wisconsin] spoke in opposition, reminding voting members that the ELCA constitution required a two-thirds vote for bylaw changes, as well as for social statements and ecumenical agreements. He concluded, “If we take those issues seriously, this issue should be taken seriously.”

Ms. Allison A. Guttu [Metropolitan New York Synod] spoke in favor, saying that since this was an important vote, she felt that there should be consistency with the rules that were adopted previously. Those rules did not require a two-thirds majority, she pointed out, and the two-thirds majority was a new recommendation from the Church Council. She questioned why there would be a new rule at this juncture, and stressed again the need for consistency. She also stressed the distinction between historical documents that provide information and policy-setting documents.

Mr. Charles E. Kalthorn [Metropolitan New York Synod] stated that he saw there were important issues under discussion and that the two-thirds guideline would be helpful to the

assembly. He further stated that he did not believe the assembly could pick and choose which social statements it would consider to be historical to “fit the need of the issue that is before us.” He argued for consistency, and said that after the process was complete, if social statements needed to be changed, they could be changed then. He asserted that the synods had been using the existing social statements in their decision making.

The Rev. Steven L. Ullestad, bishop of the Northeastern Iowa Synod, who had served as advisory bishop to the Division for Church in Society, rose to state that he believed that in the first few pages of the “Social Statement on Abortion” there was a sentence that reads, “Marriage is the appropriate context for sexual intercourse.” He believed that to be the citation under question. He expressed his belief that this was the only reference to marriage or sexual intercourse in that social statement.

The presiding bishop asked Bp. Ullestad, speaking in his former role as an advisor, how he would respond to Mr. Hesse’s question. Bp. Ullestad asked whether the question was whether the language in that social statement was determinative for the discussion before the assembly. Presiding Bishop affirmed that this was the question. In response, Bp. Ullestad answered, “I don’t believe that’s my call.” The assembly responded with laughter.

Mr. Timothy J. Mumm [South-Central Synod of Wisconsin] said, “In responding to the question, there is nothing on the docket of this assembly that has to do with the question of the definition of marriage.”

The chair then referred back to Pr. Larson, who had researched the question in the social statement. Pr. Larson said, “Our research has come up with the same conclusion: The ‘Social Statement on Abortion’ does not speak specifically to the definition of marriage between a man and a woman. That is addressed in the ‘Message on Sexuality: Some Common Convictions,’ but it is not a Churchwide Assembly social statement action.”

The Rev. William R. Crabtree [Sierra Pacific Synod] spoke against the amendment, saying, “Regardless of the comments about the social statements, I want to be confident as a voting member representing 5,000,000 Lutherans that what we vote on in regard to this subject is truly representative of them. It seems as though through the study, *Journey Together Faithfully*, it’s nearly two to one, from that feedback, of folks that do not want any change, so I think it’s good wisdom to have a two-thirds vote.”

The Rev. Luther G. Swenson [East-Central Synod of Wisconsin] called the question.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To end debate.

The chair then called for a vote on the motion to end debate.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

CARRIED:

To end debate.

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

YES-895; NO-84

Presiding Bishop Hanson then read the proposed amendment and called for the vote.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

DEFEATED:

To amend the “Rules of Organization and Procedure,” Section I, Part Ten, pages 12 and 13, titled “Vote to Adopt Certain Recommendations from Task Force Reports,” paragraph 2, so that it would read:

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

YES-363; NO-618

A two-thirds majority vote of the voting members of the Churchwide Assembly present and voting shall be required to adopt recommendations from a task force that would establish for this church a new practice or policy that is contrary to a social statement of this church on the subject of the policy, ~~or social statements received from the immediate predecessor bodies of this church that have not been replaced or superseded by social statements or decisions of this church.~~

Presiding Bishop Hanson then called upon the Rev. William C. “Chris” Boerger, bishop of the Northwest Washington Synod, to offer his amendment.

MOVED;

SECONDED:

To amend all paragraphs in the section entitled “Vote to Adopt Certain Recommendations from Task Force Reports” in Part 10 by insertion so that they would read:

A two-thirds majority vote of the voting members of the Churchwide Assembly present and voting shall be required to adopt recommendations from a task force report or an amendment or substitute motion related to them.

Presiding Bishop Hanson clarified for voting members that the proposed change would apply in each paragraph where the phrase in question appeared. He then called upon Bp. Boerger to speak to his amendment.

Bp. Boerger began, “Reverend Chair, it is again for purposes of consistency, that if we amend by less than two-thirds, we put the adoption of the rule in jeopardy. That is my concern. We certainly can trust *Robert’s [Rules of Order]*, but we go to special rules to help us do our work in a more efficient and effective manner. This is one of those places where we have felt the need to have that effectiveness. Thus, to have a simple majority to amend the proposal that then would be required to have two-thirds could in fact create confusion at a later time. It strikes me that if we are going to make amendments, we should do it with the same certainty and confidence that we would also adopt voting for or against the resolution in the end. That’s the basis of this amendment.”

Mr. Paul Basting [Sierra Pacific Synod] spoke in opposition, saying that in his understanding, throughout the ELCA’s history, a two-thirds vote had only been required for bylaws and constitutional changes. He stated that this matter was neither of those and that he felt strongly that it should be considered only by a majority vote.

Mr. Frank M. Petrovic [Metropolitan Chicago Synod] asserted that *Robert’s Rules of Order* had served the assembly well and that a simple majority should suffice for the future.

Presiding Bishop Hanson interjected that he would like to clarify the action on the floor, pointing out that the assembly seemed to be debating the two-thirds majority rule, while the proposed amendment had to do with the expansion of this rule relative to possible actions of this Churchwide Assembly. He asked speakers to keep their discussion to the topic of the proposed amendment, which, if adopted, would apply to any amendments or substitutes to the recommendations of the task force, as well.

The Rev. Ray Tiemann, bishop of the Southwestern Texas Synod, agreed that the consistency of a two-thirds vote—not just for this matter, but for any recommendation that

might come from a task force—would provide a better opportunity for the assembly to speak with “more than a majority voice” on this particular issue.

Ms. Stephanie M. Quigg [Southeastern Minnesota Synod] rose to ask how many task force reports there had been where this question had even needed to be considered.

Presiding Bishop Hanson called upon Secretary Lowell G. Almen to respond. Secretary Almen replied that the most consistent pattern with task force reports in the ELCA was that there would be a task force engaged that would submit its report to the board of the Division for Church in Society, which would transmit it to the Church Council, which would pass it along to the Churchwide Assembly. According to the “Policies and Procedures” document for the adoption of a social statement, he continued, that document initiated or developed by a task force requires a two-thirds vote. Though the matter before the Churchwide Assembly did not involve a social statement, Secretary Almen said, what he had just described would be the most common model of something coming before the assembly from a task force.

Ms. Quigg responded that her question was how many task forces had submitted recommendations that fell within this category.

Secretary Almen answered that he did not recall the exact number of social statements adopted by this church, but said he thought it was eight.

Ms. Quigg commented that this did not suggest that the assembly could really look at history for guidance.

Mr. Matthew Erickson [Southwest California Synod] asked for clarification, stating that it was unclear to him whether this proposal would make a two-thirds majority necessary to amend the recommendations of the task force, or if it would make a two-thirds majority necessary to adopt those recommendations as amended or as replaced. He commented that if a simple majority were required to amend those recommendations, that would be a different matter than if a two-thirds majority were required to amend.

The chair asked the maker of the motion to clarify the intent, expressing his own understanding that the rule as amended would require a two-thirds majority to adopt any amendments or substitutes.

Bp. Boerger answered that it was his understanding the proposal would require a two-thirds majority to adopt though, as the chair had described earlier, *Robert's Rules of Order* would require only a simple majority to amend. He explained that the proposed amendment's purpose was to make the process of amendment or substitution consistent with the process of adoption. He added that this would not affect the proposed adoption process in any way.

Presiding Bishop Hanson asked Bp. Boerger whether his proposal would then require a simple majority or a two-thirds majority to amend the recommendations, and Bp. Boerger responded that it would require a two-thirds majority.

Mr. Larry I. Rank [Oregon Synod] spoke in opposition, basing the objection on his observations as he journeyed through the Oregon Synod in preparation for the assembly. He said he had listened to the people of Oregon talking about their feelings on many issues. He stated that over the past eight assemblies, there had been many contentious subjects, including the “Called to Common Mission” agreement. He stated that he did not know whether the rules were changed for that discussion or not, but that he did not think it was time to change the rules now.

An unidentified voting member rose for a point of information, asking if this amendment would affect anything other than the ELCA Studies on Sexuality recommendations.

The presiding bishop explained that the whole block of rules being debated had been proposed relative to the recommendations of the task force, and that they would be applicable to that portion of the assembly's work for the week.

The Rev. Michael E. Pancoast [Northwest Synod of Wisconsin] called the previous question.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To end debate.

The chair then called for a vote on the motion to end debate.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

CARRIED: To end debate.

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

YES-905; NO-72

The assembly then voted on the amendment.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

CARRIED:

YES-505; NO-478

To amend all paragraphs in the section entitled "Vote to Adopt Certain Recommendations from Task Force Reports" in Part Ten by insertion so that they would read:

A two-thirds majority vote of the voting members of the Churchwide Assembly present and voting shall be required to adopt recommendations from a task force report or an amendment or substitute motion related to them.

Proposed paragraphs 2-6 as amended:

A two-thirds majority vote of the members of the Churchwide Assembly present and voting shall be required to adopt recommendations from a task force or an amendment or substitute motion related to them that would establish for this church a new practice or policy that is contrary to a social statement of this church on the subject of the policy or social statements received from the immediate predecessor church bodies of this church that have not been replaced or superseded by social statements or decisions of this church.

A two-thirds majority vote of the voting members of the Churchwide Assembly present and voting shall be required to adopt recommendations from a task force report or an amendment or substitute motion related to them that would establish for this church a new practice or policy that is contrary to an existing policy that has been adopted by the Church Council upon recommen-

ation of a board or committee, as authorized by the constitution or bylaws of this church.

A two-thirds majority vote of the voting members of the Churchwide Assembly present and voting shall be required to adopt recommendations from a task force report or an amendment or substitute motion related to them that the Church Council recommended to the Churchwide Assembly and specified that a two-thirds affirmative vote of the assembly will be necessary for adoption.

A two-thirds majority vote of the voting members of the Churchwide Assembly present and voting shall be required to adopt recommendations from a task force report or an amendment or substitute motion related to them that would establish policy for the oversight by synods of the official rosters of this church.

A majority vote of the voting members of the Churchwide Assembly present and voting shall be required to adopt recommendations from a task force report or an amendment or substitute motion related to them that are provided as advice to congregations of this church, except recommendations in implementing resolutions for a social statement for which a two-thirds vote is required.

Presiding Bishop Hanson stated that the body would now go back paragraph by paragraph through the rule as amended. He reminded assembly members that they would first need to vote on whether they wanted to adopt the final version of paragraph two of that section, which now read as follows:

A two-thirds majority vote of the members of the Churchwide Assembly present and voting shall be required to adopt recommendations from a task force or amendments or substitute motions related to them that would establish for this church a new practice or policy that is contrary to a social statement of this church on the subject of the policy or social statements received from the immediate predecessor church bodies of this church that have not been replaced or superseded by social statements or decisions of this church.

The Rev. John K. Stendahl [New England Synod] rose to a point of clarification. His first question had to do with whether the language of the recommendations was the language of the Church Council or of the task force. His second question was: if there were an amendment of a recommendation, who would determine the degree of its contrariety to predecessor body social statements? If it became a point of contention in this body, would that determination be made by the chair, a body of this church, or the assembly itself?

Responding to the second question, Presiding Bishop Hanson replied that ultimately the decisions would rest with the assembly. He added that he hoped the *ad hoc* committee, working with the makers of motions, would be the first place to attempt clarification.

Ultimately the chair would have to rule on what vote would be required, relative to the matters before the body, and then the assembly would have to vote whether to sustain the chair. But finally, he added, the work belonged to the assembly. The chair then called upon Secretary Lowell G. Almen to respond to the first question.

Secretary Almen commented that the recommendations of the task force were informed by the process provided in the bylaws for the submission of recommendations to the Churchwide Assembly. A task force is named by a churchwide unit to carry out a particular purpose, and reports its work to the unit board that created it. In the case of the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality, the report was submitted to the boards of the Division for Ministry and the Division for Church in Society. Secretary Almen explained that the bylaws then provide that those boards in turn may make recommendations to the Church Council but that the obligation of the Church Council is to take those recommendations and put them into legislative language to present as recommendations to the Churchwide Assembly. Thus, the language regarding the recommendations of the task force in the rules had been understood as applying to that string of events that began with the task force, went through the boards to the Church Council, and then on to the Churchwide Assembly.

Presiding Bishop Hanson clarified that the motion before the assembly was to adopt as a rule paragraph two of the section as amended, and that it would require a two-thirds majority to adopt. He then called for a vote.

**MOVED;
SECONDED;
DEFEATED:**

**TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED
YES-566; NO-411**

To adopt as a rule paragraph two as amended:

A two-thirds majority vote of the members of the Churchwide Assembly present and voting shall be required to adopt recommendations from a task force or amendments or substitute motions related to them that would establish for this church a new practice or policy that is contrary to a social statement of this church on the subject of the policy or social statements received from the immediate predecessor church bodies of this church that have not been replaced or superseded by social statements or decisions of this church.

Presiding Bishop Hanson declared that the motion had failed and that the paragraph was not adopted as a rule. He then directed the assembly's attention to the next paragraph under consideration.

The Rev. Linwood "Woody" H. Chamberlain Jr. [Northeastern Ohio Synod] rose to a point of order to ask the chair to explain under what rules the assembly was operating, now that paragraph two had been defeated.

The chair stated that where the body has not established its own rules, the Churchwide Assembly operates under *Robert's Rules of Order* or the ELCA constitution and bylaws where those documents speak to action the assembly might be taking.

The Rev. Victor C. Langford III [Northwest Washington Synod] asked whether the failure of the previous motion meant that the whole paragraph had disappeared or whether only the amendment had been lost and the original paragraph now stood.

The chair responded that because the vote on the paragraph as amended had failed to achieve a two-thirds majority, the entire paragraph was now gone and did not stand before

the assembly as a rule. He went on to explain that the assembly had first acted on the amendment, which had passed, and had then acted on the rule as amended, but failed to adopt the rule because it did not receive the two-thirds necessary for adoption of a rule. Absent a two-thirds majority vote, the paragraph did not stand before the assembly as a rule.

The Rev. Martin D. Wells, bishop of the Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod, protested that the confusion resulted from the presiding bishop's not stating that a two-thirds vote was required for passage.

The presiding bishop replied that he had, in fact, made clear the necessary margin to the assembly, and confirmed with the parliamentarian that the two-thirds requirement had been stated before the vote.

Ms. Catherine B. Malmstrom [New Jersey Synod] announced that she was not sure of what had just transpired and asked if the "old rule" as it had been printed in the *2005 Pre-Assembly Report* now stood.

Presiding Bishop Hanson responded that there was no "old rule." There had been a proposed new rule, which, since it did not receive a two-thirds majority, did not pass and therefore did not exist. He reiterated that adoption of a rule required a two-thirds majority vote.

Ms. Allison A. Guttu [Metropolitan New York Synod] asked whether the assembly would now move forward to consider paragraph three.

The chair replied that he would like to move on but that he first needed to respond to the white cards being raised for points of order.

The Rev. Luther G. Swenson [East-Central Synod of Wisconsin] stated that it had not been clear to the body that they were eliminating the entire paragraph and not simply the amendment, adding that this fact had come as a surprise to people seated in his area of the plenary hall.

Presiding Bishop Hanson said that he needed to ponder the matter, since a vote had already been taken. He posited that, in order to revisit the matter, the assembly would have to have a motion to reconsider by someone on the prevailing side. He added that he would make an effort to be clearer in stating the implications of votes the assembly would be taking, as well as in stating the content of those votes.

The Rev. Peter Strommen, bishop of the Northeastern Minnesota Synod, questioned the ramifications of the assembly's actions. If, for example, any of the remaining paragraphs failed to achieve a two-thirds majority, would the assembly be operating under a simple majority requirement concerning those questions?

The presiding bishop confirmed Bp. Strommen's assumptions. He stated that each of the paragraphs that the assembly had chosen to remove from *en bloc* consideration would require a two-thirds majority to adopt. Failure to achieve two-thirds would mean that a paragraph would be eliminated and would not stand as a rule. At that point, the governing documents and *Robert's Rules of Order* would become the operative rules of procedure.

Mr. Charles E. Kalhorn [Metropolitan New York Synod] asked if he could make a motion to reconsider. Presiding Bishop Hanson responded that if Mr. Kalhorn had voted on the "no" side, which had prevailed, he could make such a motion. However, Mr. Kalhorn had voted "yes," and thus could not present a motion to reconsider.

Mr. John Emery [East-Central Synod of Wisconsin] asked what action would be required for the assembly to consider the language of the rule as it had originally been proposed.

Presiding Bishop Hanson explained that someone who had voted on the prevailing “no” side could make a motion to reconsider. If the move to reconsider prevailed, the matter could be placed before the assembly again.

Mr. Emery protested that the assembly had not been given opportunity to vote on the original language of the rule. The chair responded that the rule had been amended and that the assembly had voted on the rule as it had been amended, and had failed to approve the rule.

The presiding bishop stated his desire to respect the confusion that was evident, but also wanted to be respectful of the fact a vote had been taken. He announced a brief pause while he consulted with the parliamentarian to see if there might be a clearer way of stating the assembly’s options.

After consultation with Parliamentarian David D. Swartling, Presiding Bishop Hanson informed voting members that there were two possible courses of action: someone could move to rescind, or someone could move to reconsider. Such motions would need to come before the assembly before end of business on Tuesday. He urged the assembly, however, to move forward in considering the other paragraphs that had been removed from *en bloc* consideration.

The Rev. David B. Zellmer [South Dakota Synod] affirmed that he had voted on the “no” side on paragraph two and moved to reconsider.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To reconsider paragraph two as amended.

Ms. Brittani A. Seagren [Nebraska Synod] rose to a point of order, insisting that a motion to reconsider could not be put on the floor until an intervening motion had been put on the floor.

The parliamentarian indicated that the motion could, in fact, be reconsidered at this time. He added that a motion to reconsider was debatable but not amendable.

The Rev. Donald J. McCoid, bishop of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod, stated that major recommendations on issues such as social statements and ecumenical agreements consistently had come before the assembly in the past. He contended that the confusion that had prevailed on the earlier rule demonstrated the lack of clarity about what was before the assembly. He argued that this Churchwide Assembly had before it major issues that this whole church was looking at and that if there were anything less than a two-thirds majority, no matter what the decision, it would not be helpful to this church. He spoke in favor of the two-thirds requirement in any vote for change because it would demonstrate the strong support of the assembly for the decision.

The Rev. Dennis R. Creswell [East-Central Synod of Wisconsin] asked if the assembly was considering the amended text that had been voted down or the original text as printed.

Presiding Bishop Hanson clarified that the immediate question was one of whether the assembly would reconsider its vote. First, he said, the assembly would have to vote by a simple majority on whether it would reconsider paragraph two as amended. If the motion to reconsider were to prevail by a majority, the paragraph as amended would be back before the body. It would then be open again to debate, and the assembly would move ahead to vote on that motion. For the moment, however, he stressed, the assembly was considering only the merits of the motion to reconsider.

The Rev. Stephen C. Norby [Southwestern Minnesota Synod] requested that a member of the Church Council explain the rationale behind the language of the rule, stating that it would be important for him to understand that in considering the vote to reconsider.

The chair called upon Ms Ellen T. Maxon, member of the Church Council, to address Pr. Norby's question.

Ms. Maxon stated that it was her understanding that the language of the rule was not the Church Council's language, because it had been amended.

Presiding Bishop Hanson clarified that the printed language of the original rule had been the Church Council's language, and stated that he believed this to be the subject of Pr. Norby's question.

Ms. Maxon asserted that she could not explain the original language.

Mr. Carlos E. Peña, ELCA vice president and chair of the Church Council, said it was his understanding that the council had sent this recommendation to the Churchwide Assembly for a variety of reasons. One of the main reasons had to do with the historical documents representing the predecessor body social statements and the policies and procedures document to which the Rev. Rebecca S. Larson, executive director of the Division for Church in Society, had made reference earlier in the plenary session.

The chair pointed out that the staff was having technical difficulties with the software that tracked the order of speaking at the microphones and that he would need to call a "spotter" to the podium to assist in identifying the sequence of speakers.

The Rev. Laura Z. Erisman [Sierra Pacific Synod] spoke against the motion to reconsider. While granting that the issues under consideration were weighty matters, she argued that it was unreasonable to hold the recommendations of this particular task force to a higher standard than for other weighty matters that had come before previous Churchwide Assemblies.

Mr. Michael D. Bennett [Metropolitan Chicago Synod] spoke in favor of reconsideration, basing his argument on the assembly's understanding that in the absence of a rule of its own that *Robert's Rules of Order* would become the rule of procedure. He stated that *Robert's Rules* knew nothing of ELCA council or task force processes and that the assembly would be better served by its own amended rule than by a rule that served for general situations.

In response to a question from an unidentified voting member, Presiding Bishop Hanson explained again that a majority would be required for the motion to reconsider. If the assembly voted to reconsider, he stated, it would then have before it the rule *as amended*, and a two-thirds majority would be required to adopt the rule.

Mr. Kai S. Swanson [Northern Illinois Synod] pointed out to the assembly that the first paragraph of this section of the rules already required a two-thirds vote for any task force recommendation that would require constitutional or bylaw changes.

The chair commented that if a recommendation required a constitutional or bylaw change, it would in fact require a two-thirds vote, and the body could not change that fact, due to constitutional requirements.

The Rev. Steven E. King [Southwestern Minnesota Synod] spoke in favor of reconsideration, asserting that the assembly had already witnessed enough confusion on both sides of the question. Thus, he argued, it would be reasonable to start afresh.

Mr. Patrick Monroe [Central/Southern Illinois Synod] observed that the amendment seemed to contain the same words that were in the *2005 Pre-Assembly Report* documents.

He asked for clarification of the difference between the wording of the amendment and the text as posted on the screen.

The chair reminded the assembly that it had voted to insert words that were highlighted at that moment on the screen and that were not in the *2005 Pre-Assembly Report*.

Mr. Thomas Salber [Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod] asked why the assembly was not returning to the original language since the amended version had been defeated.

Presiding Bishop Hanson responded that the question before the house was “Do you want to reconsider?” Any reconsideration necessarily would be of the amended version because the amendment had been adopted by the assembly.

Ms. Barbara Zielinski [North/West Lower Michigan Synod] asked how many times a motion could be reconsidered.

The chair responded that a motion could be reconsidered once.

The Rev. Steven L. Ullestad, bishop of the Northeastern Iowa Synod, called for the previous question.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To end debate.

The chair then called for a vote on the motion to end debate.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

CARRIED: To end debate.

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

YES-959; NO-22

The presiding bishop announced that the motion to reconsider was now before the assembly and called for members to vote. He stressed that the assembly was not voting on the rule itself, but only on whether to reconsider the vote. He added that the motion to reconsider would require a majority plus one to prevail.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

CARRIED: To reconsider paragraph two as amended.

YES-666; NO-322

The chair declared that the motion to reconsider had prevailed and that the second paragraph as amended was now before the assembly. He also announced that the problems with the software for tracking speaker order had been resolved.

The Rev. Scott A. Kuechenmeister Hall [Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod] asked the presiding bishop to explain why the assembly had been able to amend all of the rules with Bp. Boerger’s amendment, yet now had to go back and vote on each paragraph separately.

Presiding Bishop Hanson responded that the amendment from Bp. Boerger had affected every paragraph of this section of the rules and that the chair had chosen to have the body consider that amendment first as a matter of good order. Otherwise, the presiding bishop pointed out, the assembly would have had to consider the same amendment to each paragraph repeatedly. This had been a judgment call of the chair to facilitate the work of the body.

The Rev. Paul A. Tidemann [Saint Paul Area Synod] spoke against the proposed rule. He observed that when Pr. Rebecca S. Larson had spoken earlier in the session, she had said

that the documents of the predecessor bodies were not in agreement and therefore were not decisive for this church. He argued that to adopt the rule would be “terribly confusing and unfair.”

Mr. Steven R. Chapman [Northwest Washington Synod] called for the previous question.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To end debate.

The Rev. Dale J. Pepelnjak [Northwestern Minnesota Synod] commented that it was difficult for voting members to see what they were voting on because the lower portion of certain screens was obscured. He asked that the text of items being voted on be moved to an outer screen for improved visibility. The chair stated that the staff would try to resolve the issue.

Mr. John Rowe [Western North Dakota Synod] asked whether, if the rule were defeated once again, there might be a parliamentary procedure that would allow the assembly to get back to the original, unamended wording of the rule as it appeared in the *2005 Pre-Assembly Report*.

Presiding Bishop Hanson responded that the assembly could vote to reconsider the amendment, but that it could not reconsider something that had been rejected a second time.

Mr. Paul Erickson [South Dakota Synod] rose to a point of clarification to state that what Mr. Rowe was questioning was in fact what voting members did not understand: that they were not voting to amend the language in the *2005 Pre-Assembly Report* and that if they voted “no” on a given paragraph, that rule would disappear entirely.

The chair urged caution in going to the *Pre-Assembly Report* because, for example, the rules in relation to Recommendation Three required a two-thirds majority because the recommendation would require constitutional changes.

Mr. Erickson restated his question: “We want to know, how do we get back to the language that’s in our binders? Is there a process?”

The chair informed him that, in sequence, the assembly would first have to vote to close debate. It would then have before it the proposed rule as amended. The assembly would then need to rescind the amendment in order to get back to the language in the *2005 Pre-Assembly Report*. Presiding Bishop Hanson repeated his concern that the assembly not forget that the language of the proposed rule as amended was the language that the assembly had chosen to craft for that rule and that a two-thirds majority would be required to adopt it. He explained that those who wanted to hold to a two-thirds majority for the issues under consideration would want to vote to approve the rule, while those who wanted a simple majority requirement would want to vote to defeat it.

Mr. Erickson asked whether each paragraph would now require a two-thirds vote to be adopted. The chair stated that this would be so and that it was the assembly’s standard practice that adoption of rules required a two-thirds majority vote. The chair clarified that the rules that would be approved would be as earlier amended by Bp. Boerger’s amendment.

The Rev. David P. Housholder [Pacifica Synod] asked if the chair felt confident that all members knew what they were voting on at this point.

Presiding Bishop Hanson replied that he first wanted to test to see if the assembly wanted to end debate and that he then would explain what was being voted on and the implications of the vote.

Mr. Matthew L. Erickson [Southwest California Synod] proposed that, if debate were continued, someone could move to amend by striking the amendments and that might be a quicker way to get to the original wording.

Presiding Bishop Hanson reminded the assembly that the assembly was moving to the main motion and that there had been a call for the question.

The Rev. Darrell H. Jodock [Southwestern Minnesota Synod] summarized by saying that if members wanted to be rid of the amendment, they should vote “no” on closing debate and then move to reconsider the amendment.

The chair confirmed Pr. Jodock’s understanding, then called upon the assembly to vote on the motion to end debate.

**MOVED;
SECONDED;
CARRIED:**

**TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED
YES-782; NO-191**

To end debate.

The motion to end debate prevailed. Presiding Bishop Hanson then consulted with the parliamentarian concerning the best way to explain to the assembly the issue on which they would be voting and the implications of the vote. After consultation, he called the assembly back to order and asked that members rise only for points of clarification and privilege and not for debate of substance.

The Rev. Henry Schulte Jr. [Southwestern Texas Synod] rose to call the previous question. The chair reminded him that the body had just voted to end debate.

Presiding Bishop Hanson stated that the body would now vote on whether to adopt paragraph two as amended as a rule for this Churchwide Assembly. He specified that if members wanted this paragraph to be their rule, they should vote “yes”; if they were opposed, they should vote “no.” If two-thirds were to vote to adopt this paragraph as a rule, it would stand. If it did not receive two-thirds of the vote, it would disappear completely because the assembly had not adopted it. He stressed once again the two-thirds majority requirement for adoption of the rule.

The Rev. Warren D. Freiheit, bishop of the Central/Southern Illinois Synod, queried whether the assembly had voted to reconsider or just to end debate on the reconsideration.

Presiding Bishop Hanson explained that the assembly had already voted to reconsider, and then had voted to close debate on the motion, and now the amended paragraph two was on the floor.

Ms. Annie M. Santos [Sierra Pacific Synod] asked whether, if the rule were defeated again, it would be appropriate to move a reconsideration of the original language of the *2005 Pre-Assembly Report*.

After consultation with the parliamentarian, the chair stated that, if the assembly were to defeat the rule as amended, it could not be reconsidered, because it would have been defeated twice. He informed voting members, however, that they could reconsider the amendment. He pointed out, though, that motions to reconsider did not need to be taken when they were made and that, if such a motion were made, he would most likely set it aside so that the body could move through the rest of the rules before returning to it.

Ms. Santos then stated that she understood that the body had voted to amend the original language of the *Pre-Assembly Report* with a majority vote, and that the amended rule had failed because it had not achieved a two-thirds majority. She continued, however, by saying that, since the body had never voted to remove the original language, she was confused as to why that paragraph was now lost.

Ms. Tamara E. Riegel [West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod] rose to a point of clarification: If the rule did not achieve two-thirds majority and it disappeared, would the assembly go back to *Robert's Rules of Order* and consequently need only a simple majority on the sexuality recommendations?

Presiding Bishop Hanson informed her that he could not hypothesize about her question since the body did not yet know what might come before it. He said that he could state, however, that, absent a rule such as the one under consideration, *Robert's Rules of Order* and the ELCA constitution and bylaws would govern the assembly's debate.

The Rev. Heidi W. Punt [Central/Southern Illinois Synod] suggested that, if the assembly were not happy with the amendment that had been approved, it would be to the assembly's advantage to approve this motion and then vote to reconsider the amendment.

The chair expressed his concern that members' focus on the amendment and on "original language" was perhaps confusing the issue before the house. He suggested that if members were of a mind that any actions of the assembly concerning the task force recommendations on sexuality should require a two-thirds majority, they should vote "yes" on the rule. If they were of a mind that a simple majority was appropriate, they should vote "no." He then called upon the Rev. Charles W. Mays, member of the Church Council, to lead the assembly in prayer before the vote.

The chair called upon the assembly to vote on the reconsidered paragraph two, reminding members that a two-thirds majority would be required.

**MOVED;
SECONDED;
DEFEATED:**

**TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED
YES-630; NO-355**

To adopt the reconsidered paragraph two as amended:

A two-thirds majority vote of the members of the Churchwide Assembly present and voting shall be required to adopt recommendations from a task force or amendments or substitute motions related to them that would establish for this church a new practice or policy that is contrary to a social statement of this church on the subject of the policy or social statements received from the immediate predecessor church bodies of this church that have not been replaced or superseded by social statements or decisions of this church.

The chair declared the motion defeated and thus not a rule of the 2005 Churchwide Assembly.

The Rev. Rosa M. Key [Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod] called for the orders of the day.

The presiding bishop explained that the order of the day was adoption of the rules and that there was no set time for adjournment. He went on to say that since there were still rules and amendments before the house, the session would need to continue so that the body could carry out its work the next day.

Mr. Michael S. Schrey [Upper Susquehanna Synod] moved that the assembly adjourn immediately.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To adjourn immediately.

The chair called for a vote on the motion to adjourn. He clarified for the assembly that the adjournment would be simply for this session, that the motion required a simple majority for adoption, and that if it prevailed, the assembly would adjust its agenda for the next day.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

YES-359; NO-621

DEFEATED: To adjourn immediately.

The chair declared that the motion to adjourn had failed, and that the assembly would now move on to the additional rules to be considered.

Mr. Steven R. Chapman [Northwest Washington Synod] moved an amendment to paragraph three.

MOVED;

SECONDED:

To amend the “Rules of Organization and Procedure,” Section I, Part Ten, page 13, “Vote to Adopt Certain Recommendations from Task Force Reports” so that the paragraph would read:

A ~~two-thirds~~ majority vote of the voting members of the Churchwide Assembly present and voting shall be required to adopt recommendations from a task force report or an amendment or substitute motion related to them that would establish for this church a new practice or policy that is contrary to an existing policy that has been adopted by the Church Council upon recommendation of a board or committee, as authorized by the constitution or bylaws of this church.

Mr. Chapman, addressing his amendment, stated that, according to the ELCA constitution and standing rules already adopted, the Churchwide Assembly was the highest legislative authority in this church. He argued that to require a two-thirds vote to revise or remove an existing policy that was adopted by a simple majority vote of the Church Council would elevate the authority of the Church Council above that of the Churchwide Assembly.

The Rev. Victor C. Langford III [Northwest Washington Synod] spoke in opposition, expressing his feeling that much thought had been put into crafting the two-thirds requirement by those who had drafted the rule.

Ms. Allison A. Guttu [Metropolitan New York Synod] spoke in favor of the amendment. She argued that the Churchwide Assembly was the highest authority in this church and that voting members should trust its decision-making and continue with a simple majority.

The Rev. Gregory R. Pile, bishop of the Allegheny Synod, spoke in opposition. He stated that the Allegheny Synod had requested that the Church Council propose a two-thirds majority requirement for these questions because there could be a significant change in

practice and policy implicit in the vote. He went on to say that his synod had seen significant departures from 2000 years of Church practice and policy as it had looked at the recommendations. A two-thirds vote, he argued, would say to this church that it was not a one person, or one percent, who made this decision, but that two of every three persons present at the assembly had discerned that it was meet and right to make the changes.

Mr. Benjamin W. Lei [New Jersey Synod] observed that he was impressed with the assembly's care for parliamentary procedures and a democratic process. He suggested, however, that the Church was a theocracy and should be most faithful to God. The recent sexuality study, according to Mr. Lei, had showed that a significant majority of responders said they wanted to retain Scripture and the Gospel as this church's guide. He felt that the recommendations coming from the task force differed significantly from that finding.

The Rev. Laura Z. Erisman [Sierra Pacific Synod] said that she respected the work of the Church Council but that she was aware that decisions of this kind over the years of previous Churchwide Assemblies had been made by simple majority vote. She urged the assembly to be a little less "safe" and a little more trusting in this process of discerning what was best for the people of God at this time.

The Rev. Timothy J. Swenson [Western North Dakota Synod] said that what this assembly would enact in these recommendations would be seen by this church, the nation, and the world as a social statement, so it seemed right and prudent to him that the assembly should adopt it by a two-thirds majority, as had been the case with all other social statements of this church.

The Rev. Patrick V. Downes [Delaware-Maryland Synod] called the question.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To end debate.

The chair then called for a vote on the motion to end debate.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

CARRIED: To end debate.

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

YES-942; NO-33

Presiding Bishop Hanson explained to voting members that, for the first full paragraph at the top of the left column on page 13, Section One, Part Ten, the amendment was to strike the words "two-thirds" so the text would read "majority vote." He stressed once again that it took only a simple majority to adopt an amendment and that if the amendment were adopted, the assembly would still need to adopt the rule by a two-thirds majority.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

DEFEATED:

To amend the "Rules of Organization and Procedure," Section I, Part Ten, page 13, "Vote to Adopt Certain Recommendations from Task Force Reports" as follows:

YES-309; NO-668

A ~~two-thirds~~ majority vote of the voting members of the Churchwide Assembly present and voting shall be required to adopt recommendations from a task force report or an

amendment or substitute motion related to them that would establish for this church a new practice or policy that is contrary to an existing policy that has been adopted by the Church Council upon recommendation of a board or committee, as authorized by the constitution or bylaws of this church.

The chair declared that the amendment had been defeated and that the rule as originally proposed now stood before the assembly.

The Rev. E. Roy Riley Jr., bishop of the New Jersey Synod, called the previous question.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To end debate.

The chair reminded voting members that they were voting on whether to close debate. Bp. Boerger rose to a point of clarification, noting that the assembly was voting to close debate on the rule as previously amended.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

CARRIED: To end debate.

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

YES-943; NO-39

The presiding bishop explained that the assembly would now be voting on the rule itself, as previously amended. If members were in favor of the rule, he observed, they should vote “yes”; if opposed, they should vote “no.” He repeated the requirement of a two-thirds majority for adoption of the rule.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

CARRIED:

To adopt the “Rules of Organization and Procedure,” Section I, page 13, Part Ten, paragraph 3, “Vote to Adopt Certain Recommendations from Task Force Reports”:

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

YES-656; NO-320

A two-thirds majority vote of the voting members of the Churchwide Assembly present and voting shall be required to adopt recommendations from a task force report or an amendment or substitute motion related to them that would establish for this church a new practice or policy that is contrary to an existing policy that has been adopted by the Church Council upon recommendation of a board or committee, as authorized by the constitution or bylaws of this church.

The chair declared that the motion had prevailed.

Mr. Steven R. Chapman [Northwest Washington Synod] then rose to move to amend paragraph 4 by deletion of the paragraph.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To amend the “Rules of Organization and Procedure,” Section I, Part Ten, Paragraph 4, “Vote to Adopt Certain Recommendations from Task Force Reports,” by deleting the entire paragraph.

Mr. Chapman argued that any rule that required a bylaw change already required a two-thirds majority, as stated in Section I, Part Ten, Paragraph 1, which had already been adopted. Therefore, he reasoned, only a simple majority should be required of any recommendation of the Church Council that did not require a two-thirds vote according to the ELCA constitution and bylaws or *Robert’s Rules of Order*, since the Church Council was not granted authority that superceded that of the Churchwide Assembly, this church’s highest legislative authority.

The Rev. Patrick V. Downes [Delaware-Maryland Synod] called the previous question.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To end debate.

The chair then called for a vote on the motion to end debate.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

CARRIED: To end debate.

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

YES-892; NO-88

Presiding Bishop Hanson informed the house that the motion before it was to amend by striking paragraph 4. He pointed out that it would take a simple majority to adopt an amendment.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

DEFEATED:

To amend the “Rules of Organization and Procedure,” Section I, Part Ten, Paragraph 4, “Vote to Adopt Certain Recommendations from Task Force Reports,” by deleting the entire paragraph.

YES-355; NO-631

The chair declared that the motion to amend was defeated. He then informed voting members that paragraph 4 as previously amended was now before them for consideration.

The Rev. E. Roy Riley Jr., bishop of the New Jersey Synod, rose to call the previous question.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To end debate.

The chair then called for a vote on the motion to end debate.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

CARRIED: To end debate.

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

YES-901; NO-73

Presiding Bishop Hanson announced that the body would now vote on paragraph 4 as previously amended. He pointed out the two-thirds majority requirement for adoption.

MOVED;
SECONDED;
DEFEATED:

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED
YES-646; NO-333

To adopt the “Rules of Organization and Procedure,” Section I, Part Ten, page 13, paragraph 4, “Vote to Adopt Certain Recommendations from Task Force Reports”:

A two-thirds majority vote of the voting members of the Churchwide Assembly present and voting shall be required to adopt recommendations from a task force report or an amendment or substitute motion related to them that the Church Council recommended to the Churchwide Assembly and specified that a two-thirds affirmative vote of the assembly will be necessary for adoption.

The chair declared that the rule had failed to be adopted, and therefore did not stand before the assembly.

Mr. Steven R. Chapman [Northwest Washington Synod] moved to amend paragraph 5 by deletion.

MOVED;
SECONDED:

To amend the “Rules of Organization and Procedure,” Section I, Part Ten, Paragraph 5, “Vote to Adopt Certain Recommendations from Task Force Reports,” by deleting the entire paragraph.

Mr. Chapman stated that each synod already was charged with maintaining a roster of ordained ministers and rostered laypersons related to the synod. The secretary of the ELCA also maintained a roster. Bishops and synods have significant oversight of the rosters of this church, he pointed out, so in his opinion synods should be trusted to provide oversight of rosters as they had been doing since the inception of the ELCA. Therefore, he reasoned, a special rule calling for a two-thirds majority was unnecessary to allow synods to do the work they had already been doing.

The Rev. H. Gerard Knoche, bishop of the Delaware-Maryland Synod, spoke in opposition to the amendment to delete, stating that the matters to come before the assembly would establish policy and therefore should require a two-thirds majority vote.

The Rev. Stephen P. Bouman, bishop of the Metropolitan New York Synod, called the previous question.

MOVED;
SECONDED:

To end debate.

The chair then called for a vote on the motion to end debate.

MOVED;
SECONDED;
CARRIED:

To end debate.

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED
YES-915; NO-60

Presiding Bishop Hanson informed the house that the motion before it was to amend by striking paragraph 5. He pointed out that it would take a simple majority to adopt an amendment.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

YES-333; NO-644

DEFEATED:

To amend the “Rules of Organization and Procedure,” Section I, Part Ten, Paragraph 5, “Vote to Adopt Certain Recommendations from Task Force Reports,” by deleting the entire paragraph.

The chair declared that the motion to amend by striking was defeated. He then informed voting members that paragraph 5 as previously amended was now before them for consideration, and that it would take a two-thirds majority to adopt.

Mr. Patrick V. Downes [Delaware-Maryland Synod] moved to end debate.

MOVED;

SECONDED:

To end debate.

The chair then called for a vote on the motion to end debate.

MOVED;

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

SECONDED;

YES-829; NO-149

CARRIED:

To end debate.

Presiding Bishop Hanson announced that the body would now vote on paragraph 5 as previously amended. He pointed out once again the two-thirds majority requirement for adoption.

MOVED;

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

SECONDED;

YES-649; NO-337

DEFEATED:

To adopt the “Rules of Organization and Procedure,” Section I, Part Ten, page 13, paragraph 5, “Vote to Adopt Certain Recommendations from Task Force Reports”:

A two-thirds majority vote of the voting members of the Churchwide Assembly present and voting shall be required to adopt recommendations from a task force report or an amendment or substitute motion related to them that would establish policy for the oversight by synods of the official rosters of this church.

The chair declared that the motion had failed, and therefore the rule did not stand before the assembly.

Mr. Steven R. Chapman [Northwest Washington Synod] then moved to amend paragraph 6 by deletion of the entire paragraph.

MOVED;

SECONDED:

To amend the “Rules of Organization and Procedure,” Section I, Part Ten, Paragraph 6, “Vote to Adopt Certain Recommendations from Task Force Reports,” by deleting the entire paragraph.

Mr. Chapman stated that, since the assembly was not voting on a social statement or the implementation thereof, such a special rule was unnecessary.

The Rev. Patrick V. Downes [Delaware-Maryland Synod] moved all previous questions before the house.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To end debate on all previous questions.

The Rev. Victor C. Langford III [Northwest Washington Synod] raised a point of order, asking how the assembly could vote to delete something that it had never voted to establish.

Presiding Bishop Hanson explained that the assembly had been advised at the beginning of the consideration of the rules that, if someone wanted to discuss or amend a rule, they could ask to remove the rule from *en bloc* consideration and that rule would be taken up later in sequential order. He explained that the motion was to amend the proposed rule by striking the language within it. He then reminded the assembly that the question before the house was to end debate on all previous questions.

A vote was taken, but because voting members in one section of the hall reported that their voting machines were not turned on, the vote was voided and a second vote taken by voice.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

CARRIED:

To end debate on all previous questions.

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

VOICE VOTE

The chair ruled that the motion to close debate had carried. He informed voting members that the question on the floor was the motion to amend paragraph 6 by striking the entire paragraph, and that this amendment would require a majority vote.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

DEFEATED:

To amend the "Rules of Organization and Procedure," Section I, Part Ten, Paragraph 6, "Vote to Adopt Certain Recommendations from Task Force Reports," by deleting the entire paragraph.

YES-386; NO-601

The chair declared that the motion had failed and informed the assembly that it would now be voting on the rule itself, as previously amended, and that adoption would require a two-thirds majority.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

DEFEATED:

To adopt the "Rules of Organization and Procedure," Section I, Part Ten, page 13, paragraph 6, "Vote to Adopt Certain Recommendations from Task Force Reports":

A majority vote of the voting members of the Churchwide Assembly present and voting shall be required to adopt recommendations from a task force report or an amendment or

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

YES-616; NO-364

substitute motion related to them that are provided as advice to congregations of this church, except recommendations in implementing resolutions for a social statement for which a two-thirds vote is required.

Presiding Bishop Hanson informed the assembly that the motion had failed and that the rule therefore had not been adopted. He then directed the assembly's attention to Section I, Part Eighteen, page 20.

The Rev. Stacie R. Fidler [Northern Illinois Synod] moved an amendment to paragraph 1 of Part Eighteen.

MOVED;

SECONDED:

To amend Section I, Part Eighteen, page 20, paragraph 1 of the "Rules of Organization and Procedure" so that the paragraph would read:

Certain proposals that are scheduled for assembly action or information are the subject of hearings. Voting members, advisory members, other members, resource members, official visitors, registered visitors, and other categories approved by the Churchwide Assembly may attend with voice. Other guests may attend only if space permits and shall have no voice. Hearings have no legislative authority.

Speaking to her amendment, Pr. Fidler noted that, while official registration figures had not yet been released, it appeared to her that there were large numbers of registered visitors, all of whom had come to speak and be heard on a variety of issues that would come before the assembly. Many had traveled long distances at their own expense, she said. She argued that her amendment would allow registered visitors to speak at hearings on the weighty issues coming before the assembly to the benefit of all.

The Rev. Peter Strommen, bishop of the Northeastern Minnesota Synod, asked the chair if someone could explain the rationale for the existing policy.

Secretary Lowell G. Almen replied that the rule had arisen in response to situations at certain past assemblies of the ELCA. The rule under consideration had been in place at several, though not all, previous assemblies. The Church Council had recommended the rule because of complaints from voting members who had been unable to express their opinions, to ask questions necessary for their deliberations, or otherwise to participate fully in hearings because the time had been taken by advisory members and visitors. Based on evaluations and comments, he reported, the rule had been instituted to give precedence to voting members in their participation in the hearings.

The Rev. Steven L. Ullestad, bishop of the Northeastern Iowa Synod, called the previous question.

MOVED;

SECONDED:

To end debate.

The chair then called for a vote on the motion to end debate.

MOVED;
SECONDED;
CARRIED:

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED
YES-926; NO-51

To end debate.

The presiding bishop declared that the motion to end debate had prevailed. He then informed the assembly that it would vote on Pr. Fidler's amendment, which would require only a simple majority.

MOVED;
SECONDED;
DEFEATED:

YES-242; NO-733

To amend Section I, Part Eighteen, page 20, paragraph 1 of the "Rules of Organization and Procedure" so that the paragraph would read:

Certain proposals that are scheduled for assembly action or information are the subject of hearings. Voting members, advisory members, other members, resource members, official visitors, registered visitors, and other categories approved by the Churchwide Assembly may attend with voice. Other guests may attend only if space permits and shall have no voice. Hearings have no legislative authority.

Presiding Bishop Hanson announced that the motion to amend had failed and that the assembly would now consider the rule as originally written.

MOVED;
SECONDED;
CARRIED:

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED
YES-897; NO-72

To adopt Section I, Part Eighteen, page 20, paragraph 1 of the "Rules of Organization and Procedure":

Certain proposals that are scheduled for assembly action or information are the subject of hearings. Voting members, advisory members, other members, resource members, official visitors, and other categories approved by the Churchwide Assembly may attend with voice. Other guests may attend only if space permits and shall have no voice. Hearings have no legislative authority.

Presiding Bishop Hanson stated that the rule on hearings had been adopted. He added that there was one more action required concerning the rules, which was the adoption of the language on page 3 of the "Order of Business" for this date, August 8. This rule concerning departure from the agenda had inadvertently been omitted from "Part Three: Procedure and Quorum" of the printed text of the *2005 Pre-Assembly Report* as the result of a typesetting error.

It should have read as follows:

Departing from Agenda

With the consent of a majority of the voting members, the chair shall have the authority to call items of business before the assembly in

whatever order he or she considers most expedient for the conduct of the assembly's business.

A motion to alter the agenda shall require for adoption a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting.

The Rev. Steven E. King [Southwestern Minnesota Synod] moved to amend the rule by addition.

MOVED;

SECONDED:

To amend paragraph 3 by addition to read:

With the consent of a majority of the voting members, the chair shall have the authority to call any non-actionable items of business before the assembly in whatever order he or she considers most expedient for the conduct of the assembly's business.

The presiding bishop asked Pr. King to clarify the term "non-actionable." Pr. King replied that non-actionable items were those that the assembly would not be voting on, such as reports, instruction sessions, and ecumenical greetings, but not "active business" such as the assembly had been conducting in this session.

Presiding Bishop Hanson asked if this would bind the chair so that he could not move any items in the agenda that would require a vote. He pointed out that, in cases where the work of the assembly had been completed early in a given session, the chair could bring forward business in order to make the best use of the time available. He cited as examples the need to call recommendations from the Memorials Committee or from the Committee of Reference and Counsel as time became available in sessions. He asked Pr. King whether the amendment would prevent the chair from calling those items at times other than those for which they had been announced.

Pr. King replied that he wanted to know when votes would be taken on significant proposed actions, so he felt the assembly should follow the printed agenda. Other business could be adjusted by the chair to work around important votes, he indicated, but his intent was to prevent anything that required a vote from being moved within the agenda.

The Rev. Steven L. Ullestad, bishop of the Northeastern Iowa synod, spoke against the amendment. He commented that the assembly knew that this presiding bishop was always careful to be certain that members knew what they were doing and when they were doing it. He continued by saying that it would not be helpful to tie the hands of the chair across the work of this week ahead and that the assembly needed to allow for some flexibility.

Mr. Eric M. Peterson [Northwest Synod of Wisconsin] also spoke against the motion, suggesting that the assembly could always choose to overrule the chair, and that this amendment, therefore, was unnecessary.

The Rev. George E. Keck [Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod] called the previous question.

MOVED;

SECONDED:

To end debate.

The chair then called for a voice vote on the motion to end debate.

**MOVED;
SECONDED;
CARRIED:**

To end debate.

**TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED
VOICE VOTE**

Presiding Bishop Hanson ruled that the motion to end debate had carried and that the body would now vote on the amendment.

**MOVED;
SECONDED;
DEFEATED:**

To amend paragraph 3 by addition to read:

YES-105; NO-869

With the consent of a majority of the voting members, the chair shall have the authority to call any non-actionable items of business before the assembly in whatever order he or she considers most expedient for the conduct of the assembly's business.

The chair announced that the motion to amend had failed and that the assembly now would vote on the Addendum as printed in the "Order of Business." He stated that a two-thirds majority would be required for adoption.

**ASSEMBLY
ACTION
CA05.01.02**

**TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED
YES-902; NO-67**

To include the following rule that was part of the "Rules" adopted by previous Churchwide Assemblies that was inadvertently not included in "Part Three: Procedure and Quorum" of the printed text of the *2005 Pre-Assembly Report* as a result of a typesetting error:

Departing from Agenda

With the consent of a majority of the voting members, the chair shall have the authority to call items of business before the assembly in whatever order he or she considers most expedient for the conduct of the assembly's business.

A motion to alter the agenda shall require for adoption a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting.

Presiding Bishop Hanson declared that the rules were now adopted.

The Rev. Keith A. Hunsinger [Northwestern Ohio Synod] asked that members be provided a revised copy of the rules on pages 12 and 13 of Section I of the *2005 Pre-Assembly Report* as adopted by the assembly before debate began on the task force recommendations. The chair assured him that a revised version would be provided.

Pr. Hunsinger also asked that the assembly receive a printed explanation of what the rules meant for voting on the task force recommendations. The presiding bishop responded

that it would be difficult to speak with specificity to this question without knowing exactly what was going to be before the body at the time of a vote.

Organization of the Churchwide Assembly: Roll of Voting Members

Reference: *2005 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section I, pages 25–33; *Minutes* Exhibit A.

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson called upon Secretary Lowell G. Almen, on behalf of the Credentials Committee, to present the roll of voting members, advisory members, other members, and resource members of the assembly. Secretary Almen presented the roll as it appeared in the *2005 Pre-Assembly Report*, stating that a revised list would be created when synodical bishops certified an absence and an alternate had been certified by the secretary. He stated that a revised listing of those registered as voting members would be included in the final minutes of the assembly as Exhibit A. There being no objection, the report was accepted.

Adoption of the Order of Business

Reference: *Order of Business*.

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson asked voting members to locate their copy of the printed booklet containing the scheduled *Order of Business*. Secretary Lowell G. Almen noted that Plenary Session Two would begin at 8:45 A.M. on Tuesday morning, August 9, a half-hour postponement due to the late hour of the closing of the first plenary session. With that correction, Secretary Almen moved the adoption of the *Order of Business*.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To approve the Order of Business (as corrected) of the 2005 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. Olaf Roynesdal [South Dakota Synod] moved an amendment.

MOVED;

SECONDED: That plenary sessions during which the 2005 Churchwide Assembly meets as a “quasi committee of the whole” on the Church Council recommendations related to the ELCA Studies on Sexuality, as well as sessions at which we vote on sexuality recommendations, be closed to all but voting members and advisory members.

Presiding Bishop Hanson said he questioned whether the amendment was germane to the motion before the body. He declared his desire to test the body on this question and called for further discussion.

Pr. Roynesdal explained that this assembly would be making a decision that would “require every ounce of credibility it can get.” He commented that as a voting member he had received printed materials from both sides on the issue, and asserted that “intimidation” was one of the possible courses of action being proposed by those distributing the information. He expressed his feeling that “without an audience,” the assembly’s decision would have more credibility. He clarified, however, that he was not suggesting that the sessions be held in secret.

Ms. Allison A. Guttu [Metropolitan New York Synod] spoke against the amendment, characterizing it as “bordering on offensive,” and stated that visitors who had traveled many miles at their own expense already were excluded from speaking at hearings. She argued that they should be included in deliberations of the assembly. She then asked the chair the number of official visitors registered for the assembly.

Presiding Bishop Hanson responded that he did not yet have that information.

The Rev. Paul A. Tidemann [Saint Paul Area Synod] spoke against the amendment, saying that the visitors were members of this church and that it would be unwise to do anything to restrict their presence in the assembly.

Mr. Timothy J. Mumm [South-Central Synod of Wisconsin] expressed his concern for the integrity of the body if observers were to be excluded, and asserted that doing things in secrecy did not strike him as a way of doing things honestly. He asked that the amendment be defeated.

The Rev. Michael J. Neils, bishop of the Grand Canyon Synod, asked the chair if the motion was in order, expressing his feeling that the subject should have been part of the discussion of the “Rules of Organization and Procedure” that had already been approved.

Presiding Bishop Hanson announced that he would ask the assembly to decide whether the motion was germane. Upon voting, 784 members felt it was not germane, while 195 felt that it was. The chair ruled the motion out of order.

Presiding Bishop Hanson then called for a vote on approval of the *Order of Business*. He stated that approval would require a simple majority.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

YES-924; NO-45

CA05.01.03

To approve the *Order of Business* (as corrected) of the 2005 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.

Recess

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson introduced Mr. Fred and Ms. Susan More, local arrangement committee co-chairs, and expressed his great appreciation of their work. The assembly expressed its appreciation with applause.

Secretary Lowell G. Almen reminded the assembly that Plenary Session Two would begin at 8:45 A.M. the next morning. He summarized a number of significant official deadlines. Presiding Bishop Hanson then called upon the Rev. Diane (Dee) H. Pederson, member of the Church Council from St. Cloud, Minn., to lead the assembly in a hymn and prayer. At 11:39 P.M. the chair declared the assembly in recess until 8:45 A.M., Tuesday, August 9, 2005.

Plenary Session Two

Tuesday, August 9, 2005

8:45 A.M. – 10:30 A.M.

The second plenary session of the ninth Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America was called to order at 8:46 A.M. Eastern Daylight Time by the Rev. Mark S. Hanson, presiding bishop, at the Orlando World Center, Orlando, Florida. Presiding Bishop Hanson called upon the Rev. Kirk J. Havel, member of the Church Council, to lead the assembly in Morning Prayer. Mr. John D. Nevergall [Northwestern Ohio Synod] led the assembly in singing “Shepherd Me, O God.” Pr. Havel read a lesson from Isaiah, led a litany, and offered prayer. Presiding Bishop Hanson thanked musicians Mr. John and Ms. Ruth Sall from Philadelphia, Pa.

Presiding Bishop Hanson announced that the offering received at the opening Eucharist on Monday evening for the Special Needs Retirement Fund amounted to \$9,750.69, and he thanked the assembly for its generosity.

Report of the Presiding Bishop

Reference: 2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section II, pages 1–6.

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson invited Mr. Carlos E. Peña, vice president of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, to assume the chair. Chair *pro tem* Peña called upon Presiding Bishop Hanson for his report. Presiding Bishop Hanson noted that he was often asked to address the state of the ELCA. He began by inviting the assembly to reflect on the state of this church. He asked voting members, advisors, and guests to discuss briefly with one another the state of the ELCA. The state of the ELCA, he said, is inseparable from each individual member’s life of faith and their discernment of these questions: How is it with your soul? Your walk with Jesus? How do you live out your Baptism?

After those present had had opportunity for discussion, the presiding bishop continued with his report. He said, “The state of the ELCA is enriched through the lively and creative ministry of congregations. It is strengthened as God’s mission is carried out when we join together as synods and the churchwide expression. It is deepened through our ecumenical and global relationships.

“As we reflect together, I trust that it becomes clear that the state of the ELCA depends on the work of the Holy Spirit in and through the vast web of interdependent relationships in the living, changing organism called Christ’s body, the Church.

“Some would say that we are a church in search of its identity and purpose, but I do not believe we are. We do, however, face the challenges of educating and communicating. That is, we know who we are, but we need to teach and tell it far more consistently and creatively, beginning with the Scriptures, the Creeds, the Catechism, the Confessions, the writings of Martin Luther, and the marvelous contributions of our contemporary teaching theologians. This morning, let us reflect on our identity and the mission to which we are called.

“The phone rang as we were leaving the house to travel to the Women of the ELCA Triennial in San Antonio. Our daughter Rachel was on her way to the hospital. She was in labor five weeks early. We kept in touch via cell phones as long as we could and heard joyous news when we landed: ‘You have a grandson. Everything is fine. His name is

Kingston.’ His full name is Kingston Lucius Brown, a strong name planting his identity with his paternal ancestors in Jamaica.

“As Secretary Almen has reminded us in his written report, this church also has a strong name that reveals a great deal about who we are, both our identity and our mission. In fact, we need to use it as a tool for catechesis, for telling our story.”

The presiding bishop continued his report by focusing on the four key words of this church’s official name.

The EVANGELICAL Lutheran Church in America

“Evangelical. Let’s be honest. The word ‘evangelical’ creates a bit of confusion, even tension, does it not? I recall an interview with a religion writer who began, ‘Bishop Hanson, I have been writing religion stories for 10 years, but I confess I know very little about the ELCA. Who are you?’ As I described something of our identity centered in the Gospel, she interrupted, ‘Well, if that’s who you are, why do you call yourselves “evangelical”? You don’t sound like fundamentalists to me.’

“I want to offer a challenge to you and this church. Let us claim boldly, humbly, and clearly that we are evangelicals. After all, evangelical Lutherans name, proclaim, and believe the Good News of Jesus Christ. We also believe that we are one in Christ, so let us avoid always first describing the ways in which we are not like ‘those other evangelicals.’

“Don’t get me wrong. I believe one of the gifts of being Lutheran is taking theology seriously. But perhaps the most pressing theological question with which we must struggle is: ‘Amidst all the competing gospels, what good news do we announce?’

“If someone asked you, ‘What is this Gospel you Lutherans keep talking about?’, how would you respond? Think about the answer you’d give the reporter or someone who had left the church or had never been inside. Please share your responses with one other person. What is the Gospel?”

After encouraging those present at the assembly to discuss their responses, Presiding Bishop Hanson continued.

“In an article on Lutheran identity, Luther Seminary professor Gerhard Forde urged readers to practice a ‘radical Lutheranism.’ He said, ‘What shall we be? Let us be radicals: not conservatives or liberals, fundagelicals or charismatic (or whatever other brand of something-less-than-Gospel entices), but radicals: radical preachers and practitioners of the Gospel of justification by faith without deeds of the Law.’ A radical Lutheranism, he says, ‘. . . regains the courage and the nerve to preach the Gospel unconditionally. Simply let the bird of the Spirit fly! There is too much timidity, too much worry that the Gospel is going to harm someone, too much tendency to buffer the message to bring it under control. It is essential to see that everything hangs in the balance here. Faith comes by hearing.’

“Mark opens his Gospel declaring, ‘The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God’ (Mark 1:1). Listening with today’s ears, we may not realize that he was proclaiming a Gospel that was counter-cultural. The word ‘gospel’ belonged to Caesar’s heralds, who announced ‘the gospel’ in the town square. ‘Blow the trumpets, gather around, we have gospel—good news. A child has been born to Caesar; he is the son of God.’ Or ‘Caesar’s armies have been victorious in battle.’

“This is the radical offense of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Son of God is born not to Caesar, but to Mary. Born in the city of David is a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. We have good news of God’s victory, not on the battlefield, but on a cross. The crucified

one is risen. God in Christ has reconciled the whole creation and given us the ministry of reconciliation.

“In our culture, however, everything presses in a different direction than this good news that ‘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 so that no one may boast’ (Ephesians 2:8). In this culture we are valued for what we accomplish and for what we accumulate. A friend said to me recently, ‘Mark, I’m working so hard that I feel as if I must eat tomorrow’s meal today to give me energy for yesterday’s work.’ How can the subtext for such a culture not become works righteousness?”

“Into this context, we live and serve as evangelical Lutherans proclaiming that we are saved by God’s grace through faith for Jesus’ sake. Luther declared that these words are the heart of the Gospel.

“John Thomas, president and general minister of the United Church of Christ, once said, ‘There is in my mind no more important vocation for Lutheran Christians today than the reclaiming of and bearing witness to the primacy of grace, the fundamental insight of the Reformation.’

“I firmly believe we as the ELCA are hearing and heeding that call. All across this church there are signs that we are growing as an evangelizing church in a Lutheran key. Hundreds of laypersons and rostered leaders gathered for a day in Atlanta to be renewed in their baptismal calling. Others assembled at the Virginia Synod’s annual ‘Power in the Spirit’ event and the Northern Illinois Synod’s gathering of leaders. A January ice storm did not stop 125 leaders in Western North Dakota from gathering to imagine together the gifts we bring as evangelical Lutherans to the changing landscape of rural America.

“You would not believe the energy as pastor developers and 16 seminarians gathered in Las Vegas. I must admit when the praise band began the opening service declaring, ‘Stand up, wave your hands, stamp your feet. We have come to Las Vegas to get jazzed on Jesus,’ I found myself mumbling under my breath, ‘I am a Lutheran . . . I am a Lutheran . . . I know I am a Lutheran.’ But as I listened to the passion and entrepreneurial spirit of those colleagues, I realized: So are they!

“Preparing leaders for an evangelizing church in God’s mission for the life of the world shapes the curriculums and conversations and imagination at our eight seminaries. It was the focus of a retreat day for the Conference of Bishops. There are wonderful new evangelism resources available from Augsburg Fortress and the churchwide organization.

“Two years ago at the 2003 Churchwide Assembly in Milwaukee we adopted an evangelism strategy. It continues to inform our work, but now we don’t talk as much about strategies as we do about being an evangelizing church in a Lutheran key. In proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ we heed the Great Commission to go and make disciples. Let us not underestimate the power of the Holy Spirit to work through the Gospel. ‘Three thousand were added that day,’ we read in Acts 2:41.

“Last week I went to our local shoe repair shop to drop off a pair of shoes. The proprietor is Greek. He wears a hairpiece that I can only describe as looking like it was made for someone doing an Elvis Presley impersonation. He came to the front counter wearing a new t-shirt. In big bold letters it said, ‘I love you.’ ‘Hey,’ I responded, ‘I love you, too.’ He said, ‘Everyone says “I love you, too.”’

“That’s a wonderful image for evangelical Lutherans. Joyfully, boldly, publicly declaring, ‘God loves you.’ ‘Christ forgives you.’ ‘Jesus invites you, come and eat.’”

The presiding bishop invited the listeners to turn to their neighbors and practice saying these Gospel phrases. He then went on:

“By the way, I asked the shoe repairman what was on the back of the t-shirt. He turned around. It read, ‘A-Plus Sanitation Services. There’s no mess we won’t clean up.’ That may have theological possibilities for evangelical Lutherans as well.

“An evangelizing church in a Lutheran key will be attentive to the grammar we use. In the grammar of God’s grace, God is both subject and predicate, the actor and the action, the doer and the deed. The direct object of God’s creating, forgiving, loving, reconciling, judging work is the whole creation. How many of us had John 3:16 as our first memory verse? 2 Corinthians 5 picks up the same expanse of God’s grace: ‘In Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself’(2 Corinthians 5:19).

“An evangelizing church in a Lutheran key will be attentive to what the Gospel says and to what the Holy Spirit through the Gospel does. Sins are forgiven. The alienated are reconciled. Unbelief gives way to faith. The poor hear good news. The dead are raised. Those in despair find hope. The fearful experience peace. The timid gain courage. The oppressed go free.

“You live in a mission field. I do, too. As long as there is one unchurched or de-churched person who does not know the story of Jesus in our towns or workplaces, our classrooms, car pools, or families, we are called to invite that person as the Samaritan woman invited her friends to come and see Jesus. An evangelizing church tells about the love of God in Christ Jesus and bears witness to the signs of the inbreaking of God’s reign of justice, mercy, and peace in our world.

The Evangelical LUTHERAN Church in America

“The good news of God’s grace stands at the heart of who we are as Lutherans. Hear again from Article IV of the *Augsburg Confession*: ‘It is also taught among us that we cannot obtain forgiveness of sin and righteousness before God by our own merits, works, or satisfactions, but that we receive forgiveness of sin and become righteous before God by grace, for Christ’s sake, through faith, when we believe that Christ suffered for us and that for his sake our sin is forgiven, and righteousness and eternal life are given to us.’ There is no other way to be Lutheran than to be evangelical. This church exists to proclaim that Gospel to all the world.

“I was wearing my ‘Old Lutheran’ t-shirt when a clerk asked, ‘What’s a Lutheran?’ Well, the line behind me was long. What do I say to capture almost 500 years of theological writings in the time it takes to make a latte? How would you have answered her? What’s a Lutheran?”

The presiding bishop allowed participants time to discuss this question before he went on:

“To be confessional Lutheran Christians means we will be evangelical, ecumenical, and reforming. But it is not easy to be Lutheran Christians in this culture. The challenge we face as Lutheran Christians is to build upon the strong foundational themes of the ongoing Lutheran Reformation. Let us be sure that they, rather than the ethnic identities of European immigrant ancestors, become that which shapes our identity as a reforming movement in the Church catholic, engaged in God’s mission for the life of the world.

“What are those themes? Those theological foundations? Those gifts we bring as part of the body of Christ? What would you name? Perhaps justification by grace through faith, the theology of the cross, the priesthood of all believers, the means of grace.

“Think how central the words ‘and’ and ‘alone’ are for us. We believe that we are saint *and* at the same time sinner. Creation is good *and* fallen. God is hidden *and* yet revealed. The word of God is Law *and* Gospel. The Gospel is proclaimed through Word *and* Sacrament. Jesus is human *and* divine. Faith *and* reason are not in opposition but in constant conversation.

“We also proclaim grace *alone*, faith *alone*, Scripture *alone*. We could make this complex, so that the signboards on our churches would read, ‘Worship with us. Experience the dialectical, paradoxical tensions of faith and life.’ Attendance would soar.

“The other option is to continue with humility and perseverance the task of theological conversation in congregations, colleges, campus ministries, seminaries, synods, and the churchwide organization. Converse not in an elitist way; rather, as my colleague Jonathan Strandjord says, ‘Disciplined theological study must become ordinary; faith’s wisdom must be for the whole people of God.’

The Evangelical Lutheran CHURCH in America

“Sometimes it seems we have greater clarity regarding what it means that we are evangelical and Lutheran than what it means to be church. Our name is not the ‘Evangelical Lutheran Congregations in America’ or the ‘Evangelical Lutheran Federation of Synods in America’ or the ‘Evangelical Lutheran Churchwide Organization in America.’ It is the Evangelical Lutheran *Church* in America. Our identity, theology, and mission as evangelicals and Lutherans belongs to the catholicity of the church.

“When Philip Melancthon penned the Confessions and they were presented to Emperor Charles V 475 years ago, their purpose was to preserve the unity of the Western church. Years later, Dietrich Bonhoeffer reminded us that the unity of the Church as the body of Christ is not a goal to be attained but a fact to be recognized. According to this image, the Church is not to achieve unity but to act as the unified body it is. We do so not only for the sake of unity but so that the world might believe.

“Unity in the body of Christ is both God’s gift and our task. It is fitting that at this assembly we consider the recommendation for Interim Eucharistic Sharing with the United Methodist Church, an expression of our ecumenical commitment.

“Often I am asked how it is that the ELCA can have five full communion partners that reflect such diversity. As we say in the ELCA’s Statement on Ecumenism, ‘For the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the characteristics of full communion are theological and missiological implications of the Gospel that allow variety and flexibility. These characteristics stress that the church act ecumenically for the sake of the world, not for itself alone.’ Full-communion agreements are, I think, like connective tissue joining parts of the body of Christ together for the sake of the Gospel.

‘May we as the ELCA grow in our relationships with our five full-communion partners, imagining new possibilities for being in mission together and for shared worship and witness.

“In our deepening relationship as Lutherans and Roman Catholics, let us give thanks for Pope Benedict XVI’s commitment to Christian unity. Let us build upon the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* so that it might be a ‘living letter’ used for instruction and conversation in local contexts. Let us explore the possibility of creating a ‘joint declaration on the Eucharist’ as one way of celebrating the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation in 2017.

“Let us also be clear that the ordination of women—now in its 35th year—is a gift we bring to ecumenical relationships that we pray others will receive.

“Wartburg Seminary President Duane Larson has written an as-yet-unpublished editorial. I believe that he is correct that now is the time for Pope Benedict, the Ecumenical Patriarch in Istanbul, and the Lutheran and Anglican Communion to convene a global, ecumenical council on the Christian interpretation of Scripture. Dr. Larson argues that Christianity is in the midst of a global identity crisis because we have not ecumenically addressed questions about the authority and interpretation of Scripture. He writes, ‘The crisis is almost entirely due to the dominance of a fundamentalist-millennialist-apocalypticist reading of Scripture.’

“Let us as the ELCA build upon the convergence occurring in this land and throughout the world, the convergence of conservative evangelicals, Lutherans, Roman Catholics, Protestants, and Pentecostals, together with persons of other religions. What is bringing this about? The recognition that together we can be a prophetic voice and catalyst for ending hunger, reducing poverty, and healing the creation. As one British official said to Bishop Peter Rogness and other religious leaders attending a pre-G-8 summit, ‘We have the means to overcome poverty. What we lack is the moral will to do it. That’s your job.’

“One way you can take up his challenge is to join the ONE campaign. The goal of the campaign is to direct an additional one percent of the U.S. budget toward providing the most basic needs to poor countries. There will be more information about the campaign in the *Daily Lutheran*.

“Cardinal [Walter E.] Kasper, president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity at the Vatican, has often reminded us that ecumenism will not be sustained without a grass-roots spiritual dimension: people of faith praying together, studying Scripture together, engaged together in common witness and work for the life of the world. Such ecumenism of life is not dependent upon theological agreement, but is a powerful sign of our unity in Christ.

“When we define ourselves as church, let us recall how consistently Paul wrote of our unity and our diversity. His phrases easily come to mind:

1. one body, many members;
2. one Spirit, a variety of gifts;
3. one Church, various callings.

“I have appreciated Professor Barbara Rossing’s powerful image of the church as a braided stream. She envisions a model of unity that does not seek to funnel everything into one monolithic channel, but instead cherishes the diverse ecclesial strands that crisscross and divide, braiding together across a wide spectrum.

“But what about our understanding of being church together as the ELCA? We have organized this church not on the principles of hierarchy but on that of interdependence. Listen how clearly we commit ourselves to this principle: ‘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, while fully the church, recognizes that it is not the whole church and therefore lives in a partnership relationship with the others’ (ELCA 8.11.).

“In our interdependence, each part recognizes that mission efforts must be shaped by both local needs and global awareness, by both individual witness and corporate endeavor, and by both distinctively Lutheran emphases and growing ecumenical cooperation. That is our shared commitment as this church.

“There are many factors and forces—cultural, ecclesial, financial, and relational—that seek to undermine that commitment to interdependence in the ELCA. We struggle with that.

Sometimes, the opportunity to see ourselves through the eyes of others helps us recognize the strength and resiliency of this church.

“Last year, Dr. Craig Dykstra, vice president for religion at the Lilly Endowment, commented that from his perspective, the ELCA may be the only denomination in the United States today that is working. He described the ecology of the ELCA as a living organism made up of interdependent eco-systems. What did he describe? Twenty-eight colleges and universities for whom ‘Lutheran’ is not only a reference to their origins but to their mission and future. He cited our eight seminaries as [being] one system of theological conversation and formation. He noted that the largest non-profit provider of social service in the United States, Lutheran Services in America, touches one in 55 American households.

“Woven into that living, reaching-out eco-system are Lutheran World Relief, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, Lutheran Disaster Response, and a network of Lutheran schools and campus ministries and outdoor ministries. My experience the past four years is that each one of these wants to strengthen their relationship in and with this church and their identity as Lutherans engaged in God’s mission for the life of the world.

“To discover a picture of a dynamic, Christ-centered, Spirit-led, living organism, add to Dr. Dykstra’s picture of the ELCA’s ecology our polity of interdependence: congregations, synods, the churchwide organization, and our global connectedness in the communion of the Lutheran World Federation, our ecumenical relationships, and conciliar involvement. Yes, we are a living organism.

“Are we aware of the challenges we face? Most certainly. The landscape of the ELCA is one of a homogenous church in an increasingly multicultural, multi-racial context. At this assembly you will be asked to adopt two ethnic-specific ministry strategies. With the three previously adopted strategies, we will have five ethnic strategies, which will shape our future only if we are willing to confront the racism that exists within this church and culture. There are, of course, signs of hope that we are becoming a Pentecost church: The Gospel is proclaimed in 28 different languages on Sunday morning in the Metro New York Synod. Witness the diversity of candidates for ministry in the Theological Education for Emerging Ministry program and congregations becoming truly multicultural.

“Are we aware of the challenges we face? Most certainly. We will continue to journey together faithfully this week as we discuss the place in our life and ministry of persons who are gay and lesbian and in committed relationships. Let us acknowledge that it is not easy for any of us to talk personally and publicly about what it means to be faithful stewards of God’s mysterious, wonderful gift of sexuality given to every human being. Let us remember that from the days of Jesus’ earthly ministry to the present, the Church has struggled with questions of criteria for acceptance and standards for leadership. I have great faith in the Lord of this church and in you. In the work of this week and in the days that follow, let us continue to respect each other and trust in the leading of the Holy Spirit.

“Are we aware of the challenges we face? Most certainly. We are 10 years older in average age than the U.S. population. But what leadership is coming from youth and young adults throughout this church! The growth of the Young Adults in Global Mission program is amazing. I meet with young people as often as I can. These are the things I hear: ‘We want to be part of a church that matters. Where Jesus matters. Where people don’t just talk about God, but experience God’s presence. Where youth matter as the church of today, not just tomorrow. We want to be part of a church that makes a difference in the world. Bishop, is the ELCA that kind of church?’ What will we tell them? I hope our answer will be, ‘Yes, by the help of God.’

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in AMERICA

“What does it mean to be in AMERICA? And what does it mean to be American in the world today? How do we live with the reality of terrorism, but not let terrorism become our defining reality?”

“One contribution we might bring to this nation is the understanding of ‘accompaniment’ that now defines and shapes our global relationships as the ELCA. Another is to build upon the growing web of global relationships among individuals, congregations, institutions, synods, and the churchwide organization. They provide occasions for seeing ourselves as Americans through the eyes of others.

“My experience is that perspective varies greatly. In Liberia I heard great appreciation for the U.S. role in the ouster of President [Charles] Taylor and the ending of a civil war. Yet from Palestinians I hear great despair that the U.S. has not exerted its influence so that there might be a lasting, viable, two-state solution with a secure Israel and a free Palestinian state. How fitting that part of the work of this assembly will be to discern what it means for us as the ELCA to be engaged in Israel and Palestine.

“I believe Americans want to be known in the world as a freedom-loving people who are generous, compassionate, and committed to democracy. But, like those looking in on the Spirit-filled people at Pentecost and thinking they were drunk, many in the world look upon us as intoxicated with the power of our military might and preoccupied with our place in a globalized economy.

“What kind of nation are we building? Bishop Stephen Bouman suggests that it is the meta-question since 9/11. How we treat and welcome the stranger in our midst is key to our answer. An immigrant church is now being called to welcome the new immigrant. One of our memorials asks us to take that calling seriously. Will we step forward as a public church boldly witnessing to God’s love for all that God has created?”

“Can we as a church convene and be participants in public conversations of moral deliberation? In doing so, we must acknowledge the complexity of issues, and call for civility in our discourse. We must recognize that categories of morality apply to the behavior of individuals and the actions of nations or corporations—and yes, churches.

“How do we discuss the fact that we are a nation at war? How do we support our military personnel, their families, and the congregations whose pastors have been called to active duty? Last January, I spent three wonderful days with our military chaplains, including several who had served in Afghanistan and Iraq. We talked about the historic just-unjust war principles and debated whether they apply in a world of nuclear weapons and terrorist violence. We discussed what principles of just peace might be. It was a wonderfully rich discussion with varied opinions.

“On this tenth anniversary of the ELCA social statement ‘For Peace in God’s World,’ may we renew our baptismal vocation to strive for justice and peace in all the earth. It is not necessary to agree on the way to peace or what makes for justice. These questions, in fact, belong to our communities of deliberation.

“We know well portions of the ELCA document ‘Vision and Expectations.’ But how seriously do we take those sections that state:

- ‘This church expects its ordained ministers to be witnesses to and instruments of God’s peace and reconciliation for the world.’
- ‘This church expects its ordained ministers to be committed to justice in the life of the church and society and in the world.’

- ‘This church expects that its ordained ministers will be exemplary stewards of the earth’s resources and that they will lead this church in the stewardship of God’s creation.’

“As I conclude this ‘state of the church’ address, I want to mention the Design for Mission, which has resulted from the collaboration and imagination of an incredibly gifted and dedicated churchwide staff and the leadership of the Church Council. The Design for Mission provides clarity of purpose for the churchwide organization and focuses its resources. With your approval of proposed changes in our governing documents, we are eager to move ahead.

“The Design for Mission will depend upon your continued prayers and generous support. Thank you, thank you, thank you for the many ways you undergird this church’s life and mission. What a holy and humble privilege it is to serve as your presiding bishop.

“As evangelical Lutherans we return to where our life of faith begins and is centered: Christ’s death and resurrection. With all of our flaws, failures, and fears we are an assembly of believers claimed, gathered, and sent for the sake of the world. As people of the cross and resurrection, we become bearers of hope: hope active in love, hope seeking justice and peace, hope grounded in faith and forgiveness.

“As a parish pastor I encouraged confirmands to begin each day by placing a hand on their head. Please do that. Think about the water poured over you in Baptism and say, ‘I am baptized. I am chosen. I am a child of God. I belong to Jesus Christ.’ Make the sign of the cross, the mark of the One to whom we belong and in whom we are one.

“When confirmands affirm their Baptism, we do not send them into the world on their own. They first kneel to receive the laying on of hands and prayer for the Holy Spirit. Please reach out and place your hand on someone’s head or shoulder as I pray.

“The Lord be with you. Let us pray. Father in heaven, for Jesus’ sake, stir up in these women and men the gift of your Holy Spirit. Confirm their faith, guide their lives, empower them in their serving, give them patience in suffering, and bring them to everlasting life. Amen.”

Chair *pro tem* Peña thanked Presiding Bishop Hanson for his report and noted that, under the rules of the assembly, the report of the presiding bishop was now referred to the Reference and Counsel Committee.

Report of the Credentials Committee

Reference: 2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section I, pages 9 and 33.

Chair *pro tem* Carlos E. Peña called upon Mr. David A. Ullrich, vice chair of the Credentials Committee, for the committee’s report. Mr. Ullrich reported that, as of 7:05 A.M., 986 voting members had registered. Chair *pro tem* Peña then returned the chair to Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson.

Organization of the Churchwide Assembly: Constitution of Assembly Committees

Reference: 2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section I, pages 9 and 33.

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson called attention to the committees assisting the assembly in its work. He explained that the Nominating Committee had been elected by previous Churchwide Assemblies. The Committee of Reference and Counsel and the Memorials Committee were appointed by the Church Council as required by the bylaws of

this church. In the absence of objection, the chair declared these committees authorized and constituted.

Memorials Committee

Mr. Karl D. Anderson, *co-chair*
Pr. Ellen I. Arthur
Ms. Faith A. Ashton
Ms. Melba Bangert
Bp. Robert D. Berg
Ms. Andrea L. Dubler
Mr. Barry R. Herr
Pr. Sherman S. Martell

Bp. Donald J. McCoid
Pr. Diane “Dee” H. Pederson, *co-chair*
Ms. Esther Prabhakar
Pr. John C. Richter
Mr. Robert A. Sandoval
Mr. Nelvin Voss
Pr. Mary B. Zurell

Nominating Committee

Mr. David H. Black
Pr. Daniel B. Bollman
Pr. Clark K. Cary
Ms. Rita J. Dudley
Ms. Bonnie J. Earp
Ms. Virginia K. Frantz
Pr. Stephen R. Herr
Ms. Cheryl L. Hollich, *chair*
Mr. Stephen L. Knowles

Pr. Charles R. Lane
Pr. Darrel O. Lundby
Mr. Christopher J. Mehling
Pr. Raymond A. Miller
Ms. Beverly A. Peterson
Mr. Edward Wang
Mr. Daniel F. Wilson
Pr. Catherine A. Ziel

Committee of Reference and Counsel

Bp. Paul. J. Blom
Pr. Kevin C. Clementson
Pr. Joseph G. Crippen
Bp. Andrea DeGroot-Nesdahl
Pr. Jonathan L. Eilert, *co-chair*
Ms. Suzanne Gibson
Mr. Mark S. Helmke
Pr. David E. Jensen

Pr. Larry C. Kassebaum
Pr. Rosa M. Key
Mr. Aaron Kjelland
Ms. Jessica M. McKee
Mr. Ron Pittman
Ms. W. Jeanne Rapp
Mr. Rodney G. Schofield
Ms. Phyllis L. Wallace, *co-chair*

Constitution of Additional Committees

Reference: 2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section I, page 33

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson reminded the assembly that the rules adopted in Plenary Session One provided for additional committees to assist in the work of the assembly. Hearing no objection, he declared the following committees to be duly authorized and constituted.

Staff Planning Committee

Pr. Lowell G. Almen
Bp. Mark S. Hanson
Ms. Kristi S. Bangert
Mr. John R. Brooks
Pr. Michael L. Burk
Pr. Ruth E. Hamilton
Ms. Ava Martin

Ms. Mary Beth Nowak, *assembly manager*
Pr. Paul A. Schreck
Pr. Eric C. Shafer
Ms. Myrna J. Sheie, *chair*
Ms. Sonia C. Solomonsen
Mr. Scott C. Weidler

Local Arrangements Committee

Mr. Kenneth F. Aicher
 Mr. Norman Figy
 Ms. Judy Foxworthy
 Pr. Donald D. Johnson
 Mr. Jerry Johnson
 Ms. Mary Johnson
 Ms. Pat Bailey Lemesh
 Mr. Fred More, *co-chair*

Ms. Susan More, *co-chair*
 Ms. Val Neuhart
 Ms. Mary Beth Nowak, *staff*
 Mr. William Pohlad
 Pr. Roger H. Prehn
 Pr. Thomas L. "Tom" Weitzel
 Pr. Peter J. Zieg

Worship Committee

Pr. Lowell G. Almen
 Pr. Michael L. Burk, *director for worship*
 Bp. Mark S. Hanson

Ms. Myrna J. Sheie
 Mr. Scott C. Weidler, *music coordinator*

Agenda Committee

Pr. Lowell G. Almen
 Mr. Carlos E. Peña
 Bp. Mark S. Hanson, *chair*

Pr. Charles S. Miller
 Pr. Kathie Bender Schwich
 Ms. Myrna J. Sheie

Credentials Committee

Pr. Lowell G. Almen, *ex officio chair*
 Mr. David A. Ullrich, *vice chair*
 Ms. Laura Starr, *registrar*

Elections Committee

Mr. Phillip H. Harris, *chair*
 Ms. Deborah K. Myers
 Ms. C. Loraine Shields, *secretary*

Pr. Paul A. Schreck
 Mr. David A. Ullrich
 Ms. Elisabeth C. Wittman, *vice chair*

Minutes Committee

Pr. Lowell G. Almen, *ex officio chair*
 Mr. N. Keith Fry, *editor*
 Pr. Susan L. Gamelin
 Pr. Ruth E. Hamilton, *vice chair*
 Pr. James G. Krauser
 Pr. Thomas E. McKee

Pr. Richard E. Mueller
 Pr. Karl J. Nelson
 Pr. William J. Sappenfield
 Pr. Paul A. Schreck
 Pr. Leslie G. Svendsen
 Ms. Carolyn Thomas

Ad Hoc Committee on the ELCA Studies on Sexuality Recommendations

In addition to these committees, the adopted rules provided for additional committees to be established by the chair. An *ad hoc* committee to process amendments to the proposed recommendations related to the ELCA Studies on Sexuality, as authorized by Part Ten of the rules, included the following members:

Ms. Judy Biffle, member of the Church Council, *chair*
 Pr. Joseph G. Crippen, member of the Church Council
 Pr. Jonathan L. Eilert, member of the Church Council
 Pr. J. Paul Rajashekar, member of the Church Council
 Ms. Norma J. Hirsch, member of the Church Council
 Bp. Dean W. Nelson, member of the Conference of Bishops
 Pr. James M. Childs, director for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality

Pr. Stanley N. Olson, executive director of the Division for Ministry
Pr. Rebecca S. Larson, executive director of the Division for Church in Society

The chair stressed that the role of this committee would be to help voting members do their work. Absent objection, he declared this to be a duly constituted and authorized committee of the assembly.

Report of the Memorials Committee

Reference: *2005 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section VI, pages 1–111.

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson introduced the co-chairs of the Memorials Committee, the Rev. Diane “Dee” H. Pederson and Mr. Karl D. Anderson, who gave the initial report of the committee. The presiding bishop noted that consideration of memorials not included in the *en bloc* recommendation of the committee would begin in Plenary Session Three.

Pr. Pederson reported that the committee had received 196 memorials from synods, which represented 123 more memorials than had been received by the 2003 Churchwide Assembly. She reported that the committee had been working since May. Mr. Anderson reviewed the work of the committee and called the assembly’s attention to Section VI of the *2005 Pre-Assembly Report*. Mr. Anderson explained that the report of the Memorials Committee represented the committee’s recommendations to the Churchwide Assembly for action to be taken by the assembly. He reminded members of the 10:45 A.M. deadline for requesting that individual memorials be removed from *en bloc* consideration.

Pr. Pederson explained that memorials that addressed the same topic had been grouped by the Memorials Committee in order to facilitate discussion by the assembly. She commented that, within categories, the memorials reflected the diversity within the ELCA, and pointed out that in certain cases one synod may have requested an action directly opposed to that requested by another synod. She also explained the rationale for those memorials considered *en bloc* and those considered separately. She further clarified that, where the assembly was already slated to discuss a given topic, the Memorials Committee hoped that the assembly’s decisions concerning those topics would serve as the response to the individual memorials related to those subjects.

The assembly expressed its appreciation to the Memorials Committee with applause.

2006–2007 Budget Proposal: First Presentation

Reference: *2005 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section IV, pages 79–99

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson turned the chair over to Vice President Carlos E. Peña, who invited the Rev. Charles S. Miller, executive for administration in the Office of the Presiding Bishop, and Ms. Linda J. Brown, chair of the Budget and Finance Committee of the Church Council, to offer the first presentation of the 2006–2007 budget proposal.

Ms. Brown stated that one of the duties of the Churchwide Assembly was to adopt a budget for the churchwide organization. She explained that the process was described in Section I of the *2005 Pre-Assembly Report* and that there would be three opportunities in the course of the assembly to consider the budget. The first was the current presentation, the second would be at hearings on the budget following Plenary Session Three, and the third would be in Plenary Session Ten.

Ms. Brown noted that discussion of the budget would take place at the same time as discussion of proposals for restructuring because the two topics were related. She reminded

the assembly that proposed amendments to the budget would need to be submitted no later than 8:30 A.M. on Friday, August 12.

Pr. Miller related the budget to the strategic planning process that had begun in December 2001 under Presiding Bishop Hanson's leadership. He pointed out that the process involved the assumptions that strategic planning:

- shapes ELCA discipleship and stewardship;
- connects the nature and purpose of this church with the needs of the world and this church's resources;
- is creative, dynamic, prophetic, objective, analytical, and intuitive;
- helps us evaluate and nurture the work of the church;
- is communal;
- provides a common understanding for our life together.

Pr. Miller called attention to recommendations concerning the strategic planning process that appeared in the *2005 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section IV, pages 1–3. He commented that the proposals would help to fulfill directives emerging from the strategic planning process. They reflected, he reported, “a deep commitment to cooperation, coordination, and collaboration.”

He noted that 10 percent of the proposed budget would support multicultural ministries and that another 60 percent would be devoted to evangelical outreach, global mission, and education. Under the proposed budget, he said, the ELCA would establish 40 new congregations in 2006 and would support ministries in 70 countries.

At the same time, Pr. Miller remarked, “It would be unfair to suggest that all is well with the churchwide budget.” He pointed out that the present ELCA churchwide budget of \$81,000,000 was virtually identical to the 1989 churchwide budget. “The current fund has not grown at all in 17 years,” he said. He also noted that, while fixed costs continued to rise, “critical areas of ministry” had suffered reductions.

Chair *pro tem* Peña opened the floor for questions. Hearing none, he reminded the assembly once again of the deadline for submitting amendments to the proposed budget.

Report of the Nominating Committee

Reference: *2005 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section VII, pages 1–238.

Chair *pro tem* Carlos E. Peña called on Ms. Cheryl L. Hollich, chair of the Nominating Committee, for the committee's report. Ms. Hollich informed the assembly that the committee had met April 22–23, 2005, and that the members had performed their work with great care. She commented that the committee “faced a substantial task” because its work required the preparation of two different slates of nominees: one to serve if the new organizational structure were approved by the assembly and a second if the present structure were retained. She pointed out that floor nominations were permitted and would have to be submitted to the Nominations Desk by 2:25 P.M., Wednesday, August 10. She also noted that nominations for board positions required both the signature of the nominator and those of 10 additional voting members, while nominations for the Church Council and for committees required the signature of the nominator and those of 20 additional voting members.

Chair *pro tem* Peña thanked Ms. Hollich for the report.

Recess

Chair *pro tem* Carlos E. Peña called upon Secretary Lowell G. Almen for announcements. Secretary Almen announced that a service of Holy Communion would begin at 11:00 A.M., to be followed by lunch in the Grand Ballroom. He also noted that prayer requests could be posted on the prayer wall in the worship center in the Crystal Ballroom.

Ms. Stephanie Olson [East-Central Synod of Wisconsin] asked why floor nominations were permitted for some elected offices and not for others. Secretary Almen explained that bylaws set limitations on the numbers of persons elected from individual synods and regions and that the Nominating Committee needed to exercise care in making sure that those limits were honored.

The Rev. Ronald W. Moe-Lobeda [Northwest Washington Synod] requested prayers for those who mourned a youth minister and his wife who had been killed in an automobile accident Monday night.

Chair *pro tem* Peña called upon Mr. Karl D. Anderson, member of the Church Council, to lead the assembly in closing prayer. Plenary Session Two of the ninth Churchwide Assembly was declared in recess at 10:29 A.M. Eastern Daylight Time.

Plenary Session Three

Tuesday, August 9, 2005

1:30 P.M. – 4:00 P.M.

The third plenary session of the ninth Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America was called to order at 1:34 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time by the Rev. Mark S. Hanson, presiding bishop, at the Orlando World Center, Orlando, Florida. He expressed gratitude for those who had been leading worship at the assembly, pointing out that their names appeared in *Today's Docket*.

Bible Study

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson called upon the Rev. Mark A. Powell, professor of New Testament at Trinity Lutheran Seminary in Columbus, Ohio, to lead the assembly in Bible study.

Pr. Powell recalled an incident at his seminary in which a woman preparing for the ordained ministry was visibly upset. When he overheard her saying “even the children,” he understood her concern. It was the day after Ash Wednesday, and, for the first time as a worship leader, the woman had marked the people’s foreheads with a cross of ashes and had reminded her congregation that they all would die—even the children.

Noting that the theme for the assembly was “Marked with the Cross of Christ Forever,” Pr. Powell prefaced his discussion of the Gospel of Mark with the question, “What does being marked with the cross of Christ mean for us?” He repeated Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s statement, “When Jesus Christ calls a person, he bids him come and die.” He asked those present how they would respond to that call.

The story of Mark was bracketed by a baptism and a cross, he pointed out. At Jesus’ baptism the heavens were torn open, the Spirit entered Jesus, and the voice of God proclaimed Jesus to be God’s own Son. At the crucifixion the events of Jesus’ baptism were echoed as the curtain in the temple was torn, Jesus’ spirit went out of him, and the voice of a Roman centurion proclaimed Jesus the Son of God. Thus his baptism is like his death, and his death is like his baptism. At Baptism Christians are marked with a cross, a sign of death. The Apostle Paul teaches that Baptism is not just the beginning of something new, it is also the end of something old, Pr. Powell observed. The life we live in between Baptism and death was marked by the cross of Christ at our Baptism, and will be marked with the cross of Christ at our death.

Pr. Powell proposed that Baptism and death are moments when things get torn asunder, when barriers that separate us from God get ripped apart. Baptism “rips open” the barriers between God and people, and washes us clean of sins. He said, “I may be only dust, but I’m baptized dust.” And at death, God will remove the remaining barriers between us.

Pr. Powell offered three answers to the question, “What does being marked with the Cross of Christ mean for us?” First, he said, let us be God’s children reconciled to God by grace alone. Second, we are to love God with our hearts, souls, and minds and our neighbors as ourselves. And if we are unable to do that, he commented, we can at least practice being someday the people we will be. Finally, we are to be united by what God has done for us. Baptism is to be our primary identification.

Illustrating his theme, Pr. Powell said, “In heaven I may not be male; I probably will not be white. I probably won’t be American. I might not even be Lutheran! But here’s the point, which I hope will be non-controversial: I know that in heaven I will be baptized. And even then—especially then—I know I will be marked with the cross of Christ, because that is forever.”

As a body, the assembly read Romans 6:3–5: “Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.”

In the final section of the Bible study Pr. Powell led the assembly in a guided visualization exercise. He invited the members of the assembly to close their eyes and focus on this text in silent meditation. He asked that members imagine Baptism as a doorway. On one side was life apart from God; on the other, new life in Christ. Going through the door, people would be changed; some things would not survive, he posited. Those things would be dead, and they would stay dead. He asked, “What is it that would not survive this transition? What would be left behind? How will you be changed?” Then he asked that members contemplate what was new in the new life.

Pr. Powell called upon his listeners to discuss among themselves two questions: “What did you leave behind when you went through that door?” and “What did you find to be new on the other side?” After the discussion, Pr. Powell led the assembly in prayer.

Recognition of Seminary Presidents

At the conclusion of the Bible study, Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson noted that Professor Mark A. Powell was one of the almost 180 excellent teaching theologians on the faculties of the eight seminaries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Presiding Bishop Hanson then introduced the presidents of the seminaries to the assembly: the Rev. Richard H. Bliese of Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota; the Rev. Phyllis B. Anderson of Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, who was unable to be present; the Rev. James K. Echols, president of the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago; the Rev. Duane H. Larson, president of Wartburg Theological Seminary in Dubuque, Iowa; the Rev. Mark R. Ramseth, president of Trinity Lutheran Seminary in Columbus, Ohio; the Rev. H. Frederick Reisz Jr., president of the Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary in Columbia, South Carolina; the Rev. Philip D. W. Krey, president of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia; and the Rev. Michael L. Cooper-White of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.

Introduction of the Renewing Worship Proposal

Reference: 2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section IV, pages 11–17; Section V, pages 45–47.

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson called to the stage the Rev. Michael L. Burk, director for worship in the Division for Congregational Ministries; the Rev. M. Wyvetta Bullock, former executive director of the Division for Congregational Ministries and current Executive Assistant to the Presiding Bishop for Leadership Development; and Ms. Lorraine S. Brugh, member of the Renewing Worship planning committee. The three were introduced to the assembly and were asked to present the Renewing Worship proposal.

A video narrated by Pr. Burk gave an overview of the Renewing Worship process and materials. The video noted that there was a variety of worship practices within ELCA congregations and focused on a goal of worshipping as “the whole church.” The video

explained that Renewing Worship had been a five-year project engaged in developing a constellation of resources to assist worship in congregations of all kinds, ages, and cultures. The culmination of the project would be a new book of worship and other materials to serve the people of God in their worship life “with the whole church.”

After the video presentation, Pr. Bullock provided background to the proposal. She reviewed the worship resources that had served the ELCA and explained that the Renewing Worship project had been initiated to help this church, in all its diversity, continue to deepen its worship life. She noted that the development of the materials had been marked by numerous reviews and hearings.

Ms. Brugh told assembly members that the development process had involved a broad spectrum of people throughout this church. The goal was a product that would bring forward the “best thinking of this church.” She commented that the project made use of new technologies to develop resources in a variety of formats. She then described the development process in detail. Pr. Burk explained that the assembly would be asked to affirm a process for the continued development and production of the new resources. A study guide entitled “With the Whole Church” would be central to the next phase of the project, according to Pr. Burk. Following the action of the assembly, a number of reviews would be part of the final preparation of the resources. This process would conclude with approval by the Church Council of the new worship book. At the conclusion of his presentation, Pr. Burk displayed graphics revealing the proposed design of the book cover and its title: *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*. The worship book was to be deep red in color with an embossed design of a cross with four leaves.

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson invited questions from the floor for clarification purposes.

The Rev. Kent A. Mechler [Southeastern Iowa Synod] commented that the development of the resource was a work in progress and that there was no completed resource to look at to see what the assembly was voting on. He asked if, according to the process foreseen for the production of the resources, this were the last occasion a Churchwide Assembly would have to vote on the new worship book before its publication, and whether future decisions would be made by the Church Council or someone else.

Pr. Burk described how the materials review process had been developed, based in part on procedures of predecessor bodies, and he outlined the input of teaching theologians, pastors, and church musicians for guidance. After this review, the materials would go to the Conference of Bishops and the Church Council. He recounted the process by which *Lutheran Book of Worship* had been approved in 1976, two years before its publication, and he drew parallels with the new materials. He answered Pr. Mechler’s question affirmatively, but stressed that this did not preclude a finished resource being given to a future Churchwide Assembly for a vote on commending it to this church.

Mr. Joseph Baxter [Delaware-Maryland Synod] asked if the resources would be available electronically. He was told that they would be. Pr. Burk reiterated the importance the developers of the project saw for making available both print and electronic media for the various resources.

The Rev. Kenneth D. Scheck II [Northeastern Ohio Synod] asked how a copy of the informational video could be obtained. Pr. Burk replied that it could be downloaded from the ELCA Renewing Worship Web site.

Mr. Eric D. Wong [Northeastern Minnesota Synod] inquired about the rationale for encouraging weekly Eucharist.

Pr. Burk indicated that the new materials would still include a Service of the Word. In addressing the rationale, he responded that the project was grounded in the sacramental practices statement, “The Use of the Means of Grace: A Statement on the Practice of Word and Sacrament,” that was adopted by the 1997 Churchwide Assembly. That statement holds up weekly celebration of Holy Communion as the norm, grounded in our confessional understanding. It did not, however, preclude congregations from deciding how often Holy Communion is celebrated.

Mr. Charles E. Kalthorn [Metropolitan New York Synod] commented that the texts in a Lutheran hymnal reflected how we praise and thank the Lord, so he wondered why Pr. Burk “felt it was not important that we look at the wording of the hymns.”

Pr. Burk replied that it was “profoundly important” to look at the wording of hymns. He pointed out that the pre-assembly materials had included a Web site link by which members could go to the Web and give input on the hymn texts. He also expressed his hope that the hearings to be held during the assembly would also inform the developers of the materials about voting members’ opinions. He noted that it would be difficult in a Churchwide Assembly to deliberate extensively over a particular text of a hymn.

Mr. Louis M. Hesse [Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod] observed that in attending worship services at Synod and Churchwide Assemblies and at the churchwide offices in Chicago, he had yet to witness the confession and absolution of sins as part of those services. He questioned whether in the new materials the forgiveness of sins would be “made such a minor part of our worship.”

Pr. Burk responded that consistently in the history of worship at Churchwide Assemblies there had been opportunities for confession and forgiveness, among other options, throughout the week’s services, as was also the practice at the Lutheran Center. He stated that new materials would in no way de-emphasize this church’s historic commitment not only to confession of sins but also to hearing the words of God’s grace in absolution. Pr. Burk further remarked that the variety of practices in the new resources reflected the diverse traditions within the ELCA, mentioning one of his parishes where the Brief Order for Confession and Forgiveness had been part of each week’s celebration of the Lord’s Supper.

Ms. Susanne L. M. Ridenour [Delaware-Maryland Synod] asked for balance in the quest for diversity and inclusiveness. She urged that worship materials transcend individual concerns for “self” and “other,” and that developers find a way to be “transparent,” rather than be focused on “we’re going to include these people’s songs and those people’s songs.”

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson noted that hearings on the Renewing Worship project were scheduled following Plenary Session Three in preparation for the assembly’s consideration of the Renewing Worship recommendations in Plenary Session Four the following morning.

The assembly then sang the hymn, “God of Grace and God of Glory.”

Report of the Vice President and Church Council

Reference: *2005 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section IV, pages 1–99; Section V, pages 1–58; and Section IX, pages 1–69.

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson recognized Mr. Carlos E. Peña, vice president of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and chair of the Church Council, and asked him to give his report. The presiding bishop directed the assembly to Section IX of the *2005 Pre-Assembly Report*, where he said members could find a report of the actions taken by the Church Council over the course of the last biennium.

Emphasizing that the theme of the assembly was “Marked with the Cross of Christ Forever,” and was part of this church’s mission statement, Mr. Peña pointed out that, because members of this church were marked with the cross of Christ, they had a responsibility to all people with whom they shared this earth. He went on to stress that God was with the members of the assembly in their deliberations and that they did not “have the corner on the God market.” He urged members to keep that in mind throughout the assembly and to allow the Spirit to be their guide.

Vice President Peña thanked his fellow officers and the churchwide staff for their dedication and passion. He thanked the voting members for their diligence in preparing and studying the *Pre-Assembly Report*. He also expressed gratitude to the members of the Church Council for their commitment and asked the assembly to recognize them for their efforts. The council members stood to the applause of the assembly. Mr. Peña referred to the ELCA constitution, which defines the Church Council as the board of directors of this church and the interim legislative authority responsible for carrying out the work of this church between Churchwide Assemblies. He noted that the council had fulfilled its responsibilities as it responded to the actions of the 2003 Churchwide Assembly and prepared for the 2005 Churchwide Assembly. He directed voting members’ attention to Sections IV and V of the *2005 Pre-Assembly Report*, which detailed the council’s recommendations to the assembly, and to Section IX, which contained a report of the council’s actions.

Mr. Peña called upon Ms. Janet K. Thompson, member of the Church Council and chair of the council’s Planning and Evaluation Committee, to present an overview of “Faithful Yet Changing: Design for Mission through the Churchwide Organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,” which Mr. Peña described as the council’s primary focus over the course of the biennium.

Ms. Thompson stated that she would be addressing the process, the goals, and the design and cultural changes integral to the proposal. She described the various constituencies that had been consulted in the process of developing the plan and outlined the work of the council in preparing a proposal for restructuring the churchwide organization. She commented that the first priority in restructuring was to accomplish the mission of the ELCA, aligning the plan with the five strategic directions and the four commitments for implementation. She listed three goals for the restructuring. First was integrating the work of parts of the organization that had similar responsibilities. Second was lifting up this church’s commitment to multicultural ministries. Third was to position the churchwide organization to do the things only it could do or those that it could do best.

Ms. Thompson then briefly described the proposed structure of program units, offices, and service units. She reminded the assembly that this was a proposal to restructure the churchwide organization only and that it did not apply to synods or congregations. She also noted that the restructuring process called for an ongoing review of the effectiveness of the proposed structures, along with reports to the Churchwide Assembly by the Church Council. She urged members’ enthusiastic support of the plan.

Mr. Peña remarked that, related to restructuring, there was a proposal for changes in the governance of this church and that the Church Council had also overseen this process. He thanked the members of this church who had participated in the surveys regarding the changes. He reported that the research had indicated that there were a number of strengths in the current system of governance, including its ability to foster wide participation. He expressed his feeling that the system had served this church well for 17 years. The feedback

also had revealed some weaknesses, however, including a perception that the system was “complicated, unresponsive, and confusing.” In spite of that, he asserted, the research had indicated that most members of this church were satisfied with the existing system of governance. Nonetheless, the council had determined that certain changes in governance would help strengthen this church for mission. He indicated that the proposed changes and the rationale for them could be found in Section IV, beginning on page 5. He stated that the changes pertained to the Churchwide Assembly, the Church Council, and the makeup of the boards and committees of the churchwide units. Mr. Peña expressed the council’s hope that these changes would foster an interdependent relationship among the three expressions of this church.

The vice president then reported that the council had made recommendations to the assembly concerning Renewing Worship, the ELCA Studies on Sexuality, the Arab and Middle Eastern Ministry Strategy, the African Descent Ministry Strategy, interim Eucharistic sharing with The United Methodist Church, the strategy for engagement in Israel and Palestine, budget proposals for 2006–2007, and proposed amendments to the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.

Mr. Peña concluded by recounting his recent visit to Palestine and the West Bank, describing it as a “life-altering experience.” He stated that whenever he felt weighed down, he remembered his brothers and sisters in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land, who were doing outstanding ministry under adverse conditions. He expressed his hope that voting members’ knowledge of these Christians’ struggles would give them a more global vision of this church’s mission. He remarked that it was easy to get bogged down in the issues before the assembly and thus to miss the bigger picture of what was happening among God’s people. He urged members to remember that they were all God’s children, and that “Marked with the cross of Christ, we are claimed, gathered, and sent for the sake of the world.”

Report of the Reference and Counsel Committee

Reference: *2005 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section VIII, pages 1–12.

The assembly received the initial report of the Reference and Counsel Committee, which was given by two members of the Church Council: Ms. Phyllis L. Wallace and the Rev. Jonathan L. Eilert, co-chairs of the committee.

Ms. Wallace described the matters that were the responsibility of the Reference and Counsel Committee, including reception of all proposed changes to the constitution and bylaws, along with any motions not germane to the stated business of the agenda of the assembly. In addition, she announced that the committee stood ready to provide technical assistance in preparing motions and proposals to facilitate the work of the assembly. She described the makeup of the 16-member committee, and informed the assembly that the committee would be assisted by various resource persons from task forces and committees and by ELCA officers and staff, as needed.

Ms. Wallace reported that the committee had held its organizational meeting on Monday, August 8, and that it would meet again in the afternoon. She reminded members of the pending deadline of 10:45 A.M., Wednesday, August 10, for submitting bylaw amendments and the one at 10:45 A.M., Thursday, August 11, for submitting non-germane resolutions. For additional information on the process, she referred members to the “Rules of Organization and Procedure,” Part Fourteen, “Amendments to Governing Documents,” *2005 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section I, pages 16–17.

Before turning to the next item of business, Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson announced that he had just received word of the death that morning of the Rev. Gerhard O. Forde, professor *emeritus* of theology at Luther Seminary, whom Bishop Hanson had quoted in his report.

Report of the Memorials Committee

Reference: *2005 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section VI

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson called upon the Rev. Diane “Dee” H. Pederson, co-chair of the Memorials Committee, to bring the report of that committee. Pr. Pederson directed members’ attention to Section VI of the *2005 Pre-Assembly Report*, in particular to the table of contents on page 1 of that section. She identified the memorials that voting members had requested be removed from *en bloc* consideration. They were:

- Category B4: HIV and AIDS Education
- Category C1: Jewish-Christian Relations
- Category E1: Renewing Worship
- Category E3: Licensed Lay Ministers
- Category E5: Exceptions to Ordinations in Unusual Circumstances
- Category E7: Ratification of Policy and Governing Documents
- Category E18: Deaf Ministry

Additionally, the committee had recommended that five other categories be considered separately. They were:

- Category B1: World Hunger
- Category B2: Social Statement on Bioethical Research
- Category B5: Refugees, Asylum Seekers, and Immigrants
- Category E16: Faithful Conversation about Scripture
- Category E19: Mission-Support Covenant

Category B1: World Hunger

Reference: *2005 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section VI, pages 12–19.

Fifteen synods adopted essentially identical memorials on world hunger. The Model Memorial is printed here, with changes noted by synod.

Model Memorial

WHEREAS, 800,000,000 people worldwide are chronically undernourished and 1,200,000,000 people live on less than \$1.00 per day; and

WHEREAS, 30,000,000 people in the United States, including 13,000,000 children, cannot afford an adequate and balanced diet; and

WHEREAS, 189 countries, including the United States, have committed to cutting in half extreme hunger by the year 2015 by establishing the Millennium Development Goals; and

WHEREAS, advocacy organizations, like Bread for the World and the Institute for Food and Development Policy (FoodFirst), have established that there is a sufficient food supply to feed the earth’s population; and

WHEREAS, leading economists now argue that ending chronic hunger is an attainable goal for the first time in human history; and

WHEREAS, the Holy Scriptures are very clear in numerous passages that God has compassion on the poor (for example, Jeremiah 22:15-16 and Luke 6:20-21) and that it is God’s will that the hungry be fed (for example, Psalm 146:5-7 and Matthew 25:34-35); and

WHEREAS, the Church of Jesus Christ is uniquely equipped by its identity and mission to be the leaven that stirs the people and nations of the world to end chronic hunger; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the [Synod Name] make ending hunger a core conviction of its ministry and mission; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this synod memorialize the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in all of its expressions— congregations, synods, and churchwide —to make ending hunger a core conviction for this church at the 2005 Churchwide Assembly; and be it further

RESOLVED, that what ending hunger as a core conviction means for a congregation is that as a regular dimension of its ministry and mission it:

- engages in local efforts to feed the hungry and promote community economic development;
- initiates with other congregations, especially with full-communion partner congregations, advocacy of laws and policies to end hunger in the local community;
- supports advocacy of laws and policies to end hunger on the state, national, and global levels;
- contributes generously to the World Hunger Appeal of the ELCA;

and be it further

RESOLVED, that what ending hunger as a core conviction means for a synod is that as a regular dimension of its ministry and mission it:

- equips congregations in their efforts to feed the hungry and promote community economic development on the local level;
- initiates with the leaders of other judicatories, especially with full-communion partners, advocacy of laws and policies to end hunger on the state, national, and global levels;
- encourages congregations to contribute generously to the World Hunger Appeal of the ELCA;

and be it further

RESOLVED, that what ending hunger as a core conviction means for the churchwide organization is that as a regular dimension of its ministry and mission it:

- equips congregations in their efforts to feed the hungry and promote community economic development on the local level;
- supports synods in their efforts to end hunger on the state, national, and global levels;
- initiates with the leaders of other church bodies, especially with full-communion partners, advocacy of laws and policies to end hunger on the national and global levels;
- instructs the leaders of the ELCA World Hunger Appeal to give leadership to these efforts;
- continues to undertake relief efforts and implement sustainable development in partnership with Lutheran World Relief and in cooperation with other people of faith in situations of extreme hunger;

and be it further

RESOLVED, that this synod memorialize the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to make ending hunger a core conviction of this church in the strategic planning process leading to any possible churchwide restructuring proposal; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this synod memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to engage in a process together with the Lutheran World Federation and bring a proposal to the Lutheran World Federation's Eleventh Assembly to make ending hunger a core conviction of the Lutheran World Federation, just as the Lutheran World Federation's Sixth Assembly at Dar es Salaam in 1977 declared the ending of apartheid in South Africa a matter of *status confessionis*.

1. Northwest Washington Synod (1B) [2005 Memorial]

Adopted the “model memorial” printed above, with the following changes:

- All WHEREAS paragraphs are deleted
- Second RESOLVED is replaced with:
 - “RESOLVED, that this synod memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to make ending hunger a core conviction for this church in all of its expressions;”
- Third, fourth, and fifth RESOLVED paragraphs are replaced with:
 - “RESOLVED, that what ending hunger as a core conviction means for each expression of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is that, as a regular dimension of ministry and mission, it:
 1. Equips and encourages congregations to engage in efforts to feed the hungry and promote community economic development;
 2. Initiates with other congregations, judicatories, synods, and church bodies, especially with full-communion partners, advocacy of laws and policies to end hunger at community, state, national, and global levels and supports such laws and policies as apply in its area of influence;
 3. Encourages all expressions of this church to support the ELCA World Hunger Appeal and that the leaders of the ELCA World Hunger Appeal be directed to give leadership to these efforts;
 4. Continues to undertake relief efforts and implement sustainable development in partnership with Lutheran World Relief, the Lutheran World Federation, and other organizations and in cooperation with other people of faith in situations of extreme hunger;”
- Sixth RESOLVED replaces “Church Council” with “2005 Churchwide Assembly”
- Sixth RESOLVED deletes “of this church” after “core conviction”
- Seventh RESOLVED inserts “2005 Churchwide Assembly of the” before “Evangelical Lutheran Church in America”
- Seventh RESOLVED changes “and bring a proposal” with “to bring a proposal”
- Seventh RESOLVED changes “at Dar es Salaam” with “in Dar es Salaam”
- Seventh RESOLVED replaces “a matter of *status confessionis*” with “a core conviction”

2. Southwestern Washington Synod (1C) [2005 Memorial]

Adopted the “model memorial” printed above, with the following changes:

- First WHEREAS replaces “800,000,000” with “840,000,000”
- Seventh WHEREAS is deleted
- First RESOLVED is deleted
- Second RESOLVED replaces “to make” with “to likewise declare”
- Third, fourth, and fifth RESOLVED paragraphs are deleted
- Sixth RESOLVED replaces “Church Council” with “2005 Churchwide Assembly”
- Sixth RESOLVED inserts “to direct that the Church Council” after “Evangelical Lutheran Church in America”
- Seventh RESOLVED inserts “2005 Churchwide Assembly of the” before “Evangelical Lutheran Church in America”

3. Northeastern Minnesota Synod (3E) [2005 Memorial]

Adopted the “model memorial” printed above, with the following changes:

- First two WHEREAS paragraphs are combined into one
- Second RESOLVED replaces “in all its expressions” with “and all its expressions”

- Third, fourth, and fifth RESOLVED paragraphs are replaced with:
 “RESOLVED, that what ending hunger as a “core conviction” means for each of these expressions of this church is that as a regular dimension of ministry and mission it:
 - equips and encourages congregations to engage in efforts to feed the hungry and promote community economic development;
 - initiates with other congregations, judicatories, synods, and church bodies—especially with full-communion partners—advocacy of laws and policies to end hunger at community, state, national, and global levels, and supports such laws and policies;
 - encourages all expressions of this church to support the ELCA World Hunger Appeal and that the leaders of the World Hunger Appeal be directed to give leadership to these efforts;
 - continues to undertake relief efforts and implement sustainable development in partnership with Lutheran World Relief, the Lutheran World Federation, and other organizations, and in cooperation with other people of faith in situations of extreme hunger;”
- Sixth RESOLVED replaces “Church Council” with “2005 Churchwide Assembly”
- Seventh RESOLVED changes “at Dar es Salaam” with “in Dar es Salaam”
- Seventh RESOLVED replaces “a matter of *status confessionis*” with “a core conviction”

4. Saint Paul Area Synod (3H) [2005 Memorial]

Adopted the “model memorial” printed above.

5. Central States Synod (4B) [2005 Memorial]

Adopted the “model memorial” printed above, with the following changes:

- First five WHEREAS paragraphs are replaced with:
 “WHEREAS, in a world where 800,000,000 people worldwide are chronically undernourished and 1,200,000,000 people live on less than \$1.00 per day, we know that world hunger is both a problem and an opportunity;
 “WHEREAS, in our country where 30,000,000 people, including 13,000,000 children, cannot afford an adequate and balanced diet, we are both a part of the problem and a part of the solution;
 “WHEREAS, the United States, by establishing the Millennium Development Goals along with 188 other countries, has committed itself to cutting extreme hunger in half by the year 2015;
 “WHEREAS, the work of advocacy organizations like Bread for the World and the Institute for Food and Development Policy (FoodFirst) has established that there is a sufficient food supply to feed the earth’s population. Many leading economists now argue that ending chronic hunger is an attainable goal for the first time in human history;”
- Sixth and seventh WHEREAS paragraphs are combined into one, and “people” is replaced with “peoples”
- First RESOLVED is replaced with:
 “RESOLVED, that the Central States Synod make ending hunger a core conviction of its ministry and mission, that we recommit ourselves to encouraging our members and congregations to give \$6.00 per member to the World Hunger and Disaster Appeal, and that each congregation be encouraged to name a congregational hunger advocate, and that these names be reported to the World Hunger Advocate team member from that congregation’s area ministry;”
- Third RESOLVED becomes numbered subsection (1) under second RESOLVED
- Third RESOLVED replaces “RESOLVED, that what ending hunger as a core conviction means for a congregation is that as a regular dimension of its ministry and mission it”

with “1. What ending hunger as a core conviction in a congregation means is that, as a regular dimension and mission of the congregation, it:”

- Third RESOLVED, point (a), replaces “promote” with “promotes”
- Fourth RESOLVED becomes numbered subsection (2) under second RESOLVED
- Fourth RESOLVED replaces “RESOLVED, that what ending hunger as a core conviction means for a synod is that as a regular dimension of its ministry and mission it” with “2. What ending hunger as a core conviction in a synod means is that, as a regular dimension of its ministry and mission, it”
- Fourth RESOLVED adds a point (d), “makes a yearly provision for an offering to the World Hunger Appeal of the ELCA;”
- Fifth RESOLVED becomes numbered subsection (3) under second RESOLVED
- Fifth RESOLVED replaces “RESOLVED, that what ending hunger as a core conviction means for the churchwide organization is that as a regular dimension of its ministry and mission it” with “3. What ending hunger as a core conviction for the churchwide organization means is that, as a regular dimension of its ministry and mission, it continues to”
- Fifth RESOLVED, point (a), replaces “equips” with “equip”
- Fifth RESOLVED, point (a), replaces “on the local level” with “at the local level”
- Fifth RESOLVED, point (b), replaces “supports” with “support”
- Fifth RESOLVED, point (c), replaces “initiates” with “initiate”
- Fifth RESOLVED, point (d), replaces “instructs” with “instruct”
- Fifth RESOLVED, point (d), inserts “continued” before “leadership”
- Fifth RESOLVED, point (e), deletes “continues to” before “undertake”
- Fifth RESOLVED, point (e), inserts “the Lutheran World Federation, other international partners, companion synods,” after “Lutheran World Relief”
- Sixth RESOLVED deletes “of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America” after “Church Council”
- Seventh RESOLVED inserts “2005 Churchwide Assembly of the” before “Evangelical Lutheran Church in America”
- Seventh RESOLVED deletes “in 1977” after “Dar es Salaam”

6. Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod (4D) [2005 Memorial]

Adopted the “model memorial” printed above, with the following changes:

- Fifth RESOLVED, point (c), inserts “state,” before “national”
- Sixth RESOLVED replaces “leading to any possible churchwide restructuring proposal;” with “and the subsequent restructuring;”

7. Southwestern Texas Synod (4E) [2005 Memorial]

Adopted the “model memorial” printed above, with the following changes:

- Seventh WHEREAS replaces “people” with “peoples”
- First and second RESOLVED paragraphs are replaced with:

“RESOLVED, that this synod memorialize the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in all of its expressions—congregations, synods, and churchwide—to likewise declare ending hunger a core conviction for this church at the 2005 Churchwide Assembly;”
- Third and fourth RESOLVED paragraphs are deleted
- Fifth RESOLVED inserts commas after the second “that” and after “mission”
- Fifth RESOLVED, point (c), changes the commas to dashes

- Sixth and seventh RESOLVED paragraphs are replaced with:
 “RESOLVED, that this synod memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to engage in a process together with the Lutheran World Federation and bring a proposal to the Lutheran World Federation’s Eleventh Assembly to declare ending hunger a core conviction of the Lutheran World Federation.”

8. Metropolitan Chicago Synod (5A) [2005 Memorial]

Adopted the “model memorial” printed above, with the following changes:

- Second WHEREAS deletes “in the United States”
- Seventh WHEREAS replaces “people” with “peoples”
- Second RESOLVED is replaced with:
 “RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Chicago Synod Assembly memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to make ending hunger a core conviction for this church in all its expressions—congregations, synods, and churchwide;”
- Third RESOLVED, point (c), inserts “(for example, through the initiatives of Bread for the World and the Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs)” after “levels”
- Fourth RESOLVED, point (b), inserts “(for example, through the initiatives of Bread for the World and the Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs)” after “levels”
- Fifth RESOLVED, point (c), inserts “(for example, through the initiatives of Bread for the World and the Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs)” after “levels”
- Fifth RESOLVED inserts an additional point between points (c) and (d), reading, “encourages seminaries to include advocacy of justice for the hungry as a focus of curriculum;”
- Fifth RESOLVED, point (d) inserts “continued” before “leadership”
- Fifth RESOLVED, point (e) inserts “the Lutheran World Federation,” after “Lutheran World Relief,”
- Sixth RESOLVED is deleted
- Seventh RESOLVED inserts “2005 Churchwide Assembly of the” before “Evangelical”

9. Northwest Synod of Wisconsin (5H) [2005 Memorial]

Adopted the “model memorial” printed above, with the following changes:

- First two WHEREAS paragraphs are combined into one
- Additional WHEREAS inserted after the seventh WHEREAS, reading:
 “WHEREAS, what ending hunger as a ‘core conviction’ means for each of the expressions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is that as a regular dimension of ministry and mission it:
 - equips and encourages congregations to engage in efforts to feed the hungry and promote community economic development;
 - initiates with other congregations, judicatories, synods, and church bodies, especially with full-communion partners, advocacy of laws and policies to end hunger on the community, state, national, and global levels and supports such laws and policies;
 - encourages all expressions of this church to support the ELCA World Hunger Appeal and that the leaders of the Hunger Appeal be directed to give leadership to these efforts;
 - continues to undertake relief efforts and implement sustainable development in partnership with Lutheran World Relief, the Lutheran World Federation, and other organizations and in cooperation with other people of faith in situations of extreme hunger;”
- Second RESOLVED is replaced with:

“RESOLVED, that this synod memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to make ending hunger a core conviction for this church in all expressions:”

- Third through seventh RESOLVED paragraphs are replaced with:
“RESOLVED, that this synod memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to engage in a process together with the Lutheran World Federation and bring a proposal to the Lutheran World Federation’s Eleventh Assembly to make ending hunger a core conviction of the Lutheran World Federation, just as the Lutheran World Federation’s Sixth Assembly in Dar es Salaam in 1977 declared the ending of apartheid in South Africa a core conviction.”

10. La Crosse Area Synod (5L) [2005 Memorial]

Adopted the “model memorial” printed above, with the following changes:

- Seventh WHEREAS replaces “people” with “peoples”
- Second RESOLVED is replaced with:
“RESOLVED, that this Synod Assembly memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America make ending hunger a core conviction for this church in all its expressions— congregations, synods, and churchwide organization;”
- Third RESOLVED, point (a), inserts “compatible with sound environmental policies;” after “development”
- Fourth RESOLVED, point (a), inserts “compatible with sound environmental policies” after “development”
- Fifth RESOLVED, point (a), inserts “compatible with sound environmental policies” after “development”
- Fifth RESOLVED, point (d), inserts “continued” before “leadership”
- Sixth and seventh RESOLVED paragraphs are replaced with:
“RESOLVED, that this Synod Assembly direct the La Crosse Area Synod Council to forward the following two requests to the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for consideration and possible action:
 - to include the core conviction of ending hunger as a part of any churchwide restructuring proposal; and
 - to bring a proposal to the Lutheran World Federation’s Eleventh Assembly to make ending hunger a core conviction of the Lutheran World Federation.”

11. New England Synod (7B) [2005 Memorial]

Adopted the “model memorial” printed above, with the following changes:

- Deletes all WHEREAS paragraphs
- Third RESOLVED, point (c), inserts “(for example, through the initiatives of Bread for the World and the Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs);” after “levels”
- Fourth RESOLVED, point (b), inserts “(for example, through the initiatives of Bread for the World and the Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs);” after “levels”
- Fifth RESOLVED, point (c), inserts “(for example, through the initiatives of Bread for the World and the Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs);” after “levels”
- Fifth RESOLVED, additional point inserted between points (c) and (d), reading: “encourages seminaries to include advocacy of justice for the hungry as a focus of curriculum;”
- Fifth RESOLVED, point (e) inserts “the Lutheran World Federation,” after “Lutheran World Relief,”

- Seventh RESOLVED is replaced with:
 “RESOLVED, that this synod memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to engage in a process together with the Lutheran World Federation and bring a proposal to the Lutheran World Federation’s Eleventh Assembly to make ending hunger a core conviction of the Lutheran World Federation.”

12. Metropolitan New York Synod (7C) [2005 Memorial]

Adopted the “model memorial” printed above, with the following changes:

- Sixth WHEREAS replaces “has compassion on” with “desires justice for”
- Seventh WHEREAS replaces “people” with “peoples”
- Third RESOLVED is replaced with:
 “RESOLVED, that this synod encourage its congregations to make ending hunger a core conviction of their ministry and mission by:
 - engaging in local efforts to feed the hungry and promote community economic development;
 - initiating with other congregations, especially with full-communion partner congregations, advocacy of laws and policies to end hunger in the local community;
 - supporting advocacy of laws and policies to end hunger on the state, national, and global levels (for example, through the initiatives of Bread for the World and the Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs);
 - contributing generously to the World Hunger Appeal of the ELCA;”
- Fourth RESOLVED replaces “what ending hunger as a core conviction means for a synod is that as a regular dimension of its ministry and mission it” with “ending hunger as a core conviction means that this synod, as a regular dimension of its ministry and mission:”
- Fourth RESOLVED inserts an additional point before point (a) reading: “acts for systemic change of a culture that promotes hunger;”
- Fourth RESOLVED, point (b) inserts “(for example, through the initiatives of Bread for the World and the Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs):” after “levels”
- Fifth RESOLVED replaces “that what ending hunger as a core conviction means for the churchwide organization is that as a regular dimension of its ministry and mission it” with “that ending hunger as a core conviction means that the churchwide organization, as a regular dimension of its ministry and mission:”
- Fifth RESOLVED inserts an additional point before point (a) reading: “acts for systemic change of a culture that promotes hunger;”
- Fifth RESOLVED, point (c) inserts “(for example, through the initiatives of Bread for the World and the Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs);” after “levels”
- Fifth RESOLVED inserts an additional point between points (c) and (d) reading: “encourages seminaries to include advocacy of justice for the hungry as a focus of curriculum;”
- Fifth RESOLVED, point (e) inserts “the Lutheran World Federation,” after “Lutheran World Relief,”
- Sixth and seventh RESOLVED paragraphs are replaced with:
 “RESOLVED, that this synod memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to engage in a process together with the Lutheran World Federation and bring a proposal to the Lutheran World Federation’s Eleventh Assembly to make ending hunger a core conviction of the Lutheran World Federation.”

13. Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod (7F) [2005 Memorial]

Adopted the “model memorial” printed above, with the following changes:

- Seventh RESOLVED inserts “2005 Churchwide Assembly of the” before “Evangelical Lutheran Church in America”

14. Delaware-Maryland Synod (8F) [2005 Memorial]

Adopted the “model memorial” printed above, with the following changes:

- First RESOLVED is deleted
- Second RESOLVED is replaced with:

“RESOLVED, that the Delaware-Maryland Synod memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to make ending hunger a core conviction for this church in all of its expressions—congregations, synods, and churchwide;”
- Third, fourth, and fifth RESOLVED paragraphs are deleted
- Sixth RESOLVED replaces “Church Council” with “2005 Churchwide Assembly”
- Sixth RESOLVED deletes “possible”
- Seventh RESOLVED inserts “2005 Churchwide Assembly of the” before “Evangelical”

15. West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod (8H) [2005 Memorial]

Adopted the “model memorial” printed above, with the following changes:

- Sixth WHEREAS replaces “compassion on the poor” with “compassion for the poor”
- Seventh WHEREAS replaces “people” with “peoples”
- Second RESOLVED inserts “organization” after “churchwide”
- Third RESOLVED, point (a), replaces “engages” with “engage”
- Third RESOLVED, point (b), replaces “initiates” with “initiate”
- Third RESOLVED, point (c), replaces “supports” with “support”
- Third RESOLVED, point (d), replaces “contributes” with “contribute”
- Fourth RESOLVED, point (a), replaces “equips” with “equip”
- Fourth RESOLVED, point (b), replaces “initiates” with “initiate”
- Fourth RESOLVED, point (c), replaces “encourages” with “encourage”
- Fifth RESOLVED, point (a), replaces “equips” with “equip”
- Fifth RESOLVED, point (b), replaces “supports” with “support”
- Fifth RESOLVED, point (c), replaces “initiates” with “initiate”
- Fifth RESOLVED, point (d), replaces “instructs” with “instruct”
- Fifth RESOLVED, point (e), replaces “continues” with “continue”
- Sixth RESOLVED replaces “Church Council” with “2005 Churchwide Assembly”
- Seventh RESOLVED is replaced with:

“RESOLVED, that this synod memorialize the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to engage in a process together with the Lutheran World Federation and bring a proposal to the Lutheran World Federation’s Eleventh Assembly to make ending hunger a core conviction of the Lutheran World Federation.”

ADDITIONAL MEMORIALS ON RELATED TOPICS

16. Indiana-Kentucky Synod (6C) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, we, members of the Indiana-Kentucky Synod in assembly:

- have experienced the compassion of Christ;
- have been blessed with God’s saving and sustaining grace;
- have felt the stirrings of the Holy Spirit moving us to like compassion and acts of grace so that we may become a blessing to others, especially the hungry;

- have received documentation from numerous credible individuals and agencies that resources are available to end hunger in the United States of America and throughout the world; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Indiana-Kentucky Synod make the ending of hunger a core conviction among us and demonstrate this conviction through increased participation in the World Hunger Appeal of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, with the goal this year of giving \$10.00 per baptized member; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we support the advocacy efforts of the Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs, Bread for the World, and similar organizations, with the goal this year of having each member write at least one letter of advocacy and individually take conscious steps to be more sensitive to hunger issues in our respective congregations and communities and respond appropriately through some form of participation in efforts to address these issues; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we inform ourselves and consequently form our prayers with regard to the plight of the hungry and become and remain conscious of what we and our congregations are doing to alleviate hunger; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we, through the offices of synod, carry the spirit of this resolution to the greater church.

17. Southern Ohio Synod (6F) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, 800,000,000 people worldwide are chronically malnourished and experience severe food insecurity, with an average wage of \$1.00 per day; and

WHEREAS, 36,000,000 people in the United States, including 13,000,000 children, daily live uncertain of having enough to eat; and

WHEREAS, 19 countries, including the United States, have adopted the Millennium Development Goals, committed to cutting hunger in half by the year 2015; and

WHEREAS, the Holy Scriptures are very clear in numerous passages that God has compassion for the poor and hungry people and intends all, as Jesus has taught us to pray, to have “daily bread”; and

WHEREAS, the Church of Jesus Christ is uniquely called and equipped by God’s Spirit to be leaven that stirs peoples and nations to attend to God’s will that all people enjoy the fruits of God’s creation; and

WHEREAS, President Bush has proposed that the United States over the next few years commit \$15,000,000,000 in a Millennium Challenge Account to assist developing nations and \$10,000,000,000 to fight HIV-AIDS (both above and beyond our normal intentional development aid, which is less than one-half of one percent of our national wealth); and,

WHEREAS, the congregations of the Southern Ohio Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America have already committed themselves to a goal of contributing \$5.00 per member per year to the ELCA World Hunger Appeal and being regular advocates to our national and state leaders for hungry people; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Southern Ohio Synod make alleviating and ending hunger a core conviction of its mission and ministry; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this synod memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to make ending hunger a core conviction of this church; and be it further

RESOLVED, that making ending hunger a core conviction means that a congregation, as a regular dimension of its ministry, will:

- engage in local community efforts to feed hungry people;
- advocate to national, state, and local leaders for policies and programs that generously, effectively, and efficiently address the needs of hungry people;
- contribute generously through the ELCA World Hunger Appeal and Disaster Response efforts; and be it further

RESOLVED, that making ending hunger a core conviction means that the Southern Ohio Synod as a regular dimension of its mission and ministry, will:

- work to support and equip congregations in their efforts to feed hungry people, especially through the ELCA World Hunger Appeal;
- in cooperation with others, especially full-communion partners, advocate for policies and programs that seek to address the needs of hungry people;
- continue our partnership with our companion synods in Germany, Tanzania, Brazil, and Kazakhstan with a focus on assisting their ministries to hungry people;

and be it further

RESOLVED, that making ending hunger a core conviction means that the churchwide organization, as a regular dimension of its mission and ministry, will:

- work to equip congregations in this ministry, especially through the ELCA World Hunger Program and Hunger Appeal;
- support synods in their efforts;
- cooperate ecumenically and in interfaith efforts to advocate nationally for generous, effective, and efficient policies and programs to end hunger by 2015;
- continue to work with Lutheran World Relief and other international partners to address the needs of hungry people;

and be it further,

RESOLVED, that this Synod memorialize the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to make ending hunger a core conviction of this church in the strategic planning process leading to any churchwide restructuring; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this synod memorialize the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to bring a proposal to the Eleventh Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation to make ending hunger a “core conviction,” just as ending apartheid in southern Africa was declared a matter of *status confessionis* at the 1977 assembly in Dar es Salaam.

BACKGROUND

The intention of these memorials is to build upon the already existing commitment of the ELCA to address hunger through the World Hunger Appeal and Program. At the same time, however, they seek to put before this church the continuing scandal of hunger in this world, to name addressing hunger as critical to what it means to be people of faith, and to call for responses in all expressions of the ELCA: congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization.

Since 1987, the ELCA has carried out an extra-budgetary World Hunger Appeal and Program, based on God’s call to love the neighbor as Christ loves all, and with the following objectives:

1. To provide relief and development assistance for those who suffer from hunger and injustices related to hunger in this and other countries; and to maintain a disaster fund for response to international and domestic emergencies;
2. To foster the education of the members of this church to understand and confront the reality and underlying causes of hunger;
3. To advocate policies and actions for social and economic justice relating to hunger—with governments, business institutions, and structures of this church and its related agencies;
4. To encourage members of this church to practice responsible stewardship of their lives and their financial resources toward the prevention and alleviation of hunger; and
5. To facilitate listening to and working together with those who have special awareness of the realities of food and hunger, including poor and hungry people in local and global

communities and those who produce, process, and distribute food [*Adopted ELCA Constituting Convention (1987) and revised at the ELCA Churchwide Assembly (1991)*].

The budget for the ELCA World Hunger Appeal and Program for 2005 is \$16.5 million dollars—moving toward, but still short of the \$25 million dollar annual goal this church has set for itself. A large portion of money raised by the World Hunger Appeal goes directly to two key partner organizations, Lutheran World Relief and the Lutheran World Federation. This allows the ELCA to join with other Lutherans in this country and around the world in effective long-term projects and also to respond quickly when emergencies occur.

The World Hunger Program currently includes most, if not all, of the concrete actions called for by the memorial. All expressions of the ELCA participate in carrying out the activities of the World Hunger Program. These include:

1. *Relief*, which provides immediate access to food, shelter, clothing, medical supplies and care, and the means to deliver and sustain these (i.e., transport, storage, supplies) so that the basic needs of people can be met.
2. *Sustainable Development*, which leads to increased access to food and sustainable livelihoods through means such as sustainable agriculture, appropriate technology, adequate housing, jobs, primary health care and disease prevention, job training, child care, elder care, nutrition education, literacy training, sanitation, safe water supplies, below-market loans, and just land use and distribution.
3. *Community Organizing*, which brings men and women with common values, complementary interests and shared concerns together to build and maintain an environment that empowers all people to obtain justice, affirm their dignity, and gain access to the goods of the earth;
4. *Education*, which recognizes the abundance of God’s creation and addresses the causes, cures, and elimination of hunger and poverty, engages our members, and empowers synods, congregations, affiliated ministries, and ecumenical partners to act through a variety of learning opportunities;
5. *Advocacy*, which works to overcome the effects and root causes of hunger and poverty through administrative, legislative, and judicial actions in the public sphere, and through corporate actions in the private sphere.

ELCA Strategic Plan and Restructuring

“Faithful Yet Changing,” the Plan for Mission in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, including five strategic directions for the churchwide organization, was adopted by the 2003 Churchwide Assembly. This plan includes four areas “commitments for implementation,” which cut across and permeate all five of the strategic directions. One of these commitments is to “confront the scandalous realities of racial, ethnic, cultural, religious, age, gender, familial, sexual, physical, personal, and class barriers that often manifest themselves in exclusion, poverty, hunger, and violence.”

This means that confronting hunger is intended to be part and parcel of implementing all of the strategic directions. This is reflected in the churchwide restructuring proposal, which gives the World Hunger Program a central place in the organizational life of the church. From the inception, both the Appeal and the Program have had designated staff attention and have been designed intentionally to integrate the work of a number of different units. These two aspects—significant dedicated staff responsibility and the inter-unit nature of the program—have been protected in the restructuring proposal. The inter-unit nature of the World Hunger Program is an important way in which the commitment to confronting the

scandalous reality of hunger is made present in all of the work of this church. In addition, the fund-raising responsibility of the World Hunger Appeal has been strengthened by its placement in Development Services.

All of the above represent a remarkable commitment of this church to respond to hunger both programmatically and in the restructuring, a commitment that has sustained and grown even in times of financial uncertainty.

Core Conviction

Both the ELCA World Hunger Appeal and Program and the undergirding commitment in the ELCA Plan for Mission to confront the scandalous reality of hunger grow out of the understanding that ending hunger is an integral part of what it means to live as people of faith. This memorial, however, introduces a new theological term in describing this commitment as a “core conviction.” It must be noted that, while the intention of the term “core commitment” is consistent with both the current World Hunger Appeal and Program and the ELCA Plan for Mission, a potential concern does exist in that “core conviction,” it is not a phrase that has been used previously in the ELCA, nor is it one around which there is an understood or agreed definition. Furthermore, it is not a phrase around which there has been theological discussion and agreement in the Lutheran World Federation. This becomes increasingly an issue when the matter of translation is part of our discussions with partners around the world.

Some of the memorials use the term “*status confessionis*” to describe the seriousness of hunger to the church. Unlike “core conviction,” *status confessionis* has a venerable history in the Lutheran church. It refers to a “situation of confession” in which the church declares that a particular reality threatens the truth of the Gospel. The church must, therefore, in confessing the Gospel, stand against this reality and resist it.

In 2004, the ELCA Church Council referred to the Division for Church in Society a resolution from the Pacifica Synod requesting that this church consider a study of the possibility of “raising the hunger issue to the principle of *status confessionis*.” In response to the request from the Church Council, the Division for Church in Society reported that the 1997 Churchwide Assembly had declined a similar request and advised that there are not new and convincing reasons to alter that decision. In its response to the synod, the Church Council in April 2005 declined to undertake a study to consider raising hunger to the principle of *status confessionis*, but encouraged members of this church to renew their commitment to fight world hunger, especially by supporting the ELCA World Hunger and Disaster Appeal.

CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY ACTION

Pr. Pederson called the assembly’s attention to Category B1: World Hunger. She reported that a revised memorial had been distributed the previous evening and advised voting members that they should each have a revised page 19 bearing the notation “Revised 8/8/2005.” She explained that the revised recommendation strengthened this particular memorial, and more accurately reflected the intention of the 17 synods that had sent memorials on this topic. She stressed that the memorial called upon this church to recognize the urgency of this issue, asking members to recognize the unique theological and ethical responsibility of the Church to end chronic hunger, to confront the scandal of hunger in this world as a core dimension of living out the Christian faith, to recommit this church to the goals of the World Hunger Appeal, and to take leadership within the Lutheran World

Federation to find ways to address within its Eleventh Assembly the eradication of hunger as an urgent matter facing people of faith. Because the revision had been distributed only the previous evening, Pr. Pederson announced that she would read it in its entirety.

Moved;

Seconded:

To receive with gratitude the memorials of the Northwest Washington Synod; Southwestern Washington Synod; Northeastern Minnesota Synod; Saint Paul Area Synod; Central States Synod; Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod; Southwestern Texas Synod; Metropolitan Chicago Synod; Northwest Synod of Wisconsin; La Crosse Area Synod; Indiana-Kentucky Synod; Southern Ohio Synod; New England Synod; Metropolitan New York Synod; Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod; Delaware-Maryland Synod; and West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod calling for an end to world hunger;

To acknowledge that:

1. 800,000,000 people worldwide are chronically undernourished and 1,200,000,000 people live on less than \$1.00 per day;
2. 30,000,000 people in the United States, including 13,000,000 children, cannot afford an adequate and balanced diet;
3. 189 countries, including the United States, have committed to cutting in half extreme hunger by the year 2015 by establishing the Millennium Development Goals;
4. advocacy organizations, like Bread for the World and the Institute for Food and Development Policy (FoodFirst) have established that there is sufficient food supply to feed the earth's population;
5. leading economists now argue that ending chronic hunger is an attainable goal for the first time in human history;
6. the Holy Scriptures are very clear in numerous passages that God has compassion on the poor (e.g., Jeremiah 22:15-16 and Luke 6:20-21) and that it is God's will that the hungry be fed (e.g., Psalm 146:5-7 and Matthew 25:34-35);
7. the Church of Jesus Christ is equipped uniquely by its identity and mission to be the leaven that stirs the peoples and nations of the world to end chronic hunger; and
8. by establishing the World Hunger Program, the ELCA made a core theological and ethical commitment to bringing the scandal of hunger to an end;

To confront the scandal of hunger in this world as a core dimension of living out the Christian faith;

To recommit this church to the goals of the ELCA World Hunger Appeal and Program through increased resolve and renewed engagement:

1. To provide relief and development assistance for those who suffer from hunger and injustices related to hunger in this and other countries; and to maintain a disaster fund for response to international and domestic emergencies;
2. To foster the education of the members of this church to understand and confront the reality and underlying causes of hunger;

3. To advocate policies and actions for social and economic justice relating to hunger—with governments, business institutions, and structures of this church and its related agencies;
4. To encourage members of this church to practice responsible stewardship of their lives and their financial resources toward the prevention and alleviation of hunger; and
5. To facilitate listening to and working together with those who have special awareness of the realities of food and hunger, including poor and hungry people in local and global communities and those who produce, process, and distribute food;

To consider the following as examples of support, commitment, and engagement by each expression of this church:

Congregations

1. engaging in local efforts to feed the hungry and promote community economic development;
2. initiating with other congregations, especially with full-communion partner congregations, advocacy of laws and policies to end hunger in the local community;
3. supporting advocacy of laws and policies to end hunger on the state, national, and global levels; and
4. contributing generously to the World Hunger Appeal of the ELCA;

Synods

1. equipping congregations in their efforts to feed the hungry and promote community economic development on the local level;
2. initiating with the leaders of other judicatories, especially with full-communion partners, advocacy of laws and policies to end hunger on the state, national, and global levels; and
3. encouraging congregations to contribute generously to the ELCA World Hunger Appeal;

Churchwide organization

1. equipping congregations in their efforts to feed the hungry and promote community economic development on the local level;
2. supporting synods in their efforts to end hunger on the state, national, and global levels;
3. initiating with the leaders of other church bodies, especially with full-communion partners, advocacy of laws and policies to end hunger on the national and global levels;
4. continuing to undertake relief efforts and implement sustainable development in partnership with Lutheran World Relief, the Lutheran World Federation, and in cooperation with other people of faith in situations of extreme hunger; and

To request the Churchwide Assembly to direct relevant units to raise with the Lutheran World Federation this church's interest in finding ways, within the context of the Lutheran World Federation's Eleventh Assembly, to address hunger eradication as an urgent matter confronting people of faith.

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson opened discussion on the recommendation as friendly amended.

The Rev. George E. Keck [Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod] stated that he spoke in favor of the recommendation, and agreed that chronic hunger was a scandal both for the Church and for the governments of the world. He also recognized food supply as one of the underlying causes of hunger that must be dealt with. He asserted, however, an unspoken cause of hunger was the issue of world population. He decried the government's inability to offer population control at the same time it offered aid to foreign nations, and questioned whether the ELCA might not have something important to say to America and to the world about population control. He asked why this memorial as revised did not address this part of the problem.

Pr. Pederson acknowledged Pr. Keck's point but noted that population concerns were not included in the original resolutions or the model memorial and that the committee had sought to be faithful to what had been sent by the synods.

The Rev. Bruce H. Davidson [New Jersey Synod] proposed the following amendment:

MOVED;

SECONDED:

To amend the recommendation by addition, so that it would read:
Synods

1. equipping congregations in their efforts to feed the hungry to advocate for just laws and policies aimed at ending hunger and promote community economic development;

Churchwide organization

1. equipping congregations in their efforts to feed the hungry to advocate for just laws and policies aimed at ending hunger and promote community economic development;

Pr. Davidson explained that his role in the New Jersey Synod was that of director for the Lutheran Office of Governmental Ministry, an advocacy ministry of this church. He stated that the assembly could talk about advocacy but that he felt it needed to be encouraged, as well. He agreed that it was important for congregations to understand the need for direct donations to feeding the hungry, and to help them develop the sense that development aid will help to do the job, but stated that it was very difficult to get congregations to speak out on behalf of just policies and laws that would encourage the government to do a better and fairer job in being a partner in ending hunger. He argued that it would be wise for this church to help teach people what it meant to be good advocates for the right kinds of legislation so that hunger could, indeed, be eradicated. He stated that members of the ELCA were sometimes great partners in feeding the hungry but that they also needed to be encouraged to support legislation that would help feed people in need.

The Rev. Alfon W. "Chip" Larson [Sierra Pacific Synod] asserted that members of the assembly might not realize that many of the ELCA's missionaries in the field had to meet the shipments of grain at the docks to ensure that the food was brought out into the countryside. He cited the problem of corruption in the countries that hunger efforts try to assist. He felt that the addition of the phrase "just laws" to the recommendation would do a great service.

Mr. Gene Krauss [Southeastern Iowa Synod] agreed that for too long this church had done a good job of encouraging feeding of the hungry while not teaching members how to work with legislatures in the policy arena.

Mr. Eric M. Peterson [Northwest Synod of Wisconsin] noted his experience in state government and suggested that voting for this recommendation would need to be followed by advocating for the goals of the memorial with elected officials. He said that this church would need to demand just laws and that the issue could not be left at voting on the memorial. It would require members doing “footwork” for the passage of such laws.

Seeing no further speakers to the amendment, the chair called for a vote.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

Yes-894; No-62

CARRIED:

To amend the recommendation by addition, so that it would read:

Synods

- 1. equipping congregations in their efforts to feed the hungry to advocate for just laws and policies aimed at ending hunger and promote community economic development;**

Churchwide organization

- 1. equipping congregations in their efforts to feed the hungry to advocate for just laws and policies aimed at ending hunger and promote community economic development;**

Ms. Connie Scharlau [La Crosse Area Synod] stated that originally she had intended to introduce an entirely new memorial but had decided that the memorial on the floor contained good information and made a good call to action on the issue. However, she felt that the memorial did not “speak well to the people in the pews in our churches” and was difficult to understand. She stated her belief that the language of the recommendation should be simple to make it usable so that it would not just end up on the shelf.

Ms. Lois A. Holck [Southwestern Texas Synod] challenged the members of the assembly to share their blessings with those who have less, pointing out that the members of this assembly of ELCA congregations had been blessed “to overflowing.”

The Rev. Stephen P. Bouman, bishop of the Metropolitan New York Synod, commented that just to pass a memorial was “a form of cheap grace.” He asserted that what voting members did in the assembly would make a difference. He reminded the assembly that the ancestors of many of the members of this church came to this country because they were hungry. He urged that this be one issue on which this church could say that it spoke with a clear voice and unity.

Ms. Jeannine Grimm [Northwestern Ohio Synod] observed that the 2003 Churchwide Assembly had adopted a six-fold Statement of Purpose to guide this church in all of its work, yet she felt those principles were not readily available, having been printed in “very small print” on p. vii of the introduction to the *2005 Pre-Assembly Report*. She asked if the principles could be displayed to the assembly at intervals throughout the assembly. Presiding Bishop Hanson responded that he would try to find out if that would be possible.

The Rev. Laurin G. Vance [Indiana-Kentucky Synod] pointed out that the background material for this memorial had left out an important piece of information. He quoted Mr. James Wilson, United Nations undersecretary for hunger, who reported that 22,500 people, mostly children, would die each day of starvation.

Ms. Amy J. Olson [Northeastern Iowa Synod] then moved an amendment to the memorial.

MOVED;

SECONDED:

To amend the recommendation by addition, so that it would read:
Congregations

1. engaging in local efforts to pray for and with those in need, feed the hungry and promote community development.

Ms. Olson spoke to her amendment, noting that the word “prayer” appeared nowhere in the memorial. She stated that, although we are a church that supports action, “We are a church that is centered in prayer.”

Presiding Bishop Hanson stated that he believed the amendment could be adopted by consensus and put it to an immediate vote.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

VOICE VOTE

CARRIED:

To amend the recommendation by addition, so that it would read:
Congregations

1. engaging in local efforts to pray for and with those in need, feed the hungry and promote community development.

Returning to speaking to the motion as amended, the chair called upon Mr. Teka O. Fogi [Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod]. Mr. Fogi said that some reasons for hunger, such as natural disasters, were not under human control but that there were other factors, including war, displacement, and ethnic tensions, that could be controlled. He emphasized the importance of the role and the responsibility of governments in regard to issues of hunger and of the need for a “voice for the voiceless.” Mr. Fogi admitted that he had never proposed an amendment before and was unsure of how to proceed.

Presiding Bishop Hanson stated that the time for memorials was concluded and that he was about to call for the orders of the day. The presiding bishop proposed that someone offer assistance to Mr. Fogi in formulating an amendment to address his concerns following the plenary session. The chair noted that the assembly would resume discussion at the same point when the assembly returned to the consideration of memorials.

Orientation to Hearings

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson announced that the upcoming hearings would be chaired by members of the Church Council and would include resource people knowledgeable about the subject of each hearing. The hearings would give voting members an opportunity to ask their questions and would help them make the best informed decisions possible, he asserted.

Secretary Lowell G. Almen identified the locations of the various hearings and reminded the members of the remaining schedule of the day. He encouraged members to take the pages from Section IV of the *2005 Pre-Assembly Report* with them when they went to the hearings.

Recess

Secretary Lowell G. Almen reminded members of the 5:30 P.M. deadline for amendments to the Renewing Worship proposal.

He also recognized Mr. Bachman S. Brown [North Carolina Synod] as a voting member at a total of 24 assemblies, either of the ELCA or its predecessor bodies. Those gathered expressed their appreciation for his service to this church.

Ms. Ellen T. Maxon, a member of the Church Council, was called to the podium to lead the assembly in Evening Prayer. She led the assembly in singing “Will You Let Me Be Your Servant?” and in a litany before offering a closing prayer.

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson declared that the Churchwide Assembly would be in recess until 8:15 A.M. Wednesday, August 10, 2005. Plenary Session Three ended at 4:00 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time.

Plenary Session Four

Wednesday, August 10, 2005

8:15 A.M. – 10:45 A.M.

The fourth plenary session of the ninth Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America was called to order at 8:17 A.M. Eastern Daylight Time by the Rev. Mark S. Hanson, presiding bishop, at the Orlando World Center, Orlando, Florida. Those present sang the hymn, “Lord, Your Hands Have Formed the World,” and then the presiding bishop called upon the Rev. Jonathan L. Eilert, member of the Church Council, to lead the assembly in Morning Prayer. Presiding Bishop Hanson expressed gratitude to the Detroit Lutheran Coalition Mass Choir, which had provided music before the session began. The choir was founded in the 1980s by the late Mr. Tillis Butler and Dr. James Harris, composers of the “Detroit Folk Mass,” and was now under the direction of Ms. Gayle Hill and Ms. Roxie Wilson. The assembly expressed its appreciation with applause.

Presiding Bishop Hanson commended voting members for their participation in the previous day’s hearings. He proposed that the agenda be altered slightly to facilitate discussions. He then called upon the secretary to make some announcements.

The Rev. Lowell G. Almen, secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, reminded the assembly of several deadlines: a 10:45 A.M. deadline for submission to the secretary of proposed amendments to the Church Council’s recommendations regarding the ELCA Studies on Sexuality; a 10:45 A.M. deadline for the submission of “Notice” forms for proposed new constitutional provisions or bylaw amendments; and a 10:45 A.M. deadline for the removal of constitutional provisions, bylaws, or continuing resolutions from *en bloc* consideration. Presiding Bishop Hanson emphasized that the deadlines would be honored. He stressed that amendments received after the deadlines would be ruled out of order and explained the importance of respecting that limit.

Presiding Bishop Hanson presented the agenda for the session. The Report of the Secretary would be received first, followed by the recommendations included in the report “Faithful Yet Changing: Design for Mission through the Churchwide Organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,” the presentation of the recommendations from the Church Council concerning the ELCA Studies on Sexuality, and consideration of an action on Renewing Worship. He proposed that the discussion of memorials regarding governance be postponed to the afternoon.

Report of the Credentials Committee

Reference: 2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section I, page 9.

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson called upon Mr. David A. Ullrich, vice chair of the Credentials Committee, to give a report. Mr. Ullrich noted that, as of 8:08 A.M., there were 1,015 registered voting members. The chair thanked Mr. Ullrich for his report.

Mr. Charles E. Kalthorn [Metropolitan New York Synod] requested information about the number of visitors registered, asserting that this had been part of the Credentials Committee’s report at past Churchwide Assemblies that he had attended. Presiding Bishop Hanson stated that he would ask that this information be provided in a subsequent report of the Credentials Committee, if it were available.

Report of the Secretary

Reference: 2005 *Pre-Assembly Report*, Section II, pages 7–22.

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson told the assembly that this church was blessed to have as secretary someone who was keeper both of memory and of good order in this church, but who also brought to the office a deep concern for and commitment to the unity of this church, its life, and its mission. He called upon Secretary Lowell G. Almen to present his report, and directed voting members' attention to the appropriate section of the *2005 Pre-Assembly Report*.

Secretary Almen stated that these were turbulent times, as in some sense they had been for every generation, and that everyone desired a solid foundation. With the theme "Keep Your Eyes on the Horizon," he reminded assembly participants that a long history of faithful confession preceded them to this place and that the pilgrimage of faith would continue for long after their years of service. He charged members to be good stewards of the faith and conscientious disciples and to keep their eyes on the horizon.

The secretary presented a video as he compared the second and ninth biennial Churchwide Assemblies, both held in Orlando, Florida. He remarked that this was the first time that the Churchwide Assembly had returned to a place where it had been held before. He reminded the assembly that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America had been a young church when it met at the second Churchwide Assembly in 1991. He commented that there had been much anxiety before that assembly because there was to be consideration of a social statement on abortion. People were wondering, How would members negotiate their way through debate on such a difficult subject? What would be the tone of the assembly? Would the assembly processes be constructive or divisive? Would the outcomes be harmful to a sense of unity within this church? Yet, he said, that assembly kept its eyes on the horizon, aware of its foundation in Christ and its unity as the body of Christ.

Secretary Almen summarized the history of this church, including past assembly actions, many of which had been considered controversial. He recalled the various ecumenical agreements, listed the eight social statements that had been adopted by previous assemblies, and mentioned the eleven social messages adopted by the Church Council. He reminded members of the past officers who had served this church, and of a number of the decisions of previous assemblies concerning churchwide organization and strategies for ministry. The secretary also pointed out that no churchwide assembly had ever been conducted without some discussion of issues of sexuality.

Secretary Almen stated that he was the keeper of the history, rosters, and records of this church and the steward for understanding and describing that history and the governing documents of this church. He emphasized two key provisions of the constitution of this church. The first was, "The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be one church" (ELCA 5.01.). He explained that the provision meant that this church was not a scattered association of various parts, nor a union of congregations, nor a confederation of synods, but rather one body. The second was, "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, while fully the church, recognizes that it is not the whole church and, therefore, lives in a partnership relationship with the others" (ELCA 8.11.). He stressed that commitment to the practice of interdependence would guide the members of this church in their life together. Using the example of the coordinated movements necessary for swimming, an image he developed in his 1993 report to the assembly, he urged voting members to function interdependently as members of the one body of Christ in order for this church to move forward.

Presiding Bishop Hanson thanked Secretary Almen for his report and declared that, under the “Rules of Organization and Procedure,” the Report of the Secretary was accepted and referred to the Reference and Counsel Committee without further action of the assembly. The assembly affirmed the secretary’s report with applause.

The full text of Secretary Almen’s report is printed in Exhibit D.

Consideration of “Design for Mission”

Reference: *2005 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section IV, pages 1–3; Section V, pages 1–11.

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson asked Vice President Carlos E. Peña, Ms. Janet K. Thompson, and Ms. Linda J. Brown, members of the Church Council, as well as the Rev. Charles S. Miller, executive for administration, to return to the stage for the consideration of “Faithful Yet Changing: Design for Mission through the Churchwide Organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.”

Secretary Lowell G. Almen read the Church Council recommendation for assembly action.

Moved;

Seconded:

To receive as information the report, “Faithful, Yet Changing: Design for Mission through the Churchwide Organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America” [2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section V, pages 1–11];

To acknowledge with gratitude the contributions of people throughout the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for the strategic planning process and to affirm the ways in which such contributions have shaped constructively the report on the design for mission through the churchwide organization;

To affirm the processes and decisions of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran in America in response to the action of the 2003 Churchwide Assembly on strategic planning for the churchwide organization and to acknowledge the steps undertaken by the Church Council, officers, and leaders of churchwide units for the timely implementation of the strategic directions; and

To urge that the implementation of the design for mission through the churchwide organization continue so that the revised patterns of operation will be fully functioning by the beginning of the new fiscal year on February 1, 2006.

Presiding Bishop Hanson announced that this action came as a recommendation from the Church Council and thus did not require a second. He invited members of the assembly to speak to the motion.

The Rev. Gwendolyn S. King [New England Synod], quoting the Church Council’s assessment that the mandate for the Commission for Women had not been fulfilled, asked why the Church Council was “eliminating the Commission for Women,” with the mandate assigned to an interunit alliance. She wondered how this interunit alliance would work.

Pr. Miller replied that the work of the commissions was examined in the course of studying the churchwide structure. The commissions had been created at the formation of this church to perform urgent tasks on behalf of this church, he noted. He pointed out that

over time the number of commissions had been reduced to two, the Commission for Multicultural Ministries and the Commission for Women. Now, he said, based on wide-ranging feedback, a new approach seemed necessary to assume the same urgent tasks. Pr. Miller stated that the new direction did not imply that the work of the previous commissions had been accomplished; there was still a need for justice for women in the Church and in society. However, he continued, in the present structure the work of the Commission for Women did not seem to be considered to be the work of the entire churchwide organization but was perceived as being assigned to one unit. In the proposed structure an interunit alliance would be challenged to address justice issues for women. According to Pr. Miller, in addition to a full-time staff person in the Church in Society unit, every churchwide unit and office would have a designated staff person whose portfolio would include responsibility for justice for women.

Pr. King noted that, under the proposed structure, Women of the ELCA would be a program unit, though this organization was separately incorporated with its own constitution and board. She asked how, given that they were not accountable to the wider church, Women of the ELCA would function as a program unit.

Pr. Miller pointed out that the list of “Other Units” included other organizations that were separately incorporated. He went on to say that the Women of the ELCA, although separately incorporated, would maintain its incorporation and its autonomy in many areas and that this status would not be interrupted by calling it a program unit. Rather, he argued, calling it a program unit affirmed the coordinated effort with that organization, and would ensure the active participation of that organization’s executive direction in the program of the churchwide organization.

The Rev. Ann M. Tiemeyer [Metropolitan New York Synod] gave notice that she intended to propose an amendment to the Church Council recommendation that would require a report back to the assembly. The chair acknowledged the notice and assured Pr. Tiemeyer that she could propose her amendment at a later time.

The Rev. Timothy J. Swenson [Western North Dakota Synod] asked whether the assembly’s action on this motion would preclude consideration of the governing documents in their particulars as requested by petitions to remove sections from *en bloc* consideration. Presiding Bishop Hanson assured Pr. Swenson that these requests would still be honored.

The Rev. Dennis A. Meyer [Western Iowa Synod] stated that he sensed a feeling of “disconnect” within this church: a disconnection between congregations and leaders, between congregations and synods, and among congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization, with an accompanying lack of trust. He was heartened that the leaders of this church were working to address this sense of disconnection and lack of trust. Presiding Bishop Hanson responded that, as presiding bishop, he was attentive to those who had expressed such concerns and that he committed himself to seeking greater expressions of interdependence and interrelatedness within this church.

Ms. Carol McDivitt [Rocky Mountain Synod] questioned the language “living into this structure” and talk of units having collaborative relationships with one another, asking what evaluation there would be of the effectiveness of the new organization. She also commented that she was a member of the advisory committee for *The Lutheran* magazine and urged that *The Lutheran* continue as an independent voice in order to respond to the needs of those segments of this church that felt disconnected or suspicious. She inquired why the magazine would be in the Communication Services unit in the proposed structure, and expressed her concern that the proposed structure seemed to suggest that the Communication Services unit

would have “supervisory” responsibility, to a certain extent, over *The Lutheran* magazine. She said it was wonderful to have a new structure where everyone got along, but asked what would happen “when you have a new pharaoh who forgets Joseph.”

Ms. Thompson responded that the phrase “living into the structure” meant that there would be a transition period. In addressing ongoing evaluation, she stated that the Planning and Evaluation Committee of the Church Council would be hearing not only about the functioning of the structure, but also about the other issues she had addressed in the previous day’s session and would be reporting back to the council and the assembly. She went on to assure the assembly that *The Lutheran* magazine would continue to have editorial autonomy in the proposed structure. She added that it would be housed in the Communication Services unit for budgetary purposes.

Ms. McDivitt responded that she remained concerned about the magazine’s projected place in the Communication Services unit, saying, “Those who pay the bills have control. In newspaper lingo, he who buys the barrels of ink determines what gets in the paper.”

Mr. Larry I. Rank [Oregon Synod] asked for a graphic representation of both the current structure and the proposed structure of the churchwide organization. Presiding Bishop Hanson responded that Pr. Miller had those graphics available, though not in a form that could be projected, and would share them with those who requested them.

The Rev. Bryan S. Anderson [Northwest Synod of Wisconsin] expressed appreciation for the proposed structure because he felt it would be more streamlined and mission-oriented. He asked why the work of the Commission for Women would be integrated into each unit of the proposed structure, while the work of the Commission for Multicultural Ministries would not. He asked whether this were not a double message.

Pr. Miller responded that for the Commission for Multicultural Ministries there would be a “both-and” approach. This commission had a number of programmatic responsibilities that had developed over the years and those would be continued in the program unit in the new structure. In addition, there would be some 14 staff positions with responsibility for multicultural ministries that would be shared across the units.

The Rev. Christine C. Thompson [Southeast Michigan Synod] stated that the Commission for Women had brought together African-American women clergy and had addressed issues of women and children in poverty. She then asked, “As a clergywoman of color, where do I go? Who will gather us? To whom do I speak, particularly about issues for women and children in poverty?”

Pr. Miller replied that the responsibility for gathering clergywomen of color would lie with the Vocation and Education program unit. Concerns about women and children living in poverty would be addressed by the Church in Society program unit.

The Rev. David P. Housholder [Pacifica Synod] moved to end debate.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To end debate.

The chair then called for a vote on the motion to end debate. After the voting had begun, an unidentified voting member rose to a point of order, stating that not all members had the information necessary to vote. Presiding Bishop Hanson responded that the recommendation to be voted on was in the *2005 Pre-Assembly Report*, and directed members’ attention to the

appropriate section. He stressed, however, that they were voting on whether to close debate on that recommendation, and not on the recommendation itself. The Rev. Gary M. Wollersheim, bishop of the Northern Illinois Synod, rose to a point of order, stating that the members from his synod did not have a revised version of the recommendation. The chair pointed out that there had been no revision of this recommendation since August 2, so everyone had the same version that Secretary Almen had read to the assembly. For clarity, the presiding bishop asked the secretary to read the proposed action once again.

MOVED;
SECONDED;
CARRIED:

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED
YES-714; NO-266

To end debate.

The chair then called for a vote on the main motion as it had been read by the secretary.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

YES-808; NO-169

CA05.03.04

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To urge that the implementation of the design for mission through the churchwide organization continue so that the revised patterns of operation will be fully functioning by the beginning of the new fiscal year on February 1, 2006.

Presiding Bishop Hanson thanked the members of the assembly for their consideration of this recommendation and expressed gratitude to the members of the Church Council and to Pr. Miller for interpreting the provisions of this recommendation to the assembly.

Introduction to the ELCA Studies on Sexuality

Reference: *2005 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section IV, pages 19–24; Section V, pages 13–27.

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson asked the Rev. James M. Childs, director for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality, and the Rev. Margaret G. Payne, bishop of the New England Synod and chair of the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality, to present an overview of the studies. He also requested that Vice President Carlos E. Peña and Church Council members Ms. Judy Biffle, the Rev. Joseph G. Crippen, Ms. Mary T. Froehlig, Ms. Norma J. Hirsch, and the Rev. J. Paul Rajashekar present the recommendations that would come before the assembly.

Pr. Childs expressed his appreciation first to the members of the task force for their tireless work, and then to synodical and churchwide leaders, to conscientious pastors and people who had engaged in the study, and to “countless sisters and brothers in Christ who prayed earnestly for the work of the task force.” He observed that the members of the task force had maintained a constant focus on the manifold witness of God’s Word, held the vision of Christ as servant, with their view of themselves being foremost as servants of the Gospel mission of the Church, more than as servants to their own strongly-held views, which he said they had represented with great integrity. Pr. Childs commented that the task force members were “keenly aware of the joyous truth that we are all one in Christ, one body, a baptismal fellowship awash in the grace of God.” Members were profoundly concerned that this church not squander the great gift of unity. Furthermore, he reported, the task force wanted to respect convictions of conscience that had been shaped by understandings deeply rooted in God’s Word. He said that the task force had sought to focus on pastoral sensitivity to one another within the body of Christ. He reminded the assembly that God’s Law was given to God’s people for their good that they might flourish, and he said that it was in the spirit of that purpose of the Law and our Gospel mission that we draw people in, rather than isolate them.

Bp. Payne said that many people had asked her, “What is your personal opinion on this issue?” She commented that she had answered, “For the sake of this work, God has given me the gift of no opinion.” She reported, however, that she had and has an opinion, one that she described as “sharp as a sword.” She said, “For this work, I sheathed it.” While preparing to make a presentation at the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod Assembly on the topic of her own journey of faith as a member of this task force, however, she said, “I unsheathed my sword to have a look at it,” only to discover that it had turned into a plow. Listening to other people, especially those with differing opinions, had transformed it, she found. She expressed appreciation for the members of the task force for their roles in that process and asked them to stand. The assembly acknowledged their work with applause. Bp. Payne said that this transformed tool was God’s gift to her so that she might prepare soil for the planting of God’s seed. She expressed gratitude for the opportunity to serve on the task force. The assembly responded with applause.

Vice President Peña reported that on January 13, 2005, three recommendations from the task force had been released to this church. Synods, congregations, division boards, the Conference of Bishops, and all members of this church had been invited to respond to the recommendations. The Church Council reviewed those responses, and on April 11, 2005, adopted three recommendations in legislative language to be sent to the 2005 Churchwide Assembly for possible implementation. Those three recommendations appeared in the *2005 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section IV, pages 19–24, he pointed out.

Recommendations One and Two were widely supported in the feedback given by synodical councils, and were largely in their original form, he noted. He explained that

Recommendation One was a call to all the people of this church “. . . to live together faithfully in the midst of disagreements. . . .” Recommendation Two addressed the matter of the blessing of same-sex unions, he explained, and called for respecting the pastoral guidance of the 1993 statement of the Conference of Bishops. He stressed, however, that this recommendation did not restate that 1993 resolution in the form of a policy document. Recommendation Three, which provided for a specific orderly process for the rostering of gay and lesbian people in same-sex committed relationships, was an attempt to reflect the spirit and intent of the task force. The recommendation from the council, however, took the additional step of recommending a specific orderly process for possible implementation of rostering of such persons.

Mr. Peña called upon the members of the Church Council to present the recommendations in depth, explaining that the council’s hope was that this would help voting members understand clearly what each recommendation proposed so that they might be in a better position to evaluate the rationale for the recommendations and be better prepared to discuss and vote in a prayerful, thoughtful, informed way.

Ms. Froehlig reviewed the process by which the three recommendations had come to this assembly. She reminded voting members that the 2001 Churchwide Assembly had directed this church to study issues of sexuality, and specifically homosexuality, with reference to two issues: the blessing of same-sex unions and the rostering of persons in committed same-sex unions. Because this church has different policies for its public leadership than the criteria used by society, attention was given to how ELCA Lutherans look to Scripture as final authority in matters of faith and life, how they interpret Scripture according to their confessional heritage, how they engage new learning in society, and how they understand each other in this matter. She stressed that homosexual *orientation* was not the focus of the study, nor was that something that this church had condemned, and the ELCA consistently had emphasized its welcome to lesbian and gay persons. This church, however, had regarded homosexual sexual *behavior* as sinful. The questions that the study considered were these: Are acts of homosexual intimacy sinful for all people in all contexts? Specifically, is a committed, monogamous same-sex union sinful?

Ms. Biffle suggested that the issues before this church could be expressed in questions such as these: Does asking God’s blessing on same-sex unions uphold the fundamental truths of Scripture and advance God’s mission in the world? Does ordaining, commissioning, consecrating, or calling a person living in a committed same-sex union uphold the teaching of Scripture and advance God’s mission? Can a church that looks to Scripture as its final norm in matters of faith and life commend such a relationship structure? Would the present policy or a change in policy better serve the effectiveness and well-being of this church? She commented that, in the eyes of many in the world today, this discussion would be seen as a departure from Scripture, while for others, it is key to bring to an application of Scripture new information and understandings of the nature and complexity of homosexual orientation and behavior. Critical to this debate, therefore, she concluded, is a revised way of seeing homosexuality and the reinterpretation of Scripture in the light of that revised understanding. She reported that feedback from this church had revealed a widespread adherence to traditional interpretation of Scripture on this matter, and therefore a rejection of a change in policy. A significant minority of people in this church, however, believed that a faithful interpretation of Scripture *does* lead to a need for policy change. The task force also had learned that many people, especially those who might be regarded as “in the middle,” expressed a desire that this church explore ways to continue the discussion without closing the door by means of a “yes” or “no” vote. The three recommendations presented to the

assembly, said Ms. Biffle, were an attempt to hold these concerns in tension while at the same time recognizing the serious differences in biblical interpretation and understandings of homosexuality.

Pr. Crippen then presented Recommendation One:

WHEREAS, the people of this church are joined and united by the love of Jesus Christ;

WHEREAS, this unity is God's gift to us in Jesus Christ and we are called as a church to cherish, nurture, and safeguard this gift;

WHEREAS, within this unity is also a God-given diversity that we honor in the body of Christ;

WHEREAS, we give thanks to God for the precious gift of unity and the richness of diversity within the body of Christ, for each other, and for the desire and strength to live faithfully within our God-given unity and diversity;

WHEREAS, we respect the integrity of convictions of conscience and faith "with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:2-3); and

WHEREAS, we see throughout this church that a commitment to the authority of Scripture is not solely the concern of those who seek to maintain the tradition and similarly, compassion for gay and lesbian persons and a commitment that they be treated justly are not solely concerns of those advocating change; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America—its members, congregations, synods, churchwide organization, and agencies and institutions—be urged to concentrate on finding ways to live together faithfully in the midst of disagreements, recognizing the God-given mission and communion that we share as members of the body of Christ.

Pr. Crippen said that Recommendation One focused on God-given unity in the midst of diversity. The recommendation was based on the convictions that this church had not finished its discussion of issues of sexuality, that these issues should not be church-dividing, and that the diversity of interpretation on this matter reflected a richness that deserved respect rather than censure. He asked members to notice that the sixth "WHEREAS" made an important point that challenged common accusations in this debate—namely, that people who opposed a change in policy had no compassion for gay and lesbian persons and that those advocating a change in policy had no regard for the authority of Scripture. He went on to stress that Recommendation One was foundational to Recommendations Two and Three, and that it simply said, "Let us find a way to live together in Christ, despite our differences. Let us not shut doors prematurely. Let us remember that God's mission is our first priority."

Pr. Crippen explained why some did not see the sexuality discussion as a church-dividing issue: First, they see it as a question of how the Bible is to be interpreted in the face of a moral issue that is currently being reevaluated by society; second, they feel that the disagreement is not over core beliefs, such as the person of Jesus Christ, the nature of salvation, the Holy Trinity, or the nature of the Church; and third, Lutherans believe that they can disagree on moral and ethical matters as well as on the ordering of church life, and that they in fact do so on such matters as passivism vs. just war convictions, the death penalty, the circumstances around abortion, or bioethics. He then explained that, for those who do see sexuality as a church-dividing issue, it seems that Scripture is so obvious on this matter, and the arguments for overturning it so problematic, that a departure from this traditional understanding would represent a movement away from a core principle of Lutheran identity.

Pr. Rajashekar introduced Recommendation Two:

WHEREAS, this church holds that “marriage is a lifelong covenant of faithfulness between a man and a woman” (*Message on Sexuality: Some Common Convictions [1996]*, page 3); and

WHEREAS, the Conference of Bishops in October 1993 stated, “We, as the Conference of Bishops of the ELCA, recognize that there is basis neither in Scripture nor tradition for the establishment of an official ceremony by this church for the blessing of a homosexual relationship. We, therefore, do not approve such a ceremony as an official action of this church’s ministry. Nevertheless, we express trust in and will continue dialogue with those pastors and congregations who are in ministry with gay and lesbian persons, and affirm their desire to explore the best ways to provide pastoral care for all to whom they minister” (CB93.10.25); therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America continue to respect the guidance of the 1993 statement of the Conference of Bishops; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this church welcome gay and lesbian persons into its life (as stated in Churchwide Assembly resolutions from 1991, 1995, and 1999), and trust pastors and congregations to discern ways to provide faithful pastoral care to same-sex couples.

Pr. Rajashekar said that the recommendation to “respect the guidance of the 1993 statement of the Conference of Bishops” would continue the present practice of this church. He noted that no official same-sex blessing ritual was recommended in Recommendation Two. The council’s rationale for not doing so was that pastors and congregations were to be trusted in matters of pastoral care with same-sex couples. Pr. Rajashekar reminded the assembly that Recommendation Two did not address the subject of same-sex marriage. He asked voting members to keep in mind during their discussions that Lutherans do not view marriage as a sacrament but rather as a civil matter that had been partially delegated to churches in this country in that pastors are authorized by the state to conduct marriage ceremonies. He pointed out that, in some European countries, only the state marries, and the Lutheran Church blesses. He ended by affirming the honor that Lutherans give to marriage between a man and a woman, as instituted by God.

Ms. Hirsch then presented Recommendation Three:

WHEREAS, within this church we continue to share a profound commitment to the authority of Scripture as the norm for faith and life;

WHEREAS, we recognize there are deeply held yet different interpretations of Scripture to which consciences are bound;

WHEREAS, within this church we confess that all people are sinful beings, including those who serve in rostered ministry;

WHEREAS, within this church there are both those who believe that same-sex sexual conduct is inherently sinful, and those who believe that same-sex sexual conduct in a committed relationship is morally defensible for those who are of homosexual orientation;

WHEREAS, there are those in this church who believe that the ELCA should affirm and uphold current policy and practice regarding people in same-sex committed relationships;

WHEREAS, there are those in this church who believe that the Holy Spirit is calling into public ministry persons who are in committed, same-sex relationships, and congregations are indicating a willingness to call such persons to service; and

WHEREAS, within this church there is a desire to maintain the continuity of the church’s traditional teaching and practice while also providing opportunity for

ongoing discernment of new ways in which the Spirit might be speaking to this church in our time, and both may be honored by taking the step to create a process for consideration of exceptions; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall:

1. Affirm and uphold the standards for rostered leaders as set forth in “Vision and Expectations”;
2. Create a process for the sake of outreach, ministry, and the commitment to continuing dialogue, which may permit exceptions to the expectations regarding sexual conduct for gay or lesbian candidates and rostered leaders in lifelong, committed, and faithful same-sex relationships who otherwise are determined to be in compliance with “Vision and Expectations”;
3. Adopt the following bylaws to permit implementation of this limited process for exceptions to the normative policies of this church:

7.31.18. Ordination for Particular Service. For pastoral reasons and for the sake of mission in the synod, under policy and procedures approved by the Church Council, upon recommendation by a synodical bishop to the Synod Council and upon endorsement by the Synod Council, a synodical bishop shall seek an exception from the Conference of Bishops to permit the assignment of a candidate who provides evidence of intent to live in a lifelong, committed, and faithful same-sex relationship, and has been approved through the synodical candidacy process. When such an exception is granted, the synodical bishop may ordain—as authorized in the governing documents of this church and policy adopted by the Church Council—a candidate who has received and accepted a properly issued, duly attested letter of call for service in the ministry of Word and Sacrament by a congregation that has indicated its openness to call a candidate who provides evidence of intent to live in a lifelong, committed, and faithful same-sex relationship. Likewise, upon recommendation by a synodical bishop to the Synod Council and upon endorsement by the Synod Council, a synodical bishop shall seek through the Conference of Bishops—under policy and procedures approved by the Church Council—to maintain on the roster of ordained ministers an individual, under call for service in an ELCA ministry setting, who provides evidence of intent to live in a lifelong, committed, and faithful same-gender relationship. All requirements of policies of this church related to ordained ministers apply to such an individual, except those that preclude living in such relationships.

7.52.16. Approval for Particular Service. For pastoral reasons and for the sake of mission in the synod, under policy and procedures approved by the Church Council, upon recommendation by a synodical bishop to the Synod Council and upon endorsement by the Synod Council, a synodical bishop shall seek an exception from the Conference of Bishops to permit the assignment of a candidate who

provides evidence of intent to live in a lifelong, committed, and faithful same-sex relationship, and has been approved through the synodical candidacy process. When such an exception is granted, the synodical bishop may— as authorized in the governing documents of this church and policy adopted by the Church Council—commission as an associate in ministry or consecrate as a diaconal minister or deaconess a candidate who has received and accepted a properly issued, duly attested letter of call for such service by a congregation that has indicated its openness to call a candidate who provides evidence of intent to live in a lifelong, committed, and faithful same-sex relationship. Likewise, upon recommendation by a synodical bishop to the Synod Council and upon endorsement by the Synod Council, a synodical bishop shall seek through the Conference of Bishops—under policy and procedures approved by the Church Council—to maintain on the roster of associates in ministry, diaconal ministers, or deaconesses an individual, under call for service in an ELCA ministry setting, who provides evidence of intent to live in a lifelong, committed, and faithful same-gender relationship. All requirements of policies of this church related to the official lay rosters apply to such an individual, except those that preclude living in such relationships.

4. Amend bylaw 20.71.11. to allow for the implementation of new bylaw 7.31.18. and bylaw 7.52.16:
20.71.11. The Committee on Appeals shall establish definitions and guidelines, subject to approval by the Church Council, to enable clear and uniform application of the grounds for discipline in each of the above categories, provided, however, that nothing therein shall require the application of discipline where bylaws 7.31.18. and 7.52.16. have been applied.
5. Direct that the Church Council, in consultation with the Conference of Bishops and the appropriate churchwide units, adopt policy and procedures for the implementation of bylaws 7.31.18. and 7.52.16.; and
6. Direct that this process be evaluated periodically by the Division for Ministry and reviewed by the Conference of Bishops and by the Church Council.

Ms. Hirsch explained that Recommendation Three addressed the question of ordaining, consecrating, or commissioning an otherwise qualified candidate who was living in a monogamous, committed, same-sex relationship. She indicated that responses from synod assemblies had identified this recommendation as the most controversial of the three. According to Ms. Hirsch, the legislative language of Recommendation Three sought to provide an orderly process for possible implementation of the recommendation of the task force. Because Recommendation Three would require bylaw amendments for implementation, a two-thirds vote by the Churchwide Assembly would be needed for adoption. Ms. Hirsch stated that the recommendation upheld and affirmed the existing

policies of this church on ministry standards but also created a limited process of exceptions to the normative policies of this church for the purpose of outreach, ministry, and continuing dialogue. It utilized an existing process for roster exceptions. The existing process for exceptions may involve: 1) normally a congregation, and always a candidacy committee, a synod council, and a synodical bishop; and 2) the Conference of Bishops, which currently had responsibility for granting certain exceptions from normative patterns. Recommendation Three, on one hand, continued to regard the present policy as normative, Ms. Hirsch noted, but on the other hand allowed for congregations that believed their ministry would be well served by an exception to have a process for considering an exceptional candidate. Synodical review would be an important part of that process. Recommendation Three also provided that candidates who were granted an exception would be protected from policy shifts caused by leadership change; that exceptions would not be seen as a “right” and could be granted only through the process detailed in the constitution and bylaws; and that there would be a periodic formal evaluation of the process by the Division for Ministry, with review by the Conference of Bishops, and by the Church Council if the exceptions were approved. Ms. Hirsch ended by stressing that Recommendation Three did not address the matter of blessings of same-sex unions.

Vice President Peña urged members of the assembly to continue to study the background materials and the recommendations themselves and to engage in conversation. He reminded members that behind each of the discussions there was an intent to help all Christians live as faithful disciples. Since all present agreed that it was important to follow Jesus Christ as disciples, he said, the question each person should be asking was “How do these recommendations relate to faithful witness and practice as sisters and brothers in Christ?” He observed that the members of the Church Council had sought to provide an overview and perspective for discussion, debate, and decision-making as the members of this church sought to continue their journey together faithfully.

Presiding Bishop Hanson expressed appreciation to Vice President Peña and the members of Church Council for the presentation. He reminded assembly members that amendments to the recommendations would have to be submitted to the secretary’s deputy before the end of the plenary session and that he was committed to getting those amendments into the hands of voting members as quickly as possible. He added, “Over the next two days, through informal discussions at mealtimes, during breaks, and in the evening, we will continue to discern the actions this assembly might take.” He reminded the voting members that they would move into a “quasi committee of the whole” during Plenary Session Seven for further discussion of the studies on sexuality.

Presiding Bishop Hanson called for the orders of the day and the consideration of the proposal for Renewing Worship. Ms. Annie M. Santos [Sierra Pacific Synod] rose to a point of order. She asked if members could have a printed version of Ms. Hirsch’s commentary on Recommendation Three. Presiding Bishop Hanson replied that it would be provided but that he would need to verify in what form it could be made available to all.

Consideration of the Renewing Worship Proposal

Reference: *2005 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section IV, pages 11–17; Section V, pages 45–47.

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson drew the attention of the assembly to the recommendation related to Renewing Worship found in Section IV of the *2005 Pre-Assembly Report*, beginning on page 16. He invited the Rev. Michael L. Burk, director for worship, Associate in Ministry Lorraine S. Brugh, the Rev. Susan R. Briehl, and the Rev. Martin A. Seltz to the stage.

Secretary Lowell G. Almen presented the following recommendation, the reading of which was waived by consent of the assembly.

MOVED;

SECONDED:

1. To commit the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to continuing steps toward the renewal of worship, trusting in the guidance and gifts of God for the ongoing life of faith through the means of grace;
2. To urge pastors, other leaders, and all members of congregations to focus on the central importance of the means of grace and, thereby, seek to:
 - a) deepen understanding of the biblical and confessional basis of worship;
 - b) support those who are called to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ through preaching in the worshipping assembly;
 - c) provide mutual encouragement for the celebration of the Lord's Supper every Sunday;
 - d) deepen understanding of and commitment to involvement of the congregation in the baptismal promises;
 - e) strive to recover the central importance of Sunday in celebration of Christ's resurrection;
 - f) support this church's ministry of music in efforts to strengthen congregational singing;
3. To urge pastors, other leaders, and all members of congregations to foster awareness of the relationship of worship with formation in the faith and, thereby, seek to:
 - a) practice the participatory nature of worship and pray for those who preside, looking to them for leadership on behalf of the assembly and for grace in sharing that leadership when appropriate;
 - b) nurture and train good presiders and preachers, relying especially upon the seminaries of this church to explore how the curricula prepare all rostered leaders for their respective roles in worship;
 - c) search for ways to nurture and shape Christian assemblies that are richly participatory;
 - d) foster the understanding that congregations are catechizing and teaching communities;
 - e) encourage the biblical formation of people by affirming this church's recommendation of the Revised Common Lectionary for use in worship;
 - f) work cooperatively to identify needs for educational materials that increase understanding of worship;
4. To urge pastors, other leaders, and all members of congregations to strengthen the focus of mission in the worshipping assembly and, thereby, seek to:

- a) demonstrate trust that the gathering is part of the unfolding purpose of God;
 - b) see Christ's presence in the means of grace as invitation to and motivation for practicing hospitality, embracing diversity, striving for justice, caring for creation, and sharing of the Good News;
 - c) join more fully in this church's commitment to becoming an increasingly diverse, multicultural, and multi-generational body; and
 - d) recognize that unity in Word and Sacrament informs conversations on difficult issues within congregations, synods, and the larger church;
5. To acknowledge with gratitude the widespread participation of members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in the Renewing Worship project, including individuals, congregations, pastors, musicians, teaching theologians, synods, the Conference of Bishops, members of the Church Council, churchwide boards and committees, and institutions and agencies in the development of provisional resources, the testing and responding to proposals, participation in worship events, and engagement of congregations on issues related to worship;
6. To direct that the Office of the Presiding Bishop through worship staff:
- a) complete the liturgical review of proposed content of a new book of worship in accordance with established policy;
 - b) work collaboratively with synods, appropriate churchwide units, and institutions and agencies of this church on further development of worship resources to meet the evolving mission needs of this church, with special attention to the Strategy for Evangelism, as approved by the 2003 Churchwide Assembly, and this church's multicultural commitments and strategies;
 - c) commit to ecumenical cooperation in the development of worship resources when possible and appropriate; and
 - d) seek to foster continuing support—both human and financial—for ongoing resources, events, and projects for the renewal of worship throughout this church; and
7. To encourage all congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to reflect on this church's gathering by Word and Sacrament; and to invite study together of *With the Whole Church* as a resource for deepening awareness of the significance of worship in the life of each believer.

Presiding Bishop Hanson called for discussion on the proposed recommendation.

The Rev. David J. Mayer [Southwestern Texas Synod] moved to amend.

Moved;

Seconded:

- To amend the recommendation by deletion and insertion, as follows:
6. To direct that the ~~Office of the Presiding Bishop through worship staff~~ Renewing Worship committee:
 - a) complete the liturgical review of proposed content of a new book of worship in accordance with established policy and in time for the 2009 Churchwide Assembly to vote on a final, completed proposal;
 - b) work collaboratively with synods, appropriate churchwide units, and institutions and agencies of this church on further development of worship resources to meet the evolving mission needs of this church, with special attention to the Strategy for Evangelism, as approved by the 2003 Churchwide Assembly, and this church's multicultural commitments and strategies;
 - c) commit to ecumenical cooperation in the development of worship resources when possible and appropriate; and
 - d) seek to foster continuing support—both human and financial—for ongoing resources, events, and projects for the renewal of worship throughout this church; and
 7. To encourage all congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to reflect on this church's gathering by Word and sacrament; and to invite study together of *With the Whole Church* as a resource for deepening awareness of the significance of worship in the life of each believer. To facilitate this ongoing study in congregations, the 2005 Churchwide Assembly authorizes a process by which the Renewing Worship materials will be studied, reviewed, and evaluated by a task force (separate from the Renewing Worship Committee structure), consistent with the pattern established by the sexuality task force consisting of seminary professors, clergy, lay leaders, and synodical bishops to benefit from a wider variety of perspectives within the ELCA for theological consistency that incorporates a diversity of musical traditions while honoring the mandate that all segments of a proposed worship resource retain their fidelity to Lutheran confessional theology.

Pr. Mayer spoke to his amendment, saying that good and important work had been done by the Renewing Worship project team and that this work needed to continue. He said that his amendment called for strengthened accountability by asking for a finished product before the Churchwide Assembly would be asked to vote upon it. He further emphasized that his amendment would place approval “where it should be, with the Churchwide Assembly.” He also asked that a task force be created to increase input from and communication with this church, expressing his belief that this would be a normal and wise step in order to ensure the acceptance by this church of the final product. Pr. Mayer argued that, since worship is the central activity of the Church, and since the Churchwide Assembly is the highest decision-making body of this church, the assembly needed to play a key role in the development and approval of this “identity-reflecting and identity-shaping” resource.

Pr. Burk responded that the work of Renewing Worship resided in the Office of the Presiding Bishop and was carried out by the worship staff. Furthermore, he commented, the

liturgical review policy adopted in the early 1990s had defined such review as being carried out on behalf of the Office of the Presiding Bishop. He also pointed out that there was no “Renewing Worship Committee,” as referred to in the amendment, but instead a Resource Proposal Group. He commented that the amendment’s attempt to expand the review of Renewing Worship materials would actually duplicate the process that was already underway, and added that the breadth of the review thus far had been “unprecedented.” Finally, to change the time line to include a Churchwide Assembly vote on a finished product would not have precedent in this church or its predecessor bodies, he pointed out.

The Rev. Eugene H. Kern [Florida-Bahamas Synod] spoke against the amendment, saying, “We have been there and done that.” He added that he saw the amendment as redundant and serving no good purpose other than to delay the process.

Mr. Donald E. Bennett [Southern Ohio Synod] rose to a point of order. He asked that the assembly take time for prayer for God’s guidance. Presiding Bishop Hanson responded that there would be time allotted for prayer after discussion and before a vote on all recommendations.

Ms. Sarah S. Johnson [Southwestern Minnesota Synod] supported the amendment, saying it was important to have an extended period of time for study. She voiced her appreciation for the project’s commitment to Lutheran heritage, but asked how the blessing of water for Holy Baptism fit into Lutheran tradition and theology.

Presiding Bishop Hanson ruled that this question was not germane to the discussion because it referred to the content of the resources and not to the amendment before the assembly. He encouraged Ms. Johnson to raise her question with the Renewing Worship staff.

Speaking against the amendment was the Rev. David P. Housholder [Pacifica Synod]. He questioned what he saw as the implied “need for all the control.” He suggested that there was a team in place and that they should be allowed to proceed to publish a new book, commenting, “If you like it, buy it. If you don’t, there are lots of resources out there.”

Ms. Gervaise “Gerry” Peterson [Minneapolis Area Synod] asked, “How Lutheran is this hymnal? Are we changing our theology?” She asserted that the Renewing Worship materials had been created by liturgical scholars and musicians, not theologians. She wondered whether, with the wording changes in the liturgies, the integrity of Lutheran theology had been respected. Ms. Peterson asked whether diversity had “trumped” Lutheran heritage. She maintained that practices from other Christian traditions or from ancient times must be weighed on the scale of Lutheran confessional integrity, and, if found wanting, be cast aside.

The Rev. Dodd A. Lamberton [Minneapolis Area Synod] spoke against the amendment. He suggested that a new hymnal would be “a” resource, not “the” resource, and that it was for this time and not for forever. He liked the possibility of having a greater variety of hymn resources, and lauded the selections that had been made. He characterized the new resource as offering “freedom and flexibility,” and said that it would be an adventure to introduce it to a congregation, as it provided an opportunity for faith formation and the teaching of singing. He inquired about the language that spoke of “replacing” *Lutheran Book of Worship*, rather than the new materials standing alongside *Lutheran Book of Worship*.

Pr. Burk replied that current resources would still be available, including the *Service Book and Hymnal*, still in use in some congregations.

The chair reminded voting members that the present discussion was on the amendment and must address either the time line or the process.

Mr. Michael D. Bennett [Metropolitan Chicago Synod] rose to a point of order. He commented that there was disorder on the floor of the assembly, with many side conversations making it difficult to hear. Presiding Bishop Hanson urged the assembly to respect the need for all voting members to hear the proceedings.

Ms. Rosalie Rosholt [Southwestern Minnesota Synod] asked whether the question of holy water would be addressed. Presiding Bishop Hanson replied that he had ruled that question not to be germane to the motion to amend.

The Rev. Robert A. Rimbo, bishop of the Southeast Michigan Synod and a member of the Resource Proposal Group, spoke against the amendment, saying that the process of shaping worship resources was ongoing. "If we wait for a final product, we will be waiting until Christ comes again," he proclaimed. He stated that worship was a "living organism" and that waiting until 2009 was both foolish and dangerous. He asserted that the materials in question were the most tested and evaluated materials that he knew.

Ms. Kim R. Wiest [Montana Synod] supported the amendment, citing the appropriateness of waiting. She reminded the assembly that it took many years to create previous books of worship. She stated that she would feel more comfortable with delaying the approval of a recommendation regarding a new worship resource, giving this church more time to use the materials and become familiar with them so the assembly would know what it was voting on.

Ms. Sarah S. Johnson [Southwestern Minnesota Synod] rose to a point of order, questioning the chair's ruling that her question about the blessing of water for Holy Baptism was not germane to the amendment. She argued that receiving an answer would help her to vote on the amendment.

The chair said that he would honor Ms. Johnson's argument, and called for a resource person to respond to the question.

Pr. Briehl responded that the new resources were clear on the fact that Baptism is the action of the Word of God and that the Word attached to ordinary water makes it regenerative, by the power of the Holy Spirit. In praying for blessing, she stated, we pray for what God is doing already, pouring out the blessing of grace in abundance on the people and on the water. She asserted that this understanding was confessional, and in the proposed materials, "that it is the Word of God, attached, promised in this water, with this water, under this water, that brings us the gift of forgiveness and salvation and unity with Christ through the sacrament of Holy Baptism."

Ms. Christina Jackson-Skelton, ELCA treasurer, reported that the amendment would appear to have budgetary implications that would need to be addressed.

The Rev. Philip R. Heinze [Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod] rose to a point of order, questioning the order of speakers being recognized by the chair. The presiding bishop said that he would verify the order, and if a mistake had been made, he would call upon Pr. Heinze after the next speaker.

Ms. Angela Neubauer [Northeastern Ohio Synod] questioned the stewardship implied by the amendment. She pointed out the redundancies that had been mentioned earlier and contended that such review as the amendment called for would take money that could be used better for other purposes.

Mr. Richard E. Thorell [Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod] supported the amendment. He mentioned that he had heard "grumbling" about the resources. In his opinion, these were unsettled times in this church, and people needed familiar liturgy and hymns, so he agreed that more time should be given to the process.

The Rev. Steven L. Ullestad, bishop of the Northeastern Iowa Synod and advisory bishop to Augsburg Fortress, Publishers, spoke against the amendment. He reported that many individuals had been involved in the Renewing Worship process, giving as an example the members of six small-town or rural parishes within the Northeastern Iowa Synod. He also stated that he knew that teaching theologians, liturgical scholars, parish pastors, and laypersons had been involved in the process from the beginning in “a very comprehensive way.” He said that changes had been made in response to their evaluations and commended the work that had been done by the Renewing Worship team.

Ms. Rosalie Rosholt [Southwestern Minnesota Synod] favored the amendment. She asserted that, although feedback on the proposed materials had been requested and given, the information had not been made available for public review and had not been posted on the Renewing Worship Web site. She stated that the members of this church should have that information.

The Rev. Philip R. Heinze [Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod] spoke against the amendment. First, he said, in looking at the requested changes to point 7, it seemed to him that all of those things had already been done and that it seemed clear that many congregations and individuals had been included in the review process. He told the assembly that his congregation had been blessed by their experience with the Renewing Worship materials and other resources that were grounded in Lutheran understandings, such as *Lutheran Book of Worship* and *With One Voice*. He commented that 2009 was a long time to wait.

Mr. Karl E. Moyer [Lower Susquehanna Synod] expressed his “sincere and abundant thanks” for the work that had been done on Renewing Worship. He mentioned that he found some of the corrections of translations of chorales to be “good and welcome.” He spoke in favor of the amendment, however, raising some concerns about the texts of particular hymns, including one that he felt taught “universal salvation.” He also mentioned a hymn whose poetic structure and musical structure he felt did not match. He expressed a desire for further review, stating that “the need for speed is not so great as the need for care.”

The Rev. Serena S. Sellers [Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod] spoke against the amendment. As an interim pastor, she had observed that many congregations were developing their own ways of worship because *Lutheran Book of Worship* was no longer sufficient. In doing so, they were using their own criteria and their own theologies in evaluating the texts, and consequently the unity of worship could potentially be lost if there were further delays in creating a worship resource for use by all congregations. She concluded that while accountability and trust-building was important, so was church unity, and unity might be lost in the time of waiting.

Mr. Robert D. Benne [Virginia Synod] spoke in favor of the amendment. He urged delay so that additional review could be done by the grass roots of this church, particularly with regard to language for God. He contended that there had been a “very powerful agenda to hunt down, snip, prune, and annihilate any masculine pronouns for God” in worship materials, and to limit the use of masculine biblical imagery of “Lord,” “Master,” or “Father.” He argued that the vast majority of ELCA worshippers were not bothered by such language, but that it was gradually being taken away. He felt that if people were aware of this, they would put pressure on the planning group to “ease up” on what he called the erosion of traditional masculine language for God, or at the least to give choices for language.

Presiding Bishop Hanson then called for the orders of the day, assuring members who were still waiting that they would be given opportunity to speak in the same order at another

session. He asked the Rev. Gary L. Hansen, bishop of the North/West Lower Michigan Synod and a member of the assembly prayer team, to lead the assembly in prayer, gathering up the preceding conversation, offering it to God, and asking for God's blessing.

Recess

The chair called upon Secretary Lowell G. Almen for announcements. In response to earlier requests from voting members, Secretary Almen announced that, as of 9:30 A.M., 470 persons had registered as visitors. He reminded bishops and spouses to gather as the choir for the day's service of Holy Communion. The secretary informed members that the college receptions at 8:00 P.M. that evening were open to all members of the assembly. He reminded voting members about the 2:25 P.M. deadline for nominations. Finally, Secretary Almen asked bishops to pick up ballots for voting members from their synods prior to Plenary Session Six and to hold those ballots until they were instructed to distribute them.

Presiding Bishop Hanson announced that three items of unfinished business remained on the assembly's agenda and would need to be carried over to subsequent sessions: the memorial on hunger, further action regarding restructuring and governance, and action on the Renewing Worship recommendations.

Presiding Bishop Hanson called on Ms. Faith A. Ashton, member of the Church Council, to lead the assembly in prayer to close the session. He then declared that Plenary Session Four was ended and the assembly in recess at 10:47 A.M. Eastern Daylight Time.

Plenary Session Five

Wednesday, August 10, 2005

1:30 P.M. – 6:00 P.M.

The fifth plenary session of the ninth Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America was called to order at 1:31 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time by the Rev. Mark S. Hanson, presiding bishop, at the Orlando World Center, Orlando, Florida.

Presiding Bishop Hanson began by thanking worship leaders for the Service of Holy Communion that had taken place that morning. He reminded the assembly that it would need to take up a number of items left from previous sessions:

- introduction of several distinguished guests;
- a Bible study on the topic of “Journeying Together Faithfully”;
- the Renewing Worship proposal;
- reports of the treasurer and of the Mission Investment Fund;
- constitution and bylaw amendments;
- the restructuring proposal;
- greetings from military chaplains;
- introduction of two ethnic-ministry strategies;
- report from the Youth Convocation;
- College Corporation meetings;
- Memorials Committee report, beginning with the World Hunger memorial.

Because of the amount of work before the assembly, the chair proposed that the session be extended to 6:00 P.M.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To extend Plenary Session Five to 6:00 P.M.

A voice vote was taken, but the results were inconclusive, so the chair called for a vote by use of the voting machines. He announced that a two-thirds majority would be required.

MOVED;

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

SECONDED;

YES-657; NO-168

CARRIED:

To extend Plenary Session Five to 6:00 P.M.

The chair announced that, before turning to the agenda, he wanted to address two issues that had come up in the morning. He focused first on the microphone queuing system. Because there had been some confusion, Presiding Bishop Hanson asked that speakers waiting to address a main motion step to the side when an amendment was to be offered and further asked that speakers not gather and register at a microphone to speak to an amendment before one had been offered. Second, Parliamentarian David D. Swartling had informed the chair that many issues being raised by the use of white cards were not matters of urgency requiring immediate attention. The presiding bishop commented that this practice was unfair to speakers waiting in line to speak and ask questions. He said that for that reason he would be more rigorous in calling matters out of order.

Parliamentary Matters

The Rev. G. Scott Cady [New England Synod] moved to limit speeches in debate to two minutes.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To limit speeches in debate to two minutes.

The chair called for a voice vote on the motion.

MOVED;

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

SECONDED;

VOICE VOTE

CARRIED: To limit speeches in debate to two minutes.

The chair ruled that the motion had received a greater than two-thirds majority and had therefore prevailed. A division of the house was called, and the chair directed that a second vote be cast using the electronic voting machines.

MOVED;

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

SECONDED;

YES-755; NO-154

CARRIED: To limit speeches in debate to two minutes.

The Rev. Pentti J. Maki [Northeastern Ohio Synod] rose to a point of order. He asked if the vote to limit debate applied only to this plenary session or to the duration of the assembly. Presiding Bishop Hanson answered that it applied to the duration of the assembly. Pr. Maki responded that those around him had not understood that to be the case when they were voting. The chair suggested that Pr. Maki could make a motion to reconsider, but it would not be in order at this moment.

Recognition of Former Bishops

Before directing the assembly to the business of the afternoon, Presiding Bishop Hanson recognized several former bishops and asked them to come to the stage, stating that each of them shared a passion for the Gospel and for the Church, and a deep commitment to Lutheran unity and the unity of the Body of Christ. The bishops included:

- The Rev. James R. Crumley, who served as bishop of the Lutheran Church in America, one of the predecessor church bodies of the ELCA (1978-1987);
- The Rev. David W. Preus, who served as presiding bishop of the American Lutheran Church, another predecessor church body of the ELCA (1974-1987); and
- The Rev. Herbert W. Chilstrom, first presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (1987-1995).

Presiding Bishop Hanson also asked the Rev. E. Corrine Chilstrom and Ms. Annette Crumley to come to the dais so they could be acknowledged by the assembly. He welcomed them all to the assembly and stated that he thanked God for them and their leadership. The assembly responded with sustained applause. Presiding Bishop Hanson also brought greetings from the Rev. H. George Anderson, his immediate predecessor as presiding bishop of this church (1995-2001). He had planned to attend this assembly but had suffered a stroke on July 21 and was recovering well. Pr. Anderson had sent his regrets and indicated that he would be holding the assembly in prayer.

Bible Study: Journeying Together Faithfully

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson welcomed the Rev. Margaret G. Payne, bishop of the New England Synod, as the Bible study leader for the day. He mentioned that Bp. Payne had served this church as chair of the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality. In that capacity, she also had assumed the role of chaplain for the task force's meetings. Task force members had expressed appreciation for the grace and wisdom she brought to both tasks.

Bp. Payne began by telling a story that she had shared with the task force and with members of the New England Synod. She read the story of Jacob wrestling in the night with the stranger, a story of mystery, struggle, and blessing. Bp. Payne commented that contemporary Americans looking for the "good life" had somehow gotten the idea that the good life meant one without struggle, and therefore popular Christianity had decided that "as long as you have Jesus in your heart, you will find a parking place, be prosperous, avoid illness (or get healed), win all wars, and be content in knowing that you are right and holy in your preferred beliefs." She reminded the assembly that Lutherans do not claim a popular Christian spirituality. Rather, they claim Christ crucified, and are marked with the cross of Christ forever. Their only certainty is that Jesus is God, and that his death has given eternal life, forgiveness of sin, and a righteousness that could never be earned. Lutherans chart their lives by the compass of the cross of Christ, and know that the "good life" has more to do with humility and service than with victory and comfort, she said.

The bishop noted that for the past four years, this church had been journeying together faithfully in its study of sexuality, and fourteen "saintly sinners" on the task force had been struggling to chart a course with the compass of the cross even though within the task force the certainties of individuals had clashed constantly. She commented that the name of the study had been chosen carefully, because it was indeed a journey, not a battle. She also explained that the first recommendation was meant to remind this church of the shared nature of this journey. She stated that it was not a plea for unity, which has already been given in the cross of Christ; that it was not an announcement of "peace" where there was no peace; and that it was not a childish wish "that we could all learn how to play nicely together." It was, she continued, "a fervent beseeching that the people of this church struggle together and be willing to die to our own agendas so that we can have a single crucified will that seeks only to serve Jesus and the world."

Bp. Payne stated that, even though Christians journey together, they are at the same time as alone in the dark as was Jacob as they face this struggle and all of the other struggles in their lives. The fear of a struggle with an unknown and powerful foe is a primal fear, she said, and it is always made worse by darkness. Fear is all around, she said, fear of terrorists, fear of the loss of familiar ways of life, fear of these issues of sexuality, and fear sometimes of one another. Though fear cannot always be explained away, she stated, it could always be fought, and that was what Jacob did. He was transformed by his struggle, and given a new set of gifts. She argued that this church had a great need of a spirituality of struggle—what she called "holy wrestling"—for transformation. She warned against falling into a spirituality of certainty. She stated that when wrestling—whether with one's own demons, with one's brothers and sisters, or with one's enemies—when one seeks to discern God's will, one is most deeply wrestling with God, and when one does that, one is always in God's arms and already safely home.

Bp. Payne put the following five questions before the assembly and asked those present to discuss the questions with those around them:

- What is a powerful thought or feeling that this story arouses in you?
 - What is a struggle in your own life that has felt dark or frightening?
 - What is a “limp” in your life that has reminded you of wrestling with God?
 - What are gifts that we receive when we are willing to struggle?
 - What role does struggle have in our work together as the church?
- Bp. Payne concluded with prayer. Presiding Bishop Hanson thanked her for her words, wisdom, and leadership.

Consideration of the Renewing Worship Proposal (continued)

Reference: *2005 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section IV, pages 16 and 17.

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson directed the assembly to return to consideration of the amendment to the Renewing Worship resolution in Section IV of the *2005 Pre-Assembly Report*, pages 16 and 17. He asked voting members who had been waiting to speak to the amendment currently before the house to line up at the microphones in the order in which they had been in line in the previous session. He asked that the text of the amendment be displayed on the projection screens, and re-opened debate on the motion to amend.

The Rev. Robert M. Goldstein [Metropolitan Chicago Synod] moved to close debate on all matters before the house.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To end debate on all matters before the house.

Presiding Bishop Hanson told the assembly that the motion was a call to end debate on the amendment and on all matters related to Renewing Worship. If the assembly voted to close debate, he explained, it would move immediately to voting on the amendment. If the amendment were defeated, the house would immediately move to voting on the main motion as printed on pages 16 and 17 of Section IV. If the amendment were adopted, the chair would by the rules need to refer the main motion immediately to the treasurer before the assembly could vote on it, because of the budgetary implications of the amendment. He also pointed out that there were four other amendments to the Renewing Worship proposal that members intended to offer. He made clear that, if the motion to close debate prevailed, the assembly would not hear those amendments. The chair solicited questions from the assembly. Hearing none, he directed the assembly to vote on the motion to close debate, emphasizing that a two-thirds majority would be required for passage.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

DEFEATED:

To end debate on all matters before the house.

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

YES-512; NO-450

The motion was defeated. The chair directed the assembly to return to discussion of the current amendment.

Mr. John Ostraat [South Dakota Synod] spoke in favor of the amendment, saying that it made sense to him to spend more time considering Renewing Worship, based on the concerns that had been raised on the floor of the Churchwide Assembly as well as at synodical assemblies around the country. The concerns he named included both the music and texts of hymns and liturgies, the theology, the “agenda” represented in the texts, the

commitment to core Lutheran beliefs, and the time available for reflection. He stated that the assembly deserved a statistical report on feedback from test congregations, just as it had received statistical feedback on *Journey Together Faithfully: Part Two* and, as he said, the Inter-Lutheran Commission on Worship had received on the existing book of worship. He added that the amendment would preserve the authority of the Churchwide Assembly to approve “the hymnal that would represent the ELCA to the world.”

Mr. Frank R. Riddle [Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod] spoke against the amendment, saying that the problems would be the same whether the process were lengthened or not. He suggested that should the process result in a bound book that no one would buy, the publishing house would become bankrupt.

Mr. Larry Kallem [Southeastern Iowa Synod] spoke in favor. He commented that there had been promises of good materials, but, from what he heard in the hearings, the good things were mixed in with changes that many would perceive as a challenge to their faith and the way they think about God. He ended by saying, “To people in small-town or rural congregations like the one I’m in, it would be like a poke in the eye with a sharp stick.” He expressed his feeling that there needed to be more time to “work this out.”

The Rev. Marcus J. Miller, bishop of the Northeastern Ohio Synod and a reviewer of some of the Renewing Worship materials, spoke against the amendment. He said that in his experience the framers of the Renewing Worship materials had been very responsive to concerns that had been raised. He admitted that he did not like everything in the book, but said he had read the materials critically and favored them. He added jokingly that the last thing the assembly wanted was for him to return to the 2009 Churchwide Assembly to critique each hymn in the new book.

Mr. Donald J. Domrath [East-Central Synod of Wisconsin] called the question on the amendment.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To end debate.

The presiding bishop explained to the assembly that this motion would end debate on the amendment only.

Mr. Timothy Deal [North Carolina Synod] rose to a point of order, asking whether the vote would require a simple majority or a two-thirds vote. He was informed that a vote to close debate required a two-thirds majority, while the amendment itself required a simple majority.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

CARRIED: To end debate.

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

YES-900; NO-73

Presiding Bishop Hanson then announced that the assembly would move to the vote on the amendment itself. Hearing no objection, he dispensed with a reading of the amendment. Upon a request from an unidentified voting member, the presiding bishop called upon the Rev. April C. Ulring Larson, bishop of the La Crosse Area Synod, to lead the assembly in prayer before the vote.

MOVED;
SECONDED;
DEFEATED:

Yes-264; No-719

- To amend the recommendation by deletion and insertion:
6. To direct that the ~~Office of the Presiding Bishop through worship staff~~ Renewing Worship committee:
 - a) complete the liturgical review of proposed content of a new book of worship in accordance with established policy and in time for the 2009 Churchwide Assembly to vote on a final, completed proposal;
 - b) work collaboratively with synods, appropriate churchwide units, and institutions and agencies of this church on further development of worship resources to meet the evolving mission needs of this church, with special attention to the Strategy for Evangelism, as approved by the 2003 Churchwide Assembly, and this church's multicultural commitments and strategies;
 - c) commit to ecumenical cooperation in the development of worship resources when possible and appropriate; and
 - d) seek to foster continuing support—both human and financial—for ongoing resources, events, and projects for the renewal of worship throughout this church; and
 7. To encourage all congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to reflect on this church's gathering by Word and sacrament; and to invite study together of *With the Whole Church* as a resource for deepening awareness of the significance of worship in the life of each believer. To facilitate this ongoing study in congregations, the 2005 Churchwide Assembly authorizes a process by which the Renewing Worship materials will be studied, reviewed, and evaluated by a task force (separate from the Renewing Worship Committee structure), consistent with the pattern established by the sexuality task force consisting of seminary professors, clergy, lay leaders, and synodical bishops to benefit from a wider variety of perspectives within the ELCA for theological consistency that incorporates a diversity of musical traditions while honoring the mandate that all segments of a proposed worship resource retain their fidelity to Lutheran confessional theology.

Presiding Bishop Hanson directed the assembly to the main motion on pages 16 and 17 of Section IV of the *2005 Pre-Assembly Report*.

The Rev. Ralph E. Jones, bishop of the Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod, moved to amend part 6a.

MOVED;
SECONDED:

- To amend by substitution paragraph 6a:
6. To direct that the Office of the Presiding Bishop through worship staff:
 - a) ~~complete the liturgical review of proposed content of a new book of worship in accordance with established policy~~ Retain *Lutheran Book of Worship* as the core worship book and hymnal

of this church while pursuing the development of a constellation of resources in a variety of media to supplement the core material in *Lutheran Book of Worship*;

Bp. Jones said that the intent of the motion was to look at the issue of a book. He stated that he was not opposed to the Renewing Worship effort, or to the work that had been done, but expressed his understanding that the initial intent of Renewing Worship had been to provide supplemental resources for worship. He argued that this church was at a point that one primary book was not going to be the core for any congregation. Most congregations, he said, even small ones, were printing worship folders rather than using books, and were obtaining material from the Internet and other sources. He felt that a single worship book for this church was not reflective of what was actually happening in congregations.

The Rev. James E. Boline [Southwest California Synod] spoke in opposition, saying that the amendment would derail a process that had been collaborative “perhaps to a fault.” He said the Renewing Worship process had been replete with checks and balances and continued to have an inherent integrity and fidelity. He argued that “to delay this good work would be disastrous, a dastardly deed, for it would be a fear-filled breach of trust in an already lengthy process which was set in motion by an assembly before us, and by those whose calling has been to prepare us for this time now, as we seek to deepen our worship life in this church.”

The Rev. Joseph A. Wolf [Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod] inquired about the projected cost of producing and printing a new hymnal.

The Rev. Michael L. Burk, director for worship, replied that there was not as yet a specific number, but that as a matter of stewardship it would need to be comparable in real dollars to the investment in *Lutheran Book of Worship (LBW)*. He stressed, however, that there was no firm price.

Pr. Wolf clarified that he was speaking of the cost of the process of producing a new hymnal, rather than the cost of purchasing it.

Pr. Burk responded that the most significant investment already had occurred in the previous five years for the development of materials. He emphasized also that the churchwide organization’s research indicated strong interest from congregations in purchasing a new worship book and that this would be sufficient to sustain the investment cost.

The Rev. James M. Culver Jr. [Indiana-Kentucky Synod] spoke in favor of the amendment, referring to a conversation with a liturgical scholar, the Rev. Frank C. Senn of Evanston, Ill. Pr. Senn had suggested that the process had been rushed and not broad enough and that some of the texts could be improved with further input and “tinkering.” Pr. Culver recognized the diversity within this church, and stated that many were not in agreement with what they perceived as an agenda in the Renewing Worship materials, namely the elimination of masculine language for God. He asked when and by whose authority this church had decided that it was wrong to call God “Father,” “King,” “Lord,” or “he.” He asserted that, at the present time, more study and discussion was needed rather than a bound book. Many, he said, were happy with *Lutheran Book of Worship*, and were simply looking to supplement it with other resources.

The Rev. Milas “Mike” Y. Sease III [South Carolina Synod] said that his congregation, which is conservative, had been a test site and that they had appreciated the materials, language, and variety. He said that they had found that the language spoke more deeply both of the faith and of the Lutheran tradition. His congregation enjoyed the great variety of

choices that was theirs by using the electronic media. He added that couples getting married liked having the options for that rite so that they could “build the service themselves.” He disagreed with the contention that not enough time had been allowed to consider the project, pointing out that the process had been going on since 2001. He suggested that if others had availed themselves of the provisional materials available for purchase or for free downloads from the Internet, they would know that these materials speak with a depth not present in prior resources.

The Rev. Carol S. Hendrix, bishop of the Lower Susquehanna Synod, spoke in support of the amendment. She said that her congregations used many resources, including some that still used the “red book” [*Service Book and Hymnal*] and even one that used the *Common Service Book* [first copyright 1917]—and those congregations were still saying that they were not ready to move to the “new book,” referring to *Lutheran Book of Worship*. Others were eager for downloadable materials but not for a new worship book. Bp. Hendrix also said that the proposed language options were troublesome for congregations in her synod, raising the question, she said, “of which God it is we are worshipping.”

The Rev. William “Chris” C. Boerger, bishop of the Northwest Washington Synod, said that he was aware that a new hymnal “is going to have to make it or break it.” He expressed concern that, if the assembly took the action proposed in the amendment, congregations would perceive the action as a lack of support by the Churchwide Assembly for the new book, giving them a reason not to purchase it. Giving this church’s imprimatur to *Lutheran Book of Worship* and labeling other materials as “supplements,” in his opinion, was not necessarily going to help in missional outreach. Congregations, he said, would make their decisions based on their missional need. He proposed that the project move forward with the understanding that in the year 2050 there would be a pastor struggling with a congregation over whether they should still use the “green book.”

Ms. Lori Toso [La Crosse Area Synod] called the question.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To end debate.

The Rev. Michael J. Neils, bishop of the Grand Canyon Synod, rising to a point of order, asked whether, if the amendment were adopted, the resolution would have to be referred because of budget implications.

The chair stated that he did not believe it did, because the “constellation of resources” language was already in the main motion, and the proposed change did not add new costs. He directed the assembly to vote on the motion to close debate on the amendment.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

CARRIED: To end debate.

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

YES-893; NO-88

The motion prevailed, and debate was ended. A vote on the motion to amend was then called by the chair.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

DEFEATED: To amend by substitution paragraph 6a:

YES-347; NO-634

6. To direct that the Office of the Presiding Bishop through worship staff:
 - a) ~~complete the liturgical review of proposed content of a new book of worship in accordance with established policy~~ Retain *Lutheran Book of Worship* as the core worship book and hymnal of this church while pursuing the development of a constellation of resources in a variety of media to supplement the core material in *Lutheran Book of Worship*;

Ms. Rochelle M. Lahti [North/West Lower Michigan Synod] rose to a point of order, asking the chair to instruct members to turn off cell phones.

The chair then directed the assembly to the main motion on Renewing Worship.

The Rev. Patrick J. Rooney [Lower Susquehanna Synod] moved to amend sections 6 and 7 of the recommendation.

MOVED;

SECONDED:

To amend by striking sections 6 and 7 of the recommendation and substituting the following:

~~6. To direct that the Office of the Presiding Bishop . . . :~~

~~a) . . . ;~~

~~b) . . . ;~~

~~c) . . . ; and~~

~~d) . . . ; and~~

~~7. To encourage. . . .~~

That the 2005 Churchwide Assembly postpone approval and implementation of the proposed book of worship and related worship resources until at least the 2007 Churchwide Assembly and authorize the following process under which a complete draft of any proposed materials will be prepared for study, review, and evaluation by a plurality of qualified persons including both theologians who are serving in our theological institutions as well as theologians in congregations, for faithfulness to Lutheran theology and tradition and that we direct these evaluations and the details of the proposed worship resources to be made available to all pastors and congregations at least one year before the proposed worship materials are to be considered for approval by a subsequent Churchwide Assembly.

Pr. Rooney expressed his belief that the external review process was insufficient when it came to the final draft phase of a worship book. He stated that there was nothing more important to the life of the Church than the means by which it gives glory to God, because “what we pray is what we believe, what we pray shapes what we believe.” For this reason, he argued, more attention needed to be given to the texts, the music, and indeed “the whole shape of the ritual event.” He expressed concern about the use of the response “Holy Wisdom, Holy Word” to the Scripture readings, Eucharistic prayers from other traditions that do not acknowledge the Lutheran understanding of real presence, and the lack of use of the Trinitarian formula. Such matters are not trivial, he asserted. Further discussion between theologians, bishops, pastors, and other churchwide officials was essential to this process, he declared, “if this process is to be widely and joyously accepted by a faithful and confessing church.”

Ms. Rebecca Luett [East-Central Synod of Wisconsin] spoke against the amendment. She stated that she was a minister of music and worship who thought that further delay raised financial issues, risked putting members of the team in a position of not being able to continue their participation, would leave floundering those congregations waiting for materials, causing them to go elsewhere for suitable worship resources. She considered that the amendment failed to show trust in the Churchwide Assembly and in those who had worked on the project. She stated that in the past a printed book had not been presented to voting members along with editorial privileges, and that, if it had, there would have been more than 1000 different opinions about what should be changed.

Ms. Stephanie Olson [East-Central Synod of Wisconsin] said she was in favor of the amendment for the same reasons the last speaker had spoken against it. She agreed that new materials were needed, but judged that the process was still too open-ended. She argued that people working on the project needed to be given a point of closure. She suggested that they could consult with others throughout the ELCA, and, rather than have materials trickle into congregations over the next few years, they could be presented as a whole at the 2007 Churchwide Assembly.

Mr. Steven R. Chapman [Northwest Washington Synod] spoke against the amendment, asking how it was different from what had already been discussed. He stated that it had been voted down before and he did not know why it was back.

Presiding Bishop Hanson informed the assembly that the parliamentarian had felt there was enough difference from earlier amendments that the chair had allowed the amendment but stressed that the body could overrule the chair.

The Rev. Bryan S. Anderson [Northwest Synod of Wisconsin] commented that when he had come to the Churchwide Assembly, he had been in favor of adopting *Renewing Worship*. As he took his role seriously, recognizing that he represented not only himself, he had heard enough concerns voiced that he had come to believe that waiting two more years was not unrealistic. He also quoted an unnamed voting member who had contended that in Lutheran history there had never been a hymnal that had not been presented as a finished product before an assembly was asked to take action on it, "with the exception of the ELCA and its predecessor bodies." He proposed that for those whose consciences were bound on this matter it might be wise to change the process.

The Rev. John S. Hergert [Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod] gave his opinion that the amendment represented micro-management taken to the extreme and that to bring *Renewing Worship* back for approval at a later date risked causing major debate. He felt that the amendment called into question the integrity of the work and the people who had been giving their faithful service to this church, and stated he was offended by that suggestion, adding that the integrity of those involved with the project was beyond question. In his opinion, the amendment implied that this church had not sought out qualified persons. He was convinced that there had been an open process. He urged the assembly to vote the amendment down.

Mr. Donald J. Domrath [East-Central Synod of Wisconsin] declared that he had not heard about *Renewing Worship* in his congregation, saying he felt someone had "missed the boat" in contacting congregations about the project. He expressed concern about the wording of the Nicene Creed, the Apostles' Creed, and the Lord's Prayer, which in his opinion was counter to unity in the Church. He argued for keeping the traditional words, and added his belief that what people say and sing together is what they come to believe together.

Ms. Lori Toso [La Crosse Area Synod] called the question.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To end debate.

The chair called for a vote on the motion to end debate.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

CARRIED: To end debate.

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

YES-902; NO-78

The assembly then voted on the amendment to strike and add new language.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

DEFEATED:

YES-347; NO-634

To amend by striking sections 6 and 7 of the recommendation and substituting, as follows:

~~6. To direct that the Office of the Presiding Bishop . . . :~~

~~a) . . . ;~~

~~b) . . . ;~~

~~c) . . . ; and~~

~~d) . . . ; and~~

~~7. To encourage. . . .~~

That the 2005 Churchwide Assembly postpone approval and implementation of the proposed book of worship and related worship resources until at least the 2007 Churchwide Assembly and authorize the following process under which a complete draft of any proposed materials will be prepared for study, review, and evaluation by a plurality of qualified persons including both theologians who are serving in our theological institutions as well as theologians in congregations, for faithfulness to Lutheran theology and tradition and that we direct these evaluations and the details of the proposed worship resources to be made available to all pastors and congregations at least one year before the proposed worship materials are to be considered for approval by a subsequent Churchwide Assembly.

The assembly then turned to discussion of the unamended main motion.

Ms. Dorothy M. Scholz [Metropolitan New York Synod] offered a friendly amendment to point 2, subpoint f.

MOVED;

SECONDED:

To amend by addition:

2. To urge pastors, other leaders, and all members of congregations to [. . .]

f) support this church's ministry of music in efforts to strengthen congregational singing and liturgical quality;

. . . [with the remainder of the recommendation unchanged].

Ms. Scholz explained that she was concerned that there was no language in the recommendation about the quality of music presented to congregations and hoped that these words would highlight that need.

Hearing no further discussion, Presiding Bishop Hanson called for a vote.

Moved;
Seconded;
Carried:

Yes-633; No-309

To amend by addition:

2. To urge pastors, other leaders, and all members of congregations to [. . .]
 - f) support this church's ministry of music in efforts to strengthen congregational singing and liturgical quality;
... [with the remainder of the recommendation unchanged].

Discussion then returned to the main motion as amended.

Mr. Ruben A. Mesa [Southeastern Minnesota Synod] spoke in favor, asserting that renewal of worship was critical for this church and its mission. He remarked that the worship service should speak not only to those for whom the service was already "ingrained," but also to those who visit, are new, are unchurched, and who come only on Christmas and Easter, and that they should feel the same excitement voting members felt in worship at the Churchwide Assembly. He recognized that a new book of worship was only a small part of renewing worship, which he urged members to see as a continuing, evolving process aimed at developing the best of expression of this church.

Mr. Charles E. Kalthorn [Metropolitan New York Synod] spoke against the motion, basing his opposition on the fact the recommendation gave final approval of materials to the presiding bishop's staff. He added his concern that new mission starts and new congregations would have this book as their only resource.

The Rev. George E. Keck [Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod] rose to say that he had had the honor of chairing the group that had presented *Lutheran Book of Worship (LBW)* at the assembly in Boston in 1976. He clarified that the Churchwide Assembly did not vote on any draft of that book. He commented that he kept hearing in the debate that the assembly was voting on "a book." Renewing Worship, he continued, was a whole collection of a variety of resources, and not just a book. He added by way of example that he was excited about the "life passage" rites for marriage and funerals. He stated that an assembly voting on the text of a book of worship was "foreign to our history in this church," had not been done before, and was not necessary at this point. He urged the assembly to pass the motion as presented.

The Rev. James A. Mossman [Western Iowa Synod] asked if someone could comment on the philosophy behind masculine language references to God, stating that he had not heard this addressed at the hearing he attended.

Pr. Michael Burk replied that the earlier quotation from a liturgical theologian had been a misrepresentation and that the question had been addressed at a hearing the previous day. He stated that there had been a great effort made to strike a balance and that it was not true that there was an effort to eradicate masculine references to God or to eliminate precious texts that make reference to God as Lord. He noted that the assembly had sung the name "Lord" eight times in one psalm in worship earlier that morning. He asserted that there was balance, and encouraged members to look for themselves.

Ms. Judith L. Garber [Lower Susquehanna Synod] spoke in opposition. She noted that there were many pastors, musicians, and other laypersons back home, more knowledgeable than she, who were concerned about these materials. She spoke of the importance of words, and proposed that using the words in the materials week after week would tend to "codify

them and make them the way that we understand reality.” She was concerned about what she perceived as a reluctance to use biblical words such as “Lord” and “king,” or male pronouns for God the Father. She acknowledged Pr. Burk’s contention that there was an effort to strike a balance, but felt that “the reluctance [to use masculine terminology] is overwhelming.” She reported that one man in a hearing had suggested that using “Father” to refer to God was difficult for women who had been abused by their fathers. While acknowledging the tragedy of that situation, she asserted that the Gospel is transformative, and that God the Father is the prime example of a good and loving father.

Ms. Brittani A. Seagren [Nebraska Synod] spoke in favor, saying that the purpose of the project was to put forward a new generation of worship resources for congregations. New, she commented, is not always bad. In her opinion, *Lutheran Book of Worship* belonged to a previous generation. She expressed her preference for newer, livelier music and worship that would appeal to young people.

The Rev. Victor C. Langford III [Northwest Washington Synod] noted that there had been three failed efforts to change the main motion, which indicated to him that there was substantial interest surrounding the issues of language in the new materials. Failing a change in the main motion, he asked, was there another way for resource people to hear this concern and respond to it, so members would feel they could communicate their concerns when they were unable to have them adopted as part of the main motion?

Pr. Burk responded that there continued to be opportunity to write notes, to send e-mail, and to talk to synodical bishops and the members of the Church Council. He added that the final form of the material did not rest with the project group but would be approved by the Church Council after consultation with the Conference of Bishops.

The Rev. Jeffrey P. Pedersen [South-Central Synod of Wisconsin] spoke in opposition. He asked, “Does worship need to be voted on?” He commented that his congregation had both traditional and prayer and praise worship and it had never been voted on by a Churchwide Assembly. He felt that because the work on Renewing Worship was incomplete and still in process, it raised anxiety levels. He expressed surprise that the assembly would be asked to vote on something that was not yet complete. He urged that, if indeed it need to be voted on, the work first be completed so it could be looked at, studied, and then voted upon.

The Rev. Cynthia L. Krommes [Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod] reported that when all ELCA congregations were invited to participate in the review process, her congregation had embraced that opportunity. She mentioned that there had been things they had not liked, along with things they had “adored.” She thanked the team for the Evening Prayer service, which her congregation had used ecumenically during Lent. She said it was received with great delight not only by Lutherans, but also by Roman Catholics, Episcopalians, Baptists, and Methodists and that her congregation had been pleased to be able to offer that gift to their community. She recognized that worship change was always ongoing. Pr. Krommes asserted that a congregation would undergo its own liturgical renewal and change in the context of the believers in that place. She ended by saying that her congregation’s experience had been very positive.

Ms. Lori J. Splinter [Southwest California Synod] moved the previous question.

Moved;

Seconded: To end debate.

The chair called for a vote on the motion to end debate.

**MOVED;
SECONDED;
CARRIED:**

**TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED
YES-897; NO-85**

To end debate.

Presiding Bishop Hanson called on Ms. Judith Anne Bunker, member of the Church Council, to pray prior to the vote on the Renewing Worship proposal.

Mr. Donald J. Domrath [East-Central Synod of Wisconsin] rose to a point of order. He inquired what would happen to Renewing Worship if the proposal were defeated.

Presiding Bishop Hanson responded that he could not speculate on the matter until after the assembly had acted.

Ms. Bunker led the assembly in prayer, and the chair called upon the assembly to vote.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

YES-740; NO-252

CA05.03.05

1. To commit the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to continuing steps toward the renewal of worship, trusting in the guidance and gifts of God for the ongoing life of faith through the means of grace;
2. To urge pastors, other leaders, and all members of congregations to focus on the central importance of the means of grace and, thereby, seek to:
 - a) deepen understanding of the biblical and confessional basis of worship;
 - b) support those who are called to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ through preaching in the worshiping assembly;
 - c) provide mutual encouragement for the celebration of the Lord's Supper every Sunday;
 - d) deepen understanding of and commitment to involvement of the congregation in the baptismal promises;
 - e) strive to recover the central importance of Sunday in celebration of Christ's resurrection;
 - f) support this church's ministry of music in efforts to strengthen congregational singing and liturgical quality;
3. To urge pastors, other leaders, and all members of congregations to foster awareness of the relationship of worship with formation in the faith and, thereby, seek to:

- a) practice the participatory nature of worship and pray for those who preside, looking to them for leadership on behalf of the assembly and for grace in sharing that leadership when appropriate;
 - b) nurture and train good presiders and preachers, relying especially upon the seminaries of this church to explore how the curricula prepare all rostered leaders for their respective roles in worship;
 - c) search for ways to nurture and shape Christian assemblies that are richly participatory;
 - d) foster the understanding that congregations are catechizing and teaching communities;
 - e) encourage the biblical formation of people by affirming this church's recommendation of the Revised Common Lectionary for use in worship;
 - f) work cooperatively to identify needs for educational materials that increase understanding of worship;
4. To urge pastors, other leaders, and all members of congregations to strengthen the focus of mission in the worshipping assembly and, thereby, seek to:
- a) demonstrate trust that the gathering is part of the unfolding purpose of God;
 - b) see Christ's presence in the means of grace as invitation to and motivation for practicing hospitality, embracing diversity, striving for justice, caring for creation, and sharing of the Good News;
 - c) join more fully in this church's commitment to becoming an increasingly diverse, multicultural, and multi-generational body; and
 - d) recognize that unity in Word and Sacrament informs conversations on difficult issues within congregations, synods, and the larger church;
5. To acknowledge with gratitude the widespread participation of members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in the Renewing Worship project, including individuals, congregations, pastors, musicians, teaching theologians, synods, the Conference of Bishops, members of the Church Council, churchwide boards and committees, and institutions and agencies in the development of provisional resources, the testing and responding to proposals,

- participation in worship events, and engagement of congregations on issues related to worship;
6. To direct that the Office of the Presiding Bishop through worship staff:
 - a) complete the liturgical review of proposed content of a new book of worship in accordance with established policy;
 - b) work collaboratively with synods, appropriate churchwide units, and institutions and agencies of this church on further development of worship resources to meet the evolving mission needs of this church, with special attention to the Strategy for Evangelism, as approved by the 2003 Churchwide Assembly, and this church's multicultural commitments and strategies;
 - c) commit to ecumenical cooperation in the development of worship resources when possible and appropriate; and
 - d) seek to foster continuing support—both human and financial—for ongoing resources, events, and projects for the renewal of worship throughout this church; and
 7. To encourage all congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to reflect on this church's gathering by Word and Sacrament; and to invite study together of *With the Whole Church* as a resource for deepening awareness of the significance of worship in the life of each believer.

The motion was adopted. Presiding Bishop Hanson asked the assembly to join him in thanking those who had worked on the project, especially Pr. Burk. The assembly responded with applause. The assembly then sang the hymn, "O God, Our Help in Ages Past."

Reports of the Treasurer and the Mission Investment Fund

Reference: 2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section II, pages 23–57; Section III, pages 109–129.

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson announced that the assembly would hear next the report of the treasurer of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

The Rev. Lori M. Ruge-Jones [Southwestern Texas Synod] rose to a point of privilege. She said that the assembly had been told it would receive amendments to the sexuality recommendations that morning and asked when the assembly would receive those copies.

Presiding Bishop Hanson asked if the question could be answered after the treasurer's report so that he might have time to confer with those who could respond on this matter. Pr. Ruge-Jones agreed to the delay.

Ms. Stephanie Olson [East-Central Synod of Wisconsin] rose to a point of order, saying she had the same question and also wondered in what order the amendments would be acted upon.

Presiding Bishop Hanson responded that the subject would be addressed later. He expressed his desire to avoid debate on this topic while he was trying to return to the orders of the day.

The Rev. James M. Culver Jr. [Indiana-Kentucky Synod] rose to a point of personal privilege to comment on the vote just taken on Renewing Worship. The chair did not allow the privilege.

Presiding Bishop Hanson then welcomed Ms. Christina Jackson-Skelton to the podium for the report of the treasurer. He praised Ms. Jackson-Skelton for her ability to look at finances and budgets in terms of mission and for reminding this church continually of that important focus.

Treasurer Jackson-Skelton began by reporting that the ELCA had completed fiscal years 2003 and 2004 with revenue exceeding expenses in current budgeted operations. She pointed out that the complete audited report was included in the *2005 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section II, exhibit A, beginning on page 27. She then used figures projected on the screens to help with her report.

First, she pointed out that total current fund operating income for the churchwide organization increased from \$80.8 million in 2003 to \$81.3 million in 2004, while expenses related to those funds were \$80.3 million in 2003 and \$76.8 million in 2004, which resulted in favorable operating income in both fiscal years. Revenue minus expense before budgeted items resulted in a surplus of approximately \$500,000 in 2003 and \$4.5 million in 2004. The favorable operating results allowed the Church Council to approve in April 2005 Presiding Bishop Hanson's request for \$4.5 million for additional mission. Those funds would be used to strengthen core ministry commitments of this church, including leadership development (\$2.6 million), introduction of new primary worship resources (\$900,000), development and renewal of congregations (\$500,000), ministry among people living in poverty (\$400,000), and a churchwide strategy for engagement in Israel and Palestine (\$100,000).

Second, Ms. Jackson-Skelton called attention to the fact that mission support contributions from congregations through synods for current operating funds of the churchwide organization decreased from \$66.4 million in 2003 to \$65.6 million in 2004. This was the fourth straight year of flat or decreased mission support, following six consecutive years of increases. Other revenue, which in 2004 represented about 19 percent of total funds for operations—including income from missionary sponsorship, bequests and trusts, endowment, Women of the ELCA, Vision for Mission appeal, fraternal grants, and the Mission Investment Fund of the ELCA—increased from 2003 to 2004 by \$1.4 million. Ms. Jackson-Skelton used a pie chart to show that 81 percent of operating income came from mission-support contributions from congregations.

Third, she stated that giving to the general World Hunger Appeal declined from 2003 to 2004 by \$300,000 to \$16.2 million. Another \$2.2 million was received over the two-year period for the "Stand with Africa" campaign.

The ELCA Disaster Response received \$3.5 million in 2003 and \$10.5 million in 2004; nearly 50 percent of the 2004 giving was for South Asia tsunami relief (\$5 million) and hurricane relief (\$2.1 million). She also noted that this generous response had continued in 2005 and that the total given for South Asian tsunami relief in 2004 and 2005 was \$10.8 million.

Ms. Jackson-Skelton stated that the goal for the operating budget was to operate with a modest surplus each year and that this had been accomplished for the past 14 years. In 2004, expenses were adjusted downward by \$3.9 million in order to align spending with anticipated revenue, but more income was received than expected. Expenses currently were well within budget and the picture was favorable. World Hunger receipts of \$5.2 million in the first five months were up \$400,000 over the previous year in the same period, and the “Stand with Africa” campaign had received \$148,000 in those five months. She cautioned that timing differences could account for significant fluctuations, however, and that it was important to note that the financial picture could change considerably by year’s end.

She mentioned that an area of growing concern was the recent decline in mission-support contributions, with the flat or declining trend of the previous four years continuing in 2005, and synod projections for 2006 again below expected levels. At the same time, operating costs continued to increase, and further significant reductions in infrastructure costs would become more difficult to identify, which would result in cuts in churchwide programs and reduced operations, including staff. Rising health care costs continued to have a significant impact on budgets of congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization, she added. Recent adjustments in actuarial estimates had resulted in a budget decrease of \$1.5 million in the funding obligation for post-retirement subsidies. In the 2005 budget, those funds were redirected for one-time grants to ecumenical and institutional partners (\$815,000); one-time grants to emerging churches in the global Lutheran family of churches (\$100,000); and a contingency fund to be allocated once revenue projections were validated (\$900,000). In summary, she said, if balanced budgets were to continue, this church would need to increase revenue and decrease costs.

Ms. Jackson-Skelton indicated that a video about the ministry of the Mission Investment Fund (MIF) would be shown and that the Rev. Arnold O. Pierson, vice president for church relations and communications for the Mission Investment Fund, would give a brief financial picture of the MIF.

Following the video, Pr. Pierson reported the dramatic increase in the MIF in the past biennium. He noted that the fund had increased from \$171 million total assets in 1988 to \$498 million in 2005. In 1988, investments had totaled \$66 million; by 2003, investments had reached \$267 million. Currently investments totaled \$313 million, a \$46 million increase in the previous two years alone. But most important, Pr. Pierson continued, were the ministries made possible by the use of these funds. In 2005, new low-interest loans were expected to total \$300 million, representing more than 600 loans for capital projects for new missions and established congregations. Extremely favorable loan rates were made possible by invested dollars from individuals, congregations, synods, and ELCA-related organizations, with loans for land for initial church building at 0 percent for the first two years, followed by five more years at 2 percent. The interest rate for the initial building itself was at 3 percent for seven years. These rates allowed new mission starts to free money and resources for ministry.

Congregational and synodical investments amounted to \$163 million; individual investments totaled \$91 million; and investments by ELCA-affiliated organizations came to \$54 million. One in three ELCA congregations held an investment in the fund, Pr. Pierson reported, but less than one half of one percent of ELCA households were mission investors. Pr. Pierson informed the assembly that investors could earn interest through many different investment opportunities through the fund and help build the church at the same time. He thanked everyone involved in the MIF, saying that investors were providing “both space and

place for witness and worship in the name of Jesus Christ.” He continued, “You are helping build this church while sharing the faith,” and commented that support had been outstanding. Pr. Pierson invited others to join in this vital ministry.

Consideration of Constitution and Bylaw Amendments: En Bloc Regular Amendments

Reference: 2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section IV, pages 51–61; Section V, pages 45–47.

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson announced that the assembly would take up next proposed amendments to the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* that had come as recommendations from the Church Council. He explained that there were two separate *en bloc* actions that would be taken up sequentially. Following those actions, he said that the assembly would address one of the provisions that had been removed from *en bloc* consideration because it affected elections taking place the following day. The presiding bishop called Secretary Lowell G. Almen and the Rev. Kenneth M. Rupp, chair of the Church Council’s Legal and Constitutional Committee, to the podium.

Pr. Rupp explained that some of the proposed changes were editorial in nature, while others clarified content, simplified text, or eliminated duplication. He added that some of the proposed amendments emerged from the strategic planning process and involved reorganization of the churchwide organization. A six-month notice to synods of such amendments was required and had been given in accordance with ELCA 22.11.b.

He went on to remind voting members that the amendments had been distributed in the *2005 Pre-Assembly Report*. Because they were amendments to the constitution and bylaws, passage would require a two-thirds majority. He added that the text of such constitutional amendments could not be altered because of the requirement of notice, a provision of non-profit law in Minnesota, the state in which the ELCA is incorporated.

Pr. Rupp stated that bylaws could be adopted by the Churchwide Assembly by a two-thirds majority without any requirement of a six-month advance notice. Bylaws, however, cannot conflict with ELCA constitutional provisions. Bylaw amendments had been submitted to the assembly by the Church Council.

He noted that the next set of amendments involved the *Constitution for Synods*, and that the amendment process followed the same pattern as for ELCA constitutional amendments, as per ELCA provision 10.13. A final set of amendments would affect the *Model Constitution for Congregations*. ELCA governing documents require that amendments to that document be made in the same manner prescribed for bylaws of this church.

Pr. Rupp stated that these amendments had been submitted to the Churchwide Assembly by the Church Council, which favored their adoption.

The chair then called upon Secretary Almen to identify the amendments to be removed from *en bloc* consideration. Secretary Almen reported that there was no request for removal from this section and, therefore, the recommendation was presented as printed for approval.

MOVED;

SECONDED:

To adopt *en bloc*, with the exception of such amendments as may be considered separately, the following amendments to the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*; and

To authorize and direct the secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to edit cross-references in the governing documents for consistency with the adopted amendments.

Presiding Bishop Hanson reminded the assembly that the motion would require a two-thirds majority to adopt, and called for the vote.

ASSEMBLY

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

ACTION

YES-805; NO-56

CA05.03.06

To adopt *en bloc*, with the exception of such amendments as may be considered separately, the following amendments to the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*; and

To authorize and direct the secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to edit cross-references in the governing documents for consistency with the adopted amendments.

To amend bylaw 7.31.16. to provide for the possibility of “on-leave” status for family responsibilities, as previously requested in memorials and resolutions from several synods:

7.31.16. On Leave from Call. An ordained minister of this church, serving under a regularly issued letter of call, who leaves the work of that ministry without accepting another regularly issued letter of call, may be retained on the roster of ordained ministers of this church, upon endorsement by the synodical bishop, by action of the Synod Council in the synod of which the ordained minister is a member, under policy developed by the ~~Division for Ministry~~ appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council.

- a. Normative Pattern: ~~Thereafter,~~ **b** By annual action of the Synod Council in the synod of which a member, upon endorsement by the synodical bishop, an ordained minister who is without a current letter of call may be retained on the roster of ordained ministers of this church for a maximum of three years beginning at the completion of an active call. ~~Exception to this limit for the purpose of serving the needs of this church may be granted by the Synod Council in the synod of current roster after having received approval by the Conference of Bishops.~~
- b. Study Leave: By annual action of the Synod Council in the synod of which a member, with the

approval of the synodical bishop and in consultation with the ~~Division for Ministry~~ appropriate churchwide unit, an ordained minister engaged in graduate study, in a field of study that will enhance service in the ordained ministry, may be retained on the roster of ordained ministers of this church for a maximum of six years. ~~Exception to this limit for the purpose of serving the needs of this church may be granted by the Synod Council in the synod of current roster after having received approval by the Conference of Bishops.~~

- c. Family Leave: An ordained minister who has been in active service under call for at least three years may request leave for family responsibilities. By annual action of the Synod Council in the synod of which a member, upon endorsement by the synodical bishop, such an ordained minister who is without a current letter of call and who requests leave for the birth or care of a child or children of the ordained minister or the care of an immediate family member (child, spouse, or parent) with a serious health condition may be retained on the roster of ordained ministers of this church—under policy developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council—for a maximum of six years beginning at the completion of an active call.
- d. Exception to these limits for the purpose of serving the needs of this church may be granted in accordance with established policy of this church by the Synod Council in the synod of current roster after having received approval by the Conference of Bishops.

To amend bylaw 7.52.22. to provide for the possibility of “on-leave” status for family responsibilities, as previously requested in memorials and resolutions from several synods:

- 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 appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council.

- a. **Normative Pattern:** ~~Thereafter,~~ **By annual action of the Synod Council in the synod of which a member, upon endorsement by the synodical bishop, an associate in ministry, deaconess, or diaconal minister who is without a current letter of call may be retained on the roster of associates in ministry, deaconesses, or diaconal ministers of this church for a maximum of three years beginning at the completion of an active call. Exception to this limit for the purpose of serving the needs of this church may be granted by the Synod Council of current roster after having received approval by the Conference of Bishops:**
- b. **Study Leave:** By annual action by the Synod Council in the synod of which a member, with the approval of the synodical bishop and in consultation with the ~~Division for Ministry~~ **appropriate churchwide unit**, an associate in ministry, deaconess, or diaconal minister engaged in graduate study appropriate for service in this church may be retained on the roster of associates in ministry, deaconesses, or diaconal ministers of this church for a maximum of six years. ~~Exception to this limit for the purpose of serving the needs of this church may be granted by the Synod Council in the synod of current roster after having received approval by the Conference of Bishops:~~
- c. **Family Leave:** **An associate in ministry, deaconess, or diaconal minister who has been in active service under call for at least three years may request leave for family responsibilities. By annual action of the Synod Council in the synod of which a member, upon endorsement by the synodical bishop, such a rostered layperson who is without a current letter of call and who requests leave for the birth or care of a child or children of the rostered layperson or the care of an immediate family member (child, spouse, or parent) with a serious health condition may be retained on the roster of associates in ministry, deaconesses, or diaconal ministers of this church—under policy developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council—for a maximum of six years beginning at the completion of an active call.**

- d. Exception to these limits for the purpose of serving the needs of this church may be granted in accordance with established policy of this church by the Synod Council in the synod of current roster after having received approval by the Conference of Bishops.

To add a new section heading and bylaw to provide the cross-reference to the applicable bylaws that govern exchangeability of ordained ministers under full-communion agreements:

7.31.20. Invitation to Service

7.31.21. In accord with bylaw 8.72.11. and following, an ordained minister of a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been established by the Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America may serve contractually in a ministry setting of this church under a “Letter of Invitation to Service” upon the authorization of the bishop of the synod in which such service occurs.

To amend provision 7.41. to refer to responsibility of the “appropriate churchwide unit” in the reference on policy development:

- 7.41. Letters of Call. Letters of call to ordained ministers of this church or properly approved candidates for this church’s roster of ordained ministers shall be issued in keeping with this church’s constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions as well as policies regarding such calls developed by the ~~Division for Ministry~~ appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and approved by the Church Council.**

To amend bylaw 7.41.17. for greater clarity in format and to address particular circumstances of congregation membership for retired ordained ministers:

- 7.41.17. Retirement. 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 may be designated as disabled, 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.**
- a. 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~~ appropriate churchwide unit,**

reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council.

- b. If an ordained minister who has been granted retired status resides at too great a distance from any congregation of this church to be able to sustain an active relationship with that congregation, the bishop of the synod in which the ordained minister is listed on the roster may grant permission for the ordained minister to hold membership in a congregation or parish of a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

To amend bylaw 7.51.03. to follow the pattern of 7.51.04. in regard to the standards and criteria for service of associates in ministry:

- 7.51.03. Associates in Ministry. This church shall maintain a lay roster of associates in ministry of those commissioned—according to the standards, criteria, policies, and procedures of this church—for such service within the life of this church. The roster of associates in ministry, in addition to those listed in bylaw 7.51.02., shall be composed of:
- a. those certified during the period of January 1, 1988, through September 1, 1993, as associates in ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and
 - b. those who are approved, subsequent to September 1, 1993, as associates in ministry in this church according to ~~the standards, criteria, and requirements of this church, as defined herein and in~~ policies and procedures developed by the ~~Division for Ministry~~ appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council.
 - c. Upon receipt and acceptance of a valid, regularly issued letter of call, a newly approved candidate shall be commissioned, according to the proper service orders of this church, as an associate in ministry.

. . . [with the remainder of bylaw unchanged].

To amend bylaw 7.52.24. for greater clarity in format and to address particular circumstances of congregation membership for retired associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers:

- 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 may be designated as disabled, 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.

- a. 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~~ appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council.
- b. If an associate in ministry, deaconess, or diaconal minister who has been granted retired status resides at too great a distance from any congregation of this church to be able to sustain an active relationship with that congregation, the bishop of the synod in which the associate in ministry, deaconess, or diaconal minister is listed on the roster may grant permission for the individual to hold membership in a congregation or parish of a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

To amend bylaw 7.61.01. to simplify the language for greater clarity in regard to its intended meaning:

- 7.61.01. When need exists to render Word and Sacrament ministry for a congregation or ministry of this church where it is not possible to provide appropriate ordained pastoral leadership, the synodical bishop—acting with the consent of the congregation or ministry, in consultation with the Synod Council, and in accord with standards and qualifications developed by the ~~Division for Ministry~~ appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and approved by the Church Council—may authorize a person ~~rostered in other rostered ministry, or a non-rostered person~~ who is a member of a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to offer this ministry... *[with the remainder of the bylaw unchanged].*

To delete provision 8.21. because matters related to regions are addressed in Chapter 18 and the language of the provision is inconsistent with provision 18.01.; and to renumber provision 8.22. as 8.21.:

- 8.21. ~~The regions shall serve to foster interdependent relationships among the churchwide organization, the~~

~~synods, and the congregations and to assist them in exercising their mutual responsibilities.~~

- ~~8.22.~~ Conferences, clusters, coalitions, or other area subdivisions shall serve to assist the congregations and synods in exercising their mutual responsibilities.

To amend provision 8.31. and the following bylaws to clarify the existing and continuing relationship of this church to the eight seminaries, in accord with the governing documents of this church and the articles of incorporation and bylaws of the seminaries:

- 8.31. ~~Seminaries. This church shall own, govern, and support sponsor, support, and provide for oversight of seminaries for the preparation of persons for the ordained and other ministries and for continuing study on the part of ordained ministers and laypersons.~~

- 8.31.01. Each seminary shall be a seminary of this church, shall be incorporated, and shall be governed by its board of directors consistent with policies established by the ~~Division for Ministry Church Council~~. Amendments to the governing documents of each seminary and each seminary cluster shall be submitted, upon recommendation of the appropriate unit of the churchwide organization, to the Church Council for approval.

- 8.31.02. The board of directors of each seminary shall be nominated and elected to terms as specified in the governing documents of the respective seminaries in cooperation with the seminary involved, and shall consist of 20-30 members, elected as follows:

- a. At least one-fifth by the Division for Ministry nominated, in consultation with the seminaries, by the appropriate churchwide unit and elected by the Church Council;
- b. Two members elected by the bishops of the supporting synods from among their number; and
- c. The remaining members elected by the supporting synods, in consultation with the seminaries ~~The , with the number to be elected by each synod and the length of the term shall be set forth in the governing documents of the seminary.~~

Elections shall be so arranged that the terms of all directors of any given seminary elected in any year shall commence simultaneously.

- 8.31.03. In accordance with the governing documents of each seminary, the board of directors shall elect the president of the seminary in consultation with the presiding bishop

of this church and the appropriate unit of the churchwide organization as designated by the Church Council ~~board of the Division for Ministry~~, elect and retain faculty and administrative officers, and approve educational policies and programs for persons preparing for public ministry. The board shall exercise all other normal governance functions, including the granting of degrees, holding title to and managing all seminary property and assets, receiving gifts and bequests, establishing salaries for faculty and administrative officers, providing for the financial resources and fiscal contracts required to operate the seminary, and shall have authority to recruit students throughout this church.

- 8.31.04. The seminaries shall receive churchwide and synodical financial support. The amount of such support shall be determined ~~annually~~ through a consultation process involving seminaries, synods, and the appropriate unit of the churchwide organization as designated by the Church Council ~~Division for Ministry~~.
- 8.31.05. To implement financial support by this church, synods shall be assigned to specific seminaries in such manner as to attain equitable distribution of synods. Normally, all synods in a given region will be assigned to one seminary. Churchwide funds shall be distributed according to a formula developed by the appropriate churchwide unit and approved by the Division for Ministry Church Council, ~~in order to ensure equitable financial support~~.
- 8.31.06. Seminaries shall provide their remaining financial requirements through tuition, fees, endowment income, and fund-raising programs. Fund-raising in the congregations of supporting synods, however, shall be conducted only upon approval of the synods. ~~Funds for special churchwide tasks assigned to a seminary by the Division for Ministry shall be raised through the cooperative effort of the seminary and the Division for Ministry.~~
- 8.31.07. Aid to students preparing for the ministries of this church shall be administered by the seminaries under guidelines ~~established by the Division for Ministry~~ developed by the appropriate churchwide units in consultation with the presidents of the seminaries and adopted by the Church Council.

To amend provision 8.32. and following on the relationship of this church and the churchwide organization to colleges and universities of this church:

- 8.32. Colleges and Universities. This church shall express its responsibility for higher education through its colleges

and universities, ~~its Division for Higher Education and Schools~~ the appropriate churchwide unit as determined by the Church Council, and its synods. While variation is possible in college or university relationships across this church, this church recognizes the desirability of some degree of uniformity of relationship for colleges and universities within the same region. ~~Therefore, synods shall determine initial policies and thereafter review periodically such policies consistent with recommendations from the board of the Division for Higher Education and Schools and in consultation with that board and the colleges and universities within the region with respect to and consistent with the bylaws, as set forth herein.~~

To renumber continuing resolution 8.32.A97. as bylaw 8.32.01. on the relationship of this church with its colleges and universities:

~~8.32.A97.~~

8.32.01. The relationship of this church to its colleges and universities shall be guided by policies fostering educational institutions dedicated to the Lutheran tradition wherein such institutions are an essential part of God's mission in the world; faithful to the will of God as institutions providing quality instruction in religion and a lively ministry of worship, outreach, and service; diligent in their preparation of leaders committed to truth, excellence, and ethical values; and pledged to the well-being of students in the development of mind, body, and spirit.

To amend existing bylaw 8.32.01. and to insert existing bylaw 8.32.06. into 8.32.02. as follows:

~~8.32.01.~~

8.32.02. Colleges and universities of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America may relate to this church in various ways. A variety of relationship patterns is possible including relationship with the Churchwide Assembly, the Division for Higher Education and Schools, a synodical assembly, or a corporation whose voting members are, or have been elected by, synodical assemblies, other organizational units (conferences, clusters, etc.), or congregations. ~~8.32.06.~~ Subject to approval by the appropriate synods, a college or university may be owned by a not-for-profit corporation (1) that has voting members, at least 90 percent of whom shall consist of members of the biennial Churchwide Assembly, and (2) that shall hold the biennial meeting of such a corporation.

Meetings of such corporations shall be held in conjunction with the Churchwide Assembly for the purpose of electing or ratifying members of the governing board and approving amendments to the governing documents. At least 60 percent of the members of the governing boards of such the corporations that meet in conjunction with the Churchwide Assembly shall be members of this church.

To renumber existing bylaw 8.32.02. as 8.32.03., to insert existing bylaw 8.32.02. into revised 8.32.03., and to amend bylaws 8.32.04. and 8.32.05. to include references to the universities of this church:

~~8.32.02.~~

8.32.03. Primary responsibility for recruiting members for its board belongs to each college or university of this church. This responsibility is best exercised when appropriate structures of this church are substantially involved. ~~8.32.03.~~ The college or university and the appropriate synods shall determine how many of the college or university board members are to be elected or ratified by the approved form of relationship as provided in ~~8.32.01.~~ 8.32.02.

8.32.04. The responsibility for initiating changes in constitutional documents rests with each college or university of this church. Each college or university will reach agreement with the appropriate structures of this church as identified in ~~8.32.01.~~ 8.32.02. regarding changes in constitutional documents. This church's participation may range from prior consultation to final approval.

8.32.05. Representation of members of this church on college or university boards, limitation of terms for board members, whether or not college or university presidents shall be members of this church, and representation of bishops of synods on college or university boards shall be determined by each college institution and the appropriate synods.

To amend existing bylaw 8.33.01. to acknowledge the role of the Church Council in determination of unit relationships with Lutheran Services in America:

8.33.01. Through its ~~Division for Church in Society and its membership in Lutheran Services in America~~ and the appropriate churchwide unit as designated by the Church Council, this church shall, with affiliated social ministry organizations, develop criteria for their ministries, establish affiliations and alliances within this church and within society, and carry out a comprehensive social ministry witness.

To renumber section 8.40. as 8.60. for a more orderly sequence of the provisions in the chapter; to renumber 8.41. as 8.61., 8.41.01. as 8.61.01., 8.41.02. as 8.61.02.; to renumber section 8.60. as 8.40. and 8.61. as 8.41.; and to amend existing bylaw 8.61.01. as 8.41.01. to clarify the point of relationship of special interest conferences with the churchwide organization:

~~8.61.01.~~

8.41.01. Because of both official and informal international contacts with other churches, the Batak Special Interest Conference of North America, Danish Special Interest Conference, Finnish (Suomi) Special Interest Conference, German Lutheran Conference in North America, and Hungarian Special Interest Conference shall relate to this church ~~through the Department for Ecumenical Affairs~~ under the authority of the presiding bishop of this church through an executive or designated unit as determined by the presiding bishop. Official contacts and relationships of the special interest conferences with leaders and representatives of other churches shall be coordinated through the ~~Department for Ecumenical Affairs~~ Office of the Presiding Bishop.

To amend section heading 8.50.; to amend constitutional provision 8.51. by substituting a revised text with the essential substance of continuing resolution 8.51.A95.; and to delete bylaw 8.51.01. because the matter is addressed in a bylaw related to the Church Council:

8.50. RELATIONSHIP WITH ~~INDEPENDENT~~ OTHER LUTHERAN ORGANIZATIONS

8.51. This church shall not, in any manner, be responsible for the debts or liabilities of other may relate to independent Lutheran organizations, institutions, or agencies, whether independent of or affiliated with this church.

~~8.51.01. This church, through the secretary of this church and action of the Church Council, shall establish the general policies to govern official relationships with independent Lutheran organizations that seek to relate with this church while maintaining their independence and autonomy.~~

~~8.51.A95. This church shall not, in any manner, be responsible for nor liable for the actions of any independent Lutheran organization.~~

To amend provision 8.72. to clarify the source of policies and procedures for church-to-church relationships:

8.72. Policies and procedures to implement church-to-church relationships of full communion established by action of a Churchwide Assembly may be recommended by the

appropriate officer or churchwide unit ~~the board of an appropriate division~~, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council.

To amend bylaws 8.72.11. and 8.72.12. to provide for the appropriate unit cross-reference:

8.72.11. An ordained minister of this church, serving temporarily in a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by a Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, may be retained on the roster of ordained ministers—upon endorsement by the synodical bishop and by action of the Synod Council in the synod in which the ordained minister is listed on the roster—under policy developed by the Division for Ministry at the direction of the presiding bishop and secretary, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council.
[Remainder of bylaw unchanged.]

8.72.12. An ordained minister of a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by a Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America may be authorized by the synodical bishop to serve in a congregation or employing entity of this church. Such service shall be rendered under a contract between the congregation or employing entity and the ordained minister in a form proposed by the synodical bishop and approved by the congregation or employing entity. Any such service shall be in accord with churchwide policies developed by the Division for Ministry at the direction of the presiding bishop and secretary, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

To amend bylaws 9.91.01. and 9.91.02. in regard to the reference to the appropriate unit for consultation:

9.91.01. A federated congregation. . . *[first section of bylaw unchanged]*.
a. The plan of agreement shall follow, as clearly as is practicable, the model provisions developed by the secretary of this church, in after consultation with the Division for Outreach appropriate churchwide unit or units and Conference of Bishops, and approved by the Church Council, and such a plan of

agreement shall be subject to the constitutions of each church body involved.

...

- d. Implementation of the plan of agreement of a federated congregation shall be guided by policies and procedures developed in consultation with the appropriate churchwide unit or units by the ~~Division for Outreach~~ Office of the Secretary, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and approved by the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

[with the remainder unchanged].

9.91.02. A union congregation. . . *[first section of bylaw unchanged].*

- a. The plan of agreement of a union congregation shall follow, as clearly as is practicable, the model provisions of such a plan of agreement developed by the secretary of this church, in after consultation with the ~~Division for Outreach~~ appropriate churchwide unit or units and Conference of Bishops, and approved by the Church Council, and such a plan of agreement for a union congregation shall be subject to the constitutions of each church body involved.

...

- d. Implementation of the plan of agreement of a union congregation shall be guided by policies and procedures developed in consultation with the appropriate churchwide unit or units by the ~~Division for Outreach~~ Office of the Secretary, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and approved by the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

[with the remainder unchanged].

To amend bylaw 10.02.03. to reflect more accurately the process for the development of such criteria and procedures:

10.02.03. Within the territory of each geographic synod, the synod—in keeping with criteria, policies, and procedures proposed by the ~~Division for Outreach~~ secretary of this church, after consultation with the appropriate churchwide unit or units, and approved by the Church Council—may acknowledge certain authorized worshiping communities such as developing ministries, preaching points, or chapels as related to the synod and part of the synod's life and mission. Such authorized

worshiping communities of the synod shall accept and adhere to the Confession of Faith and Statement of Purpose of this church, shall be served by leadership under the criteria of this church, and shall be subject to the discipline of this church.

To amend churchwide bylaw 10.41.04. and S7.26. in the Constitution for Synods to provide for the possibility of representation of persons from forming congregations in Synod Assemblies:

10.41.04. Synods may establish processes that permit representatives of mission settings formed with the intent of becoming chartered congregations and authorized worshiping communities of the synod, under bylaw 10.02.03., to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with bylaw 10.41.01.

S7.26. This synod may establish processes through the Synod Council that permit representatives of mission settings formed with the intent of becoming chartered congregations and authorized worshiping communities of the synod, which have been authorized under ELCA bylaw 10.02.03., to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with †S7.21. ~~Such authorized~~ Authorized worshiping communities, acknowledged under criteria, policies, and procedures ~~of the ELCA Division for Outreach and~~ approved by the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, shall accept and adhere to the Confession of Faith and Statement of Purpose of this church, shall be served by leadership under the criteria of this church, and shall be subject to the discipline of this church.

To delete provision 10.64. because the matters related to regions are addressed in Chapter 18:

~~**10.64.** Each synod shall elect or appoint representatives to the steering committee of the region.~~

To amend provision 11.34. to simplify the description and definition; to combine part of provision 11.35. with amended provision 11.34.; and to delete the number 11.35. as a separate provision:

11.34. The churchwide organization shall carry out its duties through functional elements known as units, ~~known as offices, divisions, commissions, and other churchwide units.~~ Departments shall be sub-units within offices, divisions, and other units that shall accomplish particular

~~responsibilities as part of the respective unit's overall functions on behalf of this church. 11.35. Each unit shall be governed by a board, an advisory committee, a steering committee, or a committee of the Church Council.~~

To delete provision 11.36. as unnecessary because the matter is addressed in provision 11.21.p.:

11.36. The churchwide organization shall provide a disciplinary process and an appeal process.

To adopt a new bylaw as 12.12.01. to specify the required margin of vote for the adoption of a social statement of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:

12.12.01. A social statement, which is developed by the appropriate churchwide unit and presented to the Churchwide Assembly as a proposed social statement of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, shall require for adoption a vote of two-thirds of those voting members present and voting in a Churchwide Assembly. The text of a proposed social statement shall be approved and recommended to the assembly by the Church Council.

To amend bylaw 12.41.11. to increase the number of voting members in the Churchwide Assembly by 75, reestablishing the size of the assembly in the initial years of this church's operation:

12.41.11. Each synod shall elect one voting member of the Churchwide Assembly for every ~~6,500~~ 5,800 baptized members in the synod. . .
[with remainder of bylaw unchanged].

To adopt a new bylaw 12.41.22. related to participation by synodical vice presidents as voting members in the Churchwide Assembly:

12.41.22. Unless otherwise determined by the synod, the synodical vice president shall serve as a voting member of the Churchwide Assembly.

To amend provision 13.21.h. and l. to clarify the text because the presiding bishop convenes various executive groups for coordination of churchwide programs:

13.21. This church shall have a presiding bishop who, as its pastor, shall be a teacher of the faith of this church and shall provide leadership for the life and witness of this

church. The presiding bishop shall be an ordained minister of this church. The presiding bishop may be male or female, as may all other officers of this church. The presiding bishop shall:

...

h. Coordinate and supervise the work of executives of churchwide units. Convene a Cabinet of Executives for common counsel and coordination. The cabinet shall meet at least quarterly at the call of the presiding bishop. The cabinet shall be composed of the officers, the executive for administration, the assistants to the presiding bishop, the executive directors of the churchwide units, directors of the departments related to the presiding bishop, and the editor of the church periodical.

...

i. Serve as an advisory member, with voice but not vote, on all committees of this church and all boards or committees of ~~divisions, commissions, and other~~ churchwide units, or designate a person to serve as the presiding bishop's representative.

To amend bylaw 13.41.02.a. and f. to delete references no longer needed and to add an additional item concerning the established pattern for reference services:

13.41.02. The secretary shall:

a. Be responsible for the minutes and records of the Churchwide Assembly, Church Council, Executive Committee, Conference of Bishops, and Cabinet of Executives, and shall receive complete minutes for permanent record of all boards and ~~advisory and steering~~ committees of the churchwide organization.

...

f. Be responsible for the archives of this church; ~~including provision for an Archives Advisory Committee.~~

...

j. Provide library and reference services for the churchwide office.

To amend provision 14.15. in regard to the Church Council's responsibilities for election:

14.15. The Church Council shall fulfill responsibilities for elections as provided in the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America ~~elect advisory committee and steering committee members~~ and, in the event that a vacancy on the council

or on a board or committee of the churchwide organization is declared by the secretary of this church, the Church Council shall elect a member to serve the balance of the term.

To adopt a new constitutional provision 14.16. to provide for a course of action in the unusual circumstance in which a need develops for the removal from office of a member of the Church Council:

14.16. The Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America may remove for cause a voting member of the Church Council, other than an officer, at a duly held regular meeting by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the voting members of the Church Council, provided that at least 30 days written notice shall be given to each voting member of the Church Council that removal of a specific member of the Church Council will be on the agenda for such a meeting. The Church Council may remove an advisory member for cause, provided notice has been given as specified in this provision, by a majority vote of the voting members of the council.

To amend bylaw 14.21.01. to reflect its application to all churchwide units:

14.21.01. The Church Council shall act on the policies proposed by churchwide units, ~~boards~~ subject to review by the Churchwide Assembly.

To incorporate bylaw 16.11.32. as an addition to existing bylaw 14.21.02. to group together for clarity these responsibilities of the Church Council:

14.21.02. The Church Council shall review the procedures and programs of the churchwide units to assure that churchwide purposes, policies, and objectives are being fulfilled. ~~16.11.32.~~ Each ~~board~~ unit shall recommend policy and develop strategies in its particular areas of responsibility after consultation with other units of the churchwide organization and affected synods, congregations, agencies, and institutions.

- a. Policies related to the day-to-day functioning of the unit or to the specific responsibilities of the unit that have no implications for other units, congregations, synods, agencies, or institutions may be ~~adopted by the board~~ approved by the unit, subject to ratification by the Church Council.
- b. All other policies shall be submitted to the Church Council for approval.

To renumber bylaw 14.21.09. as 14.21.04. to provide a more logical sequence to the listing of Church Council responsibilities and to renumber other bylaws accordingly:

~~14.21.09~~04. The Church Council may adopt policies in accord with this church's constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.

~~14.21.04~~05. The Church Council, upon recommendation of the presiding bishop, shall submit budget proposals for approval by the Churchwide Assembly and authorize expenditures within the parameters of approved budgets.

To combine existing bylaw 15.41.02. with renumbered bylaw 14.21.06. in view of their common subject and application:

~~14.21.07~~06. The Church Council shall adopt personnel policies for this church. ~~15.41.02. The salary~~ Salary structures of all churchwide units shall be within the personnel policies of this church, unless exceptions are granted by the Church Council.

To renumber bylaw 15.41.03. as 14.21.07.:

~~15.41.03.~~

~~14.21.07.~~ Consistent with applicable personnel policies, churchwide units will have staff persons, some of whom shall be executive staff and others of whom shall be support staff. In conformity with this church's commitment to inclusive practice, churchwide units will assure that staff include a balance of women and men, persons of color and persons whose primary language is other than English, laypersons, and persons on the roster of ordained ministers. This balance is to be evident in terms of both executive staff and support staff consistent with the inclusive policy of this church.

~~14.21.14~~08. The Church Council shall report its actions to the Churchwide Assembly.

~~14.21.15~~09. Proxy and absentee voting shall not be permitted at meetings of the Church Council.

To adopt a new section heading, 14.21.10., for the other duties of the Church Council and to renumber the bylaws accordingly:

14.21.10. OTHER DUTIES OF THE CHURCH COUNCIL

14.21.11. The Church Council shall act on resolutions from synod councils.

14.21.12. The Church Council shall provide for the installation of the churchwide officers. At the installation of a newly

elected presiding bishop of this church, the presiding minister shall be the retiring presiding bishop of this church or, where that is not possible, a synodical bishop designated by the Church Council.

~~14.21.06~~**13.** The Church Council shall establish ranges for the salaries for the churchwide presiding bishop, secretary, and treasurer.

~~14.21.13~~**14.** The Church Council, acting through the ~~Division for Church in Society~~ designated churchwide unit, shall have responsibility for the corporate social responsibility of this church. . . [*with the remainder of the bylaw unchanged*].

14.21.15. The Church Council shall determine, unless otherwise specified in this church's bylaws, the appropriate churchwide unit for the fulfillment of particular program or policy responsibilities identified in the bylaws.

~~14.21.05~~**16.** The Church Council shall establish the criteria and policies for the relationship between this church and independent, cooperative, and related Lutheran organizations. The policies adopted by the Church Council shall be administered by the appropriate unit of the churchwide organization. The ~~final~~ determination of which organization shall relate to a specific unit of the churchwide organization shall be made by the Church Council.

To adopt a new section heading related to the Church Council's responsibilities for elections:

14.21.20. ELECTIONS BY THE CHURCH COUNCIL

To renumber 16.11.21. as 14.21.21. and amend to specify a duty of the Church Council in keeping with the council's role as the board of directors of the churchwide organization:

~~16.11.21.~~

14.21.21. Unless otherwise specified in this constitution and bylaws, the Church Council Each board shall elect its the executive director for each churchwide program unit to a four-year term in consultation with and with the approval of the presiding bishop of this church. Nomination of a candidate for election by the board shall be made jointly by the presiding bishop after consultation with and the search appropriate program committee of the board for each position. The Each board, together with the presiding bishop, as chief executive officer, shall arrange within the policy of this church for an annual review of the each executive director. Executive directors

A unit executive director shall be eligible for reelection. The employment of the executive director may be terminated jointly by the presiding bishop of this church and the Executive Committee of the board Church Council. With the prior consent of the presiding bishop of this church, ~~and the Church Council, the board of a division~~ may elect two executive directors for a program unit in the manner provided in this bylaw.

~~14.21.0822.~~ The Church Council shall arrange the process for all elections ~~to boards of~~ as specified in this constitution and bylaws for churchwide units to assure conformity with established criteria.

To adjust the format of bylaw 14.41.11. for clarity in regard to the responsibilities of the Executive Committee of the Church Council:

14.41.11. The Church Council shall have an Executive Committee composed of the churchwide officers and seven members of the Church Council elected by the council. The vice president of this church shall chair this committee. The Executive Committee shall:

- ~~a. counsel with the churchwide officers and shall~~ perform those functions of the Church Council assigned to it by the Church Council;
- ~~b. This committee shall~~ transmit resolutions from synods to the appropriate unit or units of the churchwide organization;
- ~~c. and shall carry out~~ fulfill the responsibilities of the ~~council~~ Church Council related to nominations, with staff services ~~provided~~ for the nomination and election processes of the Church Council provided by the Office of the Secretary;
- ~~d. provide advice and counsel for the officers;~~
- ~~e. This committee, with the exception of the officers of this church, shall~~ review the work of the officers and, with the absence of the salaried officers from such deliberations, set salaries of the churchwide ~~presiding~~ bishop, secretary, and treasurer within the ranges established by the Church Council; and
- ~~f. This committee shall~~ demonstrate concern for the spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being of the full-time salaried officers of this church.

To delete bylaw 14.41.12. as unnecessary in relation to the functioning of the committees of the Church Council:

~~14.41.12. Except as provided in bylaw 14.41.11. regarding the Executive Committee, the officers of this church shall have voice but not vote in all Church Council committees.~~

To renumber section 15.40. and following as 15.20. and following; to amend bylaw 15.41.01. as 15.21.01. to conform with constitutional provision 13.21.a. on the responsibilities of the presiding bishop; and to renumber existing bylaw 15.41.04. as 15.21.02.:

~~15.40~~

15.20. STAFF

~~15.41.01.~~

15.21.01. The ~~Department for Human Resources~~ presiding bishop shall recommend to the Church Council the personnel policies of this church. Such policies shall be binding on all churchwide units unless exceptions are granted by the Church Council or specified in the constitution and bylaws of this church.

~~15.41.04.~~

15.21.02. Approval by the presiding bishop, upon recommendation of the executive for administration, shall be required to authorize staff positions in churchwide units.

To delete bylaw 18.11.13. as no longer necessary and because of the variety of patterns in practice throughout the regions:

~~18.11.13. In partnership, the synods and the churchwide organization shall explore the feasibility of carrying out additional functions between and among synods and churchwide units within the region.~~

To renumber 18.11.14. as 18.11.13. and to delete 18.11.15. because such patterns of review are established administratively in keeping with the distinctive operations of the nine regions:

~~18.11.14~~13. Additional programs or services may be developed in each region upon the request of two or more synods, or upon the request of the churchwide organization and one or more synods, providing that each requesting synod and the churchwide organization supply the necessary financial support for the services requested.

~~18.11.15. A process for reviewing the ongoing programs of the region every four years shall be established by each regional steering committee.~~

To delete the section heading 18.11.40. and renumber bylaw 18.11.41. as 18.11.14.:

~~18.11.40.~~ Funding

~~18.11.41~~14. The funding of the region shall be shared by the participating synods and the churchwide organization according to a cost allocation as decided jointly by the synods and the churchwide organization.

To delete sections 18.11.20., 18.11.30., and 18.11.50. as well as the related bylaws because of the variety of patterns of governance, staffing, and practice in the various regions; and to acknowledge the details related to regions are addressed in continuing resolutions:

18.11.20: Governance

~~18.11.21: Each region shall have a steering committee. The membership of the committee shall be determined jointly by synodical-churchwide consultation, subject to ratification by the Church Council.~~

~~18.11.22: The churchwide organization shall have such representation on the regional steering committee as will provide adequate opportunity for a partnership relationship in shaping and sharing in the programs where responsibility is shared.~~

18.11.30: Staff

~~18.11.31: Staffing patterns developed by regions to carry out the basic functions of regional coordination shall be ratified by the Church Council. A full-time salaried coordinator may be appointed by the regional steering committee who will:~~

- ~~a. facilitate processes to accomplish the functions of the region; and~~
- ~~b. receive and carry out tasks assigned by the regional steering committee.~~

~~18.11.32: The region may have such additional staff as the regional steering committee may determine.~~

18.11.50: Geography

~~18.11.51: The synods and the churchwide organization may evaluate, from time to time, the regional geography and the appropriateness of synodical assignments to the region.~~

To adopt a new bylaw 19.05.03. to provide for unusual circumstances in which removal of a trustee may be necessary for the operation of a board or the protection of the incorporated unit:

19.05.03. A board of trustees of a separately incorporated churchwide unit of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America may remove a trustee from the board at a duly held meeting by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the total number of trustees, provided that not less than five and not more than thirty days written notice shall be given to each trustee that removal of a specific trustee will be on the agenda for such a meeting. No such removal of a trustee shall be effective without the approval of the Church Council by a majority of those present and voting. The decision of the Church Council is final.

To replace references to specific units with “the appropriate churchwide unit” in the following: 7.31.11., 7.31.13., 7.31.14., 7.31.15., 7.41.11., 7.41.12., 7.41.14., 7.41.15., 7.52.11., 7.52.12., 7.52.13., 7.52.21., 7.52.23., 7.52.26., and 7.61.02.

To delete references to a commission or commissions, including 7.31.14.; and to delete references to steering committees, including 13.41.02., 13.41.04., and 14.15.

To amend bylaw 10.32.01.b. to clarify the intended scope of the matters addressed in that bylaw:

- 10.32.01.** The following procedures shall govern matters of potential conflicts of interest for synodical bishops:
- a. *[unchanged]*
 - b. Matters include ~~disciplinary action~~ any proceedings under Chapter 20, proceedings under provision 7.46. (†S14.13.), candidacy, reinstatement, and similar matters where determinations or actions by the synodical bishop could change, limit, restrict, approve, authorize, or deny the related individual’s ministry on one of the official rosters of this church.
 - c. A related individual . . . *[with remainder unchanged]*.

To mark S14.14., S14.15., S14.16., S14.17., and S14.18. in the Constitution for Synods as required provisions for consistency in practice related to the oversight of synods in the pastoral care of congregations:

†S14.14., †S14.15., †S14.16., †S14.17., and †S14.18.

To amend provision †S18.11. in the Constitution for Synods to clarify the meaning related to required provisions:

- †S18.11.** Certain sections of this constitution incorporate and record therein required provisions of the constitution and bylaws of this church. *[Remainder of provision unchanged.]*

*To adopt a new provision as *C9.14. in the Model Constitution for Congregations to be consistent with the requirements of S14.15. in the Constitution for Synods of this church:*

- *C9.14.** The parochial records of this congregation shall be maintained by the pastor and shall remain the property of the congregation. The secretary of this congregation shall attest in writing to the bishop of this synod that such records have been placed in his or her hands in good order by a departing pastor before the installation of that pastor in another field of labor or the granting by the synod of retired status to the pastor.

To amend provision C11.01. and C12.01. in the Model Constitution for Congregations [square brackets in the model indicate optional text within a provision] to provide the option of election of the treasurer from outside the membership of the Congregation Council:

- C11.01.** The officers of this congregation shall be a president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer.
- a. Duties of the officers shall be specified in the bylaws.
 - b. The officers shall be voting members of the congregation.
 - c. Officers of this congregation shall serve similar offices of the Congregation Council and shall be voting members of the Congregation Council.
 - d. If the Congregation Council elects its officers, the president, vice president, and secretary shall be selected from the elected membership of the Congregation Council. [If the treasurer is not selected from the elected membership of the Congregation Council, the treasurer shall have voice but not vote at the meetings 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 ____ nor fewer than ____ members] of the congregation . . . [*with remainder of provision unchanged*].

To add a new optional provision as C13.08. in the Model Constitution for Congregations to provide the option of a definition of the pastor's role in committees of the congregation:

- C13.08.** The [senior] pastor of this congregation shall be *ex officio* a member of all committees and boards of the congregation. [The president of this congregation shall be *ex officio* a member of all committees and boards of the congregation, except the Nominating Committee.]

En Bloc Special Amendments Related to Reorganization

Reference: 2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section IV, pages 63–73.

Secretary Lowell G. Almen referred the assembly to page 63 of Section IV of the 2005 Pre-Assembly Report, and said that the motion was to adopt the amendments *en bloc*, with the exception of such amendments as might be considered separately. Those sections withdrawn from *en bloc* consideration for separate consideration were:

- The Rev. Gwendolyn S. King [New England Synod] requested separate consideration of continuing resolution 16.22.B00., page 66, referred to in the italic type.
- Ms. Kim R. Wiest [Montana Synod] requested removal of provisions and bylaws 17.30. through 17.31.12., pages 66 and 67, and provisions 20.11. and 20.16., page 72.

- The Rev. Jennifer M. Ginn [North Carolina Synod] also requested removal of bylaws 17.31.02. and 17.31.03. (page 67), and provisions 20.51. and 20.61. (page 72).
- The Rev. Donna L. Herzfeldt-Kamprath [Oregon Synod] requested removal of bylaws 17.31.02. and 17.31.03. (page 67).

MOVED;

SECONDED: To adopt *en bloc*, with the exception of such amendments as may be considered separately, the following amendments to the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson reminded the assembly that the motion before it was the adoption of bylaw amendments *en bloc* with the exception of those cited for separate consideration. He called for a vote on the motion.

ASSEMBLY

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

ACTION

YES-845; NO-57

CA05.03.07 To adopt *en bloc*, with the exception of such amendments as may be considered separately, the following amendments to the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*:

To amend provision 5.01.j. to delete the reference to commissions as no longer applicable:

5.01.j. Each assembly, council, committee, board, ~~commission~~, task force, or other body of the churchwide organization or any churchwide units shall be conclusively presumed to have been properly constituted, and neither the method of selection nor the composition of any such assembly, council, committee, board, ~~commission~~, task force, or other body may be challenged in a court of law by any person or be used as the basis of a challenge in a court of law to the validity or effect of any action taken or authorized by any such assembly, council, committee, board, ~~commission~~, task force, or other body.

To amend bylaw 12.41.31. to provide for the presence of program committee chairpersons at future meetings of the Churchwide Assembly:

12.41.31. Members of the Church Council, unless elected as voting members, shall serve as advisory members of the Churchwide Assembly. In addition, program committee chairpersons and board chairpersons or their designees, unless elected as voting members, shall serve as advisory members of the Churchwide Assembly. Executive directors of churchwide program units, presidents of

separately incorporated churchwide units, the executive for administration, and executive assistants to the presiding bishop shall serve as advisory members of the Churchwide Assembly.

To amend provision 11.35. to provide for reference to committees for program units:

- 11.35. Each program unit shall relate to a program committee and each separately incorporated unit shall be governed by a board, ~~an advisory committee, a steering committee, or a committee of the Church Council~~. Units shall be responsible to the Churchwide Assembly and the Church Council in the interim between regular meetings of the assembly.

To renumber existing bylaw 14.32.03. as 14.32.05. and to adopt a new bylaw 14.32.03. to provide for the role of advisory participation in meetings of the Church Council for representatives of the five ethnic associations:

- 14.32.03. The Church Council shall have as advisory members each president, or the designated representative of the president, of the African American Lutheran Association in the ELCA, the Association of Lutherans of Arab and Middle Eastern Heritage, the Association of Asians and Pacific Islanders in the ELCA, the Association of Latino Ministries in the ELCA, and the American Indian and Alaska Native Association in the ELCA.

To adopt new bylaw 14.32.04. to provide for the role of advisory participation in meetings of the Church Council for representatives of educational and social ministry institutions and agencies:

- 14.32.04. One individual representing this church's seminaries, one individual representing the ELCA-related colleges and universities, and one individual representing the social ministry organizations, chosen by the respective associations of these institutions and agencies, shall serve as advisory members of the Church Council.

To amend provision 15.11. in regard to the fulfillment of responsibilities assigned to the full-time officers:

- 15.11. An office is a unit of the churchwide organization directly related to and under the authority of a full-time officer of this church. Each office is related to the Church Council through the officer, who reports to the Church Council in

the interim between regular meetings of the Churchwide Assembly. Each office may have ~~departments~~ executive assistants to ~~assist~~ undergird the officer in the performance of specified functions that are the responsibility of that officer.

To delete section 15.20.10. through 15.21.A91. as no longer applicable in the revised organizational pattern:

~~15.20.10: Departments~~

~~15.21.11: Departments related to the officers of this church shall develop and implement churchwide standards and provide for coordination of services requiring technical and specific expertise, in support of divisions and other units.~~

~~15.21.12: Advisory committees for departments may be established by the Church Council. Members of such committees shall be selected for particular experience and expertise related to the responsibilities of the department.~~

~~15.21.13: Names and descriptions of responsibilities of the departments related to officers shall be provided in continuing resolutions.~~

~~15.21.A91: Such departments shall function under the administrative team, as defined in continuing resolution 15.11.A91., and as assigned by the presiding bishop of this church with the concurrence of the Church Council.~~

To amend the title of Chapter 16 to reflect the revised content of the chapter:

~~DIVISIONS AND COMMISSIONS~~ PROGRAM UNITS OF THE CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION

To amend section heading 16.10. and provision 16.11. to describe the revised content of the chapter:

~~16.10.~~ DIVISIONS PROGRAM UNITS

~~16.11.~~ A division program unit is a unit of the churchwide organization to which is assigned responsibility for a major, identified portion of the program of this church.

To amend bylaw 16.11.11. and adopt the revised text as a new constitutional provision numbered 16.12.:

~~16.11.11:~~

16.12. Each board unit shall be responsible to the Churchwide Assembly and will report to the Church Council in the interim. The policies, procedures, and program operation

of each division unit shall be reviewed by the Church Council in order to assure conformity with the governing documents of this church and with Churchwide Assembly actions.

To amend the section heading in 16.11.10. and renumber it as 16.12.10. for proper sequence, and to amend bylaw 16.11.12. as 16.12.11.:

16.11.12.10. Division Boards Program Committees

16.11.12.11. Each board program committee, which normally shall meet at least two times each year, shall function as specified in this church's constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions regarding its responsibilities in relation to a particular unit of the churchwide organization.

To amend bylaw 16.11.13. as 16.12.12. and revise it to reflect the change in composition:

16.11.13.12.12. Each division board program committee shall be composed of ~~21~~ 15 persons elected to one six-year term, with no consecutive reelection, and with one-third of the board members being elected every biennium, as provided in Chapter 19. The presiding bishop of this church, or the presiding bishop's designee, shall serve as an advisory member of each program committee board. The Conference of Bishops shall select one bishop to serve as an advisory member of each program committee board. A member of the Church Council shall be appointed by the Church Council to serve as a liaison member of each program committee with voice but not vote.

To renumber bylaw 16.11.33. as 16.12.13. and revise it to reflect a responsibility of each program committee:

16.11.33.12.13. Each board program committee shall approve and review major program directions proposed policies and strategies for its areas of responsibility in the preparation of such policies and strategies for submission by the executive director of the unit to cooperation with the appropriate committee of the Church Council, for presentation to the Church Council.

To renumber bylaw 16.11.14. as 16.12.14.:

16.11.14.12.14. Proxy and absentee voting shall not be permitted at meetings of any board or any committee of the board.

To delete section heading 16.11.30.; to renumber bylaw 16.11.31. as 16.12.15.; and to revise it to reflect a responsibility of each program committee:

~~16.11.30.~~ Responsibilities Common to Boards

~~16.11.31~~12.15. Each board program committee shall request budget support for programs of the division through the budget-development process. In its review of the division's work, the board shall seek to ensure that the division unit operates within the expenditure authorization established by the Church Council.

To delete section heading 16.11.40.; to renumber bylaw 16.11.41. as 16.12.16.; to revise the text to refer to program units; and to delete reference to the amendment process for such continuing resolutions since such matters are addressed in Chapters 12 and 22:

~~16.11.40.~~ Establishment of Divisions

~~16.11.41~~12.16. The responsibilities of the ~~divisions~~ program units shall be enumerated in continuing resolutions. ~~Such continuing resolutions may be amended by a majority vote of the Churchwide Assembly or by a two-thirds vote of the Church Council. Should the board disagree with the action of the Church Council, it may appeal the decision to the Churchwide Assembly.~~

To delete bylaw 16.11.42. because the program units are identified in continuing resolutions:

~~16.11.42.~~ This church shall have the following divisions:

- ~~a. Division for Congregational Ministries~~
- ~~b. Division for Ministry~~
- ~~c. Division for Outreach~~
- ~~d. Division for Higher Education and Schools~~
- ~~e. Division for Church in Society~~
- ~~f. Division for Global Mission~~

To adopt a new heading and constitutional provision to clarify the separately incorporated status of two program units:

16.20. Separately Incorporated Program Units

16.21. Provision shall be made and maintained for the separate incorporation of the Publishing House of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as program units of the churchwide organization.

To renumber section heading 17.50. as 16.30.; to amend provision 17.51. as 16.31.; and to amend and renumber the related bylaws to fit this section of the governing document on program units:

~~17.50.~~

16.30.

PUBLISHING HOUSE OF THE ELCA

~~17.51.~~

16.31.

This church shall have a publishing house to carry out the publishing ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The Publishing House of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be incorporated. Its executive director shall be The president of the corporation and shall serve as its chief executive officer. Upon authorization of the Church Council, portions of the activities of this church's publishing house may be conducted through separate corporations.

~~17.51.01.~~

16.31.01.

This publishing house shall have a board of trustees of ~~21~~ 15 members, elected for one six-year term with no consecutive reelection and with one-third elected every two years as provided in Chapter 19.

a. The board of trustees shall be composed of laypersons with expertise in publishing, education, business management, finance and investment, and ordained ministers with expertise in rural, urban, and suburban parish ministry in small and large congregations and advanced theological study.

b. The presiding bishop shall serve as an advisory member of the board of trustees, with voice but not vote, or shall designate a person to serve as the presiding bishop's representative as provided in constitutional provision 13.21.

c. The Conference of Bishops shall elect one bishop to serve as an advisory member of the board of the publishing house with voice but not vote.

d. The board of trustees of the publishing house shall serve as the board of any separate corporation of this church's publishing house and the president executive director of the publishing house shall be the chief executive officer of any such corporation.

~~17.51.02.~~

16.31.02.

The provisions of Constitutional provision 16.12. and bylaws 14.21.02., 14.21.03., ~~15.41.03., 16.11.11., 16.11.12., 16.11.32., and 16.11.33.~~ 16.12.11., and 16.12.14. shall apply to this publishing house.

~~17.51.03.~~

16.31.03.

[Text of bylaw unchanged.]

~~17.51.04.~~
16.31.04. [Text of bylaw unchanged.]

To renumber existing section heading 17.40. as 16.40.; to renumber provision 17.41. as 16.41.; and to renumber the subsequent bylaws accordingly in relation to the overall design for program units:

~~17.40.~~
16.40. WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION

~~17.41.~~
16.41. This church shall have a women's organization to assist its women to commit themselves to full discipleship, affirm their gifts, and support each other in their particular callings.

~~17.41.01.~~
16.41.01. [Text of bylaw unchanged.]

~~17.41.02.~~
16.41.02. [Text of bylaw unchanged.]

To amend bylaw 17.41.03. as 16.41.03. to provide the correct, revised numbers for the cross references:

~~17.41.03.~~
16.41.03. ~~The provisions of Constitutional provision 16.12. and bylaws 14.21.02., 14.21.03., 14.21.06., 16.12.11., 16.12.13, and 16.12.14. 16.11.11., 16.11.12., 16.11.32., and 16.11.33. shall apply to this organization. Bylaw 15.41.03. 14.21.07. shall apply to the women's organization with the exception of the balance provisions for women and men and for laypersons and persons on the roster of ordained ministers.~~

~~17.41.04.~~
16.41.04. [Text of bylaw unchanged.]

~~17.41.05.~~
16.41.05. [Text of bylaw unchanged.]

~~17.41.06.~~
16.41.06. [Text of bylaw unchanged.]

To delete bylaw 17.41.07. because it is no longer applicable:

~~17.41.07.~~ This organization's executive director shall serve as an advisory member to the steering committee of the Commission for Women, with voice but not vote.

~~17.41.08.~~
16.41.07. [Text of bylaw unchanged.]

To delete section heading 16.20., provisions 16.21. and 16.22., bylaws 16.22.10. through 16.22.18., and continuing resolution 16.22.A00. because the functions and responsibilities cited therein are incorporated into new units.

To amend the title of Chapter 17 and revise section heading 17.10. and provision 17.11. to provide for service units within the churchwide organization:

Chapter 17.

~~OTHER~~ SERVICE UNITS OF THE CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION

17.10. ~~OTHER SERVICE~~ CHURCHWIDE UNITS

17.11. A service unit is a unit of the churchwide organization to which is assigned particular identified responsibility for services on behalf of churchwide programs and, in certain units, for specific services to members, congregations, synods, and related institutions and agencies.

17.12. Separate incorporation shall be maintained for the Foundation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Mission Investment Fund of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and the Board of Pensions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, in addition to the Publishing House of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

~~17.11. This church may establish other churchwide units and organizations to carry out the purpose and functions of this church.~~

~~17.12. Other churchwide units include:~~

- ~~a. the church periodical;~~**
- ~~b. the ELCA Foundation, operating under the Endowment Fund;~~**
- ~~c. the Women of the ELCA;~~**
- ~~d. the Publishing House of the ELCA;~~**
- ~~e. the Board of Pensions; and~~**
- ~~f. the Mission Investment Fund.~~**

~~The Endowment Fund of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Mission Investment Fund of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Board of Pensions of the ELCA, the Publishing House of the ELCA, and the Women of the ELCA may be separately incorporated units of this church.~~

To adopt a new section heading, 17.20.01., and a new bylaw 17.21.01. to provide the necessary cross-references in this chapter related to applicable bylaws for the operation of service units:

17.20.01. Accountability of Service Units

17.21.01. Except as otherwise stated in bylaws, the requirements of constitutional provision 16.12. and bylaws 14.21.01. through 14.21.07. and 16.12.14. shall apply to service units of the churchwide organization.

To renumber section heading 17.30. as 17.40.; and to renumber and amend provision 17.31. as 17.41. to clarify the continuing corporate status of the Foundation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:

~~17.30.~~

17.40. ELCA FOUNDATION OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

~~17.31.~~

17.41. This church shall have a foundation to provide major gift and planned deferred giving programs for individual donors, pooled investment services for endowment funds of this church and its related congregations, synods, agencies, and institutions, and educational and support services in major gift and deferred giving programs to congregations, synods, agencies, and institutions of this church. Upon authorization of the Church Council, portions or all of one or more of these These programs and activities may be conducted through a separate corporation known as the Endowment Fund Foundation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. ~~The foundation executive director shall be president of the corporation and shall serve as its chief executive officer; unless the Church Council determines that the treasurer of this church shall be the president of this corporation.~~

To adopt a new bylaw 17.41.01. to provide for coordination of the activities of the Foundation with the Development Services unit:

17.41.01. The program and activities of the Foundation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be coordinated with the evelopment Services unit of the churchwide organization.

To amend bylaw 17.31.01. as 17.41.02. in regard to the membership of the board of trustees for the Foundation:

~~17.31.01.~~

17.41.02. The Endowment Fund Foundation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, ~~operating as the ELCA~~

~~Foundation~~, shall have a board of trustees that shall be comprised of nine persons elected to six-year terms by the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, with no consecutive reelection and with one-third of the members elected every two years. In addition to the treasurer of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the board may identify advisors as it may deem appropriate from time to time. A synodical bishop elected by the Conference of Bishops shall serve as an advisory member of the board with voice but not vote, of at least nine and not more than 13 members, selected by the Church Council's Budget and Finance Committee and ratified by the Church Council.

- a. ~~Board members shall be elected for one six-year term with no consecutive reelection and with approximately one-third elected every two years. The presiding bishop of this church or the presiding 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.~~
- b. ~~The board shall function as an advisory committee of the ELCA Foundation with respect to those activities of the ELCA Foundation not conducted through the Endowment Fund.~~

To renumber and amend bylaw 17.31.02. as 17.41.03. in keeping with the revised pattern of operation:

~~17.31.02.~~

17.41.03. The president of the Foundation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be elected by the board of trustees of the Endowment Fund of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to a four-year term in consultation with and with the approval of the presiding bishop of this church. ~~Nomination of a candidate for president shall be made jointly by the presiding bishop and the search committee of the board. The board, together with the presiding bishop, shall arrange for an annual review of the president. The president shall be eligible for reelection. The employment of the president may be terminated jointly by the board of trustees of the Endowment Fund Foundation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the presiding bishop of this church, following recommendation by the executive committee of the board of trustees.~~

To delete bylaw 17.31.03. as no longer applicable in the revised organizational structure and to renumber bylaw 17.31.05. as 17.41.04.:

~~17.31.03. This foundation's executive director shall serve as an advisory member of the board of the Division for Congregational Ministries.~~

~~17.31.05.~~

17.41.04. The board of trustees of the Foundation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall consult with the Office of the Treasurer with regard to the assessment of management fees or provision of other assets available for the budget of the foundation.

To renumber bylaw 17.31.04. as 17.41.05.:

~~17.31.04.~~

~~17.41.05. The following constitutional provisions Constitutional provision 16.12. and bylaws 14.21.02., 14.21.03., 14.21.07., 16.12.11., 16.12.13., and 16.12.14. shall apply to the operation of the ~~board~~ Foundation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. ~~14.21.01. through 14.21.04., 14.21.07., 15.41.02., 15.41.03., 16.11.11., and 16.11.12.~~~~

To amend bylaw 17.31.06. as 17.41.06. and to revise it because the method of adoption and nature of continuing resolutions is addressed in provision 22.31.:

~~17.31.06.~~

17.41.06. The specific responsibilities of the ~~foundation~~ Foundation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be enumerated in a continuing resolution. ~~The continuing resolution may be amended by a majority vote of the Churchwide Assembly or a two-thirds vote of the Church Council. Should the board disagree with the action of the Church Council, it may appeal the decision to the Churchwide Assembly.~~

To renumber section 17.70. and following as section 17.50. and following:

~~17.70~~

17.50. MISSION INVESTMENT FUND
OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

~~17.71~~

17.51. This church shall have a fund, known as the Mission Investment Fund of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in

America, to provide loans to congregations, synods, and units the churchwide organization of this church, and to other organizations and institutions that are affiliated with this church. The Mission Investment Fund of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America will provide investment opportunities for congregations, institutions, and ELCA members and shall be incorporated. ~~Its executive director shall be president of the corporation, unless the Church Council determines that the treasurer of this church shall be president and executive director of this corporation.~~

To amend bylaw 17.71.01. as 17.51.01. to provide for the revised size of the board of trustees and the revised nomination process leading to the election of members of the board:

~~17.71.01.~~

17.51.01. The Mission Investment Fund of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall have a board of trustees of ~~11~~ nine members, who shall be elected by the ~~Church Council~~ Churchwide Assembly for six-year terms with no consecutive reelection and with one-third elected each biennium as provided in Chapter 19. ~~and shall not be eligible for reelection, with six members nominated by the Church Council's Budget and Finance Committee, four members nominated by the board of the Division for Outreach, and one member nominated by the board of the Division for Church in Society.~~

To renumber bylaw 17.71.02. as 17.51.02. and revise it to clarify the meaning of the text:

~~17.71.02.~~

17.51.02. Unless ~~otherwise determined by~~ the Church Council determines that the treasurer of this church shall be the president of the Mission Investment Fund corporation ~~under provision 17.71.~~, the president, ~~who shall also serve as the executive director,~~ shall be elected by the board of trustees of the Mission Investment Fund of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to a four-year term in consultation with and with the approval of the presiding bishop of this church. Nomination of a candidate for ~~executive director~~ president of the Mission Investment Fund shall be made jointly by the presiding bishop and the search committee of the board. The board, together with the presiding bishop, shall arrange for an annual review of the ~~executive director~~ president. The ~~executive director~~ president shall be eligible for

reelection. The employment of the ~~executive director president~~ may be terminated jointly by the board of trustees of the Mission Investment Fund of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the presiding bishop of this church, following recommendation by the executive committee of the board of trustees.

To renumber bylaw 17.71.03. as 17.51.03. and amend it to provide revised cross-references:

~~17.71.03.~~

17.51.03. ~~The following Constitutional provision 16.12. and bylaws 14.21.02., 14.21.03., 14.21.06., 14.21.07., 16.12.11., 16.12.13., and 16.12.14. shall apply to the operation of the board Mission Investment Fund of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. ; 14.21.01. through 14.21.04., 14.21.07., 15.41.02., 15.41.03., 16.11.11., and 16.11.12.~~

To renumber bylaw 17.71.04. as 17.51.04.:

~~17.71.04.~~

17.51.04. The specific responsibilities of the Mission Investment Fund of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be enumerated in a continuing resolution.

To revise section 17.60. and following to reflect changes in connection with the overall revision of the churchwide organization:

17.60. BOARD OF PENSIONS

17.61. This church shall have a church pension and other benefits plans unit. This Board of Pensions shall be incorporated. ~~Its executive director shall be~~ The president of the corporation ~~and shall serve as its chief executive officer.~~

To amend bylaws 17.61.01. and 17.61.02. in recognition that the governance structure and program of the Board of Pensions are fully established for ongoing operation:

17.61.01. The Churchwide Assembly shall:

- a. ~~authorize the creation of the governance structure for this program;~~ b. approve the documents establishing and governing the program ELCA Pension and Other Benefits Program that have been referred by the Church Council; and
- cb. refer any amendments to the program ELCA Pension and Other Benefits Program initiated by the

Churchwide Assembly to the Board of Pensions for recommendation before final action by the Church Council, assuring that no amendment shall abridge the rights of members with respect to their pension accumulations; ~~and .~~

- d. ~~direct the establishment of an appeal process within the Board of Pensions to enable participants in the plans to appeal decisions.~~

17.61.02. The Church Council shall:

- a. review policy established by the board and take action on any policy that would change significantly the documents establishing and governing ~~this program~~ the ELCA Pension and Other Benefits Program;
- b. approve any changes in the ~~approved program~~ ELCA Pension and Other Benefits Program when there is to be:
 - 1) a significant increase in cost to the employers or members; or
 - 2) a significant increase or decrease in benefits to the participant members;
- c. refer any amendments to the ~~program~~ ELCA Pension and Other Benefits Program initiated by the Church Council to the board for recommendation before final action by the Church Council, assuring that no amendment shall abridge the rights of members with respect to their pension accumulations; ~~and~~
- d. refer, as it deems appropriate, proposed amendments to the ELCA Pension and Other Benefits Program to the Churchwide Assembly for final action; ~~and~~
- e. ~~appoint a Financial Information Committee, composed of persons not responsible for pension and benefits plans, to evaluate proposed benefit and contribution changes in terms of their economic impact on:~~
 - 1) ~~individual congregations;~~
 - 2) ~~synods and the churchwide organization; and~~
 - 3) ~~long-term cost to contributors.~~

To amend bylaw 17.61.03. in regard to the size and composition of the board of trustees of the Board of Pensions:

- 17.61.03. ~~This board~~ The Board of Pensions shall have a board of trustees composed of ~~24~~ 15 persons elected for one six-year term with no consecutive reelection and with**

one-third elected each biennium as provided in Chapter 19.

- a. ~~In addition, the~~ The board of trustees of this board the Board of Pensions shall include persons with expertise in investments, insurance, and pensions, and six ~~four~~ persons who are participants in members of the plans, at least one of whom shall be a lay plan participant member or lay recipient of plan benefits and at least one of whom shall be an ordained minister who is a plan participant member.
- b. The presiding bishop shall serve as an advisory member of the board of trustees, with voice but not vote, or shall designate a person to serve as the presiding bishop's representative as provided in constitutional provision 13.21.
- c. The Conference of Bishops shall elect one bishop to serve as an advisory member of the ~~Board of Pensions~~ board of trustees with voice but not vote.
- d. The treasurer of this church shall serve as an advisory member of the board of trustees with voice but not vote.

[*INFORMATION NOTE:* Bylaws 17.61.04., 17.61.06., and 17.61.07. remain unchanged.]

To amend bylaw 17.61.05. to provide the revised numbers for the appropriate cross references:

- 17.61.05. ~~The provisions of Constitutional provision 16.12. and bylaws 14.21.02., 14.21.07., 16.12.11., and 16.12.14. 15.41.03., 16.11.11., 16.11.12., 16.11.32., and 16.11.33. shall apply to this board.~~

To amend provision 19.04. to reflect the existence of program and advisory committees:

- 19.04. Other than elections of officers and executive directors of units, elections shall be for one six-year term, without consecutive reelection, and with one-third of the members of the Church Council and of each board, program committee, or advisory committee elected each biennium.

To amend bylaw 19.05.01. to reflect the existence of program and advisory committees:

- 19.05.01. Each voting member of the Church Council, board, steering program committee, or advisory committee of

this church shall cease to be a member of the Church Council, board, steering program committee, or advisory committee if no longer a voting member of a congregation of this church. Upon two successive absences that have not been excused by the Church Council, board, steering program committee, or advisory committee, a member's position shall be declared vacant by the secretary of this church, who shall arrange for election by the Church Council to fill the unexpired term.

To adopt a new bylaw 19.05.02., using part of the text of existing continuing resolution 19.61.B98.d. to define the meaning of "synodical membership" for nomination to and service in elected positions:

19.05.02. For purposes of nomination to and service on the Church Council, a program committee, or a board of a churchwide unit, "synodical membership" shall be defined as follows:

- a. A layperson shall be recorded in the synod that includes the congregation in which such a person holds membership, with the recognition that such a person shall reside within the territory of the synod or in an area immediately adjacent to the territory in the case of border areas.
- b. An ordained minister shall be recorded in the synod on whose roster such an ordained minister's name is maintained.
- c. A diaconal minister, associate in ministry, or deaconess shall be recorded in the synod on whose roster such a rostered layperson's name is maintained.

To amend bylaw 19.11.01. to reflect the existence of program and advisory committees and to recognize that the election process for the editor of The Lutheran is addressed elsewhere:

19.11.01. In the nomination and election process the following general considerations shall be observed:

- a. . . .
- b. In all elections by the Churchwide Assembly, other than for the presiding bishop, vice president, and secretary, a majority of the votes cast on the first ballot shall be necessary for election. If an election does not occur on the first ballot, the names of the two persons receiving the highest number of votes cast shall be placed on the second ballot. On the second ballot, a majority of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. ~~For the position of editor~~

~~of *The Lutheran*, a majority of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election.~~

- c. **Members of the Church Council, ~~committees~~, and the boards or committees of churchwide units who have served less than one-half of a term shall be eligible for election to one full term to be served consecutively upon the conclusion of the partial term.**
- d. **Before electing a member to a vacancy on a board or committee, the Church Council shall consult with the board or committee.**
- e. . . .
- f. **The Conference of Bishops shall select one bishop from each region to serve a four-year term as an advisory member of the Church Council. Each biennium the Conference of Bishops shall select a bishop to serve as an advisory member of each board, steering program committee, and advisory committee of the churchwide organization. No synodical bishop shall serve as a voting member of the Church Council or of a board or committee of any churchwide unit [*with remainder unchanged*].**

To amend bylaws 19.21.02. and 19.21.03. to provide for operation of a revised nomination process for members of the Church Council and program committees:

- 19.21.02. **The Nominating Committee shall nominate two persons for each council, board, or committee position, according to the process described in continuing resolutions, for which an election will be held by the Churchwide Assembly. Nominations from the floor, where permitted in the nomination process, ~~also shall be permitted~~, ~~but each floor nomination~~ shall be presented as an alternative to a specific category named by the Nominating Committee and shall therefore meet the same criteria as the persons against whom the nominee is nominated. In the materials provided in advance to each member of the assembly, the Nominating Committee shall set forth the criteria applicable to each category that must be met by persons nominated from the floor.**
- 19.21.03. **In each case in which there are floor nominations, there shall be a preliminary ballot that shall include the names of the nominees presented by the Nominating Committee or the Church Council, and the person or persons nominated from the floor, where permitted. The names of the two persons receiving the highest number of votes cast shall be placed on the final ballot.**

To amend bylaws 19.21.04., 19.41.01., and 19.51.01. to reflect the existence of program and advisory committees:

- 19.21.04.** It shall be the responsibility of the Church Council to make certain that every synod has at least one person serving on the churchwide boards or committees. Among those persons elected by the assembly, no more than two persons from any one synod shall serve on any one board or committee.
- 19.41.01.** The terms of office of persons elected to regular terms on a division committee or board by the Churchwide Assembly shall begin at the conclusion of the assembly at which such persons were elected. The commencement of terms of office of persons elected to regular terms by the Churchwide Assembly on the board of trustees of the Publishing House of the ELCA and the board of trustees of the Board of Pensions shall be specified in the bylaws of these separately incorporated entities.
- 19.51.01.** The Churchwide Assembly shall elect all members of each division program committee and board, ~~the board of trustees of the Publishing House of the ELCA, the board of trustees of the Mission Investment Fund,~~ and the board of trustees of the Board of Pensions. The Nominating Committee shall seek to ensure that these committees and boards have within their membership persons with the expertise and experience essential to the fulfillment of the work of the board unit.

To amend bylaw 19.51.02. to provide for the nomination and election process for the program committee of the Multicultural Ministries unit:

- 19.51.02.** The program committee for the Multicultural Ministries unit shall consist of 15 persons, 14 of whom shall be elected to six-year terms by the Churchwide Assembly. The committee shall include two persons from each of the following communities: African American or Black; Arab and Middle Eastern; Asian and Pacific Islander; Latino; American Indian and Alaska Native; multiracial or biracial; and Caucasian. One person shall be elected to a three-year term on the committee by the Multicultural Advisory Committee of the Lutheran Youth Organization. The members of the steering committees for each commission shall be elected by the Church Council and shall have particular experience and expertise that will assist the committee in its work. The terms of office of persons elected by the Church Council to regular terms

~~on a steering committee shall begin at the conclusion of each regular meeting of the Churchwide Assembly.~~

To delete bylaws 19.51.04. and 19.51.05. because those election processes are addressed elsewhere in the governing documents:

19.51.04. ~~The editor of the church periodical shall be elected to a four-year term by the Churchwide Assembly upon nomination as provided in Chapter 17 and shall take office on the first day of the third month after election.~~

19.51.05. ~~The Church Council shall elect the members of the board of the ELCA Foundation as provided in Chapter 17.~~

To amend bylaws 19.61.02., 19.61.03., and 19.61.05. to reflect the existence of program and advisory committees:

19.61.02. No member of the Church Council, a committee of the Church Council, a board, a steering program committee, an advisory committee, or other committee shall receive emolument for such service, nor shall any member be simultaneously an officer of this church, an elected member of the Church Council, or a member of a committee or board of the churchwide organization.

Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit the payment by this church of the costs of insurance on behalf of a person who is or was a member of the Church Council, a committee of the Church Council, a board, or committee ~~a steering committee, the board of the ELCA Foundation, or the advisory committee of the church periodical~~ against any liability asserted against and incurred by such person in or arising from that capacity, whether or not this church would have been required to indemnify such person against the liability under provisions of law or otherwise.

19.61.03. No employee of the churchwide organization of this church, ~~of or~~ or its regions, ~~or nor any~~ individual under contract to any unit of the churchwide organization or a region shall be eligible for nomination to or membership on the Church Council, a steering program or advisory committee, a board, ~~committees related to the Commission for Multicultural Ministries, church periodical, or archives; the Committee on Appeals, the Committee on Discipline, or the churchwide Nominating Committee~~ during the period of employment or service under contract. (The phrase “under contract” shall not mean short-term contracts for specific, limited purposes, usually not to exceed six months.)

- 19.61.05. No voting member of a board shall be simultaneously an officer of this church, a voting member of the Church Council, or a voting member of another board, ~~steering committee~~, or ~~advisory~~ committee of this church, except the advisory committee of the church periodical that has representation from the Church Council and the board of the Publishing House of the ELCA. Further, no person employed by an entity, agency, or institution supervised by that board or committee shall be a member of that supervising board or committee.

To amend provisions 21.02. and 21.03. to delete the reference to boards because members of boards of separately incorporated entities are to be indemnified by those entities:

- 21.02. To the full extent permitted from time to time by law, each person who is or was made or threatened to be made a party to any proceeding by reason of the present or former capacity of that person as a Church Council member, officer, employee, ~~division board member~~, or committee member of this church shall be indemnified against judgments, penalties, fines, settlements, excise taxes, and reasonable attorneys' fees and disbursements incurred by that person in connection with the proceeding. While indemnification of any person by reason of that person's capacity as a director, officer, employee, or committee member of a separately incorporated churchwide unit, ~~including the Mission Investment Fund of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America~~, may be made by such separately incorporated unit, indemnification of such person by this church is prohibited. Indemnification of any person by reason of that person's capacity as a director, officer, employee, or committee member of any other organization is subject to the provisions of section 21.03.
- 21.03. Where a person who, while a member of the Church Council, officer, employee of the churchwide organization, member of the Conference of Bishops, ~~division board member, trustee~~, or committee member of this church, is or was serving at the request of this church as (or whose duties in that position involve or involved service in the capacity of) a director, officer, partner, trustee, employee, or agent of another organization, is or was made or threatened to be made a party to a proceeding by reason of such capacity, then such person shall not be entitled to indemnification unless (a) the Church Council has

established a process for determining whether a person serving in the capacity described in this section shall be entitled to indemnification in any specific case, and (b) that process has been applied in making a specific determination that such person is entitled to indemnification.

Secretary Almen said that, based on the action just taken, the assembly would not need to take action on two bylaws related to the election process that the chair had earlier announced would need separate consideration.

Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Sexuality Recommendations

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson called upon Ms. Judy Biffle, member of the Church Council and chair of the *ad hoc* committee dealing with amendments to the sexuality recommendations, to answer questions that had been raised earlier concerning when the committee's report would be available and what it would contain.

According to Ms. Biffle, "The *ad hoc* committee made a commitment yesterday that you would receive the report no later than Thursday at noon. It is quite likely you will receive it before that. We have received 19 motions. The report will contain all of those motions in full text and also a notation as to what the *ad hoc* committee is doing with them, or any action that we will take. That action might be to combine some of common interest, or to consider them as a friendly amendment. We will not take any action without consulting with and getting agreement by the movers. Also, while it is always the prerogative of the assembly to raise motions in any order that you wish, we will be showing them in an order that we think might provide some clarity, and will allow you to review the impact of the adoption or the defeat of a particular motion, and how that might impact subsequent motions that will be before you."

Consideration of "Design for Mission" (continued)

Reference: 2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section IV, pages 1–3.

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson directed the assembly's attention to the 2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section IV, page 3, second column, to deal with unfinished work relative to the Design for Mission proposal.

In response to members who said they did not have the recommendation, or did not have an updated copy of it, the chair reminded members that it had been distributed at the first plenary session and was stapled together. However, a number of members still reported not having a copy. Ms. Nanette C. Dahlke [Metropolitan Chicago Synod] informed the assembly that it was stapled to the back of another document.

Secretary Lowell G. Almen read the recommendation:

MOVED;

SECONDED:

To acknowledge with deep gratitude the tireless and faithful work of the Commission for Women, all those who have served on the steering committee, all who have served as executive director, and all who have served on the staff; and

To recognize that the important work of fulfilling the mandate of the commission will now be the responsibility of the interunit alliance and be coordinated by the director for justice for women.

The Rev. Michael L. Cooper-White [Lower Susquehanna Synod] sought to introduce a third motion, but the chair ruled that it would be more appropriate after action on the motion currently on the floor.

The Rev. Gwendolyn S. King [New England Synod] proposed to amend by addition.

MOVED;

SECONDED:

To amend by addition:

To acknowledge with deep gratitude the tireless and faithful work of the Commission for Women, all those who have served on the steering committee, all who have served as executive director, and all who have served on the staff; and

To recognize that the important work of fulfilling the mandate of the commission will now be the responsibility of the interunit alliance and be coordinated by the director of justice for women and a newly developed program unit, Justice for Women.

Because this amendment had budgetary implications and would require an appropriation, the chair referred it immediately, to the Reference and Counsel Committee, per the assembly's rules. Therefore, he stated, the recommendation would need to be taken up after that committee had reported back.

Youth Convocation

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson asked the 42 members of the Youth Convocation to bring the report of that gathering. He mentioned that the young people had come from all over this church. Members of the convocation came to the podium as their ensemble sang "Bind Us Together, Lord." Their presentation, which included statements from almost every member of the group, focused on their identity as children of God, united in the one body of Christ regardless of their differing points of origin, opinions, and world views.

They also:

- spoke of their involvement in Churchwide Assembly worship, plenary sessions, and hearings; their search for eternal truths; and their desire to share their ideas and experiences with the whole body of Christ;
- expressed appreciation for the assembly's hard work on the issues facing the ELCA and the members' struggle together;
- lifted up the members of the assembly as role models, noting that they were keeping the assembly in their prayers; and
- thanked the assembly for setting a Christlike example.

One of the young people invited all youth voting members to stand. The assembly applauded. She challenged the assembly to involve a youth as a voting member from each synod at the 2007 Churchwide Assembly. Again, the assembly applauded. The members of the Youth Convocation left the stage singing "Bind Us Together, Lord," as they had done when they entered. Presiding Bishop Hanson thanked them on behalf of the assembly.

Greetings: Federal Chaplains

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson announced that the next item on the agenda was a greeting from the military chaplains of this church. He commented that he was pleased to have several federal chaplains present throughout the assembly and asked them to stand so they could be acknowledged. He continued by noting that, in this time of war, military chaplains and their families faced difficult times. Chaplains—some of whom had been called to active duty from the reserves and the National Guard—had left parishes to serve in places throughout the world. Their ministries—whether at home, in Iraq, or elsewhere in the world—were important to this church, its congregations, and its people, he emphasized.

Presiding Bishop Hanson informed the assembly that one of the chaplains' key contacts at home, the Rev. Darrell D. Morton, had begun work in July as the presiding bishop's assistant for federal chaplaincy ministries. Presiding Bishop Hanson asked him to stand.

The presiding bishop then called to the podium Lieutenant Colonel Michael T. Lembke, noting that Chaplain Lembke had been present throughout the assembly and had served as a parish pastor until he entered active duty in the U. S. Army in October 1986. Since then, he had served all over the world, returning in February 2005 from a one-year deployment to Iraq. While there, he wrote weekly updates called "Greetings from Tikrit on the Tigris" that described the trials and triumphs of everyday life in a war zone. Presiding Bishop Hanson also noted that Chaplain Lembke was an accomplished musician and had contributed his musical talents to congregations and units wherever he served. He asked the assembly to join him in welcoming Chaplain Lembke on behalf of all the chaplains who serve this church. The assembly gave him a standing ovation.

Chaplain Lembke said he was humbled, but that he would receive the applause on behalf of all 378 chaplains serving in the military as well as those serving in prisons and in other ways. He said that the primary purpose of a chaplain is to ensure free exercise and practice of religion, especially in places like Iraq, Bosnia, and Afghanistan. He said that chaplains continued to carry out the traditional roles of nurture, caring for the wounded, and honoring the dead, in addition to the ministry of Word and Sacrament. He expressed great appreciation for the presence of Presiding Bishop Hanson at the 2005 chaplains meeting. He also expressed appreciation for the support of the New Jersey Synod, noting that Bp. E. Roy Riley Jr. always had found him wherever he was. He spoke of the ministries being conducted by chaplains around the country, and urged those present to make contact with chaplains. He concluded by thanking members of the assembly for their encouragement and support.

Presiding Bishop Hanson asked the Rev. Kenneth M. Rupp, a member of the Church Council and a retired U.S. Army chaplain, to lead prayer. He also recognized Chaplain Gwendolyn S. King, serving in the Air Force reserve, on the 25th anniversary of her ordination.

Introduction of Ethnic Ministry Strategies

Reference: 2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section IV, pages 25–31, 33–45.

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson stated that this Churchwide Assembly was fortunate to celebrate two new ethnic-ministry strategies, noting that the approval over the next two days of the Arab and Middle Eastern Ministry Strategy and the African Descent Ministry Strategy would complete a "family" of ethnic-ministry strategies that had been developed over the last decade. With the completion of these ministry strategies, he said that he looked forward to working with members of the assembly to strengthen this church's leadership development work in five primary ethnic communities.

The presiding bishop announced that the introduction to the ministry strategies would be heard during this plenary session and would be considered separately during the next day's plenary sessions. He pointed out that both ministry strategies were found in Section IV of the *2005 Pre-Assembly Reports*, the Arab and Middle Eastern strategy on page 25 and the African Descent strategy on page 33.

He then introduced several individuals: the Rev. Frederick E. N. Rajan, executive director of the Commission for Multicultural Ministries; the Rev. Julius Carroll IV of the commission staff; the Rev. Richard J. Perry Jr. and the Rev. Rochelle E. Lewis, who served on the writing team for the African Descent Ministry Strategy; and the Rev. Bassam J. Abdallah of the commission staff and the Rev. Khader N. El-Yateem, who had served as resources for the Arab and Middle Eastern Ministry Strategy.

Pr. Rajan spoke of Arab and Middle Eastern ministries in New York City, Chicago, and Dearborn, Michigan, that had resulted from a 1992 churchwide consultation on such ministry. He stated that there were more than four million people of Arab and Middle Eastern heritage in the United States and that the Arab and Middle Eastern Ministry Strategy would continue to build strong ministry in this church. He stressed that the proposed strategy had been built on the five strategic directions that had been adopted in the 2003 Churchwide Assembly, and called for full partnership with and participation of the Arab and Middle Eastern community in this church.

Pr. Abdallah said that this church was seeking partnerships to intensify outreach among Arab and Middle Eastern communities, to start five new congregations in the next 10 years, and to recruit and educate at least five Arabic-speaking seminary students to staff those ministries. He also described the need to train lay leaders because the church had been clergy-dominated in the past. Pr. Abdallah noted that there was an ongoing partnership with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL) to share resources and to produce materials in Arabic. He stated that a new book of worship needed to be developed where Middle Eastern tradition and church culture could be integrated with Western Lutheran church tradition and culture. He solicited prayers for this ministry because resources and the number of Christians in the Middle East had been dwindling.

Pr. El-Yateem commented that the strategy would become the roadmap for people in the ELCA to strengthen and uplift existing Arab and Middle Eastern ministries, to train new leaders, and to build bridges of understanding and hope in the communities. In light of current events, he added, there was no better time to do this, and he called on the assembly to endorse the strategy.

Pr. Rajan then addressed the assembly about the African Descent Ministry Strategy, pointing out that members of African descent communities had been members of the Lutheran church in the U.S. and Caribbean for over three centuries. He stated that, at the end of 2004, there were 54,200 people of African descent in the ELCA, while over 40 million people in the United States and the Caribbean identified themselves as being of African descent. He said that the strategy being proposed was one of listening and responding to the people.

Pr. Carroll observed that many voices tell the story and create the vision. He lifted up the following eight goals of the strategy: 100 additional visionary rostered leaders of African descent; freedom for designing contextualized worship, while not confusing culture with confession; evangelical witness and service focusing on the spiritual and societal needs of people of African descent; invitation to discipleship that would lead to membership; sustained growth in all aspects of stewardship; nurturing lay leaders of all ages in

congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization; doing justice and showing mercy; and identification and nurture of leaders who have skills to serve as professional leaders in synods and throughout this church.

Pr. Lewis said that the assembly would want to be particularly attentive to Caribbean African and African national persons, who are not included in the mainstream of African Americans. She pointed out that the Lutheran churches in Africa were the fastest growing anywhere. She expressed her hope that this church could make use of the gifts of evangelism that African immigrants could bring. She stated that this ministry strategy could bring gifts of service, fellowship, and faith to this whole church so that it truly could represent the unity and diversity of the body of Christ in and to the world.

Introduction of ELCA College Presidents

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson stated that, as the assembly moved to the meetings of the college corporations, it was his pleasure to introduce the presidents of the ELCA colleges and universities, adding that the ELCA was justifiably proud of its 28 colleges and universities. He introduced the six presidents who had been inaugurated since the last assembly: Ms. Pamela M. Jolicoeur (Concordia College), Ms. Janet Phillipp (Dana College), Ms. Sabine U. O'Hara (Roanoke College), Mr. Richard A. Hanson (Waldorf College), Mr. Mark H. Erickson (Wittenberg University), and Ms. Katherine Haley Will (Gettysburg College), who was not present. He called attention to the fact that at the last Churchwide Assembly none of the college presidents was female; at this assembly, four were. He then invited Mr. Richard L. Torgerson, president of Luther College and chair of the Council of College and University Presidents, to bring a greeting on behalf of the colleges.

Mr. Torgerson invited all graduates of this church's colleges and universities to stand. He then spoke of the college and university presidents who were continually asked how they and the institutions they lead could assist this church. He thanked the assembly for creating a Vocation and Education unit in the restructuring plan. He spoke of vocation, which he defined as living life with a sense of purpose, a universal urge and need. He stated that these educational institutions help students discover vocation and purpose and equip them to serve and lead with distinction. Because the Lutheran church was born in a university, Mr. Torgerson said it was natural for education and learning to be a central part of this church's mission. He concluded by pointing out how compelling Martin Luther's theology of vocation was for this church's support of higher education.

Presiding Bishop Hanson called attention to the reception following the plenary session hosted by the ELCA's college and university presidents, which would provide an opportunity to learn more about these institutions and their gifted leaders. He said that this church worked with these leaders and institutions to strengthen their bonds, making them deeper and stronger. He expressed his hope that the percentage of ELCA students attending these colleges and universities could be increased from five percent to at least 15 percent.

College Corporation Meetings

At 4:20 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time, Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson announced that the assembly would move into the corporation meetings for four of the ELCA colleges. He explained that the governing documents of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America provide for a variety of relationship patterns between this church and its colleges and universities and that four of the 28 ELCA colleges and universities had chosen to relate to this church through the Churchwide Assembly. Presiding Bishop Hanson then declared the

Churchwide Assembly in recess, pursuant to bylaw 8.32.06., to convene the college corporation meetings for Dana College (Nebraska), Luther College (Iowa), St. Olaf College (Minnesota), and Wartburg College (Iowa). The minutes of those proceedings are kept in the records of those institutions.

At the conclusion of those meetings, Bishop Hanson declared Plenary Session Five of the 2005 Churchwide Assembly again to be in session at 4:40 P.M.

Report of the Memorials Committee

Reference: 2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section VI, pages 1-111.

Presiding Bishop Hanson invited the Rev. Diane “Dee” H. Pederson and Mr. Karl D. Anderson, co-chairs of the Memorials Committee, to come forward for consideration of additional memorials printed in Section VI, beginning with Category B1: World Hunger, on page 19.

Category B1: World Hunger (continued)

Reference: 2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section VI, pages 12-19.

The Rev. Serena S. Sellers [Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod] moved to amend item 1 under Congregations, Synods, and Churchwide organization, by adding the phrase, “ensuring adequate nutrition.”

MOVED;

SECONDED:

To amend by addition:

Congregations

1. engaging in local efforts to pray for and with those in need, feed the hungry ensuring adequate nutrition, and promote community economic development; *[with the remainder of the paragraph unchanged]*

Synods

1. equipping congregations in their efforts to feed the hungry ensuring adequate nutrition, and promote community economic development on the local level; *[with the remainder of the paragraph unchanged]*

Churchwide organization

1. equipping congregations in their efforts to feed the hungry ensuring adequate nutrition, and promote community economic development on the local level; *[with the remainder of the paragraph unchanged]*

Pr. Sellers spoke of her experiences working in food pantries where unhealthful food was being delivered to those in need. She cited the nation’s “epidemic of obesity,” and bemoaned the fact that non-nutritious food was being distributed. She argued that, by inserting these words in the resolution, people would be invited to consider *how* they are feeding the hungry, and to do so in a way that would represent good stewardship and that would lead to improved health for those we serve.

There being no debate, the chair called on a vote on the amendment.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

CARRIED:

To amend by addition:

Yes-808; No-79

Congregations

1. **engaging in local efforts to pray for and with those in need, feed the hungry ensuring adequate nutrition, and promote community economic development; [with the remainder of the paragraph unchanged]**

Synods

1. **equipping congregations in their efforts to feed the hungry ensuring adequate nutrition, to advocate for just laws and policies aimed at ending hunger, and promote community economic development on the local level; [with the remainder of the paragraph unchanged]**

Churchwide organization

1. **equipping congregations in their efforts to feed the hungry ensuring adequate nutrition, to advocate for just laws and policies aimed at ending hunger, and promote community economic development on the local level; [with the remainder of the paragraph unchanged]**

The Rev. Phillip R. Heinze [Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod] rose to encourage the assembly to consider not eating dinner on that Thursday evening, and contributing what they would have spent to a foodbank. He further urged that members, as a radical expression of the Gospel, then tip the waitstaff of the restaurant to which they would have gone, “in order that the waitstaff not suffer for my personal expression of piety.”

Mr. Richard L. Cleary [Lower Susquehanna Synod] moved to amend the paragraph “Churchwide Organization” by the insertion of an additional point, to be numbered 5. He pointed out that he was offering the amendment in conjunction with Mr. Teka O. Fogi [Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod], who had sought to introduce an amendment the previous day and who had solicited aid in formulating such an amendment.

MOVED;

SECONDED:

To amend by addition:
Churchwide organization

5. Opposing, with all means at our disposal, oppressive regimes whose policies, including war and religious and ethnic discrimination, result in chronic hunger among their people;

Speaking to his amendment, Mr. Cleary expressed his feeling that it would be a mistake to leave out of the resolution a mention of what is perhaps hunger’s chief cause around the world. He asserted that hunger in the world is not as much a result of stinginess in the West as it is the result of brutal despots who take Western charity “to line their pockets and feed the bellies of their soldiers.” Mr. Cleary urged the assembly to speak prophetically and strongly against dictatorships that starve people of food as well as freedom.

The Rev. Gemechis D. Buba [Southeastern Synod], a pastor from Ethiopia, expressed gratitude for the fact this issue was being raised, and for this church’s stand with Africa and support for Lutheran churches in Africa in times of war and discrimination and struggle. He argued that most of the hunger problem resulted from war, conflict, and ethnic discrimination, not lazy people or bad weather. He commended the Indiana-Kentucky Synod for its stand with the Oromo people.

A vote on the amendment was called.

MOVED;
SECONDED;
CARRIED:

YES-882; NO-42

To amend by addition:
Churchwide organization
5. Opposing, with all means at our disposal, oppressive regimes whose policies, including war and religious and ethnic discrimination, result in chronic hunger among their people;

The Rev. Paul J. Blom, bishop of the Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod, moved the previous question on the main motion as amended.

MOVED;
SECONDED:

To end debate.

The chair then called for a vote on the motion to end debate.

MOVED;
SECONDED;
CARRIED:

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

YES-904; NO-22

To end debate.

The motion carried. The Rev. George E. Keck [Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod] rose to a point of privilege to inquire whether all additional amendments that had previously been submitted to the Memorials Committee were now precluded from consideration by the vote to end debate. The chair affirmed his understanding. Pr. Keck moved to reconsider the motion to end debate.

MOVED;
SECONDED:

To reconsider the motion to end debate.

The chair stated that he should have made it clear before calling the vote to close debate that there were still amendments that had been submitted that would be precluded by the vote, and pledged to be more consistent with that sort of instruction to the assembly. He then directed the assembly to vote on the motion to reconsider, stressing that it would take a majority to approve it.

MOVED;
SECONDED;
CARRIED:

YES-533; NO-398

To reconsider the motion to end debate.

The Rev. Patrick V. Downes [Delaware-Maryland Synod] rose to a point of order to ask for clarification of the majorities needed for motions to end debate or to reconsider. The chair informed him that a two-thirds vote was required to end debate, while only a simple majority was required to reconsider a motion.

Pr. Keck thanked the assembly for reopening debate, and proposed an amendment to the resolution.

MOVED;

SECONDED:

To amend by addition:
Churchwide organization
1. equipping congregations . . . ;
2. supporting synods . . . ;
3. assist this church to understand the complexity of sustainable development in countries whose populations are living with chronic hunger, including such issues as economic justice, gender relationships, sustainable agriculture, environmental concerns, population, and birth control;
[with the remaining points renumbered].

Pr. Keck said that chronic hunger in the world was a scandal, but that it was a more complex issue than simply distributing more food or giving up dinner. He argued that this church ought to be able to speak to the many issues that add to the complex web of issues causing chronic hunger.

Mr. Thomas Salber [Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod] asked if it could be made known, when someone called the question, that there were more motions pending. The chair repeated his earlier statement concerning his efforts to inform the assembly of such matters.

The Rev. Daniel H. Henderson [La Crosse Area Synod] made a friendly amendment to make the first word “assisting” so it fit with the rest of the action. The assembly consented.

MOVED;

SECONDED:

To amend by addition:
Churchwide organization
1. equipping congregations . . . ;
2. supporting synods . . . ;
3. assisting this church to understand the complexity of sustainable development in countries whose populations are living with chronic hunger, including such issues as economic justice, gender relationships, sustainable agriculture, environmental concerns, population, and birth control;
[with the remaining points renumbered].

The Rev. Carol S. Custead [Allegheny Synod] moved to add the words “governmental corruption” after the words “economic justice.”

MOVED;

SECONDED:

To amend by addition:
Churchwide organization
1. equipping congregations . . . ;
2. supporting synods . . . ;
3. assisting this church to understand the complexity of sustainable development in countries whose populations are living with chronic hunger, including such issues as economic justice, governmental corruption, gender relationships, sustainable agriculture, environmental concerns, population, and birth control;
[with the remaining points renumbered].

Speaking to her addition to the amendment, Pr. Custead stated that, in her synod's companion synod of Kenya, the government had had a difficult time trying to address corruption at local levels, including such things as bribes to the police and postal service in order for people to receive aid packages, which contributed to the hunger issue.

The chair called for a vote on Pr. Custead's amendment to Pr. Keck's amendment.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

YES-725; NO-176

CARRIED:

To amend by addition:

Churchwide organization

1. equipping congregations . . . ;

2. supporting synods . . . ;

3. assisting this church to understand the complexity of sustainable development in countries whose populations are living with chronic hunger, including such issues as economic justice, governmental corruption, gender relationships, sustainable agriculture, environmental concerns, population, and birth control;

[with the remaining points renumbered].

The Rev. Marcus J. Miller, bishop of the Northeastern Ohio Synod, observed that what began as a very clear statement of this church on feeding the hungry had become complex and confusing, and stated that he was not sure it was helpful. He recommended that the assembly defeat the amendment and allow the resolution to stand on its own merits. He reasoned that the problem of hunger was so pervasive that the church needed to speak a clear word on the subject. Churchwide units were being restructured to reduce confusion, he remarked, but the kind of resolution now being considered increased confusion. He added that he was not as enthusiastic as he once was about the original memorial.

The Rev. Kristin M. Foster [Northeastern Minnesota Synod] spoke in opposition for similar reasons. She warned that the danger of listing so many things was that it complicated and left out other causes of hunger. She added that doing so did not allow for education to happen.

The Rev. Serena S. Sellers [Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod] spoke in favor. She said that addressing the complexity of the problem would better equip people to understand and therefore would make this church's efforts to alleviate hunger more effective.

The Rev. April C. Ulring Larson, bishop of the La Crosse Area Synod, argued that this amendment was not helpful. She reasoned that there were words about advocacy in other places and therefore they were not needed here.

The Rev. Bruce H. Davidson [New Jersey Synod] spoke in favor, agreeing that the resolution was complex. He suggested that this church should help people take responsibility for what they do that contributed to the problems of hunger. He felt that this church needed to lift up the political problems and take responsibility, yet be clear that the solution does not rest solely with it or the inability of others to appreciate its generosity.

The Rev. Phillip R. Nielsen [Nebraska Synod] said he was opposed to the amendment because it included the word "population," which he felt implied that the problem was that there are too many children or people.

The Rev. Joseph F. Rinderknecht [Northeastern Ohio Synod] stated that what was before the assembly called on the ELCA to engage in an educational task that would be impossible. He said that the call for birth control is heard in many countries as immoral. He commented that the problem was highly complex, and he felt that it would be a misuse of church funds to try to address all these very complicated issues.

The Rev. Margaret E. Herz-Lane [New Jersey Synod] remarked that she had visited Mali in West Africa, where she began to understand the complexity of the issue of world hunger. She stated that she had shared what she learned with many people in her synod and that this church has an important responsibility in dealing with hunger.

Mr. James L. Hansen [West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod] called the question.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To end debate.

The chair then called for a vote on the motion to end debate on the amendment.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

CARRIED: To end debate.

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

YES-881; NO-58

The assembly voted on the amendment.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

DEFEATED:

To amend by addition:
Churchwide organization
1. equipping congregations . . . ;
2. supporting synods . . . ;
3. assisting this church to understand the complexity of sustainable development in countries whose populations are living with chronic hunger, including such issues as economic justice, governmental corruption, gender relationships, sustainable agriculture, environmental concerns, population, and birth control;
[with the remaining points renumbered].

YES-393; NO-549

The Rev. Dennis R. Creswell [East Central Wisconsin] moved to close debate on the main motion.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To end debate.

The chair then called for a vote on the motion to end debate on the main motion.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

CARRIED: To end debate.

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

YES-921; NO-19

Presiding Bishop Hanson called for the vote on the memorial, but interrupted the vote to call upon the Rev. Charles W. Mays, member of the Church Council, to lead the assembly in prayer. The assembly then voted on the memorial as amended.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

Yes-927; No-27

CA05.03.08

To receive with gratitude the memorials of the Northwest Washington Synod; Southwestern Washington Synod; North-eastern Minnesota Synod; Saint Paul Area Synod; Central States Synod; Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod; Southwestern Texas Synod; Metropolitan Chicago Synod; Northwest Synod of Wisconsin; La Crosse Area Synod; Indiana-Kentucky Synod; Southern Ohio Synod; New England Synod; Metropolitan New York Synod; Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod; Delaware-Maryland Synod; and West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod calling for an end to world hunger;

To acknowledge that:

1. 800,000,000 people worldwide are chronically under-nourished and 1,200,000,000 people live on less than \$1.00 per day;
2. 30,000,000 people in the United States, including 13,000,000 children, cannot afford an adequate and balanced diet;
3. 189 countries, including the United States, have committed to cutting in half extreme hunger by the year 2015 by establishing the Millennium Development Goals;
4. advocacy organizations, like Bread for the World and the Institute for Food and Development Policy (FoodFirst) have established that there is sufficient food supply to feed the earth's population;
5. leading economists now argue that ending chronic hunger is an attainable goal for the first time in human history;
6. the Holy Scriptures are very clear in numerous passages that God has compassion on the poor (e.g., Jeremiah 22:15-16 and Luke 6:20-21) and that it is God's will that the hungry be fed (e.g., Psalm 146:5-7 and Matthew 25:34-35)
7. the Church of Jesus Christ is equipped uniquely by its identity and mission to be the leaven that stirs the peoples and nations of the world to end chronic hunger; and
8. by establishing the World Hunger Program, the ELCA made a core theological and ethical commitment to bringing the scandal of hunger to an end.

To confront the scandal of hunger in this world as a core dimension of living out the Christian faith;

To recommit this church to the goals of the ELCA World Hunger Appeal and Program through increased resolve and renewed engagement:

- 1. To provide relief and development assistance for those who suffer from hunger and injustices related to hunger in this and other countries; and to maintain a disaster fund for response to international and domestic emergencies;**
- 2. To foster the education of the members of this church to understand and confront the reality and underlying causes of hunger;**
- 3. To advocate policies and actions for social and economic justice relating to hunger—with governments, business institutions, and structures of this church and its related agencies;**
- 4. To encourage members of this church to practice responsible stewardship of their lives and their financial resources toward the prevention and alleviation of hunger; and**
- 5. To facilitate listening to and working together with those who have special awareness of the realities of food and hunger, including poor and hungry people in local and global communities and those who produce, process, and distribute food;**

To consider the following as examples of support, commitment, and engagement by each expression of this church:

Congregations

- 1. engaging in local efforts to pray for and with those in need, feed the hungry ensuring adequate nutrition, and promote community economic development;**
- 2. initiating with other congregations, especially with full-communion partner congregations, advocacy of laws and policies to end hunger in the local community;**
- 3. supporting advocacy of laws and policies to end hunger on the state, national, and global levels; and**
- 4. contributing generously to the World Hunger Appeal of the ELCA;**

Synods

- 1. equipping congregations in their efforts to feed the hungry ensuring adequate nutrition, to advocate for just laws and policies aimed at ending hunger, and to promote community economic development on the local level;**

2. **initiating with the leaders of other judicatories, especially with full-communion partners, advocacy of laws and policies to end hunger on the state, national, and global levels; and**
3. **encouraging congregations to contribute generously to the ELCA World Hunger Appeal;**

Churchwide organization

1. **equipping congregations in their efforts to feed the hungry ensuring adequate nutrition, to advocate for just laws and policies aimed at ending hunger, and to promote community economic development on the local level;**
2. **supporting synods in their efforts to end hunger on the state, national, and global levels;**
3. **initiating with the leaders of other church bodies, especially with full-communion partners, advocacy of laws and policies to end hunger on the national and global levels;**
4. **continuing to undertake relief efforts and implement sustainable development in partnership with Lutheran World Relief, the Lutheran World Federation, and in cooperation with other people of faith in situations of extreme hunger;**
5. **opposing, with all means at our disposal, oppressive regimes whose policies, including war and religious and ethnic discrimination, result in chronic hunger among their people; and**

To request the Churchwide Assembly to direct relevant units to raise with the Lutheran World Federation this church's interest in finding ways, within the context of the Lutheran World Federation's Eleventh Assembly, to address hunger eradication as an urgent matter confronting people of faith.

Recess

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson thanked the assembly for its good work and then called on Secretary Lowell G. Almen for announcements.

Secretary Almen announced that all were invited to the reception hosted by the presidents of ELCA colleges and universities at 6:00 P.M. Later in the evening, according to the secretary, several of the colleges would be holding their own receptions.

The secretary reminded the assembly that the deadline for submission of resolutions for items not germane to matters of the assembly was the following day at 10:45 A.M. Bishops were asked to pick up common ballots and hold them until instructed to distribute them to their voting members in Plenary Session Six. He reminded members that the plenary hall would be locked after the session.

Presiding Bishop Hanson asked Ms. Linda J. Brown, member of the Church Council, to lead Evening Prayer. Ms. Brown invited the assembly to sing “We are Called.” She then led the assembly in a responsive reading based on Psalm 121, read a passage from Scripture, and prayed.

The bells were sounded, the candle was extinguished, and Plenary Session Five of the ninth Churchwide Assembly ended at 5:30 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time.

Plenary Session Six

Thursday, August 11, 2005

8:15 A.M. – 11:00 A.M.

The sixth plenary session of the ninth Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America was called to order at 8:15 A.M. Eastern Daylight Time by the Rev. Mark S. Hanson, presiding bishop, at the Orlando World Center, Orlando, Florida. He called upon Mr. Ghassan “Gus” Khoury, member of the Church Council, to lead Morning Prayer. Mr. Khoury read a lesson from Philippians and led the assembly in a litany and prayer. The assembly sang the hymn “My Hope is Built on Nothing Less.” Presiding Bishop Hanson thanked the musicians from Lutheran Summer Music and urged support for the program.

Presiding Bishop Hanson commended the assembly for its progress in moving forward with the agenda and suggested an order by which the assembly would deal with items of business during the plenary session. He indicated that continued progress was essential in order that important items of business not be left to the final day of the assembly.

Parliamentary Matters

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson explained that the Credentials Committee would not be asked to report because previous reports had confirmed that a quorum was present, but indicated that a complete credentials report would be provided at the end of the assembly. In addition, he requested the assembly’s consent that the time allotted for that afternoon’s Plenary Session Seven be extended so that it would begin at 1:30 P.M. and end at 6:00 P.M.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

CARRIED:

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

VOICE VOTE

To amend the agenda to allow the assembly to remain in session until 6:00 p.m.

The Rev. John S. Hergert [Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod] asked whether the two-minute speaking limit adopted under the rules also would apply to the time when the assembly operated as a “quasi committee of the whole.” The chair responded that it did. Pr. Hergert moved to amend the rules to allow speakers to speak for three minutes during the “quasi committee of the whole.”

MOVED;

SECONDED:

To amend the rules to allow three minutes for each speech during the “quasi committee of the whole.”

In speaking to his motion, Pr. Hergert commented that, as he had practiced his brief prepared remarks in preparation for the “quasi committee of the whole,” he had found it difficult to say what he felt needed to be said within a two-minute limit.

The Rev. Roy G. Almquist, bishop of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, moved to amend the motion, reducing the time to 90 seconds.

MOVED;

SECONDED:

To amend so that the motion would read:

To amend the rules to allow ~~three minutes~~ 90 seconds for each speech during the “quasi committee of the whole.”

Bp. Almquist suggested that he would rather hear more persons speak for a shorter time than hear fewer speakers.

The Rev. Steven R. Benson [Minneapolis Area Synod] rose to a point of order, commenting that the amendment should be ruled out of order because it was counter to the intent of the motion. The chair ruled that the amendment was in order.

Mr. Howard W. Bell Jr. [Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod] moved to end debate on all matters before the house.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To end debate on all matters before the house.

The chair called for a vote on the motion to end debate.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

CARRIED:

To end debate on all matters before the house.

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

YES-901; NO-46

Presiding Bishop Hanson then directed the assembly to vote on Bp. Almquist’s amendment to the motion.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

CARRIED:

To amend so that the motion would read:
To amend the rules to allow ~~three minutes~~ 90 seconds for each speech during the “quasi committee of the whole.”

YES-495; NO-458

The amendment carried. The chair then directed the assembly to vote on Pr. Hergert’s motion as amended, stressing that a two-thirds majority was required because the motion would change the assembly rules.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

DEFEATED:

To amend the rules to allow 90 seconds for each speech during the “quasi committee of the whole.”

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

YES-502; NO-452

The motion to amend the rules was defeated, and the chair announced that the previously approved rule of a two-minute limit to speeches would stand.

Consideration of “Design for Mission” (continued)

Reference: 2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section IV, page 3.

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson announced that the recommendation for assembly action on the left-hand side of Section IV, page three, had already been approved, so the discussion on the second recommendation, printed on the right-hand side of that page, would

now continue. He reminded the assembly that there had been a motion to amend the proposal that had been referred to the Committee of Reference and Counsel for review. He called upon the Rev. Jonathan L. Eilert, co-chair of the committee, to report on the committee's findings.

Pr. Eilert explained that the committee had reviewed the proposal, consulting with the Budget and Finance Committee, and had determined that establishing a new program unit would have significant impact on the budgets for other units and programs of the churchwide organization, thereby negatively affecting their ability to meet mandatory outcomes. Because of the budgetary implications, the Committee of Reference and Counsel recommended against approving the amendment. The chair noted that, under the rules, it would take a two-thirds majority to approve the amendment in light of the opposition of the Reference and Counsel Committee.

Presiding Bishop Hanson invited debate on the proposal to create a new program unit, Justice for Women. He asked that the text of the amendment be displayed on the screen.

MOVED;

SECONDED:

To amend so that the motion would read:

To recognize that the important work of fulfilling the mandate of the commission will now be the responsibility of ~~the interunit alliance and be coordinated by the director for justice for women~~ a newly-developed program unit, Justice for Women.

The Rev. Gwendolyn S. King [New England Synod] spoke to her motion, declaring that the proposal provided “an opportunity to look for balance” and “to reclaim in full the mandate of the Commission for Women.” She suggested that women’s issues should be given the same status as multicultural issues. She asserted that the original proposal was inadequate to carry out the mandate for 63 percent of the membership of this church.

Ms. Judith L. Garber [Lower Susquehanna Synod] sought to amend the motion to refer to “the director for justice for women and children living in poverty” and to “a newly-developed program unit, Justice for Women and Children Living in Poverty.” After consultation with the parliamentarian, the chair ruled her motion out of order because it was a substantive change that was not aimed at perfecting the amendment currently before the house.

Speaking in opposition to Pr. King’s amendment, Ms. Wanda Straub [Northwestern Ohio Synod] cited her own long years of service within Women of the ELCA. She asserted that Women of the ELCA had “covered all the bases” in serving and helping women, naming several of the programs coordinated by that organization. She saw no need for “another added expense line to the budget,” adding that the Women of the ELCA was self-sufficient and gave \$750,000 annually back to the work of the ELCA.

The chair then called upon Ms. Janet K. Thompson, member of the Church Council, to provide a perspective on the desirability of creating a separate program unit for justice for women. Ms. Thompson expressed her opposition to creating a model that isolated the work of justice for women in one unit, stating that the council’s recommendation would cover the same function in a different structure, based on what she called a “matrix model.” She recounted a conversation the committee had had concerning a consultant advising a company on workplace safety issues. The consultant had informed the company that safety would not be achieved if there were a single person responsible for safety; rather, it needed to be the

priority of the manager of each department. In a similar fashion, she reasoned, requiring each unit to make justice for women a priority would make the strongest possible statement of the importance of the issue for this church.

The Rev. Christopher D. Berry [Northwest Washington Synod], speaking in favor, described his work with women candidates for the ministry, saying that he could not imagine telling them that “on the thirty-fifth anniversary of the ordination of women, this assembly did away with the Commission for Women.” He expressed his belief that the mandate of the Commission for Women had not been fulfilled yet and that the proposed unit was necessary to continue the work.

Mr. James L. Hansen [West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod] moved the previous question.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To end debate.

The chair called for a vote on the motion to end debate.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

CARRIED: To end debate.

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

YES-817; NO-145

Presiding Bishop Hanson then instructed the assembly to vote on the amendment.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

DEFEATED:

To amend by deletion and by insertion:

To recognize that the important work of fulfilling the mandate of the commission will now be the responsibility of ~~the interunit alliance and be coordinated by the director for justice for women~~ a newly-developed program unit, Justice for Women.

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

YES-332; NO-638

Presiding Bishop Hanson directed the assembly’s attention to the main motion.

The Rev. Serena S. Sellers [Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod] moved to amend the motion.

MOVED;

SECONDED:

To amend by insertion:

To recognize that the ELCA will remain accountable for the mandate of the commission. ~~T~~the important work of the commission will now be the responsibility of the interunit alliance and be coordinated by the director for justice for women.

Speaking to her amendment, Pr. Sellers said that the question had been asked whether this church would remain accountable to this particular mandate. She argued that her insertion would both preserve the intent of the restructuring and reassure those who were concerned about the elimination of the Commission for Women.

The Rev. Gary M. Wollersheim, bishop of the Northern Illinois Synod, moved to amend the amendment.

MOVED;

SECONDED:

To amend by insertion:

To recognize that the ELCA will remain accountable for the mandate of the commission through the Church Council. The important work of the commission will now be the responsibility of the interunit alliance and be coordinated by the director for justice for women.

Speaking to his amendment, Bp. Wollersheim expressed his belief in the importance of stating who is accountable, and stated that the Church Council could be responsible in this case, perhaps by appointing a task force or committee to oversee that accountability.

Speaking in opposition to Bp. Wollersheim's amendment, Ms. Dolores Yancey [Southwestern Texas Synod], a former staff member of Women of the ELCA, remarked that it seemed to her that "the same confusion that existed in the beginning still exists between the Women of the ELCA and the Commission for Women—their purpose, their charge, and their work is quite different." She stated that her experience had been that the Commission for Women had always managed to work well with other units within the churchwide organization. She asserted that "when everyone is doing a job, no one is doing the job." She ended by saying that the authority and the resources of this church should be behind a commission for women or a substitute for such a commission, and not with the Church Council.

Mr. Frank R. Riddle [Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod] moved the previous question on all matters before the house.

MOVED;

SECONDED:

To end debate on all matters before the house.

The Rev. Rolf P. Wangberg, bishop of the Northwestern Minnesota Synod, rose to question the placement of the phrase "through the Church Council" in Bp. Wollersheim's amendment. Presiding Bishop Hanson noted that the previous question had already been moved and that the assembly should proceed to a vote. He paused to point out that, should the assembly vote to close debate on all matters before the house, there were other pending amendments that would not be heard.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

DEFEATED:

To end debate on all matters before the house.

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

YES-575; NO-395

The Rev. E. Roy Riley Jr., bishop of the New Jersey Synod, moved to close debate on Bp. Wollersheim's amendment to the amendment.

MOVED;

SECONDED:

To end debate on the amendment to the amendment.

The chair directed the assembly to vote on closing debate.

MOVED;
SECONDED;
CARRIED:

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED
YES-909; NO-54

To end debate on the amendment to the amendment.

The chair then called for the vote on the amendment to the amendment.

MOVED;
SECONDED;
CARRIED:

YES-705; NO-264

To amend by insertion:

To recognize that the ELCA will remain accountable for the mandate of the commission through the Church Council. The important work of the commission will now be the responsibility of the interunit alliance and be coordinated by the director for justice for women.

The Rev. Susan K. Ericsson [Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod] spoke in support because of her belief that “accountability must rest somewhere.” She noted that on the slate of nominees for the Church Council only two of seven returning clergy members would be women, and that of 12 clergy nominated as new members of the Church Council, only three were women, with two of those running against each other. She expressed hope that the Church Council’s accountability would “begin with itself.”

The Rev. Marcia Cox [Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod] spoke in favor of the amendment. She stated that she had previously served with the Division for Ministry, which under the new organization would be the Vocation and Education unit. She voiced concern that the various program units of the new structure would have their “hands full” of other responsibilities and not pay sufficient attention to the concern of justice for women if accountability were not specifically designated.

Mr. Steven R. Chapman [Northwest Washington Synod] said he “regrettably, with sadness” spoke in support of the amendment, but asked the rhetorical question, “If matrixing of responsibilities is such a great idea, why have program units at all?” He asserted that the amendment was “the best that we have, and once again, women will be holding up more than their half of the sky.”

The Rev. Warren D. Freiheit, bishop of the Central/Southern Illinois Synod, moved the previous question.

MOVED;
SECONDED:

To end debate on the amendment.

The chair directed the assembly to vote on closing debate.

MOVED;
SECONDED;
CARRIED:

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED
YES-927; NO-46

To end debate on the amendment.

Presiding Bishop Hanson then called for the assembly to vote on the amendment as amended.

MOVED;
SECONDED;
CARRIED:

YES-823; NO-144

To amend by insertion:
To recognize that the ELCA will remain accountable for the mandate of the commission through the Church Council. The important work of the commission will now be the responsibility of the interunit alliance and be coordinated by the director for justice for women.

The Rev. Ann M. Tiemeyer [Metropolitan New York Synod] moved to further amend the motion by adding a paragraph at the end.

MOVED;
SECONDED:

To amend by addition:
To have a full report by the director for justice for women to the 2007 Churchwide Assembly describing the work of this whole church in addressing the full participation of women and describing how this new staff structure has affected our ability as a church to address the scandalous reality of sexism in the church and society.

Speaking to her motion, Pr. Tiemeyer reminded the assembly that the work of the Commission for Women had previously been constitutionally mandated, that the commission had reported directly to the Church Council and to the Churchwide Assembly, and that the commission's executive director sat on the [presiding bishop's Cabinet of Executives], and therefore "was at the heart of the conversations and decision making." She made a plea that, "as this assembly relinquishes its responsibility to maintain this as a constitutional mandate, I ask that, as a minimum, we take up the responsibility of hearing a report in two years of how this staffing structure has functioned for us."

Mr. Aaron Kjelland [Eastern North Dakota Synod] spoke in opposition, saying that the assembly had just given this responsibility to the Church Council.

The Rev. Serena S. Sellers [Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod] expressed appreciation for Pr. Tiemeyer's addition to the original recommendation and stated that, because the mandate was so important, it was good to give accountability to this entire church in the assembly.

The Rev. Bruce H. Davidson [New Jersey Synod] spoke to the "scandalous realities" of exclusion that manifest themselves in the high incidence of poverty, hunger, and violence affecting women and children and proposed that "We need a report on our progress . . . to see if we're actually doing the job."

The Rev. Heidi W. Punt [Central/Southern Illinois Synod] moved the previous question.

MOVED;
SECONDED:

To end debate.

The chair directed the assembly to vote on closing debate.

MOVED;
SECONDED;
CARRIED:

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED
YES-908; NO-40

To end debate.

The presiding bishop asked the assembly to vote on Pr. Tiemeyer's amendment.

MOVED;
SECONDED;
CARRIED:

YES-643; NO-337

To amend by addition:
To have a full report by the director for justice for women to the 2007 Churchwide Assembly describing the work of this whole church in addressing the full participation of women and describing how this new staff structure has affected our ability as a church to address the scandalous reality of sexism in the church and society.

Hearing no further discussion, Presiding Bishop Hanson called for a vote on the recommendation as amended.

ASSEMBLY
ACTION
CA05.04.09

YES-810; NO-169

To acknowledge with deep gratitude the tireless and faithful work of the Commission for Women, all those who have served on the steering committee, all who have served as executive director, and all who have served on the staff; and

To recognize that the ELCA will remain accountable for the mandate of the commission through the Church Council. The important work of fulfilling the mandate of the commission will now be the responsibility of the interunit alliance and be coordinated by the director for justice for women; and

To have a full report by the director for justice for women to the 2007 Churchwide Assembly describing the work of this whole church in addressing the full participation of women and describing how this new staff structure has affected our ability as a church to address the scandalous reality of sexism in the church and society.

Presiding Bishop Hanson expressed gratitude for the work of Ms. Joanne Chadwick, executive director of the Commission for Women, of the entire staff of the Commission for Women, and of those who had served on the steering committee for the commission. He voiced his hope that these persons would hear in the actions of the assembly a continuing deep commitment to the work yet before this church in addressing justice for women. The assembly responded with sustained applause.

The Rev. Michael L. Cooper-White [Lower Susquehanna Synod] moved the following.

MOVED;
SECONDED:

To acknowledge with deep gratitude the ministry of all current and former staff who have served within the churchwide organization as it has

been constituted; further, to keep in prayer and offer support to all staff members whose work and lives will be affected as the new structure is implemented.

Based upon his seven years of service on the churchwide staff, Pr. Cooper-White said he was keenly aware of the “dedication, faithfulness, and committed and courageous service” of those affected by the change in the structure of this church. He spoke in particular of those whose jobs he said had been eliminated by the assembly’s actions of the previous day, saying that the assembly owed them deep gratitude.

Presiding Bishop Hanson stressed to the assembly that care was being exercised by the churchwide organization in tending to displacements occasioned by the reorganization. Hearing no further discussion, Presiding Bishop Hanson called for a vote on Pr. Cooper-White’s motion.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

YES-905; NO-28

CA05.04.10 To acknowledge with deep gratitude the ministry of all current and former staff who have served within the churchwide organization as it has been constituted; further, to keep in prayer and offer support to all staff members whose work and lives will be affected as the new structure is implemented.

Presiding Bishop Hanson added his word of gratitude to all who had been involved in the four-year Design for Mission process, mentioning especially the leadership of the Rev. Charles S. Miller, executive for administration; Ms. Janet K. Thompson, chair of the Planning and Evaluation Committee of the Church Council; the members of the Church Council; and the members of the churchwide organization represented by their leaders who were present as advisory members of the assembly.

Amendments to the Governing Documents

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson called upon Secretary Lowell G. Almen to make a necessary announcement related to amendments to the governing documents. Secretary Almen reported that four such amendments had been submitted and forwarded to the Committee of Reference and Counsel prior to the deadline, related to the following constitutional provisions and bylaws: 14.31., related to the membership of the Church Council; 19.02., related to the election of the membership of the Church Council; 19.11.01., related to the process of elections; and 19.21.A98., related to elections. The secretary explained that the recommendations of the Committee of Reference and Counsel would be forthcoming.

The Rev. Kenneth D. Scheck II [Northeastern Ohio Synod] rose to a point of order to inquire whether promised documents would be received by the noon deadline. The chair assured him that documents were being prepared for distribution.

Consideration of Interim Eucharistic Sharing with The United Methodist Church

Reference: 2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section IV, pages 47–50; Section V, pages 43–44.

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson called upon the Rev. Randall R. Lee, executive for ecumenical and inter-religious relations, and the Rev. Allan C. Bjornberg, bishop of the Rocky Mountain Synod and co-chair of the Lutheran–United Methodist Dialogue, to present a proposal to declare interim Eucharistic sharing with The United Methodist Church (UMC). Presiding Bishop Hanson pointed out that the proposal “is not a full-communion agreement, but provides an additional way for congregations to get to know their United Methodist sisters and brothers better.” He also noted that the Rev. Paul A. Schreck in the Office of the Secretary had provided staff support to the dialogue team.

Pr. Lee expressed thanks for the privilege of introducing the proposal, which came to the assembly after years of dialogue. He described the proposed interim sharing of the Eucharist with The United Methodist Church as “another step in living out this church’s commitment to be in conversation with brothers and sisters from all denominations who would like to be in conversation with us.” He pointed out that this church’s ecumenical commitments are articulated in the document, “Ecumenism: The Vision of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,” which had been adopted in the Orlando World Center 14 years prior to this assembly. He called upon Bp. Bjornberg to describe the process that had brought the two churches to this moment.

Bp. Bjornberg noted that ELCA Lutherans had been in conversation with members of The United Methodist Church for almost three decades. He pointed out that both Lutherans and United Methodists began out of reform movements separated by a few centuries and had no record of historical condemnations against one another.

Bp. Bjornberg informed the assembly that the ELCA’s 1991 statement on ecumenism describes four stages of ecumenical relationship: 1) ecumenical cooperation; 2) dialogue; 3) preliminary recognition, including mutual recognition of rostered persons, agreement in doctrine, and commitments to work toward full communion, often referred to as “altar and pulpit fellowship;” and 4) full communion.

He continued by saying that interim Eucharistic sharing would allow and encourage ELCA Lutherans and United Methodists to explore and experience community in the Gospel by praying together, studying Scripture, exploring one another’s traditions, and coming to each other’s table. He outlined the progress made in recent dialogues. Conversations in 1977–79 led to a statement of agreement on the sacrament of Baptism. Further conversation in 1985–87 detailed the churches’ agreement on the office of bishop or oversight, with an understanding that episcopacy was an office of the Church and not its essence, and that it is the mission of the Church that determines the shape of that office. A third round of dialogue begun in 2001 revealed agreement on the Eucharist and related issues. He listed a number of documents that had come out of the dialogue and commended in particular two recent documents from The United Methodist Church on the sacraments. He mentioned in particular a 1996 document on Baptism, “By Water and the Spirit,” and a 2004 statement on Holy Communion, “This Holy Mystery.” Bp. Bjornberg then pointed out some of the key statements on Eucharistic sharing in the supporting materials.

He thanked by name a number of Lutheran and United Methodist participants in the most recent round of dialogues: “We of this ELCA–UMC dialogue have become more and more enthusiastic about the rich relationship we have before us.” Reporting that The United Methodist Church’s Council of Bishops had embraced in April 2005 the proposal for interim Eucharistic sharing, he urged the assembly to approve it with equal enthusiasm.

Presiding Bishop Hanson called upon Secretary Lowell G. Almen to read the recommendation.

MOVED;

SECONDED:

To welcome and rejoice in the substantial progress of the Lutheran–Methodist dialogue, looking toward the future possibility of a relationship of full communion between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and The United Methodist Church;

To now recognize The United Methodist Church as a church in which the Gospel is preached and taught;

To affirm, on the basis of studies conducted by the Lutheran–United Methodist dialogue, that the basic teaching of each respective church is consonant with the Gospel;

To acknowledge, on the same basis, that the central teaching of The United Methodist Church is sufficiently compatible with the teaching of this church;

To encourage common concern throughout the respective churches by such means as:

1. mutual prayer and mutual support by members of congregations;
2. study together of the Holy Scripture as well as the histories and theological traditions of both churches;
3. joint programs of theological discussion, evangelical outreach, and social ministry endeavors; and

To declare, on the basis of these findings, that a relationship of interim sharing of the Eucharist is hereby established between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and The United Methodist Church in the U.S.A., with such an interim sharing to be exercised according to established guidelines.

The Rev. Gladys G. Moore [New Jersey Synod] noted her upbringing in the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church and The United Methodist Church and stated that approval of the proposal would mean “finally integrating my full self” in the life of the church. She urged assembly members to take the agreement home “and rejoice in this new possibility,” arguing that reception in the congregations was vital to the success of ecumenical agreements.

The Rev. Vivian J. Davila [Caribbean Synod] said that she found the phrase “interim sharing” to be obscure and asked for a further definition.

Pr. Lee explained that the phrase was derived from the ELCA statement on ecumenism. In this context, he said, the word “interim” implies that “we hope that this is a provisional step on the way to establishing a relationship of full communion.”

Mr. Ron Pittman [Oregon Synod] described common activities and worship undertaken this summer by ELCA Lutherans and United Methodists in his Oregon community. He recounted that he had been a Methodist originally and had become a Lutheran 15 years ago. He initially was reluctant when he had heard of the possibility of an ecumenical relationship in his community, but he said that both congregations had come to appreciate the benefits that they had realized through their shared life together. He expressed hope that common endeavors would continue.

The Rev. James R. Crumley Jr. [South Carolina Synod] voiced approval of the proposal and asked why it did not go further. He expressed his belief that all the conditions for full communion between the ELCA and the UMC had already been fulfilled, and indeed were, in his opinion, fulfilled in higher degree than in some of the full-communion agreements that had already been declared. He questioned the necessity of a period of interim sharing.

Bp. Bjornberg affirmed that Pr. Crumley had “captured the mind of the dialogue team,” which had discovered sufficient agreement between the two traditions while recognizing that, in light of recent ecumenical agreements and the struggles around them, it was appropriate to allow time for this whole church to “discover the riches that we have discovered.” He declared that the dialogue team had found no impediment to full communion.

The Rev. Patrick J. Rooney [Lower Susquehanna Synod] rose to a point of order, protesting that only speakers in favor of the recommendation were being called upon to speak. The chair responded that none of the persons waiting in line at red microphones had indicated a desire to speak in opposition to the recommendation, but rather had indicated that they wished to ask questions, which moved them further down in the sequence of speaking.

The Rev. Joanna Norris Grimshaw [Central States Synod], while in favor of the motion, expressed concern about some of the theology and practice of United Methodist clergy in the area of far western Kansas where she serves, an area with very small Lutheran congregations and many Methodist congregations. She expressed concern that there could be wide divergences between the public theology of those in The United Methodist Church who were involved in the ecumenical dialogue and the practice and teaching of UMC pastors locally. By way of example, she described one neighboring UMC pastor as “iffy” about infant baptism and suggested that she would not feel comfortable with promotion of that view in the congregations she serves.

The Rev. Terrie L. Sternberg [Virginia Synod] offered a friendly amendment.

MOVED;

SECONDED:

To amend the second paragraph by deletion:
To ~~now~~ recognize The United Methodist Church as a church in which the Gospel is preached and taught;

Pr. Sternberg spoke to her amendment, explaining that when she had first read the recommendation, she had interpreted the word “now” as meaning that this church had not previously recognized the Gospel as being preached and taught in the UMC. She stated that she had been told at a hearing that the word “now” was necessary to establish a key criterion for moving toward full communion.

Hearing no further speaking, the chair called for a vote on Pr. Sternberg’s amendment.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

YES-789; NO-118

CARRIED:

To amend the second paragraph by deletion:
To ~~now~~ recognize The United Methodist Church as a church in which the Gospel is preached and taught;

The chair then invited debate on the main motion as amended.

Mr. R. Guy Erwin [Southwest California Synod] explained that his family, like many others, includes both Lutherans and Methodists. Describing the proposal as “a family

reunion,” he pointed out how much Lutherans and Methodists could learn from each other. “We have our confessional and historical heritage to offer,” he said, and Lutherans could learn from Methodists how to be a church that is not homogeneous, either theologically or racially. He asserted that Lutherans could also learn about worship and outreach from United Methodists.

The Rev. Joseph F. Rinderknecht [Northeastern Ohio Synod] asked about the authority of official doctrinal statements in The United Methodist Church within local congregations. He expressed an understanding that the binding nature of these documents was different from that within Lutheranism.

Bp. Bjornberg responded that the ELCA needed to pay attention to the adopted official positions of the UMC, which are articulated in “By Water and the Spirit” and in “This Holy Mystery.” He observed that United Methodists also could point to anecdotal situations in the ELCA where pastors or congregations depart from confessional teachings.

The Rev. David P. Housholder [Pacifica Synod] expressed surprise that the ELCA did not already have a Eucharistic sharing agreement with the UMC. “I thought we always had this,” he said, adding that his first congregation long had shared Holy Communion with Methodists. He urged that the relationship move forward, saying, “I cannot imagine a less offensive church.”

The Rev. William R. Crabtree [Sierra Pacific Synod] asked if someone could address how Eucharistic sharing agreements with other churches had been helpful as a means of determining how this new relationship with the UMC also might be helpful. He also voiced his support for the notion of an interim period of sharing as an opportunity for people to learn about the beliefs of the other church.

Pr. Lee responded that this church had entered into all its ecumenical agreements because of the mission of the Church. Through such agreements, he said, ELCA Lutherans had already discovered a variety of ways to enhance the mission in which all the churches are engaged. Through exchange of clergy and other cooperative endeavors, he continued, the ELCA had discovered an enrichment and “cross-fertilization” of theological traditions that had helped this church recognize that “we all bring something to the table that helps us to delve more deeply in the grace of God active in our lives.” Pr. Lee repeated that it was mission that led to ecumenical agreements, as well as a desire that we fulfill our Lord’s hope that we visibly manifest the unity of the body of Christ, which is his gift to us.

Mr. Eric D. Wong [Northeastern Minnesota Synod] called the question.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To end debate.

The chair directed the assembly to vote on closing debate.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

CARRIED: To end debate.

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

YES-855; NO-61

The presiding bishop asked Ms. Esther Prabhakar [Northern Illinois Synod] to lead the assembly in prayer. Following prayer, the chair called for a vote on the recommendation as amended, explaining that majority vote was required.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

YES-877; NO-60

CA05.04.11

To welcome and rejoice in the substantial progress of the Lutheran–Methodist dialogue, looking toward the future possibility of a relationship of full communion between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and The United Methodist Church;

To recognize The United Methodist Church as a church in which the Gospel is preached and taught;

To affirm, on the basis of studies conducted by the Lutheran-United Methodist dialogue, that the basic teaching of each respective church is consonant with the Gospel;

To acknowledge, on the same basis, that the central teaching of The United Methodist Church is sufficiently compatible with the teaching of this church;

To encourage common concern throughout the respective churches by such means as:

1. mutual prayer and mutual support by members of congregations;
2. study together of the Holy Scripture as well as the histories and theological traditions of both churches;
3. joint programs of theological discussion, evangelical outreach, and social ministry endeavors; and

To declare, on the basis of these findings, that a relationship of interim sharing of the Eucharist is hereby established between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and The United Methodist Church in the U.S.A., with such an interim sharing to be exercised according to established guidelines.

Greetings:

The United Methodist Church

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson invited Bishop William Oden, ecumenical officer and head of communion for The United Methodist Church, to bring a greeting. Bp. Oden expressed pleasure that “we have invited each other into each other’s house for table fellowship, for mutual mission, and for theological study.” He characterized the interim sharing period as an opportunity for the two churches to get to know one another as they perhaps had not done before.

He reminded the assembly that Methodism began when John Wesley traveled to Georgia as a missionary to the Indians there, a mission at which he failed. Returning to England in 1738 in great despair, still searching for salvation by his good works, he went to a Bible study in Aldersgate Street in London where his heart was “strangely warmed” and he had an experience of salvation by faith through grace as he read Martin Luther’s “Preface to the Epistle to the Romans.” That was the beginning of the Methodist revival in England and

around the world. Thus, he pointed out, “our roots have touched even in our very earliest phases.”

Discussing the vote just taken, Bp. Oden stated, “The victory is not the vote today.” Rather, he said, victory would come when the agreement for interim sharing of the Eucharist became “incarnate” in the lives and work of the local churches. “We are moving ahead in this historic vote today,” he affirmed.

The assembly then rose and sang John Wesley’s hymn, “O, for a Thousand Tongues to Sing.”

Consideration of the Arab and Middle Eastern Ministry Strategy (continued)

Reference: 2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section IV, pages 25–31.

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson returned the assembly’s attention to the proposed ethnic-ministry strategies. He indicated that the first of these to be considered was the Arab and Middle Eastern Ministry Strategy. He introduced three people to serve as resources for the discussion: the Rev. Frederick E. N. Rajan, executive director of the Commission for Multicultural Ministries; the Rev. Bassam J. Abdallah, consultant on Arab and Middle Eastern Ministries for the Commission for Multicultural Ministries; and the Rev. Khader L. El-Yateem [Metropolitan New York Synod]. Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson called upon Secretary Lowell G. Almen to read the recommendation.

MOVED;

SECONDED:

To receive with appreciation the Arab and Middle Eastern Ministry Strategy of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America developed by the Arab and Middle Eastern community;

To express support and deep appreciation for existing ministries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America with Arab and Middle Eastern people; and

To recommit the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to partnership with existing Arab and Middle Eastern congregations and to intensified outreach with the Gospel among the wider Arab and Middle Eastern communities.

The Rev. Paul F. Koch [Metropolitan Chicago Synod], chair of the working group on the Middle East for his synod, urged support for the resolution, noting that “Lutherans in the Holy Land need us to stand in solidarity with them and to support their ministries.” He called attention to Lutheran schools in the Holy Land where Muslim and Christian children were learning together and hearing the Gospel.

The Rev. Stephen P. Bouman, bishop of the Metropolitan New York Synod, said he hoped the assembly understood the gift this church was receiving through the resolution. He described Salaam Lutheran Church in Brooklyn, N.Y., as one of the very few places where Christians, Jews, and Muslims gathered for conversation.

The Rev. Gemechis D. Buba [Southeastern Synod] expressed support for the resolution, noting that Islam is “the fastest growing religion” in this country and in the western world. He stressed the importance of reaching out to this community with evangelism.

The Rev. Robert A. Rimbo, bishop of the Southeast Michigan Synod, noted that his synod has the largest concentration of people of Arab descent in this country and urged support for the proposal. He rejoiced in the partnership with the Evangelical Lutheran

Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL) and pleaded with the assembly, for the sake of that partnership, but also for the sake of mission in the greater Detroit area, to support the work that the committee had brought before the assembly.

Mr. Matthew L. Erickson [Southwest California Synod] asked why the Persian community was not listed.

Pr. Rajan explained that this was something of which the committee had been quite mindful. He explained that many Persian Christians were worshiping in other communities or had affiliated with churches of the Arab and Middle Eastern communities.

Ms. Judith Schlueter [Southeast Michigan Synod], a hospital chaplain in Detroit, urged support for the proposal, saying that this church's efforts to build bridges to the Middle East had been a great witness to her Muslim colleagues in the hospital.

The Rev. Steven E. King [Southwestern Minnesota Synod] said that he was impressed by the focus on outreach and evangelism and the bridge building implicit in the proposal.

The Rev. Callon W. Holloway Jr., bishop of the Southern Ohio Synod, announced that he planned to implement the ministry at the synodical level, and urged those "20 or so folks who have their voting machines stuck on 'no'" to consider voting for the proposal.

The Rev. Victor C. Langford III [Northwest Washington Synod] commented that he was excited about the strategy because, even though he was not from New York, Chicago, or Dearborn, Mich., his region had many people of Arab or Middle Eastern descent, and he thought that the strategy would "motivate us to be aware of the need."

Mr. Allen K. Anderson [Western North Dakota Synod] moved the previous question.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To end debate.

The chair asked the assembly to vote on closing debate.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

CARRIED: To end debate.

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

YES-812; NO-22

Prior to the vote on the recommended action, Presiding Bishop Hanson called upon Ms. Judith Anne Bunker, member of the Church Council, to lead the assembly in prayer.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

YES-858; NO-6

CA05.04.12 To receive with appreciation the Arab and Middle Eastern Ministry Strategy of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America developed by the Arab and Middle Eastern community;

To express support and deep appreciation for existing ministries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America with Arab and Middle Eastern people; and

To recommit the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to partnership with existing Arab and Middle Eastern congregations and to intensified outreach with the Gospel among the wider Arab and Middle Eastern communities.

**Greetings:
World Council of Churches**

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson introduced the Rev. Deborah DeWinter, program executive for the United States in the World Council of Churches (WCC), to bring a greeting on behalf of the Rev. Samuel Kobia, general secretary of the WCC. Bishop Hanson noted that Pr. DeWinter serves as a minister in a full-communication partner of this church, the United Church of Christ.

Pr. DeWinter thanked the assembly for its ecumenical hospitality and noted her own upbringing in the Lutheran Church, adding that she had been ordained in the former American Lutheran Church. She commended Presiding Bishop Hanson, Pr. Lee, and his colleagues for their leadership of the ecumenical movement. She brought greetings from the WCC offices in Geneva and New York City.

Pr. DeWinter reported that the WCC had 347 member churches, denominations, and church fellowships in 100 countries around the world, representing 550,000,000 Christians. Protestants, the Orthodox, and members of united and uniting churches “together find that they can live into God’s gift of unity in an enhanced way,” she observed.

She concluded by inviting members of the assembly to attend the Ninth Assembly of the World Council of Churches in February 2006 in Porto Alegre, Brazil, the first assembly to be held in Latin America. The theme of the assembly would be “God, in Your Grace, Transform the World.” Approximately 3000 church leaders and friends of the ecumenical movement were expected. She encouraged members to use the resources developed for that assembly in their congregations.

**Greetings:
National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.**

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson welcomed the Rev. Robert W. Edgar, general secretary of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA (NCCC), to bring a greeting. He noted that Dr. Edgar is a pastor in The United Methodist Church and also served as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives.

Dr. Edgar commended the “spirit, energy, and enthusiasm” of the assembly. As a Methodist, he commented that the ecumenical action just taken meant that “we can now nail things to the church door enthusiastically with our hearts strangely warmed.” He observed that the ELCA “has its eye on the prize,” the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, not neglecting the needs and burdens of the world. He praised ELCA efforts to bring relief to Niger, to cooperate with The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod in disaster relief, and to work to bring about peace, justice, and care for the good earth.

Dr. Edgar noted that the NCCC was grateful for the strong involvement of the ELCA in its activities. He described the council as a fellowship of Christian groups “so diverse that they could only be united by a common Lord.” Rejecting the understanding that the NCCC is a “partisan left-wing organization,” he described the council instead as a group called

together by “the Prince of Peace who each day of his life showed his bias for the poor and prayed to the Creator who gave us responsibility for tending to this beautiful world.” Dr. Edgar concluded by asking assembly members to stand and place a hand on each other’s shoulders as he offered a benediction from the Franciscan tradition.

Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Sexuality Recommendations

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson called upon Ms. Judy Biffle, co-chair of the *ad hoc* committee considering amendments and substitute motions to the Church Council recommendations regarding the sexuality studies.

Ms. Biffle reported that, as of the deadline for submission, 19 motions had been received. Assistance had been given to makers in wording their amendments and substitute motions. Of these 19, four were withdrawn. She indicated that the remaining 15 motions had been grouped and organized. A document detailing the organization was being printed, with copies to be distributed during the lunch hour. She further reported that there had been no proposed motions for Recommendation One; for Recommendations Two and Three, motions were grouped according to amendments, followed by proposed substitutions. While minor corrections for grammar and spelling had been made, no substantive changes were made to the motions, according to Ms. Biffle. Within the groupings, the motions were sequenced alphabetically according to the last name of the author. She reminded voting members that the fact a motion was printed in the report did not mean necessarily that it would come to the floor, and that each of them would need to be moved by the author to come before the assembly. She also pointed out that each motion would need to be reviewed in relation to the rules of the assembly to determine whether a two-thirds or simple majority would be required for passage.

Report of the Memorials Committee

Reference: 2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section VI, pages 1–111.

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson called upon the Rev. Diane “Dee” H. Pederson and Mr. Karl D. Anderson, co-chairs of the Memorials Committee, to present a memorial acknowledging the 350th anniversary of the arrival of Jewish people in the United States.

Category C1: Jewish–Christian Relations

Reference: 2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section VI, pages 36 and 37.

1. Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod (7E) [2004 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the 2004-2005 biennium brings the 350th anniversary of the arrival of the Jewish community in North America; and

WHEREAS, in its 1994 “Declaration to the Jewish Community” the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America expressed the “urgent desire to live out our faith in Jesus Christ with love and respect for the Jewish people”; and

WHEREAS, the partnership of the Jewish community with the lay members, clergy, congregations, agencies, and institutions of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod strengthens our witness and service in God’s name and educates us in God’s will for the world; and

WHEREAS, the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod has steadfastly committed itself to building mutual understanding among Jews and Christians through such partnership and through the work of the Institute for Jewish-Christian Understanding of Muhlenberg College; and

WHEREAS, the Jewish congregations, community centers, and federations in the region comprising the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod share our devotion to God and a commitment to bring greater

peace and justice to our local communities, our society, and the world, and have consistently contributed to the achievement of those aspirations; and,

WHEREAS, the 108th Congress of the United States of America in its first session adopted Concurrent Resolution 106, recognizing and honoring the efforts of “The Commission for Commemorating 350 Years of American Jewish History,” including the designation of September 2004 as “American Jewish History Month”; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America hereby extend its congratulations and best wishes to the Jewish community on the occasion of the 350th anniversary of the arrival of the Jewish community in North America; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America reaffirm its commitment to continue to nurture mutual understanding among Jews and Christians through the work of its congregations and agencies, including the Institute for Jewish-Christian Understanding of Muhlenberg College; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the congregations of this synod be encouraged to use the occasion of American Jewish History Month, September 2004, as an opportunity for joint celebrations and commemorations with the Jewish community and as an opportunity for Christian education in the areas of American Jewish history and the significance of Judaism for Christian self-understanding; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to recognize and honor the Jewish community for its 350 years of life, work, civic involvement, and faithfulness in North America; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the secretary of the synod communicate this assembly action to the Jewish congregations, community centers, and federations on the territory of the synod.

BACKGROUND

Although individual Jews had been present in the American colonies earlier, the September 23, 1654, arrival in New Amsterdam (later renamed New York City) of a group of 23 Jewish refugees fleeing persecution in Brazil is considered the beginning of the organized Jewish community in North America. Succeeding waves of immigration, especially in the 19th century and the early 20th century, brought the Jewish community to its present strength of five to six million people. Over this period of time, Jews have made notable contributions to American civic life, philanthropy, business, science, literature, and the arts, and have been prominent in many movements for social justice and civil rights. Especially during the past 40 years, numerous dialogues between American Christians and Jews have resulted in a new appreciation of their common roots and of the need to move beyond traditional stereotypes of one another.

In April 1994 the ELCA Church Council approved the “Declaration of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to the Jewish Community,” which renounced Luther’s anti-Jewish views, acknowledged their harmful historical effects, and pledged “to live out our faith in Jesus Christ with love and respect for the Jewish people.” In 1998 the Department for Ecumenical Affairs issued “Guidelines for Lutheran-Jewish Relations,” a practical guide for relations at the local level. In 2004, the Department for Ecumenical Affairs published “Talking Points: Topics in Christian-Jewish Relations,” a set of study and discussion materials on theological questions arising from the Christian-Jewish dialogue. The ELCA currently is engaged in a series of conversations with representatives of Reform Judaism. The Jewish-Christian dialogue continues through the ELCA’s participation in the Interfaith Relations Commission of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA.

Lutheran and Jewish representatives in Washington work together to address issues of social justice, human rights, immigration, and other issues on which their respective national bodies have taken similar positions.

CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY ACTION

Mr. Anderson presented the Memorials Committee's recommendation for action:

MOVED;

SECONDED:

To receive with gratitude the memorial of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod;

To express the best wishes of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to the Jewish community on the 350th anniversary of the founding of the Jewish community in this country;

To express appreciation for the distinguished contributions made by Jews to movements for social justice and civil rights, philanthropy, business, science, literature, and the arts;

To commend the Department for Ecumenical Affairs for its work to promote Lutheran–Jewish dialogue and produce study materials about Christian–Jewish relations, and to urge that these efforts be continued and strengthened; and

To urge congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to reach out to their Jewish neighbors for dialogue and cooperation on common concerns as suggested in the 1998 “Guidelines for Lutheran–Jewish Relations.”

Rising to a point of order, Mr. Andrew J. Carlson [Southwestern Washington Synod] questioned whether some voting machines were malfunctioning and asked that they be tested by asking every voting member to vote “yes” on a test ballot. The chair requested the vote, instructing everyone to vote “yes.” The tally showed 966 “yes” votes and 0 “no” votes.

The Rev. Christopher D. Berry [Northwest Washington Synod], campus pastor at Western Washington University, reported that eleven years ago on his campus Jewish students at the Hillel center “were really being beaten up by some of our fellow Christians.” As a result, the Lutheran Campus Ministry had offered its facility to the Jewish students as a “sanctuary.” This offer had led to shared space, programs, Bible study, and prayer. He “heartily” supported the resolution.

Hearing no further discussion, Presiding Bishop Hanson called for a vote on the recommended action.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

Yes-922; No-2

CA05.04.13

To receive with gratitude the memorial of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod;

To express the best wishes of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to the Jewish community on the 350th anniversary of the founding of the Jewish community in this country;

To express appreciation for the distinguished contributions made by Jews to movements for social justice and civil rights, philanthropy, business, science, literature, and the arts;

To commend the Department for Ecumenical Affairs for its work to promote Lutheran–Jewish dialogue and produce study materials about Christian–Jewish relations, and to urge that these efforts be continued and strengthened; and

To urge congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to reach out to their Jewish neighbors for dialogue and cooperation on common concerns as suggested in the 1998 “Guidelines for Lutheran–Jewish Relations.”

Greetings:

The Union for Reform Judaism

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson introduced Rabbi Eric H. Yoffie, head of the Union for Reform Judaism, who brought greetings from the Union for Reform Judaism. Rabbi Yoffie noted that he was the first non-Christian to address an ELCA assembly and was honored by the invitation to attend.

He pointed out that both Christians and Jews were engaged in the hard work—though there is no more important work—of “creating an earthly home for the divine presence and offering our members a life lived by the flame of faith.” He described the ELCA as “pathsetters in relations between Christians and Jews” and said he was moved by the way this church has wrestled “with the antisemitism in your own history.” He further expressed his delight at the cooperation between the two movements in advancing the cause of justice in our nation’s capital.

Rabbi Yoffie said that he was present in part to join with the ELCA in celebrating the 350th anniversary of Jewish settlement in the U.S. and thanked the assembly for the memorial it had just passed. In 1654, he recounted, 23 Jewish refugees landed in New Amsterdam. After 350 years, he stated, American Jewry had become the freest and most secure Jewish community in all of Jewish history, here in “this blessed land, protected by the sanctuary of a constitution that safeguards the sacred right to be different.” He said that at this time of observation of the anniversary, American Jews were thankful for the blessings of this country and for their friends.

American Jews also are considering the tasks as yet uncompleted, he affirmed, and look to join with other communities of faith in covenants of hope and coalitions of decency to meet the challenges that still confront them. Rabbi Yoffie noted that Christians and Jews shared common concerns about the moral lives of their children, poverty, income gaps, job insecurity, and out-of-control healthcare costs. In the face of these problems, he said, “We believe people of faith need to be worried about more than personal piety and personal morality, as critical as they are. We believe that this is not the time for governments to be craven toward the economically powerful and vicious toward the economically weak. We believe that to be a holy community is not to live in self-protective isolation, but to live in loving relationship with other people, which means reminding our countrymen that Americans who are not wealthy always fare better when we share the burdens, rather than face them alone. We believe, in short, that at this critical moment in our country’s history

people of faith must do what we have done so often before: summon America to a higher vision of its meaning and destiny.”

Rabbi Yoffie said that the American Jewish community’s efforts to secure Israel’s security were among that community’s most important accomplishments of the past 350 years. He indicated that the Union for Reform Judaism supported a two-state settlement of Israeli-Palestinian issues and asserted that the Palestinians must have a state. He commented that peace will require territorial compromise on Israel’s part, and unconditional acceptance of the Jewish state would be required of Palestinians. He stated his belief that a negotiated peace would come and that an American role in that negotiation was essential. Rabbi Yoffie affirmed the Union for Reform Judaism’s belief that the government of Israel, like all governments, is an imperfect human system, and said that his organization did not hesitate to criticize the Israeli government when it was wrong. He acknowledged that the Palestinian people are in pain and that without Palestinian dignity there will be no dignity for Israel.

He spoke of terrorism born “not out of despair but out of contempt,” saying that it must be called by its name. He called attention to 175 successful terrorist attacks against Israeli civilians since the Palestinian Authority rejected the Clinton–Barach peace plan, and asserted that, as long as such terror continued, Israel had a right to a defensive barrier to protect civilians. He urged the assembly and other friends in the Christian world neither to minimize the effects of terrorism nor to “demonize or isolate Israel as though somehow she alone were responsible for the current conflict.”

Rabbi Yoffie described the current moment as one of hope, recounting that Israel had withdrawn from Sinai and Lebanon, and soon would withdraw from Gaza. He called for Israelis and Palestinians to “look through each other’s eyes for an instant” and for the U.S. government to involve itself fully in the search for peace. Now, he said, was the time for terror to stop and for settlement building to stop. Now, he stated, was the time for everyone to see that peaceful means can achieve something that can never be achieved through violence. He told the story of Moses before his death commanding the Israelites not to hate the Egyptians, the masters and murderers of their parents. Moses, he explained, knew that to build a society of hope one must let go of hate. He said that he looked forward to joining with this church in that great task.

The assembly responded with a standing ovation.

Elections: First Common Ballot

Reference: *2005 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section VII, pages 1–238.

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson asked the assembly to turn its attention to the first ballot for elections to the Church Council and for committees relating to churchwide units. He called upon Mr. Phillip H. Harris, chair of the Elections Committee, who explained the election procedures.

Mr. Harris asked synodical bishops to distribute the common ballots that they had received that morning. The ballots of voting members not present were to be retained by the bishops. He reminded members that the governing documents did not allow for any sort of proxy voting. In order to complete the ballot, he said, voting members would need three things: a ballot form, the nominee list beginning on page 24 of Section VII of the *2005 Pre-Assembly Report*, and a ballpoint pen or pencil. He noted the biographical descriptions of the nominees in the *2005 Pre-Assembly Report* and pointed out that biographical data for nominees from the floor had been distributed with a revised list of nominees. Mr. Harris asked the assembly not to use the ivory pages beginning on page 129 of Section VII, but to refer only to the white pages. The ivory pages, he stated, could be discarded. He explained

that the substitute pages given to voting members that morning should be inserted into the white biographical pages. He noted some corrections that needed to be made by hand:

- On page 84, Section VII, Program Committee for Multicultural Ministries: the section numbered 61 should be numbered 62
- On page 85, Section VII: the section numbered 62 should be numbered 61

Mr. Charles E. Kalthorn [Metropolitan New York Synod] rose to a point of order, saying that there were members of his group who had not received page 34.1 that morning. Copies then were given to members who had not received them earlier.

Mr. Harris continued with the list of corrections:

- On the ballot form, page 1, first column, ticket 11: as item c. add the name of Mr. David E. Laden, Saint Paul, Minn. (3H)

He reminded voting members that they were to vote for only one nominee per ticket. Members could choose not to vote for any nominees on a given ticket, but voting for multiple persons on a ticket would invalidate the vote for that ticket. He stressed that ballot forms were going to be scanned electronically, so they needed to be handled with care. He advised members *not* to use the felt-tipped pens that had been provided that morning because of the risk of ink soaking through the paper and spoiling the ballot. Members who spoiled or mismarked their ballots could trade them in for a clean ballot at one of the ballot stations.

The Rev. Timothy J. Swenson [Western North Dakota Synod] rose to a point of privilege to comment that it appeared in looking at the biographies that virtually all of the candidates had at least a post-secondary degree. He asked whether it would be appropriate to suggest, or to make a motion, that the Nominating Committee adopt educational diversity as a criterion for selection of nominees. The chair ruled that it would not be appropriate to make such a motion at that point, but suggested that Pr. Swenson could consult with the secretary's deputy to determine when such a motion might be appropriate.

Ms. Stephanie Olson [East-Central Synod of Wisconsin] asked how votes for Mr. Laden would be counted, since his name was written in by hand on the ballot. Mr. Harris explained that those ballots voting for Mr. Laden would be counted by hand.

The Rev. H. Gerard Knoche, bishop of the Delaware-Maryland Synod, recommended that votes not be cast for Ms. Jill Schaeffer on Ticket 24, who was gravely ill.

Recess

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson announced that worship would begin at 11:15 A.M. and that, with the assembly's consent, the afternoon session would begin at 1:45 P.M. Consent was granted by affirmation. Secretary Lowell G. Almen reminded the assembly of several upcoming deadlines: 10:45 A.M. that morning for submission of resolutions not germane to matters before the assembly, 2:00 P.M. on Thursday for submission of the first common ballot, and 8:30 A.M. on Friday for proposed amendments to the 2006–2007 budget proposals. He also pointed out that a printed version of the presentation of the sexuality recommendations by Church Council members, which had been requested by voting members, was now available at the information desk on the concourse. The presiding bishop called upon Mr. Mark A. Buchheim, member of the Church Council, to lead the assembly in a closing prayer. Plenary Session Six was declared in recess at 11:05 A.M. Eastern Daylight Time.

Plenary Session Seven

Thursday, August 11, 2005

1:45 P.M. – 6:00 P.M.

The seventh plenary session of the ninth Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America was called to order at 1:45 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time by the Rev. Mark S. Hanson, presiding bishop, at the Orlando World Center, Orlando, Florida. He called upon the Rev. Ruben F. Duran, director for development for new congregations in the Division for Outreach, to lead the assembly in Bible study.

Bible Study

The theme of Pr. Duran's Bible study was "The Christ-marked Life," a theme suggested by the ELCA mission statement: "Marked with the cross of Christ forever, we are claimed, gathered, and sent for the sake of the world." He read from John 15 where Jesus describes the relationship between himself and his followers as "vine and branches." Pr. Duran set forth John's purpose in writing with words from the Gospel: "But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God. . . (John 20:31)." Jesus' words, "I am the vine," repeat a theme used throughout the Gospel of John, Pr. Duran pointed out. God named himself "I am" in the Old Testament and, with the same words, Jesus makes a connection between the old and the new. Pr. Duran observed that the Gospel passage he had read was full of references to connections, and called the assembly to celebrate connections that come to Christians through the cross. He commented that the sign of the cross traced on Christians at Baptism demonstrates two dimensions of discipleship: the vertical connection with God and Jesus, the vine, and the horizontal connection of branches reaching out to bear fruit for God's glory. Life, grace, mercy, and forgiveness flow from the vine to the branches. Pr. Duran then pointed out that, if Jesus is the vine, that means that Christians are not the vine but the branches—useful branches for God's purposes.

He went on to speak of the importance of bearing fruit. The purpose for which the connection is made to God is so that disciples might be useful branches for bearing fruit for God's glory. He described Christians as hungry people surrounded by hungry people, but who know where to find heavenly food; as thirsty people surrounded by thirsty people, but who know where to find the living waters. The job of disciples is to pass the word to others. That sharing is part of bearing fruit so that God through the branches can bless the world.

Third, he pointed out that in a vineyard, there are many branches going in all directions, which sustain the fruit better because they are interconnected. He commended the efforts he has seen in this church to work together as the body of Christ. Such connections, he stressed, would become even more crucial with the demographic changes occurring in the world.

Finally, after Jesus' description of the vine and the branches, he commands his disciples to love one another. "Can love be commanded?" he asked. If love is limited to sentiment and emotions, then no. But if love is commitment, then Jesus had already given his disciples what they needed in order to respond to the command. This love is crucial for the flow of God's mercy and grace for all people, he stated. This kind of love, he suggested, was the answer for racism. Racism is a particular concern for Pr. Duran, who suggested four ways to fight it: 1) by celebrating the diversity God gives; 2) by promoting awareness of culture and the richness that comes to this church from different backgrounds; 3) by developing

anti-racism skills; and 4) by engaging as church in the mission of building something new as a way to reflect God's character.

Pr. Duran called the assembly to join with him in bearing fruit for God's glory and asked that they review four questions for small group discussion:

1. What three words best describe your relationship with Jesus Christ?
2. How are you and others in your congregation expressing Christ-marked lives together? In the ELCA? In public life?
3. What are you and your congregation doing to develop your understanding of being connected to others beyond the local congregation? What could you or your congregation do to be more connected with your synod and the ELCA churchwide organization so that together you can bear more fruit for God's glory?
4. How will you build a multicultural Christian community in and through the ELCA?

In closing, Pr. Duran led the assembly in making the sign of the cross as members repeated "claimed, gathered, and sent for the sake of the world."

Parliamentary Matters

At the conclusion of the Bible study, the Rev. Christopher G. Becker [Saint Paul Area Synod] rose to a point of order. He notified the chair that many voting members had been unable to get to the ballot box by the 2:00 P.M. deadline. He offered a motion to reopen balloting and extend the deadline.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To reopen voting and extend it until 2:30 P.M.

Hearing no discussion, Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson called for a vote.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

Yes-837; No-61

CARRIED:

To reopen voting and extend it until 2:30 P.M.

Mr. Paul Erickson [South Dakota Synod] rose for a question. He asked how voting members would alternate between those speaking for and those speaking against issues during the discussion as a "quasi committee of the whole." The chair answered that there would be no alternating speeches because there would be no issue on the floor.

Ms. Linda I. Anseth [Western North Dakota Synod] rose to apologize to Pr. Duran on behalf of the assembly, saying that many of the members were distracted as they tried to finish voting during the Bible study. Presiding Bishop Hanson reminded those who might want to review the Bible study that a full text would be available on the ELCA Web site.

Presiding Bishop Hanson returned to the subject of his earlier exchange with the Rev. Michael L. Cooper-White, president of Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, Pa. Presiding Bishop Hanson suggested that his answer to Pr. Cooper-White had not been helpful, and he called upon Ms. Else B. Thompson, executive for human resources, for clarification. Ms. Thompson read the following letter, dated July 20, 2005, that had been sent to staff of the churchwide organization:

As we continue to implement the mandate of the 2003 Churchwide Assembly to align the structure and budget of the churchwide organization with the Plan for Mission of this church, and as we await decisions of the 2005 Churchwide Assembly pertaining to the

proposed changes in structure and governance of the churchwide organization, we prepare for changes that will affect all of us in significant ways. If the proposed changes are approved, the following steps related to personnel matters will unfold.

Regarding executive director positions:

In those situations where there is significant change to a unit's structure and/or purpose, namely the program units for Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission, Multicultural Ministries, and Vocation and Education, the position of executive director for each of these units will be posted immediately following the Churchwide Assembly for applications. (Anticipating the need for an announcement about the posting of these positions, the September issue of *The Lutheran* magazine will carry a notice that interested persons can check the ELCA Web site for the posting of such positions, pending approval by the Churchwide Assembly.)

The program committees for these units elected by the Churchwide Assembly will be convened by conference call to confer with the Office of the Presiding Bishop on formation of interview committees. It is anticipated that preliminary interviews for each of these positions will be conducted in early October and that final interviews will be conducted by October 20. Bishop Hanson will present his nominees for these positions to the Church Council for its ratification November 11– 13, 2005.

Regarding new staff positions:

In those situations where new staff positions are planned (e.g., Director for Justice for Women), the development of the position description and exact posting date of each position will depend on when the executive director of the unit is identified and when funding exists in the unit's budget for each position. We will inform you as soon as the posting date for each of these positions is determined.

Regarding all other staff positions:

Contrary to rumors you may have heard, there is no plan to have every staff member resign and reapply for his or her position. However, the restructuring proposal will affect some current staff positions. Changes may include the continued existence, titles and grade levels, duties, and reporting relationships of some job positions. We plan to contact affected individuals as soon as we know there is a significant change in their job. It is our intention to make these transitions as smooth as possible.

Regarding the entire process:

If decisions of the 2005 Churchwide Assembly support the restructuring proposal, the new structure from a constitutional perspective is in effect immediately. However, the enabling motion to be considered by the assembly recognizes that implementation of the new structure will take time to occur. The pertinent section of the recommended action reads: "To urge that the implementation of the design for mission through the churchwide organization continue so that the revised patterns of operation will be fully functioning by the beginning of the new fiscal year on February 1, 2006."

Therefore, following the Churchwide Assembly, your present job position and reporting relationships will continue unless you are notified otherwise. The organizational transition will begin in late August but unquestionably will take some time to be accomplished.

Throughout this process, we will make every effort to communicate clearly and in a timely manner. Please contact me or your unit's executive director if you have questions regarding the processes described in this memo. The presiding bishop and I know that this is a time of uncertainty and that change is always unsettling. We ask for your patience, prayers, and understanding during these next few months.

Charles S. Miller
Executive for Administration

Mr. Karl E. Moyer [Lower Susquehanna Synod] rose for a question. After expressing his appreciation for the presence of Rabbi Eric Yoffie during the morning's plenary session, Mr. Moyer asked if it would be possible to get a transcript of the rabbi's remarks. Presiding

Bishop Hanson answered that he believed it would, along with most other materials, but that he would seek confirmation of that fact.

Constitution and Bylaw Amendments: Items Removed from *En Bloc* Consideration

Reference: 2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section IV, pages 66ff.

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson directed the assembly to the next order of business: consideration of the constitution and bylaw amendments that had been removed from *en bloc* consideration. He reminded voting members that, according to the ELCA constitution, the amendments would be before the house for discussion, but could not be amended, because amendment requires six months' notification. He directed members' attention to the assembly Rules of Procedure, Section One, Part Fourteen, pages 16–17, for a full explanation. He reviewed the implications of actions that could be taken. If a matter pulled out of *en bloc* were approved, it would become part of the ELCA governing documents. If an amendment to an existing provision or bylaw were defeated, the original language would be maintained. If a new provision or bylaw were defeated, that provision or bylaw would not be included in the governing documents. The chair proposed that the requests made for separate consideration be considered in two groups: items concerning the Commission for Women and those concerning the church periodical. Votes would then be taken on each group of items, with a two-thirds majority required for adoption.

Presiding Bishop Hanson called upon Secretary Lowell G. Almen to provide citations and guidance. Secretary Almen, on behalf of the Church Council, introduced the first item that had been removed from the *en bloc* resolution, directing the assembly's attention to the 2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section IV, page 66, column 1.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To delete Continuing Resolution 16.22.B00. [Language establishing the Commission for Women.]

Speaking against the deletion, the Rev. Gwendolyn S. King [New England Synod] said that she had called for this amendment to be pulled from *en bloc* consideration because she wanted the assembly to pause to realize fully the impact of what it was doing. She noted that women represented 63 percent of this church and that this commission had been put in place to ensure the systematic inclusion of women in the life of this church. Currently, she said, 24 percent of rostered leaders in this church were women, and she celebrated that accomplishment. Of that 24 percent, she continued, there were 150 rostered women of color. She credited the Commission for Women with having been the advocate for her as a woman of color, more than the Commission for Multicultural Ministries. She wondered where she would go now for support. In closing, she suggested that it was the responsibility of this church to ensure systematic participation of women and to eliminate classism, racism, and sexism.

Presiding Bishop Hanson clarified his earlier statement about the necessary majority for adoption, explaining that continuing resolutions required only a simple majority, while constitutional provisions and bylaws required two-thirds. He directed voting members to Section X of the 2005 Pre-Assembly Report, where the governing documents were reproduced, for the full text of the continuing resolution in question, and paused briefly to allow members to read the text. He then called upon the Rev. Charles S. Miller, executive

for administration, to explain where the work that had been done by the Commission for Women would be located in the restructured organization. Pr. Miller referred the assembly to Section IX, page 47 of the *2005 Pre-Assembly Report*, where the responsibilities of the Church in Society program unit in the new structure were described, pointing out that the language had been taken from the continuing resolution that had established the Commission for Women. He indicated that on page 46 the Vocation and Education program unit also was being given responsibility for developing leaders from various communities and among women.

For further clarification, Presiding Bishop Hanson called upon Secretary Almen, who said that, based on the action the assembly had taken the previous day in adopting *en bloc* the amendments to the constitution and bylaws, the continuing resolutions that Pr. Miller had just cited were now in effect. They had been adopted by the Church Council in April 2005 contingent upon the assembly's action of the previous day. When the assembly adopted the constitution and bylaw amendments to enable implementation of the revised churchwide organization, he explained, those continuing resolutions went into effect. The motion before the body was to delete a previously existing continuing resolution, with language from that previously existing continuing resolution having been moved, in many respects, into the continuing resolutions for new units, specifically Vocation and Education and Church in Society.

The chair summarized by saying that the assembly would be voting to delete, but that an effort had just been made to demonstrate where those same responsibilities had been moved by the Church Council action that the assembly had ratified.

The Rev. George G. Carlson, bishop of the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin, asked whether the Commission for Women would be reinstated if the assembly voted to delete the continuing resolution in question.

The presiding bishop responded in the negative, explaining that the assembly would only be deleting the continuing resolution that described the work of that commission. The work of that commission had already been placed by the Church Council in other parts of the structure, he stated.

Ms. Diane L. Jacobson [Saint Paul Area Synod] referred to the letter regarding staffing in the restructured organization that had been read to the assembly and the words: "when the executive director of the unit is identified and when funding exists." She asked if funding were in place for the position of the director for justice for women. Pr. Miller replied that it was included in the budget proposal, but that the reference had been contingent because it would not be appropriate to assume beforehand that the assembly would approve the budget. Assuming approval, however, he stated that the position was indeed funded.

Mr. David J. Owen Sr. [Slovak Zion Synod] asked whether there would be two similar continuing resolutions in the governing documents if the recommendation were defeated. Secretary Almen affirmed that the same or similar language then would appear in two places in the governing documents.

Mr. Charles E. Kalthorn [Metropolitan New York Synod] sought to clarify that none of the work would be lost if the continuing resolution were adopted. The chair affirmed that understanding and expressed his hope that members had clearly heard the commitment to this work that had been expressed by the churchwide organization.

Mr. Richard E. Thorell [Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod] asked if the measure were a simple "housekeeping" task of removing redundant language, a characterization affirmed by Secretary Almen.

The Rev. Michael J. Neils, bishop of the Grand Canyon Synod, noted that the assembly's action that morning recognizing the Commission for Women's tireless work had already established that "the important work of fulfilling the mandate of the commission will now be the responsibility of the interunit alliance and be coordinated by the director for justice for women." He expressed his understanding that the amendment in question was simply removing language that was no longer necessary, and urged the assembly to move to a vote.

The Rev. Stephen A. Fiksdal [Southeastern Minnesota Synod] asked where the position of the director for justice for women was described in the governing documents. Secretary Almen referred him to the Church in Society unit section in the background material on the design proposal for the churchwide organization in Section V of the *2005 Pre-Assembly Report*.

The Rev. John K. Stendahl [New England Synod] urged approval of the amendment as a matter of necessary housekeeping, but asked the assembly to take a moment to be mindful of its actions. He asserted that the assembly had "removed something dear and important in our life," and voiced the hope that the commission's functions would continue in new ways. He saw the amendment as "a moment for mindfulness, nothing more."

Mr. John Rowe [Western North Dakota Synod] moved the previous question.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To end debate.

The chair directed the assembly to vote on closing debate.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

CARRIED: To end debate.

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

YES-935; NO-30

Presiding Bishop Hanson then called for a vote on the motion before the house.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

YES-866; NO-92

CA05.04.14 To delete Continuing Resolution 16.22.B00.

16.22.B00: *Commission for Women*

- a. This commission shall enable this church to realize the full participation of women; to create equal opportunity for women of all cultures; to foster partnership between men and women; to assist this church to address sexism; and to advocate justice for women in this church and society. To fulfill these responsibilities, this commission shall:*
- t) assist this church in developing, understanding, and forming its policies and practices with regard to the full involvement of women in this church. To do so, this commission will:*

- a) ~~promote and facilitate study and dialogue.~~
 - b) ~~develop and maintain relationships with other units of this church and with similar units of other church organizations.~~
 - c) ~~develop and recommend to the Church Council strategies, plans, policies, procedures, and goals related to the commission's responsibility.~~
 - d) ~~assist this church in coordinating the programs related to women.~~
- 2) ~~assist this church to create a safe environment for women in this church and society.~~
 - 3) ~~propose to the Church Council a plan to review, monitor, and report on implementation and progress toward meeting this church's goals in this area.~~
 - 4) ~~identify subjects and issues for study and action, assist this church to listen to the concerns of women, gather information, and cooperate in research under the guidance and coordination of the Department for Research and Evaluation and in accord with standards established by the Church Council.~~
 - 5) ~~provide, in cooperation with divisions and other churchwide units, for materials and other resources to carry out the functions of this commission.~~
 - 6) ~~cooperate with the appropriate agencies and institutions to address issues common to sexism and racism and other attitudes and practices that divide, discriminate, and oppress.~~
- b. ~~The executive director of this commission shall serve as an advisory member to the board of this church's women's organization and of the steering committee of the Commission for Multicultural Ministries with voice but not vote.~~
 - c. ~~This commission shall report to the Church Council through the council's Program and Services Committee.~~
 - d. ~~The steering committee of the Commission for Women shall be composed of 12 members, eight of whom shall be lay people and four of whom shall be ordained ministers, elected by the Church Council for their experience and expertise in relation to the commission's responsibilities. Membership of the committee shall include African American, Asian or Pacific Islander, Latino, and American Indian or Alaska Native persons. In addition to advisory members provided in 16.22.11., the executive director of the Women of the ELCA and the executive director of the Commission for Multicultural Ministries shall serve as advisory members of this steering committee with voice but not vote.~~

The chair declared that the motion to delete the continuing resolution had passed. He called upon Secretary Almen to introduce the recommendation of the Church Council regarding the church periodical. Secretary Almen directed members' attention to the *2005 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section IV, pages 66, 67, and 72.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To adopt provisions and bylaws 17.30. through 17.31.12. and 20.11., 20.51., and 20.61.

Secretary Almen repeated his reading of the motion in order to give voting members opportunity to circle in their binders the provisions and bylaws in question. He explained that all of these items were being moved together because they were interrelated.

The Rev. Donna L. Herzfeldt-Kamprath [Oregon Synod] opposed the action, characterizing the changes as moving *The Lutheran* magazine into the Communications Services unit and offering her view that *The Lutheran* magazine would not be as independent as it had been and needed to be. She affirmed the magazine's own statement that "it belongs to the people of the ELCA" and contended that the assembly was the place to choose the editor of the publication.

The Rev. Philip L. Hougen, bishop of the Southeastern Iowa Synod, spoke "reluctantly" in favor of the amendments, terming the removal of the election of the editor from the Churchwide Assembly "a loss." He was in favor of the amendments because they would allow the work of restructuring to go forward and because the staff of the magazine had expressed a desire to go in this direction. He urged the members of this church to remain vigilant about the autonomy of the church publication and not to hesitate to revert to election of the editor by the assembly should editorial autonomy be compromised in some way. He expressed disgust with the way *The Lutheran* magazine had handled some issues but felt that autonomy was a value the assembly needed to uphold.

The chair called upon the Rev. Kenneth M. Rupp, member of the Church Council and chair of the Constitutional and Legal Review Committee of the council, to respond. Pr. Rupp asserted that the proposed changes left editorial policy in the hands of the editors of the magazine. He explained that the larger issue for the council was that, in case of a resignation or removal, this church could not replace the editor until the next Churchwide Assembly. He noted that this was the situation in which this church now found itself, as the editor had recently resigned; so, if the change in the governing documents were not approved, an interim editor would need to be appointed for a term of nearly two years. Pr. Rupp speculated that being able to offer long-term employment would attract more candidates and more qualified candidates than would being able to offer only an interim position.

The Rev. Jennifer M. Ginn [North Carolina Synod] spoke against the action, predicting that budgetary oversight of the publication by the Communication Services unit would impair editorial autonomy. She pointed out that the magazine's mission statement included reporting on the full diversity of this church and on controversial issues within this church. She held that the practice of electing the editor at the Churchwide Assembly protected the periodical's independence and supported its mission by lifting up its commitment to this whole church. Pr. Ginn argued that the original language in the constitution had affirmed these commitments and that the changes did not.

Ms. Angela Neubauer [Northeastern Ohio Synod] supported the action, asking the assembly to consider whether anyone would go into a doctor's office telling the doctor what

to prescribe. She commented that the members of the Church Council had been chosen to represent the people of this church and to take the time to research the matters that would come before the assembly. She expressed her belief that the assembly had been “discounting” the work of the council and its wisdom, and asked the assembly to trust that the council was making a good recommendation.

The Rev. Henry Schulte Jr. [Southwestern Texas Synod] moved the previous question.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To end debate.

Presiding Bishop Hanson directed the assembly to vote on closing debate.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

CARRIED:

To end debate.

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

YES-890; NO-45

The chair directed the assembly to vote on the motion before it.

The Rev. Scott M. Grorud [Southwestern Minnesota Synod] rose to a point of order, asking the presiding bishop to clarify whether, if this motion were voted down, the structural changes voted on the previous day would still go into effect. The presiding bishop called upon Secretary Almen, who confirmed that the constitutional provisions and bylaws approved by the assembly the previous day were now in effect. The chair further clarified that the churchwide organization had an obligation to be in line with the governing documents, so if there were any discrepancy, the structural design would need to be adjusted to be in accord with the governing documents.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

YES-697; NO-264

CA05.04.15 To adopt provisions and bylaws 17.30. through 17.31.12. and 20.11., 20.51., and 20.61.

~~17.20.~~

17.30.

CHURCH PERIODICAL

~~17.21.~~

17.31.

The church periodical, *The Lutheran*, shall be published by this church through the Publishing House of the ELCA and shall be identified as a magazine of this church.

~~17.21.01.~~

17.31.01.

An advisory committee for *The Lutheran* shall have the responsibility for the church periodical. The advisory committee, in consultation with the presiding bishop of this church ~~and the Church Council~~, shall nominate the editor for the church periodical and shall arrange, together with the presiding bishop, for an annual review of the editor.

~~17.21.02:~~

17.31.02.

~~The Churchwide Assembly Church Council shall elect the editor of the church periodical by a two-thirds vote . If the first nominee nominated by the advisory committee is not elected, the advisory committee shall nominate another person. The editor shall be elected to a four-year term. 17.21.03. Should the editor be unable to serve to the completion of the editor's term, the Church Council shall elect an acting editor, upon nomination of the periodical advisory committee, to serve until the next Churchwide Assembly. The editor shall be eligible for reelection. Dismissal of an editor shall follow the procedure for an officer. Employment of the editor may be terminated jointly by the presiding bishop of this church and a two-thirds vote of the members of the Church Council present and voting.~~

~~17.21.04:~~

17.31.03.

~~The editor shall be responsible to the Churchwide Assembly through the Church Council and shall report to the Church Council in the interim, in keeping with 14.21.01. through 14.21.04., 14.21.07., 16.11.23., and 16.11.25. The editor shall select the editorial staff of the church periodical and shall be solely responsible for the periodical's editorial content. The salary of the editor shall be established by the presiding bishop of this church and salaries of staff members proposed by the editor shall be ratified by the presiding bishop or the presiding bishop's designee.~~

~~17.21.07:~~

17.31.04.

~~Official notices of this church shall be published in the periodical.~~

To renumber bylaw 17.21.05. as continuing resolution 17.31.A05:

~~17.21.05:~~

17.31.A05.

The publishing house, in consultation with the editor, shall produce and distribute the church periodical, provide staff for circulation, promotion, subscription fulfillment, advertising solicitation, billing and collection of accounts, and other services.

To delete bylaw 17.21.06. because the budget for the church periodical is to be handled as part of the regular pattern for the churchwide organization:

~~17.21.06:~~

~~The budget for the church periodical shall be prepared by the editor of *The Lutheran* magazine and the executive director of the publishing house.~~

To renumber heading 17.21.20. as 17.31.10.; to renumber bylaw 19.51.03. as 17.31.11.; and to amend bylaw 17.21.21. as 17.31.12. because the nature of continuing resolutions is addressed elsewhere in the governing documents:

~~17.21.20.~~

17.31.10. Advisory Committee for the Church Periodical

~~19.51.03.~~

17.31.11. The advisory committee of the church periodical... *[with the remainder of the bylaw unchanged].*

~~17.21.21.~~

17.31.12. The specific responsibilities of the advisory committee shall be specified in a continuing resolution. ~~The continuing resolution may be amended by a majority of the members of the Churchwide Assembly or by a two-thirds vote of the Church Council. Should the committee disagree with the action of the Church Council, it may appeal the decision to the Churchwide Assembly.~~

To amend provision 20.11. to reflect the revised process for the editor of this church's periodical and to provide for identification of the official lay rosters:

20.11. There shall be set forth in the bylaws a process of discipline governing officers, ordained ministers, officers, the editor of the church periodical, associates in ministry, persons on other official rosters diaconal ministers, associates in ministry, deaconesses, congregations, and members of congregations. Except as provided in 20.18. or 20.19., such process shall assure due process and due protection for the accused, other parties, and this church. Since synods have responsibility for admittance of persons into the ordained ministry of this church or onto other rosters of this church and have oversight of pastoral and congregational relationships, the disciplinary process shall be a responsibility of the synod on behalf of this church and jointly with it.

To amend provisions 20.51. and 20.61. to reflect the revised process for election of the editor and the pattern for termination of the editor:

20.51. The recall or dismissal of the presiding bishop, vice president, or secretary of this church ~~or the editor of the church periodical~~ and the vacating of office may be effected . . . *[with the remainder of the provision unchanged].*

- 20.61. **There shall be a Committee on Appeals to which may be referred appeals from disciplinary proceedings and petitions for the recall of an officer or the editor of the church periodical. The Church Council shall appoint three members from the Committee on Appeals who shall recommend rules of procedure for the performance of its duties. The rules shall become effective when ratified by the Church Council.**

Governance Proposals

Reference: 2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section IV, page 10.

With all amendments related to restructuring having been voted upon, Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson asked the assembly to turn its attention to two groups of proposals to amend the governing documents on the subject of governance. He indicated that Vice President Carlos E. Peña and members of the Church Council, including Ms. Linda J. Brown, Ms. Janet K. Thompson, and the Rev. Jonathan L. Eilert, were on the podium as resource persons. He directed members to Section IV, page 10 of the *2005 Pre-Assembly Report*.

Presiding Bishop Hanson called upon Secretary Lowell G. Almen to present the recommendation of the Church Council.

Moved;* *Seconded:

1. To receive as information the report on governance submitted by the Church Council as part of the strategic planning process, “Faithful Yet Changing: Design for Mission through the Churchwide Organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America”;
2. To affirm the desire to (a) build a stronger relationship and connection among all the members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and its various expressions, agencies, and institutions; (b) maintain the churchwide organization’s effectiveness and efficiency; (c) remain attentive to a wide range of views; (d) strengthen the voices of members, congregations, and synods; and (e) enable this church to carry out effectively its mission in the world;
3. To maintain the overall membership of the Churchwide Assembly and endorse a systematic process in synodical assemblies for discussion of major issues on the agenda of the Churchwide Assembly;
4. To maintain the Church Council membership of four officers and 33 people elected by the Churchwide Assembly to six-year terms in accord with the representational principles, but to endorse a system of nomination on a rotating basis through synodical assemblies;
5. To expand the advisory membership for meetings of the Church Council to include—in addition to nine synodical bishops and two youth advisors—the presidents of the five ethnic associations or their representatives; the chairs of the program committees for program units and trustees, as applicable, of the program units; the chair of the advisory committee on the work of justice for women; and one person representing this church’s eight seminaries, one person representing

- this church's 28 colleges and universities, and one person representing the social ministry organizations;
6. To encourage greater interaction of members of the Church Council with synodical councils and synodical assemblies in their respective areas; and
 7. To affirm the vision and design for operation of program committees for program units in developing coordinated and collaborative planning and decision-making on behalf of the churchwide organization.

The Rev. Peter Rogness, bishop of the Saint Paul Area Synod, proposed an amendment to the governance proposal.

MOVED;

SECONDED:

To amend paragraphs four, five, and seven of the proposal (as indicated):

4. To ~~maintain~~ expand the Church Council membership ~~of to~~ four officers and ~~33~~ 65 people elected by the Churchwide Assembly to six-year terms in accord with the representational principles, ~~but~~ and to endorse a system of nomination ~~on a rotating basis~~ through synodical assemblies;
5. ~~To expand the advisory membership for meetings of the Church Council to include—in addition to nine synodical bishops and two youth advisors—the presidents of the five ethnic associations or their representatives, the chairs of the program units and trustees, as applicable, of the program units, the chair of the advisory committee on the work of justice for women, and one person representing this church's eight seminaries, one person representing this church's 28 colleges and universities, and one person representing the social ministry organizations;~~ To request the newly constituted, expanded Church Council to consider what persons would provide the most effective advisory membership to the Church Council.
7. ~~To affirm the vision and design for operation of program committees for program units in developing coordinated and collaborative planning and decision-making on behalf of the churchwide organization.~~ To request the Church Council to make recommendations regarding oversight of program units in the light of broadened Church Council membership.

Presiding Bishop Hanson interrupted briefly to point out to the assembly that the amendment would require a simple majority for passage, while the main motion would require a two-thirds majority because it would affect the bylaws. He then asked Bp. Rogness to continue.

Speaking in support of his amendment, Bp. Rogness noted that connections, relationships, and hearing voices from congregations were all important to this church's life. He suggested that point 2 of the council's recommendation outlined the problem of communication and effectiveness well. He asserted that the people of this church did not really know those who work at the churchwide level and that there were no real connections.

He offered as evidence the election ballot that had just been completed, observing that it was “like throwing darts in a dark room,” because few people knew the nominees for whom they were voting. He argued that if members of the Church Council membership were nominated by the synods, members of this church would feel a stronger connection to the council. Bp. Rogness stated that the current level of membership on the Church Council meant that “only half of us are at the table.” He further argued that the proposed system of rotation would mean that a synod would only name a pastor to the council every 36 years. At that point in Bp. Rogness’s speech, the chair called the two-minute time limit.

An unidentified voting member rose to move that Bp. Rogness be granted an additional two minutes to continue his explanation.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To grant Bp. Peter Rogness an additional two minutes to speak to his amendment.

The chair called for a vote on the motion, noting that it would require a two-thirds majority.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

CARRIED:

To grant Bp. Peter Rogness an additional two minutes to speak to his amendment.

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

YES-627; NO-292

Presiding Bishop Hanson informed Bp. Rogness that he had an additional two minutes to continue speaking.

Bp. Rogness thanked the assembly for the additional time. He continued by saying that his proposal would accomplish several things: 1) It would create “a table made up of somebody sent there by every pastor and congregation in this church, by the grass roots in our synods, much like the Conference of Bishops; 2) It would open the door to moving oversight of all units of this church to the council, where they would report to each other in a common body, possibly in review committees, eliminating the need for expensive and cumbersome separated program units; 3) It would lead to saving “substantial amounts of money” in staff time. Addressing the concern that such a council would be too large and that power would end up in the hands of the Executive Committee, he commented that the Executive Committee of the Conference of Bishops does a good job of lining up the “nitty-gritty” of meetings but that when substantive conversations were held and decisions made, the whole of the Conference of Bishops “weighs in” on the issues.

As to worries that a larger council would have limited participation because of the time demands, Bp. Rogness observed that this is a church of 4.9 million people and that there had never been a dearth of interested and qualified nominees for the current structure. As to expense, he proposed that his amendment would hold out the possibility of saving a great deal of money. He stated that management theory in the secular world emphasizes the need for focusing, streamlining, and connecting people in teams and said that this church needs that kind of efficiency and focus.

Presiding Bishop Hanson called on the Rev. Jonathan L. Eilert, co-chair of the Committee of Reference and Counsel, to report on that committee’s recommendation concerning the proposal. Pr. Eilert stated that the Committee of Reference and Counsel had

discussed Bp. Rogness's proposal in light of the rationale provided on pages 7 and 8 of Section IV of the *2005 Pre-Assembly Report*, as well as the action of the Church Council and of the 2003 Churchwide Assembly detailed on page 45 of the Memorial Committee report in Section VI. He explained that a small minority of the committee had supported the proposal for a 65-member Church Council, but that, based on the rationales he cited, the committee was declining to recommend the amendment.

Mr. Larry I. Rank [Oregon Synod] opposed the amendment, making the observation that a 65-member Church Council would be cumbersome and unwieldy and that other changes in structure that had been made should be allowed to proceed so that their effects could first be seen. He suggested that a lack of strong relationships was caused by all the members of this church and was not simply a problem of the churchwide organization, a view he said was shared by others in his synod and around this church, and stated that pastors and synodical officials had a responsibility for improving communication. Mr. Rank proposed that before moving to "sweeping, costly, disruptive changes, we need to go back from this assembly to our congregations and our synods and refocus our energies on improving communication." He ended by saying that structures some people had wanted to see implemented 18 years before when this church was formed had not been adopted and probably would not be adopted, "so let's get on with life."

The Rev. Philip L. Hougen, bishop of the Southeastern Iowa Synod, supported the amendment, noting that one of the actions the assembly had taken had eliminated elected boards for the program units and that the assembly would no longer be electing persons from their synods to serve on these boards. He relayed that he came from a synod that had once gone 15 years without having a member serve on the Church Council and finally had received the opportunity for the previous two years to have a person on the council. That member, he said, had allowed his synod to feel connected, and had faithfully attended synod council meetings, where she received input from the synod and had reported back to them as well. He commented, "Our language about the churchwide expression as 'them' has changed because someone is there who is one of us." He argued that the cost of this experience was "relatively light" and that the need to feel connected would be served "powerfully" by having one person from each synod on the Church Council. Bp. Hougen stated that these persons would still be elected by the assembly as an expression of the wider church but that the representation for each synod would allow for a stronger connection between members of this church and the churchwide expression. He also commented that going 36 years without a pastor—or, on the other hand, a layperson—from a given synod on the Church Council struck him as "unfortunate." He concluded that Bp. Rogness's amendment was a great improvement on the council's proposal.

The Rev. Serena S. Sellers [Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod] spoke against the action, stating that, while she understood the desire for a feeling of connection with the Church Council, she saw a risk in having one person from each synod. Under the existing system, she said, when a person is elected to the council, it is as a member of this whole church and not as a member of his or her particular synod. Therefore, council members need to keep in mind what is good for this whole church. She feared that having one person from each synod on the council would lead to members who represent "one particular corner" of this church instead of being mindful of this whole church and who do not have this whole church at the heart of their decision making.

Mr. Jay R. Becklin [South-Central Synod of Wisconsin] supported the amendment, seeing it as a proposal to build trust between the various units of this church. He recalled his

experience in a business that had a similar organization of local units with boards of directors, statewide units, and a national unit to deal with national issues. He observed that when there was harmony, mutual support, and trust, things were accomplished. He noted that in his two years of service on his synod council, he had not met or even seen a Church Council member, which meant that for him, “there was no face to the church.” Mr. Becklin expressed his belief that such a point of contact was necessary.

Mr. Patrick Monroe [Central/Southern Illinois Synod] asked how the amendment would affect the budget. Presiding Bishop Hanson replied that a resource person would address the issue when debate was resumed in another session.

The Rev. Pamela J. S. Challis [Metropolitan Chicago Synod] moved to close debate.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To end debate.

The chair directed the assembly to vote on closing debate.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

CARRIED: To end debate.

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

YES-674; NO-274

Presiding Bishop Hanson instructed members to vote on Bp. Rogness’s amendment, reminding them that a majority was required for adoption.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

CARRIED:

YES-499; NO-453

To amend paragraphs four, five, and seven of the proposal (as indicated):

4. To ~~maintain~~ expand the Church Council membership ~~of to~~ four officers and ~~33~~ 65 people elected by the Churchwide Assembly to six-year terms in accord with the representational principles, ~~but and to endorse a system of nomination on a rotating basis through synodical assemblies;~~
5. ~~To expand the advisory membership for meetings of the Church Council to include—in addition to nine synodical bishops and two youth advisors—the presidents of the five ethnic associations or their representatives, the chairs of the program units and trustees, as applicable, of the program units, the chair of the advisory committee on the work of justice for women, and one person representing this church’s eight seminaries, one person representing this church’s 28 colleges and universities, and one person representing the social ministry organizations; To request the newly constituted, expanded Church Council to consider what persons would provide the most effective advisory membership to the Church Council.~~
7. ~~To affirm the vision and design for operation of program committees for program units in developing coordinated and collaborative planning and decision-making on behalf of the~~

churchwide organization. To request the Church Council to make recommendations regarding oversight of program units in the light of broadened Church Council membership.

The amendment passed. Presiding Bishop Hanson noted the late hour and the full schedule facing the assembly in the current plenary session, and stated that further consideration of the governance proposal would take place at a later time.

Report of the Fund for Leaders in Mission

Ms. Cynthia J. Halverson, director for the ELCA Fund for Leaders in Mission, and Mr. John Gilbert, former chairman of the board of Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, were welcomed by Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson, who asked them to give a report on the Fund for Leaders in Mission.

Ms. Halverson identified the Fund for Leaders in Mission as the ELCA's seminary scholarship program established by Churchwide Assembly action in 1997. She thanked Mr. Gilbert and the Thrivent Financial for Lutherans Foundation for their support of the Fund for Leaders in Mission through their successful \$1,000,000 challenge.

She told the assembly that in six years the seminary scholarship resource had received more than \$23,000,000 in gifts and documented deferred gift commitments. The fund and related synod endowments totaled \$10,400,000 which in the current year alone would provide more than \$500,000 in scholarship assistance. Since the awarding of scholarships began in 2000, \$1,700,000 had been provided to 135 students studying at the eight ELCA seminaries. Ms. Halverson asked the assembly to join her in thanking those who had made the fund possible.

Ms. Halverson explained that initial funding for the program had been provided in 1999 through the generous support of the Aid Association for Lutherans (AAL) and Lutheran Brotherhood; four years later, Thrivent Financial for Lutherans challenged the ELCA to raise \$2,000,000 for the scholarship endowment, which the foundation would match with an additional \$1,000,000. She announced that, as of July 31, 2005, the Fund for Leaders in Mission had received approximately \$3,000,000 in current gifts toward the goal. So, she concluded, "I think it's time to collect a check!"

Mr. Gilbert then presented Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson with a check, saying, "I am honored that one of my last official duties with Thrivent is to present you with this check for \$1,000,000."

After noting the long history of this church helping those in need, Mr. John Gilbert observed that it was now this church itself that was in need. "It needs leaders and people of faith," Mr. Gilbert told the assembly. He expressed his concern that rising costs were an obstacle to candidates for leadership of this church and his belief that the accomplishments of the Fund for Leaders in Mission would move this church one step further in meeting its need for leaders who are faithful, wise, and courageous. He shared his enthusiasm for the fund and recalled some of the gifted individuals who had been helped by this resource.

Accepting the check, Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson said, "The ELCA is a church with a history of strong, theologically prepared leaders. We are moving forward in many ways to ensure that we continue this history in the future. One of the strategic directions for the churchwide organization is to assist this church to 'bring forth and support faithful, wise, and courageous leaders whose vocations serve God's mission in a pluralistic world.' The

Thrivent Foundation challenge to the ELCA has been a powerful catalyst to do just that, providing an opportunity for each of us to respond with greater involvement in our shared task of preparing leaders to proclaim the Gospel.”

Presiding Bishop Hanson continued by saying, “I have had the privilege over the last three years to meet many of the scholarship recipients featured on the screen today. They are wonderfully gifted and faithful people whose lives and experiences give testimony to God’s faithfulness in calling forth rostered leaders for this church. And I know from my time with them, as well as from my time on our seminary campuses, that this church is blessed with a growing number of gifted seminary students preparing for ministry.

“I am deeply grateful for the generous gift of Thrivent Financial for Lutherans to the Fund for Leaders in Mission and to all of you who helped make the match and surpass the match. Thrivent Financial for Lutherans has been a valuable partner in this work. But the need is great. There are many more for whom such financial assistance would make all the difference in the world in their theological education.”

On behalf of all members of the ELCA, Presiding Bishop Hanson thanked Mr. Gilbert for his leadership and personal support of this initiative and asked him to convey his thanks and the thanks of the Churchwide Assembly to Thrivent Financial for Lutherans for its generous support.

Ms. Halverson reminded the assembly that the challenge of providing adequate financial support for those called to rostered ministry in the ELCA continued. The ultimate goal would be a time when the costs related to attending seminary were no longer an obstacle for those called to rostered ministry. She invited everyone to continue this good and important work, explaining that the next target goal for the Fund was to build the endowment to \$25,000,000 by 2010, in order to provide approximately \$1,200,000 in annual scholarship assistance. She invited all present to continue in this important work and to identify, encourage, and send gifted students to the seminaries of this church. She also urged generous support for the eight ELCA seminaries in their ministry to raise up “faithful, wise, and courageous leaders whose vocations serve God’s mission in a pluralistic world.”

Presiding Bishop Hanson then recognized Mr. Gilbert for his forty years of work, leadership, and commitment to strengthening Lutheran mission through the fraternal support of ministries at the local, regional, and churchwide levels as well as among the agencies and institutions of the churches.

Presiding Bishop Hanson presented Mr. Gilbert with a mosaic rendering of the ELCA logo and called upon Secretary Lowell G. Almen to read a citation in honor of Mr. Gilbert’s service:

“Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good . . .” (1 Cor 12:4–7).

With profound gratitude, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America recognizes the conscientious service of John O. Gilbert as chairman of the board of Thrivent Financial for Lutherans. You have served diligently and thoughtfully in various capacities since beginning your career with the organization in 1965. In your roles as chief executive officer and then chairman of the board, you have been a wise and courageous leader. You have nurtured with care the relationship between Thrivent Financial for Lutherans and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Through your support of this church’s Fund for Leaders in Mission,

Thrivent Financial for Lutherans has joined with us in supporting the future leaders of this church.

For your commitment to the faith of the whole Church of Jesus Christ, for the ways in which you have lived out your baptismal calling through the service you have given in your congregation, and for the wisdom and compassion you have offered so generously in your service with Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, we hereby express our heartfelt appreciation.

Although you now complete your work as chairman of the board of Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, we will continue to give thanks to God for your ongoing, constructive contributions to the work of that organization and to the life of Christ's Church.

Before moving to the next order of business, the assembly sang the hymn "Give to Our God Immortal Praise."

Quasi Committee of the Whole: Proposals Related to the ELCA Studies on Sexuality

Reference: 2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section I, pages 21–22; Section IV, pages 19–24; Section V, pages 13–27.

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson noted the agenda provided for a time to recess to a "quasi committee of the whole" to discuss the Church Council recommendations concerning the ELCA Studies on Sexuality. He explained that a "quasi committee of the whole" allowed for discussion much as would be carried on in a committee. He stressed that the rules of the assembly regarding length of speeches and refraining from applause would continue to apply. No motions or amendments would be in order during this period. He stated that this would be a time for members to listen to and understand one another, while identifying the issues, joys, and concerns that shaped members' views as a guide to decision making. Presiding Bishop Hanson directed members' attention to the recommendations in Section IV and the task force report in Section V. He reminded the assembly that the report of the *ad hoc* committee had been distributed over the lunch hour. He called upon Secretary Lowell G. Almen to present the motion.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To go into a "quasi committee of the whole" for 60 minutes for discussion only on the recommendations of the Church Council related to the ELCA Studies on Sexuality.

The chair directed the assembly to vote on the motion.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

CARRIED:

VOICE VOTE

To go into a "quasi committee of the whole" for 60 minutes for discussion only on the recommendations of the Church Council related to the ELCA Studies on Sexuality.

At 3:46 P.M. Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson declared that the assembly had formed itself as a "quasi committee of the whole." He called upon the Rev. Richard J. Foss, bishop of the Eastern North Dakota Synod, who led the assembly in prayer as the committee session began. After the prayer, the chair informed the assembly that the following persons were

present to serve as resources for the discussion, and would be able to respond to direct questions: the Rev. Jonathan L. Eilert, chair of the Program and Services Committee of the Church Council; the Rev. Stanley N. Olson, executive director of the Division for Ministry; the Rev. Rebecca S. Larson, executive director of the Division of Church in Society; the Rev. James M. Childs, director for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality; and the Rev. Margaret G. Payne, bishop of the New England Synod and chair of the Task Force for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Studies on Sexuality.

Mr. Ruben A. Mesa [Southeastern Minnesota Synod] said, “I stand before you today having to say that I will have to vote against any changes from the *status quo* with regard to this matter in the ELCA, but I do so with an incredibly heavy heart. When I was a child, I was taught that homosexuality was wrong in the eyes of God. As an adult, I believe that that was incorrect. I am a leukemia specialist, and I have had the privilege and sad honor of assisting patients, many of whom have faced either critical illness or have passed away from their diseases. In this process, I have had interactions with individuals who are in same-sex relationships during this very difficult time. I will tell you that this difficult time really brings out the true core and character of relationships, and you see the beautiful love and faithfulness and support that these individuals give each other. I see it as an expression of God’s grace, and I am skeptical that such relationships could exist without his blessings and consent. So why will I vote to oppose change? I feel that a change would potentially distract from the mission of this church, in that it would become a defining moment in the ELCA, and be damaging in the relationship with the members who oppose it currently at this time (I think the majority) and with the ecumenical partners. Do I think that these relationships should be blessed? I do believe that God blesses them already, but that unfortunately the time has not yet come for the ELCA to change its stance.”

Ms. Kara S. Felde [Indiana-Kentucky Synod] stated, “Many young adults have stood before this assembly as ‘the future leaders of this church,’ claiming that they have reached a consensus on the need to approve these recommendations on the basis of love and acceptance for all. As a young adult in this church, I would like to take exception to the notion that all young people agree on this issue. Yes, God does love all of us, and no one who has faith in God would doubt that. Why must we look to each other for verification of God’s love for us? This debate is not about emotional pleas for love or acceptance. It is about what Scripture says that can answer these difficult questions about homosexual behavior. I believe Scripture says homosexual behavior is a sin. According to the report, I am not alone. But because others voice the opposite scriptural understanding, the task force decided that we cannot determine what the Bible says. So, then, what theological authority are we using to present these recommendations? Also, some may say that Recommendation Three contains another Lutheran paradox. I prefer to call it a contradiction. How can we uphold ‘Vision and Expectations’ and at the same time allow for exceptions? We say that we cannot determine what Scripture says about homosexuality. How, then, can we act in a way that would seem to say that we *do* understand Scripture to allow exceptions to theological standards that we are still saying we uphold?”

The Rev. David N. Glesne [Minneapolis Area Synod] expressed his concern over the gravity of the proposed changes. “As we come close to considering in particular Recommendation Two, which still begs to be clarified, and Recommendation Three, I’m struck by the gravity of the monumental change that would result were we to accept these proposed exceptions. We would be granting exception to biblical moral standards that have received approval for over two thousand years. It seems to me that the crux of the matter is that there is no biblical basis for the proposed exceptions before us. Even our revisionist friends would agree and admit to that. If there were a biblical basis for the proposed

exceptions, then it seems to me that the sexuality task force and the Church Council would have built a case upon that biblical basis in order to make us amenable to accepting those. But I believe that there is no biblical basis and rationale that has been accompanying these recommendations, and therefore I don't think it is wise for us to accept that. All throughout, Scripture is unanimous in condemning homosexual behavior. The best our revisionist friends can say is, 'Yes, we agree with you that that is true, but we moderns know more than Scripture ever did and therefore it's irrelevant to the questions today.' If that's the case, can we then hold any reliance on Scripture when it speaks to other sexual matters, such as sex before marriage, incest, adultery, and promiscuity? At the end of the day, I think there's one crucial question for us: In light of the reality that there is no biblical basis for the proposed exceptions, will we hold to Scripture as our norm and source and maintain standards based on that norm and source? Or will we embrace another authority, which I believe will lead to chaos and fracture in the church? I'm all for change, but a change not based upon Scripture would not be wise."

Mr. Yau Too Chiu Jr. [Northeastern Ohio Synod] related his personal experience. "Look at me," he said. "I look a little different than all—almost all—of you. I'm Chinese by heritage. Our church is too white. Most of you do not know discrimination. Some 42 years ago when I was to get married, I was not allowed to be married in a Lutheran church despite the fact my wife is a lifetime Lutheran. Why? Leviticus 19. Well, that is good Scripture, isn't it? We've changed, we've changed a lot. However, not enough. To me, in Scripture, Christ is a loving Christ, a forgiving Christ. In the four Gospels, as I carefully combed through them, I do not find anywhere that Christ judged anybody and kicked them out and did not receive them. We are at the point of looking at what we're going to do. I hope that one of these days, when I see Christ, I will prostrate myself in front of him because of the love, and by forgiveness and his grace I will be saved. For those of you who have done a good job keeping clean, maybe you will go up and pat Christ's shoulder and say, 'Brother, I kept your altar absolutely white and clean and I am here.'"

The Rev. Bryan S. Anderson [Northwest Synod of Wisconsin] expressed his gratitude for the "clear teaching of a loving church." "First, great thanks that I can share this with the assembly. During my seventh-grade year of junior high school, I experienced a brief period of confusing feelings regarding my sexuality. At that time, I was thankful my church had a loving, consistent, and clear biblical counsel for me. Now when I look back years later at this experience, I have a serious concern for the youth of our church today. I ask myself, will today's youth have a Lutheran church that speaks in a loving and consistent manner on issues of human sexuality? Or will our denomination be a house divided in such a manner that a struggling adolescent will only receive conflicting pastoral counsel based on the congregation of which they are a member?"

The Rev. Marshall E. Hahn [Northeastern Iowa Synod] said, "Thirty-five years ago, our predecessor church bodies faced a very contentious issue on the ordination of women. A commission studied, evaluated, and concluded that the full witness of Scripture does not preclude the ordination of women, and our predecessor church bodies approved such a momentous and historic change. This Saturday we will celebrate thirty-five years of the ordained ministry of women among us. Every pastor in this hall, and most likely every layperson, could stand up right now and give you an outline of that argument from Scripture for the ordination of women because the case was made. In this issue, thus far the case has not been made for change. As the task force admits, the biblical theological case for wholesale change has not been made to the satisfaction of a majority of respondents to their study. It has been suggested that the passages prohibiting homosexual behavior are few and

far between, can be dismissed, but in fact those passages appear throughout the Old and New Testaments in several different authors and several different kinds of materials. They suggest that those passages only reflect the surrounding cultures of the day, but the fact is the surrounding cultures were much more accepting of homosexual behavior. It is said that we need to make these changes for the sake of mission, or outreach, for the sake of the Gospel, to provide loving care to our neighbor, but our mission is not to teach what is opposed to God's Word, our outreach is not to call people to live contrary to God's will. The Gospel is not to proclaim tolerance but forgiveness and acceptance and renewal of life. To make these changes proposed without a clear and convincing case would not be wise."

The Rev. Scott M. Grorud [Southwestern Minnesota Synod] stated, "As we all know, the Lord works in mysterious ways. As I was packing for Orlando, I grabbed a couple of unread newspapers, hoping I might have a chance to get some reading done here. The first one I opened had an article on the opinion page on the very topic before us, and it began with this sentence: 'The sign of a dysfunctional church is one that can't defend the obvious.' In the proposals before us, we are being asked no longer to defend convictions and practices that Christians have always—historically, theologically, socially—considered obvious. You've heard many of them already: the witness of Scripture, two millennia of Christian practice, the witness of the global South and our sisters and brothers in Christ there, the ethnic communities which this assembly has taken action to seek to reach more effectively. I think that the practices that have always been considered obvious still are. I think they're worth defending and that we need to defend them. I would think that a functional, faithful, courageous church would also think of them as worth defending."

The Rev. James M. Culver [Indiana-Kentucky Synod] said, "It is often argued that if we welcome gay and lesbian people, we must also allow practicing gay and lesbian pastors and allow them to hold leadership positions in the church. Jesus certainly welcomed all people, but he did not approve all behavior. He does not approve or condone sin of any kind. He came to forgive sins and to die for our sins. He calls sinners to repentance and new life, but never gives permission to continue in sin. He told the woman caught in adultery that she was forgiven, but also told her to go and sin no more. In Romans 6, Paul raises the question whether we may sin that grace may abound, and his answer is by no means, absolutely not. Those who've been baptized have died to sin and are called to live a new life. The real issue before us is whether homosexual behavior is sinful, and whether those who live in persistent, unrepentant sin can be leaders in the Church. As I understand Scripture, the Church's mission to gay and lesbian people is to help them find forgiveness, healing, and new life in Christ, not to affirm or approve sinful behavior."

Mr. D. Alexander Jenkins [Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod] then spoke. "It has been brought to my attention that many members of the assembly are unaware of the position taken on the homosexuality study by the Lutheran Youth Organization of this church, and would like to be informed. According to the official minutes taken at the 2003 triennial convention of the Lutheran Youth Organization, this official statement was passed: 'Be it resolved, that the Lutheran Youth Organization supports the blessing of same-sex unions and ordinations of non-celibate individuals in committed relationships of all sexual orientations; be it further resolved, that the Division for Congregational Ministries forward this resolution to the Office of the Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Church Council for submission to the sexuality study and the Churchwide Assembly.' What will we do with their resolution?"

The Rev. Keith L. Forni [Northern Illinois Synod] said, "The churches of the global South, notably the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania (ELCT) and others, have

strongly exhorted us to adhere to traditional orthodox and biblical views as regards the blessing of same-sex unions and the ordination of persons in committed same-sex relationships. Note the Bukoba statement on the ELCT Web site. Their caution—no, their stop sign—is matched by many—most—churches in the community of color in this country. Of course, no ethnic community aligns lockstep with one position or another. I simply speak as a parish pastor called to ministry in Hispanic or Latino contexts through this church, with knowledge and experience in three synods and firsthand knowledge of other work in still others. A recent issue of *The Lutheran* magazine reported the opposition to the change on homosexual issues before us, these critiques by the pastor and lay leaders of the largest Latino congregation in this church, located here in our host synod. This view from a Cuban American context caught my particular attention, as I serve faith communities in primarily Mexican cultural contexts in Illinois. The cultures of these communities brim with hospitality extended to all, and as noted in a recent *Christian Century* article, generous hearts for social concerns. However, they generally convey a profoundly conservative faith-informed view, which makes the reception of these proposed actions inconceivable.”

Ms. Connie Scharlau [La Crosse Area Synod] spoke of blessing: “Yesterday, someone questioned the blessing of baptismal water, and [the Rev.] Susan Briehl explained so well that when we bless water, we’re praying, we’re offering prayer. I think when we think about blessing same-sex unions, we have to think of the same kind of prayer. We’re praying *with* people. The question really is, are we blessing sin when we do this or are we blessing sinners? We all sin. We all differ in our interpretation of Scripture. Sin? Not sin? Would it not be better to err on the side of prayer? And regarding Recommendation Three, again, we differ greatly in the way we interpret Scripture. Each of us in this room must humbly acknowledge that ‘I might be wrong in my understanding of what Scripture says and what God is saying to us now.’ With that in mind, I offer a metaphor: We worry what the change we consider will do to our relationships with other churches. Perhaps we should think of it in terms of the metaphor of gift. Bishop Hanson said that the ordination of women is a gift we bring. Lowell Almen in his report says the ordination of women is a gift. Perhaps this is what God is calling us to do, to bring a gift to the larger Church of acceptance, love, and prayer.”

The Rev. Steven E. King [Southwestern Minnesota Synod] saw the discussion as one of defining the Gospel. “I just wanted to say why this issue has become an important one for me. It has come through my sitting down face to face with people who are on the opposite side of it as an ethical issue. And it’s trying to listen and understand where they’re coming from and how they describe their faith and what they’re seeking, and what their message is. What it has become for me is a not a difference on an ethical issue as much as on how we understand the Gospel, the definition of what the Gospel is: whether it is Jesus affirming us and leaving us as we are, patting us on the back and saying, ‘You’re alright,’ or Jesus actually addressing our sin and forgiving us. I listen to a sermon like the one we had yesterday about having to dig through the roof to get inside to be by Jesus, and it always calls me to think about how I am keeping others away from Jesus. But in the end, I felt like the story never had an end, because once that person was brought inside, Jesus announced those words of forgiveness of sins and the transformation of healing, which brought about a completely new life for that person, not simply affirming him in his sin, not simply affirming him in his physical handicap, but actually making a difference, speaking a word that transformed that man’s life. That’s why it has become important to me.”

Mr. Frank M. Petrovic [Metropolitan Chicago Synod] said, “In contrast to fluff characters like Will from ‘Will and Grace,’ episodes of ‘Queer as Folk’ demonstrate that

lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered people have compassion, lives, loves, feelings, and commitments. It's not just about sex. Although not explicit in the show, there is obvious evidence here that GLBT [Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgendered] people attend church, and yes, have calls from God to serve in rostered ministry. They are people who pray right beside you in the pews. I'm a gay man who felt a calling to serve God in ordained ministry way back in eighth grade and still feel that call today. I'm told that I'm a member of the body of Christ, welcomed to full participation. So which human being has the right to tell me that, because of who I love, my call from God is not valid? A passage in Leviticus tells us we should stone disobedient children. I feel going back to this practice could result in a lower crime rate and lower populations in our jails. Obviously, I'm being facetious. But the point is that we pick and choose the verses we take literally. By the passages chosen, you reduce my life to strictly being about sex. I don't know any heterosexual pastor whose life is just about sex, and neither is mine. I share feelings, compassion, love, and commitment. We hold fast to passages written in a different time and place, and don't make the leap of faith that God is still active among us and did not stop speaking when the Bible was complete. Assembly 2003 affirmed five strategic directions and four commitments for implementing: (*abridged*) 'confront the scandalous realities of sexual barriers that often manifest themselves in exclusion and violence.' It's time for this church to admit it has committed egregious sin against GLBT people, and exclusion, to stop spiritual violence, and to amend our sinful ways. Leviticus 19:18 says 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' Now, there's a Bible verse from Leviticus to quote!"

The Rev. Robert D. Berg, bishop of the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin, said, "I'd like to address two matters. The first has to do with clarity in Recommendation Two. The second has to do with being part of the global Church. First of all, as Recommendation Two currently stands, it is confusing. We have found in synod assemblies that persons will vote for it who believe that respecting the 1993 statement means that we will *not* practice blessings in this church. There are those who have interpreted the 'pastoral care' portion to mean that this church *will* practice blessings. We need absolute clarity on this before we vote on it. We owe that to this assembly and to this church. As a member of the Memorials Committee, I'll refer you to section VI, page 83 [of the *Pre-Assembly Report*], and I'll read it. This is background information that comes from the Memorials Committee: 'The wide variety of memorials led the Memorials Committee to conclude that there was widespread confusion about the intent of Recommendation Two. This confusion may lead voting members to be unclear about their vote on this matter. Clarification prior to consideration of the response to these memorials would be helpful.' We don't need clarification on the need for pastoral care, but we need clarification on whether that includes blessings. And then, quickly, this church, the ELCA, is a part of *the* Church, the holy catholic Church. Decisions made by this church impact the shared life and ministry of the holy catholic Church. We do make decisions on denominational and religious matters that impact the whole Church. One of the greatest gifts this church has been given is the companion synod relationship, and many of our companion synods are very concerned about how we will vote on these matters."

The Rev. James E. Boline [Southwest California Synod] then addressed the assembly: "In this church, I have always had a face, a voice, a name. Today, this nearly 44 year-old face appears before you, not too old, no longer young. This voice speaks to you, utterly dependent on the breath of God, claiming my name, James, a derivative of Jacob, the one who, if you'll recall, said to the angel, 'I will not let you go unless you bless me.' Today I stand before this assembly as your very own, in which I echo the words spoken just last

Tuesday, August 2, to my congregation council and to my bishop. I incarnate the issue which is before this assembly. I am a third-generation pastor of this church, a gay man, in a relationship of profound love and commitment with my beloved partner of eight years, Christopher Mah, who is also your child, named and claimed in the waters of Baptism. With my beloved Christopher I share my life and my home and my soul, my meals, my body, my ministry, my joys and my sorrows, and all that the years bring. As his strong name proclaims, he is a gracious ‘Christ-bearer’ for me and to me. Since third grade, the year I received this Bible at Trinity Lutheran Church in Vermillion, South Dakota, I have known my cross-marked calling to be a steward of the mysteries—mysteries I could not yet name, but which all converge in me: pastoral identity, queer identity, and an undergirding baptismal identity. And so, I ask your prayers. I ask your prayers for my family of origin, as yet mystified. I ask your prayers for my beloved congregation, St. Paul’s of Santa Monica. I ask your prayers for my partner, Christopher. I ask your prayers for my bishop, Dean Nelson. I ask your prayers for me, refusing to be banished from this church.”

Next to speak was Ms. Stephanie Olson [East-Central Synod of Wisconsin], who stated, “I would like to share my personal testimony on this issue, and how my Christian faith and confirmation instruction in my teen years helped me deal with my sexuality at a vulnerable moment 27 years ago. I was 22 years old and happily married for a little over two years. I picked up a mystery romance novel, opened it randomly, and stumbled on a section that graphically described one woman bringing another to orgasm. I was stunned, but could not stop reading. I was aroused, and disturbed by my arousal—but I never acted on the temptation. Why? Because of the foundations of my faith. I had accepted the Christian standards that *any* sex outside of marriage, homosexual or otherwise, is morally wrong and just not done. I had been inadvertently aroused and tempted. I did not act on the temptation, and the temptation faded into oblivion. The debate and study within the ELCA on sexuality brought back the memory of that incident and now, as I look back, I thank God for the foundation of faith that provided me the ability to resist this temptation. Without this, I might have submitted to the temptation and lost that which is most precious to me now: my husband, who is still my best friend and lover, and our two children, who had not yet been conceived. I have read and listened to both sides in preparation for this Churchwide Assembly. I have heard the pain expressed by persons who perceive themselves as homosexuals, and I respect the individual vulnerability. I believe that sexual intercourse was created as an act of marriage designed by God to powerfully bind a man and woman together in marriage. This makes sex incredibly dangerous to play with in any form or situation. Now I am very concerned because of the compromise the Church Council has recommended for the ELCA. I believe that compromising either the current standards for marriage and family or the vision and expectations of sexual behavior in ELCA clergy or any ELCA congregation is [not] compassionate. . . .”

The Rev. Sara A. Gausmann [Lower Susquehanna Synod] then addressed the assembly: “I give thanks to God for his love to all people. I give thanks to God for the gift of Jesus Christ, the One who came not to abolish the Law and the prophets, but to fulfill the Law. I give thanks to God that by the power of the Holy Spirit he leads us to Christ, who forgives our sins. I give thanks to God for continuing to give his commandments by which we can order our lives for the sake of bringing the Good News to others. Like a good parent, God gives guidance to our lives through these commandments, saying ‘yes’ to things that are healthy for us, saying ‘no’ to things that would harm us, others, or our society. These commandments have been a blessing to my life. Because of them, I do not have to be bound by my feelings or confined to the impulses of my conscience. As a pastor and a mother, I

grieve this new error of ambiguity that our church is considering. I don't know how I could have raised my children if I could only say, 'Do what you feel compelled to do, even if it is against God's Word. God will forgive you.' What dangers would that lead my children to? As a pastor, I have promised to uphold Scriptures, Old and New Testament, and the Lutheran Confessions. How will I teach the catechism in this new, intentionally ambiguous era? When we get to 'Thou shalt not commit adultery,' what exceptions and lifestyles am I being asked to promote to the young people of my congregation? God gives us his commandments out of his love for us. We should stick to God's Word. Thanks be to God."

The Rev. Donald J. McCoid, bishop of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod, said, "Recommendation Two indicates that the ELCA [should] continue to respect the guidance of the 1993 statement of the Conference of Bishops. As a member of the Conference of Bishops in 1993, I believe it's important to recall the issue that was before our conference meeting. At that meeting, there was one item on the agenda, and that was how to respond to the request for advice on same-gender blessings. The Conference of Bishops adopted the statement that 'We recognize that there is basis neither in Scripture nor tradition for the establishment of an official ceremony by this church for the blessing of homosexual relationships. We therefore do not approve such a ceremony as an official action of the church's ministry.' Because the Conference of Bishops believed that it was important to offer an additional word to the church and to gay and lesbian members, an additional word was added: 'Nevertheless, we express trust in and continued dialogue with those pastors and congregations who are in ministry with gay and lesbian persons, and affirm their desire to explore the best ways to provide pastoral care for all to whom they minister.' This was a statement that had two clear points: one was that we do not approve an official ceremony to bless homosexual relationships, but secondly, that continued dialogue and support for pastoral care for gay and lesbian persons would be a part of this church body's ministry. These points spoke to not supporting a ceremony of blessing but supporting pastoral care. The major point that I believe is important for our assembly to recall is that they were not united together as a way of providing for exceptions to supporting a ceremony of blessing. The guidance of the Conference of Bishops was not to support a blessing ceremony but to support continued dialogue and pastoral care with gay and lesbian persons. We need clarification on this second recommendation or there is going to be confusion about how people will end up voting."

Mr. Paul Erickson [South Dakota Synod] said, "Unbelievably, here we are at the dawn of a new millennium, when democracy is driving out tyranny around the globe, when Christians are being slaughtered in Africa in numbers as great as or greater than the worst days of the Roman Empire, when our nation is under attack by the forces of a radical faith alien to our own, when the ELCA employs a fraction of the missionaries that it did when it was formed in the '80s, and our membership is falling everywhere, our church leadership holds as its highest priority redefining traditional marriage and ordination to accommodate the sexual practices of less than one percent of our population. Martin Luther, call your service! I am dedicated to upholding the current biblical and confessional standards on sexual conduct for ordination in this church. I believe that the Word of God affirms the union of one woman and man in the bond of marriage, and that only those guided by this Word be considered for ordination. If you believe this too, I bring you good news: You are not alone. Any change in our current traditional teachings was opposed over two-to-one by the 28,000 responses to last year's *Journey Together Faithfully* Bible study. In other words, those Lutherans that took the most time to study these issues were overwhelmingly opposed to any changes in a system of belief that has worked remarkably well for thousands of years.

Upholding marriage does not mean persecuting gay Lutherans. My childhood friend most responsible for my Lutheran faith and whom I love as a brother is on the other side of this issue and sitting just two aisles over. But as we learned together in Sunday School 40 years ago in Vermillion, South Dakota, we are all called to live lives that are transformed by the Word of God, and this transformation can be difficult. Abstaining from sex outside of marriage is difficult, but as a matter of confessional teaching, if we only obey God when the order conforms to our lifestyle, we're not obeying, we're merely agreeing, and we've surrendered any claim to a life based upon the Scriptures."

The next speaker was the Rev. Ronald D. Martinson, bishop of the Alaska Synod: "It was my privilege in 1970 to be at the ALC [American Lutheran Church] meeting to vote in favor of the ordination of women. Discussions were much like this: 'How can we ignore what St. Paul says about women keeping silent?' We might snicker and laugh now. Or having something on their head . . . when Kleenex came into being, I remember people, especially in the Roman Catholic Church, putting one on their head. The words that came out at that point were compelling reasons. There were compelling reasons why the church at this point should set aside St. Paul's conversation and word and advice and counsel, and we voted it in. Where would we be if we did not have ordained women in this church today? In 1972 or 1973, I'm not sure which, I was vice president of the North Pacific District, and a man, a pastor, going through a divorce came and asked us as a Synod Council, could he remain as a pastor after his divorce. Up until then, if you got a divorce you were out. Granted, many times you ran off with the organist or the church secretary and there wasn't much question about it. But in his case that wasn't true, and we had the words of Jesus on divorce to work with—and again, compelling reasons caused us to allow him to stay. There are seven statements in Scripture against homosexuals. I remember Jesus talking about 70 times seven."

The Rev. David P. Housholder [Pacifica Synod] said, "I just don't want us to miss our date with destiny. I don't think the future of the Lutheran church is white. The future is brown. It's not in the north; it's in the south. It's not understated; it's fire-baptized. It's not nuanced; it's decisively biblical and conservative on this and other issues. The Lutheran church is headed south. Our future is in the south. We are a tired, shrinking, aging church, and the church in the south is growing and expanding and heading our way—and I'm thankful for that, I'm blessed by that, and I don't want to miss our date with the church in the south. Voting 'yes' on [Recommendation] Three is like getting a really bad haircut before our most important date. This is our future. This is our destiny. I would invite you to vote 'no' on [Recommendation] Three. Also, the most important thing I would like to say is this: If [Recommendation] Three passes, I need to serve notice as pastor of Grace Lutheran Church, a conservative, evangelical church, that we are staying with this body. I find it unbelievable that people would break fellowship with brothers and sisters who disagree, brothers and sisters with whom we are going to share eternity. I don't think [Recommendation] Three is going to pass, but I would invite my brothers and sisters on the far left to join me in a pledge of keeping our church together."

Mr. Timothy J. Mumm [South-Central Synod of Wisconsin] was next to speak: "At three weeks old, my father baptized me and welcomed me into the family of God. My family of course did not yet know that I was gay. For awhile, neither did I. Growing up in Lutheran schools and growing in Christ, I learned how important honesty is. I also learned that the only way to speak about gay people was in condemnation, crude jokes, and insults. In high school, I snuck books from my father's library and learned I was 'going through a phase.' In college, realizing that I could no longer hold onto that, I struggled with God, seeking

transformation, or failing that, asking God to not allow me to lead a life that would lead me to damnation. I begged God to take my life. Seemingly in answer to prayer, I learned about reparative therapy. I entered into counseling, learned theories of brokenness that laid the blame on my family, experienced ‘healing’ prayer over and over, experienced prayer to have demons exorcized, and so much more. Several years later, and hundreds, if not thousands, of dollars later, I was recognized as a model of God’s healing and was being approached to take a position of leadership in the ex-gay movement, while others who weren’t changing were labeled ‘hysterical’ or ‘unstable’ or ‘unfaithful.’ The only problem was that, drawing on the honesty I had learned as a child, I still knew inside that I was attracted to men, and not women. At 36, I realized that for at least 20 years I had been seeking change, but was as gay as ever. The thought of continuing this struggle for another 20 years was unacceptable. I wish I had enough time to share with you my road to self-acceptance as a gay man, the role of the means of grace, and the role of a faithful, caring pastor in that process.”

Mr. Roy Gibbs [Northwestern Ohio Synod] referred members to the first chapter of Galatians: “About a month ago, the Holy Spirit laid upon my heart this scripture from Galatians. This was written by the Apostle Paul when some were preaching a gospel that included circumcision. Martin Luther referred to this passage to support his position. Reading from Galatians: ‘I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different Gospel—not that there is another Gospel, but there are some who are confusing you and want to pervert the Gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should proclaim to you a Gospel contrary to what we proclaimed to you, let that one be accursed!’ As we have said before, so I now repeat, if anyone who proclaims to you a Gospel contrary to what you received, let that one be accursed! Am I now seeking human approval, or God’s approval? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still pleasing people, I would not be a servant of Christ’ (Galatians 1:6–10). Are we trying to create a new Gospel in the ELCA? This discussion is not about confirming a statement made by the bishops several years ago, or a change in ‘Vision and Expectations.’ It’s about following and living the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We should not be here discussing the values of the secular society, but the life-changing values of the Gospel of Jesus. Just as we prayed Monday evening, I pray that the Holy Spirit will come upon this assembly and each individual voting member, and that each of us will listen to the Holy Spirit and put behind us the standards of the secular world. May I suggest a reading of Galatians, chapters one and two?”

Ms. Jamie L. Hovland [Southwest California Synod] recounted her personal experience: “Marked by the cross of Christ, I’ve been called to serve this church as an associate in ministry, and yet another holy call, I also serve as the mother of two marvelous sons. My oldest son has recently returned from deployment in Iraq, where he served for over a year. Now home safe and sound and back at work, I’m extremely proud of him. He just happens to be straight. My youngest son serves his church as a counselor and teacher in one of our Lutheran camps. God has blessed him with wonderful gifts for ministry, and I am incredibly proud of him. He just happens to be gay. Two fine sons, both fiercely loved by their mother, both deeply loved by God, both marked by the cross of Christ in the waters of Baptism, both brought to the services of God’s house, both had the Holy Scriptures placed in their hands, both made public affirmation of their faith—but are both equally welcome to full participation in the life of this church? No, not yet. That welcome, reverend bishop, that justice, oh Mother Church, are two things for which this mother fervently hopes and prays.”

The Rev. Margaret E. Herz-Lane [New Jersey Synod] said, “Those who use the Bible are not always proclaiming the Word of God. During my time at Luther Seminary, in

American Church History class, [the professor] asked us to write a paper on our religious roots. Since I was not a cradle Lutheran, I decided to research the history of evangelization among African Americans. I concentrated on North and South Carolina and Georgia. Surprisingly, I found almost no evangelization for over 200 years before the slave uprising in the 1820s. Then the plantation owners, the states, and the churches saw evangelism as a method of pacifying the slaves. Later, when I shared my weeks of research with my mother, she seemed not to be at all surprised, and said, ‘Well, you remember what your grandmother said, don’t you?’ No, I didn’t. ‘She said that her grandmother, your great-grandmother, told her that as a child she was taken to church. The white people were seated on the first floor, the slaves were seated in the balcony, and the pastor gave two sermons. To the slaves he said, “If you work hard and mind your masters, then one day you will be able to serve in the kitchens of heaven.”’ The Bible was used, both Old and New Testaments, to justify and uphold slavery. But my grandmother heard the Word of God. She heard the Gospel which included all people, the Gospel which she shared with her daughter, who shared the Gospel with her daughter, who shared that Gospel with me.”

The Rev. William “Chris” C. Boerger, bishop of the Northwest Washington Synod, rose to ask permission for the Rev. Herbert W. Chilstrom, first presiding bishop of the ELCA, to be allowed to address the assembly, as he had been involved in the writing of the documents under discussion and could provide perspective that the assembly might not otherwise have. Presiding Bishop Hanson ruled the request out of order because Pr. Chilstrom already had the privilege of addressing the assembly.

Ms. Marcia Nagel [Southeastern Minnesota Synod] was the next to speak: “Thirty-one years ago, my husband and I made the decision to leave our growing-up’s more conservative Lutheran congregation and change to the then-ALC and eventually the ELCA, because in our former church I could make Kool-Ade and teach Sunday School—both good things—but in the ALC and ELCA I could vote and as a woman I could have a voice. Eventually, as a woman I could be a pastor, if I were called. That change had a phenomenal growing effect upon me personally, and I think on my family. Our congregation during that time, and for many years, was our family. Our daughter, who grew up in the ELCA knowing that she could be a pastor, in about eighth grade started feeling the call to be a pastor. She graduated from an ELCA college. She got a Master of Divinity degree from the University of Chicago. She did her seminary work in Chicago, did six months of mission work in Zimbabwe through the Lutheran global missions, and sometime in there realized that she had fallen in love with a person of the same gender, a woman. Her candidacy committee said, ‘You’re an exceptionally good candidate.’ I knew that too. She’s wise, generous, articulate, sensitive, has a growing spirit. . . . She’s taught me to grow in spirit.”

The Rev. Christian Jennert [Sierra Pacific Synod] said, “I am glad to be here. I am a Lutheran from Germany who has the privilege to serve in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in beautiful northern California. I just want to commend the task force for doing incredible theological work and holding this wonderful Lutheran tension. I’m impressed to serve here, and I’m impressed to look around this whole hall here and see how many Lutherans are gathered—and they cannot just express their faith (Americans are incredible for expressing their faith), they can also talk about sexuality in the same room! This is incredible! No matter where you stand, you are able to come together. Should you ever go to a German synod assembly, we are so shy we don’t talk about these things. I am very impressed by American Lutheranism and how wonderfully we talk about these things. However, I was trained in Germany, and I was trained with good Lutheran theology, not biblical fundamentalism. Good Lutheran theology is always healthy, and as I said earlier,

always holds things in tension. That means there's always this 'both . . . and,' never an "either . . . or." Mark Hanson talked about this in his opening speech. So I wonder, how can we hold this tension and the 'both . . . and'? How can we say it is both bread and also the body of Christ, not like the [Roman] Catholics who say it's only the body or the Reformed who say it's only the bread? We say it's both. That's what is so wonderful about being Lutheran. I love this about our tradition, that we can really hold tension. With that said, I'm serving in a very diverse setting in San Francisco with about a quarter of my members being lesbian or gay, and I'm wondering, what is the good news I can bring back to the City by the Bay to my members?"

Next to speak was the Rev. G. Scott Cady [New England Synod]: "This is certainly a momentous vote. Many of us who would seek some kind of change do treasure and study the Bible and find all kinds of texts and themes there to build upon. But what strikes me is that for almost every century of the Church's life a momentous moment has come and theological controversies have overwhelmed the Church. It's often not easy to discern in the middle of the debate which side is going to turn out to be the orthodox, authentic faith and which is going to turn out to be the schismatic or sectarian one. In some of the most important theological debates of the early centuries, the christological debates and so on, what finally turned the tide toward what we consider the traditional faith was a look at the liturgy. As we heard in the discussion about worship, the way we pray and what we do and say in worship does, in fact, shape our beliefs, and gives the kind of hint about how the whole message of Scripture might finally be applied. So we in our churches do call all people to the waters of Baptism and we promise them the gift of the Holy Spirit. We announce absolution over them as they confess—all the people. We offer the body and blood of Christ, and with it the gifts of life and the forgiveness of sins to all those who believe it. We preach the Gospel and declare its power to make us a royal priesthood and a holy nation. And the people who do all of those things are justified sinners, not a small segment of special sanctified, holy saints. I hope we can make some changes, because we are now stifling the use of the very gifts we promised to the segment of the Church that wishes to offer them to us to build up the body of Christ and for the healing of the world. That stifling, it seems to me, is not what we were called by Christ to do."

The Rev. Robert A. Rimbo, bishop of the Southeast Michigan Synod, spoke next: "I was the person who brought to the 2001 assembly the invitation to enter into this study, and I want to say how grateful I am for the study that was done. I believe this study has been thoroughly Lutheran in that it allows us to be in that tension that my brother was just speaking about. But I think we also need to have some clarification. We are impressed, and I think captivated, by the Third World and the southern hemisphere. But I vividly recall a conversation that my spouse and I had with our companion synod's bishop in which he was talking about the condemnation of homosexual behavior, until suddenly his mind changed when I suggested that perhaps the practice of polygamy, which their synod allowed, still is a problem for us in North America. I'm also concerned about the status that we have given to the 1993 statement of the Conference of Bishops, because I, for one, am a bishop, but was not at that time, and do not agree with that statement. So I think we need to weigh that as well. What I believe the task force is calling us to is a model of Lutheran behavior, to hold in constant tension for the sake of mission these sisters and brothers and our doctrines and our Scriptures. And I believe that in that tension we will find growth and hope and new life for sisters and brothers who are lesbian and gay."

Mr. Robert D. Benne [Virginia Synod] said, "I'd like to reflect briefly on the effects were we to move forward with [Recommendation] Two, which is very ambiguous and many

believe opens the door for the blessings of gay unions, and [Recommendation] Three, which would provide for exceptional ordinations. I think with the strong presence of many of our lesbian and gay brothers and sisters, as well as their passionate supporters, that we can easily get the impression that the council's recommendations are compromises of a slight nature, a movement just briefly away from the center, and a wise and very moderate compromise at that. I'm here to suggest that it's a tectonic change, not a mild compromise, and that the tectonic change is a movement away from the consensus that reaches back 2000 years into Judaism, is affirmed in the New Testament, and unequivocally affirmed by 2000 years of Christian moral teaching. To move away from that which I believe is deeply embedded in our people and our parishes and churches and in the great tradition, the Orthodox churches, the Catholic churches, and now the evangelical churches, a movement of a slight compromise—that looks to *us* like a slight compromise—is tectonic, and we will have to go home to explain this to parishes, and as in an earthquake the reverberations will go out far and wide, and it will have an enormous effect on our ecumenical relationships, on our local parishes, our life as a church, and our life in the world.”

At 4:50 P.M., Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson announced that the time had expired for the “quasi committee of the whole” and asked that the Rev. E. Roy Riley Jr., bishop of the New Jersey Synod, lead the assembly in prayer.

Mr. Steven R. Chapman [Northwest Washington Synod] rose to a point of order, protesting that, because of technical difficulties, there were voting members at his microphone who had been waiting longer than those who had gone to other microphones. He asserted that he had waited eight years to address the assembly, that this issue was his life, and that he would not be silenced because of a technical difficulty. He then demanded two minutes to speak.

The chair responded that the assembly had agreed to use a system in which he had great confidence, and that the system registered members in the order in which they had presented themselves. Mr. Chapman argued that he had been third in line at his microphone, but that others in longer lines had been allowed to speak and he had not. The chair stated that he would register Mr. Chapman's concern, but that the time for the “quasi committee of the whole” had expired and he was going to continue with the work of this plenary session. Presiding Bishop Hanson repeated that the assembly was no longer a “quasi committee of the whole” and declared that the plenary session had resumed.

Greetings:

Full-Communion Partner Churches

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson reminded the assembly that five churches serve Christ's mission in a relationship of full communion with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. He described the growing partnerships and reported that the separation of denominational barriers was being overcome through shared worship, mission, and sometimes, clergy. Presiding Bishop Hanson then introduced to the assembly representatives of this church's five partner churches.

The Moravian Church

The Rev. Robert E. Sawyer, president of the Moravian Church in America—Southern Province, also serves as president of the Unity Board of the Unitas Fratrum, the worldwide communion of Moravian churches.

The Rev. Sawyer greeted the assembly and mused on the expression “full-communion partner.” He asked, “Is there such a thing as *partial* communion?” He told the assembly that he came not to bring a casual or perfunctory greeting, but rather to bring a greeting in the manner of the angel who spoke to Mary: “Greetings, favored ones; the Lord is with you.”

To give a brief overview of current ministries in the Moravian Church, the Rev. Sawyer spoke first of his denomination’s program of clergy support, “Sustaining Our Shepherds,” a resource that would be shared with the ELCA. He mentioned outreach and church planting, leadership development, and camping ministries as examples of other ministries. He then described the ecumenical journey in the Moravian Church, noting that his church had begun conversation with The Episcopal Church and with a group of churches of the Reformed tradition; and he spoke of the promise of “Christian Churches Together in the USA” as the churches struggle to live out their calling to be one in a divided and polarized society.

Referring again to the angel and Mary, he ended by saying, “Do not be afraid; you have found favor with God.” He emphasized that this was a reminder of God’s grace, and that any reminder of God’s grace was a reminder of Christians’ common need of that grace. He recited a Moravian hymn, and asked that grace and peace be with the assembly.

The Reformed Churches

The Reformed Church in America, the United Church of Christ, and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) were represented by the Rev. Robina Winbush, ecumenical staff person of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). She thanked the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for substantive partnership in racial and ethnic concerns, mission, and theology. The interchangeability of ministers in isolated areas and shared worship, work, and witness of congregations highlighted a list of joint endeavors she presented. She spoke of the ELCA’s dialogue with Churches Uniting in Christ, an organization in which the following churches have been conducting ecumenical conversations: the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, The Episcopal Church, the International Council of Community Churches, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the United Church of Christ, and The United Methodist Church. She called the assembly to continue to walk in mutual faith and admonition as the churches witness together for economic justice and cooperation.

The Episcopal Church

In introducing the next speaker, Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson observed that the Rt. Rev. C. Christopher Epting, deputy for ecumenical and interfaith relations of The Episcopal Church, had been present but had had to leave the assembly. Bishop Epting’s colleague, Mr. Thomas Ferguson, associate deputy, brought greetings from Presiding Bishop Frank T. Griswold and from more than two million Episcopalians in 7,000 congregations. After setting himself the unfamiliar task of giving his “testimony,” Mr. Ferguson described how he came to an understanding of being saved through faith alone by listening to “two prominent Lutheran theologians, the great theologian and his apologist, the Luther and Melancthon of my generation: Davey and Goliath.” Mr. Ferguson spoke of “Called to Common Mission,” the document of full communion between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and The Episcopal Church, describing it as a valuable partnership for the two churches and as a gift to the broader Church. Mr. Ferguson described how this agreement was being emulated in Britain, Scandinavia, Canada, parts of Africa, and

Australia. He gave thanks as well for shared mission among congregations and for united efforts in social services. He spoke of struggles faced by The Episcopal Church that were similar to those facing the ELCA. Mr. Ferguson then blessed the assembly with a prayer based on Psalm 85, which had been written for this Churchwide Assembly by The Episcopal Church's presiding bishop, the Most Rev. Frank T. Griswold.

Parliamentary Matters

Following the greetings, Mr. Thomas Salber [Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod] rose to offer a motion to amend the agenda.

MOVED;

SECONDED:

To amend the agenda to allow an additional hour of time for the assembly to discuss the Church Council's recommendations on the "Report and Recommendations of the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality" as a "quasi committee of the whole."

The Rev. Serena S. Sellers [Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod] then offered a substitute to the motion on the floor.

MOVED;

SECONDED:

To amend by substitution:

RESOLVED, that a "quasi committee of the whole" be inserted into the schedule of Plenary Session Seven following the greetings from Women of the ELCA to allow for continuation of the discussion of proposals related to the ELCA's Studies on Sexuality and, furthermore, only those registered to speak but unable to address the assembly in the previous "quasi committee of the whole" be permitted the floor, and, furthermore, be it

RESOLVED, that the "quasi committee of the whole" be held until each of those previously registered has the opportunity to speak or until the passage of one hour, whichever comes first.

The Rev. Linwood "Woody" H. Chamberlain Jr. [Northeastern Ohio Synod] rose for a question. He asked if the effect of this motion would be to extend automatically the session until 7:00 P.M. and if names of those waiting to speak had been recorded. Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson answered both questions in the affirmative. There being no further discussion, the chair called for a vote on the amendment by substitution, emphasizing that a simple majority would be required for passage.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

CARRIED:

To amend by substitution:

RESOLVED, that a "quasi committee of the whole" be inserted into the schedule of Plenary Session Seven following the greetings from Women of the ELCA to allow for continuation of the discussion of proposals related to the ELCA's Studies on Sexuality and, furthermore, only those registered to speak but unable to address the

YES-696; NO-229

assembly in the previous “quasi committee of the whole” be permitted the floor, and, furthermore, be it

RESOLVED, that the “quasi committee of the whole” be held until each of those previously registered has the opportunity to speak or until the passage of one hour, whichever comes first.

There being no discussion, the chair called for a vote on the motion as amended, explaining that a two-thirds majority would be required because it involved a rules change.

**MOVED;
SECONDED;
DEFEATED:**

**TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED
YES-534; NO-411**

RESOLVED, that a “quasi committee of the whole” be inserted into the schedule of Plenary Session Seven following the greetings from Women of the ELCA to allow for continuation of the discussion of proposals related to the ELCA’s Studies on Sexuality and, furthermore, only those registered to speak but unable to address the assembly in the previous “quasi committee of the whole” be permitted the floor, and, furthermore, be it

RESOLVED, that the “quasi committee of the whole” be held until each of those previously registered has the opportunity to speak or until the passage of one hour, whichever comes first.

Mr. Eric M. Peterson [Northwest Synod of Wisconsin] rose to offer a motion.

**MOVED;
SECONDED:**

WHEREAS, our debate on sexuality issues on Friday will likely be lengthy and complicated; and

WHEREAS, it would be helpful to establish an order for our work that is in some measure predictable for voting members, efficient, and logical; and

WHEREAS, some amendments and substitute motions, if passed, impact, neutralize, or replace others; and

WHEREAS, the Lutheran World Federation, a body of extreme diversity in both culture and ideology, of which our presiding bishop is president, assures that debate is full, wide-ranging, logically ordered, and efficient by taking motions and amendments for discussion from the most change to the least; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that, for the sake of clarity, the least amount of confusion for voting members, and the efficiency of our work together, that amendments and substitutes related to recommendations from the Church Council on sexuality be ordered from most change to least change when compared to current policy and practice; and further be it

RESOLVED, that this assembly directs that the *ad hoc* committee, in consultation with the parliamentarian, accordingly set the order for the amendments and substitutes.

In support of his motion, Mr. Peterson suggested that the assembly needed to do its work in an orderly fashion and that decisions needed to be made on the merit of the issue and not on the basis of confusion. He proposed that the procedure would benefit both sides of the debate.

The Rev. Victor C. Langford III [Northwest Washington Synod] rose for a question. He noted that the motion provided for a priority of discussion, but asked if all motions would be heard. Presiding Bishop Hanson replied that the question could not be answered without knowing what matters would be presented.

Mr. George C. Watson [Southeast Michigan Synod] called the previous question.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To end debate.

The chair called for a vote on the motion to end debate.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

CARRIED: To end debate.

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

YES-804; NO-142

The assembly then voted on Mr. Peterson's motion. The chair indicated the need for a two-thirds majority.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

CARRIED:

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

YES-722; NO-228

RESOLVED, that, for the sake of clarity, the least amount of confusion for voting members, and the efficiency of our work together, that amendments and substitutes related to recommendations from the Church Council on sexuality be ordered from most change to least change when compared to current policy and practice; and further be it

RESOLVED, that this assembly directs that the *ad hoc* committee, in consultation with the parliamentarian, accordingly set the order for the amendments and substitutes.

Presiding Bishop Hanson then referred the matter to the *ad hoc* committee considering amendments to the sexuality recommendations.

Consideration of the African Descent Ministry Strategy

Reference: 2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section IV, pages 33–45.

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson announced the consideration of the fifth ethnic-ministry strategy: the African Descent Ministry Strategy. The strategy was outlined and defined in the document "Many Voices, Tell the Story, Create the Vision: Build Our Future: The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's Plan of Action for Ministry in African Descent Communities."

The Rev. Frederick E. N. Rajan, executive director of the Commission for Multicultural Ministries; the Rev. Julius Carroll IV, director for African American ministries for the Commission for Multicultural Ministries; and the Rev. Rochelle Lewis, a member of the task force, served as resource persons for the discussion.

Secretary Lowell G. Almen put the motion before the assembly.

MOVED;

SECONDED:

To receive with appreciation the African Descent Ministry Strategy of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America developed by the African descent community;

To express support and deep appreciation for existing ministries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America with people of African descent; and

To recommit the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to partnership with existing African descent congregations and to intensified outreach with the Gospel among the wider African descent communities.

Presiding Bishop Hanson opened the floor for discussion.

The Rev. Lawrence J. Clark [Metropolitan Chicago Synod] applauded the work of all those who had contributed to the strategy and stated, “This strategic plan has been a long time coming.” He emphasized, however, that this strategy was for this entire church, not just for portions of this church.

The Rev. Gemechis D. Buba [Southeastern Synod] stressed that the resolution opened the door to reclaiming the tradition of this church as an immigrant church. He described it as a pro-active strategy, and called for intentional outreach to immigrant communities.

Mr. Wesley L. Crenshaw [Southeastern Synod] commented that he supported the strategy but noted that more attention was needed to the tensions between the African nationals and the African American communities. He also identified a need to address the partnering of churches and of pastors from the two communities for strength and growth. He further called for aid to struggling African American and Latino congregations.

Mr. René M. Garcia [Texas-Louisiana Synod] observed that the strategy was striving for openness and integration so that the ELCA might fulfill the promise of becoming a multicultural church. He spoke of his experience attending the assembly of the African American Lutheran Association, and mentioned the need for the members of the ELCA to be open to the diversity of worship styles that could be a gift to this church.

The Rev. Paul A. Tidemann [Saint Paul Area Synod] asserted that the ELCA needed the resources that this strategy brought to the congregations of this church, particularly those that are multicultural.

Ms. Cecelia Travick-Jackson [Southwest California Synod] praised the strategy, saying that it provided a framework for affirmation of people of African American heritage to continue their faith journey with the Lutheran church. She reminded the assembly that people of the African diaspora had been part of the Lutheran church for 400 years.

The Rev. Victor C. Langford III [Northwest Washington Synod] described the strategy as a major breakthrough for the African descent community, taking the community to a level previously unknown.

The Rev. Marcia Cox [Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod] supported the strategy, noting that the richness of the congregation she served came from its diversity. Her congregation was celebrating 50 years of being an integrated church.

The Rev. Gary M. Wollersheim, bishop of the Northern Illinois Synod, declared that the community this strategy addressed is “light and leaven for the Church.”

Ms. Margaret M. Monroe [Northeastern Ohio Synod] felt the plan would benefit not only African Americans but all Americans and would bring more African Americans “to the table” and places of decision-making.

Mr. Eric D. Wong [Northeastern Minnesota Synod] called the question.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To end debate.

The chair called for a vote on the motion to end debate.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

CARRIED: To end debate.

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

YES-895; NO-19

Presiding Bishop Hanson called upon Mr. Tommie L. Robinson Jr., vice president of the Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod, to offer prayer before the vote.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

YES-940; NO-5

CA05.04.16

To receive with appreciation the African Descent Ministry Strategy of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America developed by the African descent community;

To express support and deep appreciation for existing ministries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America with people of African descent; and

To recommit the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to partnership with existing African descent congregations and to intensified outreach with the Gospel among the wider African descent communities.

The Rev. Ralph A. Boyer IV [Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod] rose to a point of privilege to clarify the effects of the motion that had been approved earlier concerning ordering of amendments related to the sexuality recommendations. He asked whether the ordering would be based on the degree of change to the recommendations themselves or on the degree of change from current policy. The chair re-read the motion as passed. Pr. Boyer then asked how the *ad hoc* committee would be able to make such determination for Recommendation Two, given the ambiguity in that recommendation as described by certain bishops. The chair declared the second question out of order, ruling that it was entering into debate. Pr. Boyer inquired as to when the assembly would know the order of the amendments, and was informed that the best answer that could be given at this point was that it would be some time the next day.

Report of the Reference and Counsel Committee

Reference: *2005 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section VIII.

The Rev. Jonathan L. Eilert, member of the Church Council and co-chair of the Reference and Counsel Committee, reported that the following resolutions had been received by the committee for its consideration as of the final deadline of 10:45 A.M. on Thursday, August 11, 2005:

- A resolution related to proposed biblical principles for mission starts;
- A resolution to establish a procedural reference bureau for future Churchwide Assemblies;
- A resolution to review election procedures for synodical bishops;
- Proposed continuing resolutions related to young adult Church Council membership;
- Constitutional provisions related to expansion of the Church Council to 65 members (plus four officers);
- A resolution related to persons with disabilities;
- A resolution related to the nominating process for program committees to allow nominations from the floor of the assembly;
- A resolution related to youth voting members from each synod.

Presiding Bishop Hanson took the opportunity to emphasize the need for close adherence to the agenda in order to complete the amount of work before the assembly.

Greetings:

Women of the ELCA

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson introduced the newly elected president of Women of the ELCA, Ms. Carmen Richards of Hope, North Dakota. Ms. Richards brought greetings and described the themes and events of the triennial convention held in July 2006 in San Antonio, Texas. The convention, attended by more than 2000 women, featured worship services, plenary presentations, workshops, tours, and business sessions. Ms. Richards told the assembly that the convention had offered many opportunities for planting and harvesting, and that the theme for this year's synodical women's conventions was "Peace." As the women who attended the triennial convention had learned to "act boldly," she suggested that the voting members might act more boldly, as well. Ms. Richards explained some of the projects of the women's organization, including a plan focused on improving women's health and the health of others. She described the Bible study featured in Women of the ELCA's periodical beginning in the fall, "Act Boldly in the Fruit of the Spirit," by the Rev. Susan L. Gamelin. Each of the fruits of the Spirit was to be discussed in terms of the bold acts it could lead to. Ms. Richards also reported highly successful sales of Fair Trade coffee. She thanked the churchwide staff and other leaders for their partnership and interaction with women and for including them in the discussion of matters important to the church. She concluded her remarks by challenging all to act boldly and to go "beyond their comfort zone." She concluded by saying, "You cannot be burned out if you are not yet on fire."

Recess

The concluding hymn for the plenary session was "Lead Me, Guide Me." Evening Prayer was led by Ms. Janet K. Thompson.

Plenary Session Seven of the ninth biennial Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America was declared in recess at 6:06 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time.

Plenary Session Eight

Friday, August 12, 2005

8:15 A.M. – 10:45 A.M.

The eighth plenary session of the ninth Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America was called to order at 8:17 A.M. Eastern Daylight Time by the Rev. Mark S. Hanson, presiding bishop, at the Orlando World Center, Orlando, Florida. He thanked the musical group SpiritSong of Christ Lutheran Church, Charlotte, North Carolina, led by Mr. Mark Glaeser and Ms. Donna Hanna, for the music they had provided as members of the assembly gathered. Presiding Bishop Hanson called upon the Rev. Kenneth M. Ruppard, member of the Church Council, to lead the assembly in Morning Prayer.

Parliamentary Matters

Mr. Eric M. Peterson [Northwest Synod of Wisconsin] rose to a point of order to request the chair's ruling on the sequencing of the sexuality recommendation amendments that had been received by voting members as it pertained to the rules of the assembly for substitute motions. Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson encouraged Mr. Peterson to wait a few moments until other matters of the orders of the day could be addressed.

Presiding Bishop Hanson briefly summarized what the assembly had completed over the past three and one-half days, then detailed what needed yet to be accomplished in the two and one-half days remaining. He expressed his gratitude for the assembly's commitment to its work and for the lively involvement of the voting members in the process.

The chair then presented the following proposed pattern for the assembly's work in Plenary Sessions Eight and Nine: Plenary Session Eight would address the recommendations of the Church Council concerning the ELCA Studies on Sexuality, the report of the Reference and Counsel Committee, and the governance proposal; Plenary Session Nine would cover greetings, final action on ministry strategies, the Memorials Committee report, and an additional Reference and Counsel Committee report. The assembly expressed its approval of the plan of work.

Presiding Bishop Hanson then proposed that Plenary Session Nine be extended until 5:00 P.M. in order to allow enough time for the business that needed to be conducted.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To extend Plenary Session Nine to 5:00 P.M.

The chair called for a vote on the motion.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

CARRIED:

To extend Plenary Session Nine to 5:00 P.M.

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

YES-754; NO-195

Presiding Bishop Hanson then led the assembly in a remembrance of Baptism and prayer.

Mr. Eric M. Peterson [Northwest Synod of Wisconsin] rose to a point of order. He questioned the list provided by the *ad hoc* committee with regard to the order of substitute

motions and amendments to be considered by the assembly. He stated his opinion that amendments to the main motion needed to be considered first, as provided in *Robert's Rules of Order*. Presiding Bishop Hanson ruled that the *ad hoc* committee had done its work according to the requirements of Mr. Peterson's motion of the previous day, pointing out that the action had changed the "Rules of Procedure" so that amendments requiring the most change from existing policy had to be considered first, whether they applied to the main motion or to a substitute motion.

Mr. Peterson moved to appeal the decision of the chair.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To appeal the decision of the chair.

The Rev. Serena S. Sellers [Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod] rose to a point of order to indicate that the amendment she had proposed was missing from the list of those to be considered. Presiding Bishop Hanson replied that Pr. Sellers's amendment had been of a primarily editorial nature and thus did not require action by the assembly.

Ms. Allison A. Guttu [Metropolitan New York Synod] asked if the motion under consideration were debatable. The chair ruled that it was. Ms. Guttu stated that she was in favor of the motion because it created an order in continuance with *Robert's Rules of Order*.

Mr. Peterson spoke in favor of his motion. He expressed his concern for good order. He stated that he had intended his motion of the previous day to order amendments perfecting the main motion before substitute motions were addressed. Mr. Peterson stressed the importance of perfecting the main motion before going on to substitutes. He stated that, while he respected the decision of the chair, he asked the assembly to overturn it.

Presiding Bishop Hanson clarified for voting members that he, as chair, had ruled that the assembly had created a new rule when it approved Mr. Peterson's motion.

Mr. Howard W. Bell Jr. [Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod] called for the question.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To end debate.

The chair called for a vote on the motion to end debate.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

CARRIED: To end debate.

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

YES-937; NO-45

Presiding Bishop Hanson then called for a vote on whether or not to sustain the ruling of the chair regarding the ordering of amendments and substitute motions.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

CARRIED: To uphold the decision of the chair on the ordering of amendments and substitute motions.

YES-685; NO-290

The Rev. Joseph A. Wolf [Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod] moved that Church Council members be asked to provide clarification on Recommendation Two before a vote on that recommendation, specifically proposing that they comment on what might constitute evidence of "intent to live in a lifelong, committed, and faithful same-sex relationship."

Presiding Bishop Hanson ruled this motion out of order because it had not been submitted in a timely manner. He suggested that Church Council members could be consulted during debate on Recommendation Two.

Pr. Wolf challenged the ruling of the chair. Presiding Bishop Hanson placed the matter before the assembly.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To appeal the decision of the chair.

The chair opened debate on the motion.

The Rev. Michael E. Pancoast [Northwest Synod of Wisconsin] stated his understanding that the Church Council had been asked a month prior to the assembly for comments and clarifications on the recommendations, but that it had not responded. He expressed his belief that the council should respectfully be held to that responsibility.

The Rev. Warren D. Freiheit, bishop of the Central/Southern Illinois Synod, moved to end debate.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To end debate.

Mr. Kevin T. Karnei [Southwestern Texas Synod] rose to a point of order, but the chair ruled that he could not ask his question at that point, as it was not relevant to the motion to end debate. The chair then called for a vote on the motion to end debate.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

CARRIED: To end debate.

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

YES-930; NO-45

Mr. Karnei then posed his question. He asked for clarification because he understood that the language Pr. Wolf referred to was in Recommendation Three, and not in Recommendation Two. The chair responded that Pr. Wolf had inquired about Recommendation Two. He pointed out that the motion now on the floor was whether or not to uphold the ruling of the chair that Church Council members would not be asked to address the issues until debate was underway, at which time they could be consulted as necessary by the assembly.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

CARRIED: To uphold the decision of the chair.

YES-743; NO-220

Consideration of Proposals Related to the ELCA Studies on Sexuality

Reference: 2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section I, pages 21–22; Section IV, pages 19–24; Section V, pages 13–27.

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson invited the assembly to turn to consideration of the recommendations related to the ELCA Studies on Sexuality. He reminded members that the 2001 Churchwide Assembly had asked this church to present recommendations at the 2005

Churchwide Assembly regarding the blessing of same-sex unions and the rostering of people in such unions. He further reminded them that the Church Council had created the Task Force for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Studies on Sexuality. This task force had invited this church and partner churches to participate in the process. Presiding Bishop Hanson observed, “We have done this work well. We have listened to each other, learned from each other, prayed with and for each other, and I believe we have journeyed together faithfully.” He reported that voting members had received an introduction to the decisions that this assembly would make, had participated in hearings, and had continued on this journey as a committee of the whole. He stated that three recommendations from the Church Council would now be presented for assembly action. He directed members to the appropriate section of the *2005 Pre-Assembly Report*.

The Rev. Terrie L. Sternberg [Virginia Synod] rose to a point of order. She commented on the need for quiet in the assembly hall and requested that private conversations end. Presiding Bishop Hanson asked the assembly to respect the need of all voting members to be able to hear the debate before the assembly.

Presiding Bishop Hanson then called several resource people to the platform: Ms. Judy Biffle, member of the Church Council and chair of the *ad hoc* committee; the Rev. Jonathan L. Eilert, member of the Church Council and chair of the council’s Program and Services Committee; the Rev. James M. Childs, director for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality; the Rev. Margaret G. Payne, bishop of the New England Synod and chair of the Task Force for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Studies on Sexuality; the Rev. Rebecca S. Larson, executive director of the Division for Church in Society; and the Rev. Stanley N. Olson, executive director of the Division for Ministry.

The Rev. Kent A. Mechler [Northeastern Iowa Synod] rose to a point of order. He reported that members were having difficulty hearing both floor debate and speech from the platform. The chair thanked Pr. Mechler for bringing this concern to his attention and asked that the problem be corrected immediately.

Presiding Bishop Hanson called upon Ms. Biffle for a report from the *ad hoc* committee, which had been asked to order the amendments and substitute motions from the most change to the least change, when compared to current policy and prevailing practice. Ms. Biffle reported that no amendments or substitute motions had been submitted regarding Recommendation One. Amendments and substitute motions regarding Recommendations Two and Three were listed in the *ad hoc* committee’s report under the name of the person who had submitted each of them. The committee reported that amendments and substitute motions to Recommendation Two would be considered in the following order: Bp. Michael J. Neils, Mr. Robert D. Benne, Mr. David J. Owen Sr., Pr. Steven R. Benson, Bp. Carol S. Hendrix, and Pr. Stephen W. Yambor. The ordering of amendments and substitute motions to Recommendation Three would be as follows: Pr. Gladys G. Moore, Mr. Kai S. Swanson, Mr. Steven R. Chapman, Pr. Virginia K. Georgulas, Mr. Eric M. Peterson, Pr. Ann M. Tiemeyer, Pr. Bobbie J. Blackburn, and Mr. Louis M. Hesse.

The chair then called upon Secretary Lowell G. Almen to present Recommendation One.

MOVED;

SECONDED:

WHEREAS, the people of this church are joined and united by the love of Jesus Christ;

WHEREAS, this unity is God’s gift to us in Jesus Christ and we are called as a church to cherish, nurture, and safeguard this gift;

WHEREAS, within this unity is also a God-given diversity that we honor in the body of Christ;

WHEREAS, we give thanks to God for the precious gift of unity and the richness of diversity within the body of Christ, for each other, and for the desire and strength to live faithfully within our God-given unity and diversity;

WHEREAS, we respect the integrity of convictions of conscience and faith “with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:2-3); and

WHEREAS, we see throughout this church that a commitment to the authority of Scripture is not solely the concern of those who seek to maintain the tradition and similarly, compassion for gay and lesbian persons and a commitment that they be treated justly are not solely concerns of those advocating change; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America—its members, congregations, synods, churchwide organization, and agencies and institutions—be urged to concentrate on finding ways to live together faithfully in the midst of disagreements, recognizing the God-given mission and communion that we share as members of the body of Christ.

Presiding Bishop Hanson informed the assembly that a majority vote would be needed for adoption of this recommendation, and invited members to address the assembly.

The Rev. Eric D. Ash Sr. [Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod] said, “Our Lord Jesus Christ prayed that all of his followers might be one. Unity, therefore, should be a high priority for us. We all sincerely hope and pray that the unity of our church will be preserved in a common understanding of God’s purpose and his love for us. There will continue to be disagreements over the controversial issues that will be decided here today. But let us begin our process by affirming our desire to live together in the faith and unity of Christ. In his Word and in his love is our unity, and I urge the adoption of this recommendation.”

Mr. Benjamin W. Lei [New Jersey Synod] raised concerns about co-dependency in sexual relationships. He was ruled out of order because he was not addressing the topic of unity in this church.

Ms. Stephanie M. Quigg [Southeastern Minnesota Synod] spoke in favor of Recommendation One: “I have a close family member who is lesbian. When I told her that I would plan to vote against any change in the church, even though we are in very different sexual ‘places,’ we still were able to live together and have a very close relationship in spite of our differences. I do ask that if we live together faithfully as a church that we remember to keep God and his Word as number one, and then we can reach out to our brothers and sisters in Christ.”

Mr. Louis M. Hesse [Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod] spoke against the recommendation, saying, “I’m speaking strictly for myself here, for those of you who think otherwise. The surest sign of disunity is scheduling a vote on unity. Unity is a gift of God. It either is or it is not. I’m at a red microphone for ‘opposed,’ but I think I really should be at a black microphone. The issue of unity should not even be coming before this assembly. We are or we aren’t. My son worked several years ago on a combine crew that worked from Texas to the Dakotas. On that crew were a couple of young men who read their Bibles regularly every morning. These men were from South Africa. They were decent young men. They were baptized Christians. They were my brothers in the faith. But they were members of the Reformed Church of South Africa, which promotes apartheid and insists on separation

of folks of different colors. I reserve the right to declare that wicked. I reserve the right to say that unity must be broken in that situation. Deeply, yes, I'm in unity with my baptized brothers and sisters, but deeply, there is wickedness and we have to be able to recognize wickedness for what it is. I wish to ask the secretary to record my vote as abstaining from this vote."

The Rev. Bruce H. Davidson [New Jersey Synod] spoke in support, saying, "I have a question. I think one of the most positive things that has happened over the last four years is that we've had some difficult conversations in this church and that we have survived those conversations and grown from those conversations. I think that is due in large part both to the quality and the content of the study materials that were in front of us. I believe that if we are going to continue to have the kind of dialogue and discussion that will both maintain unity and also help us deal with those things that sometimes separate us, we're going to have to continue to have conversations that are focused and supported by resources that will help us to do that. My question is, what are the plans to help us as we move forward to do what the recommendation is calling us to do? Will there be more study materials, will there be resources that will help us do a difficult job? I'm aware of the fact that sometimes when we pass resolutions that we think we've done the work. I think if we pass this resolution we're committing ourselves to the work, but I'd like to know at this point in time what the plans are for supporting that kind of discussion."

Presiding Bishop Hanson called on the Rev. Rebecca S. Larson, executive director of the Division for Church in Society to address the question. She informed the assembly that the process of preparing a social statement on human sexuality for presentation at the 2009 Churchwide Assembly had already begun. In addition, she mentioned that another study document, *Journey Together Faithfully, Part Three*, would be prepared, which would continue and expand the discussion to include questions about lives together as sexual beings in the body of Christ.

Ms. Natacha D. Kemp [Southeastern Minnesota Synod] spoke against Recommendation One: "By all means, unity is wonderful. We celebrate unity, and within that unity comes disagreements, agreements, and we celebrate that diversity. However, my concern, the reason why I'm speaking against this with a heavy heart, is that we seeking unity are coming to God with an agenda, and that agenda is, 'Lord, this is what we want you to do for us.' I have a problem coming as a finite human being to God, an infinite being, and saying, 'God, this is our suggestion to you. Your suggestions are no good to us. The unity that you provide is no good, so this is our suggestion for what unity and diversity is.' So I want people to really think and pray about the unity that we are striving for."

Mr. Patrick Monroe [Central/Southern Illinois Synod] spoke in favor, saying, "Jesus calls us to do two things: Love God with our whole heart and mind, and love one another as we are loved. This motion allows us to do that. The motion before us also, if we read in Matthew 13, beginning at verse 47, Jesus tells the disciples that our job is to gather in everyone. This motion allows us to do that. Our job is not to judge one another, our job is to love another. Our 'soul' job is to love one another. This motion allows us to move forward in that way not just with sexual issues, but with all issues."

The chair informed the assembly that those standing at red microphones had all indicated that they were waiting to speak to other matters, so he would go again to a speaker in favor of the recommendation.

Mr. George C. Watson [Southeast Michigan Synod] said, "I think most of us are in favor of finding ways to live together faithfully. However, I believe that we really must mean that with each other. Yesterday's 'quasi committee of the whole' was anything but living

together faithfully. For me, 'living together faithfully' means that I should feel loved, supported, and cared for by all my brothers and sisters in Christ, regardless of where we stand on a variety of issues. I've been working for many years on these subjects. My work has taken me on many trips out of town. My partner, Mike, though proud of my work, was very upset about all the time that it has required me to spend away from home. Nevertheless, he looked forward to the culmination of my work. However, unfortunately, because his funeral was the day before I left for this assembly, he'll never see the outcome. I was going to cancel my trip here, but I was told that I should come to be surrounded by people who loved and cared for me, who are people of faith. That worked until yesterday. I would ask you, if you truly want to live together faithfully, we must find ways of speaking with each other that do not call into question the sincerity of our faith and our worth as fellow members of the body of Christ, regardless of where we stand on issues. I hope that if you vote in favor of Recommendation One that you truly mean it, and will find ways to speak throughout the assembly that build each of us up, and vote in ways that allow us to live out our lives together faithfully."

Next to speak was Mr. Steven R. Chapman [Northwest Washington Synod]: "Reverend Chair, first of all, I want to acknowledge that I was indeed out of order yesterday, and I thank you for your leniency and compassion in dealing with me when I lashed out in anguish and frustration that was fueled by exhaustion. Secondly, Christ calls us to be bold in our prayers. We are to demand our gifts and our blessings from God. Here we stand with this resolution, which doesn't address calling on God to bring us unity, but for us to ask unity of each other. So at the same time that I look up to God and pray and say, 'God, I demand you give us unity,' because that is our boldness in Christ, at the same time I want to be able to look across the room and I want to wrap my arm around my brother and sister who would put me out of this church, and I want to say, 'We are united; we are the body of Christ.'"

The Rev. Kurt O. Handrich [South-Central Synod of Wisconsin] said, "I want to speak in favor, and want to lift up that this, of the three resolutions, is the most essential. I think we need to realize what it is we're doing. I come before you as the pastor of a multicultural congregation, and I dream of a future where we will be able to gather together as people of many races and sexual orientations and relationships that are blessed, and I dream that that day will come. In fact, I believe that God will make that happen. But I also know that there are many people here who disagree with that position, who see that the Scriptures and the call of Christ do not lead us there. I think it's important that we be able to say that all of us here gather as faithful people, that all of us here have wrestled with the Scriptures and that we hear Christ's call, and that if we are going to stand together, we need to have a place for all of us. This resolution leads into the other two, which says that we need to look at a way that all of us can be recognized in the church. I think we need to lift this resolution up especially and carry it forward into the others, because in the Scriptures, the story of Gamaliel in Acts 5 tells us that when the early Christian church started, and the religious leaders of the time stood against that because of tradition and what they saw Scripture saying, Gamaliel counseled them, saying, 'If this isn't from God, it will fail. But if it is from God, and we stand against it, we might find ourselves opposing God.' I would say that we need to carry this resolution forward into the others, because if it isn't from God, it will fail, and if it is from God, we wouldn't want to stand against it—but to do so knowing that we need to have a place for all of us, from all our faith perspectives. I recognize that all of us have wrestled and are following Jesus as we have found him."

Mr. Matthew L. Erickson [Southwest California Synod] commented: "I stand before you all as a man just getting ready to enter seminary. I came to this assembly not sure how I felt

about the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and my place in it. I am excited about this resolution because my time here has confirmed so strongly why I am proud to be a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. People have said that the ‘quasi committee of the whole’ yesterday showed our separation. For me, it showed our unity. My heart was broken as my brothers and sisters shared deep, heartfelt, personal stories that touched me so deeply. And at the same time, my mind and my intellect and the gifts that God gave me for looking at Scripture were deeply touched by my brothers who shared their scriptural conviction. I see tension, and I am caught in the balance, and I am so glad that we are having this discussion. This is something that we need to be wrestling with, and in wrestling, I promise, like Jacob, not to let go, and I ask you all, do not let go. Do not let go of one another. Bless one another, and hold on for dear life.”

The Rev. Paul H. Harris [Saint Paul Area Synod] said, “Before coming here, I had a number of e-mail exchanges with members of our congregation. These were with people on both sides of the issue. People opposed, a couple of them, said that if this passed, they would not be able to stay in the church. People for it said that if this did not pass, they could no longer stay in the church. I attempted to persuade them that, for the sake of church unity and for the great things that unite us, they should stay. One said, ‘Aren’t you a Lutheran? Don’t you stand in the heritage of Martin Luther? Don’t you believe that when I am convinced by Scripture and conscience that I must follow that?’ I found it difficult to reply to that. Many people, regardless of which way this issue goes, will find themselves conscience-bound, and moved by their understanding of the Holy Spirit to leave this community. I believe that we do well to bless them, to acknowledge that the unity of the Church is not diminished by leaving and becoming a Methodist, or a Baptist, or a Catholic, or whatever, but rather our unity is comprised by our connection with the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, I believe that we do well to wish people well, to bless them, and to encourage them to remain deeply connected with the body of Christ, even though they may no longer be able to be part of this particular community.”

The Rev. Steven P. Loy [Rocky Mountain Synod] moved to end debate.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To end debate.

The chair called for a vote on the motion to end debate.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

CARRIED: To end debate.

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

YES-910; NO-76

Presiding Bishop Hanson called upon the Rev. Gary L. Hansen, bishop of the North/West Lower Michigan Synod, to lead the assembly in prayer before the vote on Recommendation One.

Secretary Lowell G. Almen then read the “Resolved” clause of Recommendation One once again.

The chair called for a vote on Recommendation One.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

YES-851; NO-127

CA05.05.17

WHEREAS, the people of this church are joined and united by the love of Jesus Christ;

WHEREAS, this unity is God's gift to us in Jesus Christ and we are called as a church to cherish, nurture, and safeguard this gift;

WHEREAS, within this unity is also a God-given diversity that we honor in the body of Christ;

WHEREAS, we give thanks to God for the precious gift of unity and the richness of diversity within the body of Christ, for each other, and for the desire and strength to live faithfully within our God-given unity and diversity;

WHEREAS, we respect the integrity of convictions of conscience and faith "with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:2-3); and

WHEREAS, we see throughout this church that a commitment to the authority of Scripture is not solely the concern of those who seek to maintain the tradition and, similarly, compassion for gay and lesbian persons and a commitment that they be treated justly are not solely concerns of those advocating change; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America—its members, congregations, synods, churchwide organization, and agencies and institutions—be urged to concentrate on finding ways to live together faithfully in the midst of disagreements, recognizing the God-given mission and communion that we share as members of the body of Christ.

The request was made that the following abstentions from the vote on Recommendation One be recorded in the minutes: Mr. Louis M. Hesse (Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod), the Rev. Paul A. Landeraaen (Montana Synod), Mr. Karl E. Moyer (Lower Susquehanna Synod).

The assembly responded with applause. Presiding Bishop Hanson then announced that the assembly would consider Recommendation Two, and he called upon Secretary Almen to present the recommendation.

Moved;

Seconded:

WHEREAS, this church holds that "marriage is a lifelong covenant of faithfulness between a man and a woman" (Message on Sexuality: Some Common Convictions [1996], page 3); and

WHEREAS, the Conference of Bishops in October 1993 stated, "We, as the Conference of Bishops of the ELCA, recognize that there is basis neither in Scripture nor tradition for the establishment of an official ceremony by this church for the blessing of a homosexual relationship. We, therefore, do not approve such a ceremony as an official action of this church's ministry. Nevertheless, we express trust in and will continue dialogue with those pastors and congregations who are in ministry with gay and lesbian persons, and affirm their desire to

explore the best ways to provide pastoral care for all to whom they minister” (CB93.10.25); therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America continue to respect the guidance of the 1993 statement of the Conference of Bishops; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this church welcome gay and lesbian persons into its life (as stated in Churchwide Assembly resolutions from 1991, 1995, and 1999), and trust pastors and congregations to discern ways to provide faithful pastoral care to same-sex couples.

Presiding Bishop Hanson noted that approval of this recommendation would require a majority vote, based on his interpretation of the rules approved in Plenary Session One. He further noted that the *ad hoc* committee’s ordering would guide the presentation of motions. He then repeated his opinion that, as presently worded, the resolution would require a simple majority for passage, and any amendments or substitutions would require majority vote both to amend and approve. He urged voting members to consider the order in which amendments or substitutes would be presented in deciding when they would get in line to speak at the microphones.

The Rev. Michael J. Neils, bishop of the Grand Canyon Synod, moved a substitute for Recommendation Two.

MOVED;

SECONDED:

To amend by substitution:

It shall be the policy of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America that for the sake of ministry and mission a congregation may choose to authorize its pastor(s) to preside at services of blessing for persons in covenanted same-gender relationships.

Presiding Bishop Hanson inquired whether the motion was a substitute for one or both of the “Resolved” clauses. Bp. Neils confirmed that his motion was a substitute for the entire motion.

Bp. Neils then spoke to his motion, saying, “I offer this resolution because, by comparison to the 1993 letter of the Conference of Bishops, which was never intended as a policy statement, it is clear. I also offer it because I believe it provides us a way to preserve ‘the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace’ until such time as that same Spirit brings us to consensus around what is God’s will in this matter. A majority already believes that it knows God’s will in this, but a majority can be in error, even as the same is true for those of us in the minority. God works through history. It is possible that what seems to some to be ‘selling out to culture’ may in fact be God continuing God’s work of making all things new. This resolution places trust in congregations. We already trust congregations to make decisions about who will be baptized, who will come to the table and at what age, who will be married before our altars or buried before them. Decision making, according to this resolution, including on how a service of blessing might be performed, is left in the mission field. The vast majority of our congregations will not authorize their pastors to bless those living in covenanted, same-gender relationships, but a significant number of our congregations, having read the Scriptures, prayed, and studied, believe that the same-gender intimacy condemned in Scripture is in no way speaking to relationships that are consensual and monogamous. This resolution does not provide for same-sex marriage. It is about praying God’s blessing on people who have already entered into covenanted relationships.

I have prayed God's blessings on a house. The blessing did not build the house, it prayed God's blessing on those who were living in it. Praying a blessing is not giving permission to have sex; it is asking God to help people fulfill vows they have freely chosen to make."

The Rev. John S. Hergert [Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod] asked if adopting Recommendation Two would mean a change in the policy of this church, thus requiring a two-thirds vote to adopt. Presiding Bishop Hanson replied that the action of the assembly at Plenary Session One referred to changing existing policy. He ruled, therefore, that it did not apply to Recommendation Two, since there was no existing official policy with regard to these matters. He repeated that the body had the right to change the rule, but that the issue should be considered at the time of the vote.

The Rev. Joseph F. Rinderknecht [Northeastern Ohio Synod] asked for the location of the substitute motion proposed by Mr. Louis M. Hesse. The chair directed him to page 6 of the August 11 report of the *ad hoc* committee.

Mr. Paul Erickson [South Dakota Synod] rose to a point of order, stating his understanding that the action of Plenary Session One had been to require a two-thirds vote on all amendments and substitute motions. Presiding Bishop Hanson responded that the motion to which Mr. Erickson was referring had, in fact, been defeated.

The Rev. James R. Crumley Jr. [South Carolina Synod] spoke against the substitution: "I oppose the substitution that has been offered, along with several amendments in this particular section. It's necessary for me to say just a word as to why I do so. This issue has been before [this] church a long time. I have struggled with myself as to what particular position I could take, and I also had to struggle as bishop of the church as to what position the church should take. That struggle was around the nature of the question. If the question itself could be called simply procedural or organizational, then there would be very little problem, because the church would be totally free to act as it chose and deemed best. I concluded, however, that this particular question is a confessional question. When the 'confession of faith' and 'nature of the church' articles were under debate in the Commission for a New Lutheran Church that wrote this section of the constitution, there was some discussion when we came to the discussion of the Holy Scriptures as to 'the source and norm.' There was some debate about the word 'the.' Aren't there other issues that are 'source and norm'? The decision was 'no.' In the confessional history of the Lutheran church, it always had to be 'the.' It is not the Scriptures *and* experience, it is not the Scriptures *and* culture, it is not the Scriptures *and* nature, it is *the* Scriptures."

The Rev. Stephen P. Bouman, bishop of the Metropolitan New York Synod, stated: "One of the unfortunate things is that we have not had the full and public conversation on Scripture and its hermeneutic, and especially the necessity for Scripture to give us a narrative of the death and resurrection of Jesus, around which all other things take their place. On this amendment, imagine God taking a child. You baptize that child in your church. You catechize, Sunday School teach that child, you turn that child out into the world. That child comes to New York, or Minneapolis, or somewhere else. What do you want for that child? Hopefully that, together, we are there with your child. I support this amendment reluctantly because I don't like making policy of these things. What I hope we can do, though, is create some pastoral space for the children that we take, who come to our churches with their parents, their grandparents, their Sunday School teachers. Can we be the church together, and can we create some space for that to happen?"

Mr. John D. Nevergall [Northwestern Ohio Synod] moved that the assembly suspend all remaining action pertaining to the recommendations of the task force until a social

statement on human sexuality could be adopted by the Churchwide Assembly. The chair ruled this motion out of order because it had not been submitted in a timely manner to be considered with all other motions on this topic.

Mr. Tekla O. Fogi [Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod] spoke against the substitute: "If blessing of committed same-sex relationships and ordination of those living in committed same-sex relationships is approved by the ELCA Churchwide Assembly, I do not know what will happen to the ecumenical relationships of the ELCA with the African Lutheran churches. There are many fast-growing Lutheran churches in Africa, including the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus and the [Evangelical] Lutheran Church in Tanzania. If we approve this recommendation, all these churches, I believe, will believe that the ELCA is significantly departing from the Scripture. They believe that the authority of Scripture is at stake. They believe that the honor of God is at stake. Reverend Chair, there are more than five Oromo churches working with ELCA synods all over the U.S.A. I minister to the Oromo Christian Fellowship in Silver Springs, Maryland. All Oromo Christians in this country believe that there is a significant departure and deliberate refusal to obey the Scriptures if we adopt this recommendation. I am sure that this proposal, if approved, will be a scandal to the witness of the ELCA in its ecumenical relationships."

The Rev. Ron W. Moe-Lobeda [Northwest Washington Synod] said, "Our interpretation of Scripture is at the heart of this debate. In this regard, one of the primary passages of Scripture used to substantiate God's institution of marriage between a man and a woman is the story of Adam and Eve. However, given the basic hermeneutical principle that Scripture interprets Scripture, modern scholarship has yet another interpretation of this story that eliminates the possibility that this story has anything to do with the institution of marriage. Told by the imaginative prophets of Yahweh through the lens of being conquered and deported by the Babylonians, the story of Adam and Eve reflects a synopsis of the historical experience of the tribes of Israel in Judah; how Israel and Judah were situated in the land often described as 'flowing with milk and honey'; how the elders came to Samuel and requested to have a king like other nations, a king whom God warned would replace God as ruler of the people; how Solomon requested the ability to discern between good and evil, only to use this knowledge to fulfill God's warning that under the monarchy the people would be taxed and enslaved in order to finance the king's building projects and military endeavors; how this issue of slavery divided the nations of Israel and Judah, which previously had co-existed side by side as one flesh; how under the monarchy infant mortality increased, causing women to grieve the thought of giving birth; women were made subservient to men, and men were forced to work by the sweat of their brows as slaves for the king and the wealthy landowners; and how all of this evil done by the kings in the sight of God resulted in the conquest by foreign powers and the expulsion of the people from their 'land of delight.' With 20/20 hindsight, the prophets of Yahweh concluded that the establishment of the monarchy was the paradigm shift that led to the downfall of their two tribes. Therefore, they crafted the story of Adam and Eve in order to convince the people returning from Babylon not to restore the monarchy of their ancestors. From my perspective, this interpretation of the story of Adam and Eve is as credible and sensible as any interpretation throughout the ages, and does not allow us to use this story for defining marriage, identifying women as the cause of sin in the world, or determining that men are somehow superior to women."

The Rev. Daniel L. Henderson [La Crosse Area Synod] rose to a point of privilege. He expressed his sympathy for the members of the task force and the frustration and discouragement he felt they must be experiencing as they listened to the assembly struggle

with what he termed “three modest recommendations which are at least relatively straightforward.” He requested that the Rev. Rebecca S. Larson, executive director of the Division for Church in Society, respond to the question, “How would rejection of or major deviation from any one or more of these recommendations affect them in their task of trying to prepare that social statement on sexuality that is still the task before them?”

An unidentified voting member rose to a point of order, stating that the rules voted on in the first Plenary Session were “critical,” and requesting that the revised rules be projected on the screen before any vote took place. The chair responded that this would happen. He then called upon Pr. Larson to reply to Pr. Henderson’s question.

Pr. Larson responded that task force had begun the project of developing the social statement in January of 2005 after the release of the report for this assembly. She stated that this was normally a four-year process, as the scope and focus of a social statement was much broader than the study in *Journey Together Faithfully, Parts One and Two*. She assured the assembly that the question of how the actions of this assembly would fold into that process was very much on the hearts and minds of the task force. Without knowing what the actions of the assembly might be, however, it was not possible to know the possible effect upon the social statement. Pr. Larson stated that, as the development of the social statement evolved, not only the discussions and decisions of the assembly, but also the discussions that had led into the assembly, would be part of the broader conversation on human sexuality. She reminded the assembly that it would be a part of the process, since the procedures for development of social statements was very much dependent on members’ response to drafts of the statement. She also mentioned that the task force was developing *Journey Together Faithfully, Part Three*.

Ms. Betty J. Ulrich [Northwest Synod of Wisconsin] spoke against the substitute: “I am grateful for this church and this assembly, both of which assure us that we can always express our convictions without endangering our bond of unity in Christ. I speak as one who grew up outside of any church, became a Christian as a young adult, and joined the Lutheran church. Introduced to Scripture, I discovered the wonderful freedom of the Gospel, but also the boundaries it puts up for our safety. I also learned Luther’s admonition to take Scripture’s clear, obvious statements at face value. Both Old and New Testaments speak not against homosexual persons but against that type of sexual activity, and I think for very good reasons. I rejoiced when our church said ‘yes’ to ordaining celibate homosexuals, but I can’t in good conscience vote for this substitution, or any of those which ignore the obvious statements of Scripture on this subject, partly because of the ambiguity that’s involved, which I realize is intentional and I understand the result of it. I’m reminded of an occasion in our country’s history when a political party, thinking ambiguous statements would appease both sides, won the name ‘Mugwumps’ because their ‘mugs’ were on one side of the fence, and their ‘wumps’ were on the other. But the ambiguities that are inherent in many of these, including this one, leave the door wide open not only for the blessing of same-sex unions but even for marriage ceremonies. I think that these violate the limits that God has set up.”

The Rev. Gary Schulz [Metropolitan New York Synod] spoke of his experience of ministry to a gay couple: “About seven years ago, I met a young man, Luís, and his partner, George. Luís was dying of AIDS. He asked a pastor friend of mine, ‘Could you bless us?’ My pastor friend—a typical true Lutheran—said, ‘We have no rite. I can’t do it. But,’ he said, ‘I would bless your rings.’ And so we gathered together, read Scripture, we gathered together and prayed, we gathered together to say to Luís and George, ‘God is with you. As Christ was on the cross, and then went into the grave with his hands folded, when you die God will be with you, Luís. And God blesses you.’ And to George, ‘God blesses what you had with Luís for those many years.’ Amen.”

The Rev. Pentti J. Maki [Northeastern Ohio Synod] spoke against the motion: “I, as the pastor of several different parishes, have had the opportunity to meet the retirees who have found one another and have chosen to live together—they have chosen not to be married because they have for financial reasons felt that the pensions that they have from their deceased spouses. . . . They did not want to lose those pensions because they did not want to assume a financial hardship. I’ve often wanted to, in those situations, bless those unions, but because the church does not have a rite for that, I felt that I could not do that. It was a surprise to me when I saw the recommendation and came to understand that the words ‘faithful pastoral care’ in the Conference of Bishops report was code language for blessing same-sex unions, an unofficial blessing of same-sex unions. That was confirmed to me in black and white when I saw one of the photos that my brothers and sisters in Christ displayed in the hallway as I was walking into the assembly here a couple of days ago. If not clarified, this practice will continue, with grave consequences for our church. If not clarified, this assembly in essence will approve the blessing of same-sex unions. Silence is approval. It’s lack of leadership. It’s approval of local option, which will lead to disunity in our church. There will be congregations who won’t tolerate this lack of leadership, this implicit approval of same-sex unions. Local option will lead to a split within the ELCA.”

Ms. Christine L. Summy [Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod] rose to a point of privilege to report that the text of the captioning for the hearing-impaired on the television monitor was not accurately distinguishing between the words “right” and “rite.” Since the speakers were using the word “rite,” she argued, the use of the other word could lead to misinterpretation. The chair replied that the staff person creating the open captioning was working phonetically to transcribe the proceedings of the assembly, and praised the work she was doing. The assembly responded with enthusiastic applause in appreciation for the work of the transcriber.

Ms. Linda E. Keating [Metropolitan Chicago Synod], speaking in favor of the substitute motion, said, “It has been my privilege in my professional life to work with some of the most brokenhearted people in our society. I spent nine years as a counselor and then as a clinical director in an addictions treatment program that specializes in working with professionals: physicians, dentists, attorneys, and clergy. My hands and my heart have run over with the desperation of our gay and lesbian patients, who were rejected in the cruelest ways by their families and by their churches. As my colleagues and I heard these stories, we did not, and could not, rejoice that families and churches were holding fast to biblical writings, ‘family values,’ and religious tradition. Parenthetically, this is a very difficult witness that the Church makes to the medical community. We called those experiences by their name, and that name is ‘abuse.’ Over 30 years ago, the American Psychiatric Association declared that homosexuality should not be defined as pathological. To do so is misleading, indefensible by science, and harmful to people. Within the last several months, the American Psychological Association has published two peer-reviewed surveys. One of these supports the great benefit for mental, physical, and spiritual health for people in committed, faithful, same-sex relationships. The second tells us that the children of same-sex partners are thriving. I long for the day when we can thank God for advances in science, even when they challenge our traditional interpretation of Scripture, and when this church can be an instrument of God’s extravagant grace, and not another instrument of abuse.”

The Rev. Walter L. Wolff [Western North Dakota Synod] spoke against the amendment, stating: “What I have to say applies throughout the discussion, and I want to point that out so that I do not have to rise another time to spare this assembly unnecessary repetition. I note in the discussion on both sides that many argue from creation, which

unwittingly causes them to commit what G.E. Moore in his treatise, *Principia ethica*, calls the ‘naturalistic fallacy in ethics,’ that being, to assume that what *is* is what *ought to be*. In the discussion for change, I think there are two premises which I regard as false that I need to speak about. The first one—and I mean this in a completely descriptive and non-pejorative manner—is that the wantonness of human concupiscence should be interpretive to Scripture. That rests on a false anthropology of individuality, where the individual *qua* individual has unalienable rights and a right to freedom, which, as Orlando Patterson in his study on freedom in the Western culture points out, is the concept of absolute sovereignty. Secondly, the other issue—and I hesitate to bring this forward—is, I think, a false definition, a false premise on the essence of Christianity, the premise being that Christianity’s essence is love. That was most warmly articulated in the nineteenth century by the right-wing Hegelian, Ludwig Feuerbach, and turpidly interpreted by one of his spiritual descendants, Jürgen Moltmann. Those two false premises underlie the argument for change, and false premises necessitate an invalid conclusion.”

The Rev. Mark E. Fitzsimmons [North Carolina Synod] requested clarification, asking if the assembly debate were limited to the substitute motion on the floor. Presiding Bishop Hanson responded that the assembly also could debate the main motion even though the substitute motion was on the floor. He encouraged members to make an effort to state which motion they were addressing in order to facilitate the proceedings.

The chair requested the assembly’s permission to allow the Rev. Ralph W. Klein, resource member of the assembly and a teaching theologian at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, and the Rev. Herbert W. Chilstrom, former presiding bishop of the ELCA, to address the assembly. By voice vote the assembly granted them the right to speak.

Pr. Klein said, “For the last 40 years I have taught the authority of Scripture in Lutheran colleges and seminaries. I’d like to call attention to what Krister Stendahl taught us 40 years ago: that we need to distinguish between what the Bible *meant* in its original context and what it *might mean* today. There have been several references to the fact that Scripture speaks on this subject. It actually speaks in only six or seven passages, and never in the words of Jesus. The story of Sodom and Gomorrah deals with homosexual rape, and therefore does not apply to the current discussion. That also could be said of a passage in Leviticus which prohibits homosexual activity in the same paragraph where it prohibits sexual conduct during a woman’s menstrual period. When it comes to Romans 1, perhaps one of the most difficult passages in this discussion, we need to remember that St. Paul has an unusual definition of ‘nature.’ He also thinks that it is unnatural for a man to have long hair, and he shows no awareness at all of what our previous speaker talked about, of sexual orientation. Therefore when we look at these various passages we can say that they offer very little guidance for today, and when we realize that some people by nature or by nurture are attracted to people of the same gender, then I think that we should hold them to the same accountability to which we hold our heterosexual selves, namely that sexual activity should take place within committed relationships that are monogamous and long-lasting, and that are non-abusive and non-exploitative. Therefore, I think that Bp. Neils’s amendment is absolutely appropriate.”

Mr. Richard D. Pukema [Northwest Synod of Wisconsin] spoke in favor of the substitute, saying, “I’m a former alcoholic, former atheist, former victim of a pedophile, and a former law enforcement agent. Lord, forgive me; Lord, have mercy on me. I choose to speak about my law enforcement experience, though I could speak about all the other experiences. I would remind the body that homosexuality receives violence in our society. Law enforcement has been slow to change its attitude from, ‘You brought it upon yourself’

to ‘You deserve equal protection under the law.’ I ask that this body, if it is ever going to be a moral leader, make some statement to the fact that violence is not good, and when you continue to label people and call them ‘sinners,’ and that they are condemned, you give license and you give voice to all the hatred and the violence that goes on in our country. I don’t believe that this is the best resolution, but I support it because it’s the chance that we can move in that direction together, and see our policies and our procedures evolve.”

Mr. Richard E. Thorell [Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod], in opposing the substitute motion, said, “Well, I’ve heard a lot of biblical history in the last few moments, and like many of you, I’m becoming confused by it. But I do know this: If same-sex blessings become for all practical purposes a matter of ‘local option,’ we will effectively be hanging our pastors out to dry. They will be damned if they do, and damned if they don’t, making such decisions on an individual basis with little reasonable expectation of receiving consistent guidance from bishops, and certainly not from [this] church—and that will be for whatever they may do or may not do. Just two weeks ago, our congregation installed a brand-new assistant pastor right out of seminary. How do I go home and explain to him what this assembly has done?”

Mr. Benjamin W. Lei [New Jersey Synod] rose to ask for clarification of the term “pastoral care” in the original motion.

The Rev. Stanley N. Olson, executive director of the Division for Ministry, was called upon to respond to Mr. Lei’s question. Pr. Olson stated, “I think one should assume that ‘pastoral care’ has the same meaning that it had when the bishops adopted their resolution 11 years ago, the same meaning that it has as our pastors are trained in seminary, to use Scripture and prayer and personal and group conversation to apply the full Word of God to individual situations.”

The chair then called upon the Rev. Herbert W. Chilstrom, former presiding bishop of the ELCA, to address the assembly. Pr. Chilstrom said, “As we have heard, these issues have been around for a long time. When I was bishop of [this] church in 1992, I addressed these questions at a gathering of the bishops. In regard to blessing, I counseled them not to discipline a pastor when on the basis of his or her understanding of Scripture and conscience [he or she] felt free to give a blessing. A year later, the bishops decided that they wanted to have something more definitive, and so we developed these guidelines, which everyone agrees are very ambiguous. Now, in the years that followed that policy or that guideline decision, I traveled back and forth across [this] church, and I can tell you this, that what you suspect about bishops is true: Each one is a walking declaration of independence. What that means is that some came down very hard on the front end of that yardline, and they warned their pastors, ‘You’re going to be up to your Adam’s apple in muck if you even think about blessing someone.’ On the other hand, there were other synods where pastors knew that their bishop would not discipline them, and they were free to give a blessing. In the meantime, what was happening in the ‘straight’ world, the increase in those who were having sex prior to marriage was dramatic. Couples living together without marriage increased, and we had them in the church. At the other end of the spectrum, if you come to Green Valley, Arizona, I can point to many older couples who are living together, part of [this] church, some blessing, some not. I say, let us return to our parish pastors the confidence that they can do this work with our blessing.”

The Rev. Ronald K. Johnson [Minneapolis Area Synod] spoke in favor: “I am a parish pastor. Periodically, persons of the same gender in my congregation and community come to me and indicate that they are in love and wish to make a public commitment to each other

within the context of a church worship service. Up to this point, requests have come to me from persons who by any standard of measure are persons of faith, fully engaged within the life and the mission of the church. Some years ago, I came to the conclusion that my appropriate response to such requests is 'yes.' My conviction is rooted in the belief that the variety in human sexuality is grounded in the mysteries and wonders of God's creating act. Thus, persons of the same gender should have the opportunity to enter a covenant of fidelity acknowledged and blessed within the church. I would suggest that covenants of fidelity play a powerful role in keeping people, whether homosexual or heterosexual, faithful in relationships. You know, in a sense, love is not really adequate by itself for the preservation of relationships. Promises are also important. Promises formally made within the liturgies of the church provide an immensely powerful structure for all of us. It is therefore my opinion that these structures should be denied to no baptized person."

The Rev. Craig E. Johnson, bishop of the Minneapolis Area Synod, said, "Some of these amendments I stand for, and some I stand against. But I speak against any amendments to Recommendation Two. It seems deconstructive to tinker with the standard that has been in place and working exceedingly well for not five years, or ten years, but thirteen years. If this resolution is defeated because of tinkering, that is what I fear, and I foresee a cadre of watchdog groups that would feel the need to report other congregations, councils, and pastors that have made careful decisions about giving pastoral care to the baptized in their congregations. Next, I would foresee synods feeling compelled to discipline pastors, congregations, and councils as they work to serve their people in their context. This feels to me to be untenable, unbiblical, and a standard that would encourage secrecy and paranoia. Is this the shape of a church that you want? Let us pass Recommendation Two without amendment, and keep our workable standards intact."

Next to speak was Mr. Frank M. Petrovic [Metropolitan Chicago Synod], who observed, "This church, as well as others, complains about promiscuity in the gay and lesbian community, yet by not granting a rite of blessing or officially authorizing pastors to perform these rites of blessing, this church unofficially condones that promiscuity by withholding the vehicle for faithfulness. The other day from the dais it was expressed that we need to discern whether all sexual intimacy between same-sex couples is sinful. I don't see how love and commitment can be viewed as sinful, nor do I understand why churches in general, and this church specifically, must be the caboose rather than the engine. I speak in favor of this substitution."

Mr. Richard L. Cleary [Lower Susquehanna Synod] opposed the substitute motion, saying, "I urge the assembly to consider a consequence of deciding to permit the blessing of same-sex unions that has yet to be given much attention. We must be clear that, once we decide that the gender of the persons in relationships blessed by the Church no longer matters, we've left ourselves no logical grounds other than our own subjective preferences for deciding either that the number of persons or the nature of the relationship matters either. For example, what will we say to heterosexual couples who live together unmarried and who wish to have the Church and their pastor bless their relationship? Are we going to throw out the Church's traditional teaching on the inappropriateness of such relationships? And if we accept those relationships, what will we say to those individuals, as bizarre as it may seem to us today, who wish to live together as a group of inter-committed persons and who wish to have their relationship blessed by the Church? Once we decide that blessing same-sex unions is acceptable, we will step out onto a slippery slope which will lead to God-only-knows-where. Once we decide that blessing same-sex unions is acceptable, pastors are left with nothing beyond their own intuitions and feelings to guide them in choosing which kinds of relationships to bless, and which not."

The Rev. Christian Jennert [Sierra Pacific Synod] recounted a personal experience: “I would like to share about a couple from my congregation. As a pastor, I am entrusted with pastoral care to all of my parishioners. One couple met about 20 years ago in this church. (I was then in elementary school!) They met in church choir, where they sing wonderful tunes of Bach and Schütz and all the ‘good stuff.’ Eventually, about four years ago, they adopted two wonderful children from a drug-addicted mother. These children had a bleak perspective in the City by the Bay. These two individuals decided to give them a home and a future. They were baptized and marked with the cross of Christ forever in our community. They now attend Sunday School, and they will soon follow their parents and will sing in the Junior Choir. When Tom and Carl asked for a blessing, all that my community had to offer was a house blessing. How fair is that?”

Mr. Donald J. Domrath [East-Central Synod of Wisconsin] spoke against the substitute, saying, “I feel honored to follow Christian. I really respected his statements yesterday and the enthusiasm that he shows for this assembly. What I have to say today I actually wrote about a year ago when I was appointed to be a voting member of this assembly. I’m still going to say it today, although my heart has softened a lot since I wrote these words. Being here this week and talking to people of different orientations sexually, I’ve become very compassionate about their feelings. But for a long time, it has bothered me about the spiritual and moral decay in this country. I feel the Church should be a leader in the direction that this country takes, both in spiritual and moral matters. Instead, it seems that we have let society dictate which direction this country takes in matters that should be of great concern to this church and to all churches. Instead of supporting the teachings of the Holy Bible and Martin Luther’s catechism, we have left it up to Washington, D.C., the Supreme Court of our country, individual states’ courts, and to Hollywood to dictate morality and the standards that should be directed from the Church at large. Soon we will vote on the issue of approving and blessing gay unions, both in our clergy and our church members. We are the first culture in the history of this world to try and redefine marriage. Marriage is a creation ordinance instituted by our Creator, and we humans seem to be doing our best to change God’s will. We should always be ready to welcome and minister to the gay community in our church, and I think we do, just as we do for all sinners. But we should seek and pray for them that they would repent of their lifestyle, and live a chaste life as so many of our unmarried heterosexuals have done. Therefore I urge the assembly to reject this amendment and this proposal.”

An unidentified voting member rose to a point of order, saying, “I hear people speaking to blessing same-sex relationships, and as I see the substitute, what we are doing is blessing persons that are in those relationships.” The chair ruled that the debate was in order.

Ms. Jennifer L. Nagel [Minneapolis Area Synod] spoke in favor of the substitute motion, stating, “. . . I am that child, now an adult, and still marked with the cross of Christ forever. Brothers and sisters, I am also the daughter of one of those women who got up to speak and tell of their affirmation and their love and support for their children, and that would be me as one of those children who happens to be a gay or lesbian person. As one who has made a public lifelong commitment to my beloved Jane, and as one who has participated in a number of lifelong commitments for others seeking such blessing, I cannot say anything but the importance of the guiding and the nurturing of these blessings. If we want people to live in faithfulness, we must give them opportunities to live in faithfulness. This is what the Church is about. I also appreciate this recommendation in particular, because it gives the authority to faithful pastors and faithful congregations, and, if they need, their faithful bishops, to figure out how they can faithfully uphold this. If they do not feel comfortable

working with this resolution in blessing same-sex relationships, same-gender couples, they do not need to. No one is ever forced to do that, and couples understand that; individuals understand that.”

The Rev. Philip R. Nielsen [Nebraska Synod] spoke next: “Numbers of people in the congregation I serve have asked me, ‘Why are Lutherans proposing to bless same-gender unions?’ And I’ve had a lot of practice in trying to explain the reasons why. I’m grateful for the DVDs I’ve received from Paul Tidemann and others to provide information to my members about why we’re considering these resolutions. But as we’ve listened to the scriptural arguments, as we’ve thought about it, we haven’t yet heard that argument that has made the case for us. And so I speak against this amendment and the main resolution also, because I think it’s premature. I can’t go back to my congregation and answer their questions of why we approved such a major change—and it is a major change. The headlines will be pretty big if we do this. I can’t explain why because we don’t have a social statement which offers the theological reasons that we’ve agreed upon that support such a major change. Until we have some theological agreement about the change, other than the fact that we know good people and we’re divided about it—which are moving reasons—but if we don’t have a theological reason, a theological agreement about why, the decision to change is premature. We need to delay this decision, or change in policy, anyway, until we have agreement on the social statement, the theological reasons why we would make such a major change in our present practice and policy.”

Ms. Jana M. Holt [Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod] spoke in favor: “I would like to speak in favor of this amendment and of any amendment that favors the blessing of persons in same-sex relationships. The over 600 delegates to the 2003 Lutheran Youth Organization (LYO) convention, representing over 50,000 youths, voted with 96 percent acceptance their statement of support for the blessing of same-sex unions and ordination of individuals in same-sex monogamous relationships. Many of the youth who were there that day are here as both youth and young adult visitors and voting members. Throughout this week we have shown that we are a progressive church, dedicated to justice and diversity throughout the Church. We need to continue this conversation with open minds. I’d like to thank Bishop Hanson for affirming that he wants the ELCA to be a church where the youth matter as the church of today, not just tomorrow. So as the church of today and tomorrow, we will continue to take steps to advocate policy changes such as these before us today. I urge you to consider carefully the voice of the youth and the futility of waiting ten or fifteen years for my generation to bring up the same issue. I fear that by that time, many of my peers will have left the ELCA for a more accepting community. This should be about helping [this] church to grow. Please carefully consider the information we have received both from the people speaking in favor of and in opposition to this amendment, and from the often confusing information we have from outside sources, such as Solid Rock and Goodsoil. I’d like to remind you that this is about [this] church growing, and that nothing can grow from a rock, but only from soil.”

The Rev. Henry Schulte Jr. [Southwestern Texas Synod] said, “First of all, let me say thank you for yesterday afternoon. I think all of us had a chance to be part of the task force. Anytime we hear criticism of them, I think we know how tough it was. After much deliberation they brought their ‘best shot’ for the sake of this church at this time. Secondly, I was a member of the Conference of Bishops when we made that ruling, and it’s my understanding we said ‘no’ for the sake of [this] church—no official ceremonies. But be a pastor. And I went back to the congregation to serve a year later and the first people that came in to ask for a baptism were two ladies. And I said, ‘Yikes, what do I do in this

conservative congregation?’ I talked with the very most conservative leadership in the group, and they said, ‘That child deserves the gift of God,’ and so we did the Baptism, publicly celebrated. The difference between what we’re looking at here is the difference between accepting persons and approving something that we want to lift up and recommend for everyone. For us to substitute this resolution for what we have makes a drastic change and will have very, very serious consequences. People that are doing the blessings without approval, that’s their situation. But for us to approve ‘do as you please’ on this, it will be ‘do as you please’ on everything. I speak in opposition.”

Next to speak was the Rev. John K. Stendahl [New England Synod]: “Just a word about blessing: As a minister of the passionate and living Word of God in this world, one thing I’m called to do is to recognize the kingdom of God—its seeds, its sprouts, its fruits—and to bless, to recognize them, to give thanks for them, to pray for them, and to bless the Blessed One and ask for his blessing. So I am to consecrate the holy and to speak against all that desecrates and destroys, as well. I am to condemn that which would divide. I may sometimes exercise that calling foolishly or wrongly. God knows many of us have blessed heterosexual marriages that have become more curse than blessing to those involved. But even as the Church is not of one mind in judgment and discernment on this issue, and I cannot acclaim that it is so, I believe that I and my congregation have the *evangelische Freiheit*, the freedom in the Gospel, to exercise that discernment, and such is my conscience-binding. My conscience is bound by Scripture, not just the scriptures that Dr. Klein spoke about. I think particularly of Mark 3, in which there were those who saw Jesus doing blessing, and they said, ‘This does not fit, this is not right, this is not of God.’ And Jesus in his anger argues against them, and then he says something incredible. He says, ‘You know, that’s inexcusable. God can forgive anything. But when you blaspheme against the Holy Spirit, when you call something good ‘evil,’ when you call this faithfulness, this love ‘evil,’ that’s inexcusable.’ I don’t think Jesus is right. I think finally the sin of blasphemy is nailed to the cross.”

Ms. Stephanie M. Quigg [Southeastern Minnesota Synod] asked the author of the amendment the meaning of the word “covenanted.” Bp. Neils responded that a covenant was a relationship of promise. Thus, he said, people who have formed a relationship of promise with each other would come and ask a pastor to pray God’s blessing that they would be able to fulfill the promises that they have made to one another.

In response, Ms. Quigg said, “I would like to suggest that in Genesis 3:15 God made a first covenant with us to send his Son to the world to die for our sins, and that is what we are discussing here: a behavior. We’re not discussing relationships; we’re discussing something that people do. I am sinner and saint, and I’m thankful that God sent his Son to die for my sins. It’s important that we repent and receive forgiveness, so that in that way we can have fullness of life with God and with the body of Christ.”

The Rev. Patrick P. Gahagen [Southeast Michigan Synod] stated: “I am standing here today to address you and address the assembly and asking respect for the journey. I am in support of this amendment in my own good conscience, but also stand listening to the voices and the witnesses of the people I minister to as a pastor at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Detroit, Michigan. Immanuel is a church that welcomes gays and lesbians openly. We have wrestled with God just as Jacob did in coming to that place. But one of the things that was alluded to by the previous speaker is the question, ‘Is this a chosen lifestyle or a God-given orientation?’ We have come to the conclusion through listening and praying that it’s a God-given orientation, that it is part of who a person is, and therefore we have found a way of affirming that. One thing also that has been painted here is a picture that secular society is

somehow supporting gays and lesbians. In Michigan we just had a constitutional amendment done to make it illegal for same-sex unions to be blessed, if you would, and for gay marriages to be recognized by the state. One of our gay members said how he has been ostracized by his family, criticized by his friends, and demonized by his president, but the good news is that when he comes to Immanuel he is galvanized with the Gospel, he is super-sized by the Spirit, and he is deputized by the Divine. That's the good news we bring. As far as blessings, in my walk and knowing those who are gay and lesbian, it is not me who blesses them, but they're the ones who bless me."

The Rev. David W. Shockey [Indiana-Kentucky Synod] rose in opposition: "I want to thank [those who've participated in] this discussion, as well, and this assembly for the way they're handling these issues. I rise in opposition to this particular amendment simply because of its ambiguity. It does not specify the number of persons that are in this 'covenanted same-gender relationship,' so it falls prey to some of the same troubles that I have with the original motion of the Church Council in [Recommendation] Two. We heard earlier in the week that we're to be 'good swimmers.' I enjoy swimming a lot. One of the things I have learned is that it's important what direction you're swimming in, especially if you want to get somewhere, and that it is hard to get anywhere if you are swimming in different directions, like one arm pulling forward and one arm doing the backstroke. What I see happening here in these proposals is that we are swimming away from the Church catholic and the catholic teaching and the Scriptures subscribed to over centuries. If we approve ambiguous relationships or resolutions like these, we're guaranteed disunity, because we will be swimming in different directions."

The Rev. Stephen A. Fiksdal [Southeastern Minnesota Synod] rose to a point of personal privilege to request silent, rather than vocal, prayer before the votes on Recommendations Two and Three. Presiding Bishop Hanson responded that he would take Pr. Fiksdal's request under consideration.

The Rev. Melody B. Eastman [Metropolitan Chicago Synod] then spoke in favor of the substitute: "One of the things I value most about my tradition is our gift of seeing human intellect and the capacity for learning and for discovery and for gaining new knowledge as gifts that illuminate our faith, and are not enemies and threats to our faith, and that our capacity for learning can illuminate our understanding of Scripture, just as our understanding of Scripture illuminates our capacity to understand what we learn. The American Psychiatric Association and the American Association of Psychotherapists have both issued statements stating specifically that *public* acknowledgment and celebration of same-gender relationships contributes to the overall wholeness and emotional and spiritual well-being of those in those relationships. I don't know of any sin or brokenness that truly contributes to people's well-being. But the medical community through research and discovery has lifted up for us that this is a way in which people are helped in wholeness and in well-being—as well as the community surrounding them. So I hope that we will hear that word from the community that brings us much that we trust for our own wholeness and well-being."

The Rev. Eric D. Ash Sr. [Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod] opposed the substitute: "As a parish pastor, I've welcomed gay and lesbian members into the congregation I serve. They are kind people, they are people who strive to be faithful as they understand the faith, and I love them dearly, and I thank God for the opportunity that I've had to share the Word and Sacraments with them. If I could find any shred of evidence in the plain and simple sense of Scripture and in Christian tradition, I would bless their unions tomorrow. But I cannot because my conscience is captive to the Word of God. There is no warrant in the Bible or the universal traditions of the Church to justify blessing same-sex unions, and

Scripture must be our rule and our norm—not psychological theory, not biblical interpretation that changes from generation to generation, but Scripture must be our rule and norm. Let’s not overturn 2000 years of Christian tradition with a simple majority vote at one assembly. Let’s remain in unity not only with our brothers and sisters gathered here today, but with our brothers and sisters across the world and even those across time. I urge the defeat of this amendment and the resolution.”

The Rev. Marcia Cox [Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod] called the question.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To end debate.

The chair called for a vote on the motion to end debate.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

CARRIED:

To end debate.

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

YES-902; NO-75

The Rev. Sarah M. Lee-Faulkner [West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod] rose to a point of order. Holding her baby in her arms, she asked that voting members in the restrooms be notified that there would be a vote on the floor of the assembly, and cited the personal difficulties that long assembly sessions impose on members. The chair asked for the staff’s assistance in notifying voting members about a pending vote.

The Rev. Stephen C. Norby [Southwestern Minnesota Synod] asked what effect the adoption of the substitute would have on other proposed amendments. Presiding Bishop Hanson responded that the assembly would vote on the substitute motion, with a majority required to approve the substitute. If passed, it would become the main motion. Motions to amend the main motion then would be in order, and would be taken in the order received. After that, the assembly would need to vote whether to adopt the motion in its final form. At that point, he stated, he would explain his ruling that the motion would require a majority for passage. For the moment, however, he stressed that the assembly was operating under *Robert’s Rules of Order*, and that a majority was required to amend. At present, he stated, the assembly was simply voting on whether to substitute Bp. Neils’s amendment for the motion that had been read by Secretary Almen.

The Rev. Roy G. Almquist, bishop of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, asked if all proposed amendments to the original main motion would disappear if the substitute motion were adopted. Presiding Bishop Hanson confirmed that proposed amendments to the original main motion would disappear unless they were still applicable to the newly adopted main motion or were themselves substitutes. Bp. Almquist then asked whether the original motion could then be proposed as a substitute, and the chair informed him that it could not.

The Rev. David J. Mayer [Southwestern Texas Synod] rose to question the chair’s ruling that a simple majority would be required to substitute, given that this was a task force report. The chair responded that he was following *Robert’s Rules of Order* and repeated the clarification that had been stated earlier.

The chair then informed the assembly that the motion to substitute was before the house for a vote.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

YES-334; NO-665

DEFEATED:

To amend by substitution:

It shall be the policy of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America that for the sake of ministry and mission a congregation may choose to authorize its pastor(s) to preside at services of blessing for persons in covenanted same-gender relationships.

The Rev. Dwight L. DuBois [Southeastern Iowa Synod] proposed a change in the rules. He moved to limit debate to 20 minutes on any single amendment to a motion or to a substitute motion.

MOVED;

SECONDED:

To limit debate to 20 minutes on any single amendment to a motion or to a substitute motion.

Speaking to his amendment, Pr. DuBois expressed his concern that, even with the rule change, the 14 proposed amendments and substitutes would take more than four hours to debate, assuming a full 20 minutes for each.

The chair clarified the maker's intent that the rule would not apply to main motions, which understanding was affirmed by Pr. DuBois.

Presiding Bishop Hanson reminded the assembly that a two-thirds vote was required to change the assembly's rules. He called for a vote on the motion.

MOVED;

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

SECONDED;

YES-772; NO-185

CARRIED:

To limit debate to 20 minutes on any single amendment to a motion or to a substitute motion.

The Rev. Steven P. Loy [Rocky Mountain Synod] then proposed a rules change to limit debate to 20 minutes on any main motion.

MOVED;

SECONDED:

To limit debate to 20 minutes on any main motion.

The chair called for a vote on the proposed rules change.

MOVED;

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

SECONDED;

YES-531; NO-416

DEFEATED:

To limit debate to 20 minutes on any main motion.

Recess

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson called upon Secretary Lowell G. Almen to make announcements. Secretary Almen reminded members of the assembly to make reservations for the shuttle service to the airport at the close of the Churchwide Assembly. He announced that a Service of Holy Communion would be held at 11:00 A.M. in the worship center, adding

that the offering received during the service would be given to the World Hunger Appeal. Lunch would follow in the Grand Ballroom.

Secretary Almen recognized the Rev. Victor C. Langford III [Northwest Washington Synod] for his 30 years of active and reserve service in the U.S. military, noting that Pr. Langford retired with the rank of brigadier general.

Secretary Almen further announced that the assembly would reconvene at 1:15 P.M. and that the next day's plenary session would begin at 8:15 A.M.

Mr. Steven R. Chapman [Northwest Washington Synod] rose to a point of order, asking whether those standing in line to speak at the microphones would retain their places at the beginning of Plenary Session Nine. The chair explained that a new queue would begin at that point, unless members had been in line to speak to the main motion.

Presiding Bishop Hanson then called upon Ms. Jessica M. McKee, member of the Church Council, to lead the assembly in a closing prayer. Plenary Session Eight of the ninth biennial Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America was declared in recess at 10:49 A.M. Eastern Daylight Time.

Plenary Session Nine

Friday, August 12, 2005

1:15 P.M. – 5:40 P.M.

The ninth plenary session of the ninth Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America was called to order at 1:18 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time by the Rev. Mark S. Hanson, presiding bishop, at the Orlando World Center, Orlando, Florida.

Parliamentary Matters

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson told the assembly that he wished to clarify two matters from Plenary Session Eight. First, after the vote on the substitute motion proposed by the Rev. Michael J. Neils, bishop of the Grand Canyon Synod, there had been confusion regarding queuing at microphones. The chair ruled that the next speaker would be Mr. Robert D. Benne [Virginia Synod], who had a substitute motion to present. The chair informed voting members that those who wanted to speak to this motion would then need to register with the pages. He told members that, if they had registered during the morning session to speak to the main motion, they could return to the queue, but he asked that members exercise personal integrity in reclaiming their place in line since there was no way of knowing who had intended to speak to the main motion rather than to Bp. Neils's substitute.

Second, the chair addressed time limits on debate, expressing his interpretation that the two-minute rule limiting individual speeches was not a new rule for the duration of the assembly, but was applicable only to the sexuality studies recommendations. He stated that the assembly could choose to overrule him.

The Rev. Robert A. Rimbo, bishop of the Southeast Michigan Synod, requested permission to have the Rev. Munib A. Younan, bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL), address the assembly by telephone before the assembly acted on the strategy for engagement in Israel and Palestine. Bp. Rimbo mentioned that the ELCJHL was the companion of the Southeast Michigan Synod.

The chair remarked that the decision would be up to the assembly and that, if the assembly approved, there would then be an effort to arrange the logistics of such a communication.

Bp. Rimbo then moved.

MOVED;

SECONDED:

To invite the Rev. Munib A. Younan, bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land, to speak to the assembly on Saturday as the Churchwide Assembly considers the Churchwide Strategy for ELCA Engagement in Israel and Palestine.

The chair called for a voice vote on Bp. Rimbo's motion.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

CARRIED:

To invite the Rev. Munib A. Younan, bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land, to speak to the

VOICE VOTE

assembly on Saturday as the Churchwide Assembly considers the Churchwide Strategy for ELCA Engagement in Israel and Palestine.

Presiding Bishop Hanson announced that the day's ecumenical visitors would bring their greetings at the end of the session, or whenever the assembly completed its consideration of the sexuality recommendations.

An unidentified voting member rose to call for order, complaining that there was too much talking on the floor of the assembly. The chair called for order.

Consideration of Proposals Related to the ELCA Studies on Sexuality (continued)

Reference: 2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section I, pages 21–22; Section IV, pages 19–24; Section V, pages 13–27.

The chair called upon Mr. Robert D. Benne [Virginia Synod] to present his substitute for Recommendation Two on the blessing of same-sex unions.

MOVED; SECONDED:

WHEREAS the Conference of Bishops issued a statement in 1993 acknowledging “that there is basis neither in Scripture nor tradition for the establishment of an official ceremony by this church for the blessing of a homosexual relationship”; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the 2005 ELCA Churchwide Assembly urge all congregations to welcome everyone in the life of its congregations regardless of their sexual self-identity; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the 2005 ELCA Churchwide Assembly believe the solemnizing and blessing of sexual unions is a rite of the church to be reserved for the marriage of a man and a woman.

Speaking to his motion, Mr. Benne said, “On the Sunday following the release of the long awaited Church Council Recommendations, I visited a church in Virginia where I knew the pastor. When he saw me coming down the aisle, he met me and said, ‘What a relief, Bob! We won’t have to bless gay unions, or we won’t even be allowed to bless gay unions.’ I walked further down the hall and met a layperson who I knew was in favor of revising our teaching and practice, and she said, ‘Bob, what a relief! Now we’ll be able to bless gay unions.’ These responses capture the ambiguity of [Recommendation] Two, an ambiguity that many in the ELCA find very troubling. A number of pleas have been made to gain clarity: pleas to the Church Council, the Conference of Bishops, to the sexuality task force. They all have been unable, or unwilling, to clarify [Recommendation] Two. This substitute will clarify the matter before us and will apply its principles to all three expressions of the church’s life and ministry. We believe this clarification is consistent with 1) the intent of the bishops in 1993; 2) the Church Council’s statements in 1996; 3) the social statements of the predecessor bodies; 4) the will of the strong majority of the ELCA, at least 56 percent of the people; 5) it accords with and it clarifies and is consistent with the current rites and liturgy of *Lutheran Book of Worship* and *With One Voice*; and, finally, 6) it accords with the teachings and practices of the Church catholic throughout all times and places. Therefore, we think we should keep a solid and consistent teaching and practice before us as a church until we decide the deep issue before us, and decide it on biblical, theological, and ethical grounds. The question is whether or not homosexual relations between covenanted partners is consistent with the will and commandments of God.”

The chair then offered opportunity to Mr. Steven R. Chapman [Northwest Washington Synod] to address the main motion, as he had requested at the end of Plenary Session Eight, but Mr. Chapman withdrew his request, saying he would prefer to speak to the substitution.

The Rev. Gary M. Wollersheim, bishop of the Northern Illinois Synod, rose to speak in opposition to Mr. Benne's substitute: "An earlier speaker today, Bp. Craig Johnson from Minneapolis, said, 'Why should we change what has worked well for us for a long time?'—namely, trusting our pastors and congregations to provide for faithful pastoral care. Also, Bp. Neils said, 'We trust pastors and congregations to make decisions concerning Holy Baptism, confirmation, funerals, [and] Holy Communion. How can we not trust them to provide faithful pastoral care in this instance?' This Recommendation Two was widely discussed across the church in *Journey Together Faithfully*, and many synod assemblies this year also considered ELCA Church Council Recommendation Two. Most of these synod assemblies affirmed Recommendation Two and urged us here to do the same. In the Northern Illinois Synod, for example, we voted to endorse Recommendation Two by a four-to-one margin. Many of the synods here did the same. I do not think it's wise to change something which has been so well studied, discussed, and prayed about with a substitute motion which changes the essence of the main motion, and the essence of the main motion is to trust our pastors and congregations to do what they're called to do: provide faithful pastoral care. So I urge the assembly to defeat the substitute motion in favor of adopting the ELCA Church Council's [Recommendation] Two."

Mr. Culynn Curtis [South Dakota Synod] spoke next: "I rise in approval of this substitution because I believe the authority of Scripture comes first, and I wish to share my thoughts with you. I was elected as a non-LYO [Lutheran Youth Organization] representative by the LYO of my state to serve in this position, and I stand in the minority of my age group on this issue. I was baptized into this church just months after the founding of the ELCA. I love this church, and since the age of 5 I have felt my call to ordination in this church. However, I have been raised to believe in Luther's Reformation slogan, '*Sola scriptura*'—Scripture alone. I have friends and a cousin who perceive themselves as homosexual, and I love them dearly, and I have shown them compassion, even though I am a heterosexual. Together, we are tolerant of one another's views. Also, in the seventh grade I was verbally sexually harassed about my sexuality, and it drove me to the point of a suicide attempt. I know what this issue does to one person. That night in a brand-new Bible I was blessed to receive strength when I found Philippians 4:13—'I can do all things through him who gives me strength'—had been highlighted in a Bible I had never known or touched. I truly accepted and grasped the issue of *sola scriptura*. I believe I was sent here by the Holy Spirit for such a time as this. I believe that God's Word is God-breathed. I believe that God has told us through Paul in 1 Corinthians 6 and Romans 1 his thoughts on this issue, and I believe that God is not changing his mind on this issue now after 4000 years."

The Rev. Peter Rogness [Saint Paul Area Synod], speaking in opposition, stated: "When institutions get anxious, institutions get rigid. These are anxious times for us, and I think this action and some others are seeking to make more rigid the action that the bishops took in 1993. I was one of a handful of those in this room who were there at the time. Bp. McCoid correctly recounted yesterday that that action arose from several bishops being present and looking to one another for some advice and counsel as to how to respond to congregations and pastors where some blessings were taking place. He also correctly noted that the mind of the group at that time was reflected in what I think was a carefully nuanced three-sentence statement—not two sentences and an add-on. The first two sentences clearly describe that the group was not of a mind to call for or recognize an official rite of the church that would be a blessing of same-gender unions. At the same time, a number of us were also

recognizing that we wanted some flexibility. I had two of my 140 congregations that were blessing—good congregations, fine pastors. I didn't want to have to go home and go to war with them over this issue. So instead we expressed trust in one another in an ambiguous (perhaps), biblical (I believe, in the tradition of Gamaliel), non-anxious response. We can do that today, a non-anxious response in a very anxious society. Today 29,000 children are going to die in Africa, 29,000 more tomorrow, 40 children during each two-minute speech here. We can choose what issues to be anxious about. We can choose what issues not to be anxious about.”

The Rev. Janine G. Rew-Werling [South Dakota Synod] said, “As a parish pastor, to have clarity on the issue, I think, gives freedom to minister to all people in my congregation. A second-grade Sunday School class called me up, and the kids wanted to know why the Ten Commandments were so ‘negative’—‘thou shalt not.’ After we spent a little time looking beyond the initial reaction, their reaction to the ‘negativity’ of the Ten Commandments, I tried to remind them of the blessing and the protection and the freedom that it gives us. We ought not be afraid of the Law, because we have the Gospel that frees us to love one another, and the Gospel that reminds us not to trust ourselves, but to trust God’s Word in our relationships and in our life together. I would like clarity on this, and to trust tradition and the Word.”

Mr. Steven R. Chapman [Northwest Washington Synod] spoke in opposition: “I rise to speak in opposition to the motion to substitute for two reasons: First, what will this do to our ecumenical and LWF [Lutheran World Federation] relationships with those Lutheran and other churches that allow polygamy, if all of a sudden we say only one man and one woman? What are we going to do with them? Are we going to drop out of communion with them because they allow the practice of polygamy—which, by the way is biblically mandated, or allowed for in multiple, multiple citations in the Old Testament about ‘Marriage shall consist of one man and one or more women,’ and that a marriage shall not prevent a man from taking on concubines in addition to the wives that he already has; that a marriage is only valid if the wife is a virgin, and if the wife is not a virgin she has to be stoned; that a man can choose any woman he wants for his wife, and that the woman’s consent is unnecessary, provided that she is not another man’s wife, or his half-sister, or the mother or the sister of a woman who is already his wife; that the rapist must marry his victim (Exodus 22:16) unless the victim failed to cry out or if she was betrothed to another man, in which case the rapist should be put to death if he raped her in the country, but both of them be killed if he raped her in a town; if a man does not marry his brother’s widow, or does not give her children, he shall pay a fine of one shoe or be otherwise punished; women marry the man of their father’s choosing; women are worth seven years’ labor. Marriage in the time of the Old Testament was about the blessing of the transfer of property of a woman from her father to her husband. We have moved to marriage as a partnership of equals, and that does not apply to gender. I oppose this substitution.”

The Rev. Carol S. Custead [Allegheny Synod] spoke in support: “While I have compassion for the suffering of people that we have heard from, I do rise to speak on behalf of a group that we don’t think of that could be greatly affected. I wish that I could show you the pictures of the African faces of our little sisters in Christ that I met at the Pangoni Center in Nairobi, Kenya, in February when I visited our synod’s companion church, the Kenyan Evangelical Lutheran Church. These are hopeful faces of girls who have come out of the slums in Nairobi, where they are often sexually exploited and abused, to receive three good meals and schooling with love and compassion through the ministry of the Center. Only \$300, raised by our synod’s Sunday School children, church campers, and congregations in Pennsylvania, pays for one of these girls for a year in the Pangoni Center. But because of

the integrity of the African church people and African church leaders who are conscience-bound to Scriptural authority in matters of faith and life, we will, as our Ethiopian brother Teka has implied, our companion relationships we will put in jeopardy if what we do here today provides leeway to be interpreted as allowing for the blessing of same-sex unions. For this reason, we need the clarity of Prof. Benne's statement."

Speaking in opposition to the substitution was Ms. Diane L. Jacobson [Saint Paul Area Synod], who said, "It is precisely my reading of Scripture that leads me to find blessings on occasion appropriate, and thus to oppose this amendment. I say this in the light of God's living and breathing reality of both Law and Gospel. Biblical Law insists that we strive to protect the life and the well-being of the community. I want to speak a word of Law to both homosexuals and heterosexuals, that adultery and promiscuity are sinful behavior. I want to speak a word of Law that teaches us to uphold the covenant and commitment and the keeping of promises of both heterosexuals and homosexuals to others and to the community. Moreover, our understanding of Gospel, of the Good News of Jesus Christ, is always spoken of in light of the cross, in light of the theology of the cross. This means that the experience of suffering is never irrelevant, and is never to be bypassed or ignored in our understanding of the Gospel; that is, that experience is not extraneous to our biblical understanding of Gospel. I urge us to remember that those of us who oppose this amendment do believe in and read and adore our beloved Scriptures, which are the cradle of Christ, and through this Scripture we believe that God is alive among us, and is always able to do a new thing."

Next to speak was the Rev. Elizabeth J. Toler [North Carolina Synod]: "I speak in favor of the new motion. Sometimes when we talk about this issue we get confused and anxious. We aren't sure whether we can even say anything to anybody about it for fear of being called 'unloving' or worse. People think that, if we're critical of people's behavior or limit the church's blessing to one kind of union, that means we are judging people. But that's not what Christians do. Christians have always welcomed people regardless of their condition. We want everyone to experience the life transformation that we have in Christ. But we don't accept everything that people do. For instance, just because we don't condone drug addiction doesn't mean we don't love the addict—we do. When we forgive someone, we are saying that we love them but not what they do. When Christ forgave us from the cross, that's what he was doing. That's not being judgmental, that's love. It's the kind of love that sacrifices itself for others and in doing so changes them and us. That's what the Christian faith is all about: change. It's about the life transformation that we experience when Christ forgives us and draws us to himself. Let's follow his example and love our neighbors, knowing that God has loved us so much that he could not leave us the way he found us but changed us through that love. I speak in favor of the new motion."

The chair announced that the 20 minutes allotted for discussion was up and that the question did not need to be called, according to the rules of the assembly.

The Rev. Stephen C. Corby [Southwestern Minnesota Synod] rose to ask that the assembly be sure to pray. Presiding Bishop Hanson responded that he hoped that the members were always praying and that the assembly would continue to pray as it dealt with these matters.

The Rev. Dean W. Nelson, bishop of the Southwest California Synod, rose to a point of order. He conjectured that if the substitute were approved, it would change policy, and would thus require a two-thirds majority. The chair ruled that there was not an existing policy of the Church Council and that the rule adopted in Plenary Session One clearly referenced policies adopted by the Church Council. Upon consultation with the parliamentarian, the chair pointed out that this was simply a vote to substitute, and not a vote

on the main motion, and thus did not require a two-thirds majority because of *Robert's Rules of Order*. He then directed the assembly to vote on the substitute motion.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

DEFEATED:

YES-418; NO-581

WHEREAS the Conference of Bishops issued a statement in 1993 acknowledging "that there is basis neither in Scripture nor tradition for the establishment of an official ceremony by this church for the blessing of a homosexual relationship"; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the 2005 ELCA Churchwide Assembly urge all congregations to welcome everyone in the life of its congregations regardless of their sexual self-identity; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the 2005 ELCA Churchwide Assembly believe the solemnizing and blessing of sexual unions is a rite of the church to be reserved for the marriage of a man and a woman.

The motion failed. Presiding Bishop Hanson called upon Mr. David J. Owen Sr. [Slovak Zion Synod] to offer his amendment to the main motion.

MOVED;

SECONDED:

To amend by addition:

RESOLVED, that this church welcome gay and lesbian persons into its life (as stated in Churchwide Assembly resolutions from 1991, 1995, and 1999) and trust pastors and congregations to discern ways other than the blessing of unions to provide faithful pastoral care to same-sex couples.

Speaking to his amendment, Mr. Owen said, "At the first hearing on the sexuality study the other night, when asked why the council had not made Recommendation Two more clear, we heard that the council felt that it was up to this assembly to do so, if it so desired. This amendment is made to clarify Recommendation Two. Since I believe that the amendment is self-explanatory, I will not take any additional time to repeat arguments that we've already heard here."

The Rev. Steven L. Ullestad, bishop of the Northeastern Iowa Synod, called the previous question on this and all matters before the house.

MOVED;

SECONDED:

To end debate on all matters before the assembly.

The chair pointed out that the effect of that motion would be to close debate on this amendment and move the assembly to consideration of the main motion, bypassing consideration of additional amendments that had been proposed. He reminded voting members that the motion would require a two-thirds majority. He called for a vote on the motion to end debate.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

DEFEATED:

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

YES-503; NO-485

To end debate on all matters before the assembly.

The motion to end debate having failed, the chair returned the assembly to discussion of the Owen amendment.

Mr. Matt Severt [Greater Milwaukee Synod] spoke in opposition to the amendment, saying, “Changing this phrase is going to close ears that need to hear the Joyful News. I don’t want to have to go back to my church or to my synod and say that we’re rolling back the clock. My congregation has grown in renewal dramatically through its full acceptance of everyone, their love, and their God-given gifts. We’ve brought souls to God through that kind of grace, and I’d like us to be able to continue that work.”

The Rev. Carol S. Hendrix, bishop of the Lower Susquehanna Synod, spoke next: “I speak in support of the amendment, which brings clarity to Recommendation Two. Because there is basis neither in Scripture nor tradition for the establishment of an official ceremony by this church for the blessing of same-sex unions, this church does not have an official ceremony or rite for the blessing of same-sex unions. We have a rite of marriage, in which this church blesses a man and a woman who vow to each other lifelong faithfulness and commitment. There is not, and ought not be, an official ceremony or rite for the blessing of same-sex unions because there is no basis in Scripture or tradition for the blessing of any sexual relationship apart from marriage. For us, the ELCA, Scripture is the source and norm of our proclamation, faith, and life. This church and its pastors will continue to welcome and to provide faithful pastoral care—which is not code language for blessing same-sex unions—to all to whom we minister, regardless of their sexual self-identity, bringing Christ’s love and compassion to all who are hurting and in pain. But when it comes to blessing same-sex unions, the answer is ‘no.’”

The Rev. Gladys G. Moore expressed opposition to the amendment: “In the Lutheran church ‘unity’ does not mean ‘uniformity.’ We are a church where words like ‘freedom’ and ‘flexibility’ define who we are. The recommendation that is before us says nothing at all about marriage, and any change that would substantively alter that to speak of ‘solemnizing’ or ‘blessing’ same-sex unions—which the main recommendation does not—I think is inappropriate. The recommendation from the Church Council via the task force is a freeing one rather than binding, and encourages trust rather than the distrust and suspicion that I feel is somewhat evident because of the so-called ‘gay agenda’ in [this] church. I speak against this amendment.”

Mr. Tim Fisher [Minneapolis Area Synod] rose to question whether the amendment contradicted the intent of the main motion, and was therefore not germane.

The chair ruled that the motion was germane in the context of the body of the main motion.

The Rev. Michael E. Pancoast [Northwest Synod of Wisconsin] voiced approval of the amendment: “[This substitute] provides clarity. That is what has been asked for. Someone suggested that the second recommendation as it stood was voted overwhelmingly, 4–1 in favor. I think part of the reason was that everybody voted ‘yes’ on it, but clearly not everybody agreed on that. Contrary to the way that these substituting amendments have been portrayed, this and others, it does not eliminate what has worked well for 13 years, that is, to provide pastoral care to all people. Rather, it does define what pastoral care is and what it is not.”

Mr. Ruben A. Mesa [Southeastern Minnesota Synod] spoke next: “I spoke yesterday to this body that I am opposed to changing the *status quo* because of concerns I have for what the implications would be for the churchwide mission. That being said, I believe that the addition of more restrictive language to Recommendation Two is really an insult and

damaging to my brothers and sisters, our brothers and sisters, who struggle with these issues and are homosexual. I believe that we should trust our pastors to provide the best pastoral care that they can and not bind their hands with micromanaging and overly specific language. I feel a profoundly uncomfortable feeling that we could potentially try to legislate who receives the blessings of God. I believe that it is arrogant of us to do so, and that, in the end, the blessings of God really flow from himself.”

The Rev. Eric D. Ash Sr. [Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod] said, “This amendment is extremely concise, it is fair and just, and most of all, it is clear. We need clarity on Recommendation Two before we vote. I think it very well balances our welcoming of gay and lesbian persons while preserving the traditional, biblical, and, might I say, gracious and loving understanding of marriage and sexuality in our church. In an imperfect world, I think that this amendment may be the very best we can do in the area of sexuality until Christ comes again and all these debates are irrelevant.”

The Rev. Gary K. Olson [Saint Paul Area Synod] opposed the substitute and voiced approval for Recommendation Two: “That recommendation gives enough flexibility to pastors and bishops to use their discretion and discernment to care for gay and lesbian people in their individual circumstances. When I was a boy and a young man, the congregation in my hometown and its pastor saved my life, in a quite literal way, both spiritually, economically, and socially. They helped me have a future. The pastor did it in part, as I learned later, by bending some rules and ignoring some local traditions in order to make space for me in several ways which I will not share. I experienced what he and others in that church did as the grace of a welcoming God and a welcoming congregation. I ask you to vote for Recommendation Two and vote down this amendment, and therefore vote for giving discretion, a discretion that Recommendation Two allows as a way of trusting parish pastors and bishops to create space for gay and lesbian people in the life of our church.”

The Rev. Paul A. Gruetter [Northwestern Ohio Synod] affirmed the amendment, saying, “I speak in favor of this amendment because I believe it provides a clarity that is missing from the original recommendation. Our congregations are watching us. The media are watching us. Much of the world is watching us today. When we get to the end of the day—and I pray that we do get to the end of the day—they will ask us, what did we say? Did we say ‘yes’ or ‘no’? Do we bless or do we not bless? This amendment provides the clarity [so] that we can give an answer to our churches and to the world.”

Mr. Timothy J. Mumm [South-Central Synod of Wisconsin] was next to speak: “We have heard people say that there is no scriptural basis for blessing. We have heard people say that there is no scriptural basis for supporting anything other than [hetero]sexual orientation. As I came to terms with my sexuality, I did a lot of struggling with Scripture. As a lifelong Lutheran, it was important to me to know where I stood. One of the things that I found was that there were places where Scripture spoke to me that I didn’t expect. For example, in the New Testament Jesus tells us that it’s inappropriate not only to have sex with someone out of wedlock, it’s also inappropriate even to think about that when you look at a woman. In my life experience, to the best of my memory, I haven’t broken that rule! But Jesus calls us to look deeper than the surface. He was calling the religious leaders to look deeper than the surface here. He was calling them to a deeper understanding of Scripture. I must look at this particular Scripture deeper and say that it does apply to me, and that when I look at a man and lust after him, that that is just as inappropriate as what Jesus was calling them to do. In the same way, Paul responding to the question of ‘Should I marry or not?’ said, ‘If you can’t handle it, yes, marry.’ Not all of us are called to celibacy, and I believe that Paul’s words apply to us, as well. Sometimes it’s important for us to be in relationship and to receive blessings for that. Please defeat this amendment.”

The Rev. Steven E. King [Southwestern Minnesota Synod] spoke in support of the amendment: “I have the privilege of being a co-presenter for our synod’s professional and sexual boundaries workshop that is presented every year for new pastors and lay leaders in congregations. For our pastors, it is required that they attend, starting out or coming to our synod. Something I notice every year is a resistance, and a fear, and sometimes a kind of little rebellion, against even wanting to have to go to that. The responses we always get are, ‘I feared coming here,’ ‘I didn’t want to hear about boundaries,’ ‘I didn’t want to feel oppressed or attacked, or telling me I’m a bad person,’ and every year people leave with wonderful recommendations saying how valuable it was to hear in very clear terms how boundaries in ministry can free us up to the ministry of the Gospel. I can say for myself that the best ministry that’s happened to me by colleagues, by leaders, by synod staff for me has been when they have been very clear in holding me to those boundaries. People in this room have served that function for me. I believe that this recommendation, that I’m very much in favor of, can do that for us all: hold us to very clear boundaries as a ministry of love to one another in order to free us to serve better in the Gospel.”

Mr. R. Guy Erwin [Southwest California Synod], a teaching theologian, said, “I oppose this amendment as an unjustified limitation on our ability to bless those who come to us for blessing. There are some perspectives from our Lutheran tradition I think might be valuable to think about in this connection. I am a professor of Lutheran confessional theology at one of our universities, and so am one of the teaching theologians who wants to contribute to this conversation. One of the things that is most important about Lutheran doctrine is that we recognize that, though God is the Creator and Author of all things, we do not confuse the creation with the Creator, and we oppose all human attempts to claim divine authority for human institutions and human inventions, no matter how venerable and useful they are for ourselves. One of the ways that Luther applied this principle was in relation to what was thought of as traditional marriage in his time, a marriage in which the Church claimed all authority over marriage matters: who could marry whom, when, how, and who could end a marriage. Luther knew and insisted to others that the Christian tradition did not have a unified stance on this. Marriage was a human institution that had evolved with human experience. God had led the people of God through 2000 years of polygamy to monogamy—the people of God are slow learners—and then had encouraged monogamy in the new dispensation, but the scriptural texts nowhere require it. Luther, as you know, was very concerned to make marriage an important part of society. But he moved it out of the jurisdiction of the Church and gave it to the government. What the state can make legal, the Church can bless.”

Ms. Susan Ellingson [Minneapolis Area Synod] spoke in favor, saying, “One of the points I have heard regarding the sexuality study is that the Bible has laws that are out-of-date, so the laws about homosexuality could be as well. But there is a difference between moral laws and ceremonial laws. Ceremonial laws no longer apply to Christians, but the moral laws do. Christ has fulfilled all the ceremonial laws, but he has left the moral laws for us to follow. Jesus agreed that we should love our neighbors, just as the book of Leviticus says. He also agreed that God made us male and female and that marriage between a man and a woman is a good thing. These morals are still in force for Christians today because Jesus approved them, no matter how old they are. I have also heard it said that homosexuals are born that way and that some gene may be involved. Well, other scientists say that people can be born with a gene for alcoholism. My husband has been a recovering alcoholic for 28 years. His recovery has happened one day at a time, by the grace of God. Are we to say to the alcoholic, ‘That’s just who you are, don’t try to change’? Where would be the love in

saying something like that? My point is that it's not how you are born that matters, but how you live your life. Is it in line with God's Word or not? Do we follow what Christ says, or what the world says? I believe that if we are to love God and one another, then let's do so in the way Christ taught us, through his service, obedience, and sacrifice."

The Rev. Craig E. Johnson, bishop of the Minneapolis Area Synod, rose in opposition: "I believe that this amendment and all of the conversation about clarity, I think their *de facto* intention is to finally render Recommendation Two unacceptable to the assembly. We must not go backwards. I urge you to vote this motion down so we can preserve that which is working for us. With all due respect, on the defining of 'pastoral care,' I would prefer to have the definition of 'good pastoral care' made by my pastors on the ground in Minneapolis than by someone in Pennsylvania or southwestern Minnesota."

The chair announced that time for debate had ended, so the assembly would now vote on the amendment.

MOVED;
SECONDED;
DEFEATED:

Yes-415; No-580

To amend by addition:
RESOLVED, that this church welcome gay and lesbian persons into its life (as stated in Churchwide Assembly resolutions from 1991, 1995, and 1999) and trust pastors and congregations to discern ways other than the blessing of unions to provide faithful pastoral care to same-sex couples.

Presiding Bishop Hanson then called upon the Rev. Steven R. Benson [Minneapolis Area Synod] to introduce his amendment.

MOVED;
SECONDED:

To amend by addition:
RESOLVED, that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America continue to respect the guidance of the 1993 statement of the Conference of Bishops, which is received as a statement of advice to congregations and pastors, and therefore shall not be used as grounds for discipline in this church;
[The rest of the resolution remains unchanged.]

Speaking to his amendment, Pr. Benson said, "It is one of the great joys of parish ministry to stand with and to walk with people on journeys of which only God knows the ending. When we invite commitment, we invite the values of faithfulness and steadfastness, which we all support. When we bless, we invite people to walk in God's presence, asking for God's guidance and God's direction. To presume too quickly exactly what God's will is for anyone is a very dangerous position for a church. We will differ on this, and the amendment I'm proposing recognizes that we do not have an official policy, we do not recognize that, but we do recognize that freedom to do ministry in each individual context is needed. If I am no longer allowed to do what I have been doing, I don't know how I can be a faithful pastor."

The Rev. Scott Grorud [Southwestern Minnesota Synod] spoke against Pr. Benson's amendment, saying, "My kids and I have kind of a running joke when I have to discipline

them and tell them that they can't do something or that they must do something, and my children tend to whine about that: I tell them that my goal in life is to be the meanest dad in the whole world. That isn't, of course, literally true, but it simply means that, whether they like to hear my 'no' or my 'yes,' they need to, and I do it for their sake, not mine. To suggest that discipline in a church on matters as important as this should be removed from our language strikes me as just as foolish as to say that because my children object to being disciplined I should therefore say, 'OK, I won't.' I spoke yesterday about things that the Church has always considered obvious and that need to be defended. If we cannot take a line of defense about disciplining one another, about speaking and hearing a 'no' when a 'no' needs to be said, I fear for our life together."

Mr. René T. García [Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod] spoke in favor, saying, "I have many concerns about how some of us look at this issue as an 'us' versus 'them' situation. I, like many others, am truly a face that goes with this issue. I was baptized and confirmed in the Lutheran church. I attended worship and Sunday School regularly, served on the Youth Board of the Southwestern Texas Synod, and earned a degree from Texas Lutheran [University]. Even though I may have been a 'good Lutheran Christian,' reality was my sexual orientation was different. I was born homosexual, am a homosexual, and will die homosexual. For several years I believed that being honest and open would hinder my desire to be a fully welcomed member of the body of Christ as lived out in the ELCA. After many years of coming to terms with myself and the fact that I am a beloved child of God, I come to this Churchwide Assembly serving as an active part of the body of Christ. I refuse to be a second-class citizen in my church. I have been in a committed, monogamous relationship with my partner, Jason, for nearly eight years. I am a Lutheran living out truthfully the way that I was created by God. My sexual orientation leads me to be a minority in the ELCA, which has a history of breaking from that *status quo* and seeking full inclusion of all people."

Next to address the assembly was Mr. Dale Hamre [South Dakota Synod], who said, "I am stunned by the courage of a lot of the speakers today, but I'm also wondering if the song 'Anything Goes' is going to be included in the new revised hymnal. I speak against this. My grandfather was an alcoholic. My dad died of alcoholism. Maybe you would like to affirm my God-given orientation by joining me at the bar at 7:00 tomorrow morning. This is just wrong. I'll sit down now."

The Rev. Judy A. Reitz [Southeastern Minnesota Synod] encouraged adoption of the amendment, saying, "I want to rise in support of this, the pastoral freedom. I'm an ordained pastor. But I also want to talk about something that I think is germane to the whole conversation. I tried to do it yesterday and before, for an hour each day, so I'm going to do it here, and if I'm wrong you can just shut me down. I have heard over and over and over again in this conversation 'the authority of Scripture.' As a person who has been led into God's marvelous light by the witness of shy Norwegian [and] German Lutheran people, I came from that place where Scripture was used, picked, to condemn others, to demand from others that which we would not demand from ourselves, and it is a dark and dangerous road. You said we're supposed to be 'radically Lutheran' here. The world's watching. And so I say to this assembly and to the world, we Lutherans are rare and precious birds—some might say 'odd ducks,' but I put the best construction on it—we are rare birds who by the gift of God and a man named Martin Luther saw, and see, that the purpose of this book is not fundamentally rules. It is, as I say to my confirmation kids, the manger that carries Jesus to us. What we look for in this book—in every text, in every moment of Scripture—is how the living God made known in Christ is made known to us, and the grace and mercy of that God. So in Romans, the problem Paul is writing about is not certain people and their sins, but the

universal problem of all us, which is that we are sinners; therefore, we can say we are all sinners around the cross by the grace of God, redeemed and claimed in Baptism forever, and never have to walk that road fearing we're going to lose our salvation or end up in hell. We're free."

Mr. Randy Weitz [Sierra Pacific Synod] was opposed to the amendment and said, "This is my first Churchwide Assembly, and I'm here speaking as a loving father of two children. I've gotten to know some truly wonderful people from my Sierra Pacific Synod who are here on both sides of this sexuality issue. I dearly love them as friends, brothers and sisters in Christ. I have a 16-year-old daughter and a 13-year-old son back home in California. As I was getting ready for this adventure to Orlando, my son, Alex, was on his own adventure on a 50-mile canoe trip with the Boy Scouts, going down the Green River in Utah. At the same time in another part of Utah, another California scout was struck by lightning while sleeping in a cabin. Life is very fragile. Raising children is at times stressful, challenging, and yet truly a blessing, as I'm sure all parents and grandparents here today understand. I know how easy it is for children to get off on the wrong path in life. The other day we were told to keep our eyes on the horizon. I want my children to keep their eyes on the horizon, too. As a lifelong Lutheran, I'm concerned about my church. The other day at the hearing on sexuality I heard a handsome young man, possibly in his teens, going up to the microphone and saying, 'We are not a Bible-based church.' This concerned me. I want my church teaching truth and the difference between right and wrong to my children. I want a church that teaches them about their rich Lutheran heritage that is strongly grounded in the Word of God."

The Rev. Margaret "Meg" A. Sander [Southeastern Minnesota Synod] shared a personal experience to explain her support for the amendment: "Eighteen years ago I was in this fine state of Florida doing my internship. My internship supervisor was called to another parish. I received special dispensation to administer the sacraments. During that time, a young man from the congregation—I was older than he was, so I consider him young—came to me and asked if I could bless his relationship with his partner of 17 years. I told him that there was nothing in my being or in my studies in seminary that allowed me the possibility to do that. But then I said, in my *being* let us pray together, let us rejoice together in your partnership. And he said, 'The reason why I'm asking this is because my partner is becoming jealous, and I want the Church, the Church that we both love, to bless our union.' They are not here today. They both died of AIDS. His partner became promiscuous and he received AIDS, and he drove his car into a tree. I'm not standing here presuming that, if I was able to bless their union that they'd still be alive today. I'm not saying that. But I am in favor of this amendment because I'd hate to think that I would not be a pastor in this church that I love if I were disciplined."

Ms. Laura A. Gausmann [Lower Susquehanna Synod] spoke against the amendment: "This amendment doesn't provide the clarity that our Bible provides, and so I'd like to recommend that everyone vote 'no' on the amendment and 'no' to the Recommendation, and 'yes' to your Bible and the Scripture."

Mr. Timothy J. Mumm [South-Central Synod of Wisconsin] stated, "Just as we trust, or hope to trust, pastors to provide faithful pastoral care, we also hope that our pastors can trust us. Please, do not discipline them. Furthermore, I'd like to say that the comparison of homosexuality to alcoholism is inappropriate and unwarranted. Alcoholism is a disease that ravages families and society. Homosexuality is a condition which many people experience. We are looking for support in faithful, committed relationships, something that has clearly been shown to benefit society, whether it's [between] a straight couple or a homosexual couple."

Ms. Stephanie Olson [East-Central Synod of Wisconsin] opposed the amendment: “I have been a member of the Lutheran church for almost 49 years. In the course of that time, I have unfortunately found out later that clergy that I had been in a congregation with—in one case, the pastor was having sex with the boys in the church, and in another the case the pastor was caught having sexual relationships with numerous different women of the church. I am concerned first with the vagueness of all of these statements, that if we use these vague statements as grounds to remove any cause of discipline, our bishops will have no grounds for pastoral care or wisdom when pastoral responsibilities are abused. Unfortunately, I have seen it in our church, and oftentimes these people are very charismatic, very effective in the parish, and do a tremendous amount of damage when their sexual indiscretions are discovered. We cannot make this amendment in the face of all the vagueness we are dealing with.”

The Rev. Kenneth D. Scheck II [Northeastern Ohio Synod] moved the previous question.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To end debate.

The chair then called for a vote on the motion to end debate.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

CARRIED:

To end debate.

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

YES-901; NO-95

Debate being ended, the chair called for a vote on Pr. Benson’s amendment.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

DEFEATED:

To amend by addition:

RESOLVED, that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America continue to respect the guidance of the 1993 statement of the Conference of Bishops, which is received as a statement of advice to congregations and pastors, and therefore shall not be used as grounds for discipline in this church;

[The rest of the resolution remains unchanged.]

YES-382; NO-612

Presiding Bishop Hanson then called upon the Rev. Carol S. Hendrix, bishop of the Lower Susquehanna Synod, to present her proposed amendment.

MOVED;

SECONDED:

To amend by substitution:

RESOLVED, that this church welcome gay and lesbian persons into its life (as stated in Churchwide Assembly Resolutions from 1991, 1995, and 1999) and trust pastors and congregations to discern ways to provide faithful pastoral care ~~to same-sex couples~~ for all to whom they minister.

Addressing her amendment, Bp. Hendrix said, “I bring this amendment so that the original words of the Conference of Bishops are included in this recommendation. Pastors

are called to provide faithful pastoral care to *all* to whom they minister, not just to same-sex couples.”

Mr. Thomas Salber [Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod] opposed the amendment: “I feel that deleting the words ‘same-sex couples’ and adding ‘for all to whom they minister’ negates the beginning of the resolution, which states that this church welcomes gay and lesbian persons into its life. Adding those words negates the welcoming of gays and lesbians to [this] church.”

The Rev. Leonard M. Jepson [Indiana-Kentucky Synod] spoke in favor, saying, “I have pretty good gusto for this amendment because life in Christ is entirely a gift from God, and all of God’s children are daily empowered through Word and Sacraments and the ministries and blessings of other believers. If the Church were simply a human institution, one’s status compared to others would be a personal benchmark. If the Church were simply a human institution, we would focus on pious personal achievements or interpretations to gain acceptance in a very diverse and cruel world. But it is God who remakes us a new creation, a community of unity. It is not left to us in the complexities and mysteries of humanity to live life based on what we deem appropriate, but instead we are a church blessed by God. A blessing is not based on exclusion, but recalls what God has done and is doing for the unity of his people. I as a pastor want to bring the blessings of God to the love he establishes.”

Ms. Jennifer L. Nagel [Minneapolis Area Synod] rose to a point of order to question whether the amendment were germane to the main motion. The chair stated that he had ruled that it was because it had prevailed through the “vetting” process established by the assembly for the *ad hoc* committee and that the assembly could make the determination in choosing its course of action on this amendment.

The Rev. Daniel L. Henderson [La Crosse Area Synod] opposed the amendment and all alternate proposals: “All of these alternate motions represent a tinkering or a changing of the language that has been prayed over and deliberated and struggled with for far longer than we have this week. All of these proposals tinker with the language in ways that would tilt things in favor of one side or the other, that would make some of us go home feeling good and the others go home feeling like losers. For that reason, I encourage us to reject all of the alternate proposals so that we can vote on the original recommendation before us with its key proviso: trust that, yes, despite our common human sinfulness as we live under the Word, the Spirit works among us, and we can begin to trust our brothers and sisters in Christ.”

The Rev. Marshall E. Hahn [Northeastern Iowa Synod] spoke in favor of Bp. Hendrix’s amendment, saying, “I think [this amendment] takes out the language that was included here that is foreign to the original language of the [Conference of] Bishops’ statement from 1993. If you compare the two, you’ll see that there is no mention of same-sex couples in that language, but it is instead calling for pastoral care for all persons. I believe that the intention of this amendment is to return to that language. It is the inclusion of the language of ‘same-sex couples’ that has provided a good share of the confusion, I would believe, in this whole resolution, because it seems to legitimate the blessing of same-sex unions. So I would speak in favor of this amendment, to return to the language ‘pastoral care for all to whom they minister.’”

Mr. Frank M. Petrovic [Metropolitan Chicago Synod] spoke in opposition: “The intent of this resolution is to provide care for gay and lesbian persons, not everybody in the church. So I feel that the substitution for ‘same-sex couples’ of a generic ‘for all to whom they minister’ would water down and negate the intent of this resolution. I oppose this amendment, and I hope and pray you will also.”

The Rev. William R. Crabtree [Sierra Pacific Synod] supported the amendment: “The only thing I would add in support of this amendment is that I think it is more inclusive. This reality affects many more people than couples. There are family members, there are others who are affected by this situation and this issue whom we need to provide care for, so I would just add the point that I think this gives us more inclusivity when it comes to our pastoral care.”

Mr. John Rowe [Western North Dakota Synod] moved the previous question.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To end debate.

The chair then called for a vote on the motion to end debate.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

CARRIED: To end debate.

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

YES-898; NO-70

Presiding Bishop Hanson then called for the vote on Bp. Hendrix’s amendment.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

CARRIED:

To amend by substitution:

RESOLVED, that this church welcome gay and lesbian persons into its life (as stated in Churchwide Assembly Resolutions from 1991, 1995, and 1999) and trust pastors and congregations to discern ways to provide faithful pastoral care to ~~same-sex couples~~ for all to whom they minister.

YES-491; NO-484

The chair then recognized the Rev. Stephen W. Yambor [Lower Susquehanna Synod], who elected to withdraw his amendment.

Mr. Steven R. Chapman [Northwest Washington Synod] rose to a point of privilege to move that the assembly stand in recess for 10 minutes.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To recess for 10 minutes.

The chair then called for a vote on the motion to recess, explaining that a majority would be needed for passage.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

DEFEATED:

To recess for 10 minutes.

YES-269; NO-693

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson announced that the assembly would now consider the main motion as amended, with no time limit on debate.

The Rev. Serena S. Sellers [Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod] rose to a point of privilege, asking if a biblical scholar could clarify the definition of “blessing.”

The Rev. James M. Childs, director for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality, identified himself as a systematic theologian and ethicist. He was interrupted by an unidentified voting member who called for a point of order, stating that the word “blessing” was not in the resolution, and thus the discussion was not germane. The chair ruled that, since the word was in the “WHEREAS” clauses, the discussion was germane according to *Robert’s Rules of Order*.

Pr. Childs continued addressing the assembly: “The task force, in its report, speaks of ‘surrounding people with prayerful support,’ which is certainly biblically one way of understanding blessing, as prayerful support is brought to bear as a manner of blessing in a whole variety of human circumstances. I don’t think I can elaborate much more than that. We do have Dr. [Terence E.] Fretheim here, a biblical scholar with the task force. He may wish to add to that.” The chair called upon Pr. Fretheim, theologian and member of the task force, but Pr. Fretheim did not wish to add to Pr. Childs’ statement.

Mr. Paul Erickson [South Dakota Synod] rose to ask for clarification from resource members, citing in particular the Rev. Stanley N. Olson, executive director of the Division for Ministry. Mr. Erickson asked for resolution “once and for all” of the question of whether in the main motion the term “pastoral care” involved the blessing of same-sex unions. He sought “an answer for the pastors going home from the assembly.”

Presiding Bishop Hanson responded that, because this was a recommendation of the Church Council, he felt it would be more appropriate for the Rev. Jonathan G. Eilert, council member, to respond to Mr. Erickson’s question.

Pr. Eilert answered, “The action before us is the action of the council. Someone asked me earlier today if we had an official statement made from the council regarding Recommendation Two and what was intended there, and we do not have an official statement to add to what was already stated here. Recommendation Two was the recommended action of the council. We don’t want to institute a whole new action now. We felt that we were clear in Recommendation Two by what we meant, in keeping in line with what the Conference of Bishops originally established as their pastoral guidance for this church.”

The Rev. David W. Shockey [Indiana-Kentucky Synod] said, “Boy, looks like I’m not going to get to go to the Magic Kingdom tonight—though maybe I am, because of the answer that I just heard. I think I heard something like that in Scripture somewhere about ‘We cannot say,’ and therefore the other person involved said, ‘Neither will I give you an answer, then.’ Because the truth of the matter is that in the Magic Kingdom near where we’re meeting, there’s a ride, ‘Pirates of the Caribbean,’ where they have a whole place on fire—or it looks like fire, but really it’s all done with red and yellow lights and silk waving in a fan. It seems to me that this proposal being so vague, and already being used to justify and condone the blessings of same-sex unions in our church, is not enough for us to go home to our churches for those of us who feel that its ambiguity is a problem in its own right. Both Recommendation Two and, in my mind, Recommendation Three are cut out of the same cloth. They’re really to create an appearance of propriety to try to keep everybody together. It seems to me that a vote for Recommendation Two as it now stands is a vote to make this church the Magic Kingdom, a place where things appear to be one thing and really aren’t—they can be anything, really.”

The Rev. Kenneth D. Scheck II [Northeastern Ohio Synod] stated, “I speak in support of this amended motion because of our history, our roots. For 900 years, the Christian Church blessed same-sex unions. From the fifth to the fourteenth centuries, we see the example of that blessing over and over again. I had the privilege of doing my doctorate work at St. Mary’s Seminary, Roman Catholic Diocese of Cleveland. Some would say, ‘Oh, that’s

where you get it.' It's because I studied 'The Use of the Means of Grace,' though, that I was forced to study the liturgical theology, and I found over and over again the wonderful liturgies that were used in the fifth through the fourteenth centuries. So for us to say that the Christian Church has never done this and is unfaithful is not true. So I affirm allowing congregations to discern ways to provide faithful pastoral care for all to whom they minister."

The Rev. William J. Shields [Central/Southern Illinois Synod] was opposed to the recommendation. He said, "At our Synod Assembly this past June, we overwhelmingly approved Recommendation Two, but then later at that same assembly, by another overwhelming vote, we passed a memorial, which is in Section VI on page 83, where the 'Resolveds' say 'We resolve that this synod memorialize the Churchwide Assembly to affirm the unity of marriage as only between a man and a woman; and be it further Resolved that we memorialize the assembly to reject the establishment of an official ceremony to bless a homosexual relationship even under pastoral guidance.' So clearly the people of our synod felt that Recommendation Two precluded the blessing of same-sex unions. That kind of lack of clarity in Recommendation Two is the reason that I will vote against it."

The Rev. Theodore F. Schneider, bishop of the Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod, reflected on his reasons for supporting Recommendation Two: "It has been a long journey for me, but I've come to understand that this is a means of [this] church offering an alternative to one of the major problems, I think, among our gay and lesbian sisters and brothers, because of the difficulty in establishing and maintaining lasting relationships, which decreases the quality of life and increases the level of violence in some sectors of that community. Years ago, one of the members of our Metropolitan [Washington,] D.C., Synod confronted me by saying, 'Pastor, give us a choice. Stand with us and own it with us.' And then he said, 'How long have you and your wife been married?' And I couldn't remember . . . it seemed a tremendously long time. Next year, God willing, Doris and I will have been married 50 years. He said, 'I'd be willing to bet you that if you had not been married, if you had just a kind of agreement together, you wouldn't have made it this far.' I've pondered that a long time and I've come to believe he might have been right. I don't know for sure, but if there were no one else owning with us, certainly our family, our church, our friends, there would not have been that corraling time or force in moments of difficulty. He said, 'Give us a choice.' I think this gives our pastors in those situations in which it's right, without saying it's necessarily our norm, an opportunity to work creatively and pastorally."

The Rev. Gerald L. Mansholt, bishop of the Central States Synod, called the question.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To end debate.

The chair then called for a vote on the motion to end debate.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

CARRIED: To end debate.

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

Yes-884; No-86

Presiding Bishop Hanson called upon the Rev. April C. Ulring Larson, bishop of the La Crosse Area Synod, to lead the assembly in prayer and a time of silence, honoring the earlier request for a time of silent prayer.

After prayer, Presiding Bishop Hanson called on the assembly to vote on the recommendation as amended. Without objection, he dispensed with the reading of the motion. He reminded voting members that a simple majority was required for passage.

The Rev. Ronald D. Martinson, bishop of the Alaska Synod, rose to a point of order to ask whether, if one wanted to get back to the original motion, one could vote 'no' on this vote, and if that prevailed, ask for a new vote on the original motion.

The chair responded that a voting member could move to reconsider if that person had voted on the prevailing side. He then called for a vote.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

YES-670; NO-323

CA05.05.18

WHEREAS, this church holds that “marriage is a lifelong covenant of faithfulness between a man and a woman” (*Message on Sexuality: Some Common Convictions [1996]*, page 3); and

WHEREAS, the Conference of Bishops in October 1993 stated, “We, as the Conference of Bishops of the ELCA, recognize that there is basis neither in Scripture nor tradition for the establishment of an official ceremony by this church for the blessing of a homosexual relationship. We, therefore, do not approve such a ceremony as an official action of this church’s ministry. Nevertheless, we express trust in and will continue dialogue with those pastors and congregations who are in ministry with gay and lesbian persons, and affirm their desire to explore the best ways to provide pastoral care for all to whom they minister” (CB93.10.25); therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America continue to respect the guidance of the 1993 statement of the Conference of Bishops; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this church welcome gay and lesbian persons into its life (as stated in Churchwide Assembly resolutions from 1991, 1995, and 1999), and trust pastors and congregations to discern ways to provide faithful pastoral care for all to whom they minister.

Bp. Martinson then rose to move that the assembly reconsider the vote, stating that he had voted in the affirmative.

MOVED;

SECONDED:

To reconsider the vote on Recommendation Two.

Presiding Bishop Hanson stated that he would note the motion, but would exercise the prerogative of the chair and return to the motion after the assembly had had a chance to consider Recommendation Three. He then invited the assembly to sing “Thy Holy Wings.”

Following the hymn, Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson called upon Secretary Lowell G. Almen to read Recommendation Three to the assembly.

The Rev. Solveig A. Zamzow [East-Central Synod of Wisconsin] rose to a point of privilege to request the chair to ask the assembly to refrain from displays of emotion upon the announcement of voting results. The chair honored her request.

Secretary Almen asked if he should read all of Recommendation Three. Faced with conflicting voice response, the chair put the question of reading the recommendation to the assembly in the form of a motion.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To read Recommendation Three aloud.

The chair called for a vote on the motion.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

YES-139; NO-598

DEFEATED: To read Recommendation Three aloud.

Before proceeding to consideration of Recommendation Three, Presiding Bishop Hanson stated that he wanted to follow up on a matter raised earlier in the week, the question of which proposed amendments would require a simple majority and which would require a two-thirds majority. Referring to the report of the *ad hoc* committee, the chair gave his opinion that proposed amendments 1, 2, 4, and 5 in their current form would require a two-thirds majority, based upon the rules of the assembly, and that proposed amendments 3, 6, 7, and 8 would require a simple majority. He stressed that this was not a ruling, but only an opinion for guidance, since the assembly did not yet know in what form a particular motion would finally appear. He told voting members that he would rule on the percentage of vote required for each amendment or substitute motion after any changes had been made to it. He informed the assembly that would then be the appropriate time to appeal the chair's decision.

The chair recognized the Rev. Gladys G. Moore [New Jersey Synod], who offered a substitute for the Church Council's Recommendation Three.

MOVED;

SECONDED:

To amend by substitution:

WHEREAS, the unity of the Church is a gift of the Holy Spirit, and does not hinge on complete agreement about such mysteries of human life as our sexuality, but on our faith in Jesus Christ and our openness to the Holy Spirit, who calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian Church; and

WHEREAS, a significant number of lay members and clergy of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America have seen the presence and fruits of the Holy Spirit in the lives of gay and lesbian persons who are single and others who are living in lifelong committed relationships of mutuality, fidelity, and respect, whose lives give daily testimony to the unconditional love of God in Jesus Christ in their families, congregations, workplaces, and communities; and

WHEREAS, some of these gay and lesbian persons already serve this church in ordained ministry or in other forms of rostered service; and

WHEREAS, the first-generation Church, in the face of great opposition from pious and loyal leaders and members, agreed to a more inclusive definition of church membership that no longer required the Mosaic tradition of circumcision—a radical, history-changing decision based almost totally on the

testimony of Peter, Paul, and others that they had seen in uncircumcised Gentiles the work of the Holy Spirit and on their conclusion: “We believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will” (Acts 15:11); and

WHEREAS, the Lutheran church has historically affirmed the centrality of the Gospel and Jesus Christ as the prism through which the Church is to look as it interprets Scripture, shapes its teaching, and proclaims the life-giving Good News of God’s unconditional love for all people in Jesus Christ; and

WHEREAS, any “exception” procedure for ordination, consecration, or commissioning of otherwise qualified candidates in lifelong committed relationships of mutuality, fidelity, and respect would be offensive and discriminatory to such gay and lesbian candidates, implying that they were somehow more “sinful” than any of the rest of us; and

WHEREAS, no congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is compelled to consider or call any particular candidate for a rostered position; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America there shall be no policy barrier to rostered service for otherwise qualified persons in same-gender covenanted relationships that are “mutual, chaste, and faithful”; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the appropriate churchwide unit, in consultation with the Conference of Bishops and through action of the Church Council, accordingly revise “Vision and Expectations,” “Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline,” and all other related documents governing policy and practice on this matter.

Speaking to her substitute, Pr. Moore said, “While yesterday’s ‘quasi committee of the whole’ was painful, it was so important to listen to one another as has been so powerfully encouraged throughout this *Journey Together Faithfully* process. One phrase especially struck me: that Recommendation Three would create a ‘tectonic change’ in the church’s tradition and policy. Indeed, brothers and sisters, when the curtain of the Temple was torn in two as Jesus was dying, the earth shook to its core, and that was a tectonic change. When the stone was rolled away from the tomb and Jesus walked out into the light of resurrection and new creation, death, the most powerful barrier to God’s intention for life, was defeated. The God of Scripture is a God who removes barriers, a God who makes all things new. Jesus removed barriers based on gender, culture, socioeconomic status, disease, and theological certainty so that those on the margins of life might be restored to the community of God’s people. It is a good thing to remove barriers, and this substitute motion seeks to do [that] for otherwise qualified persons in same-gender covenanted relationships that are mutual, chaste, and faithful. The other phrase I heard repeatedly yesterday and today is our relatively new concern for what our brothers and sisters in the South—in Africa, Asia, and South America—have to say about homosexuality. For decades, our sisters and brothers of the South have been pleading with us for debt forgiveness, for food, for medicine that will help keep those 3,000 persons a day who are dying from AIDS in Zimbabwe alive. For decades, our brothers and sisters in the South have been speaking to us. Why only now have the barriers to our hearing been removed? Please do not use our sisters and brothers of the South as a barrier to listening to what God may indeed be saying in calling forth the gifts of gay and lesbian people today.”

The Rev. Gary L. Hansen, bishop of the North/West Lower Michigan Synod, said, “I believe that the table and our congregational life needs to be open to all people. I think that’s where the Word and the Sacraments give the gifts so that we might be disciples. I also

believe that the ordained ministry of the ELCA is not open to all people like the table because we have visions and expectations that relate to all kinds of areas of human beings' and disciples' lives. Some of us meet those and some of us do not. I do not believe there is scriptural basis, especially thinking of Romans 1, and when we attempt to take the place of the Creator rather than be the creation, I do not believe we have scriptural support, and I do not believe the church is ready for partnered gay and lesbian ordained clergy on our roster."

Ms. Shirley Gangstad [Southeastern Minnesota Synod] spoke in favor of the substitute: "I seek to provide the scriptural reference that the esteemed bishop does not think exists. There was a point in Jesus' ministry where his disciples came to him and said, "Lord, there are people who are preaching and teaching in your name, and they are not part of us! What shall we do?" And Jesus, in effect, said, 'Let them be. We need all the help we can get.' We are talking about people who *are* part of us. They have been sealed with the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ forever. They have been claimed and gathered, and they are waiting, waiting to be sent. We have no idea how many there are, but we certainly need all the help we can get. Why not send those who are already ours? I urge that we do just that."

The Rev. James M. Culver [Indiana-Kentucky Synod] rose to speak against this and any other recommendation that might seek to create exceptions for ordination: "The New Testament sets very high standards for pastors and leaders in the Church. We are called to a life of faithfulness and obedience to Christ. We are called to take up our cross, deny ourselves, and follow Jesus. We are called to teach sound doctrine and to live in a way that brings honor to Christ and does not in any way discredit the faith we proclaim, nor to be a stumbling block to others. Pastors are sinful human beings who struggle with various kinds of problems, but we are called to resist temptation and to not give in to our human weaknesses, because even our lives are a public witness that either support or deny the Gospel that we've been called to preach. When a pastor lives in open and unrepentant disobedience to God's Word and tries to justify sinful behavior, the message of the Gospel is in great danger of being turned into a false Gospel of cheap grace. Forgiveness of sins does not mean approval of sin or permission to sin. The Gospel calls us to repentance, forgiveness, healing, and new life in Christ. We pastors are broken, sinful people who daily need God's grace and forgiveness, but we are not permitted to excuse our sins or to pretend that sin is not sin. We must take both Law and Gospel very seriously as both God's word of judgment and grace. When our lives are an open contradiction of God's Word, we are in danger of being false teachers who mislead God's people and do them great spiritual harm."

Ms. Kaila J. Hochhalter [Grand Canyon Synod], a youth voting member, said, "I'm looking forward to going to seminary and becoming a pastor in this church. Some people in this church like to point out and feel strongly that we should follow Scripture when it comes to this homosexuality issue. If they wish to do that, then I, as a woman wanting to be a pastor, shouldn't be able to become a pastor because of Scripture. People use the Bible to exclude, but as Christians we should look on how we include."

The Rev. David W. Shockey [Indiana-Kentucky Synod] said, "I'm still just a parish pastor, and I confess that all these considerations are way beyond me and my wisdom. But having said that, I rise in opposition to this proposal and all of the Recommendation Three proposals, basically, because this one, for instance, is also based on a misunderstanding of Scripture. For instance, one of the 'Whereas' [statements] justifies this new step, which is truly different, I believe . . . no history of the 2000-year history of the Church or the teachings of the catholic Church warranting this. To say that the inclusion of the Gentiles was something new when it was already promised to Abraham and Sarah when they were

called, and then prophesied by a number of prophets, is just mind-boggling to me, because all of the things that God has done, while they are new in appearance to us, like the inclusion of the Gentiles, are not new to God. He does not change his mind. And so his Word reveals this thought, and his intention, and I believe, again, that that is clearly spoken to in Scripture regarding whether homosexuality, and therefore the ordination of active gays and lesbians, is clearly spoken to. God has spoken his opinion that this not to be the choice of the Church. I urge everybody to vote it down, because our congregations deserve a clear biblical mandate to justify any type of course that would vary from the tradition of the Church, the catholic faith.”

The Rev. John S. Hergert [Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod] spoke next: “While I’m very interested in the substitute motion, I will admit that my remarks dwell specifically with Recommendation Three, and I speak in favor of it. My reasons for doing so are personal and painful. It is my ‘limp,’ for it is about people. It is about two friends whom I have lost. This recommendation is about George, who was my pastor when I was ordained. I presided at his funeral, and I do not ever, ever want to have to stand there again and to say to somebody else’s family, somebody else’s children, as I did that day, that I needed to ask for their forgiveness for how this church treated him when it became known that he was gay. I never want to know again that we have caused so much pain to a faithful servant of this church. And it is about Joe, the most gifted pastor I have ever known. He boldly preached the Good News at my installation 14 years ago. He stood with my wife and me as we promised to be husband and wife. He helped make me whole again, for he reached down into the pit of my deepest despair and pulled me out. But he was broken by this church, this church he loved, because he was gay, because he wanted to find someone he could love. I never want to be there again when a friend says to me, ‘To hell with this church, and to hell with you for staying in it.’ And now he’s gone, and lost. How many more Georges and Joes will we have to destroy before we can do what Jesus so naturally did: to have compassion on them, to receive them as fellow members of the body of Christ, to let us all share the gifts that we all have? Please journey with me, and maybe one day I can say to Joe, ‘This is why I stayed.’”

The Rev. Paul H. Harris [Saint Paul Area Synod] stated, “There are many large and difficult questions we must consider as we grapple with this issue. However, for Christ’s Church, there is a question that has priority before all others. It is, what is God’s will? All questions pale before this. We ask, ‘What does God think?’ As Lutherans we are committed to seeking to understand God’s mind by placing ourselves before Scripture, our best access to the mind of God. However, this is no easy process. We do not have a Quran, but a Scripture which speaks with many voices, from different times, situations, and contexts. I found Dr. Fred Gaiser’s *Word and World* article on Isaiah 56 helpful, in part because of my long struggles with Scripture. I had not been able to make Saint Paul say what I wanted him to say. In Isaiah 56 the prophet says God is abrogating God’s previous command about sexually mutilated people. The Deuteronomic and Levitical codes did not allow a man with crushed testicles into the community worship before God. But the prophet announces a new word from God, which stands the old rules on their heads: ‘I give eunuchs, in my house and within my walls, a memorial and a name.’ Gaiser goes on to argue that the Scriptures we have inherited are clear in their uniform teaching on the sinful character of homosexual behavior, but asks if God might not be giving the Church a new word similar to what Third Isaiah proclaimed in his or her own time. Do we have strong evidence that the mind of God has changed? Is there a mighty wind blowing through Christ’s Church evidencing the changed mind of God? Do we have reason to believe that a new word can be proclaimed authoritatively?”

The Rev. Stacie R. Fidler [Northern Illinois Synod] spoke next: “‘Pastor, can you come now?’ The call came very early in the morning, and by the time I got to the house, the bags were packed and by the door. They were there not because the partner was leaving, but because they did not want their beloved partner to have to clean up and send their belongings after they were dead. I knew what they brought to that moment. I knew that they brought years of pain and struggle and fear. They brought the experience of someone at one of our seminaries, while they were studying there, refusing them Communion. And they had had no contact with their family for years, because their family’s Lutheran pastor had assured them that this was the best way to deal with such sinfulness. I knew what I brought to that moment. . . . The fact that a member of my mother’s *Journey Together Faithfully* group had declared that ‘those people *should* be killing themselves’ was in my memory. But I also brought the Gospel. I know the power of the Gospel to bring hope, the power of the Gospel to bring healing, even after someone has wielded it as a sword, and I the know the power of Gospel and grace and unyielding love, especially when all of the barriers that we put in the way are removed and we allow them to gush forward. I do not know what experiences, stories, and places of the heart other members of this assembly bring today to these moments. But I prayerfully hope that we will leave these moments allowing Christ’s Gospel to flow without barrier.”

Mr. Donald J. Domrath [East-Central Synod of Wisconsin] rose to ask for clarification of the phrase “long-term, committed relationship,” particularly in relation to the length of such a relationship. He also asked whether this would apply to heterosexual candidates for ministry.

Presiding Bishop Hanson directed the question back to the maker of the substitute motion, Pr. Moore. She responded that it was as difficult to define “long-term” for gay and lesbian persons as it was for heterosexual persons but stated that it should mean a commitment for life, “until death do us part.”

Mr. Domrath then asked whether that meant that a man and a woman living together would not be considered “living in sin,” as far as this church was concerned.

The chair stated that he would let Mr. Domrath’s question stand as something for the body to contemplate, as he did not wish to have Mr. Domrath entering into debate with the maker of the motion.

Returning to the substitute motion, Mr. Len Weiser [Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod] said, “This is my ninth Churchwide Assembly as a voting member, having been the youngest voting member of the Churchwide Assembly in 1989 in Chicago. In 1990, I met with my synod’s assistant to the bishop, Pr. Edith Roberts, about my sense of call to ordained ministry. In the 1991 Churchwide Assembly, and from that point forward, I have been told consistently that I was not able to be a pastor in this church because I am gay and because I desire to be in a relationship. I have a mortgage. I am a nursing home administrator, a nurse. My father died of cancer. I have experienced the ending of a nine-year committed relationship. I am a single gay father to an eight-year-old little boy who I’ll be adopting next Tuesday on August 16. I worship every Sunday. To me, I sound like most everyone in this room who is living with life’s joys and struggles. This may well be my last Churchwide Assembly, pending this vote. I’m very disheartened by what I’m hearing here, and I struggle greatly with whether or not I can be here this week. Sixteen years later as a voting member I’m still being told that I’m not good enough. I feel more discrimination from my church than anywhere else in this world. How sad is that?”

The Rev. Robert L. Driesen [Upper Susquehanna Synod] spoke next: “I remind the assembly that The United Methodist Church, with which this assembly enthusiastically

entered into an interim agreement of Eucharistic hospitality rejected a departure from the historic teaching of the Church by an overwhelming plurality at their General Assembly. Likewise, our brothers and sisters in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada rejected a proposal to permit the ordination of persons in same-sex relationships, even in the face of their own civil government's decision to allow same-sex marriages. By voting to grant exceptions and departures from our current policies, elucidated in 'Vision and Expectations,' we separate ourselves not only from these communions but with much of historic Christianity, most of whom reject such commitments. They affect and bear witness to the faith that we all profess. They affect not only ourselves but the entire Church in all its diversity, which nonetheless seeks to be faithful to our Lord Jesus. I urge us to remember those to whom we have committed ourselves, including those in The Episcopal Church, currently caught in a desperate struggle over this issue, a decision on their part that has cut them off from many within their own communion and has fractured the worldwide Anglican communion, making it virtually impossible for them to focus on the mission of the Church because of their preoccupation with addressing the concerns raised by their recent action. Keep in mind all those who confess Jesus as Lord. Listen to their counsel. Learn from their struggles. Should we take the same action mandated by this amendment, we can expect fractures not only within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, but also with our ecumenical partners."

Time for debate on the substitute amendment having expired, the chair directed voting members to return to their seats for a vote.

The Rev. Julia C. Rademacher [Central/Southern Illinois Synod] rose to a point of order, questioning what would happen to Recommendation Two if this substitute motion were approved.

The chair stated that Recommendation Two would stand, because it had already been acted on by the assembly. He acknowledged that notice had been given of an intent to ask the assembly to reconsider and stated that reconsideration would be taken up later.

Presiding Bishop Hanson went on to remind voting members that a motion to substitute required a majority. He announced that, were the motion to substitute approved, he intended to rule that approval of the new main motion would require a two-thirds majority. He then called a vote on Pr. Moore's motion to substitute.

MOVED;
SECONDED;
DEFEATED:

YES-374; NO-617

To amend by substitution:

WHEREAS, the unity of the Church is a gift of the Holy Spirit, and does not hinge on complete agreement about such mysteries of human life as our sexuality, but on our faith in Jesus Christ and our openness to the Holy Spirit, who calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian Church; and

WHEREAS, a significant number of lay members and clergy of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America have seen the presence and fruits of the Holy Spirit in the lives of gay and lesbian persons who are single and others who are living in lifelong committed relationships of mutuality, fidelity, and respect, whose lives give daily testimony to the unconditional love of God in Jesus Christ in their families, congregations, workplaces, and communities; and

WHEREAS, some of these gay and lesbian persons already serve this church in ordained ministry or in other forms of rostered service; and

WHEREAS, the first-generation Church, in the face of great opposition from pious and loyal leaders and members, agreed to a more inclusive definition of

church membership that no longer required the Mosaic tradition of circumcision—a radical, history-changing decision based almost totally on the testimony of Peter, Paul, and others that they had seen in uncircumcised Gentiles the work of the Holy Spirit and on their conclusion: “We believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will” (Acts 15:11); and

WHEREAS, the Lutheran church has historically affirmed the centrality of the Gospel and Jesus Christ as the prism through which the Church is to look as it interprets Scripture, shapes its teaching, and proclaims the life-giving Good News of God’s unconditional love for all people in Jesus Christ; and

WHEREAS, any “exception” procedure for ordination, consecration, or commissioning of otherwise qualified candidates in lifelong committed relationships of mutuality, fidelity, and respect would be offensive and discriminatory to such gay and lesbian candidates, implying that they were somehow more “sinful” than any of the rest of us; and

WHEREAS, no congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is compelled to consider or call any particular candidate for a rostered position; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America there shall be no policy barrier to rostered service for otherwise qualified persons in same-gender covenanted relationships that are “mutual, chaste, and faithful”; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the appropriate churchwide unit, in consultation with the Conference of Bishops and through action of the Church Council, accordingly revise “Vision and Expectations,” “Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline,” and all other related documents governing policy and practice on this matter.

The chair then called upon Mr. Kai S. Swanson [Northern Illinois Synod] to present his substitute motion for Recommendation Three.

Mr. Swanson moved the following:

Moved;
Seconded:

WHEREAS, within this church we continue to share in its profession of faith a profound commitment to the Scripture as “the authoritative source and norm of its proclamation, faith, and life,” and

WHEREAS, faithful and committed members of this church differ in their understanding and interpretation of Scripture as it relates to the ordination, consecration, and commissioning of individuals in lifelong, same-gender relationships of mutuality, fidelity, and respect; and

WHEREAS, this assembly, in order that we might all live together faithfully, wishes to honor the faithful opinions articulated by various members of this church; and

WHEREAS, congregations have the authority to call the pastor of their choice from the approved roster of this church; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall take a neutral stance, neither in favor of nor prohibiting the ordination, consecration, and commissioning of otherwise qualified candidates in lifelong, same-gender committed relationships of mutuality, fidelity, and respect; and be it further

RESOLVED, that those congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America that choose to call or not to call otherwise qualified

candidates in lifelong, same-gender committed relationships of mutuality, fidelity, and respect shall both be seen as being faithful to the Word of God; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this assembly urge the appropriate churchwide unit to effect such modifications as may be necessary to bring the policies and practices of this church into conformity with this action by the April 2006 Church Council meeting.

As the resolution was being read, a number of visitors left the designated visitors' area of the plenary hall and entered the voting member area, where they stood in silence facing the voting members.

Presiding Bishop Hanson asked the visitors to return to the visitor area for the well-being and good order of the house. He reminded all present that there had been respectful conversation throughout the assembly and that the body had exercised careful, respectful attention to the rules of the assembly, both to rules regarding debate and to those regarding where in the hall members and visitors were invited to be. Presiding Bishop Hanson asked the visitors to respect the chair and to return to their places. The visitors did not honor the request of the presiding bishop.

The Rev. Paul A. Tidemann [Saint Paul Area Synod] rose to a point of personal privilege and moved that his colleague in ministry, Anita Hill, be allowed to address the assembly.

MOVED;

SECONDED: That Ms. Anita C. Hill be allowed to address the assembly.

The chair called for a vote.

The Rev. David W. Shockey [Indiana-Kentucky Synod] rose to a point of order, inquiring whether the vote would require a two-thirds majority. The chair ruled that a two-thirds majority would be required because it would effect a change in the rules of the assembly.

Ms. Cynthia H. Amick [South Carolina Synod] rose to request that the assembly stand in adjournment until the house could be cleared and that only voting members then be allowed to be present.

Presiding Bishop Hanson asked Ms. Amick if she intended to ask for a recess or for adjournment, and she stated that she was, in fact, asking for a recess.

She stated her request as a motion.

MOVED;

SECONDED: That the assembly stand in recess until such time as the hall could be cleared and that only voting members be allowed to be present in the hall.

The chair stated that there was already a motion on the floor that took precedence, the motion to grant Ms. Anita C. Hill the right to speak to the assembly.

An unidentified voting member rose to a point of order to inquire whether that motion were debatable. Presiding Bishop Hanson ruled that it was not.

Another unidentified voting member called for a point of order. The chair requested that only one point of order be raised at a time.

After consultation with the parliamentarian, the chair explained that the motion to recess to a time certain was privileged and thus took precedence, but that by attaching a new rule to it (that only voting members be allowed to be present in the hall), privilege had been removed. Thus, he had ruled that the previous motion regarding Ms. Hill took precedence.

Ms. Stephanie Olson [East-Central Synod of Wisconsin] rose to a point of order, stating her belief that the rules adopted at the beginning of the assembly had already restricted speaking to voting members, and thus she believed the motion to be out of order.

Presiding Bishop Hanson ruled that this was a motion to change the rules, and was thus in order.

Ms. Brittani A. Seagren [Nebraska Synod] rose to a point of order, stating her understanding that a motion to recess had precedence over a motion to change the rules.

The chair affirmed her understanding. He explained once again that, had the motion been limited to recessing to a time certain, it would take precedence, but that it had been complicated by the fact that the maker had included a rules change in the motion. He consulted with Parliamentarian David D. Swartling to see if there were a way to separate the motions.

After consultation, the chair ruled that the motion to recess was in order, and was privileged. If adopted by a majority, the assembly would be in recess. The motion regarding who might be seated in the hall would need to be taken up after the recess, in that it pertained to a rules change.

Presiding Bishop Hanson inquired of Ms. Amick whether she wanted to recess to a time certain. She replied that she wished to amend the motion to call for a recess until the visitors could be escorted out and the business of the assembly continued.

The chair informed her that she could not amend her motion once it belonged to the house. He stated that the motion had been to recess until the hall was cleared of visitors who were at the front of the plenary hall. He then expressed his preference for not perfecting motions from the chair.

An unidentified member rose to a point of privilege, asking whether it would be permissible to have the visitors stand, for the sake of safety and good order, expressing his belief that if asked to leave, the visitors would resist, and “we will have something here that none of us want.”

The presiding bishop responded that this would mean voting “no” to a recess and in favor of continuing debate.

The chair then called for a vote on the motion to recess until the house could be cleared, telling the assembly that a simple majority would be required.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

YES-359; NO-622

DEFEATED:

That the assembly stand in recess until such time as the hall can be cleared.

Presiding Bishop Hanson instructed the assembly that the motion to allow Ms. Anita C. Hill to speak was back on the floor.

The Rev. Sara A. Gausmann [Lower Susquehanna Synod] rose to ask for clarification of who Ms. Hill was, stating that members needed to know this before they voted.

Pr. Tidemann replied that she served as a pastor at Reformation Lutheran Church in Saint Paul, Minnesota, and was his colleague. He added that she was not on the roster of ordained ministers of the ELCA.

The Rev. Victor C. Langford III [Northwest Washington Synod] commented that he could appreciate the visitors coming into the hall, stating that they had a right to do as they wanted to do. However, he added, the assembly had a right to do what it wanted to do and had asked the visitors to leave, and they had refused the request. Presiding Bishop Hanson interjected that Pr. Langford was debating a motion. Pr. Langford insisted he was not, that he simply was expressing his concern about the presence of the visitors, and that he felt they should not be in the hall to “present intimidation to this body” and that their action should not be allowed.

When some members of the assembly applauded, the chair responded that, just as the assembly was asking the visitors to abide by the rules, so would he ask voting members to abide by the rules concerning applause. He asked the assembly to move to the vote on the motion pending.

The Rev. Keith L. Forni [Northern Illinois Synod] rose to a point of order, asking if, once the assembly had “reclaimed its agenda” the assembly would be able to hear a rereading of the substitute motion in its entirety. The chair ruled that it would be reread.

The chair returned to the motion to grant Ms. Anita C. Hill the right to address the assembly and called for the vote.

An unidentified voting member rose to a point of order, asking if the motion were debatable. After consultation with the parliamentarian, the chair ruled that it was debatable, since it was a motion to suspend the rules. The member asked to address the issue. He stated that to allow Ms. Hill to speak would be unwise because it would appear to be a reward for “disruptive and intimidating behavior.”

The chair then announced that the parliamentarian had overruled himself and that the motion was in fact not debatable. He called for the vote on the motion, stating that a two-thirds majority would be required.

MOVED;
SECONDED;
DEFEATED:

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED
YES-306; NO-688

That Ms. Anita C. Hill be allowed to address the assembly.

The chair then asked the assembly to stand and sing the hymn, “The Church of Christ in Every Age.”

After the hymn, the chair once again asked the visitors to return to the section of the hall to which they had been invited as part of the assembly. He expressed his disappointment with their action not to abide by the rules. He asked the body, given the “wonderful tone” of the discussion that day and the magnitude of the assembly’s work, to allow him to continue to preside and the assembly to continue to debate the recommendations before it. He expressed his belief that the assembly could model for the visitors compliance with the rules.

The Rev. Paul A. Tidemann [Saint Paul Area Synod] rose to a point of personal privilege to make a statement. The chair informed him that it would need to be related to a privileged request. Pr. Tidemann replied that the statement was what Anita Hill would have said had she been allowed to address the assembly. The chair ruled that this was not a privileged motion.

The Rev. Gladys G. Moore [New Jersey Synod] rose to make a motion to change the rules to alter the boundaries of the assembly, stating that she did not see how a silent witness could be viewed as intimidating.

Presiding Bishop Hanson clarified with Pr. Moore that her intent was to make the area in front of the podium an additional visitors' area. She concurred.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To extend the boundaries of the hall for visitors to include the area in front of the podium.

The chair then called for a vote, as the motion was not debatable. The Rev. David W. Shockey [Indiana-Kentucky Synod] rose to a point of information, asking whether the amended rule would allow anyone to stand at the front, including “. . . you know, Solid Rockers, anyone off the street?” The chair repeated the motion. Pr. Shockey questioned whether that meant only registered visitors, and Presiding Bishop Hanson responded affirmatively.

The chair called for a vote, informing the assembly that a two-thirds majority would be required.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

YES-350; NO-601

DEFEATED: To extend the boundaries of the hall for visitors to include the area in front of the podium.

The chair commented that the assembly had now demonstrated that it did not want to change the rules and did not want to recess. He expressed confidence that the assembly had the maturity to go on with the agenda, and that he as chair had the capacity to guide the assembly through the work before it. He appealed for continued respectful listening and debate.

The Rev. Victor C. Langford III [Northwest Washington Synod] addressed the chair, stating that while he did not disagree with the chair's appeal for respect, he had trouble accepting the presence of visitors in non-visitor areas. He emphasized that the visitors wanted the assembly to accept their presence where they were, which was out of order. He expressed his feeling that the visitors should demonstrate the same qualities of fairness, justice, honesty, and integrity that they were asking for themselves and should show cooperation by accepting the ruling of the chair and vacating the front of the hall.

Presiding Bishop Hanson responded that he had twice asked the visitors to do so and that he shared Pr. Langford's disappointment with the visitors' unwillingness to heed the chair. He stated that he thought that the assembly was confronted with a series of choices, none of which he saw as good, and that the work of the assembly was best served by continuing. The presiding bishop commented that as a parent of six children he had learned that there were some behaviors that were best dealt with by ignoring them and going on with the work that needed to be done. He characterized the current situation as one of those moments and asked the assembly to concur with his wisdom in the matter.

The Rev. Timothy J. Swenson [Western North Dakota Synod] rose to a point of personal privilege.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To table all business regarding Recommendation Three and to continue with other items of business until the scheduled adjournment for the day.

The Rev. Susan K. Ericsson [Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod] rose to a point of privilege to state that she was “in awe” of the presiding bishop’s ability to lead the assembly through the matter and of his “non-anxious presence.” She stated, “If you can do it, we can do it.” The chair ruled her out of order, but added, “It sure was fun to hear.”

The chair called for a vote on the motion to table, informing the assembly that a majority vote was required.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

YES-357; NO-619

DEFEATED:

To table all business regarding Recommendation Three and to continue with other items of business until the scheduled adjournment for the day.

The chair then asked the assembly to vote on his motion to continue with the agenda.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

YES-869; NO-117

CARRIED:

To continue discussion of the agenda where the assembly left off, mindful of our shared disappointment that our guests have chosen not to abide by the rules of the house.

Presiding Bishop Hanson asked Mr. Swanson to reread his substitute motion. After he had done so, the chair pointed out that in reading the motion aloud, Mr. Swanson had changed the verb in the last “RESOLVED” clause from “*direct* the appropriate churchwide unit” (as it had been printed) to “*urge* the appropriate churchwide unit.” The maker confirmed that this was his intent. The chair affirmed that the change was his right as maker.

Mr. Swanson then addressed his motion, saying, “As Thursday’s discourse indicated, there is a lot of information for us to consider, and there are good people on all sides of these issues who feel earnestly and speak passionately. They also challenge us with a wealth of sometimes confusing information. As is the case with many very important questions in life, Scripture has much to say on both sides. Leviticus itself, as we have heard, says both ‘no’ and ‘yes.’ And just as I try to hold tight to the whole mass of the Bible, I recall Martin Luther, who said, ‘Therefore, if the adversaries press the Scriptures against Christ, we urge Christ against the Scriptures.’ Reverend Chair, one message we have heard all week long has been clear and consistent, has been completely unequivocal: On Monday, you reminded us that Christ said, ‘Why are you afraid, you of little faith?’ Later, Isaiah chided us, ‘Do not be afraid.’ And our youth chose as their theme ‘No Fear’—much better than the bumper sticker I’ve seen too often, ‘Fear this.’ It has been clear all week that God does not want us to act in fear or out of fear, since, frankly, faith trumps fear. And so I would ask all voting members this: However you intend to vote, pause and examine for one moment why you are voting that way. If in sober and honest reflection you discern that any vote on any question—including this proposal—is motivated by fear, please change your vote. I’ve heard

too much fear this week, about hymnals, and headlines, and bishops, and churchwide, and saddest of all about each other. Please, take Christ's admonition, and before you vote, replace your fear with a still greater measure of faith, especially faith in each other. That's why I support this motion, and I hope you will too."

The Rev. Larry C. Kassebaum [Grand Canyon Synod] spoke against the substitute motion and against the original recommendation, saying "I [oppose these] based on what I've seen and observed so far in this assembly. On the opening night we gathered together and spent something like four hours going over the rules, making sure that there weren't exceptions so that for only 1000 of us we could function with good order. We wrestled with that and we came up with the rules that we needed to function together. Now we're moving forward and talking about having a church take a neutral position on rules, guidelines, that will seek to give guidance to 5,000,000—seems like there could be a bit of a problem. Secondly, I would say that we spoke earlier today about the issue of unity. Well, what creates unity? Unity comes from working together on the same thing. The reason that we adopt the rules is so we can have unity and know how it is that we will guide our time together. We need that desperately, and the events of this afternoon have only served to reinforce that. I would also talk about the language used four years ago after an assembly such as this voted 900 to 100-and-some to move ahead with the study. We called that a 'mandate.' It was helpful to our leaders, our bishops, our offices in Chicago: 'We have a mandate to do this. We didn't all like it, but we have a mandate to do it.' Recently we polled our congregations involved in the study. They responded greatly. If you take the percentages, something like over 14,000, I think, gave us a bit of a mandate. They told us where they wanted this to go and what they wanted us to do. All we need to do is listen. We've heard about Scripture, we've heard about tradition, we've talked about listening to people. I think we've had 14,000 people telling us they want something, and I don't think it's this motion, so I would move its defeat."

Ms. Karen W. Johnson [Sierra Pacific Synod] spoke in favor of the motion to substitute, saying, "I have been a Lutheran all my life, and I have noticed that God has called many, many different kinds of people into ministry: men, women, younger, older, outgoing, reserved, good singers, not-such-good singers, first-, second-, and third-career, former engineers, veterinarians, teachers, married, single, divorced, and, as we've heard here on this assembly floor, pastors who are in faithful, committed same-gender relationships, pastors who are now, and have been in the past, serving congregations as faithful, wise, and courageous leaders. Who are we to question whom God has gifted and called as leaders for this church? We have candidacy committees, seminaries, intern sites, bishops, call committees, and other parts of an extended process to test candidates and pastors for their gifts and for the fruits of the Spirit: love, kindness, joy, peace, goodness, patience, faithfulness, and humility. I look forward to the time when our church will accept and welcome with joy and thanksgiving the gifts of ministry which God has given through our pastors and candidates who are in faithful, committed, same-gender relationships. But for now, I support the adoption of this substitute motion on a neutral policy so that we may trust congregations and synods as they call the most qualified candidates for their ministries."

Mr. Charles E. Kalthorn [Metropolitan New York Synod] moved to close debate on this motion and on all matters before the house.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To close debate on this and all matters before the house.

Presiding Bishop Hanson explained that an affirmative vote would close debate and move the house directly to a vote on the Swanson substitute. If the substitute did not prevail, the main motion would be on the floor, which would preclude hearing and debating the additional amendments and substitutes numbered three through eight. He reminded voting members that a two-thirds majority would be required to end debate.

An unidentified voting member rose to a point of order, asking if an affirmative vote would mean that the assembly could no longer debate Recommendation Three. The chair confirmed his assumption that an affirmative vote would close all debate on matters related to Recommendation Three.

Mr. John L. Seng [Northeastern Ohio Synod] asked whether the substitute motion would require a simple or a two-thirds majority. The chair ruled the question out of order until after the vote on closing debate.

Presiding Bishop Hanson then called for the vote on closing debate.

MOVED; **TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED**
SECONDED; **YES-461; NO-511**
DEFEATED: To close debate on this and all matters before the house.

The Rev. Gerald L. Mansholt, bishop of the Central States Synod, then called the question on the substitute only.

MOVED;
SECONDED: To close debate on the Swanson substitute motion.

The chair called for the vote.

MOVED; **TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED**
SECONDED; **YES-872; NO-106**
CARRIED: To close debate on the Swanson substitute motion.

The motion to close debate carried. Debate being ended, the chair called for a vote on the substitute motion. He reminded the assembly that the motion to amend required a simple majority, while it would be his ruling that the motion itself would then require a two-thirds majority for passage.

MOVED; **YES-297; NO-681**
SECONDED;
DEFEATED:

WHEREAS, within this church we continue to share in its profession of faith a profound commitment to the Scripture as “the authoritative source and norm of its proclamation, faith, and life,” and

WHEREAS, faithful and committed members of this church differ in their understanding and interpretation of Scripture as it relates to the ordination, consecration, and commissioning of individuals in lifelong, same-gender relationships of mutuality, fidelity, and respect; and

WHEREAS, this assembly, in order that we might all live together faithfully, wishes to honor the faithful opinions articulated by various members of this church; and

WHEREAS, congregations have the authority to call the pastor of their choice from the approved roster of this church; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall take a neutral stance, neither in favor of nor prohibiting the ordination, consecration, and commissioning of otherwise qualified candidates in lifelong, same-gender committed relationships of mutuality, fidelity, and respect; and be it further

RESOLVED, that those congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America that choose to call or not to call otherwise qualified candidates in lifelong, same-gender committed relationships of mutuality, fidelity, and respect shall both be seen as being faithful to the Word of God; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this assembly urge the appropriate churchwide unit to effect such modifications as may be necessary to bring the policies and practices of this church into conformity with this action by the April 2006 Church Council meeting.

Mr. Steven R. Chapman [Northwest Washington Synod] rose to withdraw his substitute motion (number 3F of the *ad hoc* committee report).

The Rev. Virginia K. Georgulus [Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod] then presented her proposed amendment to Recommendation Three.

MOVED;

SECONDED:

To amend by deletion:

RESOLVED, that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall:

...

3. Adopt the following bylaws to permit implementation of this limited process for exceptions to the normative policies of this church:

7.31.18. Ordination for Particular Service. For pastoral reasons . . . and upon endorsement by the Synod Council, a synodical bishop shall ~~seek an exception from the Conference of Bishops to permit~~ the assignment of a candidate. . . . Likewise, upon recommendation by a synodical bishop to the Synod Council and upon endorsement by the Synod Council, a synodical bishop shall ~~seek through the Conference of Bishops~~ under policy and procedures approved by the Church Council ~~to maintain on the roster of ordained ministers . . . [with the remainder of this proposed bylaw unchanged].~~

7.52.16. Approval for Particular Service. For pastoral reasons . . . and upon endorsement by the Synod Council, a synodical bishop shall ~~seek an exception from the Conference of Bishops to permit~~ the assignment of a candidate. . . . Likewise, upon recommendation by a synodical bishop to the Synod Council and upon endorsement by the Synod Council, a synodical bishop shall ~~seek through the Conference of Bishops~~ under policy and procedures approved by the Church Council ~~to maintain on the roster of associates in ministry, diaconal ministers, or deaconesses . . . [with the remainder of this proposed bylaw unchanged].~~

Speaking to her amendment, Pr. Georgulus said, “The candidacy process of this church is already rigorous. A candidate goes through numerous levels of approval throughout their seminary training and must finally be approved by the seminary faculty and, for a third time, by their candidacy committee in order to be approved for ordination. Synod bishops and, at times, Synod Councils, are involved in the process of call and ordination of all candidates. We rely on our synodical candidacy committees, seminaries, bishops, and in some cases, Synod Councils, to determine whether a candidate is a good match, adequately prepared, and ready for the ministry of Word and Sacrament. To require additional approval of a candidate by the Conference of Bishops implies that our current candidacy process is insufficient. Congregations need pastors. To require that the Conference of Bishops approve each gay and lesbian candidate adds a layer of approval that is unnecessary and would be onerous both for the candidate and for the conference. We trust our synods in matters of oversight of the roster already. Our synodical bishops are entrusted with the discipline process for rostered leaders. Synod Councils approve on-leave-from-call status. Imagine the implications to our candidates who are approved through the regular process, additionally approved by the Synod Council, called to a congregation, and then denied by the Conference of Bishops for the sake of the church. After the usual criteria have been met, we should let the call to a congregation be the test, not the Conference of Bishops.”

Mr. Charles E. Kalthorn [Metropolitan New York Synod] spoke against the amendment and the main motion: “My main reason [for opposition] is I’m still hoping we refer to Scripture, so I’d just like to share a Scripture with you from St. Paul’s guidance to Timothy on overseers and deacons: ‘Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task. Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. He must not be a recent convert,’ and so on and so forth. This is guidance that someone who walked with Jesus at his right hand is giving instruction to someone who is going to go out into the church, among the flock. We as Lutherans have always looked to Scripture for this. Have we lost that?”

Ms. Allison A. Guttu [Metropolitan New York Synod] supported the amendment, saying, “Thirty-five years ago we did not institute an exception process for the ordination of women to ‘try it out in special circumstances.’ We did not require additional steps for approval of a female candidate. We did not say that there was something fundamentally wrong with women, that women were somehow ‘less than,’ perhaps not up to serving as pastors. Our predecessor church bodies did not say that women needed more scrutiny than male candidates or that the presidents and bishops of the ALC or LCA would have to get together to consider whether or not one particular woman who was deemed qualified by the appropriate, lengthy candidacy process and had a call should be given an exception to be ordained. We never had a trial period to see if having female pastors was a good thing. If you are a woman, I ask you to consider just for a moment how you would have felt if the church had set an exceptions policy with additional hoops for only women to jump through, including approval by an all-male Conference of Bishops. What candidate would have even wanted to try? I speak in favor of the motion. I speak in favor of removing the extra layer of discrimination, and I thank the maker for calling attention to the discriminatory nature of the current ‘Vision and Expectations’ policy.”

Mr. Stephen C. Corby [Southwestern Minnesota Synod] spoke in opposition: “In 1987 I was privileged to be in Columbus, Ohio, at the creation of this church. When we were

created, and I fully supported it, we talked about being interdependent, and I believe that the Church Council in this case has wisely put in an interdependence with the Conference of Bishops so that we do not become a federation of synods, and that one synod will act on its own, and have no check or balance. I oppose this amendment for those reasons.”

The Rev. G. Scott Cady [New England Synod], voicing support, stated, “I support this and all motions that open some window for change. This church has consistently prayed to and through the Holy Spirit to raise up leaders. We have vacant pulpits and altars in congregations all over this country. We have people crying out for pastoral care. We want people to come to this church who have the spiritual gifts to preach the Gospel, distribute the sacraments, and care for the sick. The Holy Spirit has said, ‘All right, here they are. Here they are.’ Are we now going to say, ‘Thanks, Holy Spirit, but we prefer something else’? If the Scriptures are clear about anything, it is that God moves in unquestionably strange, baffling ways. The Spirit was unsettling to all the closest people to Jesus from the very beginning, and has continued to do that all the way through the history of the Church—and continues to do it now. We may not understand how all of this fits in with God’s plan in some overall way, but we asked God to send us people to preach Christ’s good grace to the world and to the Church. Here they are!”

The Rev. Steven L. Ullestad, bishop of the Northeastern Iowa Synod, moved the previous question.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To end debate.

The chair called for a vote on the motion to end debate.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

CARRIED: To end debate.

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

YES-923; NO-57

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson informed the assembly that the motion now on the floor was the Georgulus amendment.

The Rev. George E. Keck [Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod] rose to a point of order. The chair ruled him out of order but permitted him to continue with his comments. Pr. Keck argued that, because he saw the amendment as creating a change from a churchwide polity that would instead create a “confederation of synods,” it should require a two-thirds vote.

The chair responded that under *Robert’s Rules of Order* the amendment would require a majority and that he would rule on whether a two-thirds majority would be required on the main motion once it had been perfected. He called on the assembly to vote on the amendment.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

DEFEATED:

To amend by deletion:

RESOLVED, that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall:

...

3. Adopt the following bylaws to permit implementation of this limited process for exceptions to the normative policies of this church:

7.31.18. Ordination for Particular Service. For pastoral reasons . . . and upon endorsement by the Synod Council, a synodical bishop shall ~~seek an exception from the Conference of Bishops to permit~~ the assignment of a candidate. . . . Likewise, upon recommendation by a synodical bishop to the Synod Council and upon endorsement by the Synod Council, a synodical bishop shall ~~seek through the Conference of Bishops~~ under policy and procedures approved by the Church Council—~~to maintain on the roster of ordained ministers . . .~~ [with the remainder of this proposed bylaw unchanged].

7.52.16. Approval for Particular Service. For pastoral reasons . . . and upon endorsement by the Synod Council, a synodical bishop shall ~~seek an exception from the Conference of Bishops to permit~~ the assignment of a candidate. . . . Likewise, upon recommendation by a synodical bishop to the Synod Council and upon endorsement by the Synod Council, a synodical bishop shall ~~seek through the Conference of Bishops~~ under policy and procedures approved by the Church Council—~~to maintain on the roster of associates in ministry, diaconal ministers, or deaconesses . . .~~ [with the remainder of this proposed bylaw unchanged].

Mr. Eric M. Peterson [Northwest Synod of Wisconsin] then presented his proposed amendment.

MOVED;

SECONDED:

To amend by deletion and insertion:

RESOLVED, that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall:

...

3. Adopt the following bylaws to permit implementation of this limited process for exceptions to the normative policies of this church:

7.31.18. Ordination for Particular Service. For pastoral reasons . . . and upon endorsement by the Synod Council, a synodical bishop shall ~~seek an exception from the Conference of Bishops to~~ consult with the presiding bishop [to] permit the assignment of a candidate. . . . Likewise, upon recommendation by a synodical bishop to the Synod Council and upon endorsement by the Synod Council, a synodical bishop shall ~~seek through the Conference of Bishops~~ consult with the presiding bishop—under policy and procedures approved by the Church Council—~~to maintain on the roster of ordained ministers . . .~~ [with the remainder of this proposed bylaw unchanged].

7.52.16. Approval for Particular Service. For pastoral reasons . . . and upon endorsement by the Synod Council, a synodical bishop shall ~~seek an exception from the Conference of Bishops to~~ consult with the presiding bishop [to] permit the assignment of a candidate. . . . Likewise, upon recommendation by a synodical bishop to the Synod Council and upon endorsement by the Synod

Council, a synodical bishop shall seek through the Conference of Bishops consult with the presiding bishop—under policy and procedures approved by the Church Council—to maintain on the roster of associates in ministry, diaconal ministers, or deaconesses . . . [with the remainder of this proposed bylaw unchanged].

Speaking to his amendment, Mr. Peterson said, “Brothers and sisters in Christ, grace to you on this day, and peace that I can bring for you. I want to speak about good order, so Reverend Secretary, it is you and I again, I see. But I don’t want to talk about procedural order, I want to talk about within this process of candidacy. I believe in the priesthood of all believers. I remember in 1997 in Philadelphia when I stood on the floor as a synod youth member, we talked about the historic episcopate, and our conversations with the Episcopalian Church, and the members of the seminary who were deeply moved and felt called by God to not be a part of that episcopate. We created a process of unusual ordination for them. I support that. I do not believe in the episcopate, and I stood with Word Alone—my congregation is a Word Alone congregation—and we said we do not believe seminarians have to be ordained in this manner. Well, today we’re asking in this resolution, should it pass, that we create an exception, another ordination in unusual circumstances, and I believe it is only fair and just and in good order for this church to make that process equal to the one for those people who seek to be ordained outside the episcopate. And so I would say to you, my friends, to vote ‘yes’ on this amendment, and I will ask each of you, no matter how you feel regarding the issue of gay and lesbian ordination, or the exception, to do it, so that should this pass, we have an equal and just proposal for that ordination. This is a good amendment, and it is good government, which is what this body must have. We are the supreme legislative authority. Let us enact today good governance over our ordination process.”

There being no speakers opposed to the amendment, Presiding Bishop Hanson recognized Ms. Anna K. Lindquist [South-Central Synod of Wisconsin], who spoke in favor: “Constant throughout my education of what it means to be a Lutheran, an identity of which I’m very proud, was the firm belief that our God is a God of love and compassion who gave his only Son to die for us. Our Gospel is not a gospel of discrimination, and the Bible is not meant to be used to justify our lack of diversity. God is bigger than our fears, and he has blessed us with many opportunities to become more diverse, and this is a step in the right direction. We are a growing and changing church in a growing and changing time. As someone who plans on remaining part of this church because I love being a part of this church, when I look to the church of the future with hope for the church of today, I rejoice in a church that actually demonstrates love and provides hope in its words and deeds. I think that it’s only fair to provide them the opportunity to be ordained and to receive calls. I think this is an important step forward in our faith.”

The Rev. Gerald L. Mansholt, bishop of the Central States Synod, moved the previous question.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To end debate.

The chair called for a vote on the motion to end debate.

MOVED;
SECONDED;
CARRIED:

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED
YES-894; NO-78

To end debate.

Debate being ended, Presiding Bishop Hanson called on the assembly to vote on the Peterson amendment.

MOVED;
SECONDED;
DEFEATED:

YES-367; NO-617

To amend by deletion and insertion:

RESOLVED, that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall:

...

3. Adopt the following bylaws to permit implementation of this limited process for exceptions to the normative policies of this church:

7.31.18. Ordination for Particular Service. For pastoral reasons . . . and upon endorsement by the Synod Council, a synodical bishop shall seek an exception from the Conference of Bishops to consult with the presiding bishop [to] permit the assignment of a candidate . . . Likewise, upon recommendation by a synodical bishop to the Synod Council and upon endorsement by the Synod Council, a synodical bishop shall seek through the Conference of Bishops consult with the presiding bishop—under policy and procedures approved by the Church Council—to maintain on the roster of ordained ministers . . . [with the remainder of this proposed bylaw unchanged].

7.52.16. Approval for Particular Service. For pastoral reasons . . . and upon endorsement by the Synod Council, a synodical bishop shall seek an exception from the Conference of Bishops to consult with the presiding bishop [to] permit the assignment of a candidate . . . Likewise, upon recommendation by a synodical bishop to the Synod Council and upon endorsement by the Synod Council, a synodical bishop shall seek through the Conference of Bishops consult with the presiding bishop—under policy and procedures approved by the Church Council—to maintain on the roster of associates in ministry, diaconal ministers, or deaconesses . . . [with the remainder of this proposed bylaw unchanged].

The Rev. Ann M. Tiemeyer [Metropolitan New York Synod] then presented her proposed amendment.

MOVED;
SECONDED:

To amend by addition:

5. [. . .] adopt policies and procedures for the implementation of bylaws 7.31.18. and 7.52.16. by April 30, 2006; [with the remainder unchanged].

Speaking to her amendment, Pr. Tiemeyer said, "Once this recommendation has passed, it will be critical to implement it in an orderly way in order to live faithfully together and to rebuild trust. The date in my amendment of April 30 is in line with the second Church Council meeting following this assembly, allowing time for the council to consult with the Conference of Bishops, as required by this recommendation. We, as the assembly, are the highest voting authority of this church, and therefore I believe it is our responsibility to set this date of implementation so that the Church Council does not need to be caught up in debating over the timing of implementation. I urge you to support the amendment."

The Rev. Gerald L. Mansholt, bishop of the Central States Synod, called the question.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To end debate.

The chair called for a vote on the motion to end debate.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

CARRIED: To end debate.

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

YES-930; NO-44

Debate being ended, Presiding Bishop Hanson called on the assembly to vote on the Tiemeyer amendment.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

CARRIED:

To amend by addition:

YES-499; NO-482

5. [. . .] adopt policies and procedures for the implementation of bylaws 7.31.18. and 7.52.16. by April 30, 2006; [with the remainder unchanged].

The amendment prevailed. The Rev. Bobbie J. Blackburn [Florida-Bahamas Synod] presented her proposed amendment.

MOVED;

SECONDED:

To amend the third "RESOLVED" by deletion and substitution:

RESOLVED, that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall:

1. Affirm and uphold the standards for rostered leaders as set forth in "Vision and Expectations";
- ~~2. Create a process for ...;~~
- ~~3. Adopt the following ...;~~
- ~~4. Amend bylaw 20.71.11. ...;~~
- ~~5. Direct that the Church Council...; and~~
- ~~6. Direct that this process be evaluated periodically....~~
2. Acknowledge the broad spectrum of points of view and deeply held beliefs of members of our congregations regarding the ordination of homosexual persons in same-sex, committed relationships and the absence, as yet, of a social statement upon which to base a change in current policy; and

3. Commit to continued study and dialogue and to a process for changing policy in response to Churchwide Assembly-adopted social statements.

In speaking to her amendment, Pr. Blackburn stated, “I bring this before the house in response to many conversations with people and congregations in the Florida-Bahamas Synod and others who are at this point wanting to move forward and to continue to dialogue and to study, but who do not want to take a preemptive action that doesn’t appear to those outside our church that we have done the appropriate deliberation. Our church can move incredibly quickly, as we in the Florida-Bahamas Synod experienced when we had hurricanes last year. People were here immediately to help. Our church can also seem to move incredibly slowly. I delight in the quickness of [this] church when necessary. I also applaud the slowness of [this] church when such important matters are at stake. My brothers and sisters who are gay and lesbian deserve to have this matter studied very carefully and brought forward in such a way that it is defensible and will not later have the rug pulled out from underneath it.”

Mr. Eric M. Peterson [Northwest Synod of Wisconsin] spoke against the amendment: “I rise in opposition, my friends, just based simply on what the good secretary said in one of his reports to us, and that is that there has not been a Churchwide Assembly of this church that has ever *not* had the issue of homosexuality before it—sometimes not in regards to this specific question. This church has been in a constant tension, in the good Lutheran fashion, of talking about this issue. Now our friends and our brothers and sisters in Christ, some of whom are standing in front of you, some of whom are in the congregations back home, are waiting for this church to say, ‘Shall we live out what I believe and what my conscience bears witness to be the Gospel of Jesus Christ, that “all of you should drink of this cup and do it in remembrance of me”?’ Or shall we go home and say, ‘We are going to delay yet again . . . we are going to delay yet again?’ We talk about a radical Gospel for a radical church. God doesn’t call us to the waters of Baptism so that we can stand on the sidelines, stick our little toe in, see if we like it, ‘let’s go see if God does the things that we want,’ you know, and maybe make a decision 10, 15 years down the road. No, he calls us to Baptism, and Christ reaches right out of the waters and brings us down in with him, and says that we are his, and that God owns us and loves us, and that his Gospel will protect us and give us a promise. My friends, this is exactly the action that no one wants here. We know it. Our calling the previous question proves to it. Let’s make a decision. I believe that it is time for us to make a decision on this issue, and I believe it is time for us to make a decision in a way that says we will be obedient to the Gospel of Jesus Christ that we proclaim.”

Mr. John D. Nevergall [Northwestern Ohio Synod] spoke in favor of the amendment: “When the 2001 assembly in Indianapolis called for action on this issue, as I understand it, that call was indeed for the type of discussion that we are having today. However, conversations throughout [this] church over the four years since that time have revealed that debating policy without a foundation will be extremely difficult, if not impossible. John Stuart Mill tells us, ‘It is the duty of governments and of individuals to form the truest opinions they can, to form them carefully, and to never impose them upon others unless they are quite sure of being right.’ Firmly built on the hermeneutic of Law, viewed through the lens of the Gospel, we as the assembly must work to build a proper foundation before anything else. Such a foundation will be formed through the creation of a social statement on human sexuality. The process leading to the creation of a social statement is a difficult one. Truly, it is a journey of which we cannot see the end. This is, however, the only way to bring proper and dignified debate to an issue that commands nothing less.”

The Rev. Kristin M. Foster [Northeastern Minnesota Synod] opposed the amendment, saying, “I think back 35 years ago if we had decided we didn’t have enough congregations that wanted to call women as pastors at that time to warrant allowing them to be ordained, we’d probably still be studying it. My third congregation, when I was being considered for a call, was not unanimous in calling me. In fact, several people voted against, because almost 20 years after our vote to ordain women they were still convinced that it was wrong to do so. But those same people who voted against me couldn’t stand it now if I left. So sometimes it is experience that changes people. I think we have a better way than studying more and that is the way that we are all a part of here. That’s why I’d like to commend everyone here today. Look at the people here in front of you. They are here not as a threat but as a promise. They are really here as a reminder of the powerful work that all of your congregations have done in calling people through the Gospel, enlightening them with the Holy Spirit’s gifts and that Holy Spirit sanctifying and keeping us in true faith. It is such a privilege to see the fruit of your very traditional work in bringing the reality of that third article of the Catechism into your congregations and your worshiping assemblies. I thank you for your courage and love in being here with us and completing the circle of communion, and all of you here for your good work, which you can continue in confidence that God will use it to call the people God will call.”

The Rev. Patrick V. Downes [Delaware-Maryland Synod] called the previous question.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To end debate.

The chair called for a vote on the motion to end debate.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

CARRIED: To end debate.

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

YES-958; NO-33

Debate being closed, Presiding Bishop Hanson called for a vote on Pr. Blackburn’s amendment.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

DEFEATED:

YES-184; NO-808

To amend the third “RESOLVED” by deletion and substitution:

RESOLVED, that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall:

1. Affirm and uphold the standards for rostered leaders as set forth in “Vision and Expectations”;
- ~~2. Create a process for ...;~~
- ~~3. Adopt the following ...;~~
- ~~4. Amend bylaw 20.71.11. ...;~~
- ~~5. Direct that the Church Council...; and~~
- ~~6. Direct that this process be evaluated periodically....~~
2. Acknowledge the broad spectrum of points of view and deeply held beliefs of members of our congregations regarding the ordination of homosexual persons in same-sex, committed relationships and the absence, as yet, of a social statement upon which to base a change in current policy; and

3. Commit to continued study and dialogue and to a process for changing policy in response to Churchwide Assembly-adopted social statements.

An unidentified voting member rose to a point of order and offered a motion to extend the plenary session.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To extend the plenary session until such time as all matters regarding the recommendations on sexuality have been addressed and the assembly has heard from our ecumenical guests here to greet the assembly.

The chair interpreted the motion to encompass the move to reconsider that had been brought before the house, as it was related to the sexuality recommendations. He then called for a vote on the motion to extend the session.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

CARRIED:

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

YES-838; NO-138

To extend the plenary session until such time as all matters regarding the recommendations on sexuality have been addressed and the assembly has heard from our ecumenical guests here to greet the assembly.

Presiding Bishop Hanson then called upon Mr. Louis M. Hesse [Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod] to present his proposed substitute amendment.

MOVED;

SECONDED:

To amend by substitution:

WHEREAS, the ELCA Church Council adopted the statements “Vision and Expectations: Ordained Ministers in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America” (1990) and “Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline” (1993); therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the 2005 ELCA Churchwide Assembly continue to accept the standards for rostered leaders in “Vision and Expectations” and “Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline” and call for their fair and consistent application for all rostered leaders of the ELCA.

Mr. Hesse addressed his substitute: “I believe in the forgiveness of sins. My positions are fairly well known here. In Matthew 5:37 our Lord Jesus Christ says, ‘Let your “yes” be “yes” and your “no” be “no.” Anything else comes from the evil one.’ I told my task force colleagues that if they could make the case I would support a total change in our rostering and blessing positions. The case has not been made. I’ve heard a lot of talk about Gospel here today, and I’m beginning to wonder if I’m in the right church. A Gospel of full acceptance, accepting everyone as they are—what does that say about sinfulness? What does it say about the crucifixion of Jesus Christ? What was that all about? I believe in the forgiveness of sins. The Gospel is about divine redemption, forgiveness. Pride, envy, greed, lust, anger, gluttony, sloth—I’ve got them all, deeply embedded within me. Are you going to accept the behaviors that flow from those orientations, accepting all orientations as they are, as our young people wish us to do? I was born that way: pride, envy, greed, lust, anger,

gluttony, sloth. What does this church say about sinfulness and repentance? Are we antinomian? That's a dirty word around here, I think. The case has not been made. It has not been made from Scripture, it really hasn't been made from science, and it has not been made for the health and well-being of the community."

Ms. Janice L. Miller [Rocky Mountain Synod], speaking against Mr. Hesse's substitute, said, "As we discuss requirements for ordination today, my congregation would like you to know an extraordinarily gifted candidate for the rostered ministry of this church. Diana demonstrates a passion for ministry with the poor in our downtown neighborhood. She speaks out against injustice and empowers others to live their faith. Diana recently graduated from seminary, and her call to ordination has been affirmed by fellow students, teachers, family, her home congregation, where she will preach on Sunday, and in my congregation, where she served as an intern. Her preaching, her gracious worship leadership, her love for our members, all mark her as a promising pastor for this church. But Diana is also called to other things: to motherhood, and, as a lesbian woman, called to live in a loving, lifelong relationship. In this church she cannot live her life faithful to these callings. So this spring, just weeks before graduation, Diana withdrew from the candidacy process so she could live her life with integrity. Nowhere in Scripture does Jesus talk about homosexuality. What we do hear in the pew week after week are stories of Jesus breaking down barriers, challenging religious rules of his day. Diana, and many who have spoken here this week, honor us by trusting us to hear their stories of pain and frustration as they try to serve this church, which is in need of pastors. I urge you to honor their trust by voting to remove barriers so that congregations faithfully engaged in the call process are permitted to consider candidates like Diana. In my congregational context in central Denver, Diana's presence in our pulpit has been an evangelical message of good news."

The Rev. Rodney L. Ronneberg [Delaware-Maryland Synod] supported the substitute, saying, "This amendment reflects a true centrist view on ordination. We already have the practice of ordaining only chaste homosexuals, a practice which is fair and balanced. This is the same practice applied to those who are single who seek ordination in this church. To alter what is already recognized as current practice by allowing the exception of ordaining active homosexuals will have the effect of opening a floodgate to anyone who wishes to live in any kind of an alternative lifestyle, from being sexually active while single to those who live in common-law relationships, and beyond. We are all aware that the world is watching us this week. We've been reminded of that any number of times. I already know that I have anxious parishioners awaiting the outcome of what we are contemplating and discerning at this assembly. I wonder what will we say to the folks at home once we leave this place. What we have before us in this amendment represents what is true to the Scriptures, what we believe, teach, and confess. And while we may speak of our Lutheran paradoxes, whether it be Law-Gospel, creation-redemption, saint-sinner, hidden God-revealed God, there are no Lutheran paradoxes regarding morals or ethics. To advocate anything else which does not represent a middle ground would suggest sweeping changes in our teaching on marriage, family, and ordination will cause phenomenal confusion for the folks back home, because what we have taught them about the truths of Scripture and the practices we embrace as Lutheran Christians will give way to a different view of the Bible and of how people, especially pastors, are to live."

Ms. Constance M. Kilmark [South-Central Synod of Wisconsin] opposed the substitute: "We've done many new things in our church, some of which have been quite controversial. There was a time in our church when some Lutheran congregations opposed slavery, and we had a war about that. We succeeded, even though it's based in Scripture that slavery is

acceptable. We already ordain gay and lesbian people, and all the people that I've heard speaking today against allowing committed same-gender relationships would be unaffected by what that means, and so we condemn people in our ordained ministry to live for decades without the loving support of a partner. The life of a pastor is already a lonely life. Martin Luther very quickly abandoned celibacy for the sake of love and support, and I think he was right in doing that. We say in Genesis that it is not good for man or people in general to be alone. Having a supportive life partner both supports the mission, life, and life of a pastor, and, most importantly perhaps, models stability for all of God's people. Promiscuity is the sin on which we all agree. If I were wrong on this issue, I would rather be wrong on the side of grace, and come before the throne of God having erred on the side of generosity and ask forgiveness for my error. But in the meantime, I want to be generous and I want our church to be generous and wide open."

Ms. Jennifer L. Nagel [Minneapolis Area Synod] moved the previous question.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To end debate.

The chair called for a vote on the motion to end debate. Ms. Kim R. Wiest [Montana Synod] rose to a point of personal privilege to clarify what was being voted upon. The chair specified that the vote was to end debate and that, if debate were ended, Mr. Hesse's substitute amendment would then be on the floor. If at that point the amendment were approved, it would become the action before the house, open again for debate. He stressed again, however, that the vote about to be taken concerned only ending debate, and that a two-thirds majority would be required.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

CARRIED: To end debate.

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

YES-937; NO-37

Debate being ended, the chair called for a vote on Mr. Hesse's substitute motion.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

DEFEATED:

To amend by substitution:

WHEREAS, the ELCA Church Council adopted the statements "Vision and Expectations: Ordained Ministers in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America" (1990) and "Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline" (1993); therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the 2005 ELCA Churchwide Assembly continue to accept the standards for rostered leaders in "Vision and Expectations" and "Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline" and call for their fair and consistent application for all rostered leaders of the ELCA.

YES-444; NO-535

The substitute motion was defeated. Presiding Bishop Hanson announced that the main motion as amended was now before the assembly.

An unidentified voting member from the Northwestern Minnesota Synod asked that the voting totals be left on the screen for a longer time. Presiding Bishop Hanson asked that the totals be shown once again.

Mr. Kevin S. Bardonner [Indiana-Kentucky Synod] called the previous question.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To end debate.

The chair called for a vote on the motion to end debate.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

CARRIED: To end debate.

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

YES-741; NO-243

Debate on the main motion was closed. Presiding Bishop Hanson called upon the Rev. E. Roy Riley Jr., bishop of the New Jersey Synod and chair of the Conference of Bishops, to lead the assembly in prayer.

The Rev. Jeffrey C. Giles [Western North Dakota Synod] rose to a point of privilege to remind the house to refrain from displays of emotion.

The chair reminded the assembly that it was voting on Recommendation Three as amended and that a two-thirds majority would be required for adoption.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

DEFEATED:

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

YES-490; NO-503

WHEREAS, within this church we continue to share a profound commitment to the authority of Scripture as the norm for faith and life;

WHEREAS, we recognize there are deeply held yet different interpretations of Scripture to which consciences are bound;

WHEREAS, within this church we confess that all people are sinful beings, including those who serve in rostered ministry;

WHEREAS, within this church there are both those who believe that same-sex sexual conduct is inherently sinful, and those who believe that same-sex sexual conduct in a committed relationship is morally defensible for those who are of homosexual orientation;

WHEREAS, there are those in this church who believe that the ELCA should affirm and uphold current policy and practice regarding people in same-sex committed relationships;

WHEREAS, there are those in this church who believe that the Holy Spirit is calling into public ministry persons who are in committed, same-sex relationships, and congregations are indicating a willingness to call such persons to service; and

WHEREAS, within this church there is a desire to maintain the continuity of the church's traditional teaching and practice while also providing opportunity for ongoing discernment of new ways in which the Spirit might be speaking to this church in our time, and both may be honored by taking the step to create a process for consideration of exceptions; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall:

1. Affirm and uphold the standards for rostered leaders as set forth in "Vision and Expectations";
2. Create a process for the sake of outreach, ministry, and the commitment to continuing dialogue, which may permit exceptions to the expectations regarding sexual conduct for gay or lesbian candidates and rostered leaders in lifelong, committed, and faithful same-sex relationships who otherwise are determined to be in compliance with "Vision and Expectations";

3. Adopt the following bylaws to permit implementation of this limited process for exceptions to the normative policies of this church:

7.31.18. Ordination for Particular Service. For pastoral reasons and for the sake of mission in the synod, under policy and procedures approved by the Church Council, upon recommendation by a synodical bishop to the Synod Council and upon endorsement by the Synod Council, a synodical bishop shall seek an exception from the Conference of Bishops to permit the assignment of a candidate who provides evidence of intent to live in a lifelong, committed and faithful same-sex relationship, and has been approved through the synodical candidacy process. When such an exception is granted, the synodical bishop may ordain—as authorized in the governing documents of this church and policy adopted by the Church Council—a candidate who has received and accepted a properly issued, duly attested letter of call for service in the ministry of Word and Sacrament by a congregation that has indicated its openness to call a candidate who provides evidence of intent to live in a lifelong, committed and faithful same-sex relationship. Likewise, upon recommendation by a synodical bishop to the Synod Council and upon endorsement by the Synod Council, a synodical bishop shall seek through the Conference of Bishops—under policy and procedures approved by the Church Council—to maintain on the roster of ordained ministers an individual, under call for service in an ELCA ministry setting, who provides evidence of intent to live in a lifelong, committed, and faithful same-gender relationship. All requirements of policies of this church related to ordained ministers apply to such an individual, except those that preclude living in such relationships.

7.52.16. Approval for Particular Service. For pastoral reasons and for the sake of mission in the synod, under policy and procedures approved by the Church Council, upon recommendation by a synodical bishop to the Synod Council and upon endorsement by the Synod Council, a synodical bishop shall seek an exception from the Conference of Bishops to permit the assignment of a candidate who provides evidence of intent to live in a lifelong, committed and faithful same-sex relationship, and has been approved through the synodical candidacy process. When such an exception is granted, the synodical bishop may—as authorized in the governing documents of this church and policy adopted by the Church Council—commission as an associate in ministry or consecrate as a diaconal minister or deaconess a candidate who has received and accepted a properly issued, duly attested letter of call for such service by a congregation that has indicated its openness to call a

candidate who provides evidence of intent to live in a lifelong, committed and faithful same-sex relationship. Likewise, upon recommendation by a synodical bishop to the Synod Council and upon endorsement by the Synod Council, a synodical bishop shall seek through the Conference of Bishops—under policy and procedures approved by the Church Council—to maintain on the roster of associates in ministry, diaconal ministers, or deaconesses an individual, under call for service in an ELCA ministry setting, who provides evidence of intent to live in a lifelong, committed, and faithful same-gender relationship. All requirements of policies of this church related to the official lay rosters apply to such an individual, except those that preclude living in such relationships.

4. Amend bylaw 20.71.11. to allow for the implementation of new bylaw 7.31.18. and bylaw 7.52.16:
20.71.11. The Committee on Appeals shall establish definitions and guidelines, subject to approval by the Church Council, to enable clear and uniform application of the grounds for discipline in each of the above categories, provided, however, that nothing therein shall require the application of discipline where bylaws 7.31.18. and 7.52.16. have been applied.
5. Direct that the Church Council, in consultation with the Conference of Bishops and the appropriate churchwide units, adopt policy and procedures for the implementation of bylaws 7.31.18. and 7.52.16. by April 30, 2006; and
6. Direct that this process be evaluated periodically by the Division for Ministry [or the appropriate churchwide unit] and reviewed by the Conference of Bishops and by the Church Council.

The chair turned to the motion made by the Rev. Ronald D. Martinson, bishop of the Alaska Synod, to reconsider the vote on Recommendation Two.

Bp. Martinson stated that he wanted to withdraw his motion but asked to be able to address the body. The chair ruled that he could not speak to it if he were withdrawing it. Presiding Bishop Hanson further stated if Bp. Martinson wished to pursue the matter, there would be a need to test the body to see if it wanted to re-enter the conversation. Bp. Martinson stated that he would rather sing “Beautiful Savior.”

The Rev. Darrell H. Jodock [Southwestern Minnesota Synod] rose to move that the assembly suspend the rules in order to vote on what things, going forward, members did agree upon concerning sexuality.

MOVED;

SECONDED:

To suspend the rules to allow introduction of a motion to determine what things members of the assembly agree upon [on the sexuality issues] before returning home.

The chair clarified for the assembly what it was voting on and called for a vote.

MOVED;
SECONDED;
DEFEATED:

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED
YES-281; NO-667

To suspend the rules to allow introduction of a motion to determine what things members of the assembly agree upon [on the sexuality issues] before returning home.

The chair then invited the assembly then sang “Beautiful Savior.”

Greetings:

The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson introduced to the assembly the Rev. Dr. Gerald B. Kieschnick, president of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS). Presiding Bishop Hanson expressed his gratitude for the commitment of the LCMS to work in partnership with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, Lutheran World Relief, Lutheran Services in America, Lutheran Disaster Response, military chaplaincies, and some schools. He expressed his respect for President Kieschnick’s passion for proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ throughout the world. He further expressed his thankfulness for the collegial spirit and substantive discussions of the semi-annual meetings between leaders of the two churches.

President Kieschnick brought greetings to the assembly in the name of Jesus Christ. He mentioned the LCMS’s goal of reaching 1,000,000 unchurched people by 2017, the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. He informed the members of the assembly that the LCMS had been praying for them. He spoke of Baptism and being marked with the cross of Christ, quoting Luther that “no greater jewel can adorn our body and soul than Baptism, for through it we obtain holiness and salvation.”

He stated further that Lutheran Christians cherish the Word of God, confessing the Old and New Testaments as the only rule and norm by which to live and judge. He urged the assembly to always adhere to the Word of God, even in discord. He pledged the faithfulness of the LCMS in its working relationship with the ELCA, under the authority of God’s Word, and encouraged the ELCA in its efforts to do the same.

President Kieschnick noted the sensitivity of the LCMS to the struggles of the ELCA, affirming that the LCMS was no stranger to internal struggles. He recognized that both bodies pledge allegiance to Scripture, though not always agreeing on what Scripture says. He expressed his prayer that the differences between the two bodies not be widened but rather bridged and asked for wisdom and faithfulness to God’s holy revelation and to his will for both church bodies.

President Kieschnick reminded the assembly that Luther said that Baptism is the garment Christians are to wear every day and that Christians must practice the work that makes them Christians. He ended by asking that God help in the fulfillment of the calling of the baptized children of God and assured those present that they were in his prayers and in those of the people and pastors of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

Greetings:

The Roman Catholic Church

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson then welcomed to the podium Bishop Stephen E. Blaire, chair of the Bishops’ Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs of the

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. Presiding Bishop Hanson spoke of how this church had worked together with the Roman Catholic Church to strengthen the relationship between the two churches, especially in light of the 1999 *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*. Presiding Bishop Hanson expressed his hope that, looking toward the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in 2017, Lutherans and Roman Catholics jointly could mark the milestone in some meaningful way.

Bp. Blaire thanked the assembly for its hospitality. He spoke of how impressed he was by the theme of the assembly, “Marked with the cross of Christ forever,” because, he said, it is in the common experience of our Lord’s salvation that we become one and are one.

Addressing the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*, the bishop said that it had become a point of reference in the Roman Catholic Church’s ecumenical relations, and was important not only for its relationship with Lutherans, but also with other church bodies.

He pointed out that the past year marked the completion of the tenth Roman Catholic-Lutheran dialogue in the United States. The topic of the dialogue was *koinonia* (communion or fellowship). Because this was a topic that had not been in dispute in the sixteenth century, it provided rich ground for dialogue and had resulted in a “tremendous” document.

He described Presiding Bishop Hanson’s proposal for a joint declaration on the Eucharist to mark the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation as “very interesting” and said that he would present the idea to the Bishops’ Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs. He recounted his pain at attending two worship services during the Churchwide Assembly and not being able to share in the communion. He stated that, in Roman Catholic theology, communion is not only a sign of achieving full communion but also a means of arriving at full communion. He stated the need further to explore together that concept.

Bp. Blaire then quoted Presiding Bishop Hanson’s report in which he had said that unity in the body of Christ is both a gift and a task. Bp. Blaire said that there is already unity in the body of Christ but that the body of Christ continues to need to be built, which is first and foremost the work of the Holy Spirit, who creates the unity of the Church. He voiced his church’s desire to cooperate more fully with the ELCA and expressed the need for this cooperation to be primary in the relationship between the two bodies.

He also said that he was anxious to read the Rev. Duane H. Larson’s proposal to bring together Lutheran, Catholic, Anglican, and Orthodox Christians to discuss a global means of understanding and interpreting Scripture. He saw this understanding as a crucial need.

Bp. Blaire concluded by saying that he had now attended two Churchwide Assemblies and had been enriched in his own Roman Catholic faith by the Lutheran perspective he had witnessed there.

Greetings:

Lutheran Men in Mission

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson then called to the podium Mr. Heber Rast, president of Lutheran Men in Mission, to bring greetings from that organization.

Mr. Rast noted that the mission statement of Lutheran Men in Mission (LMM) was that every man in every congregation of this church have a growing relationship with Christ. This mission was at the forefront of everything his organization does. He discussed the LMM’s Master Builders program, which seeks to help men become better husbands, fathers, neighbors, and Christians, while increasing their participation in the life of congregations.

He reported on the LMM's conference on "Building Discipleship," which had been attended by Presiding Bishop Hanson. The group of 600 men spent a day building the shell of a house for Habitat for Humanity, adopted an ambitious program for the organization, and studied a reorganization plan to incorporate separately LMM with a strong relationship to the ELCA. He expressed confidence that LMM would achieve financial independence from the ELCA by 2008. Other goals included boosting the participation of men aged 18–34; increasing Bible distribution from 30,000 copies to 100,000 copies; and distributing copies of a Spanish translation of the Bible.

Mr. Rast also spoke of creating a new generation of mentors for younger men and developing plans for working with the Youth and Family Institute. He informed the assembly that his organization was a candidate for a \$500,000 challenge gift and that they had recently begun a challenge campaign to raise funds for the future.

Recess

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson called upon Secretary Lowell G. Almen to make announcements. Among them was thanks for the world hunger offering that morning, which had amounted to \$17,379.

An unidentified voting member rose to a point of personal privilege to express his profound gratitude to Presiding Bishop Hanson for his "gracious and Christ-like leadership" this day and every day. The assembly responded with sustained applause. The presiding bishop gave his thanks to the assembly for its prayers and called it a privilege to serve.

Another unidentified voting member rose to thank the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality for their hard work. Presiding Bishop Hanson added gratitude to the *ad hoc* committee and the churchwide staff. Again, the assembly gave lengthy applause.

Presiding Bishop Hanson then called upon the Rev. Kim R. Taylor, member of the Church Council, to lead the order for closing the session.

The ninth plenary session of the ninth biennial Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America was declared in recess at 5:41 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time.

Plenary Session Ten

Saturday, August 13, 2005

8:15 A.M. – 10:45 A.M.

The tenth plenary session of the ninth Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America was called to order at 8:17 A.M. Eastern Daylight Time by the Rev. Mark S. Hanson, presiding bishop, at the Orlando World Center, Orlando, Florida. Presiding Bishop Hanson called upon Ms. Judy Biffle, member of the Church Council, to lead the assembly in Morning Prayer. The service included the hymn “Healer of Our Every Ill,” a lesson from Ezekiel, and a prayer and litany. Presiding Bishop Hanson thanked the musicians from Lutheran Summer Music.

As the assembly moved into the work of the day, Presiding Bishop Hanson commended the voting members for their remarkable work during the past few days. He noted that the ELCA Web site linked over a thousand people to the discussion, and many others were in contact through telephone, e-mail, news stories, and prayer. Presiding Bishop Hanson reviewed the proposed agenda for the day and asked for consent to it, which he received.

Recommitment to Ethnic-Ministry Strategies

Reference: 2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section IV, page 46.

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson informed the assembly that it had one final action to take related to the “family” of ethnic-ministry strategies. “We now have strategies that have grown out of the five ethnic communities within this church,” he said, indicating that the proposed action would link them together and to the ELCA’s Plan for Mission. He asked that copies of the action be distributed by the pages to voting members who had not yet received them. Presiding Bishop Hanson called upon Secretary Lowell G. Almen to read the recommendation from the Church Council.

MOVED;

SECONDED:

To acknowledge with gratitude the completion of five ethnic-ministry strategies for this church:

1. African Descent Ministry Strategy
2. Arab and Middle Eastern Ministry Strategy
3. Asian and Pacific Islander Ministry Strategy
4. Latino Ministry Strategy
5. American Indian and Alaska Native Ministry Strategy;

To give thanks to God for the gifts of diversity, ethnicity, and varied cultures within this church and for the opportunities to become a multicultural and multi-ethnic church;

To affirm the call for all members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to embrace the commitments for implementation of the Plan for Mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, committing this church to:

1. Confront the scandalous realities of racial, ethnic, cultural, religious, age, gender, familial, sexual, physical, personal, and class barriers that often manifest themselves in exclusion, poverty, hunger, and violence; and

2. Pursue ardently this church's commitment to becoming more diverse, multicultural, and multigenerational in an ever-changing and increasingly pluralistic context, with special focus on full inclusion in this church of youth, young adults, and people of color and people whose primary language is other than English;

To commend the five ethnic-ministry strategies to the Office of the Presiding Bishop with the request that a review of the strategies, the plans inherent within them, and budget implications be undertaken;

To request that a report and possible recommendations be brought to the April 2006 meeting of the Church Council; and

To request that a report of plans and accomplishments be brought to the 2007 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

In the absence of debate on the issue, Presiding Bishop Hanson called for a vote.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

YES-886; NO-24

CA05.06.19

To acknowledge with gratitude the completion of five ethnic-ministry strategies for this church:

1. African Descent Ministry Strategy
2. Arab and Middle Eastern Ministry Strategy
3. Asian and Pacific Islander Ministry Strategy
4. Latino Ministry Strategy
5. American Indian and Alaska Native Ministry Strategy;

To give thanks to God for the gifts of diversity, ethnicity, and varied cultures within this church and for the opportunities to become a multicultural and multi-ethnic church;

To affirm the call for all members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to embrace the commitments for implementation of the Plan for Mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, committing this church to:

1. Confront the scandalous realities of racial, ethnic, cultural, religious, age, gender, familial, sexual, physical, personal, and class barriers that often manifest themselves in exclusion, poverty, hunger, and violence; and
2. Pursue ardently this church's commitment to becoming more diverse, multicultural, and multigenerational in an ever-changing and increasingly pluralistic context, with special focus on full inclusion in this church of youth, young adults, and people of color and people whose primary language is other than English;

To commend the five ethnic-ministry strategies to the Office of the Presiding Bishop with the request that a review of

the strategies, the plans inherent within them, and budget implications be undertaken;

To request that a report and possible recommendations be brought to the April 2006 meeting of the Church Council; and

To request that a report of plans and accomplishments be brought to the 2007 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Consideration of the 2006–2007 Budget Proposal

Reference: 2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section IV, pages 79–99.

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson directed the assembly to consideration of the 2006 and 2007 budget proposal, and invited Ms. Linda J. Brown, chair of the Church Council's Budget and Finance Committee; Treasurer Christina Jackson-Skelton; and the Rev. Charles S. Miller, executive for administration, to the speaker's platform. He noted the prior presentation of the proposal in plenary session and the opportunity members had had to discuss the budget in the hearing on Tuesday. Ms. Brown indicated no need to make additional remarks, so Presiding Bishop Hanson called upon Secretary Lowell G. Almen to read the recommendation from the Church Council.

MOVED;

SECONDED:

2006 Budget Proposal:

To approve a 2006 current fund fiscal year income proposal of \$81,228,515; and

To approve a 2006 World Hunger income proposal of \$16,750,000.

2007 Budget Proposal:

To approve a 2007 current fund fiscal year income proposal of \$81,539,500; and

To approve a 2007 World Hunger income proposal of \$17,000,000.

Spending Authorization:

To authorize the Church Council to establish a spending authorization after periodic review of revised income estimates.

Mr. R. Brandon James [Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod] commented that, by his calculations, the ELCA churchwide budget worked out to approximately \$13.00 per baptized member of this church. In his synod, he said, the expectation is that \$42.00 per baptized member would be forwarded from the congregation to the synod. This figure, he pointed out, suggested that in some synods the recommended guideline of 55 percent of synodical income being remitted to the churchwide organization was not being honored. He asked whether this guideline were still in effect and which synods were meeting the expectation.

Ms. Brown acknowledged that the expectation remained 55 percent but stated that not all synods were meeting it. She urged the assembly to refer to the report of the Church Council for further details of actions related to percentages by synod, though she indicated that voting members did not have in their materials an actual breakdown of synodical giving. Presiding Bishop Hanson noted that the information was available, and could be obtained by voting members upon their return to their homes.

Ms. Susanne L. M. Ridenour [Delaware-Maryland Synod] asked why the budget proposal was staying at the \$81 million level rather than increasing. She wondered whether the figure suggested that budget planners had low expectations or simply were being fiscally responsible.

Ms. Brown replied that the budget proposals were calculated on projections of contributions from synods as developed through consultations.

Mr. David F. Hagen [Florida-Bahamas Synod] said that, while he supported the churchwide budget and the efficiencies that had permitted it to remain at constant levels, he wanted this church to feel good about the ministries taking place in synods and congregations, which had dramatically grown. He desired that the assembly know about these ministries as well as churchwide ones.

Presiding Bishop Hanson commented that he chaired a mission-support working group that was trying to balance affirmation of congregational ministries with encouraging congregations to support the shared ministries of this church. He expected suggestions to emerge from the group in the coming year for both affirming and challenging congregations.

Referring to the previous question about the number of synods meeting the 55 percent expectation, Ms. Brown informed the assembly that a memorial in Section VI, page 74, of the *2005 Pre-Assembly Report* recorded that, for 2005, 15 synods were at or above the 55 percent level; 26 were between 50 and 54 percent; 10 were between 45 and 49 percent; eight were between 40 and 44 percent; three were between 30 and 39 percent; and three were below that level.

Ms. Carol McDivitt [Rocky Mountain Synod] commented that pastors needed to be held to the standards expressed in “Vision and Expectations” regarding their personal stewardship and the stewardship of their congregations. In her own congregation, she reported, there was pastoral resistance to increasing support for ELCA ministries and “the congregation never gets to vote” on the matter. She proposed synodical workshops on the entire contents of “Vision and Expectations,” arguing that following the “fullness” of that document would lead to this being a much better church.

Ms. Shirley Gangstad [Southeastern Minnesota Synod] reported that only once in her life had she heard the word “tithing” mentioned from the pulpit. She defined tithing as a spiritual orientation, rather than a financial one. She wondered, “If we were tithing . . . what kind of good works could we do all over the world?” She urged pastors and bishops to use the word “tithing” and to practice it.

Mr. Knute Ogren [New England Synod] remarked that he liked to talk to people about money and faith and that he had found that the people who most needed to know about tithing were “people who wear collars.” He proposed that seminaries teach future pastors to practice tithing and to preach about money. He added, tongue-in-cheek, that “Lutherans are awful, awful givers, except all of us who are here and any who happen to be watching on the Internet.”

Mr. Carlos Agüero [Northwest Washington Synod] stated that he regretted the fact that his congregation was one that was withholding funding from the churchwide organization. He urged assembly members to encourage their congregations “to be more responsible titheers.”

Mr. Eric N. Peterson [Northwest Synod of Wisconsin] moved the previous question.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To end debate.

Presiding Bishop Hanson instructed the assembly to vote.

MOVED;
SECONDED;
CARRIED:

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED
YES-864; NO-71

To end debate.

Debate being closed, the chair asked the assembly to vote on the budget proposal.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

YES-911; NO-26

CA05.06.20 2006 Budget Proposal:

To approve a 2006 current fund fiscal year income proposal of \$81,228,515; and

To approve a 2006 World Hunger income proposal of \$16,750,000.

2007 Budget Proposal:

To approve a 2007 current fund fiscal year income proposal of \$81,539,500; and

To approve a 2007 World Hunger income proposal of \$17,000,000.

Spending Authorization:

To authorize the Church Council to establish a spending authorization after periodic review of revised income estimates.

Greetings:

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson described the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) as the ELCA's closest church body neighbor. He reported that the Rev. Raymond L. Schultz, national bishop of the ELCIC, had planned on bringing a greeting to the assembly from both the ELCIC and the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), which he serves as a member of the council. Due to the illness of Bp. Schultz, Presiding Bishop Hanson stated, a greeting from the ELCIC would be delivered by the Rev. Paul Johnson, assistant to the national bishop.

Pr. Johnson remarked, "It is my joy to bring you greetings in Christ from all of your brothers and sisters in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada." He expressed his pleasure at being able to report that Bp. Schultz had been reelected a few weeks previously at the ELCIC convention in Winnipeg. Because the ELCIC and the ELCA have a "rich shared history," he said, the partnership between the two church bodies "is important to the ELCIC We celebrate a unity that transcends political divisions We look forward to a shared future in the truest liberty, the Gospel freedom which is ours in Christ Jesus alone."

Pr. Johnson gave thanks for the many ways the ELCA works with the ELCIC in generous partnership. He informed the assembly that the ELCIC had been taking part in the

“Renewing Worship” project and that the project organizers had heard and incorporated ELCIC concerns, leading to a resolution of appreciation at the recent convention. He called attention to other joint activities, including a key leaders meeting, a convocation the previous winter in Alberta for farmers and ranchers at which concerns on both sides of the border had been discussed, a LWF regional consultation, and cooperative work in global mission.

While celebrating the partnership, Pr. Johnson also made it clear that the ELCIC had real gifts to offer to the ELCA. He clarified the action taken at the recent convention, explaining that the ELCIC had not addressed, as had been stated the previous day, the ordination of gay and lesbian persons in committed relationships. Rather, it had addressed a local option for blessing same-sex unions, a proposal that had been defeated. The next day at the convention’s closing worship, at which Presiding Bishop Hanson preached, a rite of healing had been offered in which virtually every person took part. Then they all celebrated the Lord’s Supper together. They were reminded in these ways, despite their differences, of their unity. While differences can be real and disagreements painful, the One who unites us cannot be divided, he declared. Together, the ELCA and the ELCIC can be a church in mission for others, he concluded.

Greetings:

Lutheran World Federation

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson noted that through the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) the ELCA is connected with 138 other Lutheran church bodies throughout the world, representing nearly 65 million Lutherans in 77 countries. He invited Ms. Kathy J. Magnus, LWF regional coordinator for North America, to bring a greeting on behalf of the Rev. Ishmael Noko, general secretary of the LWF.

Ms. Magnus began by telling the assembly that “there is a goat somewhere in the world with your name on it.” She explained her comment by relating the story of a refugee in Rwanda who had brought her family to a resettlement camp after her village had been attacked by rebel forces. The LWF, Ms. Magnus said, had given this woman hope in the form of a home and a goat, which would provide milk for her children and manure to fertilize her garden. The story illustrated one ministry of the LWF; others, among many, include grain banks, Bible schools, HIV-AIDS workers, trucks, wells, seminaries, lay evangelists, ecumenical relationships, church buildings, fishing boats, and advocacy. “The LWF is the means by which the ELCA holds hands with some 66 million Lutherans around the world, and 66 million Lutherans do make a difference,” she declared.

She read a letter from Pr. Noko in which he reminded the assembly that Lutherans have an ecumenical calling, dating back to the Reformation. The main objective of Lutheranism is to remain true to the Gospel, he said, summarized in the doctrine of justification by grace for Christ’s sake through faith. He emphasized that it was the responsibility of Lutherans to uphold clearly what is necessary for salvation and thereby for the true unity of the Church. Unity in Christ is God’s gift, which allows people to live together with differences of opinion. He urged that the ELCA view itself as a church of those reborn in Baptism. Ms. Magnus expressed the thanks of the LWF for the service of Presiding Bishop Hanson as president of the LWF and for his “strong leadership.” Ms. Magnus encouraged assembly members to obtain more information about the LWF from its Web sites.

Ms. Diane L. Jacobson [Saint Paul Area Synod] asked for a moment of personal privilege to speak as the North American representative at an LWF deliberation on the authority and interpretation of Scripture. She requested the assembly to assist the work by

filling out a survey. Presiding Bishop Hanson responded that copies of the questionnaire would be made available, adding that by completing the form, assembly members would be “very helpful” to the process.

The Rev. Andrea F. DeGroot-Nesdahl, bishop of the South Dakota Synod, expressed gratitude for the opportunity to take part in a June 2005 consultation that brought together 25 women who serve as bishops or leaders of judicatories in the churches that comprise the Lutheran World Federation.

Greetings:

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sierra Leone

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson noted that he and his wife, Ione, recently had visited Western Africa, including two countries recovering from the effects of prolonged civil wars, Liberia and Sierra Leone. He spoke of the important interfaith work towards peace being carried out in those countries. Two of those working for peace and healing whom he had met there were the Rev. Thomas Barnett, bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sierra Leone (ELCSL), and his wife, the Rev. Marie Barnett, a member of the Executive Committee of the LWF. Bp. Barnett brought a greeting from his church body.

Bp. Barnett expressed thanks for the support of the ELCA and of the LWF during “ten years of senseless war.” Noting that the LWF now describes itself as “a communion of churches,” he observed that the communion is “held together by the Gospel” as people called by God to be in mission together. Bp. Barnett brought to the assembly the commitment of his church to continue to walk with the ELCA as it continued to walk with his church. Together, through the power of the Holy Spirit, he said, the churches would “bring light in a world of darkness and hope in the midst of despair, and share the love of Christ with everybody.”

Governance Proposals (continued)

Reference: 2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section IV, pages 5–10.

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson asked the assembly to return to its discussion of the governance proposal, reminding the assembly of its earlier action amending the proposal from the Church Council (see above, page 241ff.). These amendments, offered by the Rev. Peter Rogness, bishop of the Saint Paul Area Synod, would provide for a 65-member Church Council with one council member from each synod. It was the amended action that was before the assembly, he informed voting members. The action was projected on the screen as Secretary Lowell G. Almen read the paragraphs that had been amended the previous day.

Moved;

Seconded:

1. To receive as information the report on governance submitted by the Church Council as part of the strategic planning process, “Faithful Yet Changing: Design for Mission through the Church-wide Organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America”;
2. To affirm the desire to (a) build a stronger relationship and connection among all the members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and its various expressions, agencies, and institutions; (b) maintain the churchwide organization’s effectiveness and efficiency; (c) remain attentive to a wide range of views; (d) strengthen the voices of members, congregations,

- and synods; and (e) enable this church to carry out effectively its mission in the world;
3. To maintain the overall membership of the Churchwide Assembly and endorse a systematic process in synodical assemblies for discussion of major issues on the agenda of the Churchwide Assembly;
 4. To expand the Church Council membership to four officers and 65 people elected by the Churchwide Assembly to six-year terms in accord with the representational principles, and to endorse a system of nomination through synodical assemblies;
 5. To request the newly constituted, expanded Church Council to consider what persons would provide the most effective advisory membership to the Church Council.
 6. To encourage greater interaction of members of the Church Council with synodical councils and synodical assemblies in their respective areas; and
 7. To request the Church Council to make recommendations regarding oversight of program units in the light of broadened Church Council membership.

Mr. Earl L. Mummert [Lower Susquehanna Synod] moved to divide the question so that paragraphs 1, 2, 3, and 6 would be voted upon separately from paragraphs 4, 5, and 7.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To divide the question so that paragraphs 1, 2, 3, and 6 would be considered separately from paragraphs 4, 5, and 7.

Speaking to his motion, Mr. Mummert explained his belief that the various paragraphs addressed different issues, with paragraphs 1, 2, 3, and 6 not addressing constitutional issues.

Presiding Bishop Hanson then explained to the assembly that the motion was not debatable but was amendable.

Mr. Eric M. Peterson [Northwest Synod of Wisconsin] asked whether paragraphs 1, 2, 3, and 6 would be voted upon individually or together as a group. Presiding Bishop Hanson indicated that they would be voted upon as a group.

There being no further discussion, the chair called for the vote.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

YES-697; NO-211

CARRIED: To divide the question so that paragraphs 1, 2, 3, and 6 would be considered separately from paragraphs 4, 5, and 7.

Presiding Bishop Hanson directed the assembly to take up paragraphs 1, 2, 3, and 6.

Bp. Rogness expressed his support for passage of the proposals in these paragraphs.

The Rev. Ralph W. Dunkin, bishop of the West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod, asked whether provisions in paragraph 3 would mean that the ELCA now would set the agenda for the Synod Assembly and whether it would represent changes to the process by which synods would memorialize the Churchwide Assembly. Secretary Almen responded

by explaining that the churchwide organization would seek to engage systematically Synod Assemblies in discussion of major issues that would later come to the Churchwide Assembly. He added that the memorials process would remain unchanged.

Hearing no further discussion, Presiding Bishop Hanson called for the vote on paragraphs 1, 2, 3, and 6.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

YES-906; NO-18

CA05.06.21

- 1. To receive as information the report on governance submitted by the Church Council as part of the strategic planning process, “Faithful Yet Changing: Design for Mission through the Churchwide Organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America”;**
- 2. To affirm the desire to (a) build a stronger relationship and connection among all the members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and its various expressions, agencies, and institutions; (b) maintain the churchwide organization’s effectiveness and efficiency; (c) remain attentive to a wide range of views; (d) strengthen the voices of members, congregations, and synods; and (e) enable this church to carry out effectively its mission in the world;**
- 3. To maintain the overall membership of the Churchwide Assembly and endorse a systematic process in synodical assemblies for discussion of major issues on the agenda of the Churchwide Assembly; and**
- 6. To encourage greater interaction of members of the Church Council with synodical councils and synodical assemblies in their respective areas.**

Presiding Bishop Hanson turned the assembly’s attention to paragraphs 4, 5, and 7 of the proposal, as amended. He reminded the assembly that it would take a two-thirds vote to adopt them because of their constitutional implications. Presiding Bishop Hanson called upon the Rev. Charles S. Miller, executive for administration, to respond to earlier questions related to the costs of enlarging the membership of the Church Council. While Pr. Miller said he could not provide definitive information because of the way the amendment was worded, his sense and that of Bp. Rogness was that an expanded Church Council would be able to operate within the current budget allocations.

The Rev. Jonathan L. Eilert, co-chair of the Committee of Reference and Counsel, reminded the assembly that the committee’s original response was to decline to recommend the proposed amendment to the governance proposal. He called attention to Motion J, which was before the assembly, and explained that, while the committee did not recommend the

changes, if two-thirds of the assembly supported an expanded council, the committee would propose the required constitutional provisions in a first reading to begin the process of amending the constitution.

Presiding Bishop Hanson returned the discussion to paragraphs 4, 5, and 7.

The Rev. Judy A. Reitz [Southeastern Minnesota Synod] requested that members of the Church Council address the question of the workability of the proposal for a council doubled in size. Presiding Bishop Hanson indicated that a member of the council would address the issue in the course of the debate.

The Rev. G. Scott Cady [New England Synod], speaking in opposition, indicated that there are two churchwide groups that include one representative from each synod: the Conference of Bishops and the Lutheran Ecumenical Representatives Network (LERN). In each of these, Pr. Cady observed, there were too many males who were middle-aged and of European ancestry. He questioned whether the amended proposal would allow the ELCA to maintain its representational principles. Instead, he argued, there would be geographic representation at the expense of diversity.

The Rev. William E. Rindy [Eastern North Dakota Synod] spoke of the importance of connecting members to the mission and of “bridging the disconnect” between congregational members and the wider church. He wondered how many voting members to the assembly could name or recognize one Church Council member whom they would feel comfortable approaching. He said that the amended proposal “would provide a recognizable face” and “one knowledgeable person” in each synod to interpret Church Council actions.

Mr. Jeff L. Kane [New England Synod] remarked that he was unclear about the implications and impact of the proposal on the polity of this church, in particular on the understanding that the Church Council is brought together to do the work of this whole church. While recognizing the need for council members to be known and to come from each of the geographical areas, he recommended that the assembly seek ways other than the amended proposal to accomplish the goals of bringing the churchwide expression closer to the members of this church. He added that the proposal would make finding nominees for council positions from the various representational categories more difficult.

Mr. Carlos E. Peña, vice president of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and chair of the Church Council, responded to several questions that had been addressed to the Church Council. He emphasized that the Church Council had not recommended Bp. Rogness’s proposal because council members understand that they were elected to serve this whole church, not just a single synod. He added that the council had explored several proposals, including those with councils of 33, 65, and even 128 members. The Church Council, after considering the matter, had decided that an expanded council would be too large to be an effective deliberating body, he stated. In addition, he argued, a larger council would put more decisions into the hands of a smaller group, the Executive Committee.

The Rev. Phillip R. Nielsen [Nebraska Synod] indicated that the rationale for a change in governance included the opportunity to address a climate of mistrust and a perception of disconnect between congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization. He expressed a need “to do something obvious” to address the problem, and judged that the amended proposal was obvious. He added that if the expanded council proved unwieldy, “we can go back” to a smaller council. He challenged the notion that having council members from each synod would mean that the members would not be responsible to this whole church. He commented that “trust needs to go both ways” and that the ELCA “needs to trust the synods to provide good people” who can work for the good of this whole church.

The Rev. Gregory R. Pile, bishop of the Allegheny Synod, said that he had come to the assembly intending to support the full recommendation, but had changed his mind because of the amendments. He suggested that adding 32 people to the council would make decision-making more time-consuming and cumbersome and would afford “less opportunity to develop working relationships within the council” because of the limited time available to the council for its meetings. He pointed out that having a Church Council member did not automatically make a synod feel more connected to the churchwide expression.

The Rev. Philip L. Hougen, bishop of the Southeastern Iowa Synod, said he favored the proposal because of his experience in mission-support discussions. He declared that improvement of financial support for churchwide ministries could not be expected if business continued to be done in the same way. He added that expanding the council would be a “demonstrably positive effort” at showing that the churchwide expression was committed to being connected with all expressions of this church.

Mr. Earl L. Mummert [Lower Susquehanna Synod], member of the Church Council, commented that expanding the Church Council might help improve the sense of connectedness but would hamper the council’s work of administration and oversight. The Executive Committee would assume those functions by default, he stated. Mr. Mummert compared his service on the Church Council to his time on the board of directors of a large bank. He indicated that the bank had reduced the size of its board and eliminated its executive committee to improve decision-making and governance. He noted that the board of trustees of the Board of Pensions had also reduced its size in order to govern more effectively. He asked the assembly to allow time for the council’s proposals to be tested.

The Rev. Steven L. Ullestad, bishop of the Northeastern Iowa Synod, reported that Mr. Gary L. Wipperman, a Church Council member from his synod, also served as an advisory member to the Synod Council. In that capacity he had explained each body’s deliberations to the other and had helped to build a bridge between the two. Bp. Ullestad recommended implementing the amended proposal at the current assembly and reviewing it at the next assembly.

Ms. Linda J. Brown, a member of the Church Council for the past nine years, described the challenge facing members of the council. The amount of work was enormous. “Imagine receiving your *Pre-Assembly Report* twice a year,” she said. Due to increased expectations of council members, she expressed concern about finding candidates to serve who can leave their jobs and families twice a year for council meetings and at other times for synodical meetings.

Mr. John B. Litke [Metropolitan New York Synod] expressed his belief that the current structure worked well, balancing the synodical structure of the Conference of Bishops with the churchwide perspective of the Church Council. He pointed out that since some synods were 30 times larger than others, the proposal actually was not very representative. Adopting the amended proposal, he said, would create greater geographic disproportionality.

The Rev. Theodore “Ted” H. Rust [Northeastern Ohio Synod] expressed the view that having each synod represented on the Church Council would demonstrate connectedness and serve this church as effectively as does the 65-member Conference of Bishops. The proposed council might result in an increase in mission-support income, he commented. He further suggested that a larger council would mean more opportunity for women and persons of color to be involved in the legislative aspects of this church.

The Rev. Lynn M. Sanner [Allegheny Synod] requested that Bp. Rogness explain the envisioned process of nomination and election. Presiding Bishop Hanson indicated that her

request did not take precedence in the discussion, so she would need to wait at a microphone to make it.

Mr. David E. Laden [Saint Paul Area Synod], speaking as a member of his Synod Council, described the proposal, as amended, as “simple, straightforward, and easy to understand.” It also strengthened the connections and interdependence between this church’s expressions, in his opinion. He added that this church’s ability to fund its ministries would be positively affected by having in each synod a “direct conduit” to and from the Church Council.

Mr. Michael S. Schrey [Upper Susquehanna Synod] cautioned that having 65 members on the Church Council, each hoping to have his or her own say on each issue, would greatly lengthen council meetings. He asked rhetorically whether voting members intended to double the size of their Synod Councils and Congregation Councils in order to “improve connectedness.” Connectedness would come through each voting member and leader of this church intentionally building bridges in their congregations to the wider church, he asserted.

The Rev. William C. “Chris” Boerger, bishop of the Northwest Washington Synod, speaking in favor, remarked that it would be useful to have another person in a synod in addition to the bishop to help with communication and interpretation of churchwide decisions. He observed that sometimes “efficiency drives us to make decisions we regret.” He added that having more contributions to a conversation often leads to better decision-making and greater “ownership of decisions.”

Ms. Sally Wing [Northwest Washington Synod] affirmed that this church was not a federation of synods because each council member served this whole church. She described the difficulty in the nomination process of fulfilling the requirements of the ELCA’s representational principles, noting that computers were needed in order to achieve the necessary balance. The system, however, worked, and committees looked “like a rainbow” instead of being composed entirely of white males.

Mr. Paul Erickson [South Dakota Synod] questioned whether the current Church Council was truly representative of the membership of this church, when two-thirds of the membership of this church expressed opposition to changes in sexuality standards while the Church Council forwarded proposals recommending changes by a vote of 31–2. He would prefer elections to take place in the synods. “I trust the church, and I will trust the Church Council when it represents the entire body,” he declared.

Mr. Donald E. Lamprecht [Alaska Synod] expressed his view that the Church Council as currently constituted is representative. He pointed out that on the first two sexuality recommendations, the Churchwide Assembly had effectively returned to the recommendations of the Church Council.

The Rev. James M. Culver Jr. [Indiana-Kentucky Synod] argued that the proposal, as amended, “would strengthen the unity” of this church because of wider representation.

The Rev. Stephen P. Bouman, bishop of the Metropolitan New York Synod, moved the previous question.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To end debate.

Presiding Bishop Hanson instructed the assembly to vote on the motion.

MOVED;
SECONDED;
CARRIED:

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED
YES-864; NO-71

To end debate.

Debate being closed, the chair asked the assembly to vote on paragraphs 4, 5, and 7.

Ms. Barbara A. Keener [Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod], raising a point of clarification, asked what the effects of a failure to pass the proposal as amended would be on the size of the Church Council. Presiding Bishop Hanson responded that nothing would change. He added that the amended proposal would require a two-thirds vote to adopt because it involved a constitutional provision change.

Mr. Matthew L. Erickson [Southwest California Synod] inquired about the process for first and second readings of constitutional changes. Presiding Bishop Hanson referred the question to Secretary Lowell G. Almen. Secretary Almen explained that the assembly was about to vote on paragraphs 4, 5, and 7 as amended. If these provisions were approved, the Committee of Reference and Counsel would come back to the assembly with two constitutional amendments to be presented for a first reading. If they received approval by a two-thirds majority, a second reading would take place at the 2007 Churchwide Assembly, and the amendments would require adoption at that point by another two-thirds vote. The secretary stressed, however, that the assembly at this moment was voting only on the recommendation. Should the assembly approve the recommendation, the constitutional provision changes necessitated by that approval would be put before the 2005 Churchwide Assembly at a later point in its business.

Mr. Erickson clarified that the process meant that the Church Council would not expand immediately. Presiding Bishop Hanson affirmed Mr. Erickson's understanding, saying that any change would take place only if the 2007 Churchwide Assembly ratified the constitutional amendments by a two-thirds margin.

The chair then called for a vote on paragraphs 4, 5, and 7.

MOVED;
SECONDED;
DEFEATED:

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED
YES-464; NO-505

4. To expand the Church Council membership to four officers and 65 people elected by the Churchwide Assembly to six-year terms in accord with the representational principles, and to endorse a system of nomination through synodical assemblies;
5. To request the newly constituted, expanded Church Council to consider what persons would provide the most effective advisory membership to the Church Council.
7. To request the Church Council to make recommendations regarding oversight of program units in the light of broadened Church Council membership.

The Rev. Phillip R. Heinze [Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod] moved to amend the rules to limit debate on any matter before the assembly to 20 minutes.

MOVED;
SECONDED:

To limit debate on any matter before the assembly to 20 minutes.

Presiding Bishop Hanson asked for and received clarification of the maker's intent that "any matter" referred to any matter before the assembly for debate and action.

Mr. Knute Ogren [New England Synod] wondered if the motion would affect the upcoming conversation with Bp. Munib A. Younan of the Evangelical Church in Jordan and the Holy Land.

The chair replied that he interpreted the motion as applying only to debate. He then directed the assembly to vote on the motion to limit debate.

MOVED;

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

SECONDED;

YES-811; NO-132

CARRIED:

To limit debate on any matter before the assembly to 20 minutes.

Mr. John D. Litke [Metropolitan New York Synod] inquired about the status of the governance proposal now that paragraphs 4, 5, and 7 had failed to pass in any form. The chair requested that Secretary Almen address the question. Secretary Almen responded that what was in place were the amended constitutional and bylaw changes, which had not contained any change in the size of the Church Council but had contained some changes concerning advisory members of the council. The Church Council would examine the Churchwide Assembly's actions and determine if further action were required.

Churchwide Strategy for Engagement in Israel and Palestine

Reference: 2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section IV, pages 75–78; Section V, pages 48–58.

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson invited the Rev. Robert A. Rimbo, bishop of the Southeast Michigan Synod, and Ms. Janet K. Thompson, member of the Church Council, to the podium for a brief presentation on the strategy. He noted that joining them would be several resource people: the Rev. Rafael Malpica-Padilla, executive director of the Division for Global Mission; the Rev. Rebecca S. Larson, executive director of the Division for Church in Society; Ms. Lita B. Johnson and the Rev. Said R. Ailabouni of the Division for Global Mission; the Rev. Randall R. Lee, director for the Department for Ecumenical Affairs; and Mr. Dennis Frado, director for the Lutheran Office for World Community in the Division for Church in Society. In the presentation Bp. Rimbo pointed out that the proposed strategy "expresses a sense of deep urgency" to resolve issues in the Middle East. The strategy called for this church to speak out boldly for peace with justice at a time when the hope for a negotiated settlement "remains fragile," he explained.

Ms. Thompson commented that the campaign encouraged members of this church to act in solidarity with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land, whose social ministries are "rays of hope in a desperate situation." Noting that the number of Christians in the Holy Land had declined rapidly in recent years, Ms. Thompson expressed concern that "church" in that region would come to refer to holy shrines rather than to God's holy people.

Bp. Rimbo continued by describing many of the hardships experienced by the Palestinian people due to the creation of a wall or fence being built by the Israeli government to protect its people. He pointed to the inability of worshipers, workers, students, doctors, and nurses to get to the places they needed to be without waiting in long lines at checkpoints. Many Lutheran ministries were threatened by the wall, he declared. He also noted that Palestinian lands have been confiscated for the purpose of creating the wall. In the Holy Land, he said, the Lutheran Church continues to teach peace and to work for justice and

peace. The “Peace Not Walls” strategy does not break new policy ground, he contended, but would give energy to calls for ELCA advocacy with the U.S. government, especially for improving access to the Augusta Victoria Hospital in east Jerusalem. The presenters commented that this church consistently has said “no” to terrorism and “yes” to all those who work for peace, whether they are Christians, Jews, or Muslims.

They further informed the assembly that the communion ware being used in assembly worship, which would be sent to all synods, was crafted by Christian artisans under the auspices of Christmas Lutheran Church in Bethlehem. They concluded that “despair is not an option for those who believe in Jesus Christ.”

Presiding Bishop Hanson introduced the Rev. Munib A. Younan, bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land, who brought a greeting by telephone. Bp. Younan was received with applause by the assembly. He opened his comments by expressing his gratitude to the ELCA for its accompaniment of his church. He told of his “fervent prayer that my children and grandchildren will one day live side by side with their Israeli brothers and sisters in a just peace.” Noting that the history of the region is “littered with incidents which drive us apart and block our pathway to peace,” he said his church believes “the way forward can only be through peaceful and respectful negotiations between Palestinians and Christians.”

Bp. Younan said his church condemns terrorism but also believes that the security of Israel depends on freedom and justice for the Palestinian people, just as freedom and justice for the Palestinian people depends on security for Israel. He reported that the creation of the Israeli security wall “separates people from work, church, family, and their own land.” If Israel feels a need to build a wall, he said, that wall should be built on Israeli, not Palestinian, land. “The wall does not create peace,” he said, “it breeds despair.”

Bp. Younan expressed the belief that the first step to peace would be Israel’s withdrawal from Gaza, but that other actions needed to be taken. He also noted that his church had taken action to have the LWF condemn the growth of anti-Semitism and Islamophobia. It is essential, he asserted, that mutual understanding be deepened, tolerance be increased, and common values of justice, peace, and reconciliation be sought. The future of the Palestinian church was at stake, he stated. He thanked the ELCA for developing the strategy under consideration and asked for Christ’s blessings on the assembly.

Presiding Bishop Hanson returned the assembly’s attention to the proposal before it. He called upon Secretary Lowell G. Almen to read the strategy. When Secretary Almen asked whether reading the entire proposal were necessary, the assembly indicated that it was not.

***Moved;
Seconded:***

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and its predecessor bodies have:

- a. accompanied the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land in its life and ministry in Jerusalem and the occupied Palestinian Territories, and
- b. provided humanitarian and refugee assistance to Palestinians for over fifty years, through the Lutheran World Federation’s Augusta Victoria Hospital and other ministries; and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and its predecessor bodies have for many years worked for peace between Israelis and Palestinians, advocating for political solutions that address the rights to security and peace with justice for both Palestinians and Israelis; and

WHEREAS, acting in accord with the social statement of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, “For Peace in God’s World,” and working in partnership with other Lutherans, ecumenical, interfaith, and secular partners, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is committed to building a movement that will strengthen the resolve of political leaders—including those in the U.S.—to find a peaceful and just solution in the Holy Land; and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL) and the Lutheran World Federation have drawn to the attention of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America not only the extreme hardship brought to Palestinian communities by the continuing Israeli occupation and construction of the separation wall, but also the imminent threat they pose to the future of the ELCJHL and other Christian churches in the Holy Land; and

WHEREAS, the emerging fragile prospects for a lasting peace between Israel and Palestine require both Israelis and Palestinians to 1) avoid taking any actions that would undermine the peace (e.g., attacks on civilians, confiscation of land) and 2) actively engage in actions that strengthen the will for peace; and

WHEREAS, the 2003 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America reaffirmed “the ELCA’s commitment to accompany the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and Palestine and its ecumenical and inter-faith partners, to carry out public policy and human rights advocacy on their behalf, and to offer humanitarian relief and development assistance”; and

WHEREAS, in carrying out this mandate, the Church Council in April 2004 joined the Lutheran World Federation, the World Council of Churches, and others seeking peace in the region in calling for an end to the construction of the Israeli separation wall being built on Palestinian land; and

WHEREAS, the Church Council in April 2005 approved the Churchwide Strategy for ELCA Engagement in Israel and Palestine; and

WHEREAS, this strategy responds to the call of ELCA companions in the Holy Land for a churchwide campaign for peace: “Peace Not Walls: Stand for Justice in the Holy Land”; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that members, congregations, synods, the churchwide organization, and church-related agencies and institutions are urged to participate in the churchwide campaign for peace—Peace Not Walls: Stand for Justice in the Holy Land—by engaging in awareness-building, accompaniment, and advocacy activities, including:

1. praying for peace with justice between Israel and Palestine and for the continuing witness of the Christian Church—including the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land—in the region;
2. building relationships with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land, the ministries of the Lutheran World Federation, and other ecumenical and inter-faith companions engaged in the pursuit of peace in the Holy Land;
3. learning about the situation there, sharing information, and building networks;
4. intensifying advocacy for a just peace in the region, building upon Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and predecessor body policies, and engaging with the public media in this effort;
5. stewarding financial resources—both U.S. tax dollars and private funds—in ways that support the quest for a just peace in the Holy Land; and
6. giving generously to help ensure the continuation of the schools and other ministries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land and the humanitarian work of the Lutheran World

Federation through Augusta Victoria Hospital and other ministries;
and be it further

RESOLVED, that individual congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America are encouraged to become part of a chain of action to link the 2005 Churchwide Assembly with the 2006 synodical assemblies through congregational use of communion ware made in Bethlehem, thereby expressing in worship, prayer, giving, and advocacy this church's solidarity with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land.

Mr. Ramsey G. Tesdell [Southeastern Iowa Synod] pointed to his Palestinian-Norwegian ancestry and shared some of his Palestinian family's struggle, with which he became familiar during a visit to the Holy Land. He said that he had witnessed people being "detained for simply trying to walk the same paths Jesus once walked." He called for action from this church, "not more statements."

Mr. Benjamin W. Lei [New Jersey Synod] wanted to ask for some information. Presiding Bishop Hanson ruled him out of order because he was engaging in debate without waiting his turn to do so.

Mr. Louis M. Hesse [Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod] moved to table the proposal. Presiding Bishop Hanson ruled the motion out of order because Mr. Hesse had moved to the front of his queue to raise it, pointing out that the chair had not been treating such motions as superseding the order of debate. Presiding Bishop Hanson ruled that Mr. Hesse would need to wait his turn to make the motion to table.

Mr. Paul Erickson [South Dakota Synod] called on the assembly to remember that the Middle East was still "a war zone" and that "any expectancy of normalcy" was unrealistic. He contended that since Israel built the wall to protect its people, acts of terrorism and violence had declined "precipitously." Once a Palestinian state had been established, the wall could be redirected, he argued. He feared that this church's support for Christians in Palestine would lead to anti-Semitism, and he urged voting members to remember the people of Israel at the same time they remembered Palestinians.

The Rev. George E. Keck [Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod] called for the adoption of "this timely resolution." He asked for an explanation of the problems posed by the wall with regard to access to the Augusta Victoria Hospital. He also expressed concern about the hospital's tax situation.

Pr. Ailabouni responded that the wall was "just down the hill" from the hospital, which made it very difficult for patients and hospital staff to get to the hospital. As for the tax situation, it was still in the courts, he reported. Should the case be lost, he said, the hospital would need another \$400,000 a year in gifts from donors to pay the taxes.

Mr. Frado directed attention to Section V, page 53, of the *2005 Pre-Assembly Reports*, where the hospital was specifically mentioned as a focus for advocacy by the ELCA.

Mr. Donald E. Lamprecht [Alaska Synod] moved to amend the proposal by deletion.

MOVED;

SECONDED:

To amend by deletion:
To strike the word "occupied" from the first "Whereas" clause;
To strike the sixth and ninth "Whereas" clauses; and
To strike the term "Peace Not Walls" from the last "Whereas" clause
and the first "Resolved" clause.

Speaking to his amendment, Mr. Lamprecht explained that the proposed changes would make the resolution more neutral by eliminating words that could be considered controversial.

The Rev. Serena S. Sellers [Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod], speaking in opposition, noted that the boundaries that the wall violated were internationally recognized. She observed that, while the wall between her house and her neighbor's was wonderful, it had not been built on her land, nor did it keep children from attending school or patients from getting to a hospital. She affirmed Israel's right to build a wall on its own territory to prevent persons from entering Israel and causing violence, but expressed her fear that the wall itself was a form of violence against the Palestinian people.

The Rev. Joseph F. Rinderknecht [Northeastern Ohio Synod] supported the intention of the action to promote dialogue and peace. He recognized the difficulty of Bp. Younan's situation, in that he is distrusted by Arabs because he is Christian and by Jews because he is Palestinian. Pr. Rinderknecht shared with the assembly some information from a dialogue that had taken place in his town, noting that the incidence of suicide bombings within Israel had declined by 90 percent since the creation of the wall and thus had allowed an Israeli peace movement to re-emerge. He supported the amendment because he felt Israeli partners in the dialogue would regard the original language as "inflammatory."

Recess

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson called for the orders of the day and asked for consensus from the assembly to convene Plenary Session Eleven at 1:15 P.M. He called upon Secretary Lowell G. Almen for announcements. Secretary Almen asked synodical bishops to pick up ballots for their voting members prior to the afternoon session. He described checkout procedures for Sunday and announced that the offering from the Sunday worship would benefit the Fund for Leaders in Mission.

Presiding Bishop Hanson called upon Ms. Mary T. Froehlig, member of the Church Council, to close the session with prayer. Plenary Session Ten of the ninth Churchwide Assembly was declared in recess at 10:47 A.M. Eastern Daylight Time.

Plenary Session Eleven

Saturday, August 13, 2005

1:15 P.M. – 5:30 P.M.

The eleventh plenary session of the ninth Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America was called to order at 1:15 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time by the Rev. Mark S. Hanson, presiding bishop, at the Orlando World Center, Orlando, Florida. As members were coming to order, Presiding Bishop Hanson shared with those present some fun facts. He said that, as of 10:00 A.M., Augsburg Fortress, Publishers, had distributed 516 free books; 6,000 people had been on-line during the plenary sessions; 134 people had participated in “Walk, Run, Roll, and Swim”; \$27,000 had been given in offerings, with an additional offering for the Fund for Leaders in Mission to be received on Sunday; and the assembly had met for more than 24 hours in plenary sessions, with less than six hours remaining.

The chair proposed the following revised agenda for the afternoon:

- World Hunger Appeal and Lutheran World Relief report
- Bible study
- Elections
- Report of the Young Adult Convocation
- Continued consideration of the churchwide strategy for ELCA engagement in Israel and Palestine
- Report of the Memorials Committee (3:10 P.M.–4:10 P.M.)
- Greetings: Augsburg Fortress, Publishers
- Greetings: Lutheran Services in America
- Report of the Reference and Counsel Committee (4:25 P.M.–5:00 P.M.)
- Continuation of the report of the Memorials Committee

The assembly gave consent.

Rising to a point of personal privilege, Mr. Charles E. Kalthorn [Metropolitan New York Synod] thanked the members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for their care following the events of September 11, 2001.

The presiding bishop asked Vice President Carlos E. Peña to chair the assembly for the first portion of the afternoon session.

World Hunger Appeal and Lutheran World Relief

Vice President Carlos E. Peña welcomed to the podium Ms. Kathryn Sime, director for the ELCA World Hunger Appeal, and Ms. Kathryn F. Wolford, president of Lutheran World Relief.

Ms. Sime put a face on the work of the World Hunger Appeal in Africa when she introduced the assembly to Godfrey, a young man who served as head of his household because both of his parents had died of AIDS. He and 35,000 other AIDS orphans in the region were assisted by a program of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, supported by gifts to the World Hunger Appeal. Because of the program, Godfrey was able to attend school, and he had brought one of his two chickens to Ms. Sime to thank her for the opportunity. Ms. Sime expressed her thanks to all those who were partners in the World Hunger and Disaster Appeal. Gifts, she explained, helped this church respond not only to

emergencies but to the root causes of hunger through relief, development, education, and advocacy in the U.S. and around the world. She recounted the outpouring of aid received and then given domestically in response to the previous year's hurricanes, as well as that distributed internationally with partner churches following the December 2004 tsunami. To date, gifts for tsunami relief had exceeded \$10,000,000, she told the assembly, funding a five-year response plan with partners throughout the region. Ms. Sime expressed gratitude for the gifts, saying they had "woven a rich tapestry of help and hope throughout Southeast Asia."

Ms. Sime read a short poem written by a child in India about the tsunami and the relief effort. She then introduced a brief video concerning the impact of both the tsunami in India and the aid received there. The video featured a teacher who had struggled to serve her students and community after the disaster. She had received training from the Lutheran church to counsel victims and restore hope. She hoped that the area and the people could return to the way they had been prior to the tsunami.

Ms. Wolford spoke of the work of Lutheran World Relief, supported by the World Hunger Appeal, not only in high-profile disaster relief but in many countries not in the headlines, such as Niger, Uganda, Bolivia, Colombia, El Salvador, Tanzania, and other places. She described the specific ways World Hunger gifts supported activities in each place. Ms. Wolford recounted the words of an Afro-Colombian woman: "In life we are invisible; in death we become a statistic." Through Lutheran World Relief, Ms. Wolford told the assembly, "You demonstrate that her life counts; her life is precious to God." She told the assembly that, together with local churches, Lutheran World Relief is at the forefront of advocacy for peace and human rights.

She expressed gratitude to the Women of the ELCA for their acceptance of the challenge to sell 90 tons of fairly traded coffee. Those tons represented a living wage for some of the world's poorest farmers, she explained. Ms. Wolford remarked on the changes evident in Nicaragua four years after Hurricane Mitch. There relief workers had taught farming, marketing, and land conservation. Those whom they taught had shared that knowledge, a person-to-person ministry that echoed St. Paul's second letter to the Corinthians, "You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us (2 Corinthians 9:11)."

Ms. Sime introduced Ms. Nancy Arnison, the new director for the ELCA World Hunger program. In closing, Ms. Sime likened the partnerships between the ELCA World Hunger Program, Lutheran World Relief, and members of this church to the woven bracelets from Faith and Hope Lutheran Church in Nicaragua, which had been distributed earlier. She asked that the bracelets serve as a reminder of the many threads of this church's hunger and disaster ministries woven together through the ELCA World Hunger Appeal: "Every day, through your gifts and your prayers, we weave a life-giving tapestry of health and hope with our neighbors around the world and around the corner." She thanked the members for all they do, in Christ's name, for this ministry.

Bible Study

Vice President Carlos E. Peña introduced the Rev. Peter W. Marty, senior pastor of St. Paul Lutheran Church in Davenport, Iowa, and host of the ELCA radio program "Grace Matters." Pr. Marty led a Bible study on the theme "Living in God's Amazing Grace."

The study's text was from Matthew 14:28-30: "Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from

me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” Pr. Marty referred to a lesson he had learned from a homiletics professor, the Rev. Fred Craddock: Things are not meaningful merely because someone says so. Proclaiming an experience to be meaningful is inadequate. A Christian should proclaim the Gospel and trust that those who hear will experience its deep meaning for themselves. Pr. Marty described grace as reliable on one hand and unpredictable on the other; grace, however, cannot be forced on other people. When grace is forced onto someone else, he said, “it ceases to be grace and then it becomes an agenda.” He quoted the Rev. Eugene Peterson’s translation of the Matthew text, “Learn the unforced rhythms of life.”

Pr. Marty suggested that the burdens Jesus talks about in this verse are not only the burdens of life’s schedule, they are the burdens of religion. Religious burdens are exhausting because they try to prescribe behavior for others and attempt to force grace on them. Pr. Marty highlighted two solutions offered by Jesus to get out from under the burden of religion: 1) Jesus offers himself. He says, “Learn from me. Walk with me. Work with me.” 2) Jesus does not offer an escape from burdens; he offers equipment: the yoke, an instrument of work. Jesus offers “a new way to carry life, a new way to bear responsibility, a new way to allow God to give you a better tomorrow than you could ever make for yourself.”

Pr. Marty pointed out that Jesus never asks disciples to figure out their lives and then come follow him. “It is a bring-your-burdens-along kind of following,” he observed. People are not loved by Jesus Christ because they are worthy. They are worthy because they are loved by him. The difference between the two was huge, Pr. Marty declared.

Jesus walks everyone into his world of unconditional love. It is religious people who try to make conditional what Christ has already deemed unconditional, Pr. Marty commented. It is religion that finds grace exhausting and judgment attractive, so Jesus invites those who are weary and burned out from the weight of religion into a life of faith, he said.

The Good News, Pr. Marty proclaimed, is that God sends Jesus Christ, the one who is lowly and gentle in heart, as a model for living. “Learn from him to live the unforced rhythms of grace,” he urged.

Six questions were projected on the hall screens, and Pr. Marty asked the assembly to discuss them in small groups:

1. Discuss the ways in which the ordinary events of your life may be full of momentous grace and how God offers great potential through every little encounter.
2. What are your favorite expressions of or references when using the word “grace”? What is it about you that others might consider gracious or grace-filled?
3. What do you do to try and live more freely and lightly?
4. In the ELCA congregation you attend or serve is there an image that outsiders would connect with the word “grace” or “gracious” or the commitments and ideas that go with either word? How so?
5. What does it mean to you to call the act or behavior of praying before a meal “grace”? Do you have a favorite table grace to share with others around you?
6. What do you do personally to communicate a gentle spirit, a kinder way, a softer touch?

Elections: First Common Ballot Report and Second Common Ballot

Reference: 2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section VII, pages 1–238.

Vice President Carlos E. Peña, chair *pro tem*, called upon Mr. Phillip H. Harris, chair of the Elections Committee, to deliver its report on the first common ballot. Mr. Harris informed the assembly that, of the 104 tickets, elections had occurred on all but 12. Given that copies of the results had been distributed to all voting members, Mr. Harris asked the chair to declare all those indicated on the report elected without the reading of names. Vice President Peña asked if there were any objection to waiving the reading of the results. There being none, the vice president declared elected all people who had received greater than a majority of votes on the first ballot for Church Council, boards, and committees.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

CA05.06.22 To declare elected all people who received greater than a majority of votes on the first ballot for the Church Council, boards, and committees.

Church Council

Pr. Steven “Steve” P. Loy, Las Cruces, N.M. (2E)
Pr. Elizabeth A. Eaton, Ashtabula, Ohio (6E)
Pr. Keith A. Hunsinger, Defiance, Ohio (6D)
Pr. Jonathan W. Linman, New York, N.Y. (8B)
Ms. Ann F. Niedringhaus, Duluth, Minn. (3E)
Ms. Sandra Schlesinger, Midland, Mich. (6B)
Ms. Lynette M. Reitz, Watsontown, Pa. (8E)
Mr. Bradley Dokken, Watford City, N.D. (3A)
Mr. Mark S. Helmke, San Antonio, Texas (4E)

Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission

Pr. Melanie Martin-Dent, Malta, Mont. (1F)
Pr. Peter Y. Wang, Naperville, Ill. (5A)
Ms. Gail A. Starr, Durham, N.C. (9B)
Ms. Luz E. Rubert-Lopez, Bridgeport, Conn. (7B)
Mr. Lance W. Webster, Wayne, Neb. (4A)
Pr. Sarah M. Lee-Faulkner, Grafton, W.Va. (8H)
Pr. Pamela R. Fickenscher, Edina, Minn. (3G)
Ms. Marilyn Miller, Milwaukee, Wis. (5J)
Mr. Francis Ramos-Scharron, Guaynabo, Puerto Rico (9F)
Mr. Rob M. Stuberg, Helena, Mont. (1F)
Pr. Angela L. Shannon, Ft. Wayne, Ind. (6C)
Ms. Leesa Wimmer, Perkasio, Pa. (7F)
Ms. Marilyn Liden Bode, Seattle, Wash. (1B)

Global Mission

Pr. Lori A. Kochanski, Allentown, Pa. (7E)
Ms. Sarah Geddada, Floral Park, N.Y. (7C)
Mr. John A. Henderson, Baltimore, Md. (8F)

Vocation and Education

Pr. Marcia Cox, Washington, D.C. (8G)
Pr. Russell C. Kleckley, Irmo, S.C. (9C)
Ms. Alcyone M. Scott, Fremont, Neb. (4A)
Mr. Osamu Matsutani, Anchorage, Alaska (1A)
Mr. Jan L. Elsasser, Allentown, Pa. (7E)
Pr. Nelson T. Strobert, Gettysburg, Pa. (8E)
Pr. John F. Hoffmeyer, Philadelphia, Pa. (7B)
Ms. Kathryn L. Johnson, Louisville, Ky. (6C)
Ms. Carolyn Wright, Fargo, N.D. (3B)
Mr. Jonathan Vehar, Albuquerque, N.M. (2E)
Mr. Paul J. Rasmussen, Sisseton, S.D. (3C)
Mr. Kai S. Swanson, Rock Island, Ill. (5B)

Church in Society

Pr. Paul D. Ostrem, Muscatine, Iowa (5D)
Mr. Jadon Berry, Bellingham, Wash. (1B)
Mr. Kent Burgess, Billings, Mont. (1F)
Mr. Daniel Namarra, Minneapolis, Minn. (3G)

Multicultural Ministries

Pr. James K. Echols, Chicago, Ill. (4F)
Pr. Wi Jo Kang, Colorado Springs, Colo. (2E)
Ms. Alyce A. Walluk, Anchorage, Alaska (1A)
Ms. Grace G. El-Yateem, Brooklyn, N.Y. (7C)
Pr. Ramona Soto Rank, Portland, Ore. (1E)
Pr. Khader N. El-Yateem, Brooklyn, N.Y. (7C)
Mr. Aureo F. Andino, Guaynabo, Puerto Rico (9F)
Mr. Anthony M. Bateza, Ames, Iowa (5D)
Pr. Larry J. Jorgenson, Anchorage, Alaska (1A)
Pr. Rosemary Sanchez-Guzman, El Paso, Texas (2E)
Ms. Patricia M. Robinson, Philadelphia, Pa. (7F)
Ms. Karris Golden, Waterloo, Iowa (5F)
Mr. Alfred V. Sagar, Jackson, Miss. (9D)

Publishing House

Pr. Jan A. Ruud, Tacoma, Wash. (1C)
Pr. Marty E. Stevens, Salisbury, N.C. (9B)
Ms. Martha E. Stortz, Berkeley, Calif. (2A)
Ms. Janet Thompson, Eagan, Minn. (3H)
Mr. Steven E. Titus, Fremont, Neb. (4A)

Board of Pensions

Ms. Mary K. Gobber, Lincoln, Neb. (4A)
Ms. Ivy S. Bernhardson, Bloomington, Minn. (3G)
Ms. Lois A. O'Rourke, Madison, Wis. (5K)
Mr. David D. Swartling, Bainbridge Island, Wash. (1B)
Mr. James D. Swinford, Indianapolis, Ind. (6C)

Mission Investment Fund

Pr. Abraham Cheng Shin Lu, Elmhurst, N.Y. (7C)
Ms. Janet H. Neff, Royersford, Pa. (7F)
Ms. Josefina Nieves-Lebron, San Juan, Puerto Rico (9F)

Nominating Committee

Pr. Kathryn “Kathy” J. Gerking, Iowa City, Iowa (5D)
Pr. Thomas E. McKee, Harrisburg, Pa. (8D)
Ms. Jeannine G. Grimm, Haskins, Ohio (6D)
Ms. Judith M. Bailey, Ocean City, N.J. (7A)
Mr. Larry D. Iverson, Owatonna, Minn. (3I)
Mr. Daniel F. Wilson, Miami, Fla. (9E)

Committee on Discipline

Pr. L. Paul Bartling, Seattle, Wash. (1B)
Pr. Judith A. McKee, York, Pa. (8D)
Pr. Kirk J. Havel, Midland, Mich. (6B)
Pr. Jean Bozeman, Norfolk, Va. (9A)
Pr. Lee H. Wesley, New York, N.Y. (7C)
Pr. Janet M. Corpus, Philadelphia, Pa. (7F)
Pr. Niels H. Nielsen, Dingmans Ferry, Pa. (7E)
Pr. David E. Klepper Jr., Mount Joy, Pa. (8D)
Pr. Arlen D. Hermodson, Moorhead, Minn. (3D)
Ms. Amy E. Hackler, Olathe, Kan. (4B)
Ms. Janice Krempin Wahl, Worthington, Ohio (6F)
Ms. Yolanda A. Tanner, Baltimore, Md. (8F)
Mr. Gregory G. Foote, Eugene, Ore. (1E)
Mr. Rod Schofield, Colorado Springs, Colo. (2E)
Mr. Benjamin E. Landon, South Williamsport, Pa. (8E)
Mr. Thomas R. Olson, Fargo, N.D. (3B)

Committee on Appeals

Pr. David G. Gabel, Traverse City, Mich. (6B)
Ms. Deborah S. Yandala, Westlake, Ohio (6E)
Mr. Athornia “Thorny” Steele, Columbus, Ohio (6F)

Mr. Harris gave instructions to voting members concerning the second common ballot, which would determine election for the remaining 12 tickets. He asked the bishops to distribute the second common ballot at that point, and reminded the assembly of the 6:00 P.M. deadline for completion.

Two voting members, the Rev. Ann M. Tiemeyer [Metropolitan New York Synod] and the Rev. John A. F. Corgan [New England Synod] rose to points of personal privilege, but both were ruled out of order by Chair *pro tem* Peña.

Young Adult Convocation

Vice President Carlos E. Peña introduced the report of the Young Adult Convocation. He explained that this church had hosted both a youth convocation, which had made a report on Wednesday afternoon, and a young adult convocation. More than 60 young adults entered the plenary hall singing “One Bread, One Body” to make their report. The report opened with prayer. As a witness to their diversity, portions of the report were given in Spanish. The members of the Young Adult Convocation spoke of their desire to exercise leadership in this church. They charged the ELCA with reaching out to them and their unique spiritual gifts through stronger communication and relationships, and they pledged themselves to work toward unity in this church. Among those reporting were Ms. Crystal

Corman [Nebraska Synod], Ms. Lonna Field [Minneapolis Area Synod], Ms. Brianna Morris [Texas-Louisiana Synod], Mr. Joshua Buzzard [Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod], Ms. Michelle Ridenour [Pacifica Synod], Ms. Shavaughan Joyce [Southeast Michigan Synod], Mr. John Brett [Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod], Mr. Tim Haggett [Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod], and Mr. Ryan McCutchan [Southwest California Synod].

At the conclusion of the report of the Young Adult Convocation, Mr. Peña returned the chair to Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson.

Churchwide Strategy for Engagement in Israel and Palestine (*continued*)

Reference: 2005 *Pre-Assembly Report*, Section IV, pages 75–78; Section V, pages 48–58.

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson reminded the assembly that the question on the floor was the amendment to the Churchwide Strategy for ELCA Engagement in Israel and Palestine submitted by Mr. Donald E. Lamprecht [Alaska Synod] (see above, page 358). He explained that at 3:10 P.M. he would be calling for the orders of the day in order to address memorials.

MOVED;

SECONDED:

To amend by deletion:
To strike the word “occupied” from the first “Whereas” clause;
To strike the sixth and ninth “Whereas” clauses; and
To strike the term “Peace Not Walls” from the last “Whereas” clause and the first “Resolved” clause.

Mr. Louis M. Hesse [Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod] rose to a point of order, saying, “With great regret, Reverend Chair, I would beg you to declare this discussion out of order.”

Presiding Bishop Hanson responded, “I will not do that. I view it to be in order.”

Mr. Hesse appealed the decision of the chair to the assembly.

MOVED;

SECONDED:

To appeal the ruling of the chair.

Mr. Hesse, speaking to his motion, stated, “While this subject is clearly, and immensely, and continuing, deeply tragic, and it deserves everyone’s attention here, this discussion is clearly also violating some of our most treasured founding principles, namely inclusiveness, diversity, [and] bringing all voices equally to the table. I have some experience in this, and speak from personal experience of the importance of being inclusive and bringing every voice to the table when discussing an issue that is as deep and complex as this one is. Please, listen to all the voices that are involved in this, and I ask you to rule this out of order until such time as all those voices can be present for our decisions.”

Presiding Bishop Hanson responded, “I would like to share why I view this to be in order. From [*Pre-Assembly Report*,] Section X, page 5, in our own constitution we say in part c. that we will be ‘. . . advocating dignity and justice for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations. . . .’ To fulfill this purpose, this church shall ‘[l]ift its voice in concord and work in concert with forces for good. . . , 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.’ And under the responsibility of the Churchwide Assembly, we say in our constitution that you ‘. . . shall deal with all matters which are necessary in pursuit of the purposes and functions of this church.’”

The chair then opened the motion to debate. Hearing none, he called for a vote.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

Yes-715; No-177

CARRIED:

To sustain the ruling of the chair.

The Rev. Kevin S. Knouse, bishop of the Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod, asked the assembly to reject the amendment. He commented that he had traveled in the Holy Land earlier in the year and, while not claiming to be an expert, he had met and talked with both Palestinians and Israelis who opposed the wall. He described some of the hardships the wall created.

Mr. Matthew L. Erickson [Southwest California Synod] stated that for 18 months his congregation had shared worship space with a synagogue. He articulated the concern of his rabbi neighbors, who felt strongly that the onus regarding the wall was being put only on Israelis. They also objected strongly to the title of the campaign, “Peace Not Walls.” He reminded voting members that there were still daily calls among Palestinian leaders for an end to Israel. Mr. Erickson worried about the loss of mission opportunities with secular Jews in his community if the amendment were not approved.

The Rev. John K. Stendahl [New England Synod], a member of the Consultative Panel on Lutheran-Jewish Relations, acknowledged that many words in the strategy were not perfect, but he emphasized that the ELCA had a responsibility to speak to the issue both because of its solidarity with the Palestinians and with the Israelis. He stressed that the resolution was about the wall on Palestinian land. He believed the document articulated this church’s deep concern evenhandedly, and stressed that it called for a shared cooperation in peacemaking.

The Rev. Linwood H. “Woody” Chamberlain Jr. [Northeastern Ohio Synod] indicated that in the hearing about the strategy the presenter had focused on encouraging dialogue between both sides and among faiths. He expressed concern that this church’s effectiveness in reconciliation might be damaged if the strategy were perceived as one-sided.

Ms. Karen J. Zeile [Southeast Michigan Synod] observed that she was burdened by the experience of her trip to the Holy Land earlier in the year. Israel has the right to protect itself from acts of terror, she declared. The wall, however, is about more than security, she asserted, offering as evidence the fact that the wall was not being built on the agreed-upon Green Line. “It is also a land grab and also an attempt to isolate Palestinians one from another,” she stated. To illustrate the hardships the wall imposed, Ms. Zeile spoke of an organist at Church of the Redeemer Lutheran Church in Jerusalem whose marriage was declared illegal retroactively and whose wife, living on the West Bank, cannot join him and their family for worship.

Presiding Bishop Hanson announced that, under the rule established earlier governing the length of time any issue may be discussed, the time for debate had expired. He put the question to an immediate vote.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

YES-369; NO-565

DEFEATED:

To amend by deletion:
To strike the word “occupied” from the first “Whereas” clause;
To strike the sixth and ninth “Whereas” clauses; and
To strike the term “Peace Not Walls” from the last “Whereas” clause
and the first “Resolved” clause.

The chair informed the assembly that 13 minutes remained for discussion of the main motion, under the rules.

The Rev. Alfon W. “Chip” Larson [Sierra Pacific Synod] offered an amendment.

MOVED;

SECONDED:

To amend by replacing the word “undermines” in the ninth “Whereas” clause with the words “may undermine” as follows:
WHEREAS, in carrying out this mandate, the Church Council in April 2004 joined the Lutheran World Federation, the World Council of Churches, and others in calling for an end to the construction of the Israeli separation wall or barrier being built on Palestinian land, which may undermine ~~undermines~~ efforts toward a credible two-state solution; and . . . [*The rest is unchanged.*]

Speaking to his amendment, Pr. Larson reminded voting members of the actions of the 1989 Churchwide Assembly, which struck a balance between the two goals of desire for national security for Israel and an independent Palestinian state. He judged that the strategy struck that balance.

Mr. John S. Munday [Minneapolis Area Synod] remarked that he understood terror and violence because of the murder of his daughter. Justice for her death had been a long time in coming. He spoke of a recent trip to the Holy Land and earlier journeys to Central America, where he had learned to listen to the people. He pointed out that Bp. Munib A. Younan of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land had supported passage of the strategy and that Rabbi Eric Yoffie had also spoken of the need for compromise. He urged rejection of the amendment.

The Rev. William R. Crabtree [Sierra Pacific Synod] indicated that the small change outlined in the amendment would help the strategy achieve the right balance in its prophetic call.

Mr. Kevin S. Bardonnner [Indiana-Kentucky Synod] called the previous question.

MOVED;

SECONDED:

To end debate.

Presiding Bishop Hanson instructed the assembly to vote.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

CARRIED:

To end debate.

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

YES-829; NO-74

Debate being ended, the chair called for a vote on the amendment.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

Yes-571; No-335

CARRIED:

To amend by replacing the word “undermines” in the ninth “Whereas” clause with the words “may undermine” as follows:

WHEREAS, in carrying out this mandate, the Church Council in April 2004 joined the Lutheran World Federation, the World Council of Churches, and others in calling for an end to the construction of the Israeli separation wall or barrier being built on Palestinian land, which may undermine ~~undermines~~ efforts toward a credible two-state solution; and . . .

[The rest is unchanged.]

Presiding Bishop Hanson indicated that debate would resume on the main motion as amended.

The Rev. Paul F. Koch [Metropolitan Chicago Synod] observed that, judging from his visits to the region, the Palestinian people wanted a homeland and peace. He expressed his desire for a map to be projected on the screens so that voting members could understand what the wall does. He explained that it cut Palestinian territories into disconnected regions that would be difficult to unite into a state. He noted that the International Court of Justice had ruled that the wall violated the rights of Palestinians.

The Rev. Phillip R. Nielsen [Nebraska Synod] affirmed the perception that the wall had reduced terrorism in Israel, but he acknowledged that the wall caused hardship for Palestinians. He asked that voting members, with the help of a resource person, consider what they were saying to Israelis: Did the strategy say that the way the Israelis were building the wall was unjust or did it say that they had no right to build a security wall at all?

Mr. Dennis W. Frado, director for the Lutheran Office for World Community, Division for Church in Society, clarified that the strategy specifically referred to the wall on Palestinian land, not to Israel’s right to build a barrier on its own land.

The Rev. Robert M. Goldstein [Metropolitan Chicago Synod] spoke of his great-grandfather, who grew up in Jerusalem and had been the sole survivor of a pogrom in Russia. Pr. Goldstein indicated his great love for his roots and stated that he had served on the local Lutheran-Jewish dialogue team, which had been working in close communication with the American Jewish Committee. He cautioned against the temptation to take sides too quickly; at first glance he had thought that the wall was a good idea, but he had decided that it hurt the Palestinian people’s right to live in their land.

Ms. Bonnie Nordvall [Northwestern Minnesota Synod] inquired whether and in what ways Israeli people were consulted in the preparation of the proposed strategy.

Mr. Frado replied that the January 2005 consultation had included only two people outside of this church, a Palestinian and another person from the Middle East. Representatives from the Lutheran-Jewish consultative panel also were present.

Ms. Nordvall asked whether there had been any Israelis present. She received a negative response.

The Rev. Said R. Ailabouni, program director for Europe and the Middle East Continental Desk, Division for Global Mission, added that Bp. Munib A. Younan and the general secretary of the Middle East Council of Churches also had been present. A decision had been made not to include either Israeli or Palestinian authorities, but rather to invite only church representatives.

The Rev. Roy Paul Henrickson [Virginia Synod] expressed his surprise that this church would presume to tell others how to seek peace more clearly when both it and this nation needed to first “pluck out the log” from their own eyes.

Mr. James L. Hansen [West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod] reminded the assembly that it would be important for this church to have passed a statement by the time the Lutheran World Federation council met at the end of August. He urged voting members to talk to those who had visited the Middle East under the auspices of the Division for Global Mission. He commented that eyewitness accounts from these people led him to support the recommendation.

Mr. Larry D. Shull [South Carolina Synod] opposed the resolution because, prior to the construction of the wall, the Israeli government had pleaded with Palestinian people to stop the indiscriminate killings through terrorist attacks. The wall was built to save the lives of both Israelis and Palestinians, he said.

The Rev. Gemechis D. Buba [Southeastern Synod] favored the resolution because it continued the tradition of the Lutheran church worldwide of speaking prophetically against injustice and oppression. He contended that the strategy was a document of evangelism, reconciliation, and peace.

Presiding Bishop Hanson notified the assembly that the time for debate on the main motion had expired. He noted that three previously submitted amendments had not been moved on the floor yet and would not be unless the assembly altered its rules. Before calling for a final vote on the strategy, he asked Ms. Mary T. Froehlig, member of the Church Council, to lead the assembly in prayer.

The chair directed the assembly to vote on the main motion as amended.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

YES-668; NO-269

CA05.06.23

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and its predecessor bodies have:

- a. accompanied the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land in its life and ministry in Jerusalem and the occupied Palestinian Territories, and**
- b. provided humanitarian and refugee assistance to Palestinians for over fifty years, through the Lutheran World Federation's Augusta Victoria Hospital and other ministries; and**

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and its predecessor bodies have for many years worked for peace between Israelis and Palestinians, advocating for political solutions that address the rights to security and peace with justice for both Palestinians and Israelis; and

WHEREAS, the 1989 Churchwide Assembly affirmed the Message on "The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict," which acknowledged that

"a. Because of a history of discrimination and genocide and the dangers feared today, the desire for national security is the major Israeli political goal.

"b. Because of a history of occupation and experience as a refugee people, Palestinian self-determination incorporated within an independent Palestinian state is the major Palestinian political goal" and that these two goals needed to be recognized as legitimate if peace is to be achieved; and

WHEREAS, Bishop Munib A. Younan of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land has stated: “It is our conviction that the security of Israel is dependent on freedom and justice for Palestinians, and that freedom and justice for Palestinians is dependent on security for Israel. This symbiotic relationship remains the key for any just solution in the area”;

WHEREAS, acting in accord with the 1995 social statement of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, “For Peace in God’s World,” and working in partnership with other Lutherans, ecumenical, interfaith, and secular partners, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is committed to building a movement that will strengthen the resolve of political leaders—including those in the U.S.—to find a peaceful and just solution in the Holy Land; and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL) and the Lutheran World Federation have drawn to the attention of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America not only the extreme hardship brought to Palestinian communities by the continuing Israeli occupation and construction of the separation wall or barrier on Palestinian land, but also the imminent threat they pose to the future of the ELCJHL and other Christian churches in the Holy Land; and

WHEREAS, the emerging fragile prospects for a lasting peace between Israel and Palestine require both Israelis and Palestinians to 1) avoid taking any actions that would undermine the peace (e.g., attacks on civilians, confiscation of land) and 2) actively engage in actions that strengthen the will for peace; and

WHEREAS, the 2003 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America reaffirmed “the ELCA’s commitment to accompany the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and Palestine and its ecumenical and inter-faith partners, to carry out public policy and human rights advocacy on their behalf, and to offer humanitarian relief and development assistance” and expressed the “hope that the Quartet’s [U.S., Russian Federation, European Union, and United Nations] ‘Road Map’ will lead to an end to the occupation, terrorist attacks, and all other forms of violent conflict, as well as to both a viable, contiguous, independent Palestinian state and a secure Israel”; and

WHEREAS, in carrying out this mandate, the Church Council in April 2004 joined the Lutheran World Federation, the World Council of Churches, and others seeking peace in the region in calling for an end to the construction of the Israeli separation wall or barrier being built on Palestinian land, which may undermine efforts toward a credible two-state solution; and

WHEREAS, the Church Council in April 2005 approved the Churchwide Strategy for ELCA Engagement in Israel and Palestine; and

WHEREAS, this strategy responds to the call of ELCA companions in the Holy Land for a churchwide campaign for peace: “Peace Not Walls: Stand for Justice in the Holy Land”; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that, acting in accord with previous ELCA policy actions, members, congregations, synods, the churchwide organization, and church-related agencies and institutions are urged to participate in the churchwide campaign for peace: “Peace Not Walls: Stand for Justice in the Holy Land” by engaging in awareness-building, accompaniment, and advocacy activities, including:

1. praying for peace with justice between Israel and Palestine and for the continuing witness of the Christian Church—including the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land—in the region;
2. building relationships with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land, the ministries of the Lutheran World Federation, and other ecumenical and inter-faith companions engaged in the pursuit of peace in the Holy Land;
3. continuing to build bridges to other Christian brothers and sisters throughout the Middle East, including Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine, and Egypt, and advocating for human rights when those rights are threatened;
4. learning about the situation in the Holy Land, sharing information, and building networks;
5. intensifying advocacy for a just peace in the region, building upon Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and predecessor body policies, and engaging with the public media in this effort;
6. stewarding financial resources—both U.S. tax dollars and private funds—in ways that support the quest for a just peace in the Holy Land; and
7. giving generously to help ensure the continuation of the schools and other ministries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land and the humanitarian work of the Lutheran World Federation through Augusta Victoria Hospital and other ministries; and be it further

RESOLVED, that individual congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America are encouraged to become part of a chain of action to link the 2005 Churchwide Assembly with the 2006 synodical assemblies through congregational use of communion ware made in Bethlehem, thereby expressing in worship, prayer, giving, and advocacy this church’s solidarity with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land.

Following the adoption of the strategy, the Rev. Donald M. Carlson [Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod] offered the following motion.

Moved;

Seconded: RESOLVED, that the Office of the Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America communicate the actions and concerns of this assembly, as expressed in the adopted version of “Strategy for Engagement in Israel and Palestine,” to the office of the United States Secretary of State.

Pr. Carlson commented that it was important that the administration be aware of this church’s concerns for justice for both the Palestinians and the Israeli people.

Seeing no one else desiring to speak, Presiding Bishop Hanson put the motion to a vote.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

YES-799; NO-123

CA05.06.24 RESOLVED, that the Office of the Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America communicate the actions and concerns of this assembly, as expressed in the adopted version of “Strategy for Engagement in Israel and Palestine,” to the office of the United States Secretary of State.

Before continuing with the agenda, Presiding Bishop Hanson prayed the following prayer, which came from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land: “Lead us all—Palestinian, Israeli, Muslim, Jew, Christian—out of the tombs that entrap us, the grief that wounds us, the hate that embitters us, the despair that paralyzes us, and the fear that holds us hostage. Raise up among us and within us your Spirit of Wisdom and Grace for the journey. Open our eyes and soften our hearts to help us see your face in the eyes of the other. Make us the church you meant us to be, the people of faith and courage you call us to be, bridge-builders, healers, ministers of reconciliation, justice, and peace. Amen”

Report of the Memorials Committee

Reference: 2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section VI, pages 1–111.

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson called to the podium Mr. Karl D. Anderson and the Rev. Diane “Dee” H. Pederson, co-chairs of the Memorials Committee. Mr. Anderson reported on two memorials removed from the *en bloc* resolution. He informed the assembly that the material in Category E1: Renewing Worship already had been addressed by the action of the Churchwide Assembly on that topic and that a substitution for the recommended action on Category E7: Ratification of Policy and Governing Documents had been referred to the Committee of Reference and Counsel and now was Motion I.

Category B2: Social Statement on Bioethical Research

Reference: 2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section VI, page 20.

1. Northeastern Iowa Synod (5F) [2004 Memorial]

WHEREAS, our society finds itself in the midst of a revolution brought upon it by the growing science of biotechnology; and

WHEREAS, this impacts nature and humans in such fundamental practices as medicine, food supply, research, giving birth, and so forth; and

WHEREAS, this revolution holds potential promise for the improvement of life and simultaneously poses immense dangers for the future of humanity and the course of nature itself; and

WHEREAS, U.S. society is wrestling with numerous controversies related to the “new genetics,” including research in genetically modified organisms, cloning, and stem cells; and

WHEREAS, critical issues need to be addressed, such as the patenting of life forms, the future of farming, and the implications of commercial control of genetic material; and

WHEREAS, moral guidance for practical choices is needed in the face of the technological realities; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Northeastern Iowa Synod in Assembly memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly to approve the development of a social statement that addresses the theological, ethical, public, and pastoral issues surrounding genetic research and therapy; and be it further

RESOLVED, that progress reports be provided to the 2007 and 2009 Churchwide Assembly, with a final proposal provided to the 2011 Churchwide Assembly.

BACKGROUND

Since the early 1990s, the rapidly developing knowledge of genetics and its technological applications have been impacting American society with nearly tangible force. The 2004 memorial from the Northeastern Iowa Synod succinctly and accurately describes this broad social revolution and the challenges it presents to this church in terms of theology, ethics, and public life. The memorial provides a sound rationale for the development of an ELCA social statement on genetic research and technology.

The development of such a social statement seems both desirable and feasible at this time. It will require, however, a careful process to define a manageable scope and the specific subject matter for the social statement. While the urgency of the issues resulting from the “new” genetics are pressing and this church has been developing commendable resources for this task, the challenges are also daunting because the impact of genetics on society is so fundamental, broad, and rapid.

This church’s resources for this task include existing study resources available from the Division for Church in Society on genetic testing, cloning, genetically modified organisms, and the theological implications of genetic developments. Other ELCA resources include the work of its colleges, universities, and seminaries, which have contributed steadily to theological and public conversations through class offerings, special conferences, and other activities. The ELCA, moreover, is gifted with leading thinkers on these issues, and ELCA members have reflected upon and discussed them from the perspective of faith when confronted in daily life. While such resources are in place, the daunting challenges for a social statement on genetics should also be candidly assessed. There are significant areas of genetic research that the ELCA and its members have addressed only minimally, if at all. In addition, the issues involved are highly controversial and divisive and people of common faith have quite contrary convictions.

Cost Analysis

Costs for further defining the subject matter of the social statement and then convening a task force to prepare the social statement would be approximately \$165,000, spread over six years. These costs reflect the activities necessary for carrying out the process leading to a social statement in line with “Policy and Procedures of the ELCA for Addressing Social Concerns,” which was affirmed by the 1997 Churchwide Assembly. This includes

consultations, task force meetings, and publications. These finances as well as the staff time required would come from the operating budget of the Division for Church in Society (or the appropriate churchwide unit). Pending approval by the 2005 Churchwide Assembly, the expenses would be anticipated for 2006.

CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY ACTION

Mr. Karl D. Anderson, co-chair of the Memorials Committee, moved the following:

MOVED;

SECONDED:

To receive with gratitude the memorial of the Northeastern Iowa Synod requesting that an ELCA social statement on genetic research and therapy be developed;

To acknowledge that conversations on this topic already are being conducted throughout society and this church;

To call upon the Division for Church in Society (or the appropriate churchwide unit) to develop a social statement that addresses significant theological, ethical, public, and pastoral challenges arising from developments in genetics in accord with ELCA guidelines (as set forth in “Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns”) for possible consideration by the 2011 Churchwide Assembly; and

To encourage continued faithful conversations on this topic throughout this church during the study process.

The Rev. Steven L. Ullestad, bishop of the Northeastern Iowa Synod, supported the action, citing a microbiologist in his synod who struggled with ethical issues in his field. Many others were also struggling, he said, without adequate avenues for dialogue. He asked that members of this church join together in a conversation about these difficult issues.

Mr. Ruben A. Mesa [Southeastern Minnesota Synod] identified himself as a hematologist at the Mayo Clinic, where he works on new therapies for leukemia. Most people have no concept of how quickly this subject is evolving, he commented. It was difficult to keep up with developments, and the complexities of issues are often oversimplified for political purposes, he contended. The ELCA could be a leader in providing guidance in these difficult bioethical matters by offering a place to deliberate and think deeply.

Ms. Susan D. Doyle [Oregon Synod] described herself as a futurist. She read from an essay she had written in *Faith Trends and Issues* regarding stem cell research. She said the faith community could provide structure to discussion of these issues.

Ms. Rachel Thue [Northwestern Minnesota Synod] called the previous question.

MOVED;

SECONDED:

To end debate.

Presiding Bishop Hanson instructed the assembly to vote.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

CARRIED:

To end debate.

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

YES-807; NO-46

The presiding bishop directed the assembly to vote on the recommendation of the Memorials Committee.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

YES-792; NO-69

CA05.06.25

To receive with gratitude the memorial of the Northeastern Iowa Synod requesting that an ELCA social statement on genetic research and therapy be developed;

To acknowledge that conversations on this topic already are being conducted throughout society and this church;

To call upon the Division for Church in Society (or the appropriate churchwide unit) to develop a social statement that addresses significant theological, ethical, public, and pastoral challenges arising from developments in genetics in accord with ELCA guidelines (as set forth in “Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns”) for possible consideration by the 2011 Churchwide Assembly; and

To encourage continued faithful conversations on this topic throughout this church during the study process.

Category B5: Refugees, Asylum Seekers, and Immigrants

Reference: 2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section VI, pages 24-29.

Eleven synods adopted essentially identical memorials on Refugees, Asylum Seekers, and Immigrants. The Model Memorial is printed here, with changes noted by synod.

Model Memorial

WHEREAS, Jesus calls those who follow him to love their neighbors, the hungry, the homeless, and the vulnerable; and

WHEREAS, people of faith are called to action doing the things that God wants to get done; and

WHEREAS, there are 11,000,000 refugees and 23,000,000 displaced people fleeing wars, political and religious persecution, violations of human rights, and hunger; and

WHEREAS, the United States of America is a nation of immigrants with a long history of welcoming newcomers to its shores; and

WHEREAS, the United States continues to face challenges in restoring its capacity to resettle more than 50,000 refugees, which is far below this country’s historic annual admission level of well over 100,000; and

WHEREAS, many newcomers, especially children and those who have been trafficked to this country for the purpose of forced labor or sexual exploitation, need protection, help, and the opportunity to live in dignity; and

WHEREAS, refugees, asylum seekers, and immigrants face a myriad of burdensome laws, procedures, and unjust practices that contribute to such problems as the “warehousing” of refugees in overseas camps, the detention of asylum seekers in U.S. jails, the lack of legal protections for unaccompanied children and asylum seekers, and the separation of families; and

WHEREAS, burdensome laws and procedures and unjust practices undermine this country’s security; and

WHEREAS, the congregations and members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America have a long tradition in refugee resettlement ministry; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America recommit to being an advocate and justice-seeker in regard to refugee and immigration issues; and be it further

RESOLVED, that each synodical bishop be requested to appoint a task force to give leadership in involving congregations in refugee and immigration justice issues, including education, advocacy, and local service; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the task forces relate to the Division for Church in Society (or the appropriate churchwide unit) and work closely with and support Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service and its local partners; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the [Synod Name] memorialize this resolution to the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for consideration and action.

1. Southwest California Synod (2B) [2005 Memorial]

Adopted the “model memorial” printed above, with the following changes:

- Third WHEREAS replaces “violations of human rights, and hunger;” with “and violations of human rights;”
- Fifth WHEREAS is replaced with:

“WHEREAS, the United States continues to face challenges in bolstering its capacity to resettle the U.S. government’s goal of 70,000 refugees, which is far below this country’s historic annual admission level of well over 100,000, recognizing a temporary shutdown in the refugee resettlement program and a sharp decrease following the attacks of September 11, 2001, resulted in only 27,000 new refugees in 2002, 28,000 in 2003, and 52,330 in 2004. And alarmingly, due to limited funding, refugee admission levels may fall below 40,000 this year if Congress does not appropriate additional funds;”
- Seventh WHEREAS replaces “that contribute to such problems as the ‘warehousing’ of refugees in overseas camps, the detention of asylum seekers in U.S. jails, the lack of legal protections for unaccompanied children and asylum seekers, and the separation of families;” with “including the detention and deportation of children and asylum seekers and the separation of families;”
- First RESOLVED is replaced with:

“RESOLVED, that the 2005 Synod Assembly of the Southwest California Synod memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to recommit itself to being an advocate and justice seeker in regard to refugee and immigration issues;”
- Third RESOLVED changes “the task forces” to “these task forces”

2. Northeastern Minnesota Synod (3E) [2005 Memorial]

Adopted the “model memorial” printed above, with the following changes:

- Second WHEREAS is deleted
- Seventh WHEREAS replaces “that contribute to such problems as the ‘warehousing’ of refugees in overseas camps, the detention of asylum seekers in U.S. jails, the lack of legal protections for unaccompanied children and asylum seekers, and the separation of families;” with “including the detention and deportation of asylum seekers, the separation of families, and the institutionalization of vulnerable migrant children;”
- Fourth RESOLVED is replaced with:

“RESOLVED, that the Northeastern Minnesota Synod Assembly direct the Northeastern Minnesota Synod Council to forward this resolution to the 2005

Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for consideration and action.”

3. Nebraska Synod (4A) [2005 Memorial]

Adopted the “model memorial” printed above, with the following changes:

- First four RESOLVED paragraphs are replaced with:
 - “RESOLVED, that the Nebraska Synod in Assembly memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to:
 1. recommit this church to being an advocate and justice-seeker in regard to refugee and immigration issues; and
 2. request each synodical bishop to appoint a task force to give leadership in involving congregations in refugee and immigration justice issues, including education, advocacy, and local service; and
 3. have each task force relate to the Division for Church in Society (or the appropriate churchwide unit) and work closely with and support Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service and its local partners.”

4. Central States Synod (4B) [2005 Memorial]

Adopted the “model memorial” printed above, with the following changes:

- Fifth WHEREAS is deleted
- Fourth RESOLVED reads “that the Central States Synod Assembly direct the Central States Synod Council to forward this resolution to the ELCA Churchwide Assembly for consideration and action.”

5. Southwestern Texas Synod (4E) [2005 Memorial]

Adopted the “model memorial” printed above, with the following changes:

- Fourth WHEREAS is deleted

6. Metropolitan Chicago Synod (5A) [2005 Memorial]

Adopted the “model memorial” printed above, with the following changes:

- Seventh WHEREAS inserts “legal” before the first use of “refugee”
- Seventh WHEREAS replaces “laws, procedures, and unjust practices” with “laws and procedures”
- Seventh WHEREAS replaces “such problems as the ‘warehousing’ of refugees in overseas camps,” with “undue delays in refugee camps,”
- First four RESOLVED paragraphs are replaced with:
 - “RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Chicago Synod Assembly memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:
 1. to recommit this church to being an advocate and justice-seeker in regard to refugee and immigration issues;
 2. to ask each synodical bishop to appoint a task force to give leadership in involving congregations in refugee and immigration justice issues, including education, advocacy, and local service; and
 3. to ensure that the synodical task forces relate to the Division for Church in Society (or the appropriate churchwide unit) and work closely with and support Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service and local partners such as its Chicago affiliate, Interfaith Refugee and Immigration Ministries (IRIM).”

7. South-Central Synod of Wisconsin (5K) [2005 Memorial]

Adopted the “model memorial” printed above, with the following changes:

- Second WHEREAS is deleted
- Third WHEREAS replaces “violations of human rights, and hunger;” with “and violations of human rights;”
- Seventh WHEREAS replaces “that contribute to such problems as the ‘warehousing’ of refugees in overseas camps, the detention of asylum seekers in U.S. jails, the lack of legal protections for unaccompanied children and asylum seekers, and the separation of families;” with “including the detention and deportation of children and asylum seekers and the separation of families;”
- First RESOLVED is replaced with:
“RESOLVED, that the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly to recommit this church to being an advocate and justice-seeker in regard to refugee and immigration issues;”
- Third RESOLVED changes “the task forces” to “these task forces”
- Fourth RESOLVED is deleted

8. Metropolitan New York Synod (7C) [2005 Memorial]

Adopted the “model memorial” printed above, with the following changes:

- Third WHEREAS replaces “violations of human rights, and hunger;” with “and violations of human rights;”
- Seventh WHEREAS replaces “that contribute to such problems as the ‘warehousing’ of refugees in overseas camps, the detention of asylum seekers in U.S. jails, the lack of legal protections for unaccompanied children and asylum seekers, and the separation of families;” with “including the detention and deportation of children and asylum seekers and the separation of families;”
- First RESOLVED is replaced with:
“RESOLVED, that the 2005 Metropolitan New York Synod Assembly memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to recommit this church to being an advocate and justice-seeker in regard to refugee and immigration issues;”
- Second RESOLVED replaces “each synodical bishop be requested to” with “the bishop of this synod”
- Third RESOLVED replaces “the task forces” with “this task force”
- Fourth RESOLVED is deleted

9. Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod (8A) [2005 Memorial]

Adopted the “model memorial” printed above, with the following changes:

- Eighth WHEREAS is deleted
- First four RESOLVED paragraphs are replaced with:
“RESOLVED, that the Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to recommit this church to being an advocate and justice-seeker in regard to refugee and immigration issues; and be it further
RESOLVED, that each synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America be encouraged to develop strategies to address immigrant and refugee issues.”

10. Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod (8B) [2005 Memorial]

Adopted the “model memorial” printed above, with the following changes:

- Seventh WHEREAS replaces “U.S. jails,” with “federal, state, and county jails;”

- First four RESOLVED paragraphs are replaced with:

“RESOLVED, that the 2005 Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod Assembly memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to:

 1. recommit this church to being an advocate and justice-seeker in regard to refugee and immigration issues and to authorize updating the 1998 Message on Immigration; and
 2. ask each synod to appoint a task force to give leadership in involving congregations in refugee and immigration justice issues, including education, advocacy, and local service. It is recommended that each synodical task force relate to the Division for Church in Society (or the appropriate churchwide unit) as well as relevant synodical committees. It is recommended that each task force work closely with and support Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service and its local partners; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the 2005 Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod Assembly encourage the Synod Council to develop a Task Force on Immigration and Refugee Issues in our synod.”

11. Lower Susquehanna Synod (8D) [2005 Memorial]

Adopted the “model memorial” printed above, with the following changes:

- New WHEREAS inserted before the first WHEREAS reading:

“Whereas, Jesus calls those who follow him to proclaim good news to the poor and release to the captives, and to let the oppressed go free;”
- First WHEREAS replaced with:

“WHEREAS, the Gospel frees us from fear to live in service to and build up the life of our neighbor, the hungry, the homeless, and the vulnerable;”
- Third WHEREAS replaces “violations of human rights, and hunger;” with “and violations of human rights;”
- Sixth WHEREAS inserts “unaccompanied” before “children”
- Seventh WHEREAS replaces “that contribute to such problems as the ‘warehousing’ of refugees in overseas camps, the detention of asylum seekers in U.S. jails, the lack of legal protections for unaccompanied children and asylum seekers, and the separation of families;” with “including the detention and deportation of children and asylum seekers and the separation of families;”
- Eighth WHEREAS is moved to precede the sixth WHEREAS of the model memorial
- Eighth WHEREAS replaces “burdensome laws and” with “restrictionist laws, policies,”
- First RESOLVED is replaced with:

“RESOLVED, that the Lower Susquehanna Synod, meeting in assembly, memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to go on record as recommitting this church to being an advocate and justice-seeker in regard to refugee and immigration issues;”
- Third RESOLVED inserts “to:” after “partners”
- Third RESOLVED inserts the following numbered points:
 - “1) Analyze the political, economic, social, and environmental reasons for uprooting of people and examine the role of governments in creating conditions that uproot people and place migrants in difficult situations;
 - 2) Monitor humanitarian laws relating to migrants, refugees, and internally displaced people, recognizing that they are under constant review and revision because of the changing international environment;
 - 3) Seek ways to collaborate between church, ecumenical, and international institutions (such as local advocacy ministries, World Council of Churches, and the United

Nations High Command for Refugees) in order to respond to the needs of immigrants and asylum seekers by providing lawful protection, assistance, and advocacy;

- 4) Generate educational materials according to the purpose of the task force;
- 5) Establish a speakers' bureau;
- 6) Direct information to pastors, congregations, communities, and media outlets;
- 7) Present information at conference meetings, synod assemblies, and other gatherings;
- 8) Encourage and help facilitate the sponsorship of refugees and immigrants;
- 9) Encourage congregations to welcome and invite refugees and immigrants into their congregational life;
- 10) Train the baptized in ways to deepen theological reflection and to practice a culture of encounter, hospitality, and exchange between immigrants, refugees, and congregations;
- 11) Encourage congregations, individuals, and communities to be advocates on issues concerning legislative justice as well as individual cases of immigration and asylum by contacting members of Congress and the Executive Branch to insist that migrants and asylum seekers are detained only in exceptional circumstances and for a limited time and may avail themselves of judicial review and legal advice and to discourage our government from pursuing legislation that criminalizes immigrants or promotes restrictionist policies that use security concerns to justify detention of all undocumented immigrants and asylum seekers;
- 12) Advocate on behalf of unaccompanied alien children.”

Additional memorial on this topic

12. New Jersey Synod (7A) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, God commanded Israel: “The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the stranger as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God” (Leviticus 19:34); and

WHEREAS, Lutherans have welcomed and assisted strangers through Lutheran World Relief, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, and Lutheran social service organizations—including Lutheran Social Ministries of New Jersey—for more than 50 years; and

WHEREAS, in the 2004 federal fiscal year U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement “detained 235,347 aliens nationwide and held approximately 20,000 aliens in custody per day”; and

WHEREAS, in New Jersey, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement “detained approximately 700 aliens per day; 60 percent of those were criminal aliens. At the Elizabeth Contract Detention Facility U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement detains 245 [non-criminal] aliens each day” (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement News Release 1/24/05); and

WHEREAS, asylum seekers entering the United States must prove to an immigration official at ports of entry that they have “a credible fear” of persecution if they are returned to their home country in order not to be immediately returned to that country; and

WHEREAS, Congress required that those subject to this “expedited removal” process, including asylum seekers, be detained until the United States removes them; however, if a “credible fear” is established, Congress allowed that discretionary parole should be considered for those who can establish identity and community ties and who are not subject to any possible bars to asylum involving violence or misconduct; and

WHEREAS, the study on asylum seekers in expedited removal by the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom reports that “. . . detained asylum seekers in Expedited Removal are subject to conditions of confinement that are virtually identical to those in prisons or jails. These conditions create a serious risk of institutionalization and other forms of psychological harm . . .”; and

WHEREAS, the guidelines of the United Nations High Commission on Refugees state: “Conditions of detention for asylum-seekers should be humane with respect shown for the inherent dignity of the

person. They should be prescribed by law. . . . The use of prisons should be avoided. If separate detention facilities are not used, asylum-seekers should be accommodated separately from convicted criminals or prisoners on remand . . .”; and

WHEREAS, U.S. detention standards are based on a correctional model and U.S. law does not provide standards specific to non-criminal asylum seekers; and

WHEREAS, in fiscal year 2003 in the Newark, New Jersey, District, 3.8 percent of asylum seekers were released (paroled) prior to a decision in their case, compared with the Harlingen, Texas, District, where 98 percent of asylum seekers were released; and

WHEREAS, immigration judges, who currently determine asylum eligibility, vary significantly in their individual approval rates and grant asylum in 25 percent of cases involving represented applicants but only 2 percent in unrepresented cases; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the New Jersey Synod memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to:

- request this church’s leaders, including the presiding bishop, synodical bishops, pastors, and lay leaders to pray for and advocate for just and compassionate treatment of asylum seekers and all those who are held in detention;
- request that congregations continue to respond in love, spiritual care, and support for those who are detained by the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security through visits, letters, prayer, and assistance;
- call upon Congress and the administration to immediately end the detention and imprisonment of non-criminal asylum seekers, undocumented laborers, and others in jails or jail-like facilities;
- urge the implementation of just, consistent, and humane practices regarding the treatment of asylum seekers, such as those suggested in the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom’s February 2005 study on asylum seekers in expedited removal;

and be it further

RESOLVED, that the bishop of the New Jersey Synod urge the Director of Detention and Removal Operations, Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Newark District Office, to parole asylum seekers awaiting their “credible fear” interviews into the community through temporary sanctuary communities—groups of religious congregations and other community groups acting on behalf of asylum seekers—or family members.

BACKGROUND

God’s call to welcome the stranger is deeply rooted in the witness of both the Old and New Testaments. Israel was a migrant and refugee people, fleeing oppression in Egypt. Numerous Old Testament passages reflect the compelling relationship between love of God and love for the stranger:

- “You shall not oppress a resident alien; you know the heart of an alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt” (Exodus 23:9).
- “When an alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt; I am the Lord your God” (Leviticus 19:33, 34).
- “For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who is not partial and takes no bribe, who executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and who loves the strangers, providing them food and clothing. You shall also love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt” (Deuteronomy 10: 17-19).

In the New Testament as well, the relationship between the love of God and the welcoming of the stranger is clearly evident. Jesus himself was a refugee; Joseph and Mary had to leave everything behind and carry the infant Jesus to safety when the state set out to murder innocent children. In Matthew 25 Jesus includes welcoming the stranger as a sign of love of God: “. . . I was a stranger and you welcomed me. . . . Then the righteous will answer him, ‘. . . and when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you?’ . . . And the king will answer them, ‘Truly, I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.’”

ELCA Message on Immigration

Jesus’ call to welcome the stranger has for many years been an integral part of the experience and social policy of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and its predecessor churches. During World War II, one in six Lutherans in the world was a refugee or displaced person. As oppression grew in Europe in 1939, Lutherans in the United States created an agency to meet the needs of these refugees. That agency, now known as Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS), continues to work in close partnership with the ELCA in all matters pertaining to refugee, immigration, and migrant issues, including receiving ELCA financial support and ensuring significant ELCA participation on its board of directors.

In 1997, the ELCA Churchwide Assembly called for “a resource for deliberation on attitudes regarding immigrants and a resource to interpret and apply ELCA policy related to immigration” (CA97.6.39). In response, the ELCA Church Council adopted a Message on Immigration at its meeting November 16, 1998.

A Message is one way the ELCA speaks to social issues. Messages, which are adopted by the ELCA Church Council, are “communications which draw attention to a social issue and encourage action on it. . . . They are not new social policy positions of the ELCA, but build upon previously adopted social statements and social policy resolution. . . . Messages address contemporary situations 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. . . . They signal certain priority concerns that arise from this church’s mission in the world (“Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns,” pages 20–21).

The following excerpts from the ELCA Message on Immigration describe this church’s call and response that has emerged from the faith tradition above and from this church’s experience:

- We recognize and rejoice that our church along with our country continues to change with the steady arrival of newcomers in the United States. Persons who have recently come from Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, and other areas of the world are enriching congregations throughout the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). We celebrate the liturgy in 33 languages; we worship and sing in Spanish with our new *Libro de Liturgia y Cántico*. Newcomers increasingly are assuming leadership roles in our congregations, synods, affiliated educational and social ministry agencies, and churchwide ministries. We are beginning new congregations in immigrant communities. We thank God for these developments, and we remember Paul’s admonition: “Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, to the glory of God” (Romans 15:7) (page 1).

- This is a fitting time for us to examine anew our attitudes toward newcomers, to strengthen our church's ministry among, with, and for the most vulnerable of newcomers, and to continue to advocate for immigration, refugee, and asylum laws that are fair and generous (page 1).
- This ministry requires compassion and competence, is time-consuming, sometimes heart-breaking, and frequently unrecognized. Opportunities abound for members, congregations, pastors, bishops, and all the expressions of our church to support, strengthen, and expand this ministry (page 3).
- Newcomers without legal documents also are among the most vulnerable. Congregations are called to welcome all people, regardless of their legal status. Persons who once were or now are without documents are members of our congregations, and we want them to feel and know that in the Church they are part of a safe and caring community. We encourage bishops and synods to show their support for congregations composed of or working with immigrants who may or may not have documents (pages 4-5).
- Those who minister with vulnerable newcomers should not be isolated or disconnected from one another. In order to support and strengthen our church's ministry with immigrants, we encourage churchwide units to continue to work with congregations, synods, and Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service to provide opportunities for these pastors and lay leaders to learn from and support one another (page 5).
- Newcomers in our church, pastors and congregations ministering with immigrants, and the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service also are educators in our church and advocates for those who cannot speak for themselves. Out of their daily experience, they can teach the rest of us about the gifts newcomers bring to our church and country, the often harsh consequences of recent (1996) immigration and welfare laws on family life, or the way immigrants who lack legal status are taken advantage of in working situations. They keep before us—so that we do not forget—the grim realities many immigrants face and the strength of character and resourcefulness newcomers demonstrate. They inform us of conditions in other countries and what the role of the United States has been. They provide our church with experience and knowledge to take part in public deliberation on immigration, refugee, and asylum policies (page 5).
- We encourage our members, in light of our history and our ministry with newcomers, to join with other citizens in our democratic society to support just laws that serve the common good (page 6).
- The newcomers in our church from around the world remind us that all of us in the Church of Jesus Christ are sojourners, “for here we have no lasting city, but we are looking for the city that is to come” (Hebrews 13: 14). As we journey together through the time God has given us, may God give us the grace of a welcoming heart and an overflowing love for the new neighbors among us” (page 9) (*All quotations from the ELCA Message on Immigration, 1998*).

Cost Analysis

The potential costs for the implementation of this memorial include costs for synods, the churchwide organization, and Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS). They include the following:

- Preliminary research and development of the idea;
- Ongoing consultation and coordination from the ELCA, including the Division for Church in Society and the Committee for Ministry Among People in Poverty of the Conference of Bishops;

- Ongoing resource and technical support from LIRS;
- Convening of task force members either in person or by conference call;
- Printing and distribution of mailings; and
- Resourcing and support for networks.

Beginning costs for each synod task force would be approximately \$1000 for their needs, including mailing and printing. A small initial grants fund of about \$20,000 for seed money accessible by request from the task forces would support initial activities. It is estimated that LIRS's expenses for this effort would be approximately \$85,000 for various staffing costs, travel, printing, mailing, and telephone (e.g., in-kind costs).

Discussions among LIRS, the ELCA Division for Church in Society, and other stakeholders, including the Conference of Bishops' Ministry Among People Living in Poverty (MAPP) Committee, have already taken place regarding this initiative. Bishop Stephen P. Bouman of the Metropolitan New York Synod has agreed to take initial leadership in networking with other bishops regarding this idea. Bp. Bouman pledged \$50,000 from his synod, and this amount has been matched by a \$50,000 grant from the Ministry Among People Living in Poverty program of the ELCA.

CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY ACTION

The Rev. Diane "Dee" H. Pederson, co-chair of the Memorials Committee, moved the following:

MOVED; SECONDED:

To receive with gratitude the memorials of the Southwest California Synod; Northeastern Minnesota Synod; Nebraska Synod; Central States Synod; Southwestern Texas Synod; Metropolitan Chicago Synod; South-Central Synod of Wisconsin; New Jersey Synod; Metropolitan New York Synod; Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod; Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod; and Lower Susquehanna Synod that welcome and encourage task forces to:

1. empower this church in its engagement with refugee and immigrant issues; and
2. strengthen collaboration between the ELCA and the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS) to carry out this church's work with newcomers;

To acknowledge that this commitment to welcoming the stranger is rooted in the faith tradition of this church;

To reaffirm the principles articulated by the ELCA in its Message on Immigration and recommit this church to live out the message boldly and compassionately;

To call upon the U.S. Congress and administration:

1. to end immediately the detention and imprisonment of non-criminal asylum seekers, undocumented laborers, and others in jails or jail-like facilities; and
2. to implement just, consistent, and humane practices regarding the treatment of asylum seekers, such as those suggested in the February 2005 study of asylum seekers in expedited removal by the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedoms; and

To refer these memorials related to refugees, asylum seekers, and immigrants to the Division for Church in Society (or the appropriate churchwide unit) for implementation in consultation with the Conference of Bishops and Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service.

The Rev. Stephen P. Bouman, bishop of the Metropolitan New York Synod, urged adoption of the recommendation, saying that since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, this country had not only turned its back on immigrants and asylum seekers but blamed them. Caring for security was essential, he said, but he expressed hope that the results of the action would be legal, safe, sane, and hospitable migration. He praised the work of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS) and pointed out to the assembly that \$50,000 had been given by the Metropolitan New York Synod to implement the resolution.

The Rev. Timothy L. Kanuff Jr. [Northwest Synod of Wisconsin] called the question.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To end debate.

The chair instructed the assembly to vote on the motion to end debate.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

CARRIED:

To end debate.

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

YES-786; NO-60

Debate being closed, the presiding bishop called for a vote on the recommendation of the Memorials Committee.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

CA05.06.26

YES-805; NO-57

To receive with gratitude the memorials of the Southwest California Synod; Northeastern Minnesota Synod; Nebraska Synod; Central States Synod; Southwestern Texas Synod; Metropolitan Chicago Synod; South-Central Synod of Wisconsin; New Jersey Synod; Metropolitan New York Synod; Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod; Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod; and Lower Susquehanna Synod that welcome and encourage task forces to:

1. empower this church in its engagement with refugee and immigrant issues; and
2. strengthen collaboration between the ELCA and the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS) to carry out this church's work with newcomers;

To acknowledge that this commitment to welcoming the stranger is rooted in the faith tradition of this church;

To reaffirm the principles articulated by the ELCA in its Message on Immigration and recommit this church to live out the message boldly and compassionately;

To call upon the U.S. Congress and administration:

1. to end immediately the detention and imprisonment of non-criminal asylum seekers, undocumented laborers, and others in jails or jail-like facilities; and
2. to implement just, consistent, and humane practices regarding the treatment of asylum seekers, such as those suggested in the February 2005 study of asylum seekers in expedited removal by the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedoms; and

To refer these memorials related to refugees, asylum seekers, and immigrants to the Division for Church in Society (or the appropriate churchwide unit) for implementation in consultation with the Conference of Bishops and Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service.

The Rev. Serena S. Sellers [Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod] proposed a new rule.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To end debate automatically after three unopposed speeches either in favor of or opposed to an action.

Pr. Sellers explained that her proposal would expedite the action of the assembly.

Mr. John Rowe [Western North Dakota Synod] offered an amendment to the motion.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To amend by addition:
To end debate automatically after three unopposed speeches either in favor of or opposed to an action, as long as there are no other amendments being proposed.

The chair called for a vote on the amendment to the motion.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

YES-464; NO-395

CARRIED:

To amend by addition:
To end debate automatically after three unopposed speeches either in favor of or opposed to an action, as long as there are no other amendments being proposed.

Presiding Bishop Hanson then called for a vote on the motion as amended.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

YES-736; NO-107

CARRIED:

To end debate automatically after three unopposed speeches either in favor of or opposed to an action, as long as there are no other amendments being proposed.

Category E16: Faithful Conversation about Scripture

Reference: *2005 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section VI, pages 69–70.

1. North Carolina Synod (9B) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America there is a disconcerting level of divergence as to how best to interpret the Scriptures and to what extent and in what ways biblical authority informs, shapes, and norms the life of the individual Christian and this church itself; and

WHEREAS, there is a crucial need to work toward a consensus on a biblical hermeneutic and the most appropriate methods of biblical interpretation that foster the most accurate understanding and faithful interpretation of the therapeutic, informative, prophetic, pastoral, and normative message of the Scriptures and its impact on the life of the individual Christian and the corporate life of this church; and

WHEREAS, the Lutheran Confessions rightfully question any authoritarian or ecclesial structure that usurps the ultimate authority of the Gospel of Jesus Christ; the Lutheran Confessions simultaneously affirm the authority of the Scriptures, historically respecting the plain sense of Scripture opened to us by the Holy Spirit and rightly divided into Law and Gospel; the Lutheran Confessions, likewise, call the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to foster faithful and sustained dialogue with the Scriptures regarding complex and controversial issues of faith and life while avoiding both ecclesial authoritarianism on one extreme and individual, parochial, and congregational autonomy and subjectivism on the other; and

WHEREAS, there is an urgent need to summon and harness the talents and resources of this church's brightest and best to help guide this church in a sustained, faithful, and ongoing conversation with the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions regarding complex and difficult matters of faith and life; and

WHEREAS, there is a compelling need to facilitate faithful conversation with the Scriptures and to foster a functional and sustainable consensus from within which major theological, ethical, and doctrinal decisions can then be forged in order to enhance the health, mission, and well-being of this church, to increase the levels of trust, and to strengthen the bonds of community, fellowship, and mutual ministry; and

WHEREAS, even modest progress toward achieving a workable resolution of these more basic and foundational matters can enhance the future health and well-being of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and foster a climate more conducive to the qualities and gifts of faithfulness, resiliency, steadfastness, wisdom, discipleship, and hope amidst the uncertainties and vicissitudes posed by present and future challenges; and

WHEREAS, an increasing clarity surrounding this church's theological grounding and understanding of the authority and proper interpretation and application of Scripture can better equip and strengthen this church in addressing numerous other matters of significant theological and ethical gravity currently facing it, thus rendering this church less vulnerable to forces that otherwise have the potential to generate much confusion, dissension, and pain throughout it; and

WHEREAS, continued confusion surrounding the authority of Scripture and the inability to develop a credible and coherent method for the interpretation and normative application of the truth revealed in the Scriptures is one of the most perilous deficiencies that threatens to undermine and weaken the life and mission of the modern church in general and Protestantism in particular; and

WHEREAS, the constitutions of this church (churchwide, synod, and congregation) confess that "The canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the written Word of God. Inspired by God's Spirit speaking through their authors, they record and announce God's revelation centering in Jesus Christ. Through them God's Spirit speaks to us to create and sustain Christian faith and fellowship for service in the world." Furthermore, this church "accepts the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God and the authoritative source and norm of its proclamation, faith, and life"; and

WHEREAS, the Conference of Bishops has "called on ELCA members to unite in prayer, read Scripture and Luther's Large Catechism, participate in weekly worship, study theology, practice forgiveness, invite people to a faith community, and serve and love in Christ's name"; and

WHEREAS, for the sake of the Gospel, as well as the health and well-being of this church's life and ministry, there is an urgent need to summon this whole church to a renewed focus on its call as

baptized people to a life of prayer, discipleship, sanctification, and theological discernment; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the 2005 North Carolina Synod Assembly memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to join with the appropriate churchwide units, agencies, synods, seminaries, congregations, and others in an ongoing effort to address issues surrounding the authority of Scripture, the development of a coherent and credible hermeneutic that is faithful to the Gospel as revealed most clearly in Jesus Christ, God's Living Word, and to develop an ecclesial climate, process, and means for fostering healthy and spirited conversation that faithfully relates the truths revealed in the Scriptures and affirmed in the Lutheran Confessions to the faith and life of both individual Christians and the corporate life of this whole church; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the appropriate churchwide units, in cooperation with agencies, synods, seminaries, congregations, and others across this church, develop a specific plan, process, procedure, and schedule for addressing these concerns and that a progress report be presented at the 2007 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

BACKGROUND

The memorial of the North Carolina Synod on "Foundational Issues" appropriately focuses on the centrality of Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions in the life of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. It relates to the authority of Scripture and the importance of articulating a Lutheran hermeneutic in the study and interpretation of Scripture.

The Association of Teaching Theologians of the ELCA, whose purpose is to encourage and stimulate theological reflection, meets annually. The group also meets every three years with the Conference of Bishops to discuss matters of theological concern to the life of this church. In August 2003 the subject of the association's gathering was "Interpreting the Bible: The Promise and Challenges of a Lutheran Hermeneutic." This is an example of the attention given to "issues surrounding the authority of Scripture" and "the development of a coherent and credible hermeneutic," as cited in the North Carolina Synod memorial.

The publishing ministry of the ELCA—Augsburg Fortress, Publishers—recently produced a new adult Bible study series, *No Experience Necessary*, that seeks to encourage the study of Scripture throughout the congregations of this church. That Bible study series will contribute to "fostering healthy and spirited conversation that faithfully relates the truths revealed in the Scriptures," as cited in this memorial. Further, the Division for Ministry has the responsibility to "initiate, encourage, and promote theological reflection in cooperation with the Association of Teaching Theologians of the ELCA, seminaries and college and universities of this church, the Conference of Bishops, and other churchwide units" (ELCA continuing resolution 16.11.B03.f.).

CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY ACTION

The Rev. Diane "Dee" H. Pederson, co-chair of the Memorials Committee, moved the following:

MOVED;

SECONDED:

To refer the memorial of the North Carolina Synod on foundational issues of the authority of Scripture and principles of biblical interpretation to the Office of the Secretary, acting in consultation with the presiding bishop, the Conference of Bishops, and the Division for Ministry (or the appropriate churchwide unit), for development of a report and possible

recommendations to be presented at the April 2006 meeting of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

The Rev. Kathleen D. McCallum Sachse [Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod] contended that there was a crisis in this church concerning what it means to be Lutheran and what it means to read Scripture as a Lutheran. During discussion of the *Journey Together Faithfully* materials, she had discovered that relatively few of her parishioners read the Bible in a Lutheran manner. The assembly had revealed that the problem was epidemic in this church, she stated. While society often seemed to be divided between thoroughgoing secularism or radical fundamentalism, Lutheranism represented a third way, rejoicing in paradox and complexity. She urged reclamation of the unique and beautiful Lutheran hermeneutic.

The Rev. Leonard H. Bolick, bishop of the North Carolina Synod, declared that it was imperative for this church to embrace the resolution. Scripture is foundational for God's people, the norm of the church's faith and life together. Lutherans proclaim Scripture but do not always understand how to interpret it. Study of the interpretation of Scripture would strengthen Lutheran identity, he declared.

The Rev. Jeffrey P. Pedersen [South-Central Synod of Wisconsin] opposed the recommendation, asking who has the authority to interpret Scripture. The Holy Spirit, he continued, would not contradict the Word of God. He expressed fear that such a study would tamper with the Bible's foundational role in theology and policies.

Mr. Eric D. Wong [Northeastern Minnesota Synod] called the previous question.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To end debate.

The chair called for a vote on the motion to end debate.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

CARRIED: To end debate.

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

YES-787; NO-73

Debate being closed, the presiding bishop called for a vote on the recommendation of the Memorials Committee.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

YES-757; NO-123

CA05.06.27

To refer the memorial of the North Carolina Synod on foundational issues of the authority of Scripture and principles of biblical interpretation to the Office of the Secretary, acting in consultation with the presiding bishop, the Conference of Bishops, and the Division for Ministry (or the appropriate churchwide unit), for development of a report and possible recommendations to be presented at the April 2006 meeting of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Category E19: Mission-Support Covenants

Reference: 2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section VI, pages 73–74.

1. Lower Susquehanna Synod (8D) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, when this church was formed, a covenant was adopted that called for the allocation by all synods of 55 percent of all mission-support receipts to the churchwide expression of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for churchwide ministries; and

WHEREAS, it grieves the Lower Susquehanna Synod to be part of the increasing number of synods that do not act in accord with that covenant; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that each synod enter into a renewed covenant with all other synods to accept the original challenge and vision of remitting 55 percent of mission-support receipts for churchwide ministries; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Lower Susquehanna Synod, meeting in assembly, memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly to call upon the Church Council to urge each of the 65 synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and their Synod Councils to recommit to accepting the original challenge and vision of remitting at least 55 percent of mission-support receipts for churchwide ministries.

BACKGROUND

Constitution

There are several constitutional provisions related to mission-support funding:

Constitutional Provision 10.71.:

Each synod shall remit to the churchwide organization a percentage of all donor-unrestricted receipts contributed to it by the congregations of the synod, such percentage to be determined by the Churchwide Assembly. Individual exceptions may be made by the Church Council upon request of a synod.

Provision †S15.12. in the *Constitution for Synods*:

The annual budget of this synod shall reflect the entire range of its own activities and its commitment to partnership funding with other synods and the churchwide organization. Unless an exception is granted upon the request of this synod by the Church Council, each budget shall include the percentage of congregational mission support assigned to it by the Churchwide Assembly.

Provision †S15.11. in the *Constitution for Synods*:

Since the congregations, synods, and churchwide organization are interdependent units that share responsibly in God's mission, all share in the responsibility to develop, implement, and strengthen the financial support program of the whole church. The gifts and offerings of the members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America are given to support all parts of this church and thus partnership in this church should be evidenced in determining each part's share of the gifts and offerings. Therefore:

- a. The mission of this church beyond the congregation is to be supported by such a proportionate share of each congregation's annual budget as each congregation determines. This synod shall develop guidelines for determining "proportionate share," and shall consult with congregational leaders to assist each congregation in making its determination.
- b. This synod shall receive the proportionate share of the mission support from its congregations, and shall transmit that percentage of each congregation's mission support as determined by the Churchwide Assembly to the treasurer of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

History

At its constituting convention, the ELCA voted that a minimum of 55 percent of all donor unrestricted receipts contributed to the synod by its congregations would be remitted

to the churchwide organization. Individual exceptions could be made by the Church Council upon the request of a synod (ELCA87.30.9.). The 1989 Churchwide Assembly voted to continue that percentage while a report was underway regarding an alternative approach to proportionate funding (CA89.07.62). A progress report was received by the 1991 Churchwide Assembly.

The 1993 Churchwide Assembly voted that “a goal for the proportionate-share amount shall be established on the basis of certain common factors, with such a goal (a) presenting a challenge for growth in current giving and sharing; (b) providing flexibility in dealing with diversity; (c) establishing accountability; and (d) assisting interpretation and communication . . .” (CA93.07.31). The action also provided that the proportionate-share commitment would be allocated based on the number of confirmed-and-communing members of congregations and common synodical current operating expenses. The synodical-churchwide consultations would provide a forum for determining a mutually agreed upon division of proportionate-share giving.

The 1995 Churchwide Assembly considered the report, “Mission Support—Alternative Formula and Process” and approved the procedures as described in the document as the means of sharing between synods and the churchwide organization the mission-support funds submitted by congregations for support of synodical and churchwide ministries (CA95.06.49).

At its April 2004 meeting, the ELCA Church Council reviewed an “Executive Summary of Key Principles in Mission-Support Patterns of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.” The document noted that:

1. Funds are provided by congregations for *both* synodical and churchwide ministries. This reflects the polity of this church and underscores mutual responsibilities for mission and ministries.
2. The process includes mutual consultation, mutual agreement on percentage and amount, and mutual affirmation by the Synod Council and Church Council.
3. The frame of reference for the determination of percentage and amount includes:
 - a. Historical income and expenditure patterns in the synod;
 - b. Past mission-support commitments and trends;
 - c. Size of the synod (geography, membership, and congregations);
 - d. Core budget;
 - e. Numbers of extremely small or large congregations on the synod’s territory;
 - f. Specific mission-support levels;
 - g. Support of agencies and institutions in the synod; and
 - h. Current and restricted fund balances.
4. “Synod budget” is the synodical portion of mission support as mutually established by action of the Synod Council and Church Council.
5. Assembly action
 - a. The Churchwide Assembly establishes the budget for churchwide ministries.
 - b. Synod Assembly decision making on sharing is limited. A motion to change the percentage or amount for churchwide ministries in a Synod Assembly without consultation could be ruled out of order, but the Synod Assembly could ask the Synod Council to engage the Church Council in deliberation on the matter.

In March 2004, the Conference of Bishops voted:

WHEREAS, our life together as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America over these next two years requires a unified and concerted effort by all 65 synods for partnership in good budget planning and consistent ministry; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that we, the Conference of Bishops, encourage each synod to maintain its current percentage of mission support to the churchwide organization for

the 2004–2005 and 2005–2006 budgets and, if possible, even to increase that percentage; and be it further

RESOLVED, that each of us will encourage our Synod Council to discuss that intent in their next meeting; and be it further

RESOLVED, that an update on that information be shared with the treasurer of this church following the decision of that intent.

Current Process

The current process is one of continuous consultation, information sharing, and negotiation. Annual consultations are held between synods and the churchwide organization. Consultations develop relationships through shared decision-making and partnership in God's mission. After the consultation, the division of mission-support receipts are projected in both dollar amounts and percentage for use in synodical and churchwide organization budgeting, with the synod indicating which projection (dollar amount or percentage) is the predominant (fixed) commitment. The synod may express the commitment, however, in either dollar amount or percentage terms, or both, for use within their own synod.

Mutual ratification of a mission-support commitment progresses in the following stages:

1. Churchwide executive and synodical bishop (phone conversation);
2. Churchwide organization representatives and synodical representatives (annual consultation);
3. Synod Council and Church Council (statement of intent); and
4. Synod Assembly and Churchwide Assembly (budget adoption).

Any proposed change in the predominant commitment calls for additional consultation (i.e., by telephone, face-to-face, and conference call) as appropriate. That additional consultation may include synodical bishops, staff members, officers, or others, and churchwide organization staff, Church Council members, or other synodical bishops.

At the same time, changes in churchwide organization commitment to synods by way of staffing or expenditures would call for the same kind of consultation with synods.

Consultations may take place in the following ways: mail and phone calls; regional gatherings; or intensive individual meetings with synods.

Current Levels of Support

For fiscal year 2005, 15 synods are at 55 percent or above; 26 are between 50 and 54 percent; 10 are between 45 and 49 percent; eight are between 40 and 44 percent; three are between 30 and 39 percent; and three are between 20 and 29 percent.

Special Considerations

Synods and the churchwide organization are equal partners called to exercise joint stewardship of mission-support dollars from congregations. Careful attention needs to be given to the balance between synodical ministry needs (staff and programs), support of agencies and institutions, and churchwide mission support. Proportional adjustments should be considered with the effect on all other programs. The budgeting, planning, and prioritizing process in both synods and the churchwide organization should reflect this partnership.

Conclusion

The task before us involves how we make mutual decisions about monies entrusted by congregations to synods and the churchwide organization for the purpose of mission in the

United States, the Caribbean, and throughout the world. The reality is that the synod receives these financial resources first. There is no mechanism for enforcement regarding how those funds will be shared with the churchwide organization. The possibility exists for decisions to be made in isolation. Mutual decisions need to be based on mutual trust. Those relations are built up over time and are dependent upon leadership that can advocate for the whole church.

At its April 2005 meeting the Church Council recommended (CC05.04.18) that plans be formulated for study and consultation regarding new ways of growing mission support.

CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY ACTION

Mr. Karl D. Anderson, co-chair of the Memorials Committee, moved the following:

MOVED;

SECONDED:

To receive with appreciation the memorial of the Lower Susquehanna Synod related to the mission-support covenant;

To be mindful, and to remind one another, that we are in covenant relationship among all synods and the churchwide organization;

To recall that the Conference of Bishops very recently committed to work to maintain or grow their respective levels of mission support as expressed in percentages of sharing with the churchwide organization;

To acknowledge that further study and consultation among synods, the churchwide organization, the Conference of Bishops, and the Church Council are necessary to discover new ways of growing mission support and that plans for such study and consultation are underway; and

To refer the memorial to the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Office of the Presiding Bishop, in consultation with the Conference of Bishops, with a request that a report and possible recommendations be brought to the November 2006 meeting of the Church Council.

The Rev. Carol S. Hendrix, bishop of the Lower Susquehanna Synod, spoke in support of the recommendation, saying, "Over the years the pattern for sharing mission support has changed, and the proportion of giving of 55 percent has been eroded. . . . There is a need for honest and open dialogue about why these patterns have changed and how together we will support financially the mission and ministry of this church in all of its expressions."

Mr. Earl L. Mummert [Lower Susquehanna Synod] commented that the memorial lifted up this church's interdependence and its financial covenant while it deliberated how to increase overall support for its mission and ministries. It is difficult to resist pressures within a synod to lower the percentage of giving, he acknowledged, but it is important to keep covenants.

Ms. Mariana Perez-Helling [Minneapolis Area Synod] moved to close debate.

MOVED;

SECONDED:

To end debate.

The chair called for a vote on the motion to end debate.

MOVED;
SECONDED;
CARRIED:

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED
YES-811; NO-37

To end debate.

Presiding Bishop Hanson then called for the vote on the motion.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

YES-777; NO-86

CA05.06.28

To receive with appreciation the memorial of the Lower Susquehanna Synod related to the mission-support covenant;

To be mindful, and to remind one another, that we are in covenant relationship among all synods and the churchwide organization;

To recall that the Conference of Bishops very recently committed to work to maintain or grow their respective levels of mission support as expressed in percentages of sharing with the churchwide organization;

To acknowledge that further study and consultation among synods, the churchwide organization, the Conference of Bishops, and the Church Council are necessary to discover new ways of growing mission support and that plans for such study and consultation are underway; and

To refer the memorial to the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Office of the Presiding Bishop, in consultation with the Conference of Bishops, with a request that a report and possible recommendations be brought to the November 2006 meeting of the Church Council.

Category B4: HIV and AIDS Education

Reference: 2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section VI, pages 22–23.

1. Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod (8B) [2004 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the Scriptures teach that disease is often not caused by someone's individual sins; and
WHEREAS, St. Paul warns us against judgmentalism in Romans 2:1–3; and

WHEREAS, medical research has identified AIDS as being caused by the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV); and

WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, headquartered in Atlanta, indicates there are 40,000,000 people living with HIV and AIDS in the world; and

WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates 5,000,000 people acquired HIV worldwide in 2003; and

WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates there are close to 1,000,000 people living with HIV and AIDS in the United States; and

WHEREAS, HIV infections are disproportionately affecting communities that have already experienced intense discrimination in society; and

WHEREAS, the number of AIDS deaths in the United States has decreased from a peak in 1995, while the number of people living with HIV continues to increase; and

WHEREAS, there is still no cure for HIV infection, nor is a vaccine expected to be available for up to 15 years; and

WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention indicates that the stigma against people with HIV and AIDS is a major barrier to education and prevention of new HIV infections; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to:

1. renew its ministry of caring for all people affected by HIV and AIDS by directly addressing the stigma that still exists in church and society;
2. continue to encourage doctors, nurses, caregivers, and pastors who witness to God's grace in their daily ministry with people living with HIV and AIDS;
3. initiate a churchwide effort to encourage HIV and AIDS education and prevention in congregations by stressing the urgency of using learning tools such as "Brokenness to Wholeness," a four-week education program written by the Lutheran AIDS Network (available on-line at www.LutheranAIDS.net);
4. communicate to local Lutheran Social Service agencies the value of coordinating their HIV and AIDS education efforts with local interfaith AIDS networks; and
5. advocate for increased funding at all governmental levels to care for people living with HIV and AIDS and educate all people on the full range of ways to prevent new HIV infections.

2. Southeastern Synod (9D) [2004 Memorial]

WHEREAS, Jesus teaches in John 9:1-3 that disease is not caused by God's judgment for someone's individual sins; and

WHEREAS, St. Paul warns us against judgmentalism in Romans 2:1-2; and

WHEREAS, medical research has identified AIDS as being caused by the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV); and

WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates 5,000,000 people acquired HIV worldwide in 2003; and

WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates there are close to 1,000,000 people living with HIV or AIDS in the United States; and

WHEREAS, seven of the 10 states with the highest AIDS case rates are in the South; and

WHEREAS, HIV infections are disproportionately affecting persons from groups that have already experienced intense discrimination in society; and

WHEREAS, the number of AIDS deaths in the United States has decreased from a peak in 1995, while the number of people living with HIV continues to increase; and

WHEREAS, there is still no cure for HIV infection, nor is a vaccine expected to be available for up to 15 years; and

WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention indicates that the stigma against people with HIV or AIDS is a major barrier to education and prevention of new HIV infections; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Synod memorialize the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to:

1. renew its ministry of caring for all people affected by HIV or AIDS by directly addressing the stigma that still exists in church and society;
2. continue to support and encourage doctors, nurses, caregivers, and pastors who witness to God's grace in their daily ministry with people living with HIV or AIDS;
3. initiate a churchwide effort to encourage HIV-AIDS education and prevention in congregations by stressing the urgency of using learning tools such as "Brokenness to Wholeness," a four-session education program written by the Lutheran AIDS network, available on-line at www.LutheranAIDS.net;

4. communicate to local Lutheran social service agencies the value of coordinating their HIV-AIDS education efforts with local interfaith AIDS networks; and
5. advocate for all governmental levels to care for people living with HIV-AIDS and educate people on the full range of ways to prevent new HIV infections.

BACKGROUND

The ELCA has had a commitment to the ministry of caring in response to the AIDS pandemic since the beginning of this church in 1988. This commitment was first expressed in the Message adopted by the ELCA Church Council in November 1988 on “AIDS and the Church’s Ministry of Caring.” Since that time, the ELCA has sought to live out the intentions expressed in this Message through national conferences, the HIV-AIDS Clearinghouse and Speakers Bureau, and resource information, including the Web site with resources and relevant links. The Festival of St. Luke (the Sunday nearest to the date of December 1, which is International AIDS Day) was designated to celebrate annually the ministry of healing and especially to remember those living with and affected by HIV and AIDS.

Lent 2001 marked the launch of “Stand with Africa,” an ongoing campaign of the ELCA World Hunger Program, which supports African churches and communities as they withstand HIV and AIDS, banish hunger, and build peace. It gives special emphasis to an often-forgotten continent that is a place of promise and progress despite its being one of the epicenters of the HIV and AIDS pandemic.

Social ministry organizations affiliated with the ELCA provide services such as supportive housing for families with HIV and AIDS, AIDS care education, Second Family Programs, camping opportunities, and information and referral services. ELCA staff were in the forefront of the development of the Lutheran AIDS Network (LANET), and support has been provided as LANET continues to develop. The ELCA World Hunger Program domestic hunger grants program has provided grants to congregations and agencies that serve persons living with and affected by HIV and AIDS.

The ELCA is a member of the global Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance, working on HIV and AIDS by engaging in public policy advocacy as well as providing financial support for the alliance.

Cost Analysis

Beginning in 2005, modest funding for staff time for this ministry was allocated in the Division for Church in Society’s budget. Additional funds would be needed to increase the staff time, to reinstate the clearinghouse and speakers bureau, and to provide more funding for grants to congregations and agencies serving in this ministry.

CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY ACTION

The Rev. Diane “Dee” H. Pederson, co-chair of the Memorials committee, moved the following:

Moved;

Seconded:

To receive with gratitude the memorials of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod and Southeastern Synod related to HIV and AIDS education; and

To refer the memorials to the Division for Church in Society (or the appropriate churchwide unit) with the request that the unit collaborate with

the Lutheran AIDS Network (LANET), the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance, and other ecumenical and interfaith efforts within the guidelines of “Faithful Yet Changing,” the Plan for Mission in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and the financial and human resources available.

Ms. Allison A. Guttu [Metropolitan New York Synod] supported the recommendation because, although the number of deaths due to HIV was down, infections were up. Discrimination for victims still continued, she added. She urged individuals and congregations to use available educational resources.

The Rev. Bruce H. Davidson [New Jersey Synod] proposed an amendment.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To amend by addition at the end:

To respond immediately to the call for advocacy in the memorials by urging ELCA advocacy ministries and other churchwide units, as well as synods and congregations, to give immediate attention to two significant measures that will be considered by Congress in the fall of 2005: 1) the re-authorization of the Ryan White Care Act; and 2) administration initiatives to secure major funding to fight HIV-AIDS in Africa.

Pr. Davidson, co-chair of the Lutheran AIDS Network, thanked the Memorials Committee for its recommendation and spoke of the urgent need for advocacy on the specific congressional actions named in his amendment.

The Rev. Gary E. Schulz [Metropolitan New York Synod] recounted events from his trip to South Africa just before the Youth Gathering in Atlanta. On the flight back to the U.S. many youth and adults were wearing shirts that read “HIV-positive” in support of those in Africa who were dying of AIDS. Many people, he reported, reacted strongly and negatively to these shirts.

Ms. Linda Warren [North Carolina Synod], who had worked for 27 years with people who are HIV-positive, supported both the amendment and the recommendation. She noted that AIDS was the primary cause of death of African American women aged 16–25. This country cannot continue to deny that it has a problem with this disease, she said. Funding for the Ryan White Care Act is imperative, she stated, especially for those who cannot afford medication.

Ms. Lois A. Holck [Southwestern Texas Synod] asked whether there were plans to allocate funding in 2006 for the staff time proposed by the action.

Presiding Bishop Hanson replied that a resource person would look into it and report back after action on the amendment.

The Rev. Lawrence J. Clark [Metropolitan Chicago Synod] offered an amendment to the Davidson amendment.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To amend by addition:

To respond immediately to the call for advocacy in the memorials by urging ELCA advocacy ministries and other churchwide units, as well as

synods and congregations, to give immediate attention to two significant measures that will be considered by Congress in the fall of 2005: 1) the re-authorization of the Ryan White Care Act; and 2) administration initiatives to secure major funding and release the current funding promised by the president to fight HIV-AIDS in Africa.

Pr. Clark spoke to his amendment, saying that the president had promised funding that had not been released yet, so he wanted the action to note that fact.

Mr. Patrick Monroe [Central/Southern Illinois Synod] added that members of this church should write to their representatives in government.

Ms Mariana Perez-Helling suggested the addition of “of the United States” to the end of the amendment. The chair asked the assembly to add those words by unanimous consent. Without objection, the words were added.

MOVED;

SECONDED:

To amend by addition:

To respond immediately to the call for advocacy in the memorials by urging ELCA advocacy ministries and other churchwide units, as well as synods and congregations, to give immediate attention to two significant measures that will be considered by Congress in the fall of 2005: 1) the re-authorization of the Ryan White Care Act; and 2) administration initiatives to secure major funding and release the current funding promised by the president of the United States to fight HIV-AIDS in Africa.

Hearing no further debate, the chair called for a vote on Pr. Clark’s amendment.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

CARRIED:

YES-820; NO-68

To amend by addition:

To respond immediately to the call for advocacy in the memorials by urging ELCA advocacy ministries and other churchwide units, as well as synods and congregations, to give immediate attention to two significant measures that will be considered by Congress in the fall of 2005: 1) the re-authorization of the Ryan White Care Act; and 2) administration initiatives to secure major funding and release the current funding promised by the president of the United States to fight HIV-AIDS in Africa.

Hearing no further debate, the chair called for a vote on Pr. Davidson’s amendment as amended.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

CARRIED:

YES-820; NO-68

To amend by addition at the end:

To respond immediately to the call for advocacy in the memorials by urging ELCA advocacy ministries and other churchwide units, as well as synods and congregations, to give immediate attention to two significant measures that will be considered by Congress in the fall of 2005: 1) the re-authorization of the Ryan White Care Act; and 2)

administration initiatives to secure major funding and release the current funding promised by the president of the United States to fight HIV-AIDS in Africa.

Mr. Thomas Salber [Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod], a home and hospice care worker for individuals with HIV, commended this church for the memorial and asked for its continued support and prayer for individuals with HIV and AIDS and those who care for them.

The Rev. Donald J. McCoid, bishop of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod, urged members to go home and be advocates for this issue.

Mr. Eric D. Wong [Northeastern Minnesota Synod] called the question.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To end debate.

The chair called for a vote on the motion to end debate.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

CARRIED: To end debate.

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

YES-872; NO-22

Presiding Bishop Hanson then called for the vote on the motion as amended.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

YES-880; NO-22

CA05.06.29 To receive with gratitude the memorials of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod and Southeastern Synod related to HIV and AIDS education; and

To refer the memorials to the Division for Church in Society (or the appropriate churchwide unit) with the request that the unit collaborate with the Lutheran AIDS Network (LANET), the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance, and other ecumenical and inter-faith efforts within the guidelines of "Faithful Yet Changing," the Plan for Mission in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and the financial and human resources available.

To respond immediately to the call for advocacy in the memorials by urging ELCA advocacy ministries and other churchwide units, as well as synods and congregations, to give immediate attention to two significant measures that will be considered by Congress in the fall of 2005: 1) the re-authorization of the Ryan White Care Act; and 2) administration initiatives to secure major funding and release the current funding promised by the president of the United States to fight HIV-AIDS in Africa.

Category E3: Licensed Lay Ministers

Reference: 2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section VI, page 44.

1. Northern Great Lakes Synod (5G) [2004 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has recognized the need for laypersons, under the supervision of the bishop of a synod, to render pastoral services in instances where ordained clergy are not otherwise available; and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has interpreted 7.61.01. of the constitution to preclude individuals licensed for ministry from officiating at marriages; and

WHEREAS, an individual licensed for ministry has had the opportunity for previous pastoral contact through the ministry of the congregation with the individuals seeking marriage; and

WHEREAS, in small-town and rural settings weddings are a natural extension of pastoral ministry, touching not only the lives of the couple but the community as a whole; and

WHEREAS, since in isolated rural communities where ordained clergy are not available, an individual licensed for ministry may be the only pastoral presence available, thereby effectively eliminating the ministry opportunity that occurs at a wedding and its preparation if individuals licensed for ministry are precluded from officiating at marriages; and

WHEREAS, the state governments of both Michigan and Wisconsin permit marriages by individuals authorized by their church bodies regardless of their status as ordained or laity; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Northern Great Lakes Synod, gathered in assembly, memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to amend its documents and its understanding of Licensed Lay Ministry to authorize Licensed Lay Ministers, serving under the appointment of the synodical bishop in congregational settings where an ordained pastor is not under call, to solemnize weddings in the congregation in which they serve, subject to the laws of the state in which the community is located.

BACKGROUND

The policy and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has been that only ordained ministers may preside at a marriage service (bylaw 7.61.01., *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*). Synodically authorized ministers and other laypersons have normally not been authorized to preside at marriage services. The Conference of Bishops, at its March 2005 meeting, recommended revision of the policy and guidelines related to synodically authorized ministers, which includes the statement that “in keeping with the historic practice of the Lutheran Church and this church’s bylaws, only ordained ministers are authorized by this church to preside at marriage services.” This policy as amended was adopted by the Church Council at its April 2005 meeting.

The Church Council at the April 2005 meeting also directed the Division for Ministry (CC05.04.25) “to study, in consultation with the Conference of Bishops, the question whether laypersons may be authorized in this church to preside at marriage services; and to request a report and possible recommendations to the Church Council no later than April 2006.” The memorial of the Northern Great Lakes Synod was adopted in 2004, prior to this action of the Church Council.

CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY ACTION

The Rev. Diane “Dee” H. Pederson, co-chair of the Memorials Committee, moved the following:

MOVED;

SECONDED:

To refer the memorial of the Northern Great Lakes Synod related to licensed lay ministers and weddings to the Division for Ministry (or the appropriate churchwide unit), in consultation with the Conference of Bishops, the Office of the Secretary, and ELCA legal counsel, as information for the study requested by the ELCA Church Council; and

To anticipate that a report and possible recommendations will be brought to the April 2006 meeting of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

The Rev. Ray Tiemann, bishop of the Southwestern Texas Synod, stated that, while the policy was being reviewed by the Church Council, he wanted it to be discussed on the floor of the assembly so that the Church Council would know the Churchwide Assembly's thoughts on the matter.

The Rev. William E. Shaner Jr. [Nebraska Synod] did not believe that lay ministers would be legally recognized to conduct marriage in most states.

Ms. Judy M. Mattson [Northern Great Lakes Synod] pointed out that people served by lay ministers expect that those who care for them spiritually would be able to preside at their weddings.

The Rev. Leonard M. Jepson [Indiana-Kentucky Synod] opposed the change, because presiding at weddings entailed more than conducting a ceremony. It entailed pastoral care before and after the wedding. He did not want to see the office of ordained minister diluted by the change in practice.

The Rev. William "Chris" C. Boerger, bishop of the Northwest Washington Synod, reported that in his state the only impediment lay ministers face in presiding at marriage is current ELCA policy, which forbids it. He asked, "Why can lay ministers administer communion, which is a sacrament, and not marriage, which is not?"

Ms. Kathleen Fick [Eastern North Dakota Synod] commented that it was important for synods to have discretion in the matter.

The Rev. Joseph F. Rinderknecht [Northeastern Ohio Synod] opposed the idea of expanding lay ministry. He proposed ordaining those lay people serving in such capacities.

Ms. Elaine L. Nygaard [Western North Dakota Synod] called the question.

MOVED;

SECONDED:

To end debate.

The chair called for a vote on the motion to end debate.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

CARRIED:

To end debate.

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

YES-850; NO-55

Presiding Bishop Hanson directed the assembly to vote on the recommendation of the Memorials Committee.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

YES-736; NO-172

CA05.06.30

To refer the memorial of the Northern Great Lakes Synod related to licensed lay ministers and weddings to the Division for Ministry (or the appropriate churchwide unit), in consultation with the Conference of Bishops, the Office of the Secretary, and ELCA legal counsel, as information for the study requested by the ELCA Church Council; and

To anticipate that a report and possible recommendations will be brought to the April 2006 meeting of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Greetings:

Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson called to the podium Mr. Ralston H. Deffenbaugh Jr., president of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS). Mr. Deffenbaugh told the assembly that he had come to thank this church for the support and help its members had given immigrants and refugees. He reviewed briefly the history of the organization, then informed the assembly that in the past year it had resettled 9,304 refugees, obeying the biblical injunction to welcome the stranger. He noted the challenges LIRS faced, including the official attitude toward immigrants since September 11, 2001, and what he called a “broken” immigration system. Immigration reform is very much needed, he declared. Mr. Deffenbaugh invited everyone to reach out a hand to those who are foreign, strange, or different and to dare to be welcoming.

Greetings:

Augsburg Fortress, Publishers

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson invited Ms. Beth A. Lewis, the president and chief executive officer of the Publishing House of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Augsburg Fortress, Publishers, to address the assembly. Ms. Lewis encouraged members of this church to think of the publishing house as not just another vendor, but as a ministry of this church. She explained that Augsburg Fortress, which is supported only by sales, had given energy and creativity to new products and customer relations.

Ms. Lewis provided her top ten reasons to look to Augsburg Fortress for resources:

10. Faith formation resources for all ages, including “No Experience Necessary,” a new adult Bible study; 22
9. Over 500 downloadable resources;
8. A Book Fair program for congregations;
7. Church supplies: great quality, new lower prices;
6. Bishop Hanson’s new book, *Faithful and Courageous*;
5. A new confirmation program, “Here We Stand,” including the *Lutheran Handbook*;
4. New ways of communicating with members, including the “One Mission” blog;
3. Dramatically improved service quality, with shipping in less than 24 hours 99.29 percent of the time;
2. An on-line worship planning tool: www.sundaysandseasons.com;

1. Purchases from this ministry of publishing are a stewardship choice. Any income is reinvested into the development of resources for this church and the larger Christian community.

She concluded her remarks with the Augsburg Fortress mission statement, “One mission, one future, together” and asked members of this church to continue to communicate their dreams and wishes to her, promising to listen to them and respond.

Greetings: Lutheran Services in America

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson welcomed the executive director of Lutheran Services in America (LSA), Ms. Jill A. Schumann. He noted that the *Nonprofit Times* had named Ms. Schumann to its list of the fifty most powerful, influential leaders in the nonprofit world.

Ms. Schumann noted that more than 1 in 50 Americans were touched by the more than 300 health and human service organizations affiliated with Lutheran Services in America. She described the myriad activities of these Lutheran social ministry organizations. She encouraged members to find out more about LSA at its Web site, particularly “Growing Connections,” a database of sites and services. Ms. Schumann invited members to assume a role in LSA’s national affordable housing initiative and asked for information from congregations about their work in housing. She also reported that across the country social ministry organizations were reinventing and reinvigorating their relationships with congregations.

Ms. Schumann announced a new initiative to raise awareness of the organization and engage the community, “Trading Graces,” an on-line auction through eBay. She urged assembly members to get involved with the project. Finally, she encouraged members to share the Lutheran social ministry story “because it’s not about us; it’s about God.”

Report of the Reference and Counsel Committee

Reference: 2005 *Pre-Assembly Report*, Section VIII, pages 1–12.

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson called to the podium the Rev. Jonathan L. Eilert and Ms. Phyllis L. Wallace, co-chairs of the Committee of Reference and Counsel, to lead the voting members in their work of considering resolutions from the assembly.

Motion A: Proposing Biblical Principles for Mission Starts

Reference: 2005 *Pre-Assembly Report*, Section VIII, page 1.

Motion A was submitted by the Rev. Robert D. Hofstad, bishop of the Southwestern Washington Synod:

WHEREAS, our Lord Jesus Christ commissioned us to “Go and make disciples . . .” (Matthew 28:19–20); and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America adopted an Evangelism Strategy that makes starting new congregations one of the means for creating outreach “centers of service and witness, inviting all to faith in Jesus Christ”; and

WHEREAS, methodologies for new church starts need to adapt to the changing economic and demographic realities and the widening spectrum of spiritual choices that demand new and creative outreach strategies; and

WHEREAS, the ongoing model of financing new mission starts is based on lending practices that tether new mission starts to debt service rather than being resourced for creative outreach; and

WHEREAS, new Christians who take a step of faith, many times to the curiosity of family and peers, perceive a disconnect between biblical methodologies of starting new mission churches and current lending practices; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA continues to address urgent matters of faith and life through churchwide initiatives of biblical study and discernment; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the ELCA and the theological faculties at its colleges, universities, and seminaries engage in a study process no longer than one year of a biblical approach to starting new mission congregations; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the conclusions of this process of study be shared with congregations for reflection and discernment utilizing churchwide models used for studies of faith-and-life issues; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the 2007 Churchwide Assembly vote on a methodology for new mission starts that reflects the challenges of today's mission field in the United States and its territories in faithfulness to biblical models of financing, building up, encouraging, and holding new mission congregations accountable for Great Commission outreach.

CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY ACTION

The Rev. Jonathan L. Eilert, co-chair of the Committee of Reference and Counsel, read the committee's recommendation:

MOVED;

SECONDED:

To refer this motion to the Vocation and Education unit in collaboration with the Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission unit with the request that a report and possible recommendations be brought to the April 2006 meeting of the Church Council.

Speaking to his motion, Bp. Hofstad explained that the resolution called for a study of the biblical principles underlying the planting of new mission congregations. He stated that the Pacific Northwest, having the lowest percentage of people attending church in the nation, faced a huge evangelism challenge, and he urged support of the study.

Seeing that no one else wished to speak to the motion, Presiding Bishop Hanson called for a vote on the committee's recommendation.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

Yes-842; No-14

CA05.06.31

To refer this motion to the Vocation and Education unit in collaboration with the Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission unit with the request that a report and possible recommendations be brought to the April 2006 meeting of the Church Council.

Pr. Eilert explained that Motion I: Ratification of Policy and Governing Documents would come to the assembly as a memorial.

Motion D: Bylaw and Continuing Resolution

Related to Young Adult Church Council Members

Reference: 2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section VIII, page 4.

Motion D was submitted by Ms. Mikka McCracken [Northwestern Minnesota Synod]:

WHEREAS, the current constitutional provision 19.21.A98. provides for only two members of the Church Council to be under the age of 30 at the time of their election and that the two youth advisory

members have voice but no vote, allowing for a Church Council without any voting membership under the age of 30; and

WHEREAS, people of different ages, much like people of different cultural backgrounds, bring valuable experiences and fresh perspectives to the table; and

WHEREAS, this church is a diverse body, spanning many generations, and as the board of directors of this church, the Church Council should reflect that diversity; and

WHEREAS, if this church truly believes that young people are the leaders of today, then it needs to give them the opportunity to raise their voices to the larger church because when young people are invited and encouraged to participate in the decision-making processes of the church, they claim ownership of its work and responsibility for its future; and

WHEREAS, electing two voting members under the age of 24 would serve the Church Council because it would ensure that those voting members are under 30 for the duration of their term; and

WHEREAS, young adults who are 24 and under are at a crucial point in their lives because they offer a youthful perspective while possessing the maturity, responsibility, and thoughtfulness to carry out the business of the council; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America amend continuing resolution 19.21.A98 so that it reads:

19.21.A98 *The Nominating Committee shall strive to ensure that:*

a. at least two members of the Church Council shall have been younger than 30 years of age and older than 24 years of age at the time of their election.

b. at least two members of the Church Council shall have been younger than 24 years of age at the time of their election.

CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY ACTION

The Rev. Jonathan L. Eilert, co-chair of the Committee of Reference and Counsel moved the following:

MOVED;

SECONDED:

To refer this motion to the Office of the Secretary with the request that a report and possible recommendations be brought to the April 2006 meeting of the Church Council.

Mr. Kai S. Swanson [Northern Illinois Synod] moved that the entire report of the Reference and Counsel Committee be approved. Presiding Bishop Hanson ruled the motion out of order.

Ms. Mikka McCracken [Northwest Minnesota Synod] introduced a substitute motion.

MOVED;

SECONDED:

To request the Office of the Secretary to develop a system for implementing these age restrictions on the membership of the Church Council in the election process by 2007.

After consulting with the parliamentarian, the chair suggested that, since the substitute motion referred to regulations that did not exist yet, Ms. McCracken should consult with the parliamentarian in order to compose a motion that would achieve her aims. While she did so, the assembly continued its work with another resolution.

Motion C: Synodical Bishops' Election Procedures

Reference: 2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section VIII, page 3.

Motion C was submitted by the Rev. Michael L. Cooper-White [Lower Susquehanna Synod]:

WHEREAS, our church is blessed by a wonderful cadre of bishops whose ministries of oversight support congregations and other ministries; and

WHEREAS, electing bishops is one of this church's most important leadership selection processes; and

WHEREAS, some synods have developed creative approaches to preparing for and conducting bishops' elections; and

WHEREAS, incumbent bishops' ongoing episcopal ministries may be hindered by reelection processes requiring the use of the open ecclesiastical ballot; and

WHEREAS, in future reviews of their election procedures, some synods may benefit from a churchwide assessment of the merits of electing bishops by ecclesiastical ballot and possible alternative methods; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that this assembly call upon the Church Council to implement a process assessing the merits of electing bishops by ecclesiastical ballot; and be it further

RESOLVED, that alternative episcopal election processes (such as those utilized by churches with which the ELCA is in full communion) be explored; and be it further

RESOLVED, that current and former synodical bishops, Synod Councils, and others be consulted in the assessment process as deemed appropriate; and be it further

RESOLVED, that a report on this assessment process be made available to all synods.

CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY ACTION

Ms. Phyllis L. Wallace, co-chair of the Committee of Reference and Counsel, moved the following:

MOVED;

SECONDED:

To refer this motion to the Office of the Presiding Bishop in consultation with the Conference of Bishops with the request that a report and possible recommendations be brought to the November 2006 meeting of the Church Council.

Pr. Cooper-White indicated that he had submitted the motion because of his high regard for the office of bishop and those who serve in that office. He expressed the concern that their ministry is hindered when they are running for office. Pr. Cooper-White also suggested the possibility that current election processes inhibit the number of women in the office of bishop. Since some synods and full-communion partners had explored other processes, he recommended that these be studied.

Since no one else wished to speak on the matter, Presiding Bishop Hanson called for a vote on the committee's recommendation.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

YES-723; NO-157

CA05.06.32

To refer this motion to the Office of the Presiding Bishop in consultation with the Conference of Bishops with the request that a report and possible recommendations be brought to the November 2006 meeting of the Church Council.

Motion E: Resolution Related to Persons with Disabilities

Reference: 2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section VIII, page 5.

Motion E was submitted by Ms. Constance M. Kilmark [South-Central Synod of Wisconsin]:

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is committed to greater diversity in its membership; and

WHEREAS, Paul reminds us that we are one body with many members and that those members include people with many types of disabilities; and

WHEREAS, people with disabilities have experience in the world that is necessary and valuable to all of us to form a more complete perspective on our human condition; and

WHEREAS, people with disabilities seek, like all others, full citizenship and self-determination in the civil world and full inclusion at every level in the life of the Church; and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America can only be enriched as it affirmatively seeks out the perspective of people with disabilities; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America affirm that people with disabilities have a valuable perspective, which must be represented by people with disabilities themselves and not solely by “abled” people on behalf of people with disabilities; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America will seek and invite the participation of persons with disabilities in each of the churchwide organization’s five program units as well as the two separately incorporated program units (Augsburg Fortress, Publishers, and Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America); and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America will encourage and equip congregations and synods to be proactive in outreach to people of all ages with all forms of disabilities and proactive in their welcome of the gifts of people with disabilities at every level of membership and leadership in these expressions of the church.

CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY ACTION

Ms. Phyllis L. Wallace, co-chair of the Committee of Reference and Counsel, moved the following:

MOVED;

SECONDED:

To refer this motion to the Vocation and Education unit in collaboration with the Office of the Presiding Bishop with a report and possible recommendations to be brought to the April 2006 meeting of the Church Council.

Ms. Constance M. Kilmark [South-Central Synod of Wisconsin] spoke in favor of the motion, noting that people with disabilities represented another type of diversity that this church needed. She called upon the assembly to welcome people with disabilities, because they have much to teach members of this church, and to support the recommendation.

The Rev. Lawrence J. Clark [Metropolitan Chicago Synod] rose for a question. He wanted to know why this motion was referred only to the Vocation and Education unit when it had an impact on other ministries of the church. Ms. Wallace responded that the Office of the Presiding Bishop and the Vocation and Education unit would consult with other appropriate units.

Mr. Timothy J. Mumm [South-Central Synod of Wisconsin] told the assembly that his work as an American Sign Language interpreter informed his understanding of this issue. He emphasized the importance of decisions, including those about accessibility, being made in collaboration with disabled people. He supported the recommendation.

Ms. Natacha D. Kemp [Southeastern Minnesota Synod] contrasted the blessings her disabled brother had experienced growing up in a supportive congregation with the lives of his friends who were not always as fortunate. She supported the resolution because it would increase education about and welcoming of persons with disabilities.

Presiding Bishop Hanson moved to the vote because three consecutive speakers had supported the motion.

Prior to the vote, the Rev. Serena S. Sellers [Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod] inquired about a change in the designated unit to receive the motion. Presiding Bishop Hanson responded that the Committee of Reference and Counsel had made the change, based on the location of disabilities ministries in the new churchwide structure.

The chair then called for the vote on the recommendation.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

YES-867; NO-31

CA05.06.33 To refer this motion to the Vocation and Education unit in collaboration with the Office of the Presiding Bishop with a report and possible recommendations to be brought to the April 2006 meeting of the Church Council.

Ms. Stephanie Olson [East-Central Synod of Wisconsin] asked the chair why motions were not being considered in order and then inquired specifically about Motion I. The Rev. Jonathan L. Eilert, co-chair of the Committee of Reference and Counsel, replied that Motion I had been referred to the Memorials Committee and would be coming to the assembly from that committee.

Presiding Bishop Hanson then indicated to the assembly that it would return to consideration of Motion D.

Motion D: Bylaw and Continuing Resolution Related to Young Adult Church Council Members (continued)

Reference: 2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section VIII, page 4.

On the floor was the recommendation of the Committee of Reference and Counsel.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To refer this motion to the Office of the Secretary with the request that a report and possible recommendations be brought to the April 2006 meeting of the Church Council.

Ms. Mikka McCracken [Northwestern Minnesota Synod], having consulted with the parliamentarian, moved to substitute the original resolution in its entirety for the recommendation of the Committee of Reference and Counsel.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To amend by substitution:

RESOLVED, that the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America amend continuing resolution 19.21.A98 so that it reads:

19.21.A98 *The Nominating Committee shall strive to ensure that:*
a. at least two members of the Church Council shall have been younger than 30 years of age and older than 24 years of age at the time of their election.
b. at least two members of the Church Council shall have been younger than 24 years of age at the time of their election.

Speaking in support of her amendment, Ms. McCracken acknowledged her appreciation of the work of the Committee of Reference and Counsel. She desired to challenge the assembly, however, to commit to engaging young adults in the Church Council and in the life of this church. Her substitute motion would allow the assembly to mandate inclusion of young people as voting members of the Church Council.

Ms. Erin Clark [Northern Illinois Synod] spoke in favor of the amendment, stating her hope that more of her peers would become involved in the work of this church. She asserted that the substitute motion would encourage more young adult leadership.

The Rev. Joseph A. Lambert [Northeast Iowa Synod] rose in opposition to the amendment, citing his concern that a precedent was being set. Mandating youth members of the Church Council could pave the way for calls for other types of mandated representation, he said. Pr. Lambert noted that the assembly had already heard a call for educational diversity and had just acted on a goal of diversity of abilities.

Mr. John Rowe [Western North Dakota Synod] supported the amendment, stating that young people were the least represented group in this church, and their number was declining. He asserted that the motion would welcome young people into leadership.

Mr. John D. Nevergall [Northwest Ohio Synod] identified himself as a young person who was against the amendment. He had been elected on his own merits, not because of representational requirements, he stated. He predicted that requiring youth representation on the Church Council would harm the credibility of those young adult members.

Ms. Anna K. Lindquist [South-Central Synod of Wisconsin] spoke in favor of the substitute motion, saying that it would ensure that the needs of young people were addressed and their voices heard. Representation on the Church Council would tell young adults that they were valued in this church and would encourage participation in events like the Churchwide Assembly.

Ms. Amy J. Olson [Northeastern Iowa Synod] commented that she had been elected as a voting member because of who she was and not because of her age, so she opposed the substitute motion. She suggested that leadership in this church should begin in the congregation, not the Church Council.

Ms. Amanda Wahlig [Southeastern Synod], age 22, recounted her participation in three churchwide assemblies, having been elected to her first as a youth representative when she was 16. Subsequently, she had been elected as a regular voting member. She spoke in favor of the amendment because of her own positive experiences, adding that young adults would offer richness and depth to the council.

The Rev. Henry Schulte Jr. [Southwestern Texas Synod] spoke against the amendment, citing his preference for the original recommendation from the Committee of Reference and

Counsel. He remarked that the proposal needed to be considered more carefully and at greater length; the referral would provide for such consideration.

Ms. Brittani A. Seagren [Nebraska Synod] asked why this church could not trust people to vote on the Church Council, noting that she can vote in her own congregation. She judged that the substitute motion would increase the involvement of youth in this church.

Mr. Joshua R. Toufar [Northwest Synod of Wisconsin] recounted his own progress in church leadership, moving from involvement in his congregation to his synod and to the Churchwide Assembly. He saw youth membership in the Church Council as the logical next step. He called upon the assembly to take the next step and approve the substitute motion.

Ms. Carol Syse [Greater Milwaukee Synod] announced that two young people served on her congregation council. She characterized the arrangement as beneficial and supported the amendment.

Ms. Elaine L. Nygaard [Western North Dakota Synod] called the previous question.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To end debate.

The chair called for a vote on the motion to close debate.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

CARRIED: To end debate.

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

YES-756; NO-155

Debate being closed, Presiding Bishop Hanson called for a vote on the motion to amend.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

DEFEATED:

To amend by substitution:

RESOLVED, that the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America amend continuing resolution 19.21.A98 so that it reads:

- 19.21.A98 *The Nominating Committee shall strive to ensure that:*
- a. at least two members of the Church Council shall have been younger than 30 years of age and older than 24 years of age at the time of their election.*
 - b. at least two members of the Church Council shall have been younger than 24 years of age at the time of their election.*

Presiding Bishop Hanson indicated that debate could continue on the main motion, the recommendation of the Committee of Reference and Counsel.

Mr. Kevin S. Bardonner [Indiana-Kentucky Synod] called the previous question.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To end debate.

The chair called for a vote on the motion to close debate.

**MOVED;
SECONDED;
CARRIED:**

**TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED
VOICE VOTE**

To end debate.

The chair then called for a vote on the recommendation of the Committee of Reference and Counsel.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

YES-790; NO-128

CA05.06.34 To refer this motion to the Office of the Secretary with the request that a report and possible recommendations be brought to the April 2006 meeting of the Church Council.

The Rev. Dennis A. Meyer [Western Iowa Synod] rose to a point of privilege to ask if it would be appropriate for the presiding bishop to affirm that anyone could be elected to the Church Council. Presiding Bishop Hanson called on Secretary Lowell G. Almen to respond.

Secretary Almen replied that the Nominating Committee cast a wide net each biennium and appreciated receiving names of potential nominees. Within the guidelines of geographic distribution, age distribution, and representation principles, anyone who is a voting member of an Evangelical Lutheran Church in America congregation could be elected to any position for which the Churchwide Assembly votes.

Recess

Secretary Lowell G. Almen made a number of announcements.

Presiding Bishop Hanson invited Ms. Lois A. Holck [Southwestern Texas Synod], who had raised a question about staff funding during the discussion of Category B4: HIV and AIDS Education, to see the Rev. Rebecca S. Larson, executive director of the Division for Church and Society, for further information.

Presiding Bishop Hanson then called upon the Rev. Jennifer J. Thomas, member of the Church Council, to lead the assembly in Evening Prayer. The eleventh plenary session of the ninth Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America was declared in recess at 5:38 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time.

Plenary Session Twelve

Sunday, August 14, 2005

10:00 A.M. – 11:50 A.M.

Prior to the opening of Plenary Session Twelve, the members of the ninth biennial Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America gathered in the Crystal Ballroom for a service of Word and Sacrament. The Rev. Mark S. Hanson, presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, presided. The Rev. E. Roy Riley Jr., bishop of the New Jersey Synod and chair of the Conference of Bishops, preached.

The twelfth plenary session of the ninth Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America was called to order at 10:00 A.M. Eastern Daylight Time by the Rev. Mark S. Hanson, presiding bishop, at the Orlando World Center, Orlando, Florida. He called upon the Rev. Joseph G. Crippen, member of the Church Council, to lead the assembly in prayer. Upon completion of Morning Prayer, Presiding Bishop Hanson thanked Pr. Crippen. He also expressed his appreciation to Bp. Riley for his proclamation of the Gospel at the service of Word and Sacrament.

Presiding Bishop Hanson reviewed for the assembly the agenda items that remained before it and expressed his conviction that, with the cooperation of voting members, the assembly would be able to complete its business before the announced time of adjournment. He reminded the assembly that any unfinished business would be referred to the Church Council.

Report of the Credentials Committee

Reference: 2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section I, page 9.

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson called upon the Rev. Lowell G. Almen, secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, to present the final report of the Credentials Committee. Secretary Almen reported that 1,015 of the 1,018 possible voting members had registered for the assembly. The distribution of voting members was 618 laypersons and 397 ordained clergy. There were 122 persons who identified themselves as persons of color or whose primary language is other than English. There were also 515 visitors who registered for the assembly. A detailed report appears as Exhibit A of this volume.

Elections: Second Common Ballot Report

Reference: 2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section VII, pages 1–238.

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson called on Mr. Phillip H. Harris, chair of the Elections Committee, to present the report on the second common ballot. Mr. Harris thanked the members of the Elections Committee and those who had helped with the election process. He congratulated those who were elected and extended his gratitude to those who offered to serve but who were not elected. Mr. Harris announced that the result of the second common ballot had been distributed, so he asked the assembly's permission to dispense with the reading of the report. He recommended that the chair declare elected those with more than a majority of votes. Hearing no objection, Presiding Bishop Hanson declared elected all those who had received greater than a majority of votes on the second ballot for the Church Council, boards, and committees. The complete report appears as Exhibit B of this volume.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

CA05.07.35 To declare elected all those who received greater than a majority of votes on the second ballot.

Church Council

Pr. Jeffrey B. Sorenson, Sioux Falls, S.D. (3C)

Mr. David Truland, Troy, N.Y. (7D)

Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission

Pr. Matthew Bode, Detroit, Mich. (6A)

Mr. Fuad B. Nijim, Palo Alto, Calif. (2A)

Global Mission

Pr. Arthur C. Repp, Carbondale, Ill. (5C)

Ms. Sharon Magelssen, Mason City, Iowa (5F)

Vocation and Education

Pr. Gerald A. Spice, Grosse Pointe Farms, Mich. (6A)

Pr. Kathryn A. Kleinhans, Waverly, Iowa (5F)

Ms. Susan M. Stover, Hildreth, Neb. (4A)

Church in Society

Ms. Joyce Schoulte, Garnavillo, Iowa (5F)

Multicultural Ministries

Mr. Stephen A. Berg, West Bend, Wis. (5J)

Committee on Appeals

Pr. Margaret E. Herz-Lane, Camden, N.J. (7A)

Report of the Memorials Committee (continued)

Reference: 2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section VI, pages 1-111.

Noting that the assembly was “approaching the finish line,” Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson thanked voting members for their careful work. He called upon Mr. Karl D. Anderson and the Rev. Diane “Dee” H. Pederson, co-chairs of the Memorials Committee, to continue their report.

The Rev. David W. Shockey [Indiana-Kentucky Synod] rose to a point of personal privilege to complain that during worship a person had been passing out papers bearing a justification of the previous day’s protest action. He wondered how to prevent such an inappropriate action from happening again.

Presiding Bishop Hanson expressed his regrets for the incident, adding that churchwide staff had worked hard to prevent such actions from occurring.

The Rev. Alfon “Chip” W. Larson III [Sierra Pacific Synod] moved to reconsider the previous day’s action on the strategy for engagement in Israel and Palestine.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To reconsider the churchwide strategy for engagement in Israel and Palestine.

The chair responded that the motion did not take precedence, so he would call for it at an appropriate time. He expressed a desire to complete the report of the Memorials Committee.

Category E5: Exceptions to Ordinations in Unusual Circumstances

Reference: 2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section VI, pages 47–48.

1. Southwestern Minnesota Synod (3F) [2004 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the 2001 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, meeting in Indianapolis, approved a bylaw amendment to the constitution, 7.31.17., Ordination in Unusual Circumstances, providing that prospective ordinands may be ordained by a pastor other than a bishop, following a process of approval; and

WHEREAS, some seminary students report that some bishops or synod staff members have tried to dissuade or deter students from exercising their constitutional right to request that someone other than a bishop ordain them; and

WHEREAS, some students report that they have been told that such a request would delay their ordination significantly or would compromise their future options in certain synods; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Southwestern Minnesota Synod request that the Conference of Bishops reaffirm its reported commitment to honor this “exceptions” bylaw and ensure that students who request such an exception be treated respectfully and that such requests be dealt with in a timely way; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southwestern Minnesota Synod request that synodical candidacy committees invite persons who advocate non-episcopal ordination to meet with candidates for ordained ministry as they consider their confessional convictions and their constitutional options; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southwestern Minnesota Synod request that the secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and each synodical bishop make no distinction in rosters or records between pastors ordained by bishops and those ordained by pastors other than a bishop; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southwestern Minnesota Synod Assembly memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to adopt this resolution.

2. Southwestern Minnesota Synod (3F) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, in 1999 the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America through its Churchwide Assembly agreed to enter full communion with The Episcopal Church in an effort to establish more visible unity of Christ’s church on earth; and

WHEREAS, in 2003 The Episcopal Church, against pleas from within the worldwide Anglican Communion and from others, confirmed Eugene Robinson as bishop of the Diocese of New Hampshire, with full knowledge that he was actively engaged in a homosexual lifestyle; and

WHEREAS, within the worldwide Anglican Communion, the churches of the 55,000,000-member Global South have now broken or suspended fellowship with The Episcopal Church, whose membership is 2,300,000 by comparison; and

WHEREAS, it is therefore evident that “Called to Common Mission” no longer advances the wider ecumenical standing of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America but rather threatens to alienate it from a majority of Anglicans, as well as other Christians numbering in the millions, such as The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod, who believe The Episcopal Church’s action is contrary to God’s Word; and

WHEREAS, a growing number of Lutherans within this church continue to be gravely concerned about the adoption of the Anglican historic episcopate, one evidence of which is the “Admonition for the True Peace and Unity of the Church”³; and

WHEREAS, the requirement of ordination of Evangelical Lutheran Church in America pastors in the Anglican Episcopal succession (except in unusual circumstances), and the further requirement that all future Evangelical Lutheran Church in America bishops stand in the Anglican Episcopal succession, as set forth in “Called to Common Mission,” continues to divide this church at a time when other issues also threaten the church with schism; and

WHEREAS, present situations in which clergy from one church body serve congregations of the other need not be disrupted; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Southwestern Minnesota Synod Assembly memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly to suspend this church’s participation in the “Called to Common Mission” agreement with regard to the ordination of pastors and the installation of bishops.

BACKGROUND

The 2001 Churchwide Assembly adopted bylaw 7.31.17. regarding ordination in unusual circumstances, which indicates that “the pastoral decision of the synodical bishop shall be in accordance with policy developed by the Division for Ministry, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council.” Such a policy was adopted by the Church Council in April 2001. The policy indicates that it “shall be evaluated periodically by the Division for Ministry and reviewed by the Conference of Bishops and by the Church Council.”

The Division for Ministry believes that the bylaw is generally functioning as it was intended to function, allowing for the respecting of diverse opinions.

The Office of the Secretary reports that there are not separate rosters; there is only one roster of ordained ministers.

Early in 2005 a review of the policy was conducted. At that time, the Division for Ministry recommended continued monitoring of the use of the bylaw, according to the policy adopted by the Church Council. Following an additional four-year period of experience, the Conference of Bishops and the Church Council will receive a report in early 2009. The Division for Ministry also recommended that the language of the policy be amended to clarify the expectations of the essay that the candidate requesting an exception is required to submit in accordance with the policy. The Church Council voted in April 2005 (CC05.04.40) to accept both of these recommendations.

“Called to Common Mission”

“Called to Common Mission,” the document that established a relationship between this church and The Episcopal Church, makes clear that decisions regarding who may serve as an ordained minister remain a matter of the internal policies of each church body (“Called to Common Mission,” paragraph 22). Ordained ministers who wish to serve in the other church body must abide by the standards for ministerial conduct established by the receiving church body. Thus decisions made by a full-communion partner church on standards for ordained ministry are not binding on this church.

The memorial of the Southwestern Minnesota Synod, in its final WHEREAS clauses, also does not accurately reflect the understanding set forth in “Called to Common Mission.”

³WordAlone Network Theological Advisory Board, Nov. 18, 2002.

Pastors are not ordained in the Anglican Episcopal succession. Rather, bishops are installed in the historic succession of bishops and, although “Called to Common Mission” encourages the participation of an Episcopal bishop as a sign of the agreement of full communion, a bishop may be installed without the participation of a bishop of The Episcopal Church. Furthermore, apart from an agreement of full communion, the exchangeability of clergy is not permitted by the governing documents of this church.

A similar resolution was defeated (Yes–139; No–842) at the 2003 Churchwide Assembly.

CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY ACTION

Mr. Karl D. Anderson, co-chair of the Memorials Committee, moved the following:

MOVED;

SECONDED:

To receive the memorials of the Southwestern Minnesota Synod regarding ordination of pastors and the installation of bishops;

To refer the memorial related to ordination to the Division for Ministry (or the appropriate churchwide unit) as information in its ongoing review of the “Policy for Ordination in Unusual Circumstances in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America” in consultation with the Conference of Bishops and the Church Council; and

To decline to suspend this church’s participation in “Called to Common Mission” with regard to the ordination of pastors and the installation of bishops, but to refer the memorials of the Southwestern Minnesota Synod to the Department for Ecumenical Affairs (or the appropriate churchwide unit) and the Lutheran-Episcopal Coordinating Committee as information.

Ms. Natacha D. Kemp [Southeastern Minnesota Synod] rose to a point of order with a question about the content of the memorial. The chair responded that such questions could be asked during the course of the debate.

The Rev. G. Scott Cady [New England Synod], president of the Lutheran Ecumenical Representatives Network, supported the committee’s recommendation. He remarked that it was impossible to overstate the fruits of full-communion agreements, including “Called to Common Mission.” The Churchwide Assembly should not act to change any full-communion relationship because those relationships had been good for the church bodies and for the world, he declared.

The Rev. Serena S. Sellers [Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod] called the previous question.

MOVED;

SECONDED:

To end debate.

Presiding Bishop Hanson called for a vote on the motion to close debate.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

CARRIED:

To end debate.

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

YES-720; NO-100

The chair called for a vote on the recommendation of the Memorials Committee.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

YES-671; NO-146

CA05.07.36

To receive the memorials of the Southwestern Minnesota Synod regarding ordination of pastors and the installation of bishops;

To refer the memorial related to ordination to the Division for Ministry (or the appropriate churchwide unit) as information in its ongoing review of the “Policy for Ordination in Unusual Circumstances in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America” in consultation with the Conference of Bishops and the Church Council; and

To decline to suspend this church’s participation in “Called to Common Mission” with regard to the ordination of pastors and the installation of bishops, but to refer the memorials of the Southwestern Minnesota Synod to the Department for Ecumenical Affairs (or the appropriate churchwide unit) and the Lutheran-Episcopal Coordinating Committee as information.

Following the vote, Presiding Bishop Hanson encouraged Ms. Kemp to address her question to the Rev. Randall R. Lee, director for the Department for Ecumenical Affairs.

Category E7: Ratification of Policy and Governing Documents

Reference: 2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section VI, pages 50–55.

Three synods adopted essentially identical memorials on the Ratification of Policy and Governing Documents. The Model Memorial is printed here, with changes noted by synod.

Model Memorial

WHEREAS, the constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America recognizes the importance of the relationship between congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization, and further recognizes the interdependent nature of those relationships (constitutional provision 8.11.); and

WHEREAS, the constitutions of this church’s predecessor bodies recognized the fundamental representative nature of congregations and its members when gathered as the larger church body (ALC Constitution, 503.1, 503.5; LCA Constitution Article X paragraph 5; ULCA Article VIII, paragraph 4; AELC Article VIII, paragraph 3; ELC Chapter 7, 33); and

WHEREAS, such representation by constituent congregations was implicit when making changes to the constitution that would impact those congregations; and

WHEREAS, requiring ratification by synod assemblies or congregations of amendments to the constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America would promote better communication and better relationships between congregations, synods, and the Churchwide Assembly; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the [Synod Name] memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly to amend Chapter 22 of the constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to add the following provision:

22.12. Any amendment to the ELCA Constitution, in addition to approval by a regular meeting of the Churchwide Assembly, as required by the ELCA Constitution, must be ratified by three-fourths of ELCA synods at duly called synod assemblies or a majority of ELCA congregations within one calendar year of the final approval by the Churchwide Assembly; and be it further

RESOLVED, to amend 22.11. by deleting “The constitution of this church may be amended only through either of the following procedures . . .” and substituting for it, “Any amendment to the constitution of this church shall be amended in accordance with 22.12. of this constitution and through the following procedures . . .”

1. Montana Synod (1F) [2005 Memorial]

Adopted the “model memorial” printed above, with the following changes:

- First and second WHEREAS paragraphs are deleted
- First RESOLVED deletes “of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America” after “chapter 22 of the constitution”
- First RESOLVED replaces “three-fourths” with “two-thirds”

2. South Dakota Synod (3C) [2004 Memorial]

Adopted the “model memorial” printed above.

3. Southwestern Minnesota Synod (3F) [2004 Memorial]

Adopted the “model memorial” printed above, with the following changes:

- First WHEREAS replaces “relationship” with “relationships”
- Second WHEREAS replaces “paragraph” with the symbol “§” in three instances
- First RESOLVED replaces “provision” with “provisions”
- Inserts a third RESOLVED paragraph reading:
“RESOLVED, that the Southwestern Minnesota Synod Assembly memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to amend Chapter 22 of the constitution.”

Additional memorial on this topic

4. South Dakota Synod (3C) [2004 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the Church is the whole people of God; and

WHEREAS, the Churchwide Assembly is a body of approximately 1000 members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, a body of more than 5,000,000 members; and

WHEREAS, members of the Churchwide Assembly are to be regarded as voting members, rather than representative delegates, according to the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and

WHEREAS, any decision approving the blessing of same-sex unions and the rostering of non-celibate gay and lesbian persons has the potential to have a profound impact on local congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and

WHEREAS, Chapter 5, “Principles of Organization,” of the constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America states in 5.01.c.: “The congregations, synods, and churchwide organization of this church are interdependent partners sharing responsibility in God’s mission. In an interdependent relationship primary responsibility for particular functions will vary between partners. Whenever possible, the entity most directly affected by a decision shall be the principal party responsible for decision and implementation with the other entities facilitating and assisting . . .”; and

WHEREAS, such decisions will have their most direct impact on congregations in such realms as calling clergy to serve them, their witness to the local community, evangelism, and stewardship, among other things; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the South Dakota Synod Assembly memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly to initiate action that would call upon each congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to ratify any decisions regarding the blessing of same-sex unions or rostering non-celibate gay and lesbian persons that may be approved by the Churchwide Assembly within a period of 12 months following the close of such an assembly, and that such decisions shall not take effect or be implemented unless a majority of congregations voting approve the decisions made.

BACKGROUND

Polity and Governance

Polity may be defined briefly as the form of organization and government of a church body. The pattern of polity is informed by ecclesiology (doctrine of the Church). The system of church governance and “legislative” decision-making, in turn, is shaped by the polity of the church body.

Primary keys to understanding the polity of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America are provisions 5.01. and 8.11. in this church’s constitution:

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be one church. This church recognizes that all power and authority in the Church belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ, its head. Therefore, all actions of this church by congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization shall be carried out under his rule and authority . . .⁴

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, while fully the church, recognizes that it is not the whole church and therefore lives in a partnership relationship with the others.⁵

Purposes of This Church

The commitments of each expression are reflected in the purposes of this church, which are stated in the constitutions of each expression:

1. To proclaim God’s saving Gospel;
2. To carry out Christ’s Great Commission;
3. To serve in response to God’s love to meet human needs;
4. To worship God;
5. To nurture members in the Word of God; and
6. To manifest the unity given to the people of God.

Description of Purposes

This church seeks to participate in God’s mission in the world through the practice of these purposes, which are stated in churchwide constitutional provision 4.02. [†S6.02. in the *Constitution for Synods* and *C4.02. in the *Model Constitution for Congregations*] as follows:

- a. Proclaim God’s saving Gospel of justification by grace for Christ’s sake through faith alone, according to the apostolic witness in the Holy Scripture, preserving and transmitting the Gospel faithfully to future generations.

⁴Provision 5.01. in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.

⁵Provision 8.11.

- b. Carry out Christ's Great Commission by reaching out to all people to bring them to faith in Christ and by doing all ministry with a global awareness consistent with the understanding of God as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier of all.
- c. 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.
- d. Worship God in proclamation of the Word and administration of the sacraments and through lives of prayer, praise, thanksgiving, witness, and service.
- e. 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.
- f. Manifest the unity given to the people of God by living together in the love of Christ and by joining with other Christians in prayer and action to express and preserve the unity which the Spirit gives.⁶

Commitments

The mutual commitments of congregations, synods, and churchwide ministries are described in this way:

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.⁷

Common Responsibility of Partners

Since congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization are partners that share in God's mission, all share in the responsibility to develop, implement, and strengthen the financial support program of this church.⁸

Responsibilities of Congregations

The congregation shall include in its mission a life of worship and nurture for its members, and outreach in witness and service to its community.⁹

A congregation is a community of baptized persons whose existence depends on the proclamation of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments and whose purpose is to worship God, to nurture its members, and to reach out in witness and service to the world. To this end it assembles regularly for worship and nurture, organizes and carries out ministry to its people and neighborhood, and cooperates with and supports the wider church to strive for the fulfillment of God's mission in the world.¹⁰

⁶Provision 4.02.

⁷Provision 8.16.

⁸Provision 8.15.

⁹Provision 8.12.

¹⁰Provision 9.11.

Primary Duties of Each Synod

The synod shall provide for pastoral care of the congregations, ordained ministers, associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers within its boundaries. It shall develop resources for the life and mission of its people and shall enlarge the ministries and extend the outreach into society on behalf of and in connection with the congregations and the churchwide organization.¹¹

Tasks of the Churchwide Organization

The churchwide organization shall implement the extended mission of the Church, developing churchwide policies in consultation with the synods and congregations, entering into relationship with governmental, ecumenical, and societal agencies in accordance with accepted resolutions or in response to specific agreed-upon areas of responsibility.¹²

Not Same, but Somewhat Similar

The polity and pattern of governance in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is not the same as that of the three predecessor church bodies. Yet that “legislative” decision-making system is similar to that of The American Lutheran Church, the Lutheran Church in America, and the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches.

AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH: The American Lutheran Church (ALC), formed in 1960, used the following definition of membership: “The membership of The American Lutheran Church shall consist of congregations. The requirements for membership shall be: a. The profession of a common faith. b. The acceptance of this Constitution and its Bylaws. c. Participation in the program of activity approved by this Church” (Provision 6.11. in the Constitution and Bylaws of The American Lutheran Church). Likewise, in the ALC district constitution, this definition was provided: “The membership of the district shall be composed of congregations” (D5.10. in the District Constitution). Further, the following was stipulated in ALC provision 4.13.: “Congregations...pledge themselves to assure...[the ALC] the human authority, power, and resources needed to carry out its purpose as set forth in this Constitution. The American Lutheran Church pledges itself to use its authority, power, and resources both to serve its congregations directly and to serve their interests in those spheres where congregations cannot act effectively alone....”

Strictly speaking, neither the districts nor the national office of The American Lutheran Church were seen as possessing any legitimate ecclesial (i.e., churchly) character in themselves. Their functions were only delegated ones from congregations. Only congregations were seen as “church,” as reflected in The American Lutheran Church’s constitution and bylaws. As a further indication of this understanding, the word, “pastor,” was defined and restricted to “a member of the clergy serving a parish” (ALC bylaw 7.22.12.).

Constitutional amendments adopted by a two-thirds vote at the ALC’s General Convention were submitted to congregations. Each congregation had one vote, determined by a majority, to approve or disapprove of the amendment. Amendments were declared approved if favored by two-thirds of the votes cast during a six-month period (ALC constitution 20.21., 20.22., and 20.23.). Few constitutional amendments were considered in the ALC. Bylaws constituted most of that church’s government documents.

¹¹Provision 8.13.

¹²Provision 8.14.

LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA: By contrast, the membership of the Lutheran Church in America (LCA), formed in 1962, was defined in this way: “This church shall consist . . . of the congregations and ordained ministers . . .” (Article III, Section 1, of the constitution of the Lutheran Church in America). Further, it was provided that: “Congregations and ordained ministers when organized into a synod may through such synod unite with this church upon application for membership, subscription to this constitution including its Confession of Faith, and acceptance . . . at a convention of this church” (Article III, Section 3 of the LCA constitution). The definition of the Lutheran Church in America “was heavily influenced by Henry Melchior Muhlenberg, who called together Lutheran clergy and lay people to found the Ministerium of Pennsylvania in 1748. The former United Lutheran Church in America continued this focus, and it was reinforced by the former Augustana Lutheran Church when the LCA was formed . . .,” Edgar R. Trexler wrote in *Anatomy of a Merger*, page 167.

ASSOCIATION OF EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCHES: The Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches (AELC), formed in 1976 in a separation from The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS), defined itself less as a church body and more as a free association. This both carried forward the strong congregational polity of the LCMS and also reflected the turmoil out of which the AELC was formed. That turmoil led to strong suspicions of vesting any authority anywhere other than in each congregation alone.

In the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, as the governing documents demonstrate, is committed to living and practicing the faith that we confess together. Therefore, the members of the ELCA are dedicated to partnership and interdependence as a church. So we see in this declaration: “The congregations, synods, and churchwide organization shall act in accordance with the Confession of Faith set forth in Chapter 2 of this constitution and with the Statement of Purpose set forth in Chapter 4.”¹³

The congregations, synods, and churchwide organization are each fully “church,” as we noted earlier. Yet, we also noted that each is not, when separate from one another, the whole “church.” These twin acknowledgments need to be held together by those who embrace the ecclesiology and polity of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

That commitment to unity is underscored in the definition of membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Indeed, who does belong to this church? “The members of this church shall be the baptized members of its congregations,” the ELCA’s churchwide constitutional provision on membership declares.¹⁴ This means that the members of this church work together in their respective congregations, those 10,766 basic centers for mission through which members are nurtured in the Word of God as proclaimed and taught, washed and nourished through the sacraments, and sent into the journey of ministry in their daily lives. Those same members join hands with other members for the sake of the shared ministry that the people of this church undertake together through the respective synods and through the churchwide organization.

¹³Provision 5.01.a.

¹⁴Provision 6.01.

Nature of the Church

Within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the “Nature of the Church” is defined in the governing documents, as follows:

The Church exists both as an inclusive fellowship and as local congregations gathered for worship and Christian service.

1. Congregations find their fulfillment in the universal community of the Church, and the universal Church exists in and through congregations.
2. This church, therefore, derives its character and powers *both*
 - a. from the sanction and representation of its congregations and
 - b. from its inherent nature as an expression of the broader fellowship of the faithful.
3. In length, it acknowledges itself to be in the historic continuity of the communion of saints;
[and]
4. In breadth, it expresses the fellowship of believers and congregations in our day.¹⁵

Some individuals mistakenly have assumed that this 99-word paragraph is the only statement of the ecclesiology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, as contained in this church’s governing documents. It is not!

The use of that provision in the ELCA constitution, when coupled with the other constitutional definitions of the ELCA’s ecclesiology, represented a significant development. That provision moved the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America toward a broader, deeper, and more historically and confessionally grounded understanding. It acknowledged this church’s “inherent nature” as a reflection of the one holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. Likewise, this church’s “historic continuity” with the whole Church universal, thereby, was underscored.

Further, the provision on the “Nature of the Church” and related ones (such as 5.01.¹⁶, 8.11.¹⁷, and others) recognized that ecclesial (that is, churchly) reality does not reside exclusively in separate congregations, as necessary and strategic as each one is. The ELCA is a church body, not a random association of self-contained communities of faith. Thus, the churchly reality abiding also in the expressions known as synods and the churchwide organization is embraced.

Provision 3.02. itself does have an interesting history. It was copied from the constitution of the Lutheran Church in America (LCA). It was inserted as a new chapter in the ELCA constitution at the final meeting of the Commission for a New Lutheran Church (CNLC), held in Seattle June 23–25, 1986. The addition was made in response to concerns expressed by LCA synodical bishops and by the LCA Executive Council. They had worried publicly and officially about the “new church” succumbing to “congregationalism.” In the late spring of 1986, LCA Bishop James R. Crumley Jr. wrote to LCA pastors, arguing that

¹⁵Provision 3.02. Emphasis added, and sections numbered for clarity.

¹⁶Provision 5.01. reads: “The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be one church. This church recognizes that all power and authority in the Church belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ, its head. Therefore, all actions of this church by congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization shall be carried out under his rule and authority. . . .”

¹⁷Provision 8.11. affirms: “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, while fully the church, recognizes that it is not the whole church and therefore lives in a partnership relationship with the others.”

“the solid embodiment in an ecclesiastical entity of our self-understanding and self-identity as Lutherans” was crucial for moving forward.¹⁸

The new chapter that was added at the Seattle CNLC meeting was an exact quotation of Article IV, Section 2, in the constitution of the Lutheran Church in America. Although a highly significant addition, the text of the provision was inserted without debate and with support of representatives of the two other merging bodies, The American Lutheran Church (ALC) and The Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches (AELC).

Within a Wider Context

That crucial text of Chapter 3 of the ELCA constitution anchors the three primary expressions of this church—congregations, synods, and churchwide organization—within the context of the whole Church of Jesus Christ.

If Chapter 3 in the ELCA’s churchwide constitution on the “Nature of the Church” is viewed in isolation, it appears to present only a bipolar description of “Church” as congregations and the whole Church catholic. The ELCA’s ecclesiology and polity, however, cannot be fully understood through exclusively focusing on that chapter. The chapter must be read in the context of ELCA constitution Chapter 5 on organization, Chapter 6 on membership, Chapter 7 on ministry, Chapter 8 on relationships (especially constitutional provision 8.11.), Chapter 9 on congregations, Chapter 10 on synods, Chapter 11 on the churchwide organization, and related provisions. Seen together, these sections offer a portrait of this church’s ecclesiology and polity. In turn, the pattern of governance and decision-making reflects responsibilities assigned to each primary expression of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

The conviction that the congregations, synods, and churchwide organization are each fully the church but, in themselves, not the whole church represents a gigantic step for some members and leaders throughout the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The individualism reflected by certain immigrant strands of North American Lutheran history and the continuing individualistic spirit within U.S. society militate against a churchly awareness. Lutherans in America are not alone in facing this challenge, however. Yet the polity of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America points to a deep awareness of unity and interdependence within the life of this church and, indeed, the whole Church.

Current Pattern in ELCA

Within the ELCA, responsibility for particular types of decisions are assigned to the three primary expressions.

Congregations: Congregation meetings call pastors, elect members of the Congregation Council, conduct elections for other positions in the congregation, adopt budgets, and make other decisions concerning the internal life of that congregation.

Synod Assemblies: Synod Assemblies elect officers, members of the Synod Council, and others; adopt budgets and resolutions; and conduct other legislative business appropriate for the assembly.

Churchwide Assembly: The Churchwide Assembly elects officers, members of the Church Council, and others for churchwide boards and committees; adopts budgets; acts on

¹⁸Based on the author’s personal notes. See also Edgar R. Trexler, *Anatomy of a Merger* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1991), pages 165ff.

memorials submitted by Synod Assemblies; considers resolutions from voting members; votes on church-to-church proposals and other matters affecting the national and international relationships of this church; and adopts by a two-thirds vote the text of social statements that have been prepared by task forces and distributed widely for study and comment throughout this church before submission to the assembly.

Other Models

Perhaps the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) operates with the closest model to what these resolutions and memorials are requesting. Yet the Presbyterian pattern does not provide for congregational or regional referenda on social statements.

In the Presbyterian pattern of governance, amendments to the *Book of Order* (ELCA parallel, *constitution*) require approval by a majority of the presbytery assemblies (ELCA parallel, *Synod Assemblies*).

In the Presbyterian system, however, adoption of social statements rests with the Presbyterian General Assembly (ELCA parallel, *Churchwide Assembly*). The same situation for adoption of social statements prevails in the governance and decision-making structures of other full-communion partner church bodies.

Principles in the polity of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) include:

Presbyters [elders and ministers of Word and Sacrament] are not simply to reflect the will of the people, but rather to seek together to find and represent the will of Christ;

Decisions shall be reached in governing bodies by vote, following opportunity for discussion, and a majority shall govern;

A higher governing body shall have the right of review and control over a lower one and shall have power to determine matters of controversy upon reference, complaint, or appeal; [and]

Governing bodies possess whatever administrative authority is necessary to give effect to duties and powers assigned by the Constitution of the church.¹⁹

Further, within the polity of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is this provision:

All governing bodies of the [Presbyterian] church are united by the 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 powers not mentioned being reserved to the presbyteries, and with the acts of each subject to review by the next higher governing body.²⁰

Proposed amendments [to the *Book of Order*] must be approved by the General Assembly and transmitted to the presbyteries for their vote.²¹

When the next ensuing General Assembly shall have received written advice that a proposed amendment to the *Book of Order* has received the affirmative votes of a majority of all the presbyteries, the General Assembly shall declare the amendment made.²²

¹⁹G-4.0301d.-i. in the *Book of Order* of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 2001 edition.

²⁰G-9.0103 in the Presbyterian *Book of Order*. In the Presbyterian system, the scope of this review includes actions of the local Session (in ELCA terms, *Congregation Council*).

²¹G-18.0301.c. in the Presbyterian *Book of Order*.

²²G-18.0301.d. in the Presbyterian *Book of Order*.

Responsibilities of Churchwide Assembly

Provision 12.21. in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* lists the responsibilities of the Churchwide Assembly:

The Churchwide Assembly shall:

- a. Review the work of the churchwide officers, and for this purpose require and receive reports from them and act on business proposed by them.
- b. Review the work of the churchwide units, and for this purpose require and receive reports from them and act on business proposed by them.
- c. Receive and consider proposals from Synod Assemblies.
- d. Establish churchwide policy.
- e. Adopt a budget for the churchwide organization.
- f. Elect officers, board members, and other persons as provided in the constitution or bylaws.
- g. Establish churchwide units to carry out the functions of the churchwide organization.
- h. Have the sole authority to amend the constitution and bylaws.
- i. Fulfill other functions as required in the constitution and bylaws.
- j. Conduct such other business as necessary to further the purposes and functions of the churchwide organization.²³

Establishment of churchwide policy is one of the basic duties of the Churchwide Assembly.

Observations on Process

Widespread discussion of proposed social statements and certain general policies within congregations and throughout synods, especially in Synod Assemblies, merits greater attention. This represents a crucial step prior to consideration of certain issues in the Churchwide Assembly.

A ratification process would be difficult to define. Some of the synodical resolutions reflect concern over the decisions related to issues of sexuality that were mandated by the 2001 Churchwide Assembly. Ratification of constitution amendments would have nothing to do with such decisions.

Further, a ratification process would alter significantly the underlying polity of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America—a polity that merits deeper understanding in the nurture of greater ecclesial awareness of this church's ministry and purposes.

The 2003 Churchwide Assembly voted (CA03.06.21):

To acknowledge that the subject of the memorials of the Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod, the South Dakota Synod, the East-Central Synod of Wisconsin, the Northwestern Minnesota Synod, the Northeastern Minnesota Synod, and the Minneapolis Area Synod has been studied by the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, with a detailed response already having been provided by the Church Council; and

To affirm the April 2003 response of the Church Council (CC03.04.03) as the response of the 2003 Churchwide Assembly to the memorials of the Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod, the South Dakota Synod, the East-Central Synod of Wisconsin, the Northwestern Minnesota Synod, the Northeastern Minnesota Synod, and the Minneapolis Area Synod:

To acknowledge with gratitude the resolutions of the Montana Synod, South Dakota Synod, Southwestern Minnesota Synod, and Southeastern Minnesota Synod related to potential ratification processes;

²³Provision 12.21.

To request that the secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America convey the background information and analysis related to those resolutions to the four synods as the response of the Church Council;

To affirm the importance of widespread study and discussion of proposed social statements and major policy directions throughout the congregations and synods prior to their consideration by the Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;

To acknowledge that in congregations, synods, the churchwide organization, and related institutions and agencies of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the people of faith face the ongoing task of reflecting on issues within the life of the whole Church while practicing a spirit of unity and commitment to mutual understanding; and

To urge renewed reflection for a deeper understanding of the work of the whole Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the ways in which this church is called to engage in study, discussion, and decision-making; and

To encourage the Conference of Bishops, the Church Council, synod councils, and all members of this church to maintain, strengthen, and promote trust and communication throughout this church.

CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY ACTION

Mr. Karl D. Anderson, co-chair of the Memorials Committee, surveyed the background information, then announced that the committee had received notice of a voting member's intention to move a substitute motion. He moved the following recommendation of the committee:

**MOVED;
SECONDED:**

To acknowledge that the subject of the memorials of the Montana Synod, South Dakota Synod, and Southwestern Minnesota Synod has been studied by the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, with a detailed response having been provided by the Church Council and the 2003 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and

To request that the secretary of this church transmit the action of the 2003 ELCA Churchwide Assembly related to the ratification of policy and governing documents to the synods as the response of the 2005 Churchwide Assembly to the memorials.

Ms. Kim R. Wiest [Montana Synod] offered a substitute motion.

**MOVED;
SECONDED:**

To substitute the following for the recommendation of the Memorials Committee:

WHEREAS, such representation by constituent congregations was implicit when making changes to the constitution that would impact those congregations; and

WHEREAS, requiring ratification by synod assemblies or congregations of amendments to the constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America would promote better communication and better relationships between congregations, synods, and the Churchwide Assembly; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Montana Synod memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly to amend Chapter 22 of the constitution to add the following provision:

22.12. Any amendment to the ELCA Constitution, in addition to approval by a regular meeting of the Churchwide Assembly, as required by the

ELCA Constitution, must be ratified by two-thirds of ELCA synods at duly called synod assemblies or a majority of ELCA congregations within one calendar year of the final approval by the Churchwide Assembly;

and be it further

RESOLVED, to amend 22.11. by deleting “The constitution of this church may be amended only through either of the following procedures . . .” and substituting for it, “Any amendment to the constitution of this church shall be amended in accordance with 22.12. of this constitution and through the following procedures . . .”

Ms. Wiest spoke to her motion, commenting that ratification by synods or congregations was not at cross-purposes with this church’s constitution or its polity. The process would continue the interdependence of congregations, synods, and the churchwide expression and allow all voices to be heard. The substitute, she pointed out, would give the Churchwide Assembly the authority to decide who would ratify, whether synods or congregations. She urged the assembly to do a new thing, one that would promote interconnectedness and communication.

The Rev. Paul A. Landeraaen [Montana Synod] wondered what would it be like if all persons involved in synod assemblies were to participate in the decision-making process of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. A ratification process would build trust and address the divisions in this church, he contended.

The Rev. Joanna Norris Grimshaw [Central States Synod], speaking against the substitution, observed that the current system involved consultation with congregations and synods, as evidenced by the process used by the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality. She added that the distrust in this church was in large part a result of the distrust in society.

The Rev. Ronald C. Neustadt [Central/Southern Illinois Synod] moved to end debate on the motion to substitute.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To end debate.

Presiding Bishop Hanson called for a vote on the motion to close debate on the substitute motion.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

CARRIED:

To end debate.

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

YES-754; NO-85

The chair then directed the assembly to vote on the motion to substitute.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

DEFEATED:

To substitute the following for the recommendation of the Memorials Committee:

WHEREAS, such representation by constituent congregations was implicit when making changes to the constitution that would impact those congregations; and

YES-223; NO-610

WHEREAS, requiring ratification by synod assemblies or congregations of amendments to the constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America would promote better communication and better relationships between congregations, synods, and the Churchwide Assembly; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Montana Synod memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly to amend Chapter 22 of the constitution to add the following provision:

22.12. Any amendment to the ELCA Constitution, in addition to approval by a regular meeting of the Churchwide Assembly, as required by the ELCA Constitution, must be ratified by two-thirds of ELCA synods at duly called synod assemblies or a majority of ELCA congregations within one calendar year of the final approval by the Churchwide Assembly;

and be it further

RESOLVED, to amend 22.11. by deleting “The constitution of this church may be amended only through either of the following procedures . . .” and substituting for it, “Any amendment to the constitution of this church shall be amended in accordance with 22.12. of this constitution and through the following procedures . . .”

Presiding Bishop Hanson informed the assembly that it next would consider the recommendation of the Memorials Committee.

An unidentified voting member raised a point of privilege, telling the chair that people were having difficulty hearing. Presiding Bishop Hanson, after consulting with staff, responded that the problem had been fixed.

The Rev. Bryan S. Anderson [Northwest Synod of Wisconsin], noting that this assembly was his first, expressed concern about the number of voting members who had attended assemblies multiple times. He questioned whether the assembly was a representative body and advocated a system of checks and balances on it. Thus, he disagreed with the recommendation of the Memorials Committee.

The Rev. Heidi W. Punt [Central/Southern Illinois Synod] called for the question.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To end debate.

The chair called for a vote on the motion to end debate.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

CARRIED: To end debate.

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

YES-742; NO-82

The chair then directed the assembly to vote on the recommendation of the Memorials Committee.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

CA05.07.37

To acknowledge that the subject of the memorials of the Montana Synod, South Dakota Synod, and Southwestern Minnesota Synod has been studied by the Church Council of

YES-592; NO-242

the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, with a detailed response having been provided by the Church Council and the 2003 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and

To request that the secretary of this church transmit the action of the 2003 ELCA Churchwide Assembly related to the ratification of policy and governing documents to the synods as the response of the 2005 Churchwide Assembly to the memorials.

Mr. Frank M. Petrovic [Metropolitan Chicago Synod], in response to an earlier complaint, clarified that the person handing out materials during worship was not a representative of any group, but was acting on his own. Several individuals had chastised the person, he added.

Category E18: Deaf Ministry

Reference: *2005 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section VI, page 72.

1. Lower Susquehanna Synod (8D) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, God has created humankind in God's image (Genesis 1:26–27); and

WHEREAS, Jesus himself touched the lives of individuals with disabilities with his healing love; and

WHEREAS, it is the work of the Holy Spirit to “. . . call, gather, enlighten, and make holy the whole Christian church . . .” (Martin Luther's Small Catechism, Explanation of the Third Article of the Apostles' Creed), and that individuals with disabilities are included in the whole Christian church; and

WHEREAS, our own Evangelical Lutheran Church in America churchwide organization's proposed future Design for Mission calls for “special attention [to] be devoted to fostering a culture that values diversity and inclusivity . . .”; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Lower Susquehanna Synod, meeting in assembly, memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly to invite the participation of persons with disabilities in each of the churchwide organization's five program units as well as the two separately incorporated program units, specifically, Augsburg Fortress and Women of the ELCA; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America affirm, retain, and consider expanding the office of the full-time director for the churchwide organization's work on behalf of persons with disabilities; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this full-time director position for the churchwide organization's work on behalf of persons with disabilities be located in the Public Witness program unit; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the ELCA project coordinator for deaf ministry be given full scope of supervision for the work of deaf ministry and the coordinator's work be increased to half-time.

BACKGROUND

The ELCA Church Council in November 2000 and the Churchwide Assembly in 2001 considered similar requests from the Lower Susquehanna Synod and the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod. The 2001 Churchwide Assembly expressed appreciation for the

synod's concern for and commitment to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's deaf ministry. It also noted the Church Council's approval in 1998 of the "Comprehensive Study of Ministry with and among Persons Who Are Deaf and Persons with Disabilities of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America." Based upon the findings of this report, the Division for Church in Society recommended that the entire churchwide organization, and in particular the Division for Church in Society, should lift up the unique culture and language (American Sign Language) of deaf persons; that the Division for Church in Society should renew its deaf ministry inter-unit partnership with the Division for Outreach and the Commission for Multicultural Ministries; that deaf ministry should be separated from disability ministries in structure and budget; and that primary responsibility for deaf ministry should remain with the Division for Church in Society.

In answer to these recommendations, deaf ministry was separated from disability ministries in structure and budget; a full-time director for disability ministries has been on staff since June 1999; and a part-time coordinator for deaf ministry has been on staff since 2001. Oversight for the ELCA's deaf ministry is the responsibility of this person.

The board of the Division for Church in Society has received regular updates from the coordinator for deaf ministry, who works with congregations, synods, individuals interested in rostered ministry, the Evangelical Lutheran Deaf Association (ELDA), and others. In 2004, a revised brochure on deaf ministry in the ELCA was distributed and a new directory of ELCA deaf ministries prepared. According to the most recent report, "Continual contact has been maintained with deaf individuals seeking lay ministry training and ordained clergy considering deaf ministry as well as support for those already in ministry. The coordinator participated in setting up the visit of a researcher on deaf faith life for two deaf congregations. . . . Much information and referral is done through e-mail with individuals and congregations all over the country on such items as resources, liturgy, and setting up deaf ministry."

If the bylaw and budget provisions related to the proposed restructuring of the churchwide organization are approved by the 2005 Churchwide Assembly, the Vocation and Education unit would have responsibilities for disability ministries and deaf ministries.

CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY ACTION

The Rev. Diane "Dee" H. Pederson, co-chair of the Memorials Committee, summarized the background material for the recommendation, then indicated that a voting member would be offering an amendment to the Memorials Committee's recommendation. She moved the following:

MOVED;

SECONDED:

To reaffirm the concern for deaf ministry within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as expressed in the memorial of the Lower Susquehanna Synod;

To reaffirm the intention of the April 2001 action of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America that:

1. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America lift up and support the unique culture and language, American Sign Language (ASL), of deaf persons;
2. Deaf ministry be separated from disability ministries in structure and budget;

3. A coordinator for deaf ministry continue to assist ELCA congregations with deaf ministries, recruit leadership for such congregations, and act as the liaison between the Evangelical Lutheran Deaf Association and the ELCA's deaf ministry;
4. The appropriate unit of the churchwide organization be committed to increasing support for this ministry as it becomes possible;

To acknowledge that the actions taken by the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America on the 2006–2007 budget proposal and the constitution and bylaw amendments related to the restructuring of the churchwide organization, including the location of deaf and disabilities ministries, will be the response of the assembly to the memorial of the Lower Susquehanna Synod.

The Rev. David R. Fisher [Lower Susquehanna Synod], recounted how he had been impressed by the inspiring skill of the woman who had been signing for the deaf in worship, and urged support for the recommendation of the Memorials Committee.

Ms. Barbara A. Keener [Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod] reported that she had worked in deaf ministry for ten years and encouraged voting members to vote for the recommendation. She expressed disappointment that the coordinator's position had not been increased to half-time, because many deaf congregations were being started and she felt the coordinator had been doing a wonderful job.

Mr. Timothy J. Mumm [South-Central Synod of Wisconsin] supported the continuation of deaf ministry and recommended that deaf persons be active in the work. He reminded those present that the National Association of the Deaf and its chapters stated that deaf persons appreciate the terms “deaf “ and “hard of hearing” but did not care for the terms “hearing-impaired,” “mute,” or “dumb.” As one who worked with deaf people, he advocated their recognition as a unique culture.

Noting that three people had spoken in favor of the Memorials Committee's recommendation, Presiding Bishop Hanson informed the assembly that, under its rules, debate would normally be at an end. However, the amendment to the recommendation had not been proposed yet, so he called on the voting member who wished to propose an amendment.

Ms. Constance M. Kilmark [South-Central Synod of Wisconsin] moved the following amendment.

MOVED;

SECONDED:

To amend by addition, placing the following at the beginning of the Memorials Committee recommendation:

To affirm that our brothers and sisters with disabilities have valuable perspectives, which should be presented by people with disabilities themselves and not solely by “abled” people on behalf of people with disabilities;

To affirm that to be a truly inclusive church, we must seek people with disabilities of all sorts to teach others of us how to be specifically welcoming to them and how properly to value and use the gifts of their experience at every level of membership and leadership in every expression of this church.

Speaking to her amendment, Ms. Kilmark observed that she would love to see worship at a Churchwide Assembly led by deaf people with a person interpreting for the assembly. It would be a wonderful witness, she concluded.

The Rev. John M. Gosswein [Nebraska Synod] reported that a deaf person had asked him, “Why do the hearing people hate me? . . . No one talks with me.” Pr. Gosswein responded that hearing people were the ones who were disabled because they did not have the skill to communicate and so moved away from deaf people, just as they did with others whom they did not understand. He stated that he had come to realize how great the gifts are that the Spirit has given to the community of people that are labeled as disabled.

The Rev. Steven P. Ridenhour [Virginia Synod] called the question.

MOVED;
SECONDED: To end debate.

The chair called for a vote on the motion to end debate.

MOVED;
SECONDED;
CARRIED: To end debate.

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED
YES-821; NO-18

The chair directed the assembly to vote on the amendment to the recommendation of the Memorials Committee.

MOVED;
SECONDED;
CARRIED:

YES-694; NO-142

To amend by addition, placing the following at the beginning of the Memorials Committee recommendation:

To affirm that our brothers and sisters with disabilities have valuable perspectives, which should be presented by people with disabilities themselves and not solely by “abled” people on behalf of people with disabilities;

To affirm that to be a truly inclusive church, we must seek people with disabilities of all sorts to teach others of us how to be specifically welcoming to them and how properly to value and use the gifts of their experience at every level of membership and leadership in every expression of this church.

Presiding Bishop Hanson explained that the recommendation of the Memorials Committee as now amended was on the floor.

Ms. Alison M. Glace [Delaware-Maryland Synod] called the question.

MOVED;
SECONDED: To end debate.

An unidentified voting member began to ask a question about the content of the recommendation. The chair ruled her out of order because the question had been called.

The chair called for a vote on the motion to end debate.

MOVED;
SECONDED;
CARRIED:

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED
YES-814; NO-26

To end debate.

Presiding Bishop Hanson informed the assembly that it now would be voting on the recommendation of the Memorials Committee as amended.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

YES-592; NO-242

CA05.07.38

To affirm that our brothers and sisters with disabilities have valuable perspectives, which should be presented by people with disabilities themselves and not solely by “abled” people on behalf of people with disabilities;

To affirm that to be a truly inclusive church, we must seek people with disabilities of all sorts to teach others of us how to be specifically welcoming to them and how properly to value and use the gifts of their experience at every level of membership and leadership in every expression of this church;

To reaffirm the concern for deaf ministry within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as expressed in the memorial of the Lower Susquehanna Synod;

To reaffirm the intention of the April 2001 action of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America that:

1. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America lift up and support the unique culture and language, American Sign Language (ASL), of deaf persons;
2. Deaf ministry be separated from disability ministries in structure and budget;
3. A coordinator for deaf ministry continue to assist ELCA congregations with deaf ministries, recruit leadership for such congregations, and act as the liaison between the Evangelical Lutheran Deaf Association and the ELCA’s deaf ministry;
4. The appropriate unit of the churchwide organization be committed to increasing support for this ministry as it becomes possible;

To acknowledge that the actions taken by the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America on the 2006–2007 budget proposal and the constitution and bylaw amendments related to the

restructuring of the churchwide organization, including the location of deaf and disabilities ministries, will be the response of the assembly to the memorial of the Lower Susquehanna Synod.

Pr. Pederson stated that the report of the Memorials Committee had been completed. The assembly greeted this announcement with applause.

En Bloc Memorials Committee Resolution

Reference: 2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section VI, pages 1–111.

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson called upon Secretary Lowell G. Almen to read the *en bloc* action, which would approve the remainder of the memorials before the assembly. The motion was approved without discussion.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

YES-791; NO-35

CA05.07.39 To approve *en bloc*, with the exception of those memorials considered separately, the following responses to 2003, 2004, and 2005 synodical memorials printed in the Report of the Memorials Committee:

Category A1: New Mission Starts

Reference: 2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section VI, pages 10–11.

1. Southeastern Minnesota Synod (3I) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the Church has been called to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ; and
WHEREAS, there are over 70 million people without churches in the United States today; and
WHEREAS, the starting of new congregations is a good way to spread the Good News; and
WHEREAS, there are many methods for starting new congregations; and
WHEREAS, local expressions of this church (for example, synods and conferences) need to try some of these processes as well as the current Evangelical Lutheran Church in America model for outreach if the growing population of the unchurched is to be reached; and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has identified specific sites for development of mission starts and redevelopments, yet does not have sufficient numbers of leaders identified as mission developers and redevelopers to do the ministry in those places; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Minnesota Synod memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to call upon each synod and synodical subdivisions (for example, conferences), where they exist, to work in collaboration with the Division for Outreach (or the appropriate churchwide unit) in outreach and mutual support in a variety of methods to develop and redevelop congregations for people who have no church home; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Minnesota Synod memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to call upon each synod and synodical subdivisions (for example, conferences), where they exist, to work in collaboration with the Division for Outreach (or the appropriate churchwide unit) either to start a congregation or to redevelop an existing congregation every year; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Minnesota Synod memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to call upon each synod and synodical subdivisions (for example, conferences), where they exist, to work in collaboration with the Division for Outreach (or the appropriate churchwide unit) to identify and raise up missional leaders whom God calls to mission development and redevelopment.

BACKGROUND

The Division for Outreach is grateful for the memorial of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod that encourages synods and their structures to work in partnership to start new and renew existing congregations. An adequate response to this memorial will require both partnership and increased resolve to identify, recruit, support, train, and deploy lay and clergy people with gifts for starting new congregations and renewing existing congregations.

Since the early 1990s, the ELCA has called on this church to increase the number of new starts. The 2003 Churchwide Assembly approved “Sharing Faith in a New Century: A Vision for Evangelism in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,” and asked this church not only to “nurture evangelical leaders so that this church will be faithful in its response to God’s call to mission and evangelism” but also “to support the development of new ELCA congregations and ministry sites in communities that invite all to faith in Jesus Christ.”

The Churchwide Assembly action underscored the importance of strengthening partnerships throughout this church for starting new congregations and renewing existing congregations as centers of evangelical outreach. It expressed gratitude for the possibilities for expanded collaboration in witness and service with ecumenical partners and companion churches around the globe. Finally, the action commended the proposed actions in the strategy to the Office of the Presiding Bishop for inclusion into the overall strategic planning process, which was approved by the ELCA Church Council in April 2004. One strategic direction of the Plan for Mission is “to assist members, congregations, synods, and institutions and agencies of this church to grow in evangelical outreach.”

The Plan for Mission supports the objectives of the Evangelism Strategy, including the objective to “Start and Renew Congregations,” which calls for “members, congregations, synods, churchwide ministries, and related institutions and agencies to seek opportunities to strengthen partnerships throughout this church for starting new congregations and renewing existing congregations as centers of service and witness, inviting all to faith in Jesus Christ.”

The objective calls for the development of a plan that by 2010 would include a pattern of starting 100 new congregations annually. At least half of these new ministries will be among people of color or people whose language is other than English. At least 20 percent of these new ministries will be among people living in poverty, requiring additional long-term funding or less capital-intensive leadership models. The action also calls for the annual redevelopment of at least 200 existing congregations by 2010. At least 25 percent of these congregations would be in rural areas and 25 percent in urban areas.

The Division for Outreach has been working with synods through its mission directors to plan for a diverse and growing number of new ministry profiles to consider annually. Over the last two years, approximately sixty profiles for new starts were considered by a review table including nine synodical bishops along with Division for Outreach executive staff and mission directors. Each of the past two years, 50–55 sites have been approved for entry, but only 30–35 have been started due to the lack of leaders.

The profiles included a wide variety of types of starts and partnerships for funding. There are an increasing number of congregations starting congregations, second site new starts, and clusters of congregations starting congregations.

Plans for starting and renewing congregations also call for a comprehensive plan to revitalize congregations. The plan is to include: identification of assessment tools based on the standards of excellence that can be used to evaluate present ministry and identify assets; development and training of teams of consultants in every synod, available to congregations to support their work with the assessment tools and set in motion specific actions toward increased vitality and effectiveness; and encouragement of congregational plans for outreach.

Staff of the churchwide organization have identified Natural Church Development as an assessment tool to assess health in congregations. Coaches trained in use of the tool work with congregations to identify eight quality characteristics of healthy congregations, assess strengths in each area, and develop a plan for increasing strengths. Transformational Ministry training also addresses the redevelopment of congregations. The training is provided nationally and in many regions with a goal of working with 300 congregations annually.

A series of training events throughout this church for “coaches” seeks to address the call for people in each synod to assist congregations in renewal and to support and encourage mission developers in their work.

The second objective of the evangelism strategy is to “Prepare and Renew Evangelical Leaders,” calling on “. . . members, congregations, synods, churchwide ministries, and related institutions and agencies to nurture evangelical leaders under the renewing power of God’s Spirit so that this church can be faithful in its response to God’s call to mission and evangelism.”

A goal under this objective is “prepare and renew evangelical leaders, lay and clergy, by reaffirming evangelism as a key priority.” A footnote to the goal states:

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America affirms its evangelical identity and mission, and calls for further development and renewal of evangelical leaders. Our mission seeks the empowerment of the Holy Spirit to prepare and renew evangelical leaders so that the ELCA can be faithful to God’s will for our church and its ministry. Effective evangelical leaders:

1. hold Jesus at the heart of their ministry and set about to make disciples in his name;
2. center ministry in effective proclamation of the Gospel and administration of the sacraments, and equip the people of God for witness and service;
3. are courageous, passionate, and contextual leaders who see themselves as witnesses to Jesus Christ and the in-breaking reign of God;
4. see change as an opportunity for renewed spiritual vitality;
5. understand the gift of the diverse cultural reality in their contexts and develop a plan for their congregations to reflect that diversity;
6. have a clear vision of God’s mission and the commitment to following that vision;
7. work in partnership teams, lay and clergy, for the sake of God’s mission;
8. engage the needs of neighbor, community, and world, shaping their witness and service to fit those needs; and
9. invite all into God’s baptismal and Eucharistic community.

Mission developer training, transformational ministry training, and coach training for Natural Church Development all seek, with the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, to renew and strengthen evangelical leaders.

Cost Analysis

The memorial calls for each synod to either start a congregation or to redevelop an existing congregation every year. The current process calls for and budgets for approximately 50 new starts each year. The funding for those new starts, increasingly, is through the churchwide organization and other funding partners.

The approximate cost for a mission developer for a year is \$68,000–70,000. The formula assumes half the cost of mission developers will be generated in the synod, conference, cluster, or local congregation through dollars over and above regular mission support. The formula also expects that the leadership from some starts will be provided by existing congregations at no additional cost, bi-vocational developers that earn most of their salary in secular work, and other varieties of less-than-full-time paid leadership.

Under the current approach to funding new starts, if every synod supported a new start (approximately 15 more than are approved now), the churchwide cost beyond currently available funds would be \$500,000 each year to start those ministries with decreasing amounts required for two to three additional years as the new starts grow and mature financially.

The Church Council in April 2005 approved a designated fund that provides \$2,587,000 for support of the leadership development dimensions of the evangelism strategy and a one-time additional amount of \$500,000 for new congregation development and renewal. Additional resources would be required to meet the goals described in this memorial and the evangelism strategy. The action of the Church Council is a significant step toward identifying needed resources. Continued work on partnership funding of new starts through a wide variety of sources will be critical to reaching the goals.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

EN BLOC

CA05.07.39a

To thank the Southeastern Minnesota Synod and to affirm in principle the synod’s memorial for its support of the goals of the evangelism strategy, “Sharing Faith in a New Century: A Vision for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,” and the second strategic direction of “Faithful Yet Changing,” the Plan for Mission in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America: “to assist members, congregations, synods, and institutions and agencies of this church to grow in evangelical outreach”;

To reaffirm the call of the ELCA evangelism strategy “to underscore the importance of strengthening partnerships throughout this church for starting new congregations and renewing existing congregations as centers of evangelical outreach”;

To direct that the Division for Outreach (or the appropriate churchwide unit), the Division for Congregational Ministries (or the appropriate churchwide unit), the Office of the Presiding Bishop, the Office of the Treasurer, and the

Conference of Bishops bring a report related to starting and renewing congregations to the April 2007 meeting of the ELCA Church Council, with a report to the 2007 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Category B3: Caring for Creation

Reference: 2005 Pre-Assembly Report, page 21.

1. Metropolitan New York Synod (7C) [2004 Memorial]

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in assembly commend “Caring for Creation” to our congregations for prayerful review, study, and action (See www.elca.org/dcs/epr/environment/envindex.html); and be it further

RESOLVED, that this synod memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to offer increased attention and support to both churchwide and synodical programs and ministries for environmental education and advocacy so that this church might more faithfully carry out the vision, hope, and justice goals of the 1993 statement.

BACKGROUND

Since the adoption of the ELCA Social Statement “Caring for Creation: Hope, Vision, and Justice” in 1993, the ELCA has been a leading voice within the religious community and throughout society regarding the need for a just, responsible, and faithful relationship to God’s gracious gift of creation.

Based in the Division for Church in Society, the ELCA’s program on Environmental Education and Advocacy provides educational resources to individuals, congregations, and synods. It also seeks to link together concerned individuals and congregations and to provide opportunities for them to manifest their commitment to earthkeeping in a variety of ways, including public policy advocacy. Key elements of this program include:

- networking through regular communication with an on-line community interested in creation care and through e-advocacy;
- speaking engagements at churches, Global Mission Events, ELCA gatherings, and other public fora;
- provision of resource materials and information;
- distribution of a semi-monthly newsletter; and
- focused advocacy on public policy.

The ELCA sponsored a 10th anniversary convocation in November 2003 that celebrated the adoption of the “Caring for Creation” social statement. The gathering of nearly 100 people provided an opportunity to look thoughtfully ahead to the future of creation care work and earthkeeping among individuals, congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization.

The ELCA’s environmental education and advocacy program has continued to work diligently to promote awareness of the social statement, increase access to educational resources, network with active and concerned congregations, and provide opportunities for engagement.

Highlights include:

- Nearly 2000 copies of the “Congregation Environmental Audit Guides” have been distributed for use in synods and congregations; numerous others have been downloaded and distributed electronically.
- The North/West Lower Michigan Synod has developed a pilot program for earthkeeping education and has called a diaconal minister to direct the efforts.
- Working together with the churchwide organization, the Lutheran Coalition for Public Policy in Minnesota has created a strong environmental focus in their program, including adding a staff person, one-half of whose time is dedicated to environmental issues.
- The ELCA continues to play a leadership role within the National Council of Churches Eco-Justice Working Group and regularly contributes to the development of program and materials for such things as Earth Day, the semi-annual ecumenical gathering, and regional events.
- The program has played a significant role in two pilot projects involving five congregations in Racine, Wisconsin, and Chicago, Illinois, working on a three-year project to make creation care part of their core identity.
- The program regularly works with, consults, and supports the work of the state public policy offices, the office of corporate social responsibility, the Lutheran Office for World Community, the rural ministry desk, the Commission for Multicultural Ministries, and many others throughout the ELCA community.

Cost Analysis

The Division for Church in Society currently has one full-time staff person with time dedicated solely to environmental education and advocacy. Within the context of flat or decreasing budget projections for 2006, the implications of increasing this work would mean the reduction of staff and work in another area. There are, however, a variety of opportunities that are being pursued to expand and strengthen the work through asset-based collaboration with other units, networking with synods, and the increased use of e-advocacy.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

EN BLOC

CA05.07.39b

To express gratitude to the Metropolitan New York Synod for its memorial commending the ELCA social statement, “Caring for Creation: Hope, Vision, and Justice”;

To encourage congregations, synods, and public policy coalitions to renew their study of this social statement, to communicate with each other, and to advocate with their local and state governments individually and corporately through local and state councils of churches; and

To refer the memorial to the Division for Church in Society (or the appropriate churchwide unit) for its consideration and implementation within the guidelines of “Faithful Yet

Changing,” the Plan for Mission in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and within human and financial constraints related to this church’s ongoing work with environmental education and advocacy.

Category B6: ELCA Engagement in the Holy Land

Reference: 2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section VI, pages 30–33.

1. Oregon Synod (1E) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the state of Israel continues to build and extend a separation wall on Palestinian territory, and tensions between Israel and Palestine continue to explode into frequent acts of violence in both the state of Israel and the Palestinian territories; and

WHEREAS, our Lutheran companions in the Holy Land have issued an urgent request for support and assistance because the separation wall on Palestinian territory creates a real threat to the very continuation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land; and

WHEREAS, the separation wall isolates many Palestinians from their usual sources of education, health, social, commercial, and religious services and undermines the possibility of a secure Palestine, which is necessary for a lasting two-state solution with a secure Israel; and

WHEREAS, the separation wall reduces access to the Lutheran World Federation’s Augusta Victoria Hospital, which serves as the primary hospital providing necessary emergency and long-term health care to many Palestinians; and

WHEREAS, the board of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America’s Division for Global Mission has called on the Church Council and this church’s five million members to be “a bold and urgent voice” to the U.S. government, encouraging the government to exercise its “substantial influence on the state of Israel” to end construction and remove all existing sections of the separation wall; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that members, congregations, and the bishop of the Oregon Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, become active public voices of advocacy, calling for an end to the construction of the separation wall and calling for the removal of all existing sections of the separation wall; and be it further

RESOLVED, that, by passage of this resolution, the Oregon Synod memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in support of all actions by this church that call for the U.S. government to exercise its influence on the state of Israel to end the construction of the separation wall and to remove all existing sections of the separation wall in Israel and Palestinian territories.

2. Southeast Michigan Synod (6A) [2005 Memorial]

RESOLVED, that the Southeast Michigan Synod Assembly memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America would engage in the following actions:

1. Accept that we are all in part responsible for the conflict in the Holy Land through things we have done and left undone;
2. support the ELCA Middle East Strategy;
3. develop a curriculum for congregational study which makes known the plight of Lutheran Christians in the Holy Land;
4. understand and define the difference between Judaism and secular Zionist nationalism;
5. promote grass roots advocacy efforts within the congregations of this church body;
6. counteract the beliefs of erroneous rapture theology and condemn it as heresy; and
7. understand how our tax and investment dollars help or hinder the conflict in the Holy Land and respond accordingly and faithfully.

3. Metropolitan New York Synod (7C) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, new possibilities for achieving a lasting peace between Israel and Palestine seem to have emerged in the wake of the January 2005 Palestinian elections; and

WHEREAS, the fragile hope for peace will be strengthened by both parties ending violence against civilians and communities and avoiding actions that will make more difficult the peace-making task; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to commend the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land for its strong condemnation of all forms of violence and urge the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land to continue its strong witness for peace; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to call upon the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land and all people of good will in Israel and Palestine to denounce all organizations that use violence as a means of resolving the Palestinian-Israeli impasse.

4. Metropolitan New York Synod (7C) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, new possibilities for achieving a lasting peace between Israel and Palestine seem to have emerged in the wake of the January 2005 Palestinian elections; and

WHEREAS, the fragile hope for peace will be strengthened by both parties ending violence against civilians and communities and avoiding actions that will make more difficult the peace-making task; and

WHEREAS, the Israeli government is continuing to build its separation wall deep within the occupied Palestinian territories around settlements east of Jerusalem and through Bethlehem and Beit Jala; and

WHEREAS, the continued construction of the separation wall on this path requires the confiscation of Palestinian land, isolates Palestinians from nearby Jerusalem, and separates many Palestinians from their usual sources of educational, health, social, commercial, and religious services; and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land has shared with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America the extreme urgency of this situation and its belief that the extension of the wall currently under way threatens the very continuation of that church and its ministries; and

WHEREAS, the separation wall in these areas, scheduled to be completed within 2005, undermines the possibility of a viable, contiguous, secure Palestine, which is a necessary part of a lasting two-state solution with a secure Israel; and

WHEREAS, the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, amplifying the call of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land and the Lutheran World Federation companions in the region, voted in April 2004, among other things, to:

- Join with the Lutheran World Federation and the World Council of Churches in calling for an end to the wall's construction; and
- Urge synods, in addition to highlighting these concerns at their synod assemblies, to find ways through prayer, through learning opportunities, through action, and through giving to support people in crisis in Palestine and respond to Bishop Younan's request for advocacy ("No More Walls"), making use of resources available through the divisions for Global Mission and Church in Society;

therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod acknowledge the urgent call of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land and memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to:

- Use all available means to make its members, congregations, and synods aware of:

1. The immediate threat to the future of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land and other churches in the region posed by the separation wall; and
 2. The threat to future hopes for peace resulting from the building of the wall on Palestinian land;
- Boldly and urgently call on the U.S. government to use its substantial influence on the state of Israel to achieve immediate cessation of construction of the separation wall; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to:

- Call for the immediate cessation of construction of the Israeli separation wall and removal of all existing sections of the wall on Palestinian land;
- Request the Division for Church in Society (or the appropriate churchwide unit) to intensify its advocacy relating to this critical situation, in accord with the proposed “Churchwide Strategy for ELCA Engagement in Israel and Palestine,” underscoring the U.S. tax dollars that are channeled to Israel for foreign and military assistance;
- Call upon synods to share the urgent call of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land with all voting members at their synod assemblies and take appropriate action, even as this matter will be brought to the 2005 Churchwide Assembly if the construction of the wall continues;
- Call upon all members, congregations, synods, and related agencies and institutions to respond to the request of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America’s companion church in the Holy Land for bold advocacy that calls for construction of the separation wall to cease; and
- Call upon appropriate churchwide staff to prepare information for synod assemblies, which will assist them to address this urgent situation.

5. Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod (8G) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has approved a “Churchwide Strategy for ELCA Engagement in Israel and Palestine” (www.elca.org/middleeast); and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is committed to “serve in response to God’s love to meet human needs, advocating dignity and justice for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations . . .” (ELCA constitution 4.01. and 4.02.c.); and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Lutheran World Federation have extensive and historic relations with partners in both Israel and Palestine and operate the Augusta Victoria Hospital on the Mount of Olives and other humanitarian and religious institutions that are vulnerable due to current tensions in the Middle East; and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land is pleading for the help of United States Lutherans in the establishment of peace, justice, and reconciliation among Israelis and Palestinians (April 2005 letter, “A Call from Jerusalem to the World”); and

WHEREAS, the consultative panel of Lutheran-Jewish Relations of the Department for Ecumenical Affairs of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America advocates a “positive course of investment in grass-roots organizations in both Israel and Palestine that are striving to reach across the dividing lines and work towards peace, justice, and reconciliation” [April 12, 2005, letter from the Rev. Franklin E. Sherman, Associate for Interfaith Relations, Department for Ecumenical Affairs; cf. www.elca.org/ea]; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod in assembly commend the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for its “Churchwide Strategy for ELCA Engagement in Israel and Palestine,” with its call for awareness-building, accompaniment, and advocacy, and endorse the strategy as a guide for individual and congregational study and action; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to adopt the “Churchwide Strategy for ELCA Engagement in Israel and Palestine”; and be it further

RESOLVED, that members and congregations of this synod be encouraged to register with the ELCA e-Advocacy Network (www.elca/advocacy) so that they may respond to timely action alerts related to the strategy.

6. Virginia Synod (9A) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the board of the Division for Global Mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America affirmed a strategy for this church’s engagement in Israel and Palestine and acknowledged an “urgent” call from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land for action regarding the construction of an Israeli separation wall in the occupied Palestinian territories; and

WHEREAS, the board called on the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to “use all available means” to make this church’s nearly 5,000,000 members aware of the “immediate threat” to the future of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land and hope for peace in the Middle East posed by the construction of an Israeli separation wall on Palestinian land; and

WHEREAS, according to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land, the extension of the wall “threatens the very continuation of the church and its ministries.” Scheduled to be completed this year, the wall separates many Palestinians from their usual sources of education, health, social, commercial, and religious services and undermines the possibility of a secure Palestine, which is necessary for a lasting “two-state solution” with a secure Israel; and

WHEREAS, the board affirmed the “Churchwide Strategy for ELCA Engagement in Israel and Palestine” and recommended that the council affirm and convey the plan to the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America with a resolution to call on “. . . all expressions of the ELCA to participate in the emerging campaign for peace with justice in Israel and Palestine”; and

WHEREAS, President George W. Bush stated, “Israel should freeze settlement construction, dismantle unauthorized outposts, end the daily humiliation of the Palestinian people, and not prejudice final negotiations with the placements of walls and fences” [November 19, 2003]; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the 2005 Virginia Synod Assembly call on its congregations and members to work with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and national, state, and local government representatives to express concerns and request actions to all parties involved to (1) cease immediately the building of the separation wall, (2) dismantle all parts of the separation wall and its related zones already built, (3) return lands confiscated for the path of the separation wall, and (4) provide compensation of damages and lost income due to the destruction of land and property in addition to the restitution of land; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Virginia Synod Assembly convey its strong endorsement of and support for the “Churchwide Strategy for ELCA Engagement in Israel and Palestine” and its solidarity with the mission and ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land and the Lutheran World Federation to the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

7. Caribbean Synod (9F) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, Israel has illegally occupied the West Bank and Gaza since 1967 and set up colonies and settlements, which now house nearly 420,000 Jews on Palestinian land; and

WHEREAS, these colonies and settlements violate scores of United Nations resolutions, along with the fourth Geneva Convention; and

WHEREAS, the policies and the procedures of the Israeli government over the past 57 years of occupation have rendered nearly two-thirds of native Palestinians as refugees or displaced people; and

WHEREAS, the ongoing erection of a cement wall on confiscated Palestinian land to serve as a barrier and border between Israel and Palestine continues to reify the illegal occupation and confiscation of Palestinian lands; and

WHEREAS, our sisters and brothers in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land under Bishop Munib Younan are crying out for our support and solidarity in finding creative ways to resist the tyranny of the Israeli occupation against the Palestinian people; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the congregations and members of the Caribbean Synod call and memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to enact a divestment and reinvestment initiative like those of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Anglican Church, and the World Council of Churches with all of its financial transactions.

BACKGROUND

At its April 2005 meeting, the ELCA Church Council adopted a Churchwide Strategy for Engagement in Israel and Palestine. This strategy builds upon the long history of involvement of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and its predecessor bodies in the Holy Land. It also acknowledges that, at this time, there appears to be a window of opportunity in which a lasting peace may be crafted. This lends urgency to the ELCA work for peace with justice in the Holy Land. It also recognizes that the ELCA's companion church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL), has requested the advocacy and assistance of the ELCA and other churches of the Lutheran World Federation in dealing with the hardships to Palestinian communities caused by the continuing Israeli occupation and its construction of the separation wall on Palestinian land. The ELCJHL also has expressed its deep concern that these actions pose a serious threat to its future and the future of the "living church" in the Holy Land.

The memorials of the Southeast Michigan, Metropolitan New York, and Oregon Synods call on the 2005 Churchwide Assembly to affirm actions described in the Churchwide Strategy for Engagement in Israel and Palestine. This strategy was developed by the Division for Church in Society and the Division for Global Mission, with participation from other units, synods, and a wide variety of academics, experts in interfaith dialogue, advocates, and participants in grassroots networks. Background information is found in the *2005 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section IV, pages 75–78, and the Churchwide Strategy is found in Section V, pages 48–58. A summary of actions by the ELCA and its predecessor bodies is included in the strategy.

This strategy affirms the ELCA's commitment to accompany its companion church in the Holy Land in mission and calls for the development of a churchwide campaign, "Peace Not Walls," which encourages members, congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization to join in this effort. It calls for, among other things, "an end to terrorism and violence by individuals, organizations, and states" and states that the ELCA will express this commitment in its advocacy.

According to the strategy, one element of this advocacy will be to explore economic initiatives, including "promoting positive economic development in the region to help those most in need," "insisting that U.S. tax dollars for foreign aid be distributed to both Palestinians and Israelis with equity and on condition that aid be used for economic growth and humanitarian needs," "making consumer decisions that favor support to those in greatest need," and "managing collective or personal investments with concern for their impact on the lives of all Holy Land peoples who suffer from ongoing conflict."

The promotion of economic initiatives can be manifested in many forms. For example, shareholder actions, including dialogue with corporate management, filing of shareholder resolutions, outreach to other shareholders and investment advisors, and voting of proxies,

can be used to change corporate policies or practices. Other economic initiatives include boycotts of products and services to coerce or to express protest, divestment, social investing, and development of social screens. While all of these tools may be available to this church, certain actions such as divestment are not available to the Board of Pensions. The Board of Pensions has always taken the position that divestment, *per se*, of pension accumulations is an illegal violation of its fiduciary duties under both federal and Minnesota law.

As an alternative to divestment, the ELCA Retirement Plan provides eight investment fund options that are social purpose funds. These funds apply social screens in accordance with the values of this church and within the fiduciary responsibility the Board of Pensions bears for its plan members. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has no policy on the subject of divestment. While some other denominations have undertaken certain economic initiatives, it is the policy of the ELCA that this church does not comment on actions or matters that are internal to other church bodies.

The 2005 Churchwide Assembly will be considering a recommendation related to the Churchwide Strategy and the “Peace Not Walls” campaign (*2005 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section IV, pages 75-77, and Section V, pages 47-60), which deals with many of the concerns of the synods. However, the Metropolitan New York and Oregon Synods call on the ELCA Churchwide Assembly to take a separate action relating to the separation wall.

At its April 2004 and April 2005 meetings, the ELCA Church Council took action on this issue (CC05.04.19), upon recommendation of the Division for Global Mission and the Division for Church in Society:

To acknowledge the urgent call of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land for action regarding the continuing construction of the separation wall in Palestine;

To encourage members, congregations, and synods to become aware of the effects of the separation wall on the lives of Palestinians, including:

- a. the threat to future hopes for peace; and
- b. the threat to the ministries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land and other churches;

To call for the immediate cessation of construction of the Israeli separation wall and the removal of all existing portions of this wall on Palestinian land;

To request that the Division for Church in Society intensify its advocacy relating to this critical situation, in accord with the Churchwide Strategy for ELCA Engagement in Israel and Palestine;

To request that members of this church and synods meeting in assembly respond to the request of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America’s companion church in the Holy Land for bold advocacy that calls for construction of the separation wall to cease; and

To direct appropriate churchwide staff to provide information related to this issue for use by members, congregations, and synods.

At the time they conveyed this action to the council, the Division for Global Mission and the Division for Church in Society noted that ELCA Churchwide Assembly action on the separation wall might be desirable, should the Israeli government continue its construction of the wall. They suggested that, should this be the case, a resolution be crafted for consideration by the Churchwide Assembly, which would be conveyed to the assembly by the ELCA Church Council at its pre-assembly meeting. This approach will enable the Churchwide Assembly to act on the most current information in a rapidly changing situation.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

EN BLOC

CA05.07.39c To receive the memorials of the Oregon Synod; Southeast Michigan Synod; Metropolitan New York Synod; Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod; Virginia Synod; and Caribbean Synod and commend those synods for taking action that contributes to peace with justice in the Holy Land and that recognizes the accompaniment of this church with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL) and other churches in the region;

To acknowledge the information provided above, the action taken by the ELCA Church Council in adopting the Churchwide Strategy for Engagement in the Middle East, and action by the ELCA Churchwide Assembly relating to the “Peace Not Walls” campaign as the response of the 2005 Churchwide Assembly to these memorials.

Category B7: Opposition to War

Reference: 2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section VI, pages 34–35.

1. Caribbean Synod (9F) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, peace is not an option for Christians, but a mandate for us to work and overcome; and

WHEREAS, peace and pacifism have been understood as a peace with a sword, peace without justice, and militarized peace; and

WHEREAS, today we are at war in Iraq and Afghanistan, where many people are dying, including children, youth, and the elderly; and

WHEREAS, one of the arguments used to justify the unjustifiable (war) is that through it peace can be obtained for the world; and

WHEREAS, the anti-war is proposed as the free determination or no intervention in a country; and

WHEREAS, war is one of the maladies and most perverse sins of our times, and it is a disobedience to the Christian imperative in the Decalogue, “You shall not kill”; and

WHEREAS, not to denounce war makes us accomplices of the *status quo*; and

WHEREAS, Oscar Arnulfo Romero, Archbishop of El Salvador, speaking about the true peace said: “Peace is not the product of fear, peace is not the silence of cemeteries, peace is not the product of violence and repression. True peace can only be accomplished through justice with fair and equitable sharing of all goods . . .”; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Caribbean Synod Assembly memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to request that the government of the U.S.A. and its allies end all military actions in Iraq and Afghanistan; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the 2005 Churchwide Assembly make a request to governments around the world to put an end to war.

BACKGROUND

In 1995 the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America adopted a social statement, “For Peace in God’s World.” This statement discusses the biblical basis for seeking peace and the church as a community of peace. It also calls on members of the ELCA to be active for peace in their role as citizens and to deliberate on decisions of war and peace.

In making decisions about war, the statement notes that “. . . we face conflicting moral claims and agonizing dilemmas” (p. 11). It does not rule out the use of military force but states, “We begin with a strong presumption against all war; support for and participation in a war to restore peace is a tragic concession to a sinful world. Any decision for war must be a mournful one” (p. 11).

The social statement calls on the ELCA to “seek guidance from the principles of the ‘just/unjust war’ tradition” (p. 11). Later, it says that “[a]nother voice with deep historical roots in the Christian tradition also speaks in our church,” namely, “. . . members who in the name of Jesus Christ refuse all participation in war, who commit themselves to establish peace and justice on earth by nonviolent power alone, and who may suffer and die in their discipleship” (p. 12).

In sum, the “statement focuses on building a just peace and identifies tasks that create conditions for peace” (p. 11).

In several statements starting in August 2002, Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson has brought forward these principles and related questions for discussion in the Church and the public arena prior to and since the U.S. decision to engage in military action in Iraq.

He opposed efforts by the “United States to seek to overthrow the regime of Saddam Hussein with military action” because it would have “great consequences for the people of Iraq.” In questioning “the legitimacy of unilateral use of military force to control weapons of mass destruction, [he] welcome[d] the unanimous vote in the U.N. Security Council on Nov. 8 [2002] and the efforts of President Bush to seek an international consensus on steps to ensure Iraqi disarmament.” He also expressed hope that Iraq would comply with the United Nations’ resolution.

Once military hostilities began, the Presiding Bishop noted that members of the “Evangelical Lutheran Church in America share with all Christians the call to be peacemakers.” He affirmed that moral deliberation needs to continue in the midst of war, in particular about “questions of how to use our power and wealth responsibly to disarm Iraq, to alleviate human suffering in the region, and to exercise leadership within the international community.” In that context, he said the ELCA “affirm[s] that governments should vigorously pursue less coercive measures over more coercive ones: consent over compulsion, nonviolence over violence, diplomacy over military engagement, and deterrence over war.”

The situation in late June 2005 is that the governments of Iraq and Afghanistan are seeking to establish peaceful and stable societies in their countries. The social statement, “For Peace in God’s World”—in discussing the “agonizing dilemmas” previously referenced, but not ruling out the use of force—states, “While we support the use of nonviolent measures, there may be no other way to offer protection in some circumstances than by restraining forcibly those harming the innocent” (p. 11). The statement also says, “. . . we affirm that governments may legitimately employ such measures as law and its enforcement, police protection, provisions for the common defense, and resistance to aggression” (p. 10).

Concerning the second RESOLVED, the same social statement discusses the need for governments to seek alternatives to war. Since the start of the war in Iraq, ELCA advocacy ministries such as the Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs (LOGA) and the Lutheran Office for World Community (LOWC) have not advocated with governmental bodies for an end to the war because there has been no basis in ELCA policy or direction from the ELCA Church Council to do so.

The Division for Church in Society through its on-line *Journal of Lutheran Ethics* (www.elca.org/jle) has dealt as recently as June 2005 with the subject of the war in Iraq and,

in an article entitled, “Just Peace and Just Peacemaking,” encouraged moral deliberation in the Church around these issues.

An ELCA Interunit Team for the Decade for a Culture of Peace and Nonviolence has taken steps to create and strengthen a network of advocates for peace. On April 1–3, 2005, this team sponsored an “Equipping for Peacemaking” event in Chicago, which was attended by 60 leaders from throughout the United States. The focus was to nurture and strengthen peacemakers’ abilities to share skills and stories about peacemaking so that they can better equip ELCA members to contribute to justice and nonviolence.

In addition, Lutheran Peace Fellowship, an independent Lutheran organization, has developed resources to encourage members of this church to advocate for peace in Iraq (http://members.tripod.com/~lutheran_peace/iraq_res2003.html).

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

EN BLOC

CA05.07.39d To express appreciation to the Caribbean Synod for reminding the Churchwide Assembly of the calling of Christians to seek peace;

To urge members, congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization to call upon the government of the United States of America and its allies to work with the governments of Iraq and Afghanistan to take immediate and comprehensive steps to end the violence and establish peaceful, stable, and just societies in these countries;

To commend the ongoing work of this church, in all its expressions, to engage world governments regarding peace, as the response of the Churchwide Assembly to the Caribbean Synod; and

To reaffirm the ELCA social statement, “For Peace in God’s World,” which addresses the matter of seeking alternatives to war and the need for governments to “pursue less coercive measures over more coercive ones: consent over compulsion, nonviolence over violence, diplomacy over military engagement, and deterrence over war” (p. 10).

Category D1: Interim Ministry Pensions

Reference: 2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section VI, page 38.

1. Minneapolis Area Synod (3G) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the Minneapolis Area Synod has been faithfully served by interim pastors, who play a strategic role in pastoral transitions in synod congregations; and

WHEREAS, the Minneapolis Area Synod in 2002 created an Interim Ministry Advisory Team, composed of interim pastors elected by their colleagues and an equal number of appointees by the bishop, to advise the bishop on matters related to interim ministry; and

WHEREAS, the Minneapolis Area Synod Council may issue a call to an interim pastor when she or he begins to serve a second interim appointment and may also, on the recommendation of the

bishop, in consultation with the Interim Ministry Advisory Team, identify a pool of pastors especially qualified for and committed to interim ministry; and

WHEREAS, an interim pastor who has been called by the Minneapolis Area Synod Council but is between appointments is required, though without income, to pay her or his own pension and insurance benefits or switch to coverage on spouses' health plans; and

WHEREAS, the Interim Ministry Advisory Team could advise the bishop and the Minneapolis Area Synod Council regarding the status of interim pastors not currently serving interim appointments, both pastors recognized for this purpose by the Minneapolis Area Synod Council and others; and

WHEREAS, fifteen of the interim pastors rostered in the Minneapolis Area Synod agreed unanimously to support this resolution at their regular gathering on May 8, 2004, (even though the number of interim pastors who will benefit directly from this resolution will be smaller); therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Minneapolis Area Synod in assembly memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to ask the appropriate unit to develop a comprehensive policy for the practice of interim ministry, including the nature of call for interim pastors, the status of interim pastors *vis à vis* the clergy roster, and the status of recognized interim pastors between appointments; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Minneapolis Area Synod in assembly memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly to request the ELCA Board of Pensions to develop a specific procedure for sustaining pension and benefits for recognized interim pastors between appointments.

BACKGROUND

The document "Guidelines Related to Interim Pastoral Ministry" was adopted by the Church Council as policy of the ELCA in November 1996. These guidelines address the concerns identified in the memorial of the Minneapolis Area Synod related to the "practice of interim ministry." This policy allows for either the appointment of an ordained minister to provide pastoral care on an interim basis or the call of an ordained minister to provide such pastoral care and ministry. A call to interim ministry is from a Synod Council. It may either be a term call to a specific congregation or a term call to interim ministry in the synod. Such calls may be issued for a one- to three-year term of service, with an annual review by the Synod Council or its designated committee. The policy states that "in issuing a call to interim ministry, the synod assumes no responsibility for guaranteeing continuous employment, compensation, or benefits for the pastor under call" (ELCA churchwide constitutional provision 7.43.).

While some synods issue term calls to interim ministry with appointments to specific congregations, other synods only issue a term call to a specific congregation, thus causing an ordained minister to be on-leave-from-call between appointments to congregations. Subsequently, interim pastors may experience a gap in benefit coverage, including disability, during the times between term calls.

An interim pastor who is between calls may extend ELCA health coverage for up to three years, although the cost may be prohibitive for some. Such persons, however, are not permitted to extend ELCA disability coverage or continue pension contributions.

The ELCA Board of Pensions and Division for Ministry are conscious of the potential financial impact upon those who serve in interim ministry and will continue to seek to provide appropriate means to address this reality. If a report, as envisioned by this memorial, would recommend revisions to the policy document "Guidelines Related to Interim Pastoral Ministry," these would need to be reviewed by the Conference of Bishops before the Division for Ministry (or the appropriate churchwide unit) could refer the changes to the Church Council for approval according to continuing resolution 16.11.B03.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

EN BLOC

CA05.07.39e

To thank the Minneapolis Area Synod for its memorial on interim ministry;

To refer the memorial to the Division for Ministry (or the appropriate churchwide unit), and request a review, in consultation with the Board of Pensions, of the “Guidelines Related to Interim Pastoral Ministry” for possible revision;

To refer the memorial to the ELCA Board of Pensions in consultation with the Division for Ministry (or the appropriate churchwide unit) for consideration as they continue to address the insurance (including disability) and pension provisions related to ordained ministers who serve as interim pastors under synodical call; and

To request that a report and possible recommendations be brought to the March 2006 meeting of the Conference of Bishops and the April 2006 meeting of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Category E2: Evangelism Strategy

Reference: 2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section VI, pages 42–43.

1. Northeastern Ohio Synod (6E) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, our Lord Jesus gave his followers a clear mandate to “Go and make disciples” (Matthew 28:19–20); and

WHEREAS, our Lord Jesus told his followers that they would be his “witnesses” (Acts 1:8); and

WHEREAS, the Statement of Purpose in the Constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (Chapter 4) declares that this church is “sent to bear witness to God’s creative, redeeming, and sanctifying activity in the world” and provides the following guidelines as fulfillment of the statement:

4.02. To participate in God’s mission, this church shall:

- a. Proclaim God’s saving Gospel of justification by grace for Christ’s sake through faith alone
- b. Carry out Christ’s Great Commission by reaching out to all people to bring them to faith in Christ
- e. Nurture its members in the Word of God so as to grow in faith and hope and love, and to see daily life as the primary setting for the exercise of their Christian calling . . . ; and

WHEREAS, the Church is defined as the “. . . assembly of believers among whom the Gospel is preached in its purity and the holy sacraments are administered . . .” (*The Augsburg Confession*, Article VII); and

WHEREAS, North America is the third largest mission field in the world with over 62,000,000 people who are unaffiliated Christians or nonreligious; and

WHEREAS, it is the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America’s continuing intention to renew its commitment to be faithful witnesses and to be an evangelical people who proclaim the good news of God in Jesus Christ, reach out to invite all people into faith in Christ, and deepen the faith and discipleship of its members and those new to this church; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Northeastern Ohio Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly to renew its commitment and focus

on the evangelism strategy, “Sharing Faith in a New Century: A Vision for Evangelism in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America”; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Northeastern Ohio Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly to adjust this church’s budget to make the evangelism strategy a reality; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Northeastern Ohio Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly to take the following actions:

- a. Restructure the churchwide offices for a strong evangelism presence, whose purpose will include developing mentoring networks to enable Evangelical Lutheran Church in America congregations, agencies, and institutions to become more intentional about the ways in which they share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with others.
- b. Recruit and equip regionally distributed evangelism leaders who have a passion for evangelism and the ability to communicate that passion clearly to mentor with synods and congregations in their geographic areas.
- c. Create an organizational culture and identity that will facilitate the flow of evangelistic efforts through the various divisions, departments, and expressions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

BACKGROUND

“Faithful Yet Changing,” the Plan for Mission in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, was adopted by the Church Council in April 2003 and acknowledged with gratitude by the 2003 Churchwide Assembly. This plan contains five strategic directions for the churchwide organization for the period 2004–2012, two of which specifically relate to evangelical witness and discipleship. They are: “Support congregations in their call to be faithful, welcoming, and generous, sharing the mind of Christ” and “Assist members, congregations, synods, and institutions and agencies of this church to grow in evangelical outreach.” The plan also contains four commitments for implementation, including this one pertinent to the topic of evangelism: “Pursue ardently the ELCA’s commitment to becoming more diverse, multicultural, and multi-generational in an ever-changing and increasingly pluralistic context, with special focus on the full inclusion in this church of youth, young adults, and people of color and people whose primary language is other than English.”

The churchwide organization has taken several steps to implement these two strategic directions and the commitment for implementation.

Outcomes for the churchwide organization’s ministries, beginning with the 2006-2007 biennium, focus on leadership development, one of the four essential objectives of the evangelism strategy adopted by the 2003 Churchwide Assembly. The outcomes for the two strategic directions named above are that current and future leaders throughout this church will:

- Articulate the connection between Word and Sacrament, vocation, and God’s mission in the world;
- Stimulate a vibrant worship life that draws on Lutheran and ecumenical, including ethnic and global, resources;
- Grow in their capacity to be evangelical witnesses and servants;
- Grow in their capacity to lead communities of evangelical witness and service; and
- Be equipped to build and support diverse and inclusive communities of faith.

In April 2005 the Church Council approved a designated fund of \$2,587,000 for support of the leadership development dimensions of the evangelism strategy and five ethnic-specific ministry strategies. In addition to the fund described above, the council also designated \$500,000 for new congregation development and renewal of existing congregations. The Rev. M. Wyvetta Bullock was appointed executive for leadership development in the Office of the Presiding Bishop and will convene a team of churchwide staff and representatives of the Conference of Bishops to administer \$2,050,000 of the designated fund. She will serve as advocate, ambassador, and leader for these strategies across this church.

The proposal for restructuring the churchwide organization includes the creation of a program unit titled Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission. Excerpts from the restructuring proposal approved by the Church Council describe this unit:

1. This unit brings together ELCA churchwide ministries that support congregations in their call to be faithful, welcoming, and generous. It assists congregations, synods, and institutions and agencies of this church to grow in evangelical outreach. Among its responsibilities are support of discipleship and lifelong learning, increasing awareness about the centrality of prayer, starting and renewing congregations, and the implementation of the ELCA evangelism strategy and pertinent portions of all ethnic-specific strategies.
2. Existing programs to be included in this new program unit are: evangelism, Christian education, stewardship education, multilingual and culture-specific programs, Lutheran Men in Mission, outreach research and planning, new congregations, renewal of congregations, pertinent portions of the ethnic-specific ministry strategies, rural ministry, urban ministry, and specialized outreach ministries (e.g., maritime, prisons, deaf).
3. This work is currently located in the Division for Congregational Ministries, Commission for Multicultural Ministries, and the Division for Outreach. The churchwide organization intends to assist this church to become passionate about evangelizing and to reflect the cultural and ethnic diversity of its communities.

Cost Analysis

As indicated above, new designated funds approved by the Church Council in April 2005 that are directly related to the memorial total \$3,087,000. A number of existing designated and restricted funds also support ministries pertinent to the memorial.

The 2006–2007 budget proposal allocates \$20,425,000 to the Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission program unit, of which approximately \$18,000,000 supports the four objectives of the evangelism strategy.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

EN BLOC

CA05.07.39f

To affirm in principle the memorial of the Northeastern Ohio Synod regarding evangelism;

To acknowledge the actions of the 2005 Churchwide Assembly on the 2006–2007 budget proposal and the constitutional and bylaw amendments related to restructuring as the response of the assembly to the memorial, noting that the

continuing resolution adopted by the Church Council to constitute the Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission program unit would be implemented upon favorable action on the restructuring proposal.

Category E6: Term Limits for ELCA Officers

Reference: 2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section VI, page 49.

1. Northeastern Minnesota Synod (3E) [2004 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America limits Church Council members to a single six-year term of office and prohibits consecutive reelection of Church Council members; and

WHEREAS, many synod constitutions limit terms of office of their elected and representative officials; and

WHEREAS, modest term limitations promote continuity in leadership while providing an opportunity for diversity, new ideas, and responsiveness to change to develop and grow; and

WHEREAS, no term limitations are presently applicable to any of the elected officers of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that this synod supports term limitations for the offices of presiding bishop, vice president, secretary, and treasurer, with each officer to serve no more than two consecutive six-year terms; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this synod assembly calls on the Churchwide Assembly to pass the appropriate constitutional amendments creating such term limits.

BACKGROUND

The pattern for limitation of terms for synodical officers varies. Although most synods do not have a limitation on terms for the synodical bishop, about a score do so. Some additional synods limit terms for the synodical vice president, secretary, and treasurer.

When the churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America was established, the pattern of the merging churches was followed for churchwide officers. Therefore, no limit was placed on the number of terms. The rationale employed by the Commission for a New Lutheran Church (CNLC) was that the Churchwide Assembly should have the freedom to make decisions on the election or reelection of officers.

The 2003 ELCA Churchwide Assembly considered an identical memorial from the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin and voted (CA03.06.53):

To decline to initiate amendments of the governing documents related to the terms of the churchwide officers; and

To refer the memorial of the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin to the Church Council in connection with the Church Council's ongoing review of the churchwide organization.

The action of the Churchwide Assembly was referred to the November 2003 meeting of the Church Council and was considered as part of its ongoing consideration of changes in governance. No changes regarding term limits for churchwide officers were recommended.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

EN BLOC

CA05.07.39g To decline to initiate amendments of the governing documents related to the terms of the churchwide officers; and

**To refer the memorial of the Northeastern Minnesota
Synod to the Church Council in connection with the Church
Council's ongoing review of the churchwide organization.**

Category E8: Addressing Sexual Misconduct

Reference: *2005 Pre-Assembly Report*, pages 56–57.

1. Delaware-Maryland Synod (8F) [2004 Memorial]

WHEREAS, a recent Texas criminal court decision involving a former pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has resulted in his conviction on 14 counts of sexual assault against children and for possession of child pornography, which occurred while he was pastor of an Evangelical Lutheran Church in America congregation in Marshall, Texas, and his subsequent sentence to serve a five-year term on federal counts and a 397-year term in state prison; and

WHEREAS, elected officials and other leaders of this church approved for ordination this person of questionable moral behavior, and the bishop's office of the Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod encouraged a congregation of this church to call him without informing the call committee of previous criminal accusations; and

WHEREAS, this tragic betrayal of trust can have a profound and devastating impact upon the very ministry of this church and its efforts to spread the Gospel in a world that is already skeptical of this church's mission and its intent; and

WHEREAS, the settlement of civil lawsuits in this case will, as reported in news releases, cost the insurers of this church many millions of dollars; and

WHEREAS, the sexual abuse of children perpetrated by rostered leaders in the church deeply wounds the innocent essence of the child, and it also tears at the very heart and soul of the entire body of Christ; and

WHEREAS, these and other such crimes may not have happened if the standards of "Vision and Expectations: Ordained Ministers in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America" had been upheld; and

WHEREAS, further inaction will continue to leave people without protection and may result in future outrageous behaviors that will shame the Church of Christ and expose this church to more lawsuits and possible criminal prosecution; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Delaware-Maryland Synod memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to uphold "Vision and Expectations" as the enforceable and enforced policy concerning the doctrinal and behavioral standards of all rostered persons in this church; and be it further

RESOLVED, that "Vision and Expectations" be adhered to in every expression of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and be it further

RESOLVED, that all candidates be fingerprinted and receive a national criminal background check and any results be passed on to the candidacy and call committees; and be it further

RESOLVED, that in every expression of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America a child protection policy be developed and implemented to protect children and youth from abuse of any kind.

BACKGROUND

The WHEREAS sections of this memorial contain several inaccurate statements regarding a case of sexual misconduct of an ELCA ordained minister. The most egregious of these are the assertions that members of the synodical candidacy committee, elected officials, and other leaders of this church knew of criminal accusations against this individual even while recommending him for ordination and the subsequent congregation call process, and the assertion that "Vision and Expectations" is not uniformly applied throughout this church.

The document “Vision and Expectations: Ordained Ministers in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America” is a document that states both the vision for ordained ministry in the life of the ELCA and the “high expectations its members have of those who serve in this ministry.” As the ELCA Candidacy Manual states, “All ordained ministers must be able to state a clear intention to live and conduct themselves in a manner consistent with these expectations.” A similar expectation applies to those who serve in a rostered lay ministry.

The candidacy process for every individual seeking to serve in the rostered ministry of the ELCA begins with an entrance decision by the candidacy committee. The decision by a committee is based, in part, on the candidate’s stated intention to “live in accord with ‘Vision and Expectations,’ and candidate screening reports that include a psychological evaluation and, beginning in 2005, a required background check. The psychological evaluation includes the use of the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI-2).

The entrance interview, conducted by members of the synod candidacy committee who have received interview training, includes the following questions:

“Are you familiar with the document ‘Vision and Expectations?’ Do you intend to live in accord with its standards of conduct as a candidate and as a rostered leader in the ELCA? If no, please explain in detail.

“Do you now engage or have you ever engaged in any addictive behavior, including drug or alcohol abuse or sexual or pornographic addictions? If so, please explain in detail and describe any treatment or therapy for addictive behavior.

“Have you ever engaged in, been accused of, sued, or charged with sexual molestation, sexual harassment, child abuse, spousal neglect or abuse, or financial improprieties? If yes, please explain in detail.

“Do you have any sexual attraction toward children or minors, or any history of sexually deviant behavior, including behavior with children or minors?”

Furthermore, it is important to remember that the document “Vision and Expectations: Ordained Ministers in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America” (2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section V, pp. 29–33) was adopted by the ELCA Church Council in 1990 “as a statement of this church.” It is a document that “seeks 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.” It is distinct from “Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline” (2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section V, pp. 39–41), which is a juridical document that describes grounds for which ordained ministers, rostered lay ministers, and congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America may be subject to the disciplinary process of this church.

If the proposed changes in the structure of the churchwide organization are affirmed, the proposed Vocation and Education program unit would have the responsibility to study this church’s attention to the protection of children from abuse. This may lead to the development of policy related to this issue, as well as resources to be made available to congregations and other expressions of this church.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

EN BLOC

CA05.07.39h To refer the memorial of the Delaware-Maryland Synod related to the expectations of ordained ministers to the Division for Ministry (or the appropriate churchwide unit) on the use of “Vision and Expectations: Ordained Ministers in the

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America” in the candidacy process of this church; and

To request that a report be brought to the April 2006 meeting of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Category E9: Resources for Pastoral Support of Same-Gender Relationships

Reference: 2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section VI, pages 58–59.

Five synods adopted essentially identical memorials on Resources for Pastoral Support of Same-Gender Relationships. The Model Memorial is printed here, with changes noted by synod.

Model Memorial

WHEREAS, the resolution known as “The Definition and Blessing of Committed Same-Gender Relationships” (CA01.06.28), which was adopted by the 2001 Churchwide Assembly, directed the Division for Ministry in consultation with the Division for Congregational Ministries and the Conference of Bishops to identify and make available materials and resources to assist and support pastors as they provide counseling and pastoral support for persons seeking same-gender blessings; and

WHEREAS, the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality believes that pastors and congregations can and should be trusted by this church to exercise the wisdom of discretion in their ministry to same-sex couples and their natural and congregational families; and

WHEREAS, this church has yet to begin the task of identifying and making available such resources; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the [Synod Name] memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to adopt the following: “The Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall direct the appropriate unit(s) of the church to identify and make available materials to assist and support pastors as they provide pastoral care and counseling for persons concerned with these issues (CA01.06.28).”

1. Oregon Synod (1E) [2005 Memorial]

Adopted the “model memorial” printed above, with the following changes:

- First WHEREAS replaces “which was” before the word “adopted”
- RESOLVED deletes “of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall” after “Church Council”

2. Minneapolis Area Synod (3G) [2005 Memorial]

Adopted the “model memorial” printed above, with the following changes:

- First WHEREAS inserts “of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America” after “Churchwide Assembly”
- Second WHEREAS inserts “the Report and Recommendations for” before “the Task Force”
- Second WHEREAS replaces “believes that” with “states that”
- Third WHEREAS replaces “begin the task of identifying and making” with “make”
- RESOLVED is replaced with:

“RESOLVED, that the Minneapolis Area Synod in Assembly memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly to adopt the following: “The Church Council of the Evangelical

Lutheran Church in America shall direct the appropriate unit(s) of the church to “identify and make available materials and resources to assist and support pastors as they provide counseling and pastoral support for persons in committed same-gender relationships” as called for in the resolution known as “The Definition and Blessing of Committed Same-Gender Relationships” (CA01.06.28).”

3. Saint Paul Area Synod (3H) [2005 Memorial]

Adopted the “model memorial” printed above, with the following changes:

- First WHEREAS is deleted
- Third WHEREAS is deleted
- RESOLVED deletes “to adopt the following: ‘The Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall’”
- RESOLVED inserts the word “churchwide” before the word “unit(s)” and deletes “of the church” after the word “unit(s)”
- RESOLVED replaces “concerned with these issues (CA01.06.28)” with “in committed same-gender relationships”

4. Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod (4F) [2005 Memorial]

Adopted the “model memorial” printed above, with the following changes:

- First WHEREAS deletes “which was” before the word “adopted”
- RESOLVED replaces “The” before “Church Council” with “That the”
- RESOLVED deletes “shall” before “direct”
- RESOLVED replaces “persons concerned with these issues (CA01.06.28).” with “same-gender-oriented persons.”

5. Southeastern Synod (9D) [2005 Memorial]

Adopted the “model memorial” printed above.

BACKGROUND

The action of the 2001 Churchwide Assembly (CA01.06.28) included the “request that the Division for Ministry, in consultation with the Division for Congregational Ministries and the Conference of Bishops, identify and make available materials to assist and support pastors as they provide pastoral care and counseling for persons concerned with these issues.” The memorial of the Oregon Synod inaccurately refers to the action of the 2001 Churchwide Assembly regarding a churchwide study on homosexuality as the “Definition and Blessing of Committed Same-Gender Relationships.”

Several memorials inaccurately state in the first WHEREAS that the 2001 Churchwide Assembly “directed the Division for Ministry, in consultation with the Division for Congregational Ministries and the Conference of Bishops, to identify and make available materials and resources to assist and support pastors as they provide counseling and pastoral support *for persons seeking same-gender blessings*” (emphasis added).

The 2001 assembly action to which reference is made in these memorials was forwarded to the Task Force for ELCA Studies on Sexuality with the request that it be included in its work. This was made clear in the task force director’s report to the April 2002 meeting of the ELCA Church Council. The final report and recommendations of the task force are printed in the *2005 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section V, pages 13–27.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

EN BLOC

CA05.07.39i To refer the memorials of the Oregon Synod, Minneapolis Area Synod, Saint Paul Area Synod, Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod, and the Southeastern Synod related to resources for the pastoral support of same-gender partnerships to the Division for Ministry (or the appropriate churchwide unit), in consultation with the Division for Congregational Ministries (or the appropriate churchwide unit) and the Conference of Bishops, to identify and make available materials to assist and support pastors as they provide pastoral care and counseling for persons in same-gender partnerships.

Category E10: Anti-Racism Work

Reference: 2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section VI, pages 60–62.

Thirteen synods adopted essentially identical memorials on anti-racism efforts by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The Model Memorial is printed here, with changes noted by synod.

Model Memorial

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in its constitutional Principles of Organization (5.01.b.) declared its commitment to be an inclusive church in the midst of division in society and throughout its governing documents named specific ways in which it would live out its commitment to cultural diversity; and

WHEREAS, the 1993 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, meeting in Kansas City, Missouri, adopted the social statement “Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity, and Culture,” which states that “the Church confesses Christ, who has broken down the dividing wall (Ephesians 2:14). Christ, our peace, has put an end to the hostility of race, ethnicity, gender, and economic class. The Church proclaims Christ, confident this good news sets at liberty those captive behind walls of hostility (cf. Luke 4:18)”; and

WHEREAS, the social statement declared that “racism—a mix of power, privilege, and prejudice—is sin, a violation of God’s intention for humanity. . . . Racism fractures and fragments both church and society”; and

WHEREAS, the social statement calls on promises to be kept, stating: “We expect our leadership to name the sin of racism and lead us in our repentance of it. . . . We expect our leadership to persevere in their challenge to us to be in mission and ministry in a multicultural society”; and

WHEREAS, this church has not lived in full compliance with its commitments by not examining the structural and cultural realities of racism at all levels, not requiring anti-racism education of its leaders, and not allocating adequate resources for staff and programs to address the sin of racism; and

WHEREAS, this failure is manifested in the continued lack of growth among communities of color, with the membership of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America remaining 97 percent White in a society that is 69.1 percent non-Hispanic White; and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America needs to allocate staff and program budget to implement the usage of the many anti-racism resources it has produced, including the recently published “Breaking the Bonds” and “Troubling the Waters for Healing of the Church: A Journey for White Christians from Privilege to Partnership,” and to train facilitators to lead anti-racism efforts at all levels of this church; and

WHEREAS, the restructuring of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America takes seriously the challenge for its leadership to name the sin of racism and lead efforts to challenge its effects by placing

the work of anti-racism within the Office of the Presiding Bishop but fails to provide full-time staff or funding for that work; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the [Synod Name] memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to declare its intention to live out its commitment to persevere against racism and White privilege and strive to be transformed by allocating resources for a full-time position, support staff, and program budget for the work of anti-racism and dismantling White privilege through education, action, and resource development within the Office of the Presiding Bishop and the Multicultural Ministries unit; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the anti-racism efforts of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America be monitored by the Multicultural Ministries unit and that a full report on the efforts against racism and toward transformation and growth be reported to each Churchwide Assembly.

1. Northwest Washington Synod (1B) [2005 Memorial]

Adopted the “model memorial” printed above, with the following changes:

- Deletes all eight WHEREAS paragraphs

2. Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod (1D) [2005 Memorial]

Adopted the “model memorial” printed above.

3. Montana Synod (1F) [2005 Memorial]

Adopted the “model memorial” printed above, with the following changes:

- First RESOLVED moves “within the Office of the Presiding Bishop and the Multicultural Ministries unit” from after “resource development” to after “program budget”

4. Southwest California Synod (2B) [2005 Memorial]

Adopted the “model memorial” printed above, with the following changes:

- Fifth WHEREAS replaces “commitments by not” with “commitments, in not”
- First RESOLVED replaces “full-time position, support staff, and program budget for the work of anti-racism and dismantling White privilege through education, action, and resource development within the Office of the Presiding Bishop and the Multicultural Ministries unit;” with “staffing and programming for the work of anti-racism education, action, and resource development;”
- Second RESOLVED replaces “Multicultural Ministries unit” with “appropriate unit of the churchwide organization”

5. South Dakota Synod (3C) [2005 Memorial]

Adopted the “model memorial” printed above, with the following changes:

- Deleted third, fifth, sixth, and seventh WHEREAS paragraphs
- Eighth WHEREAS replaces “the restructuring of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America takes seriously” with “the proposed changes to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America structure embrace”
- Eighth WHEREAS deletes “full-time staff or”
- First RESOLVED is replaced with:

“RESOLVED, that the South Dakota Synod memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to declare its intention to live out its commitment to work against racism; and be it further RESOLVED that the South Dakota Synod memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran

Church in America to direct the Church Council to allocate resources for a full-time program position within the Office of the Presiding Bishop and the Multicultural Ministries unit for education, action, and resource development toward the work of eliminating racism;”

- Second RESOLVED replaces “a full report on the efforts against racism and toward transformation and growth” with “such efforts”

6. Saint Paul Area Synod (3H) [2005 Memorial]

Adopted the “model memorial” printed above, with the following changes:

- Fifth WHEREAS is deleted
- Sixth WHEREAS replaces “this failure is manifested in the” with “there is a”
- Seventh WHEREAS replaces “needs to allocate staff and program budget to implement the usage of the many anti-racism resources it has produced,” with “the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has produced anti-racism resources,”
- Eighth WHEREAS deletes “but fails to provide full-time staff or funding for that work”
- First RESOLVED is replaced with:
 - “RESOLVED, that the Saint Paul Area Synod memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to declare its intention to live out its commitment to persevere against racism and White privilege and strive to be transformed, including consideration of reallocation of resources and program budget for education, action, and resource development within the Office of the Presiding Bishop and the Multicultural Ministries unit for the work of anti-racism and dismantling White privilege;”
- Second RESOLVED replaces “a full report on the efforts against racism and toward transformation and growth be reported to each Churchwide Assembly” with “efforts against racism and toward transformation and growth be reported to each Churchwide Assembly.”

7. Central States Synod (4B) [2005 Memorial]

Adopted the “model memorial” printed above.

8. Metropolitan Chicago Synod (5A) [2005 Memorial]

Adopted the “model memorial” printed above, with the following changes:

- Third WHEREAS replaces “declared” with “declares”
- First RESOLVED moves “within the Office of the Presiding Bishop and the Multicultural Ministries unit” to follow “program budget”
- First RESOLVED inserts the following at the end of the paragraph: “; and to ensure that the anti-racism efforts of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America be monitored by the Multicultural Ministries unit (or the equivalent unit) and that a full report on the efforts against racism and toward transformation and growth be reported to each Churchwide Assembly by that unit.”
- Second RESOLVED is deleted

9. Northern Illinois Synod (5B) [2005 Memorial]

Adopted the “model memorial” printed above, with the following changes:

- First RESOLVED replaces “Multicultural Ministries unit;” with “Commission for Multicultural Ministries (or the appropriate churchwide unit);”
- Second RESOLVED replaces “Multicultural Ministries unit” with “Commission for Multicultural Ministries (or the appropriate churchwide unit)”

10. Southeastern Iowa Synod (5D) [2005 Memorial]

Adopted the “model memorial” printed above, with the following changes:

- First WHEREAS replaces “named” with “names”
- Second WHEREAS replaces “1993 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, meeting in Kansas City, Missouri,” with “Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has”
- Second WHEREAS replaces “The Church proclaims Christ, confident this good news sets at liberty those captive behind walls of hostility (cf. Luke 4:18)” with an ellipsis
- Third and fourth WHEREAS paragraphs are deleted
- Fifth WHEREAS replaces “by” with “in”
- Fifth WHEREAS replaces “structural and cultural realities of racism at all levels,” with “realities of racism at all levels within this church,”
- Sixth WHEREAS is deleted
- Seventh WHEREAS deletes “including the recently published ‘Breaking the Bonds’ and ‘Troubling the Waters for the Healing of the Church: A Journey for White Christians from Privilege to Partnership,’”
- First RESOLVED replaces “through” with “and for”

11. Greater Milwaukee Synod (5J) [2005 Memorial]

Adopted the “model memorial” printed above, with the following changes:

- First RESOLVED is replaced with:
“RESOLVED, that the Greater Milwaukee Synod memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to declare its intention to live out its commitment to persevere against racism and White privilege and strive to be transformed by allocating resources for a full-time position to be located within the Office of the Presiding Bishop and the Multicultural Ministries unit, and to include support staff and program budget for the work of anti-racism and dismantling White privilege through education, action, and resource development;”
- Second RESOLVED is replaced with:
“RESOLVED, that the Greater Milwaukee Synod memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to encourage the monitoring of the anti-racism efforts of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America by the Multicultural Ministries unit and that a full report on the efforts against racism and toward transformation and growth be reported to each Churchwide Assembly.”

12. New Jersey Synod (7A) [2005 Memorial]

Adopted the “model memorial” printed above.

13. Metropolitan New York Synod (7C) [2005 Memorial]

Adopted the “model memorial” printed above, with the following changes:

- First RESOLVED is replaced with “RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to declare its intention to live out its commitment to persevere against racism and White privilege and strive to be transformed by making it a priority of the Multicultural Ministries unit;”
- Adds a third RESOLVED paragraph: “RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly to mandate that, as a symbol of this intention, the Conference of Bishops, as a group, complete an anti-racism workshop prior to the 2007 Churchwide Assembly;”

- Adds a fourth RESOLVED paragraph: “RESOLVED, that in support of the anti-racism efforts the Office of the Bishop of the Metropolitan New York Synod organize and implement a future ministerium on the issue of anti-racism.”

BACKGROUND

Staff of the Commission for Multicultural Ministries, the Office of the Presiding Bishop, and the Department for Human Resources have begun and made significant progress on the transition of anti-racism training from the commission to the presiding bishop’s office, pending approval by the Churchwide Assembly of all relevant constitutional changes. What follows is a summary of the proposed plan included as part of “Faithful Yet Changing,” the Plan for Mission in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (see *2005 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section V, pages 1–11, for the complete report).

Racial justice ministries, which would be located in the proposed Multicultural Ministries program unit, would have responsibility for addressing internalized racial oppression; White privilege; this church’s climate on race, ethnicity, and diversity; ecumenical partnerships for racial justice; and, in collaboration with the proposed Church in Society program unit, public policy and corporate social responsibility matters of relevance to this crucial arena of ministry. Of course, the Multicultural Ministries unit also would incorporate many other responsibilities.

Anti-racism and diversity training, housed in the Office of the Presiding Bishop, would provide a two-day anti-racism training module for all new churchwide staff, Church Council members, synodical bishops, and elected members of boards, program committees, and advisory committees. In addition, there would be diversity training for churchwide staff, beginning with executive directors and moving eventually to all supervisors in the organization. Further, services to synods would be provided to support them in anti-racism training and related efforts.

The proposed restructuring of the churchwide organization would create an inter-unit Racial Justice Ministry Coordinating Team that brings together staff from Multicultural Ministries, the Office of the Presiding Bishop, Human Resources, Church in Society, Synodical Relations, and the Women of the ELCA. It is hoped that the team also would include liaisons from the Church Council and Conference of Bishops. It is here that the coordination between racial justice ministries, anti-racism training, and diversity training would occur. In addition, the team would jointly plan and implement facilitators’ training and churchwide audits and surveys related to the range of matters described above. The team would meet quarterly.

Monitoring of churchwide anti-racism efforts would occur in two ways. The Racial Justice Ministry Coordinating Team, on which Multicultural Ministries would be represented by its executive director and director for racial justice ministries, would hold a quarterly review of the work of both anti-racism training and racial justice ministries. In addition, the Planning and Evaluation Committee of the Church Council annually would evaluate this work and other commitments of the churchwide organization and would report to the Church Council. Biennially the Church Council would report to the Churchwide Assembly on anti-racism work and other commitments of this church.

Cost Analysis

A total of \$80,000 has been allocated to the Office of the Presiding Bishop in the 2006 budget proposal for support of anti-racism training. This provides for part-time contract

staffing for oversight of the program, as well as all the direct training costs such as trainer fees and meals.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

EN BLOC

CA05.07.39j To affirm in principle the memorials of the Northwest Washington Synod; Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod; Montana Synod; Southwest California Synod; South Dakota Synod; Saint Paul Area Synod; Central States Synod; Metropolitan Chicago Synod; Northern Illinois Synod; Southeastern Iowa Synod; Greater Milwaukee Synod; New Jersey Synod; and Metropolitan New York Synod regarding the support and monitoring of anti-racism work;

To express gratitude to these synods for their memorials calling this church to name the sin of racism and to persevere in anti-racism education;

To affirm that actions taken by the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America on the 2006-2007 budget proposal and the bylaw amendment pertaining to the responsibilities of the Church Council's Planning and Evaluation Committee will be the response of the assembly to the memorials.

Category E11: Lay Roster

Reference: 2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section VI, pages 63–64.

1. Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod (7F) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, in Holy Scripture Paul wrote to the Ephesians concerning the variety of gifts God has given for ministry: “The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ” (Ephesians 4:11–13); and

WHEREAS, in Chapter 7 of the constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, there are provisions for this church to call “some of its baptized members for specific ministries in this church” (7.11.) in and through the ordained and lay rosters; and

WHEREAS, the basic standards for ordained ministers and the lay rosters are the same in the constitutional bylaws 7.31.10., 7.31.11., and 7.52.11.a.; and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America study of ministry, “Together in Ministry,” states that the lay rosters have “served the church to meet the specialized needs for leadership in mission. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and its predecessor churches established certified and commissioned lay ministries to give leadership for mission in areas not requiring an ordained minister of Word and Sacrament”; and

WHEREAS, constitutional bylaw 7.51.02. illustrates the breadth of the lay roster from predecessor church bodies: “Under constitutional provision 7.51., those persons previously rostered as commissioned church staff (The American Lutheran Church), deaconesses (The Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches), deaconesses (The American Lutheran Church), deacons (The Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches), lay professional leaders (the Lutheran Church in

America), and commissioned teachers (The Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches) shall be retained as associates in ministry of this church (except for removals in accord with the governing documents, criteria, policies, and procedures of this church) in the recognized category of ministry of their previous church body for as long as they are in good standing according to the standards, criteria, policies, and procedures of this church . . .”; and

WHEREAS, in the *Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope*, Melancthon argued against a hierarchy among pastors and bishops, saying, “In Luke 22:24–27, Christ expressly forbids lordship among the apostles, for the question of who would be in charge and become, as it were, the vicar of the absent Christ was the very thing about which they were arguing when Christ spoke of his passion. Christ rebuked the apostles for this error and taught that there would be neither lordship nor superiority among them but that the apostles would be sent as equals to carry out the ministry of the Gospel in common. For that reason he said, “The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, but it is not so with you. Rather whoever wants to be great among you will be your servant.” Furthermore, Melancthon said, “According to John 20:21, Christ commissions the apostles as equals, without distinction, when he says: ‘As the Father has sent me, so I send you.’ He sends forth each one individually in the same way as he himself was sent, he says, and therefore he bestows upon no one any privilege or lordship over the rest. In 1 Corinthians 3:4–8, 21–22 Paul regards all ministers as equals and teaches that the church is superior to its ministers. Thus he grants neither preeminence nor lordship over the church or the other ministers to Peter . . .”; and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America study of ministry, “Together in Ministry,” states how laity and clergy are to work together and not create a hierarchy: “Ministry should draw persons together across distinctions such as ‘laity’ and ‘clergy.’ Claims of personal privilege and status must never cloud the fundamental purpose of ministry, which is service . . .” Furthermore, the study references “in the Bible, ‘ministry’ regularly means ‘service,’ carried out in a variety of ways and contexts. It arises out of the divine initiative of a gracious God who accomplishes salvation. Christians respond in faith to God’s initiative through service to one another and to the neighbor in God’s world. . . . How ministerial leadership is to be structured is not a matter which Scripture answers absolutely. Indeed, New Testament ministries are portrayed in great variety. To fit needs at different times in history and to reflect various understandings of the Church, subsequent Christian traditions have developed these New Testament examples of ministering along different, even divisive lines: Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Anglican, Reformed, Pentecostal; hierarchical and egalitarian; Episcopal, Presbyterian, congregational. A Lutheran view, recognizing the variety in Scripture, can set forth its model without expecting others to conform to it and can respect alternative structures for good order in other churches without itself adopting them. Given the confessional insistence on God’s ministry to us, on the office of ministry for the means of grace, and, especially in Luther, on the priesthood of all the baptized, such a view of the Church and its marks implies twin concerns in ministry. Ministerial leadership is expected, on the one hand, to provide Word and Sacrament in congregations and other specialized settings, and, on the other, to stress service to the neighbor and to others in God’s world . . .”; and

WHEREAS, in the constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America there is only one ordained minister roster, despite various forms of formation or admission onto the roster. Section 7.31.14. provides for rostering of ordained ministers by “Admission under Other Circumstances.” Specifically, “Candidates for ordination as pastors or for reception who by reason of (a) age and prior experience, (b) ordination in another Lutheran church body, or (c) ordination in another Christian church body, whether in North America or abroad, shall be approved by the appropriate committee for ordination or reception according to criteria, policies, and procedures recommended by the Division for Ministry, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council.” Furthermore, the roster of ordained ministers is comprised of persons who are serving to meet the missional needs of this church and have completed the candidacy process through the candidacy manual guidelines for persons ordained in another Lutheran or Christian tradition, alternate route, or theological education for emerging ministries, yet there is one roster for ordained ministers; and

WHEREAS, the 2005 edition of the candidacy manual does not make any distinction between the specializations of the three lay rosters: “While the forms of ministry regarding all three lay rosters

might be different, there are common areas of specialization, focus, and need throughout this church . . .”; and

WHEREAS, the roster of ordained ministers is comprised of persons who are serving in various ministry settings, often as a generalist, though also with various specializations, and have been rostered after normally receiving a M.Div. degree, yet there is one roster for ordained ministers; and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has established the goal to become a more inclusive, ecumenical, and unified church; and

WHEREAS, the differences between the current three lay rosters can be unclear, hierarchical, and divisive, seeming to imply a hierarchy that is contrary to the priesthood of all believers and Lutheran understanding of the equality of ministry, and, furthermore, it is cumbersome to change between the lay rosters because of the necessity of completing a new candidacy process; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly to combine the three existing lay rosters into one lay roster and that all persons on the lay roster be referred to as diaconal ministers.

BACKGROUND

The formation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America included the retention of persons who served on lay rosters of predecessor church bodies as ELCA associates in ministry. These included commissioned church staff, deaconesses, deacons, lay professional leaders, and commissioned teachers. The 1993 Churchwide Assembly, acting on the Study of Ministry report, created a new category of lay ministry, that of diaconal minister. In the ELCA, there are three categories of rostered lay ministry: associates in ministry, ELCA deaconesses, and diaconal ministers.

The lay rosters in the ELCA represent over 120 years of ministry by Lutheran deaconesses in this country, decades of formal recognition and rostering for a variety of lay ministers by our predecessor church bodies, and ten years of growth in the roster of ELCA diaconal ministers. In recognition of this significant history and the evolving mission of this church, the Division for Ministry began conversations with representatives of these three rosters regarding their ministries within the ELCA, and plans are underway to convene a 2006 consultation, tentatively titled “ELCA Word and Service Rosters: Planning for the Future.”

This event will not focus on the question of the number of rosters, but will rather ask several broad mission-related questions regarding the most effective ways to call forth and support the ministries of Word and Service.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

EN BLOC

CA05.07.39k To refer the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod memorial on the formation of one lay roster to the Division for Ministry (or the appropriate churchwide unit) for its consideration as it continues to study the roles, responsibilities, and educational requirements of the three lay rosters of this church and to support the work of those who serve in these ministries.

Category E12: Model Constitution for Congregations

Reference: 2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section VI, page 65.

1. Southwest California Synod (2B) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, this congregation recognizes that Christ's Church on earth is a church of inclusion of all believers in the body of Christ, rather than a church of exclusion; and

WHEREAS, this congregation recognizes that the inclusive nature of Christ's Church requires that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America adopt the broadest possible definition of who is or may become a baptized or confirmed member of a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and

WHEREAS, the *Model Constitution for Congregations* of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America makes mandatory Section *C.8.02.c., which contains the following language defining voting membership: "Voting members are confirmed members. Such confirmed members, during the current or preceding calendar year, shall have communed in this congregation and shall have made a contribution of record to this congregation"; and

WHEREAS, this congregation believes that it would be an act in furtherance of the building up of the body of Christ as represented in his Church in its expression in and through the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, that individual congregations be permitted to make additional demands of its members, if those members desire to be voting members of the congregation, for minimal levels of commitment to the ministry of that congregation in the areas of service to the ministry of the congregation, attendance at worship services of the congregation, evangelism efforts of the congregation, protecting the unity of the congregation, and financial support for the ministry of the congregation; and

WHEREAS, this congregation has given favorable consideration to a proposal by its congregational council for an amendment to the congregational constitution to define voting membership more expansively, including a requirement that to become or maintain voting membership, a member of the congregation be required, annually, to execute and fulfill to the best of the member's ability a membership covenant; and

WHEREAS, this congregation has been advised that, because of restrictions placed on congregations by the *Model Constitution for Congregations*, the proposed amendment to the St. Luke congregational constitution may not be approved by the Southwest California Synod or the churchwide organization; and

WHEREAS, the congregational council of St. Luke Lutheran Church, on behalf of its members, has been authorized to propose to the 2005 Synod Assembly of the Southwest California Synod, a resolution on this matter; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the 2005 Synod Assembly of the Southwest California Synod memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to adopt appropriate amendments to its governing documents, including the *Model Constitution for Congregations*, and specifically Section *C.8.02.c. thereof, to make the current language of Section *C.8.02.c. non-mandatory and to permit individual congregations to adopt a more expansive and more rigorous requirement, up to but not exceeding reception of Holy Communion six times per year, for the maintenance of voting membership in a congregation beyond that currently provided in Section *C.8.02.c.

BACKGROUND

Within the polity of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the membership of this church body is defined as "the baptized members of its congregations" (provision 6.01. in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*). Among the baptized members, certain people are granted voting privileges.

In the case of congregations, voting privileges are defined in required provision *C8.02.c. in the *Model Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, which reads: "Voting members are confirmed members. Such confirmed

members, during the current or preceding calendar year, shall have communed in this congregation and shall have made a contribution of record to this congregation.”

As protection for members of congregations, this common standard exists for all members of this church. Some unfortunate situations have occurred in rare but sad instances in which a few members with the pastor and at times with the complicity of the Congregation Council have sought to deny persons the right to vote apart from the requirements specified in provision *C8.02.c.

The provision defines a common standard throughout this church for voting privileges by members in their respective congregations. A proposed change may have significant implications for the basic polity, underlying ecclesiology, and voting practices within the life of this church.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

EN BLOC

CA05.07.391 To refer the memorial of the Southwest California Synod on the definition of voting members in congregations to the Office of the Secretary for development—in consultation with the Conference of Bishops and other appropriate churchwide units—of a report to the November 2006 meeting of the ELCA Church Council.

Category E13: African Descent Ministry Strategy

Reference: 2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section VI, page 66.

1. Metropolitan New York Synod (7C) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the Commission for Multicultural Ministries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has developed an African Descent Ministry Strategy, “Many Voices, Tell the Story, Create the Vision: Build Our Future,” that identifies and structures eight mission opportunities and goals for Lutherans of African descent; and

WHEREAS, the Church Council has approved the ministry strategy for presentation to the 2005 Churchwide Assembly; and

WHEREAS, the Metropolitan New York Synod chapter of the African American Lutheran Association, which hosted the first of the twelve strategic plan steering team’s focus group nationwide meetings in developing the plan, wholeheartedly endorses the strategic plan that sets direction for the vision of its mission; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Assembly memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to adopt the African Descent Ministry Strategy.

2. Caribbean Synod (9F) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has expressed a commitment to the people of African descent to be intentional in including all people of color and language other than English from its inception in the active administration, participation, and direction of the executing of the organization of this church; and

WHEREAS, the African Descent Ministry Strategy seeks to encompass the whole peoples of African descent throughout the United States of America, including African American, African Caribbean, and African nationals; and

WHEREAS, the African Descent Ministry Strategy recognizes the unique gifts of ministry brought to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in the various forms of expression in people of African descent; and

WHEREAS, the African Descent Ministry Strategy embraces the presence of African Caribbean descent congregations in the Virgin Islands District of the Caribbean Synod, Region 9; and

WHEREAS, the Virgin Islands have four of the oldest Lutheran communities in the northern hemisphere, beginning in 1666;

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America seeks the full participation of the people of the Caribbean Synod in its boards, commissions, divisions, and all churchwide offices; and

WHEREAS, the geographical position of the Caribbean Synod creates unique travel issues, time constraints, and extraordinary financial hardships to be included in such events as meetings, gatherings, and training; and

WHEREAS, the African Descent Ministry Strategy seeks to provide for intentional funding to include representation of the communities of African descent from the Virgin Islands; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Caribbean Synod recognize that the African Descent Ministry Strategy is inclusive of the issues of the African Caribbeans in the Virgin Islands District of the Caribbean Synod, Region 9, and that we fully support the total acceptance of the strategy as the voice and vehicle to empower all persons of African descent in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Caribbean Synod call upon the voting members to the 2005 Churchwide Assembly to approve the African Descent Ministry Strategy; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the resolution be memorialized to the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

BACKGROUND

The concerns raised by the memorials of these synods were addressed as part of the business of the 2005 ELCA Churchwide Assembly (see above, CA05.04.16, page 266). Background information on the African Descent Ministry Strategy and the proposed action on this topic recommended by the ELCA Church Council are printed in Section IV of the *2005 Pre-Assembly Report*, pages 33–45.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

EN BLOC

CA05.07.39m To receive the memorials of the Metropolitan New York Synod and the Caribbean Synod on the African Descent Ministry Strategy; and

To acknowledge the action of the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America on the African Descent Ministry Strategy as the response of the Churchwide Assembly to these memorials.

Category E14: Removal of a Synodical Bishop

Reference: *2005 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section VI, page 67.

1. Southwestern Washington Synod (1C) [2005 Memorial]

RESOLVED, that the Southwestern Washington Synod memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:

- to create a due process to remove from office any bishop who knowingly presents a rostered person for call to a congregation or agency without written notice of past proven or openly confessed sexual misconduct about that rostered person, and
- to direct the Division for Ministry (or the appropriate churchwide unit) to carefully prepare the constitutional and policy provisions necessary to create this process.

BACKGROUND

A comprehensive process for the removal of a synodical bishop from office was enacted by the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in 1992. That action was taken in keeping with bylaw 20.53.11. in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*. That process is detailed in continuing resolution 20.53.A92., which reads:

Recall or Dismissal of a Synod Officer

- a. *The recall or dismissal of the bishop, vice president, secretary, or treasurer of a synod of this church and the vacating of office may be effected:*
 - 1) *for willful disregard or violation of the constitution and bylaws of this church or the constitution and bylaws of the synod;*
 - 2) *for such physical or mental disability as renders the officer incapable of performing the duties of office; or*
 - 3) *for such conduct as would subject the officer to disciplinary action as an ordained minister or as a member of a congregation of this church.*
- b. *Proceedings for the recall or dismissal of a synodical bishop shall be instituted by written petition by:*
 - 1) *the Synod Council on an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of its elected members present and voting;*
 - 2) *the Synod Assembly on an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of its members present and voting;*
 - 3) *at least 10 synodical bishops; or*
 - 4) *the presiding bishop of this church.*

The petition shall be filed with the chair of the Committee on Appeals (in care of the secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 8765 West Higgins Road, Chicago, Illinois 60631) and shall set forth the specific charge or charges.
- c. *Proceedings for the recall or dismissal of an officer of a synod, other than the synodical bishop, shall be instituted by written petition by:*
 - 1) *the Synod Council on an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of its elected members present and voting;*
 - 2) *the Synod Assembly on an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of its members present and voting; or*
 - 3) *the synodical bishop.*

The petition shall be filed with the chair of the Committee on Appeals (in care of the secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 8765 West Higgins Road, Chicago, Illinois 60631) and shall set forth the specific charge or charges.
- d. *In the case of alleged physical or mental incapacity of an officer of a synod,*
 - 1) *the procedures outlined in ¶S8.56. shall first be followed, and if such officer does not accept the decision of the Synod Council, the Synod Council may proceed to petition for proceedings for recall or dismissal.*
 - 2) *four members of the Committee on Appeals, designated by the committee chair and consisting of two ordained ministers and two lay persons, shall*
 - a) *investigate such conditions in person;*
 - b) *seek competent medical testimony;*

- c) *seek the counsel and advice of the presiding bishop of this church if such officer is the synodical bishop;*
 - d) *seek the counsel and advice of the synodical bishop if such officer is the vice president, secretary, or treasurer of the synod; and*
 - e) *submit a written report of their findings to the other members of the Committee on Appeals.*
- 3) *the members of the Committee on Appeals, other than those who investigated the conditions and other than those who are disqualified, shall review the findings of the investigation committee and by an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of those present and voting shall adopt the findings and grant the petition.*
- e. *If the synod officer is an ordained minister, grounds for recall or dismissal include those set forth in 20.21.01. and as defined under the process described in 20.71.11. and 20.71.12. for discipline of ordained ministers.*
 - f. *If the synod officer is a layperson, grounds for recall or dismissal include those set forth in 20.41.01.*
 - g. *If the case of alleged willful disregard or violation of the constitution and bylaws of this church or the constitution and bylaws of the synod or of alleged conduct as would subject the officer to disciplinary action, the following procedures shall apply:*
 - 1) *If the proceedings were instituted by the presiding bishop of this church, the synodical bishop, or at least 10 other synodical bishops, the petitioner shall first meet with the Executive Committee of the Synod Council in which the officer serves. The Executive Committee shall function as a consultation panel to give advice to the petitioner;*
 - 2) *If as a result of the consultation the petition is not filed, no further proceedings shall be required;*
 - 3) *If as a result of the consultation the petition is filed or if the proceedings were instituted by the Synod Assembly or the Synod Council, the petition shall be referred to the Committee on Appeals, which shall function as the discipline hearing committee that shall conduct a hearing in accordance with the rules provided for in 20.21.16. except to the extent that those rules are in conflict with the provisions of this continuing resolution; and*
 - 4) *the members of the Committee on Appeals, other than those who are disqualified, may grant the petition by an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of those present and voting.*
 - h. *Upon the filing of a written petition, the Executive Committee of the Synod Council may temporarily suspend the officer from service in the synod without prejudice, but with continuation of compensation, including benefits, if the officer is a salaried employee of the synod. Appeals from such temporary suspension shall be provided in ¶8.56.*
 - i. *Written notice of a decision by the Committee on Appeals that the charges have been sustained shall be given to the affected officer. The Synod Council shall be notified of such decision and the office shall be vacated if the charges have been sustained.*

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

EN Bloc

CA05.07.39n To refer the memorial of the Southwestern Washington Synod on the recall of a synodical bishop to the Office of the Secretary for a review in light of continuing resolution 20.53.A92. of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, with a report to the April 2006 meeting of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Category E15: Support for Augsburg Fortress, Publishers

Reference: *2005 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section VI, page 68.

1. Northwest Synod of Wisconsin (5H) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, Augsburg Fortress is the ministry of publishing within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and

WHEREAS, in recent years Augsburg Fortress has made improvements in development of high-quality, Lutheran resources at a competitive price and has improved the quality of service to customers; and

WHEREAS, as a unit of this church, Augsburg Fortress does not receive any financial support other than through the sale of the products and services provided; and

WHEREAS, Augsburg Fortress has developed award-winning Vacation Bible School curricula, and through that curricula, donations of over \$288,000 were received by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's Division for Global Mission to fund the digging of deep tube wells to bring clean water to people in southern Bangladesh; and

WHEREAS, a new adult Bible study program will be published this spring and a new confirmation resource, which will be a combined online and print resource, will be published this summer; and

WHEREAS, in order for Augsburg Fortress to have the financial resources necessary to invest in the development of new curricula resources, worship resources, theological books, etc., it must make a profit; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that congregations and individuals of the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin pray for the ministry of publishing at Augsburg Fortress; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the congregations and individuals of the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin be encouraged to support Augsburg Fortress through the intentional purchase of supplies, books, and resources; and be it further

RESOLVED, that congregations be encouraged to place a link to Augsburg Fortress on congregational Web sites; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to encourage all synods and congregations of this church to be intentional about supporting Augsburg Fortress Publishing through the purchase of supplies, books, and resources.

BACKGROUND

Augsburg Fortress, Publishers, is the publishing ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. As the Publishing House of the ELCA, it is the unit of the churchwide organization charged with the responsibility of preparing resources for worship, education, and edification for congregations and members throughout this church.

Leadership in this church's publishing ministry is committed to being responsive to the needs of pastors, members, and congregations, and committed to competitive pricing of its products.

Unlike most churchwide units that receive mission-support funding for programs and activities, Augsburg Fortress, Publishers, is financed solely by the sale of its products. It is a nonprofit operation. That means any revenue in excess of expense does not accrue to shareholders but rather is used to support development of new resources for members and congregations.

This memorial urges that encouragement be voiced by the 2005 Churchwide Assembly for the support of the vital publishing ministry of this church.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

EN BLOC

CA05.07.39o

To receive with gratitude the memorial of the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin on supporting Augsburg Fortress, Publishers;

To acknowledge that in recent years Augsburg Fortress, Publishers, has taken important steps to improve products, service, and pricing;

To entreat pastors, other congregational leaders, and members to remember in prayer the publishing ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the leaders and staff of this church's publishing unit, Augsburg Fortress, Publishers;

To encourage congregations and synods to place a link on their respective Web sites to Augsburg Fortress, Publishers, to foster broader awareness of the ministry of publishing in this church and the resources available through this church's publishing unit; and

To urge pastors, other congregational leaders, members, bishops, other synodical leaders, and staff to support this church's publishing unit through the purchase of competitively priced worship materials, Bible study materials, other educational resources, Sunday school and Vacation Bible School curriculum, books, and other church supplies from Augsburg Fortress, Publishers, in support of the publishing ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Category E17: Inclusion of Teaching Theologians as Voting Members

Reference: 2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section VI, page 71.

1. Saint Paul Area Synod (3H) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is currently considering changes to its governance to insure, among other values, that decisions are made "by well-informed members of this church"; and

WHEREAS, there is a desire that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as a deliberating body be as well informed as possible about the various issues it faces; and

WHEREAS, the Lutheran church has traditionally valued the exchange of ideas among laypersons, pastors, and teaching theologians to help at all levels of the deliberative process; and

WHEREAS, the presence and voice of trained theologians can be particularly helpful during deliberations at Churchwide Assemblies; and

WHEREAS, the current system of electing voting members does not address the need for such voices; and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has provision within its constitution for a regular meeting of teaching theologians to discuss theological issues facing the Church and world; and

WHEREAS, these meetings have resulted in the formation of the ELCA Association of Teaching Theologians, who now meet annually and have a duly elected governing board; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Saint Paul Area Synod memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America that, in its new governance proposals, provision be made for the teaching theologians of this church to be represented with both voice and vote at Churchwide Assemblies; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the term “teaching theologians” shall include all members of this church who teach at ELCA seminaries or in the religion departments of ELCA colleges and all members of this church who teach religion or theology at non-Lutheran institutions; and be it further

RESOLVED, that 10 such teaching theologians be elected to each Churchwide Assembly; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Church Council, in consultation with the ELCA Association of Teaching Theologians, develop a process for electing to the Churchwide Assembly teaching theologians who represent a variety of theological perspectives.

BACKGROUND

The 2005 memorial of the Saint Paul Area Synod addresses the helpful participation of ELCA teaching theologians in the life of this church and specifically asks for provision for the election of 10 teaching theologians to each Churchwide Assembly. The memorial also asks that the term “teaching theologians” be understood to mean not only those who teach at ELCA seminaries and colleges but “all members of this church who teach religion or theology at non-Lutheran institutions.”

Since the beginning of the ELCA, provision has been made for the presidents of colleges, universities, and seminaries of this church to have voice but not vote at Churchwide Assemblies. In 2004, provision was made in the continuing resolutions of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* to permit a representative of the faculty of each seminary of the ELCA to serve as “a seminary faculty resource person for each Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The faculty representative shall have voice, if so granted in the assembly’s rules, but not vote in plenary sessions of the assembly” (12.41.B04.).

A teaching theologian may be elected by the synod in which the person is either rostered or, in the case of a lay person, a member of an ELCA congregation. In the case of rostered persons, ELCA seminary faculty members are assigned to synods within the seminary cluster and thus often are rostered in a synod where they do not reside. This may be a factor behind the reality that teaching theologians are often not elected by a synod as a voting member.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

EN Bloc

CA05.07.39p

To request that the Office of the Secretary, in consultation with the Division for Ministry (or the appropriate churchwide unit), review the request of the Saint Paul Area Synod concerning possible changes in the governing documents of this church that would provide for the election of 10 teaching theologians of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to each Churchwide Assembly, and bring a report and possible recommendations to the April 2006 meeting of the Church Council.

Category E20: Fund Appeal for New Ministries

Reference: *2005 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section VI, page 75.

1. Grand Canyon Synod (2D) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, it is the commission of the Lord of the Church to “Go and make disciples . . . baptizing them . . . and teaching them . . .” (Matthew 28:19–20); and

WHEREAS, the challenge of the great commission would coincide with the present Evangelical Lutheran Church in America emphasis on evangelism; and

WHEREAS, the resources of this church, the people, are relatively untapped for this kind of witness; and

WHEREAS, new mission development has never, since 1988, reached the level of new starts that existed in the predecessor synods; and

WHEREAS, the basic ministries of the Gospel take place in and through congregations; and

WHEREAS, there is estimated to be over 90,000,000 unchurched people in this country; and

WHEREAS, membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is diminishing, some 200,000 in recent years, now numbering under 5,000,000 people at the same time the population of the nation is increasing; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Grand Canyon Synod in assembly memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to authorize a three-year professionally guided fund appeal to be used for the establishing of new congregations.

BACKGROUND

The *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* includes bylaw 11.41.06., which reads:

No churchwide appeal to congregations or individuals of this church for the raising of funds shall be conducted by this church or churchwide units without the consent of the Churchwide Assembly, following consultation with the Conference of Bishops. No appeal to selected congregations and individuals of this church for the raising of funds shall be conducted by this church or churchwide units without the consent of the Church Council, following consultation with either the Conference of Bishops or specific synods as appropriate. Proposals for such special appeals shall be presented to the Church Council through the appropriate council committee with recommendations by the Office of the Presiding Bishop.

The topic of a churchwide campaign or funding appeal has been discussed in two churchwide settings during the 2003–2004 biennium.

First, a churchwide staff working group developed a report with recommendations to the Office of the Presiding Bishop in 2003 on the subject of mission funding. One topic addressed in the report is a major churchwide campaign. The commentary indicates that “a major churchwide campaign to support specific churchwide mission priorities (e.g., planting new congregations) could provide significant additional income. Such a campaign could enhance a sense of unity and, possibly, new energy and excitement to advance a common purpose. It could also build major donor capacity and provide an opportunity to ‘tell the story.’ It would, however, require a significant, multi-million dollar up-front outlay to defray fundraising expenses (commensurate with the goals set). It would have a long window for return. In the current fundraising and economic environment, the outcome of such a campaign is not certain.”

The recommendation accompanying the report advises “do not launch a major churchwide campaign at this time.” The report was presented for discussion by the Budget and Finance Committee of the Church Council in April 2003. A significant portion of the committee meeting was devoted to discussion of the report and recommendations. There were no suggested changes to the recommendations.

Second, as part of the churchwide strategic planning process, a roundtable on mission funding was held October 7–8, 2003. There were twenty participants from congregations, synods, and institutions of this church and ten participants from churchwide staff. In the course of the meeting, a major churchwide funding appeal was discussed, but without definitive conclusion. The final report of the roundtable includes eight far-reaching outcomes related to mission funding with many additional short-term outcomes. No reference is made in the report to a churchwide fund appeal.

Cost Analysis

It is generally estimated that an organization needs to have in hand the equivalent of 20 percent of the fund appeal goal to underwrite the appeal expenses. Thus, for example, if the goal is \$25 million, \$5 million would be required up front to study, plan, and implement the appeal.

The source for such funding is unknown at this time.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

EN BLOC

CA05.07.39q To express gratitude to the Grand Canyon Synod for its commitment to the evangelism strategy, “Sharing Faith in a New Century: A Vision for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,” adopted by the 2003 Churchwide Assembly, the great need to increase this church’s establishment of new congregations, and the significant funding required for this endeavor; and

To direct, in accordance with churchwide bylaw 11.41.06., that the Division for Outreach (or the appropriate churchwide unit), the Division for Congregational Ministries (or the appropriate churchwide unit), the Office of the Presiding Bishop, the Office of the Treasurer, and the Conference of Bishops bring a report related to funding for new and renewing congregations to the April 2007 meeting of the Church Council, with a report to the 2007 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Category E21: Theological Education for Emerging Ministries

Reference: 2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section VI, page 76.

1. Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod (8A) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod, because of our large number of small membership congregations, has recognized the need to provide pastors who are able to minister in these special situations; and

WHEREAS, our synod has been aggressively recruiting persons who are willing to be prepared to serve via the Theological Education for Emerging Ministry (TEEM) track for ordination; and

WHEREAS, it has been brought to our attention that such persons are now subject to the same guidelines for assignment and thus may be called into any region of this church; and

WHEREAS, many of these persons have family and job requirements that limit their mobility; and

WHEREAS, the TEEM track was designed to meet the special needs of synods; therefore, be it
RESOLVED, that the Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to review and change its policy concerning assignment of TEEM-track candidates for ordination, allowing them flexibility in negotiating their call in keeping with the needs of family, job, and other important considerations as well as the needs of this church.

BACKGROUND

The churchwide assignment process of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America takes into consideration the mission and ministry needs of this whole church and particular synods as well as the particular gifts and identified needs of candidates. The ELCA Candidacy Manual indicates that “Theological Education for Emerging Ministries” (TEEM) candidates participate in the churchwide assignment consultation and are administratively assigned to the synod, which has already identified a ministry setting.

The recommendations provided by synodical bishops for TEEM program candidates include a description of the particular ministry site in the synod where the candidate will serve. It is with this understanding that a candidate enters the ELCA candidacy process as a TEEM candidate. Upon completion of the candidacy process, the candidate is assigned and called to serve in the previously identified ministry site.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

EN BLOC

CA05.07.39r To commend the Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod for its faithful commitment to raising up candidates from the synod for the Theological Education for Emerging Ministries (TEEM) program;

To acknowledge that candidates are identified by synods for service in a particular ministry site, to which they return upon completion of the candidacy process; and

To urge the synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to continue to raise up leaders both for ministries within the synod through the TEEM program and for this whole church through the candidacy process.

Category F1: Responses to Recommendation One

Reference: 2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section VI, pages 77–80.

1. Oregon Synod (1E) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, individuals and congregations in the Oregon Synod have reviewed and prayerfully considered materials from the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality and responded to them; and

WHEREAS, the Oregon Synod has conducted “listening posts” and engaged in a process of moral deliberation in response to action of the 2004 Oregon Synod Assembly; and

WHEREAS, in a spirit of Christian love and concern, members of the 2005 Oregon Synod Assembly have considered and debated issues relating to human sexuality that will be addressed at the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and

WHEREAS, the people of God who are part of the Oregon Synod, regardless of the diversity of their views, are joined and united by the love of Jesus Christ; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Oregon Synod memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to adopt Church Council Recommendation One on the sexuality studies; and be it further

RESOLVED, that individuals and congregations within the Oregon Synod offer their prayers for members of the 2005 Churchwide Assembly as they consider issues raised by the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality and resolutions related to them.

2. Rocky Mountain Synod (2E) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality has made its Report and Recommendations (January 13, 2005); and

WHEREAS, the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has made recommendations (April 11, 2005) to the 2005 Churchwide Assembly; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the 2005 Rocky Mountain Synod Assembly urge the 2005 Churchwide Assembly to endorse Recommendation One of the task force report, which states: “Because the God-given mission and communion we share is at least as important as the issues about which faithful conscience-bound Lutherans find themselves so decisively at odds, the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality recommends that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America concentrate on finding ways to live together faithfully in the midst of our disagreements.”

3. Northwestern Minnesota Synod (3D) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, Recommendation One of the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality reads: “Because the God-given mission and communion we share is at least as important as the issues about which faithful conscience-bound Lutherans find themselves so decisively at odds, the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality recommends that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America concentrate on finding ways to live together faithfully in the midst of our disagreements”; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the 2005 Northwestern Minnesota Synod Assembly memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly to approve Recommendation One with the following change: to delete the phrase “at least” and substitute “of greater importance than” because the God-given mission and communion we share is much more important than the issue about which faithful conscience-bound Lutherans find themselves so decisively at odds.

4. Saint Paul Area Synod (3H) [2005 Memorial]

RESOLVED, that the Saint Paul Area Synod indicate support for the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Recommendation One concerning the report of the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality.

5. Saint Paul Area Synod (3H) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, we, the youth leaders and representatives of Lutheran Youth Networking in Christ (LYNC) feel a strong commitment to this church, want to maintain lasting relationships with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America throughout our lives, and desire to continue on our journey together; and

WHEREAS, as young people baptized into the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, we have spent our lives within this church, which is our home, valuing our Lutheran faith and the work of the Lutheran church, and wanting to ensure the same for generations to come; and

WHEREAS, Ephesians 4 states: “Always be humble and gentle. Patiently put up with each other and love each other. Try your best to let God’s Spirit keep your hearts united. Do this by living at

peace. All of you are part of the same body. There is only one Spirit of God, just as you were given one hope when you were chosen to be God's people. We have only one Lord, one faith, and one baptism. There is one God who is the Father of all people. Not only is God above all others, but he works by using all of us, and he lives in all of us"; and

WHEREAS, the constitution of the Lutheran Youth Organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America states in 2.01.i: "The purpose of this organization is to exhibit the inclusive unity that is God's will for the church"; and

WHEREAS, we pray and trust that the decisions made by the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America will be guided by the Holy Spirit, and we trust members of this church to have faith in the guidance of the Holy Spirit throughout the process leading up to, during, and after the 2005 Churchwide Assembly; and

WHEREAS, we desire members and congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to stay a united church regardless of the potentially divisive conversations and actions concerning the issue of sexuality in this church, especially following the release of the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality report and recommendations on January 13, 2005, and the action taken at the 2005 Churchwide Assembly; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Saint Paul Area Synod Council ask members and congregations of the Saint Paul Area Synod to be faithful in commitment to work together as one body in the mission of Jesus Christ within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, regardless of actions taken during the 2005 Churchwide Assembly; and be it further

RESOLVED, that members and congregations of the Saint Paul Area Synod join LYNC in actively continuing conversation, study, and efforts to bridge the diversity of the congregations and individuals that make up this church; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Saint Paul Area Synod in assembly receive and support the LYNC call to unity and continued partnership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and forward this call for unity and this resolution to the 2005 Churchwide Assembly.

6. Central States Synod (4B) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the people of the Central States Synod give thanks to God for our oneness in Christ Jesus and for the gift of the Holy Spirit working in this synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America during this time of study and discernment of God's will for this church; and

WHEREAS, we give thanks for the variety of gifts and richness of diversity within this church and recognize that people within this synod are not of one mind on the matter of sexuality, at times presenting fundamentally differing perspectives grounded in credible Lutheran theological and biblical teachings; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Central States Synod, in assembly, affirm with gratitude the involvement of congregations and individuals in this study and conversation and affirm with gratitude the work of the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality, the Conference of Bishops, and the Church Council in preparing the recommendations to be presented to the 2005 Churchwide Assembly; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Central States Synod, in assembly, encourage all of its congregations to hold in prayer the voting members of the 2005 Churchwide Assembly and further pray for the blessing of the Holy Spirit to guide the deliberations and decisions of the 2005 Churchwide Assembly; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Central States Synod, in assembly, memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly to approve the resolution related to Recommendation One as presented by the Church Council, affirming our unity while recognizing our diversity as a people of God and encouraging us to find ways to live together faithfully in the midst of our differences.

[NOTE from the synod: The vote on this memorial was Yes-384; No-72; Abstain-25.]

7. Greater Milwaukee Synod (5J) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the Task Force for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Studies on Sexuality has published its findings and recommendations for the people of this church to ponder and to give them some clear evidence of how some members of this church currently stand in regard to persons who are homosexual and specifically in regard to the blessing of same-gender unions and the ordination of gay and lesbian persons living in committed relationships; and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America currently maintains a policy of open congregational membership for gay and lesbian persons, as well as a policy of ordaining gay and lesbian persons who promise to remain celibate, but currently does not approve of blessing same-gender commitment ceremonies nor of ordaining gay and lesbian persons unwilling to remain celibate; and

WHEREAS, a significant number of members and clergy of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America have seen the presence and the fruits of the Holy Spirit in the lives of gay and lesbian persons who are single and others who are living in committed, responsible, loving relationships, whose lives give a daily testimony to the unconditional love of God in Jesus Christ in their families, in their congregations, in their work places, and in their communities; and

WHEREAS, the first-generation Church, in the face of great opposition from pious and loyal leaders and members, agreed to a more inclusive definition of church membership that no longer required the Mosaic tradition of circumcision—a radical, history-changing decision based almost totally on the testimony of Peter, Paul, and others that they had seen in uncircumcised Gentiles the work of the Holy Spirit and, based on their “Lutheran” conclusion: “We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are . . .” (Acts 15:11); and

WHEREAS, the Lutheran church has historically affirmed the centrality of the Gospel and Jesus Christ himself as the prism through which the Church is to look as it interprets Scripture, shapes its teaching, and proclaims the life-changing good news of God’s unconditional love for all people in Jesus Christ; and

WHEREAS, failure of the Church to accept, affirm, and bless gay and lesbian persons, their Spirit-filled faith and witness, as well as their relationships and families, is a serious matter of a negative witness to the entire gay and lesbian community and to the world at large; and

WHEREAS, it has always been with great struggle that the Church has changed its stance on such watershed issues as the abolition of slavery, the end of child labor, the enfranchisement of women, the end of racial segregation, and the ordination of women—yet the Church and the world are less oppressive and much healthier for the changes; and

WHEREAS, the Greater Milwaukee Synod and its congregations are already enriched by the gifts of gay and lesbian persons who believe in Jesus Christ and whose lives are filled with the Spirit, many of them living in healthy, loving, committed unions; and

WHEREAS, the unity of the Church does not hinge on complete agreement about such mysteries of human life as our sexuality but on our faith in Jesus Christ and our openness to the Holy Spirit; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Greater Milwaukee Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly to

1. witness to the unconditional love of God in Jesus Christ by affirming acceptance of gay and lesbian believers in Christ as congregational members on the same basis as other members;
2. encourage congregations that find the full acceptance of gay and lesbian persons and pastors to be contrary to their understanding of the Gospel and of the Scriptures to continue in prayerful study and discernment of God’s will in dialogue with sisters and brothers in this church;
3. encourage congregations that find the full acceptance of gay and lesbian persons and pastors to be consistent with their understanding of the Gospel and of the Scriptures to continue in prayerful study and discernment of God’s will in dialogue with sisters and brothers in this church;

4. call upon all congregations of this church to engage in ongoing prayer, study, discernment, walking with sisters and brothers in the lesbian and gay community, and partnering with other congregations for the purpose of mutual enrichment and growth, as outlined in Recommendation One of the report of the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality.

8. Greater Milwaukee Synod (5J) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the Greater Milwaukee Synod Council supports Recommendation One from the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality, which states that we should “concentrate on finding ways to live together faithfully in the midst of our disagreements”; and

WHEREAS, the 1993 statement by the Conference of Bishops leaves room for pastoral response to the missional need for the blessing of committed same-gender unions, which is the foundation of Recommendation Two and which is the spirit by which the Greater Milwaukee Synod passed its Resolution One and the subsequent Resolution A-Substitute; and

WHEREAS, the Greater Milwaukee Synod Resolution A-Substitute states that this church is in a period of discernment regarding homosexuality and, more specifically, regarding the best way to recognize and support gay and lesbian members; and

WHEREAS, the Greater Milwaukee Synod Resolution A-Substitute states that there are pastors and congregations involved in surrounding gay and lesbian persons with prayers, seeking God’s blessing on permanent, committed same-gender relationships; and

WHEREAS, the Greater Milwaukee Synod Resolution A-Substitute states that there are also pastors and congregations who welcome gay and lesbian persons but who do not consider it faithful or appropriate to ask God’s blessing on same-gender relationships; and

WHEREAS, the Greater Milwaukee Synod has continued to operate in a healthy manner despite experiencing a lengthy and sometimes painful and contentious process of discernment regarding this matter; and

WHEREAS, the Greater Milwaukee Synod understands the dialogue must continue, especially as it pertains to Recommendation Three and that the passing of resolutions are a step in that dialogue process; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Greater Milwaukee Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly to witness to the unconditional love of God in Jesus Christ by recognizing and affirming those pastors and congregations who ask God’s blessing on permanent, faithful, committed, same-gender relationships, recognizing that they do so on the basis of their understanding of Scripture, tradition, and the guiding of the Holy Spirit; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Greater Milwaukee Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly to witness to the unconditional love of God in Jesus Christ by recognizing and affirming those pastors and congregations who welcome gay and lesbian persons but who do not find that asking God’s blessing on permanent, faithful, committed, same-gender relationships is in keeping with their understanding of Scripture, tradition, and the guiding of the Holy Spirit; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we charitably respect one another as we examine our understanding and practices, speaking the truth in love and practicing the “mutual conversation and consolation of the saints” (Luther).

9. La Crosse Area Synod (5L) [2005 Memorial]

RESOLVED, to support the resolution related to Recommendation One of the report and recommendations of the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality as presented by the Church Council to the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

10. La Crosse Area Synod (5L) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, we, as youth leaders, desire to continue our journey together, feel a strong commitment to this church, and want to maintain lasting relationships within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America throughout our lives; and

WHEREAS, we, as young baptized members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, value our Lutheran faith and the work of the Lutheran church, and because we have spent our lives within this church which we consider our home, and further desire to ensure the same for generations to come; and

WHEREAS, Scripture states: “Lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all (Ephesians 4:2-6); and

WHEREAS, the constitution of the Lutheran Youth Organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America states: “The purpose of this organization is to exhibit the inclusive unity that is God’s will for the church (2.01.i)”;

WHEREAS, the Small Catechism teaches that the Holy Spirit “calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth”; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that we strive for unity as a church, regardless of potentially divisive conversations and actions concerning the issue(s) of sexuality; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the 2005 Churchwide Assembly be memorialized and encouraged to have faith in the guidance of the Spirit; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we encourage members and congregations to maintain their commitment to work together as one body in the mission of Jesus Christ within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, regardless of decisions made by the 2005 Churchwide Assembly; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we individually commit ourselves to live out these intentions in our lives and congregations.

11. Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod (8G) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has placed on the agenda of the 2005 Churchwide Assembly three recommendations for action as a result of its consideration of the “Report and Recommendations” of the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality and related actions and responses from 55 Synod Councils; and

WHEREAS, the weight of evidence needed to change the Church’s long-held, catholic, and biblical teaching regarding homosexual acts has not emerged with sufficient certainty to affect the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America’s practice concerning ordaining clergy and blessing unions; and

WHEREAS, the unity of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is challenged in the face of fundamental disagreement over core beliefs and practices of this church; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod in assembly memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly to fully endorse Recommendation One of the Church Council concerning the sexuality studies: that this church concentrate on finding ways to live together faithfully in the midst of its disagreements.

12. West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod (8H) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the “Recommendations on Sexuality Studies” and the “Report and Recommendations from the Task Force for Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Studies on Sexuality” both confuse the institutional unity of the visible church with the spiritual unity of the hidden church; and

WHEREAS, the report of the task force rightly states “that our differences express deeply held and conscience-bound positions”; and

WHEREAS, Recommendation One of the “Recommendations on Sexuality Studies” calls for “living together faithfully in the midst of disagreements”; and

WHEREAS, faithfulness, as understood by conscience-bound persons, may preclude life together in one particular institutional structure or polity of the visible church; and

WHEREAS, maintenance of the institutional unity of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in its current form may prove impossible because of the mutual exclusivity of these “deeply held and conscience-bound positions”; and

WHEREAS, excessive commitment of resources to the maintenance of the institutional unity of the visible church in times of major conflict unreasonably diverts limited resources from mission and ministry; and

WHEREAS, the mission and ministry of the Church might be pursued just as effectively in institutional structures or polities other than the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and

WHEREAS, the report of the task force errs in asserting, “If the assembly approves this first recommendation, it is declaring that this issue does not have to be church dividing”; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that this synod memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly to formally declare that this issue is, in fact, church-dividing.

13. South Carolina Synod (9C) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality has recommended that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America concentrate on finding ways to live together faithfully in the midst of disagreements; and

WHEREAS, Jesus Christ, in his prayer to his Father, asked “that all be one as we are one”; and

WHEREAS, Scripture declares that there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and our creeds profess one holy catholic and apostolic church; and

WHEREAS, the Conference of Bishops has reported significant differences of opinion concerning the issues surrounding gays and lesbians; and

WHEREAS, the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America experienced disagreement over the development of their response to the task force recommendations; and

WHEREAS, in *Journey Together Faithfully: Part Two*, the task force provided a balanced presentation, which had over 28,000 responses, of which 74.6 percent responded “that they better understood the views of other people”; and

WHEREAS, the 2003 South Carolina Synod Assembly experienced meaningful dialogue concerning the issue of gays and lesbians in this church, during which the participants acknowledged a greater understanding of the issue; and

WHEREAS, there are other issues that arise within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America that have the possibility of deeply dividing us; and

WHEREAS, many congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America continue to experience deep divisions and conflict that hamper the proclamation of the Gospel; and

WHEREAS, this church should be a place where divisive issues can be discussed safely; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the 2005 Assembly of the South Carolina Synod endorse Recommendation One of the Church Council concerning the ELCA Studies on Sexuality; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the endorsement recognize the need to include other issues that can divide this church; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the 2005 Assembly of the South Carolina Synod submit a memorial to the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America asking that the Church Council’s Recommendation One be adopted; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the South Carolina Synod Assembly memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to develop and share strategies for living together faithfully in the midst of disagreements arising from the role of gays and lesbians in this church and other disagreements that divide this church and its congregations.

BACKGROUND

The concerns raised by the memorials of these synods were addressed as part of the business of the 2005 ELCA Churchwide Assembly (see above, CA05.05.17, page 276). Background information on ELCA Sexuality Studies: Responses to Recommendation One and the proposed action on this topic recommended by the ELCA Church Council are printed in Section IV of the *2005 Pre-Assembly Report*, pages 19–21.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

EN BLOC

CA05.07.39s To receive the memorials of the Oregon Synod; Rocky Mountain Synod; Northwestern Minnesota Synod; Saint Paul Area Synod; Central States Synod; Greater Milwaukee Synod; La Crosse Area Synod; Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod; West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod; and South Carolina Synod on the ELCA Sexuality Studies: Responses to Recommendation One of the ELCA Studies on Sexuality; and
To acknowledge the action of the 2005 ELCA Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America related to Recommendation One of the ELCA Studies on Sexuality as the response of the Churchwide Assembly to the memorials of these synods.

Category F2: Responses to Recommendation Two

Reference: *2005 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section VI, pages 81–84.

Five synods adopted essentially identical memorials on Recommendation Two. The Model Memorial is printed here, with changes noted by synod.

Model Memorial

WHEREAS, the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality has characterized the 1993 pastoral statement by the Conference of Bishops to have “pointed the way by treating such decisions as matters of pastoral care . . .”; and

WHEREAS, the understanding of the 1993 pastoral statement by the Conference of Bishops varies widely throughout the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and

WHEREAS, then-Presiding Bishop Herbert W. Chilstrom stated on February 16, 1995, that “this statement by the Conference of Bishops is a statement of advice. It is not binding on pastors, nor is it grounds for discipline in our church . . .”; and

WHEREAS, the task force said, “With respect to the matter of blessing same-sex couples who have entered into long-term monogamous covenants of love and care, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America currently has no legislative policy . . .”; and

WHEREAS, the task force “believes that pastors and congregations can and should be trusted by this church to exercise the wisdom of discretion in their ministry to same-sex couples and their natural and congregational families . . .”; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the [Synod Name] memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to adopt the following as the policy of this church: “It shall be the policy of the ELCA that for the sake of outreach, ministry, mission, and prayerful support, a congregation may choose to give its pastor or pastors discretion to perform services of blessing of covenanted same-gender relationships.”

1. Northwest Washington Synod (1B) [2005 Memorial]

Adopted the “model memorial” printed above, with the following changes:

- All WHEREAS paragraphs are deleted

2. Oregon Synod (1E) [2005 Memorial]

Adopted the “model memorial” printed above, with the following changes:

- RESOLVED paragraph replaces “a congregation may choose to give its pastor or pastors” with “a congregation’s pastor(s) shall have”

3. Grand Canyon Synod (2D) [2005 Memorial]

Adopted the “model memorial” printed above, with the following changes:

- Fourth WHEREAS replaces “same-sex” with “same-gender”
- Fifth WHEREAS replaces “same-sex” with “same-gender”
- A new WHEREAS is inserted after the fifth WHEREAS, reading:
“WHEREAS, this affirms Recommendation Two of April 11, 2005, on the sexuality studies by the Church Council to the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America ‘continue to respect the guidance of the 1993 statement of the Conference of Bishops; and be it further resolved that this church welcome gay and lesbian persons into its life (as stated in Churchwide Assembly resolutions from 1991, 1995, and 1999), and trust pastors and congregations to discern ways to provide faithful pastoral care to same-sex couples. . .’;”
- RESOLVED replaces “mission, and prayerful support,” with “and mission, undergirded by prayerful support,”

4. Minneapolis Area Synod (3G) [2005 Memorial]

Adopted the “model memorial” printed above, with the following changes:

- First WHEREAS begins “the Report and Recommendations of the...”
- Sixth WHEREAS is deleted
- RESOLVED is replaced with:
“RESOLVED, that the Minneapolis Area Synod in assembly memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to adopt the following as the policy of this church: ‘It shall be the policy of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America that while it does not have an approved service for the covenanting of same-gender partnerships and does not officially endorse such ceremonies, it recognizes the right of congregations to give their pastor or pastors discretion to perform such services for the sake of outreach, ministry, mission, and prayerful support.’”

5. Southeastern Iowa Synod (5D) [2005 Memorial]

Adopted the “model memorial” printed above, with the following changes:

- Second WHEREAS replaces “the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;” with “this church;”
- Fourth WHEREAS replaces “task force” with “Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality”
- Two additional WHEREAS paragraphs are inserted after the fifth WHEREAS, reading:
“WHEREAS, the resolution known as ‘The Definition and Blessing of Committed Same-gender Relationships’ (CA01.06.28), which was adopted by the 2001 Churchwide Assembly, directed the Division for Ministry in consultation with the Division for Congregational Ministries and the Conference of Bishops to identify and make available materials and resources to assist and support pastors as they provide counseling and pastoral support for persons seeking same-gender blessings; and

“WHEREAS, this church has yet to begin the task of identifying and making available such resources;”

- An additional RESOLVED is inserted at the end:

“RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Iowa Synod memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to adopt the following: ‘That the ELCA Church Council direct the appropriate unit(s) of the church to “identify and make available materials and resources to assist and support pastors as they provide counseling and pastoral support for persons in committed same-gender relationships” as called for in the resolution known as “The Definition and Blessing of Committed Same-Gender Relationships” (CA01.06.28).’”

Additional memorials on this topic

6. Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod (1D) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has no policy on the blessing of same-sex unions; and

WHEREAS, the 1993 statement of the Conference of Bishops states that there is “basis neither in Scripture nor tradition for the establishment of an official ceremony by this church for the blessing of a homosexual relationship” and that the bishops “do not approve such a ceremony as an official action of this church”; and

WHEREAS, statements of the Conference of Bishops do not establish policy for this church; and

WHEREAS, the second recommendation of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to the 2005 Churchwide Assembly concerning the report and recommendations of the task force for the ELCA sexuality studies resolves that the “Evangelical Lutheran Church in America continue to respect the guidance of the 1993 statement of the Conference of Bishops” but also resolves that this church “trust pastors and congregations to discern ways to provide faithful pastoral care to same-sex couples”; and

WHEREAS, the Church Council has determined that this recommendation does not constitute a change in policy, requiring only a simple majority approval by the 2005 Churchwide Assembly; and

WHEREAS, this recommendation appears to leave the question of whether to bless “lifelong, committed, and faithful same-sex relationships” to congregational and pastoral discernment; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the 2005 Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod Assembly memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to amend the Church Council’s second recommendation to clarify whether the 1993 Statement of the Conference of Bishops shall become policy, or if the blessing of same-sex unions is a matter of discernment that is entrusted to pastors and congregations.

7. Rocky Mountain Synod (2E) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality has made its Report and Recommendations (January 13, 2005); and

WHEREAS, the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has made recommendations (April 11, 2005) to the 2005 Churchwide Assembly; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the 2005 Rocky Mountain Synod Assembly urge the 2005 Churchwide Assembly to endorse Recommendation Two of the task force report, which states: “The Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality recommends that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America continue to respect the pastoral guidance of the 1993 statement of the Bishops.”

8. Northwestern Minnesota (3D) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the Conference of Bishops, meeting October 5–8, 1993, issued the statement “Blessing of Homosexual Relationships” (CB93.10.25), which says, “We, as the Conference of Bishops of the

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, recognize that there is basis neither in Scripture nor tradition for the establishment of an official ceremony by this church for the blessing of a homosexual relationship. We, therefore, do not approve such a ceremony as an official action of this church's ministry. Nevertheless, we express trust in and will continue dialogue with those pastors and congregations who are in ministry with gay and lesbian persons and affirm their desire to explore the best ways to provide pastoral care for all to whom they minister"; and

WHEREAS, Recommendation Two of the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality reads: "The Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality recommends that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America continue to respect the pastoral guidance of the 1993 statement of the Conference of Bishops"; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the 2005 Northwestern Minnesota Synod Assembly memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to approve Recommendation Two.

9. Saint Paul Area Synod (3H) [2005 Memorial]

RESOLVED, that the Saint Paul Area Synod Assembly indicate support for the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Recommendation Two concerning the report of the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality with the following additional wording [underlined]:

RESOLVED, that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America continue to respect the guidance of the 1993 statement of the Conference of Bishops; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this church welcome gay and lesbian persons into its life (as stated in Churchwide Assembly resolutions from 1991, 1995, and 1999) and trust God to guide pastors and congregations to discern ways to provide faithful pastoral care to same-sex couples.

10. Central States Synod (4B) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the people of the Central States Synod give thanks to God for our oneness in Christ Jesus and for the gift of the Holy Spirit working in this synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America during this time of study and discernment of God's will for this church; and

WHEREAS, we give thanks for the variety of gifts and richness of diversity within this church and recognize that people within this synod are not of one mind on the matter of sexuality, at times presenting fundamentally differing perspectives grounded in credible Lutheran theological and biblical teachings; and

WHEREAS, the 1993 statement of the Conference of Bishops provides counsel and guidance to pastors and congregations, leaving room for pastoral response to missional needs for caring for and supporting all persons, including those in committed same-gender relationships; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Central States Synod, in assembly, memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly to approve the resolution related to Recommendation Two as presented by the Church Council, respecting the 1993 statement of the Conference of Bishops as pastoral guidance and trusting pastors and congregations to provide faithful pastoral care to all persons.

[NOTE from the synod: The vote on this memorial was Yes-344; No-122; Abstain-12.]

11. Metropolitan Chicago Synod (5A) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, God creates us to be in relationship with one another, and both Scripture and society sanction faithful, committed, and monogamous relationships in which sexuality is only one dimension of human intimacy and mutuality; and

WHEREAS, the Metropolitan Chicago Synod has declared itself a Reconciling in Christ synod, making a public affirmation that gays and lesbians are welcome in our parishes and are invited to participate fully in the life and ministry of our congregations; and

WHEREAS, the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality said, “With respect to the matter of blessing same-sex couples who have entered into long-term, monogamous covenants of love and care, the ELCA currently has no legislative policy . . .”; and

WHEREAS, in June 2001, the Metropolitan Chicago Synod memorialized the Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to develop a rite of blessing for same-gender couples; and

WHEREAS, the resolution known as “The Definition and Blessing of Committed Same-Gender Relations” (CA01.06.28), which was adopted by the 2001 Churchwide Assembly, directed the Division for Ministry in consultation with the Division for Congregational Ministries and the Conference of Bishops to identify and make available materials and resources to assist and support pastors as they provide counseling and pastoral support for persons seeking same-gender blessings; and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has yet to begin the task of identifying and making available such resources; and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America through its publishing house and synods does suggest, encourage, and make available resources for blessing rituals for pets, wreaths, nativity scenes, candles, ashes, palms, oils, seeds, soil, quilts, sewing kits, layettes, health kits, and backpacks, among other non-human or inanimate objects; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Chicago Synod Assembly memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly to adopt the following as the policy of this church: “It shall be the policy of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, that, for the sake of outreach, ministry, mission, and prayerful support, congregations can recognize and affirm the discretion of pastors to perform services of blessing of faithful, committed, and monogamous same-gender relationships”; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Chicago Synod Assembly memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly to direct the Division for Ministry in consultation with the Division for Congregational Ministries (or their successors) and the Conference of Bishops to develop a rite of blessing for same-gender couples and to identify and make available materials to assist and support pastors as they provide pastoral care and counseling for people seeking to have their same-gender relationship blessed as provided by CA01.06.28.

12. Central/Southern Illinois Synod (5C) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the Bible is God’s living Word and carries the ultimate authority on all aspects of life; and

WHEREAS, while in some instances Scripture has corrected itself, the specific texts on homosexuality remain consistently opposed throughout Scripture (Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13, Romans 1:26–27, 1 Corinthians 6:9); and

WHEREAS, Scripture upholds that the union of marriage is between a man and a woman (Genesis 2:21–24, Matthew 19:1–12) and it says nothing in favor of homosexual relationships; and

WHEREAS, Scripture contains the law, which identifies sin and thereby precludes both the ordination or consecration of a person actively involved in a homosexual relationship and the blessing of same-sex unions; and

WHEREAS, by the grace of God all sinners are welcomed into the church, are called to repent of their sins, and then to live a Christ-like life with the aid of the Holy Spirit; and

WHEREAS, homosexuality is a burden carried by some which often leads to a deep sense of pain and isolation; and

WHEREAS, rostered leaders must strive to exemplify the highest moral and ethical conduct possible; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that this synod memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to affirm the unity of marriage as only between a man and a woman; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this synod memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to reject the establishment of an official ceremony blessing a homosexual relationship, even under pastoral guidance.

13. Western Iowa Synod (5E) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the ceremonies of this church communicate its theological understandings and create a positive witness to society, contributing to the life, health, and stability of communities; and

WHEREAS, the ceremonies of this church should reflect the theological understandings shared in common by this church; and

WHEREAS, the Conference of Bishops (1993) did not approve an official ceremony by this church for the blessing of same-sex unions because they found no basis for it in the Bible or in tradition; and

WHEREAS, establishing the practice of blessing same-sex unions would be a public affirmation of a new type of institution; and

WHEREAS, respecting and upholding the witness of Scripture and the practice of this church in regard to the structure for human relationships is important to the continuity of this church's witness to the Christian faith; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Western Iowa Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly to adopt the following statement: "After study and deliberation, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America determines that the practice of this church should not be changed to include ceremonies for the blessing of same-sex unions."

14. La Crosse Area Synod (5L) [2005 Memorial]

RESOLVED, to support the resolution related to Recommendation Two of the report and recommendations of the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality as presented by the Church Council to the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

15. Southeastern Synod (9D) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is considering the appropriate response to its study of the blessing of committed same-gender relationships and of the rostering of approved candidates who are in committed same-gender relationships; and

WHEREAS, the study identified no scriptural basis for the establishment of an official ceremony by this church for the blessing of a homosexual relationship in a manner consistent with marriage; and

WHEREAS, the recommendations of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America would leave this church without a clear policy on the question of blessing same-sex unions and the ordination of people in those relationships; and

WHEREAS, these recommendations would place reliance on individual bishops and synodical interpretations, which would be subject to personal bias and not necessarily Scriptural authority; and

WHEREAS, this policy does in fact represent a change in policy in spite of the task force's claim to the contrary; and

WHEREAS, the unity of this church is best served by common standards that are uniformly held and enforced by all of its synods and congregations; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Synod memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to adopt the following statement from the Conference of Bishops as the policy of this church: "There is basis neither in Scripture nor tradition for the establishment of an official ceremony by this church for the blessing of a homosexual relationship. We, therefore, do not approve such a ceremony as an official action of this church's ministry. Nevertheless, we express trust in and will continue dialogue with those pastors and congregations who are in ministry with gay and lesbian persons and affirm their desire to explore the best ways to provide pastoral care for all to whom they minister."

BACKGROUND

The wide variety of memorials led the Memorials Committee to conclude that there was widespread confusion about the intent of Recommendation Two. This confusion may lead

voting members to be unclear about their vote on this matter. Clarification prior to consideration of the response to these memorials would be helpful.

Some of these synodical memorials were adopted prior to the Task Force Report, and some were adopted prior to the Church Council recommendations, and therefore may not reflect the content of the action before the assembly.

The concerns raised by the memorials of these synods were addressed as part of the business of the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (see above, CA05.05.18, page 309). Background information on ELCA Sexuality Studies and the proposed action on this topic recommended by the ELCA Church Council are printed in Section IV of the *2005 Pre-Assembly Report*, pages 19-21.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

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CA05.07.39† To receive the memorials of the Northwest Washington Synod, Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod, Oregon Synod, Grand Canyon Synod, Rocky Mountain Synod, Northwestern Minnesota Synod, Minneapolis Area Synod, Saint Paul Area Synod, Central States Synod, Metropolitan Chicago Synod, Central/Southern Illinois Synod, Southeastern Iowa Synod, Western Iowa Synod, La Crosse Area Synod, and Southeastern Synod related to Recommendation Two of the ELCA Studies on Sexuality; and

To acknowledge the action of the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America related to Recommendation Two of the ELCA Studies on Sexuality as the response of the Churchwide Assembly to the memorials of these synods.

Category F3: Responses to Recommendation Three

Reference: *2005 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section VI, pages 85–91.

1. Northwest Washington Synod (1B) [2005 Memorial]

RESOLVED, that the Northwest Washington Synod memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to adopt the following: “That it shall be the policy of this church that there be no policy barrier to rostered service for otherwise qualified persons in same-gender covenanted relationships that are ‘mutual, chaste and faithful’” (“Vision and Expectations,” page 13); and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Division for Ministry (or the appropriate churchwide unit), in consultation with the Conference of Bishops and through action of the Church Council, revise “Vision and Expectations” and “Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline” in accordance with the foregoing resolution.

2. Oregon Synod (1E) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the unity of the Church does not hinge on complete agreement about such mysteries of human life as our sexuality but on our faith in Jesus Christ and our openness to the Holy Spirit; and

WHEREAS, a significant number of members and clergy of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America have seen the presence and the fruits of the Holy Spirit in the lives of gay and lesbian persons who are single and others who are living in committed, responsible, loving relationships, whose lives give a daily testimony to the unconditional love of God in Jesus Christ in their families, in their congregations, in their workplaces, and in their communities; and

WHEREAS, some of these gay and lesbian persons already serve this church in ordained ministry or in other forms of rostered service; and

WHEREAS, the first-generation Church, in the face of great opposition from pious and loyal leaders and members, agreed to a more inclusive definition of church membership that no longer required the Mosaic tradition of circumcision—a radical, history-changing decision based almost totally on the testimony of Peter, Paul, and others that they had seen in uncircumcised Gentiles the work of the Holy Spirit and on their conclusion: “We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are” (Acts 15:11); and

WHEREAS, the Lutheran Church has historically affirmed the centrality of the Gospel and Jesus Christ himself as the prism through which the Church is to look as it interprets Scripture, shapes its teaching, and proclaims the life-changing good news of God’s unconditional love for all people in Jesus Christ; and

WHEREAS, the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality has recommended “that the ELCA concentrate on finding ways to live together faithfully in the midst of our disagreements,” but also recommends that this church refrain from changing current discriminatory policies and practices with regard to lesbian and gay Lutherans; and

WHEREAS, such “living faithfully” would require us all to abide injustice, prejudice, and less than genuine hospitality towards faithful gay and lesbian Christians in our congregations; and

WHEREAS, some members of the task force have taken the position, as expressed in Dissenting Position Two, calling for removal of the last sentence of the subsection “Sexual Conduct” in “Vision and Expectations,” which states: “Ordained ministers who are homosexual in their self-understanding are expected to abstain from homosexual sexual relationships”; and

WHEREAS, no congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is compelled to consider or call any particular candidate for a rostered position; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Oregon Synod memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to adopt the following: that it shall be the policy of this church that there be no policy barrier to rostered service for otherwise qualified persons in same-gender covenanted relationships that are “mutual, chaste, and faithful,” (“Vision and Expectations,” page 13); and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Division for Ministry (or the appropriate churchwide unit) in consultation with the Conference of Bishops and through action of the Church Council accordingly revise “Vision and Expectations,” “Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline,” the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, and all other related documents governing policy and practice on this matter.

3. Grand Canyon Synod (2D) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality has stated, “that the disagreement over these issues before the church is deep, pervasive, multi-faceted, and multi-layered. This church is not of one mind . . .”; and

WHEREAS, the task force has recommended “that the ELCA concentrate on finding ways to live together faithfully in the midst of our disagreements . . .”; and

WHEREAS, the task force Recommendation Three does not insure a uniform response across this church; and

WHEREAS, the task force’s Recommendation Three does not provide a sanctioned and consistent process or guidance for a way to live faithfully in the midst of these disagreements to those gay and lesbian persons called to ministry across this church who are in covenanted relationships; and

WHEREAS, this affirms Recommendation Three on the sexuality studies by the Church Council to the 2005 Churchwide Assembly that “. . . within this church there is a desire to maintain the continuity of the Church’s traditional teaching and practice while also providing opportunity for ongoing discernment of new ways in which the Spirit might be speaking to this church in our time, and

both may be honored by taking the step to create a process for consideration of exceptions”; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Grand Canyon Synod Assembly memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to adopt the Church Council Recommendation Three “RESOLVED” points one, two, and three.

4. Southwestern Minnesota Synod (3F) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the third recommendation of the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality does constitute a substantive change in implementing policy from “Vision and Expectations,” and that change has far-reaching implications within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, for intra-Lutheran relations, and for our ecumenical partners; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Southwestern Minnesota Synod Assembly memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly to recognize officially that the third recommendation does constitute a substantive change in implementing “Vision and Expectations” and thus requires a two-thirds vote for approval at the 2005 Churchwide Assembly.

5. Southwestern Minnesota Synod (3F) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the local option (i.e., allowing each congregation or synod to decide for itself regarding these matters of homosexuality) is in no way a compromise because it will mean that those opposed to changes in this church’s traditional positions on these questions relating to homosexuality lose their right to continue to teach that homosexual practice is wrong in all circumstances because the Church will now have permitted it; and

WHEREAS, the local option is a means for the gradual establishment of the changes in question, in lieu of a decision through a proper vote; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that Southwestern Minnesota Synod Assembly memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly that the local option not be considered.

6. Southwestern Minnesota Synod (3F) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the Confession of Faith in the constitution states that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America “accepts the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God and the authoritative source and norm of its proclamation, faith, and life” (2.03.); and

WHEREAS, the Scriptures testify that God created the gift of sexuality (Genesis 1 and 2; Mark 10:6–9; Ephesians 5:28–33); and

WHEREAS, the Scriptures teach that marriage is a lifelong bond of faithfulness between one man and one woman and the context for which sexual intercourse is reserved (1 Corinthians 6:15–20; Hebrews 13:4; Galatians 5:16–19); and

WHEREAS, that Biblical teaching about sexual life has shaped and continues to shape the moral fabric of civilization in profound and positive ways; and

WHEREAS, that Biblical teaching about sexual life is facing unprecedented challenges in society and the church; and

WHEREAS, a tradition so universal and valuable should not be changed without overwhelming biblical and confessional warrant; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Southwestern Minnesota Synod Assembly memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly to honor and uphold biblical teaching about human sexuality by recommending no changes be made in the written standards of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for sexual conduct.

7. Saint Paul Area Synod (3H) [2005 Memorial]

RESOLVED, that the Saint Paul Area Synod Assembly indicate support for the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Recommendation Three concerning the report of the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality.

[NOTE from the synod: Yes-224; No-153; Abstentions-18]

8. Saint Paul Area Synod (3H) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality states that there is “no consensus on these matters within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America” on the questions of blessings and ordinations of same-sex committed relationships; and

WHEREAS, the task force recommendations lack clarity and present contradictory messages that will encourage confusion; and

WHEREAS, clergy and congregations and synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, acting conscientiously, do not want to and should not have to violate church rules; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Saint Paul Area Synod memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to adopt the following: “that while the ELCA continues to seek consensus on these questions of blessings and ordination of gay and lesbian persons in committed relationships, any prohibitions against the blessings and ordination of gay and lesbian persons in committed relationships be suspended. During this time, partnered gay or lesbian candidates who are otherwise in compliance with ‘Vision and Expectations’ will be approved for call. And pastors and congregations in ministry with gay and lesbian persons will be affirmed in their discernment about the best ways to provide pastoral care for all to whom they minister, including providing blessing services.”

[NOTE from the synod: Yes-205; No-191; Abstentions-8.]

9. Saint Paul Area Synod (3H) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality has stated “that the disagreement over these issues before the church is deep, pervasive, multi-faceted, and multi-layered. This church is not of one mind”; and

WHEREAS, the task force has recommended “that the ELCA concentrate on finding ways to live together faithfully in the midst of our disagreements”; and

WHEREAS, the task force’s Recommendation Three does not ensure a uniform response across this church; and

WHEREAS, the task force’s Recommendation Three does not provide a uniform way for those gay and lesbian persons across this church who are in publicly covenanted relationships and who are also called to ministry to live faithfully in the midst of these disagreements; and

WHEREAS, some members of the task force have taken the position, as expressed in Dissenting Position Two, that calls for the removal of the provision in the document “Vision and Expectations” Section III, sub-section “Sexual Conduct,” which states: “Ordained ministers who are homosexual in their self-understanding are expected to abstain from homosexual sexual relationships” (see similar wording in “Vision and Expectations” for commissioned and consecrated persons); and

WHEREAS, the 2001 Churchwide Assembly action CA01.06.36 directed this church:

“To respond to the memorials of the Saint Paul Area and Metropolitan Chicago synods by requesting that the Church Council, the Conference of Bishops, and the Division for Ministry create a specific plan and timeline leading to a decision concerning the rostering of homosexual persons who give expression to sexual intimacy only in a relationship that is mutual, chaste, and faithful, including but not limited to:

- 1) changes in “Vision and Expectations”;
- 2) changes in “Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline”;
- 3) amendments to the ELCA constitution and bylaws; and
- 4) changes in all other related governing documents.

In the event any of the above-mentioned changes require approval of the ELCA Churchwide Assembly, such actions shall be placed before the 2005 Churchwide Assembly for adoption or ratification”; and

WHEREAS, no congregation of the ELCA is compelled to consider or call any candidate for a rostered position; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Saint Paul Area Synod memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to adopt the following: “That it shall be the policy of this church that there be no barrier to rostered service for otherwise

qualified persons who are coupled in same-gender, publicly covenanted relationships that are 'mutual, chaste and faithful,'" ("Vision and Expectations," page 13); and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Division for Ministry (or the appropriate churchwide unit) in consultation with the Conference of Bishops and the Church Council, make appropriate revisions in "Vision and Expectations" and in "Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline," as directed by the 2001 Churchwide Assembly, and that a timeline be established for the implementation of this policy.

[NOTE from the synod: Yes-215; No-182; Abstentions-6]

10. Central States Synod (4B) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the people of the Central States Synod give thanks to God for our oneness in Christ Jesus and for the gift of the Holy Spirit working in this synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America during this time of study and discernment of God's will for this church; and

WHEREAS, we give thanks for the variety of gifts and richness of diversity within this church and recognize that people within this synod are not of one mind on the matter of sexuality, at times presenting fundamentally differing perspectives grounded in credible Lutheran theological and biblical teachings; and

WHEREAS, the recommendations of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America place the trust of this church in the congregations, synods, candidacy committees, and synodical bishops to discern the Holy Spirit's gifts for rostered ministry among the baptized and make decisions appropriate to each situation, while respecting conscience-bound positions that are in disagreement; and

WHEREAS, no congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is compelled to consider or call any candidate for a rostered position; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Central States Synod, in assembly, memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly to approve the resolution related to Recommendation Three as presented by the Church Council, which provides a way to create space in this church for ministries that would fully accept the gifts of gay and lesbian rostered leaders living in committed same-gender relationships.

[NOTE from the synod: The vote on this memorial was Yes-249; No-247; Abstain-13.]

11. Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod (4D) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the recommendations of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America concerning the Studies on Sexuality will be considered at the 2005 Churchwide Assembly; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod in assembly memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly to keep in place the current "Vision and Expectations" and "Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline" for rostered leaders in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and make no change in policy, practice, or procedure.

12. Metropolitan Chicago Synod (5A) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the Report and Recommendations of the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality recommends "that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America concentrate on finding ways to live together faithfully in the midst of our disagreements" but also recommends that the ELCA refrain from changing current discriminatory policies and practices with regard to lesbian and gay Lutherans; and

WHEREAS, such "living faithfully" would require us all to abide in justice, prejudice, and less than genuine hospitality towards faithful gay and lesbian Christians in our congregations; and

WHEREAS, the task force's Recommendation Three does not insure a uniform response across this church; and

WHEREAS, the original resolution of the 2001 Churchwide Assembly, CA01.06.36, directed this church “To respond to the memorials of the Saint Paul Area and Metropolitan Chicago synods by requesting that the Church Council, the Conference of Bishops, and the Division for Ministry create a specific plan and timeline leading to a decision concerning the rostering of homosexual persons who give expression to sexual intimacy only in a relationship that is mutual, chaste, and faithful, including but not limited to:

- 1) changes in ‘Vision and Expectations’;
- 2) changes in ‘Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline’;
- 3) amendments to the ELCA constitution and bylaws; and
- 4) changes in all other related governing documents;

In the event any of the above mentioned changes require approval of the ELCA Churchwide Assembly, such actions shall be placed before the 2005 Churchwide Assembly for adoption or ratification”; and

WHEREAS, no congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is compelled to consider or call any candidate for a rostered position; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Chicago Synod Assembly memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to adopt the following: “That it shall be the policy of this church that there be no policy barrier to rostered service for otherwise qualified persons in same-sex covenanted relationships that are ‘mutual, chaste, and faithful,’” (“Vision and Expectations,” p. 13); and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Chicago Synod Assembly direct the Metropolitan Chicago Synod Council to forward this resolution to the Executive Committee of the Church Council to revise the document “Vision and Expectations” and the document “Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline” by the Division for Ministry (or the appropriate churchwide unit).

13. Southeastern Iowa Synod (5D) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, Recommendation Three of the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality does constitute a substantive change in implementing policy from “Vision and Expectations,” and that change has far-reaching implications within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, for intra-Lutheran relations, and for our ecumenical partners; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Iowa Synod Assembly endorse the April 11, 2005, action of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America requiring a two-thirds majority vote for approval of matters relative to Recommendation Three of the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality and communicate that endorsement to the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

14. Southeastern Iowa Synod (5D) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality has made a heroic effort to find common ground among diverse and strongly held views regarding this church’s attitude toward homosexuality; and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America’s current position imposes on persons with same-sex orientation who are called to ministry conditions that are not imposed on heterosexual individuals; and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Church Council’s Recommendation Three on the sexuality studies affirms “the authority of Scripture as the norm for faith and life” and states that they “recognize there are deeply held yet different interpretations of Scripture to which consciences are bound”; and

WHEREAS, the Church Council acknowledges that “there are those in this church who believe that the Holy Spirit is calling into public ministry persons who are in committed same-sex relationships, and congregations are indicating a willingness to call such persons to service; and

WHEREAS, the Church Council validates that “within this church there is a desire to maintain the continuity of the church’s traditional teaching and practice while also providing opportunity for ongoing discernment of new ways in which the Spirit might be speaking to this church in our time”; and

WHEREAS, a growing number of Evangelical Lutheran Church in America congregations and agencies have found their ministry and outreach strengthened by the leadership of gay, lesbian, and bisexual rostered individuals in committed same-sex relationships; and

WHEREAS, no synod, bishop, candidacy committee, or congregation is forced or required to consider or call any candidate for a rostered position; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Iowa Synod Assembly endorse the recommendations of the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Iowa Synod memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to adopt the following as policy: “That the various expressions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America refrain from disciplining those who in good conscience, and for the sake of outreach, ministry, and the commitment to continuing dialogue, call or approve partnered gay and lesbian candidates whom they believe to be otherwise in compliance with ‘Vision and Expectations’ and to refrain from disciplining those rostered persons so approved and called.”

15. Western Iowa Synod (5E) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality acknowledged the division of opinion throughout this church in regard to these questions; and

WHEREAS, contrary to the report of the task force, decisions that would allow for a local option or a non-geographical synod would constitute a change in existing practices as a church; and

WHEREAS, decisions that would allow for the change of existing practices as a local option or allow for the formation of a non-geographical synod where practices could differ from the main body of this church could contribute further to the division within this church; and

WHEREAS, such local option decisions would shape in part the choices made during the elections of persons to serve as bishops of this church; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Western Iowa Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly to adopt the following statement: “After study and deliberation, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America will not at this time change the current tradition and practice of this church by the addition of a local option or by the formation of a non-geographical synod.”

16. Western Iowa Synod (5E) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America holds “that marriage is a lifelong covenant of faithfulness between a man and a woman”; and

WHEREAS, the Conference of Bishops in October 1993 stated, “We, as the Conference of Bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, recognize that there is basis neither in Scripture nor tradition for the establishment of an official ceremony by this church for the blessing of a homosexual relationship”; and

WHEREAS, the resolutions to adopt bylaws 7.31.18. and 7.52.16. raise too many issues to adopt as implementation, including, for example:

1. How do you define a committed relationship and what evidence should be presented to show the existence of a committed relationship?
2. What is the mission of the synod?
3. How do you define “ordination to a place”?
4. How do you define “approval for particular service”?
5. If a person is ordained or approved to particular service, were they to move, would their ordination for particular place or approval for particular service become invalid?

6. Will the entire process be in the hands of the bishops and Synod Councils?
 7. Will this process be prejudicial for or against people of heterosexual or homosexual orientation?;
- and

WHEREAS, the 2005 Churchwide Assembly must make a decision regarding the sexuality study recommendations before constitutional change can be considered; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Western Iowa Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly to defeat recommended bylaws 7.31.18. and 7.52.16.

17. Greater Milwaukee Synod (5J) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the Task Force for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Studies on Sexuality has published its findings and recommendations for the people of this church to ponder and to give them some clear evidence of how some members of this church currently stand in regard to persons who are homosexual and specifically in regard to the blessing of same-gender unions and the ordination of gay and lesbian persons living in committed relationships; and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America currently maintains a policy of open congregational membership for gay and lesbian persons, as well as a policy of ordaining gay and lesbian persons who promise to remain celibate, but currently does not approve of blessing same-gender commitment ceremonies nor of ordaining gay and lesbian persons unwilling to remain celibate; and

WHEREAS, a significant number of members and clergy of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America have seen the presence and the fruits of the Holy Spirit in the lives of gay and lesbian persons who are single and others who are living in committed, responsible, loving relationships, whose lives give a daily testimony to the unconditional love of God in Jesus Christ in their families, in their congregations, in their work places, and in their communities; and

WHEREAS, the first-generation Church, in the face of great opposition from pious and loyal leaders and members, agreed to a more inclusive definition of church membership that no longer required the Mosaic tradition of circumcision—a radical, history-changing decision based almost totally on the testimony of Peter, Paul, and others that they had seen in uncircumcised Gentiles the work of the Holy Spirit and, based on their “Lutheran” conclusion: “We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are . . .” (Acts 15:11); and

WHEREAS, the Lutheran church has historically affirmed the centrality of the Gospel and Jesus Christ himself as the prism through which the Church is to look as it interprets Scripture, shapes its teaching, and proclaims the life-changing good news of God’s unconditional love for all people in Jesus Christ; and

WHEREAS, failure of the Church to accept, affirm, and bless gay and lesbian persons, their Spirit-filled faith and witness, as well as their relationships and families, is a serious matter of a negative witness to the entire gay and lesbian community and to the world at large; and

WHEREAS, it has always been with great struggle that the Church has changed its stance on such watershed issues as the abolition of slavery, the end of child labor, the enfranchisement of women, the end of racial segregation, and the ordination of women—yet the Church and the world are less oppressive and much healthier for the changes; and

WHEREAS, the Greater Milwaukee Synod and its congregations are already enriched by the gifts of gay and lesbian persons who believe in Jesus Christ and whose lives are filled with the Spirit, many of them living in healthy, loving, committed unions; and

WHEREAS, the unity of the Church does not hinge on complete agreement about such mysteries of human life as our sexuality but on our faith in Jesus Christ and our openness to the Holy Spirit; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Greater Milwaukee Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America memorialize the 2005 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to witness to the unconditional love of God in Jesus Christ by revising the “Vision and Expectations” document to permit gay and lesbian candidates in committed relationships to be considered for ordination on the same basis as other candidates.

18. La Crosse Area Synod (5L) [2005 Memorial]

RESOLVED, to support the resolution related to Recommendation Three of the report and recommendations of the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality as presented by the Church Council to the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

19. Indiana-Kentucky Synod (6C) [2004 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the unity of a denomination is a small evidence of the unity of the Body of Christ; and

WHEREAS, it is essential to the unity of a denomination that it share a common ministerium—pastors and other rostered leaders who are acceptable to the entire denomination, not to just a part of it; and

WHEREAS, gay or lesbian pastors with partners, while they would be acceptable to some members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, would be unacceptable to other members; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Indiana-Kentucky Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly to reaffirm present guidelines: “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 sexual relationships.”

20. Indiana-Kentucky Synod (6C) [2004 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is weakened without unity in faith and practice; and

WHEREAS, the maintenance of one roster of ordained ministers contributes to unity in faith and practice in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and

WHEREAS, the standards of conduct described in “Vision and Expectations” for the ordained ministers of this church is used to determine membership on the roster of ordained ministers and, thereby, is an important factor in nurturing unity in faith and practice in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and

WHEREAS, the current disunity in this church concerning proposed changes to “Vision and Expectations” indicates that it has not yet reached a consensus that can be supported with joy and enthusiasm by all; and

WHEREAS, the Church at its best has always sought to make important decisions affecting its unity in faith and practice with the free consent of all (cf. the first apostolic council in Acts 15); and

WHEREAS, without such free consent, unity in faith and practice suffers and the vitality of the mission of this church is weakened; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that, for the sake of the unity of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and its mission, the Indiana-Kentucky Synod Assembly request that the 2005 Churchwide Assembly maintain the current practices concerning sexual-genital expressions permissible for those admitted to the roster as prescribed in “Vision and Expectations” until at least a two-thirds majority of voting members of the Churchwide Assembly agree to a change; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America utilize the forthcoming statement on human sexuality as an opportunity to continue its prayer, study, and discussion of homosexuality and its relationship to “Vision and Expectations” for ordained ministers in this church until such time as the Spirit leads us to discern a faith posture reflecting the free consent and the joyful and enthusiastic support of all.

21. Upper Susquehanna Synod (8E) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, St. Paul, in his letter to the Philippians, enjoins the whole Church to “be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind,” (Philippians 2:2); and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has, for the past four years, been studying sexuality, including the question of the rostering of people in committed same-sex sexual relationships; and

WHEREAS, 73.4 percent of responding participants in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's Study on Sexuality desired either no change to current policy, to delay a decision on the matter, or had no opinion; and

WHEREAS, the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, in its third recommendation to the 2005 Churchwide Assembly, has recommended that the assembly take action to change this church's policy regarding rostering individuals in same-sex relationships by "creating a process for the sake of outreach, ministry, and the commitment to continuing dialogue, which may permit exceptions to the expectations regarding sexual conduct for gay and lesbian candidates in lifelong, committed, and faithful same-sex relationships who otherwise are determined to be in compliance with 'Vision and Expectations'"; and

WHEREAS, such action, while in part intended to uphold current standards, would in fact change the policy of this church regarding rostering those in same-sex relationships by permitting a system of exceptions for those who dissent from the policy; and

WHEREAS, this proposed change in policy would take place without a consensus for change in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and

WHEREAS, this proposed change in policy, while intended to continue the dialogue, would in fact stop the dialogue by unilaterally declaring it impossible to reach consensus and demanding that two contradictory positions be permitted to coexist in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and

WHEREAS, this proposed change in policy would alienate us from our communion partners in the Lutheran World Federation; become a barrier in ecumenical dialogue with other churches; obscure the clarity of our witness to the Gospel in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; destroy the unity and interchangeability of the ordained ministry in this church; exacerbate the perceived division between the churchwide, synodical, and congregational expressions of this church; and sow seeds of mistrust between bishops, pastors, and laity; and

WHEREAS, the Synod Council of the Upper Susquehanna Synod, following the release of the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality's report and recommendations, held a series of "listening meetings" in each conference of the synod, and subsequently communicated to the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in March 2005, asking them to recommend that the policy of this church as expressed in "Vision and Expectations" be upheld at the present time; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Upper Susquehanna Synod, in assembly, memorialize the 2005 ELCA Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to uphold the standards for rostered persons as documented in "Vision and Expectations," without exceptions.

22. Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod (8G) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the "Report and Recommendations" of the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality has stated "that the disagreement over these issues before the church is deep, pervasive, multi-faceted, and multi-layered . . ." and "This church is not of one mind . . ."; and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America does not provide a way for gay and lesbian persons across this church who are in covenanted relationships and who are called to ministry to live faithfully to God's call in the midst of these disagreements; and

WHEREAS, no congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is ever compelled to call any candidate for a rostered position; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod in assembly memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly to adopt the following: "It shall be the policy of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America that there be no policy barrier to rostered service

for otherwise qualified persons in same-gender covenanted relationships.”²⁴ Upon adoption of such policy, the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall take steps necessary to implement such policy.

23. West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod (8H) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the Churchwide Assembly acted prudently in CA99.06.27 “to decline to propose at this [1999] assembly a change in the standards for rostered ministry related to non-celibate gay and lesbian persons,” stating, “we await a time of clearer understanding provided by the Lord of the Church and, in the meanwhile, pray for the Holy Spirit’s guidance and work to the best of our ability”; and

WHEREAS, the Task Force for ELCA Studies on Human Sexuality stated that “the disagreement over these issues before the church is deep, pervasive, multi-faceted, and multi-layered. This church is not of one mind”; and

WHEREAS, the task force also stated that “at this time, there is no consensus on these matters within the ELCA and that our differences express deeply held and conscience-bound positions;” and

WHEREAS, the task force also stated that “the biblical-theological case for wholesale change in this church’s current standards has not been made to the satisfaction of the majority of participants in the study. This judgment correlates with other data of ELCA opinion on matters of sexuality from correspondence, e-mail, hearings, forums, and communication with bishops and other leaders. It also corresponds to the weight of opinion among our ecumenical partner churches and the partner churches of the Lutheran World Federation”; and

WHEREAS, this church is no closer to consensus now than it was in 1999; and

WHEREAS, the policy change proposed in Recommendation Three of the “Recommendations on Sexuality Studies” violates the current and accepted position statements of the ELCA on matters of human sexuality (i.e., ALC study and LCA study); therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that this synod memorialize 2005 Churchwide Assembly to reject Recommendation Three of the “Recommendations on Sexuality Studies.”

24. South Carolina Synod (9C) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the 2001 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America authorized a study of human sexuality; and

WHEREAS, the total response to *Journey Together Faithfully, Part Two* was 28,000 and, of that, 56 percent opposed the blessing and rostering of practicing homosexuals; and

WHEREAS, the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has recommended a process that would grant ordination to practicing homosexuals, in which it states, “the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall create a process for the sake of outreach, ministry, and the commitment to continuing dialogue, which may permit exceptions to the expectations regarding sexual conduct for gay and lesbian candidates and rostered leaders in lifelong, committed, and faithful same-sex relationships who are otherwise determined to be in compliance with ‘Vision and Expectations’ and adopt the following bylaws to permit implementation of this limited process for exceptions to the normative policies of this church”; and

WHEREAS, the Conference of Bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in 1993 stated, “. . . there is basis neither in Scripture nor tradition for the establishment of an official ceremony by this church for the blessing of a homosexual relationship. We, therefore, do not approve such a ceremony as an official action of this church’s ministry”; and

WHEREAS, seventeen theologians of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, including South Carolinians the Rev. James Crumley, Dr. Michael Root, and Dr. David Yeago, issued A

²⁴Lacking a secular document (legally recognized document of a state), a notarized document from the synodical bishop affirming that two people are in a committed, exclusive relationship shall define for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America a “covenanted relationship.”

Statement of Pastoral and Theological Concern, in which they urge rejection of the recommendations of the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality; and

WHEREAS, the Conference of Bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, our companion synod, stated, “The Conference of Bishops rejects biblical expositions done by some theologians and scholars with intent to affirm and legalize homosexuality. We do not agree with those seeking to ordain homosexuals into the ministry of Word and Sacrament. Instead we call upon the Church of Christ worldwide to sympathize with them, pray for them, and counsel them how to be transformed in their thought and intentions” (Bukoba Statement 2004); and

WHEREAS, the 2004 South Carolina Synod Assembly passed a resolution that resolved, “that this synod assembly go on record as affirming the current policy of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America”; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the South Carolina Synod Assembly memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to maintain the standards for rostered and ordained leaders as outlined in “Vision and Expectations” and that no exceptions be granted.

BACKGROUND

Some of these synodical memorials were adopted prior to the Task Force Report, and some were adopted prior to the Church Council recommendations, and therefore may not reflect the content of the action before the assembly.

The concerns raised by the memorials of these synods were addressed as part of the business of the 2005 ELCA Churchwide Assembly (see above, page 310ff.) Background information on ELCA Sexuality Studies and the proposed action on the topic recommended by the ELCA Church Council are printed in Section IV of the *2005 Pre-Assembly Report*, pages 22–24.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

EN BLOC

CA05.07.39u To receive the memorials of the Northwest Washington Synod; Oregon Synod; Grand Canyon Synod; Southwestern Minnesota Synod; Saint Paul Area Synod; Central States Synod; Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod; Metropolitan Chicago Synod; Southeastern Iowa Synod; Western Iowa Synod; Greater Milwaukee Synod; La Crosse Area Synod; Indiana-Kentucky Synod; Upper Susquehanna Synod; Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod; West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod; and South Carolina Synod related to Recommendation Three of the ELCA Studies on Sexuality; and

To acknowledge the action of the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America related to Recommendation Three of the ELCA Studies on Sexuality as the response of the Churchwide Assembly to the memorials of these synods.

Category F4: Other Memorials Related to the ELCA Studies on Sexuality

Reference: 2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section VI, pages 92–108.

Eight synods adopted essentially identical memorials on topics related to the ELCA Studies on Sexuality. The Model Memorial is printed here, with changes noted by synod.

Model Memorial

WHEREAS, the historical, biblical, and confessional teaching and practice of the Christian Church on marriage and sexual ethics is expressed in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's official teachings, policies, and documents; and

WHEREAS, the Conference of Bishops in October 5–8, 1993, addressed the issue of same-sex unions in accordance with this historic consensus; and

WHEREAS, a clear majority of respondents to *Journey Together Faithfully, Part Two* agrees with the Church's historical consensus; and

WHEREAS, this consensus is articulated in "Dissenting Position One" of the task force's report and recommendations; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the [Synod Name] memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to adopt "Dissenting Position One" from the task force report:

1. Affirm and uphold current policy and practices consistent with past understandings of "Vision and Expectations" and "Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline," and the social statements of the Lutheran Church in America and The American Lutheran Church;
2. Admonish individuals, communities, congregations, and synods that any discipline that may result in response to actions contrary to those policies be undertaken with all humility in the knowledge that we see through a glass darkly. May we forgive as we wish to be forgiven. Remembering the log in our own eye, may Christian charity guide our ways; and
3. Beseech individuals, communities, congregations, and synods, who for reasons of conscience will act contrary to the aforementioned policies, to graciously accept and endure the discipline of the church for the sake of peace, secure in the knowledge "that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us" (Romans 8:18); and be it further

RESOLVED, that the [Synod Name] memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to adopt the following statement as official policy: "... there is basis neither in Scripture nor tradition for the establishment of an official ceremony by this church for the blessing of a homosexual relationship. We, therefore, do not approve such a ceremony as an official action of this church's ministry" (CB93.10.25).

1. Montana Synod (1F) [2005 Memorial]

Adopted the "model memorial" printed above, with the following changes:

- Third WHEREAS is replaced with:
"WHEREAS, 56.2 percent of 3,956 respondents to *Journey Together Faithfully, Part Two* oppose blessing and rostering;"
- Fourth WHEREAS deletes "task force's" before "report" and inserts "of the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality;" after "recommendations"

2. Eastern North Dakota Synod (3B) [2005 Memorial]

Adopted the "model memorial" printed above.

3. Southwestern Minnesota Synod (3F) [2005 Memorial]

Adopted the "model memorial" printed above, with the following changes:

- The WHEREAS paragraphs are replaced with the following:
 - “WHEREAS, we recognize the lack of agreement on the issues of same-sex blessings and ordination of non-celibate homosexuals; and
 - “WHEREAS, in such situations, our unity is measured by Scripture, which is ‘the authoritative source and norm’ of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America’s proclamation, faith, and life (Constitution, 2.03.); and
 - “WHEREAS, the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality’s ‘Dissenting Position One’ (Report, page 15) addresses same-sex blessings and non-celibate homosexual ordinations in accord with Scripture and in a caring and compassionate manner; therefore, be it”
- A new RESOLVED paragraph is inserted that states:
 - “RESOLVED, that the 2005 Southwestern Minnesota Synod Assembly adopt ‘Dissenting Position One’ as its response to the Report and Recommendations of the ELCA Task Force on Sexuality Studies; and be it further”
- The “Preface” from “Dissenting Position One” is included in the quotation, to read:

Preface

Given the lack of unanimity, consensus, or even (in some cases) a simple majority for change in practices and policies regarding the blessing of same-sex relationships and the ordaining, consecrating, or commissioning of people in such committed relationships among the task force, theologians, the bishops and clergy, the seminaries, the laity and congregations, synods, the wider Lutheran community, and the ecumenical Christian community, if the Holy Spirit is speaking a new word in this time and place, many in the community are not hearing it. Therefore, this recommendation is offered as a dissenting alternative to the recommendations passed by the task force.

The Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality should recommend that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:

1) Affirm...*[followed by the remainder of the quotation]*
- The final RESOLVED is deleted

4. Nebraska Synod (4A) [2005 Memorial]

- Adopted the “model memorial” printed above, with the following changes:
- Second WHEREAS is deleted
 - Three additional WHEREAS paragraphs are inserted after the first WHEREAS, reading:
 - “WHEREAS, the biblical research that is available on homosexuality has not shown a compelling argument to depart from the Church’s traditional position on same-sex attraction (homosexuality); and
 - WHEREAS, there is a growing population of people who have left the homosexual lifestyle and found hope and healing for their same-sex attraction; and
 - WHEREAS, the recommendation puts our relationships at risk with the Lutheran church around the world, as well as our ecumenical partners;”
 - First RESOLVED, point (2), replaces “through a glass darkly” with “through a ‘mirror dimly””
 - Second RESOLVED is deleted

5. Southwestern Texas Synod (4E) [2005 Memorial]

- Adopted the “model memorial” printed above, with the following changes:
- Fourth WHEREAS replaces “task force’s report and recommendations;” with “Report and Recommendations of the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality;”
 - Second RESOLVED deletes the parenthetical reference to “(CB93.10.25)”

6. Northeastern Iowa Synod (5F) [2005 Memorial]

Adopted the “model memorial” printed above, with the following changes:

- Fourth WHEREAS replaces “task force’s report and recommendations;” with “report and recommendations of the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality;”
- An additional RESOLVED is inserted at the end, reading:
“RESOLVED, that the Northeastern Iowa Synod Assembly memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to adopt the following statement: ‘The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America will actively seek partnership with effective ministries which bring Christ’s healing and transforming power to those who desire healing from sexual brokenness.’”

7. Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod (8A) [2005 Memorial]

Adopted the “model memorial” printed above, with the following changes:

- Fourth WHEREAS replaces “task force’s report and recommendations;” with “report and recommendations of the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality;”
- First RESOLVED replaces “memorialize” with “affirm the action of the Synod Council and ask”
- Creates a second RESOLVED from the model memorial’s first RESOLVED by changing the colon after “task force report” to a semi-colon and inserting “and be it further RESOLVED, that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America”, followed by the numbered points

8. Allegheny Synod (8C) [2005 Memorial]

Adopted the “model memorial” printed above, with the following changes:

- First RESOLVED replaces “memorialize” with “ask”
- First RESOLVED, point (2), replaces “through a glass darkly” with “through the glass darkly”

9. South Carolina Synod (9C) [2005 Memorial]

Adopted the “model memorial” printed above, with the following changes:

- First RESOLVED changes the colon after “task force report” to a comma and inserts “which asks this church to”
- Inserts the following at the end of the memorial: “*NOTE from the synod: This memorial was approved by the following margin: Yes-333; No-75; Abstain-8.*”

Additional memorials on related topics

10. Alaska Synod (1A) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America will consider recommendations on the sexuality studies from the Church Council; and

WHEREAS, the 2004 Assembly of the Alaska Synod adopted a Resolution Concerning Synodical Guidelines for Candidates in Call Processes—an Alternative to the 2005 Churchwide Assembly Vote on Clergy in Same-Gender Relationships (Resolution 04-2); and

WHEREAS, Resolution 04-2 observed that questions of blessing same-gender relationships and the ordination and call of persons in same-gender relationships are best resolved by the local expressions of this church—the synod and the congregation where such blessings and calls actually take place; and

WHEREAS, Resolution 04-2 called upon the Alaska Synod Assembly to develop local guidelines for rostering and submitting candidates and clergy, including those in same-gender relationships; and

WHEREAS, the recommendations on the sexuality studies from the Church Council to the 2005 Churchwide Assembly make room for such local guidelines; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Alaska Synod express its support for the recommendations on the sexuality studies from the Church Council to the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Alaska Synod communicate this action to its voting members for the 2005 Churchwide Assembly.

11. Montana Synod (1F) [2004 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is engaged in studies of human sexuality and homosexuality; and

WHEREAS, these churchwide studies are exploring the specific issues of (a) blessing same-sex unions and (b) ordaining gay and lesbian persons living in committed relationships; and

WHEREAS, the Confession of Faith of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America commits this church to regard the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as “the inspired Word of God and the authoritative source and norm of its proclamation, faith, and life” and the Lutheran Confessions as “further valid interpretations of the faith of the Church”; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Montana Synod affirm and endorse as a faithful expression of biblical and confessional teaching regarding the question of blessing same-sex unions those statements regarding human sexuality and homosexual behavior already adopted by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, to wit, the statement of the October 1993 meeting of the Conference of Bishops, that “There is basis neither in Scripture nor tradition for the establishment of an official ceremony by this church for the blessing of a homosexual relationship. We, therefore, do not approve such a ceremony as an official action of this church’s ministry”; and be it further

RESOLVED, that, as a faithful expression of biblical and confessional teaching regarding sexual conduct of this church’s pastors and particularly the question of ordaining gay and lesbian persons in committed relationships, the statement contained within the 1990 Church Council document “Vision and Expectations” that “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 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 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 sexual relationships”; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this memorial in no way excludes or prohibits homosexuals or divorced individuals from inclusion and active membership in the church congregation; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Montana Synod confirms the following statements of biblical and confessional principles in support of the previous actions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and as a guide to the deliberations of the task force for the ELCA studies on sexuality:

We believe, teach and confess that

1. Sexuality is a good gift God graciously bestows on humanity for the sake of love, devotion, and procreation.
2. By creating us male and female, God has built gender complementarity into the very fabric of human existence.

3. Marriage, the lifelong union of fidelity between one man and one woman, is the only relationship God has ordained for the full expression of human sexuality.
4. Marriage is neither a private arrangement nor merely a human construct or custom. It is, rather, a divine institution by which God has founded human community “in a joy that begins now and is brought to perfection in the life to come” (*LBW*, p. 203).
5. Neither the Scriptures nor the Lutheran Confessions grant any authorization to the Church to recognize as divinely approved any relationship other than the marriage of one man and one woman for the full expression of human sexuality;

and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Montana Synod memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to affirm these scriptural and confessional principles regarding human sexuality and homosexual behavior and to adopt no changes in its teaching or practice that contradict these principles.

12. Southwest California Synod (2B) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, we strongly affirm the conclusion of Recommendation One of the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality that, in the face of the issues “about which faithful conscience-bound Lutherans find themselves so decisively at odds,” the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America focus on “finding ways to live together faithfully in the midst of our disagreements;” and

WHEREAS, we regret the excessively dismissive and offensive language of Recommendation Two of the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality that refers to the blessing of same-sex committed relationships “as a matter quite distinct from and in no way equivalent to marriage,” as many of us with pastoral experience in this area find such a claim both pastorally insensitive and patently untrue since the careful pre-union preparation we conduct with same-sex couples and the liturgies we use closely adhere to the manner in which we help to prepare heterosexual couples for marriage; and

WHEREAS, the “present secular debate” (cf. Recommendation Two of the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality) was not foreseen at the outset of the study in 2001 and does not mean that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America can therefore ignore the present social and political context (*Sitz im Leben*), especially since it has already and will continue to have strong repercussions upon the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender community within and without this church, while at the same time we also welcome the recommendation of the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America “commit itself to respect one another’s consciences in this matter” since our pastoral experience has long since convinced us that the blessing of committed relationships is a significant expression not only of individual pastors’ ministry but that of congregations’ and the larger church’s as well; and

WHEREAS, we continue to find the existing exclusionary policy of “Vision and Expectations” and “Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline” an offense to justice inconsistent with this church’s repeated affirmation of its intention to extend welcome to all persons, explicitly including gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people while still, at this moment of continuing disagreement in this church, we welcome the gracious encouragement of Recommendation Three of the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality that “as a pastoral response to the deep divisions among us, this church may choose to refrain from disciplining those who in good conscience, and for the sake of outreach, ministry, and the commitment to continuing dialogue, call or approve partnered gay or lesbian candidates whom they believe to be otherwise in compliance with ‘Vision and Expectations’ and to refrain from disciplining those rostered people so approved and called,” agreeing that “this approach allows the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to trust congregations, synods, candidacy committees, and bishops to discern the Holy Spirit’s gifts for ministry among the baptized and make judgments appropriate to each situation”; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the 2005 Synod Assembly of the Southwest California Synod memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

to search for “ways to live together faithfully in the midst of our disagreements”; and be it further

RESOLVED, that among specific actions we recommend be undertaken by the Southwest California Synod and communicated to the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as examples of attempts “to live together faithfully in the midst of our disagreements” are the following:

- a. The reactivation of our synod’s Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Task Force of the Board for Public Ministry.
- b. The assignment of a synod staff person to work with this dimension of our life together.
- c. Priority given by the Synod Council, bishop, and staff to the intentional development of a more consciously pastoral and non-disciplinary approach to these issues in relation to, for example, the synodical candidacy committee, call process, outreach and evangelism programs.
- d. Use of existing Reconciling in Christ congregations and gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender pastors and lay persons as primary resources for growth in sensitivity to this dimension of our life together as a church.
- e. Full inclusion and welcome of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender pastors and lay people in all areas of church life, including synod communications, programs, and pastoral care.

13. Southwest California Synod (2B) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the 2001 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America set in motion a process across this church to study questions relating to homosexuality, specifically whether ministry standards should be changed to allow the ordination of non-celibate gays and lesbians and whether pastors of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America should bless same-gender unions; and

WHEREAS, this process must be considered sufficient with respect to the allotted time of four years, with respect to the high level of participation of members of this church, with respect to the development of resources as directed by the Churchwide Assembly, and certainly with respect to the cost of the study (up to \$2,300,000 from the churchwide expression of the church alone); and

WHEREAS, failure fully to decide these issues at the 2005 Churchwide Assembly will inevitably result in the indefinite prolonging of troubled concern among many, lack of clarity to guide local practice, and an inability to bring needed closure to these important issues; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the 2005 Synod Assembly of the Southwest California Synod memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to bring the two questions—whether to ordain non-celibate gays and lesbians and whether to bless same-gender unions—to a vote at the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

14. Southwest California Synod (2B) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the people of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America are joined and united by the love of Jesus Christ while at the same time recognizing that even within this unity there exists also a love-filled diversity; and

WHEREAS, this diversity means that the people of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America have chosen, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and for the sake of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in accord with Jesus’ “high priestly prayer” (John 17), to live together in love in spite of differences on a host of issues; and

WHEREAS, the seventh Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, meeting in August 2001, called for a study of homosexuality with reference to two such issues—the

blessing of same-sex unions and the ordination, consecration, and commissioning of people in committed same-sex unions; and

WHEREAS, in response to this call, the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America established a Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality, which studied extensively these issues and produced a report on the matter in January of 2005; and

WHEREAS, the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, representing a wide diversity of opinions on these issues, studied the report of the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality with a deep concern for the good of this church and the clarity of the Gospel; and

WHEREAS, the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has recommended three resolutions to the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America . . . ; and

WHEREAS, these three resolutions seem a moderate, even-handed, pastoral approach to these issues, given the current diversity of opinion within this church; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the 2005 Synod Assembly of the Southwest California Synod memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to adopt the three resolutions recommended by the Church Council in its report of April 11, 2005, titled, "Recommendations from the ELCA Church Council to the ELCA Churchwide Assembly on Sexuality Studies."

[NOTE from synod: The vote was Yes-172; No-104.]

15. Pacifica Synod (2C) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the people of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America discover our unity in Christ and declare that unity in this church's Confession of Faith, stated in chapter two of its constitution; and

WHEREAS, we know at the same time that we are a diverse people who have chosen to be one in the midst of our differences on various issues; and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America was called in its 2001 Churchwide Assembly to study homosexuality with reference to the blessing of same-sex unions and the ordination, consecration, and commissioning of persons in committed same-sex unions; and

WHEREAS, the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality has led this church through a thorough study, whereby any and all were invited to respond, and this same Task Force offered its recommendations to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in January 2005; and

WHEREAS, the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, in its April 2005 meeting, has recommended three recommendations to the 2005 Churchwide Assembly; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that regarding the three recommendations proposed by the Church Council in its report of April 11, 2005, the Pacifica Synod, meeting in assembly, May 5-7, 2005, took the following votes:

- Recommendation One as submitted by the Church Council: 290 Accept; 17 Reject; 8 Abstentions.
- Recommendation Two with the following changes [underlined]: 201 Accept; 78 Reject; 5 Abstentions:

RESOLVED, that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America continue to receive with respect the guidance of the 1993 statement of the Conference of Bishops while at the same time respectfully listening to those who are asking for and/or presiding at ceremonies to bless same-sex unions; and be it further

RESOLVED, that as the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality continues its work on human sexuality, it address the relationship of sexuality and marriage and include both the historical development of marriage and the current political and church-related questions about these matters; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this church welcome gay and lesbian persons into its life (as stated in Churchwide Assembly resolutions from 1991, 1995, and 1999), and trust pastors and congregations to discern ways to provide faithful pastoral care to same-sex couples.

- Recommendation 3 as submitted by the Church Council: 186 Accept; 119 Reject; 12 Abstentions.

RESOLVED, that the Pacifica Synod Assembly memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to pass the recommendations of the Church Council concerning the report and recommendations of the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality with the changes to Recommendation Two noted above.

16. Western North Dakota Synod (3A) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the Western North Dakota Synod Council thanks the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality for its diligent and faithful work on behalf of this whole church; and

WHEREAS, the results of the churchwide study concluded that marriage is between a man and a woman and that this church should not develop a ceremony to bless same-sex couples; and

WHEREAS, the results of the churchwide study concluded that the ministry standards of “Vision and Expectations” should be maintained; and

WHEREAS, there is support from the Western North Dakota Synod Council for the notion expressed in Recommendation One that we “concentrate on finding ways to live together faithfully in the midst of our disagreements”; and

WHEREAS, there is support from the Western North Dakota Synod Council for the decision of the task force to decline to recommend any change with respect to the matter of blessing same-sex couples; and

WHEREAS, the Western North Dakota Synod Council rejects the idea implied in Recommendation Three that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America standards for rostered leaders should remain the same but this church may refrain from disciplining some partnered gay or lesbian candidates; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Western North Dakota Synod in assembly memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to continue under the standards as set forth in “Vision and Expectations” and “Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline”; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Western North Dakota Synod voting members of the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America take under advisement the affirmation as they attend the 2005 Churchwide Assembly in Orlando, August 8–14, 2005.

17. South Dakota Synod (3C) [2003 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is engaged in studies of human sexuality and homosexuality; and

WHEREAS, these churchwide studies are exploring the specific issues of (a) blessing same-sex unions and (b) ordaining gay and lesbian persons living in committed relationships; and

WHEREAS, the Confession of Faith of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America commits this church to regarding the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as “the inspired Word of God and the authoritative source and norm of its proclamation, faith, and life” and the Lutheran Confessions as “further valid interpretations of the faith of the Church;” therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the South Dakota Synod Assembly affirm and endorse as a faithful expression of biblical and confessional teaching regarding the question of blessing same-sex unions those statements regarding human sexuality and homosexual behavior already adopted by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, to wit, the statement of the October 1993 meeting of the Conference of Bishops, that “There is basis neither in Scripture nor tradition for the establishment of an official ceremony by this church for the blessing of a homosexual relationship. We, therefore, do not approve such a ceremony as an official action of this church’s ministry”; and be it further

RESOLVED, that, as a faithful expression of biblical and confessional teaching regarding sexual conduct of this church's pastors and particularly the question of ordaining gay and lesbian persons in committed relationships, the statement contained within the 1990 Church Council document "Vision and Expectations," that "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 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 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 sexual relationships"; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the South Dakota Synod Assembly affirm the following statements of biblical and confessional principles in support of the previous actions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and as a guide to the deliberations of the task force for the ELCA studies on sexuality:

We believe, teach and confess that:

1. Sexuality is a good gift God graciously bestows on humanity for the sake of love, devotion, and procreation.
2. By creating us male and female, God has built gender complementarity into the very fabric of human existence.
3. Marriage, the lifelong union of fidelity between one man and one woman, is the only relationship God has ordained for the full expression of human sexuality.
4. Marriage is neither a private arrangement nor merely a human construct or custom. It is, rather, a divine institution by which God has founded human community "in a joy that begins now and is brought to perfection in the life to come" (*LBW*, p. 203).
5. Neither the Scriptures nor the Lutheran Confessions grant any authorization to the church to recognize as divinely approved any relationship other than the marriage of one man and one woman for the full expression of human sexuality; and be it further

RESOLVED that the South Dakota Synod Assembly memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to affirm these scriptural and confessional principles regarding human sexuality and homosexual behavior and to adopt no changes in its teaching or practice that contradict these principles.

18. South Dakota Synod (3C) [2004 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is constitutionally committed to the Holy Scriptures as "the inspired Word of God and the authoritative source and norm of its proclamation, faith and life;" and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's current standards of conduct for ordained ministers are enumerated in "Vision and Expectations: Ordained Ministers in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America," which includes the following statement regarding the sexual conduct of ordained ministers: "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 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 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 sexual relationships”; and

WHEREAS, the Conference of Bishops has affirmed that “There is basis neither in Scripture nor tradition for the establishment of an official ceremony by this church for the blessing of a homosexual relationship. We, therefore, do not approve such a ceremony as an official action of this church’s ministry” (1993 Statement); and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is involved in a study of human sexuality and exploring the specific issues of blessing same-sex unions and ordaining gay and lesbian persons living in committed relationships; and

WHEREAS, individuals, congregations, and synods have been asked to provide responses regarding the appropriate action for the 2005 Churchwide Assembly to take; and

WHEREAS, this will be the last opportunity of the South Dakota Synod to provide a formal response to the Task Force for the ELCA Sexuality Studies prior to its formation of recommendations for the 2005 Churchwide Assembly; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the South Dakota Synod in assembly affirms and endorses the current standards of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America regarding the sexual conduct of its ordained ministers as articulated in “Vision and Expectations: Ordained Ministers in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America”; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the South Dakota Synod in assembly affirms and endorses the 1993 statement of the Conference of Bishops regarding the question of blessing same-sex unions; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the South Dakota Synod Assembly memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to adopt and affirm formally the current policies regarding the blessing of same-sex unions and the ordination of gay and lesbian persons in committed relationships as articulated in “Vision and Expectations: Ordained Ministers in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America” and in the 1993 statement of the Conference of Bishops.

19. South Dakota Synod (3C) [2004 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is the product of the merger of The American Lutheran Church, the Lutheran Church in America, and the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches; and

WHEREAS, The American Lutheran Church adopted a social statement in 1980 entitled “Human Sexuality and Sexual Behavior”; and

WHEREAS, this statement may serve the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in its current discussions of human sexuality and of the specific questions of whether to bless same-sex unions and whether to ordain gay and lesbian persons living in committed relationships; and

WHEREAS, The American Lutheran Church’s social statement “Human Sexuality and Sexual Behavior” includes a section on homosexuality that reads as follows:

1. We note the current consensus in the scientific community that one’s preferred sexual behavior exists on a continuum from exclusively heterosexual to exclusively homosexual and that homosexual behavior takes a variety of forms. We believe it appropriate to distinguish between homosexual orientation and homosexual behavior. Persons who do not practice their homosexual erotic preference do not violate our understanding of Christian sexual behavior.
2. This church regards the practice of homosexual erotic behavior as contrary to God’s intent for his children. It rejects the contention that homosexual behavior is simply another form of sexual behavior equally valid with the dominant male/female pattern.
3. We have reviewed the challenges to the traditional interpretations of those Scripture passages that appear to proscribe homosexual behavior. We are not convinced by the evidence presented. Among passages cited as requiring interpretations different from the traditional interpretation are: Genesis 18:16–19:29; Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13; Romans 1:24–32; 1 Corinthians 6:9–10; 1

Timothy 1:10. While we see no scriptural rationale for revising the church's traditional teaching that homosexual erotic behavior violates God's intent, we nonetheless remain open to the possibility of new biblical and theological insights.

4. We agree that homosexually-behaving persons need God's grace as does every human being. We all need the care and concern of the congregation. We all need opportunity to hear the Word, to receive the sacraments, to accept the forgiveness God offers, to experience the understanding and the fellowship of the community of Christ. We all need the power of the Holy Spirit for ethical living sensitive to our own individual situations. So saying, we nevertheless do not condone homosexual erotic behavior. Nor do we condone idolatry, pride, disrespect for parents, murder, adultery, theft, libel, gossip, or the other sins known in our circles. The sacrifice God finds acceptable from each of us is "a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart." Then he can answer our prayer for a "clean heart . . . a new and right spirit within me" (See Psalm 51).
5. Truth, mercy, and justice should impel members of congregations of The American Lutheran Church to review their attitudes, words, and actions regarding homosexuality. Christians need to be more understanding and more sensitive to life as experienced by those who are homosexual. They need to take leadership roles in changing public opinion, civil laws, and prevailing practices that deny justice and opportunity to any persons, homosexual or heterosexual. We all need recognition and acceptance as human beings known to and loved by God;

therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the South Dakota Synod affirms the understanding of homosexuality and homosexual behavior as articulated by The American Lutheran Church in its social statement "Human Sexuality and Sexual Behavior"; and be it further

RESOLVED, that members of the South Dakota Synod be encouraged to study The American Lutheran Church social statement "Human Sexuality and Sexual Behavior" as a part of their deliberation on any proposed Evangelical Lutheran Church in America statements on sexuality; and be it further

RESOLVED, that members of the South Dakota Synod be encouraged to review their attitudes, words, and actions regarding homosexuality: 1) to be more understanding and more sensitive to life as experienced by those who are homosexual; 2) to take leadership roles in changing public opinion, civil laws, and prevailing practices that deny justice and opportunity to any persons, homosexual or heterosexual; and 3) to recognize and accept gay and lesbian persons as human beings known to and loved by God; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the South Dakota Synod Assembly memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to affirm the understanding of homosexuality and homosexual behavior as articulated by The American Lutheran Church in its social statement "Human Sexuality and Sexual Behavior" and to adopt no changes in current Evangelical Lutheran Church in America policies regarding the blessing of same-sex unions and the ordination of gay and lesbian persons in committed relationships.

20. South Dakota Synod (3C) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the historical, biblical, and confessional teaching and practice of the Christian Church on marriage and sexual ethics is expressed in the current official teachings, policies, and documents of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and

WHEREAS, in its constitution, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America makes a commitment to "the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God and the authoritative source and norm of its proclamation, faith, and life"; and

WHEREAS, the 2004 South Dakota Synod Assembly memorialized the 2005 Churchwide Assembly "to formally adopt and affirm the current ELCA policies regarding the blessing of same-sex unions and the ordination of gay and lesbian persons in committed relationships as articulated in 'Vision and Expectations' and in the 1993 statement of the ELCA Conference of Bishops" (Resolution 9, adopted by 75 percent, 299–100); and

WHEREAS, the study conducted by the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality has found that a significant majority of members continue to believe that this church's commitment to Scripture will not allow the blessing of same-sex unions and the rostering of people in those relationships; and

WHEREAS, the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has recommended three resolutions for the 2005 Churchwide Assembly, reflecting the three recommendations of the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality; and

WHEREAS, the 1993 statement of the Conference of Bishops on the blessing of same-sex unions does not have the status of official Evangelical Lutheran Church in America policy; and

WHEREAS, the proposed resolution on Recommendation Two would leave the 1993 statement of the Conference of Bishops as "guidance" rather than as official church policy and would leave the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America with no policy on the blessing of same-sex unions; and

WHEREAS, the proposed resolution on Recommendation Three would require some form of official recognition by this church of a same-sex union; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the South Dakota Synod Assembly memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to amend the resolution proposed by the Church Council regarding Recommendation Two by adding the following "Resolved":

"RESOLVED, that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America adopt as policy the following portion of the 1993 statement of the Conference of Bishops: "There is basis neither in Scripture nor tradition for the establishment of an official ceremony by this church for the blessing of a homosexual relationship. We, therefore, do not approve such a ceremony as an official action of this church's ministry"; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the South Dakota Synod Assembly memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to reject the resolution proposed by the Church Council regarding Recommendation Three and instead to affirm and uphold current policy and practices consistent with past understandings of "Vision and Expectations," "Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline," and the social statements of the Lutheran Church in America and The American Lutheran Church; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the South Dakota Synod Assembly charge its voting members to the 2005 Churchwide Assembly to prayerfully consider the sense of their synod when casting their votes on the recommendations concerning the sexuality studies from the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to the 2005 Churchwide Assembly.

21. Southwestern Minnesota Synod (3F) [2004 Memorial]

WHEREAS, churchwide studies are exploring the specific issues of (a) blessing same-sex unions and (b) ordaining gay and lesbian persons living in committed relationships; and

WHEREAS, the Confession of Faith of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America commits this church to regarding the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as "the inspired Word of God and the authoritative source and norm of its proclamation, faith, and life" and the Lutheran Confessions as "further valid interpretations of the faith of the Church"; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Southwestern Minnesota Synod affirm and endorse as a faithful expression of biblical and confessional teaching regarding the question of blessing same-sex unions those statements regarding human sexuality and homosexual behavior already adopted by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, to wit, the statement of the October 1993 meeting of the Conference of Bishops, that "[T]here is basis neither in Scripture nor tradition for the establishment of an official ceremony by this church for the blessing of a homosexual relationship. We, therefore, do not approve such a ceremony as an official action of this church's ministry"; and be it further

RESOLVED, that, as a faithful expression of biblical and confessional teaching regarding sexual conduct of this church's pastors and particularly the question of ordaining gay and lesbian persons in committed relationships, the statement contained within the 1990

Church Council document “Vision and Expectations,” that “[T]he 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 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 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 sexual relationships”; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southwestern Minnesota Synod affirm the following statements of biblical and confessional principles in support of the previous actions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and as a guide to the deliberations of the task force for the ELCA studies on sexuality:

We believe, teach and confess that

1. Sexuality is a good gift God graciously bestows on humanity for the sake of love, devotion, and procreation.
2. By creating us male and female, God has built gender complementary into the very fabric of human existence.
3. Marriage is neither a private arrangement nor merely a human construct or custom. It is, rather, a divine institution by which God has founded human community “in a joy that begins now and is brought to perfection in the life to come” (*LBW*, p. 203).
4. Neither the Scriptures nor the Lutheran Confessions grant any authorization to the Church to recognize as divinely approved any relationship other than the marriage of one man and one woman for the full expression of human sexuality; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southwestern Minnesota Synod memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to affirm these scriptural and confessional principles regarding human sexuality and homosexual behavior.

22. Southwestern Minnesota Synod (3F) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the 2001 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America set in motion a process across this church to study questions relating to homosexuality, specifically whether ministry standards should be changed to allow the ordination of non-celibate gays and lesbians, and whether Evangelical Lutheran Church in America pastors should bless same-gender unions; and

WHEREAS, this process must be considered sufficient with respect to the allotted time of four years, with respect to the participation of members across this church, with respect to the development of resources as directed by the Churchwide Assembly, and certainly with respect to the cost of the study (up to \$1.15 million from the churchwide expression of the church alone); and

WHEREAS, failure fully to decide these issues at the 2005 Churchwide Assembly will inevitably result in the indefinite prolonging of troubled concern among many, rather than the healthy closure that is needed; and

WHEREAS, failure fully to decide these issues at the 2005 Churchwide Assembly will also stand in the way of the timely emergence of other issues, discouraging members and making this church stagnant; therefore, be it

RESOLVED that the Southwestern Minnesota Synod Assembly memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly to bring to a vote this year the two questions: whether to ordain non-celibate gays and lesbians and whether to bless same-gender unions.

23. Minneapolis Area Synod (3G) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, in Conference Assembly the South Minneapolis Conference of the Minneapolis Area Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America concurred with the Report and Recommendations of the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality that members of this church, given differences that are deeply held and based in conscience, are called to find “ways to live together faithfully in the midst of our disagreements”; and

WHEREAS, the recommendations of the task force would permit, in local situations and “as a pastoral response” without discipline, the blessing of same-gender relationships and rostered service to this church by persons living in same-gender partnered relationships; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Minneapolis Area Synod Assembly memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to adopt the three recommendations of the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the task force be strongly urged to continue moving forward to develop a more just and inclusive vision of church polity related to the full inclusion of gay and lesbian persons in the life of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, blessings of same-sex unions, and the full inclusion of non-celibate gay and lesbian clergy.

24. Northern Illinois Synod (5B) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, in response to the seventh Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, meeting in August 2001, which directed this church: 1) to study homosexuality with reference to two issues—the blessing of same-sex unions and the ordination, consecration, and commissioning of people in committed same-sex unions; and 2) to develop a social statement on sexuality, the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America bundled the two resolutions and established the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality; and

WHEREAS, the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality has since forwarded three recommendations in its report to the Church Council; and

WHEREAS, the Church Council, meeting in April 2005, has duly considered the recommendations from the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality and has responded, forwarded, and recommended adoption of three resolutions to the 2005 Churchwide Assembly; and

WHEREAS, the conference deans of the Northern Illinois Synod believe it is important to the life of this church to engage in open and honest discussion, as well as to honor our partnership in ministry with all the expressions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America by transmitting the Northern Illinois Synod’s opinion concerning each of the resolutions; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the 2005 Northern Illinois Synod Assembly, after discussing the three resolutions forwarded by the Church Council to the Churchwide Assembly while in the quasi committee of the whole (which is a device that enables the full assembly to give detailed consideration to a matter informally), will, for the purpose of informing the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of its opinion concerning each of the three resolutions, vote by written ballot either “yea, in favor” or “nay, opposed” to each resolution; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the results of the vote by written ballot shall be reported to the 2005 Northern Illinois Synod Assembly and transmitted by memorial to the 2005 Churchwide Assembly.

[NOTE from the synod: Results of the poll were as follows:

Recommendations from the Church Council to the 2005 Churchwide Assembly

Recommendation One

474 votes cast; Yes-380; No-88; Abstain-6

Recommendation Two

471 votes cast; Yes-369; No-97; Abstain-5

Recommendation Three

469 votes cast; Yes-235; No-229; Abstain-5

Task Force Dissenting Position One

473 votes cast; Agree-146; Disagree-229; Not Sure-94; Abstain-4

Task Force Dissenting Position Two

471 votes cast; Agree-259; Disagree-152; Not Sure-56; Abstain-0]

25. Central/Southern Illinois Synod (5C) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, in 2001 the seventh Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America directed this church 1) to study homosexuality with reference to two issues: the blessing of same-sex unions and the ordination, consecration, and commissioning of people in committed same-sex unions and 2) to develop a social statement on sexuality; and

WHEREAS, in November 2001 and April 2002 the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America bundled the two resolutions into one mandate for study and recommendations, established the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality, and called for the appointment of a director for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality; and

WHEREAS, the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality presented a report to the Church Council with three recommendations on the issues of the rostering of persons in committed same-sex relationships and the blessing of same-sex unions; and

WHEREAS, the Church Council has received this report and developed resolutions to be addressed during the 2005 Churchwide Assembly; and

WHEREAS, the Central/Southern Illinois Synod has participated in the study process used by the task force to help develop its report and recommendations, upon which the Church Council's resolutions are based; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Central/Southern Illinois Synod memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to adopt the resolution of the Church Council, which calls for this church to concentrate on finding ways to live together faithfully in the midst of disagreements, recognizing the God-given mission and communion that we share as members of the body of Christ; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Central/Southern Illinois Synod memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly to adopt the resolution forwarded by the Church Council that calls for continued respect for the guidance of the Conference of Bishops' 1993 statement on the blessing of same-sex unions, for welcoming gays and lesbians into the life of this church, and for trusting pastors and congregations to provide faithful pastoral care for same-sex couples.

26. Western Iowa Synod (5E) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, Holy Scripture teaches that marriage, as intended by the creator, is the union of one man and one woman (Genesis 1:27-28; Matthew 19:4-6); and

WHEREAS, the marriage rite in *Lutheran Book of Worship* affirms that "God in his goodness created us male and female" and that God "established marriage and continues to bless it with his abundant and ever-present support"; and

WHEREAS, the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America adopted the statement "Vision and Expectations: Ordained Ministers in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America" (1990), which directs that "ordained ministers who are homosexual in their self-understanding are expected to abstain from homosexual sexual relationships," and "Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline" (1993), which says that "Practicing homosexual persons are precluded from the ordained ministry of this church" and subsequent comparable documents which set forth the same policies for all rostered leaders of this church; and

WHEREAS, the Conference of Bishops issued a statement in 1993 acknowledging "that there is basis neither in Scripture nor tradition for the establishment of an official ceremony by this church for the blessing of a homosexual relationship"; and

WHEREAS, the Church Council adopted a Message to this church in 1996 that reaffirms that "marriage is a lifelong covenant of faithfulness between a man and a woman"; and

WHEREAS, the 1991 Churchwide Assembly declared that “gay and lesbian persons, 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 Western Iowa Synod memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to express its opposition to all forms of prejudice against persons because of their sexual orientation and declare its intention to include all people as full participants in the life of congregations of this church; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Western Iowa Synod memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to reaffirm the above-mentioned provisions set forth in “Vision and Expectations: Ordained Ministers in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America” and “Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline” and subsequent comparable documents applicable to all rostered leaders of this church; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Western Iowa Synod memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to reaffirm that the solemnization of marriage as a rite of this church is to be used solely for the union of a man and a woman and that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America neither recognizes nor endorses any ecclesiastical ceremony for blessing the union of same-sex couples; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Western Iowa Synod memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to incorporate these reaffirmations in its forthcoming statement on sexuality (2007); and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Western Iowa Synod memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to direct all expressions and units of this church to abide by the provisions set forth in “Vision and Expectations: Ordained Ministers in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America” and “Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline,” and to apply the appropriate discipline when necessary, in accordance with the constitution, bylaws, and other disciplinary documents of this church.

27. Western Iowa Synod (5E) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the 2001 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America set in motion a process across this church to study questions relating to homosexuality, specifically whether ministry standards should be changed to allow the ordination of gays and lesbians living in committed same-gender relationships and whether pastors of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America should bless same-gender unions; and

WHEREAS, this process must be considered sufficient with respect to the allotted time of four years, with respect to the participation of members of this church, with respect to the development of resources as directed by the Churchwide Assembly, and certainly with respect to the cost of the study (up to \$2,300,000 from the churchwide expression of this church alone); and

WHEREAS, failure fully to decide these issues at the 2005 Churchwide Assembly will inevitably result in the indefinite prolonging of troubled concern among many, rather than the healthy closure that is needed; and

WHEREAS, failure fully to decide these issues at the 2005 Churchwide Assembly will also stand in the way of the timely emergence of other issues, discouraging members and making this church stagnant; and

WHEREAS, the local option is in no way a compromise because it will mean that those opposed to changes in this church’s traditional positions on these questions relating to homosexuality lose their right to continue to teach that homosexual practice is wrong in all circumstances because this church will now have permitted it; and

WHEREAS, the local option is really a means for the gradual establishment of the changes in question, in lieu of a clear decision through a proper vote; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Western Iowa Synod Assembly memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly to bring the two questions—whether to ordain, commission, or consecrate non-celibate gays and lesbians and whether to bless same-gender unions—to a vote at this present assembly.

28. Northeastern Iowa Synod (5F) [2004 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the traditional understanding of marriage as a divinely instituted union between one man and one woman has been challenged in recent times by those who advocate the blessing of same-sex unions; and

WHEREAS, the expectations for ELCA rostered persons as outlined in the document “Vision and Expectations” that those who are homosexual in their self-understanding shall refrain from homosexual relations has also been challenged by those who advocate that the ELCA permit the rostering of those who are in committed, homosexual relationships; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA, at the 2001 Churchwide Assembly, responded to such challenges by setting in motion a study process with a full report and possible recommendations to be brought before the 2005 Churchwide Assembly; and

WHEREAS, congregations and individuals have been encouraged throughout the past four years to be in study and prayer and discussion about these issues; and

WHEREAS, it is our commitment in the ELCA that the Holy Scriptures be “the authoritative source and norm of our proclamation, faith, and life” as stated in the constitution of the ELCA; and

WHEREAS, homosexual sexual activity is condemned in the Scriptures, without exception, in every passage in which it is discussed or portrayed, in both the Old and New Testaments; and

WHEREAS, no credible argument has been made from Scripture for the overturning of this consensus judgment concerning homosexual sexual activity; and

WHEREAS, the 2003 Northeastern Iowa Synod Assembly accepted the statement below as “an important perspective in the conversation on human sexuality” without adopting it; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Northeastern Iowa Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America adopt the following amended version of “A Pastoral Statement of Conviction and Concern” on human sexuality in accord with what the church has taught and confessed on these issues since apostolic times.

1. The Bible and the Christian Tradition, including the Lutheran Confessions, see sexuality as integrally related to the doctrine of marriage. Marriage, an institution ordained by God, is the life-long union of one man and one woman for the creation of human life and for their mutual love and care. Sexual intercourse is not a fundamental private right or psychological necessity but a gift of God. Its purpose is to serve as a means of uniting husband and wife and continuing God’s life-creating work. The confessions teach that we are to “live chastely in thought, word, and deed in (our) particular situation” (*Large Catechism* 394:219, Tappert trans.). Sexual intercourse is part of the vocation of marriage and is misused in any other context.
2. The Gospel frees us from the curse of the Law, that is, the judgment that falls on us because we are sinners. It does not free us from the righteous life that the Law summarizes: “You, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness” (Romans 6:18). The freedom of the Gospel does not make the forbidden permissible; rather, that freedom encourages and enables us to embrace joyfully a life of faithful service and holy living. In Christ we are given the grace, by the Holy Spirit, to “know how to control (our) own body in holiness and honor” (1 Thessalonians 4:4).
3. We view any change in the church’s doctrine of marriage as a grave error. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is currently studying whether this church may bless homosexual relationships, and whether this church may ordain sexually active homosexuals to the office of the ministry. Such proposed changes in Christian doctrine

distort the Biblical record, appeal to questionable scientific theories, suppress inconvenient data, and rely overwhelmingly on individual experience which has been conditioned by contemporary culture and values. We believe that conversations on this issue should focus on the teaching of Holy Scripture and the theological and confessional witness of the church. We call this church to recognize that personal experience is not a reliable interpretive key to the Word of God.

4. Several strategies have been proposed by those who wish to change the present policy. One is “ordination to place,” in which a non-celibate homosexual is ordained exclusively to serve one congregation. A second is “synodical option,” which permits synods to set their own standards in this matter. A third strategy might be termed “conscientious pluralism,” in which traditional and revisionist perspectives on these matters are allowed to coexist in this church. A fourth strategy is to set up a “non-geographic synod” within the ELCA of congregations willing to be served by rostered persons living in a committed homosexual relationship. Any of these proposals would destroy the unity of the ELCA and of its ordained ministry.
5. We acknowledge the genuine suffering and challenge that our homosexual brothers and sisters face. We repudiate all forms of prejudice and hatred, but we believe that Christian love requires the clear proclamation of God’s truth, which alone can free and reconcile us. Sensitive pastoral care for homosexual persons will include compassion, encouragement, and the same call to repentance and chastity that God continually places before us all.

Because we love the whole Church, many of us are facing a potential crisis of conscience regarding the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. We earnestly desire to remain actively engaged in the life and mission of our church. We therefore pray that our church’s reflection on human sexuality be determined by an obedient listening to the Word of God and by a faithful witness to that Word; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we commend the aforementioned statement to the ELCA Task Force on Human Sexuality, Dr. James Childs, director; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we memorialize the ELCA Churchwide Assembly to adopt the aforementioned statement at the 2005 Assembly.

29. Northern Great Lakes Synod (5G) [2005 “straw poll”]

[NOTE from the synod: The assembly took a “straw poll” on the three recommendations from the Church Council to the Churchwide Assembly on the ELCA Studies on Sexuality and wished the results to be shared. Recommendation One: Yes-183; No-45; Abstain-16. Recommendation Two: Yes-175; No-44; Abstain-24. Recommendation Three: Yes-79; No-130; Abstain-34.]

30. East-Central Synod of Wisconsin (5I) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality has shown how difficult the decisions at the upcoming 2005 Churchwide Assembly concerning these issues will be; and

WHEREAS, we are united in our concern for the unity of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and aware of how divisive this issue is; and

WHEREAS, we are mindful that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, as a Lutheran body, is still maturing and perhaps not ready to deal with these issues without great damage on the local and churchwide levels; and

WHEREAS, we have not fully discerned where the Holy Spirit is leading us within this church in these matters, and the timing may not be right; and

WHEREAS, we believe that the positive ramifications of this process are that people have been pulled back into the Word and that our members have become more active and aware of issues in this church and that the discussions on these issues have been helpful; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the East-Central Synod of Wisconsin in assembly memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to

1. lift up the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality in prayer and with gratitude for their long, hard work;
2. continue discussions on human sexuality within this church;
3. support and uphold the current “Vision and Expectations” while discussions continue; and
4. refrain from voting on issues of human sexuality at this time;

and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality be asked to continue their work by bringing to the 2007 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America recommendations with specific language to define terms and procedures, such as what “committed, long-term relationship” means or specifically how bishops might exercise local pastoral care in matters pertaining to this issue.

31. Indiana-Kentucky Synod (6C) [2004 memorial]

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America calls many Lutheran churches around the world “companion churches”; and

WHEREAS, this church is trying to be less paternalistic and more fraternal in its relationships with companion churches, particularly in the so-called Third World; and

WHEREAS, a change in this church’s present policy regarding the ordination of homosexuals in relationships could jeopardize its relationships with such churches; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Indiana-Kentucky Synod memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly to direct the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality to consult with all of this church’s companion churches as it continues conversation on the issues of 1) ordaining homosexual pastors in relationships and 2) blessing same-sex unions, and continues study on human sexuality; and be it further

RESOLVED, that such consultations not be limited to European Lutheran churches but also specifically seek the wisdom of companion churches in Canada, Asia, Latin America, Africa, and Oceania.

32. Indiana-Kentucky Synod (6C) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the Indiana-Kentucky Synod in assembly, in R-1-04, stated:

Be it resolved that the Indiana-Kentucky Synod of the ELCA memorializes the 2005 Churchwide Assembly to reaffirm present guidelines: “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 sexual relationships”; and

WHEREAS, the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality in its recent report has suggested that exceptions to this policy might be allowed; and

WHEREAS, the Conference of Bishops in its meeting in October of 1993 issued the following statement with respect to the blessing of same sex unions: “. . . there is basis neither in Scripture nor tradition for the establishment of an official ceremony by this church for the blessing of a homosexual relationship. We, therefore, do not approve such a ceremony as an official action of this church’s ministry” (Conference of Bishops 93.10.25); therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Indiana-Kentucky Synod in assembly memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to affirm that all

individuals, regardless of their sexual orientation, be welcomed within this Christian community and be afforded the same encouragement and accountability that all persons in Christ are granted; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Indiana-Kentucky Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America provide training and resources to congregations to assist them with welcoming gay and lesbian people; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Indiana-Kentucky Synod in assembly memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to affirm that single ordained, consecrated, and commissioned people are expected to live a chaste life; married ordained, consecrated, and commissioned people are expected to live in fidelity to their spouses; ordained, consecrated, and commissioned people who are homosexual in their self-understanding are expected to abstain from homosexual sexual relationships; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Indiana-Kentucky Synod in assembly memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to request that all synodical bishops and councils be universal and uniform in applying the current guidelines as stated in "Vision and Expectations"; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Indiana-Kentucky Synod in assembly memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly to affirm the October of 1993 statement from the Conference of Bishops with respect to the blessing of same-sex unions.

33. Northwestern Ohio Synod (6D) [2005 memorial]

WHEREAS, since biblical times, the Church has held church leadership to a high standard of behavior (Titus 1:6-9), and, because of the importance of the Gospel, Paul states that those who preach the Gospel are examples to their flock (1 Timothy 4:16), and that this standard is more than personal holiness; it is the holiness that comes from God working through rostered leaders, who hold a significant responsibility (Matthew 18:6); and

WHEREAS, the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality presented a statement made by the Conference of Bishops 12 years ago, which states there is no scriptural or traditional support for either blessing of same-gender unions or rostering of persons in committed gay or lesbian relationships but that the bishops will continue communications to these members and will support the best pastoral care from pastors and congregations to gay and lesbian persons in their parishes; and

WHEREAS, the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality states that this church is not of one mind on the issue of blessing same-gender unions and lacks any policy guidance in this matter; and

WHEREAS, the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality states that this church is not of one mind on the issue of rostering persons in committed gay or lesbian relationships and is unsure of the use of the current policy guidance on this matter; and

WHEREAS, as a significant change in policy, the recommendations of the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality set aside any consequence for violation of the "Vision and Expectations: Ordained Ministers in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America," a document by which this church has been guided; and

WHEREAS, since these recommendations place on the synodical bishop the decisions both to issue a call to non-celibate gay or lesbian rostered leaders and the policy of blessing same-gender unions, leading to such issues of division as:

Some synods of this Church, having a higher percentage of gay and lesbian or heterosexual clergy, depending on the bishop's willingness to ordain them, will create gay and lesbian-friendly synods or traditionalist synods;

Some bishops might be elected by a synod based on their willingness to roster or to not roster non-celibate gay or lesbian candidates;

There may become 65 separate churches instead of 65 synods of one Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;

The burden of making and defending a position on blessing of same-gender unions and ordination of non-celibate gay and lesbian persons will fall solely on the synodical bishop since there is no churchwide policy to support his or her decision; and

WHEREAS, as in any other change in policy, such a decision should be voted on and defeated or passed by the voting members of the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, thereby allowing this church to vote its convictions; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Northwestern Ohio Synod Assembly memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to vote to establish a policy that this church will not offer blessings of same-gender unions; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Northwestern Ohio Synod Assembly memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to affirm the current “Vision and Expectations,” that all rostered leaders are to be faithful in marriage and chaste outside of marriage. This standard is to be equally applied to those who see themselves as heterosexual and to those who see themselves as gay or lesbian; and be it further

RESOLVED, that, as the Northwestern Ohio Synod is not of one mind in this matter, the number of votes for, against, and abstaining on the question of this memorial shall be counted and recorded, and the results shall accompany the memorial sent to the 2005 Churchwide Assembly: Yes-315; No-143; Abstain-23; total votes counted-481.

34. Northeastern Ohio Synod (6E) [2005 Memorial]

RESOLVED, that the 2005 Northeastern Ohio Synod Assembly memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to adopt the following resolution as a substitute for the Church Council recommendations:

That the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:

- 1) Affirm and uphold current policy and practices consistent with past understandings of “Vision and Expectations,” “Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline,” and the social statements of the Lutheran Church in America and The American Lutheran Church.
- 2) Admonish individuals, communities, congregations, and synods that any discipline that may result in response to actions contrary to those policies be undertaken with all humility in the knowledge that we see through the glass darkly. May we forgive as we wish to be forgiven. Remembering the log in our own eye, may Christian charity guide our ways; and
- 3) Beseech individuals, communities, congregations, and synods, who for reasons of conscience will act contrary to the aforementioned policies, to graciously accept and endure the discipline of the church for the sake of peace, secure in the knowledge “that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us” (Romans 8:18).

35. Southern Ohio Synod (6F) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America documents “Vision and Expectations” and “Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline” continue to be biblically and theologically valid; and

WHEREAS, the Report and Recommendation of the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality concluded that a clear majority of respondents to the *Journey Together Faithfully* study were not in favor of changing current policies; and

WHEREAS, the granting of exceptions for ministry candidates living in committed same-gender relationships would not unite but further divide this church; and

WHEREAS, the Conference of Bishops has declared “. . . there is basis neither in Scripture nor tradition for the establishment of an official ceremony by this church for the blessing of a homosexual relationship” (1993); therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Southern Ohio Synod memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to affirm and uphold without exception the current policy and practices for rostered leaders as set forth in “Vision and Expectations” and “Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline”; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southern Ohio Synod Assembly memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to adopt, as official policy, that it neither establish nor approve a ceremony for the blessing of a homosexual relationship as an official action of this church’s ministry.

36. New Jersey Synod (7A) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the New Jersey Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America believes that God calls members of this church to be welcoming and accepting of all people and to love justice and that this welcome and justice include homosexual persons in committed relationships; and

WHEREAS, true welcome and justice include the calling of homosexual persons in committed relationships to serve as pastors, associates in ministry, and other rostered leaders; and

WHEREAS, congregations, synods, and wider expressions of this church that choose to call and roster persons who are homosexual and in committed relationships should not fear discipline; and

WHEREAS, a true welcome of homosexual persons means a recognition of the faithful relationships of those persons with partners and the fact that these persons, like heterosexual persons, wish to prayerfully and publicly affirm vows of lifelong faithfulness, and some congregations and clergy feel called to extend this right to all faithful adults; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that, since the New Jersey Synod favors a change in policy that would allow for the blessing of same-sex relationships and ordination of people in same-sex relationships, it trust the guidance of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the work of the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality in terms of what will maintain both the unity and ministry of this church; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the New Jersey Synod affirm the three resolutions from the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America regarding the report and recommendations of the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality and encourage the adoption of these resolutions at the 2005 Churchwide Assembly.

37. New England Synod (7B) [2005 Memorial]

RESOLVED, that the 2005 New England Synod Assembly memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly to adopt the three proposals set forth by the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in its April 2005 meeting.

[NOTE from the synod: This memorial was approved by a vote of Yes-386 and No-74.]

38. Metropolitan New York Synod (7C) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the 2005 Metropolitan New York Synod Assembly has received four proposed memorials to the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America regarding the action on the ELCA Studies on Sexuality; and

WHEREAS, these proposed memorials include calls to

1. affirm and uphold current policy and practices consistent with past understandings of “Vision and Expectations,” “Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline,” and the social statements of the Lutheran Church in America and The American Lutheran Church;
2. affirm the Conference of Bishops’ 1993 statement on the blessing of homosexual relationships;
3. develop standardized policies detailing the chaste and faithful behaviors expected of all rostered leaders, regardless of whether that person is heterosexual or homosexual;
4. acknowledge that, while there is currently no agreement between those who would approve candidates in committed same-sex relationships and those who would not approve such candidates, the current standards of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America are consistent with the ecumenical consensus of the Church; and

WHEREAS, the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America on April 11, 2005, has provided the three recommendations for consideration at the 2005 Churchwide Assembly; and

WHEREAS, the concerns raised in the proposed memorials are faithfully addressed in the April 11, 2005, recommendations of the Church Council; and

WHEREAS, the Church Council's recommended process for exceptions strikes a necessary balance between these two positions and allows people who hold them to remain in unity while respecting their difference; and

WHEREAS the Church Council's recommended process does not create new policies but retains both the current standards of "Vision and Expectations" as normative and the procedures already in place for granting exceptions; and

WHEREAS, we wish to support actions in compliance with the policies and procedures of this church; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to adopt the resolutions pertaining to the recommendations of the Church Council for the sake of the Gospel of Christ and the mission of the Church; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod communicate to the 2005 Churchwide Assembly that the process recommended by the Church Council both preserves the current standards of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and presents the best hope at present for preserving the unity of this church; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod communicate to the 2005 Churchwide Assembly that the process recommended by the Church Council will serve the best interests of the whole Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, in its three expressions as congregations, synods, and churchwide body, by acknowledging the ministry of candidates in committed same-sex relationships among congregations and synods who wish to call them.

39. Upstate New York Synod (7D) [2005 Memorial]

RESOLVED, that the Upstate New York Synod Assembly affirm Recommendation One concerning the report of the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality from the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to the 2005 Churchwide Assembly; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Upstate New York Synod Assembly affirm Recommendation Two concerning the report of the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality from the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to the 2005 Churchwide Assembly; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Upstate New York Synod Assembly affirm Recommendation Three concerning the report of the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality from the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to the 2005 Churchwide Assembly; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the decisions of the Upstate New York Synod made on the resolutions on the recommendations concerning the report of the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality from the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to the 2005 Churchwide Assembly, including any vote totals announced, be communicated to the 2005 Churchwide Assembly via the proper channels for such communications.

[NOTE from the synod: The resolutions were approved at the Upstate New York Synod Assembly held June 5–7, 2005. Votes were as follows: Recommendation One: Yes-334, No-65; Recommendation Two: Yes-280, No-119; Recommendation Three: Yes-237, No-165.]

40. Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod (7E) [2005 Memorial]

RESOLVED, that the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to recommend adoption of Recommendation One from the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality, which calls upon the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America “to concentrate on finding ways to live together faithfully in the midst of our disagreements”; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to recommend adoption of Recommendation Two from the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality, which calls upon the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America “to continue to respect the pastoral guidance of the 1993 statement of the Conference of Bishops”; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this church welcome gay and lesbian persons into its life (as stated in Churchwide Assembly resolutions from 1991, 1995, and 1999), and trust pastors and congregations to discern ways to provide faithful pastoral care to same-sex couples; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to recommend adoption of Recommendation Three from the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality, which provides for exceptions to the “Vision and Expectations” statement and the “Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline” for partnered gay or lesbian candidates or rostered leaders.

41. Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod (7F) [2005 “sense of the synod” resolution]

[NOTE from synod: The assembly took a “sense of the synod” vote on the three recommendations from the Church Council to the Churchwide Assembly on the ELCA Studies on Sexuality and wished the results to be shared. Recommendation One: the assembly voted in favor of the recommendation, but the number of votes for and against was not recorded. Recommendation Two: the assembly voted in favor of the recommendation: Yes-322; No-6. Recommendation Three: the assembly voted in favor of the recommendation: Yes-185; No-57; Abstain-36.]

42. Lower Susquehanna Synod (8D) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in assembly in 2001 directed this church to develop a social statement on sexuality; and

WHEREAS, this study is not yet complete; and

WHEREAS, a decision on the blessing of same-sex unions and the ordination, consecration, and commissioning of people in committed same-sex unions would be better informed in the context of such a statement; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Lower Susquehanna Synod at its 2005 Synod Assembly memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to postpone a decision on the blessing of same-sex unions and the ordination, consecration, and commissioning of people in committed same-sex unions until the social statement on human sexuality is completed.

43. Lower Susquehanna Synod (8D) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, “Vision and Expectations” and “Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline” are authoritative policies already in place, defining matters of doctrine, morals, and conduct for all rostered persons in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and

WHEREAS, all rostered persons are under the authority of a synodical bishop; and
WHEREAS, there is a need to prevent instances of inconsistent implementation of “Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline” and to ensure vigilance in that implementation in order to avoid injury to the body of Christ and public scandal; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Lower Susquehanna Synod, meeting in assembly, request the 2005 Churchwide Assembly to encourage the Conference of Bishops to hold one another accountable for vigilant, consistent, and collegial implementation of “Vision and Expectations” and “Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline” for the greater well-being of the body of Christ and its mission.

44. Upper Susquehanna Synod (8E) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, we are conscience-bound by our faith and hope in Jesus Christ to support, promote, and obey the Word of God; and

WHEREAS, “Social statements guide the institutional life of this church” (“Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns,” February 1998); and

WHEREAS, in the history of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and its predecessor church bodies, social statements were adopted and then decisions were made based upon the foundational material contained in the social statement; and

WHEREAS, Recommendation Three of the Church Council represents a significant change in the life and ministry of this church; and

WHEREAS, any action taken by the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America concerning ordination policies of this church has the potential to “predetermine” what a social statement needs to say to justify such policies; and

WHEREAS, we support the three recommendations of the Upper Susquehanna Synod Council that were sent to the secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America on February 18, 2005, in response to the recommendations of the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality; and

WHEREAS, Recommendation One of the Upper Susquehanna Synod Council offers the best potential for successfully addressing the sexuality issue as well as many other life issues of the members of Evangelical Lutheran Church in America congregations; and

WHEREAS, a clear majority of respondents to *Journey Together Faithfully, Part Two* agree with the Church’s historical consensus; and

WHEREAS, if the 2005 Churchwide Assembly adopts Church Council Recommendation Three, many may be conscience-bound to withhold support for this recommendation based on biblical guidelines for choosing church leaders; and

WHEREAS, we encourage members of Evangelical Lutheran Church in America congregations to live together faithfully in the midst of our disagreements in this issue, obey the Word of God, believe in Jesus Christ, and trust in the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America be requested to adopt the three recommendations of the Upper Susquehanna Synod Council:

Recommendation #1:

Because the God-given mission and communion we share is of utmost importance and because faithful conscience-bound Lutherans find themselves so decisively at odds over the issues of sexuality, we, the Upper Susquehanna Synod Council, recommend that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America concentrate on finding ways to live together faithfully in the midst of our disagreements.

Recommendation #2:

We, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, recognize that there is basis neither in Scripture nor tradition for the establishment of an official ceremony by this church for the blessing of a homosexual relationship. We, therefore, do not approve

such a ceremony as an official action of this church's ministry. Nevertheless, we express trust in and will continue dialogue with those pastors and congregations who are in ministry with gay and lesbian persons and affirm their desire to explore the best ways to provide pastoral care for all to whom they minister.

Recommendation #3:

We, the Upper Susquehanna Synod Council, recommend that, at this time, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America continue under the standards regarding sexual conduct for rostered leaders as set forth in "Vision and Expectations" and "Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline";

and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Upper Susquehanna Synod memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to postpone action on Church Council Recommendation Three until after a social statement on sexuality is approved by this church in assembly; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the 2005 Churchwide Assembly request all synods to survey congregations and individual members to identify and suggest guidelines for living together faithfully in the midst of our disagreements, by obeying the Word of God and relying on belief in Jesus Christ and the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit, and to submit results to the Church Council with the purpose of providing consistent guidelines for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Upper Susquehanna Synod comment, promote, encourage, and recommend to congregational councils, committees, members, adjunct bodies (e.g., Stephen Ministries, etc.), and pastors to become more pro-active in our practical and spiritual response to the grace of God, so that in all things the love of Christ Jesus is our constant inspiration and guide and that his Gospel love will have the victory in our ongoing struggle to be faithful, whatever issues or controversies engage us as his body. Amen

45. Upper Susquehanna Synod (8E) [2004 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has adopted a process of discerning a social ethic about human sexuality, especially homosexuality, concluding with a social statement in 2007; and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has adopted a process of deciding whether persons in same-sex relationships can be accepted into the rostered ministry, to be acted upon in 2005; and

WHEREAS, this time line asks us to adopt the process before accepting the principle; and

WHEREAS, others in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America are suggesting delaying a vote regarding the rostering of persons in same-sex relationships, and

WHEREAS, to make a decision about policy and practice without overwhelming consensus is to act according to the Kingdom of Power rather than the Kingdom of Grace, which is contrary to a Lutheran understanding of establishing public policy and principles; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Upper Susquehanna Synod in assembly memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to delay voting on the question of rostering persons in committed same-sex relationships until after it has adopted a social statement on sexuality, including homosexuality.

46. Virginia Synod (9A) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America have been called upon to study and respond to the materials presented in the *Journey Together Faithfully* study; and

WHEREAS, after much deliberation and input, the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality has presented for comment and action their report of January 13, 2005; and

WHEREAS, the bishop of the Virginia Synod, the Rev. James F. Mauney, has memorialized his thoughts on the task force report in a January 12, 2005, letter to all congregations of the Virginia Synod; and

WHEREAS, the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has studied and responded to the task force report with a set of Recommendations on Sexuality Studies at its April 2005 meeting; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Virginia Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America express its agreement with Recommendation One of the Recommendations on Sexuality Studies from the Church Council and its included rationales via memorial to the 2005 Churchwide Assembly that it similarly accept and endorse these recommendations; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Virginia Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America express its agreement with Recommendation Two of the Recommendations on Sexuality Studies from the Church Council and its included rationales via memorial to the 2005 Churchwide Assembly that it similarly accept and endorse these recommendations; and be it further

RESOLVED, that in regard to Recommendation Three the Virginia Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America recommend to the 2005 Churchwide Assembly that this church maintain and uphold the standards for rostered leaders as set forth in “Vision and Expectations”; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we encourage our duly elected synodical voting members to the 2005 Churchwide Assembly, guided by the Holy Spirit, the sentiments of this resolution, and the debates and discussions of the 2005 Churchwide Assembly, to vote their consciences on this very difficult and important matter, secure in the confidence and trust we have placed in them.

47. North Carolina Synod (9B) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, Holy Scripture teaches that marriage, as intended by the creator, is the union of one man and one woman (Genesis 1:27–28; Matthew 19:4–6); and

WHEREAS, the marriage rite in *Lutheran Book of Worship* affirms that “God in his goodness created us male and female” and that God “established marriage and continues to bless it with his abundant and ever-present support”; and

WHEREAS, the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America adopted the statement “Vision and Expectations: Ordained Ministers in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America” (1990), which directs that “ordained ministers who are homosexual in their self-understanding are expected to abstain from homosexual sexual relationships,” and “Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline” (1993), which says that “Practicing homosexual persons are precluded from the ordained ministry of this church,” and subsequent comparable documents that set forth the same policies for all rostered leaders of this church; and

WHEREAS, the Conference of Bishops issued a statement in 1993 acknowledging “that there is basis neither in Scripture nor tradition for the establishment of an official ceremony by the church for the blessing of a homosexual relationship”; and

WHEREAS, the Church Council adopted a Message to the Church in 1996 that reaffirms that “marriage is a lifelong covenant of faithfulness between a man and a woman”; and

WHEREAS, the 1991 Churchwide Assembly declared that “gay and lesbian persons, as individuals created by God, are welcome to participate fully in the life of the congregations of the ELCA”; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the North Carolina Synod, meeting in assembly, memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to express its opposition to all forms of prejudice against persons because of their sexual orientation and declare its intention to include all people as full participants in the life of congregations of this church; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the North Carolina Synod memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly to affirm the above-mentioned provisions set forth in “Vision and Expectations: Ordained Ministers in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America” and “Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline” and subsequent comparable documents applicable to all rostered leaders of this church and declare that persons who are homosexual in their behavior shall neither be admitted to nor retained in any rostered ministry of this church; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the North Carolina Synod memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly to affirm that the solemnization of marriage as a rite of this church is to be used solely for the union of a man and a woman and that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America does not recognize nor endorse any ecclesiastical ceremony of blessing for the union of same-sex couples; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the North Carolina Synod memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly to direct the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality to incorporate these affirmations in its forthcoming statement on sexuality (2009); and be it further

RESOLVED, that the North Carolina Synod memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly to direct all expressions and units of this church to abide by the provisions set forth in “Vision and Expectations: Ordained Ministers in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America” and “Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline” and to apply the appropriate discipline when necessary, in accordance with the constitution, bylaws, and other disciplinary documents of this church.

[Note from the synod: Yes–319; No–251]

48. Southeastern Synod (9D) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality did not recommend changes in the current policy of this church about blessing committed same-sex relationships and ordaining, consecrating, or commissioning people in such relationships; and

WHEREAS, the task force encourages this church to refrain from disciplining those who do not abide by this policy; and

WHEREAS, the task force will be developing a social statement on human sexuality for presentation to the 2009 Churchwide Assembly; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly to maintain this church’s current policy through discipline; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this policy not be changed prior to the adoption of a social statement on human sexuality by a Churchwide Assembly; and be it further

RESOLVED, that such a social statement on human sexuality be founded on Scripture, the Lutheran Confessions, and traditional church teachings.

49. Florida-Bahamas Synod (9E) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the people of the Florida-Bahamas Synod give thanks to God for our oneness in Christ Jesus and for the gift of the Holy Spirit working in this synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America during this time of study and discernment of God’s will for this church; and

WHEREAS, we give thanks for the variety of gifts and richness of diversity within this church, and recognize that people within this synod are not of one mind on the matter of sexuality, at times presenting fundamentally differing perspectives grounded in credible Lutheran theological and biblical teachings; and

WHEREAS, the 1993 statement of the Conference of Bishops provides counsel and advice to pastors and congregations leaving room for pastoral response to missional needs for caring for and supporting all persons, including those in committed same-gender relationships; and

WHEREAS, the recommendations of the Church Council place the trust of this church in the congregations, synods, candidacy committees, and bishops to discern the Holy Spirit’s gifts for

ministry among the baptized and make decisions appropriate to each situation while respecting conscience-bound positions that are in disagreement; and

WHEREAS, no congregation of this church is compelled to consider or call any candidate for a rostered position; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Florida-Bahamas Synod, in assembly, affirm with gratitude the involvement of congregations and individuals in this study and conversation, and affirm with gratitude the work of the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality, the Conference of Bishops, and the Church Council in preparing the recommendations to be presented to the 2005 Churchwide Assembly; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Florida-Bahamas Synod, in assembly, encourage all of its congregations to hold in prayer the voting members of the 2005 Churchwide Assembly, and further pray for the blessing of the Holy Spirit to guide the deliberations and decisions of the Churchwide Assembly; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Florida-Bahamas Synod, in assembly, memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly to approve the resolution related to Recommendation One as presented by the Church Council, affirming our unity while recognizing our diversity as a people of God and encouraging us to find ways to live together faithfully in the midst of our differences; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Florida-Bahamas Synod, in assembly, memorialize the Churchwide Assembly to approve the resolutions related to Recommendation Two as presented by the Church Council, respecting the 1993 statement of the Conference of Bishops as pastoral guidance and trusting pastors and congregations to provide faithful pastoral care to all persons; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Florida-Bahamas Synod, meeting in assembly, memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly to affirm and endorse “Vision and Expectations” as the normative expectations of this church for its rostered persons; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Florida-Bahamas Synod, meeting in assembly, memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly to urge all synodical bishops to enforce the current standards in matters of doctrine and conduct according to “Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline” among all rostered persons under their care; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Florida-Bahamas Synod, meeting in assembly, memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly to support a process to ensure consistent and collegial implementation of “Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline” for the greater well-being of the body of Christ and its mission.

[Note from synod: RESOLVED clauses 1, 2, and 3 were approved by an estimated 90 percent margin on an uncounted hand vote. RESOLVED clause 4 was affirmed by an estimated 80 percent margin. RESOLVED clauses 5, 6, and 7 were moved and substituted for the original proposal on a 224-201 vote; subsequently, the substitute resolution for 5, 6, and 7 was adopted on a 237-171 vote with the request that the vote be reported with the memorial.]

BACKGROUND

Some of these synodical memorials were adopted prior to the Task Force Report, and some were adopted prior to the Church Council recommendations, and therefore may not reflect the content of the action before the assembly.

The concerns raised by the memorials of these synods were addressed as part of the business of the 2005 ELCA Churchwide Assembly (see above, pages 270-291, 293ff.). Background information on the ELCA Studies on Sexuality and the proposed action on this topic recommended by the ELCA Church Council are printed in Section IV of the *2005 Pre-Assembly Report*, pages 19–24.

The memorials of the Southwest California Synod and the Western Iowa Synod erroneously note concerns related to the cost of the study as “up to \$2,300,000 from the churchwide expression alone.” The Church Council approved two transfers to fund the project. The first was in 2001 for \$250,000 and the second was in 2002 for \$900,000, for a total of \$1,150,000 to fund the project through 2007.

As of January 31, 2005, \$613,039 had been expended for the first three years, leaving a balance of \$536,961. The remainder of the funds will provide funding for the development of the social statement on human sexuality.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

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To receive the memorials of the Alaska Synod; Montana Synod; Southwest California Synod; Pacifica Synod; Western North Dakota Synod; Eastern North Dakota Synod; South Dakota Synod, Southwestern Minnesota Synod; Minneapolis Area Synod; Nebraska Synod; Southwestern Texas Synod; Northern Illinois Synod; Central/Southern Illinois Synod; Western Iowa Synod; Northeastern Iowa Synod; Northern Great Lakes Synod; East-Central Synod of Wisconsin; Indiana-Kentucky Synod; Northwestern Ohio Synod; Northeastern Ohio Synod; Southern Ohio Synod; New Jersey Synod; New England Synod; Metropolitan New York Synod; Upstate New York Synod; Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod; Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod; Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod; Allegheny Synod; Lower Susquehanna Synod; Upper Susquehanna Synod; Virginia Synod; North Carolina Synod; South Carolina Synod; Southeastern Synod; and Florida-Bahamas Synod on the recommendations related to the ELCA Sexuality Studies; and

To acknowledge the action of the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America on the recommendations related to the ELCA Sexuality Studies as the response of the Churchwide Assembly to the memorials of these synods.

Category F5: Affirmation of Welcome for Gay and Lesbian Christians

Reference: 2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section VI, page 109.

1. Northwestern Minnesota Synod (3D) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, “The Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality recommends that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America concentrate on finding ways to live together faithfully in the midst of our disagreements” (Report and Recommendations, page 5); and

WHEREAS, the task force’s report concedes that the Churchwide Assembly actions in 1991 and 1993 “to affirm 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” are “differently interpreted in understanding and practice” (Report and Recommendations, page 23); and

WHEREAS, the ELCA studies on sexuality were undertaken with the assumption that the Christians of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America “welcome gay and lesbian people as sisters and brothers in Christ even though they have reservations about blessing same-sex unions and welcoming people in same-sex unions into our ministries” (*Journey Together Faithfully, Part Two*, page 43); and

WHEREAS, these studies often have provoked debate concerning the faith of lesbian and gay Christians, particularly the genuineness of that faith; and

WHEREAS, the word of faith proclaims, “If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved . . . for everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Romans 10:9, 13); therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Northwestern Minnesota Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in assembly welcome all lesbians and gay people who gather with this church in Christian confession, receiving them as sisters and brothers in Christ and joint heirs to the eternal kingdom of our Lord; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Northwestern Minnesota Synod in assembly encourage its congregations to welcome these Christians to participate fully in the life of this church; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Northwestern Minnesota Synod in assembly memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to endorse this statement of affirmation.

BACKGROUND

The policy base and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in affirming the intention and commitment of this church to be welcoming of gay and lesbian persons is well established.

The language of the memorial echoes previous actions and documents that underscore this intention and commitment, including actions of the 1991, 1995, and 1999 ELCA Churchwide Assemblies [see *2005 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section V, page 28], which affirmed the ELCA’s policy of welcome to gay and lesbian people, but also the 1993 statement of the Conference of Bishops. The Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality has consistently reaffirmed the ELCA’s commitment to welcome gay and lesbian persons in both its process and publications, including its “Report and Recommendations” in January 2005.

At its April 2005 meeting, the ELCA Church Council took three actions related to the ELCA Studies on Sexuality. The second recommendation specifically states “that this church welcomes gay and lesbian persons into its life (as stated in Churchwide Assembly resolutions from 1991, 1995, and 1999. . .).”

The Division for Outreach, in 1998, developed a resource titled “Congregational Hospitality to Gay and Lesbian People.” The resource was developed to assist congregations to be welcoming and hospitable and is available from the Division for Outreach or on-line at www.elca.org/outreach/resources/hospitality.html.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

EN BLOC

CA05.07.39w To thank the Northwestern Minnesota Synod and endorse its memorial as a statement of affirmation of welcome for gay and lesbian Christians who, as individuals created by God, are welcome to participate fully in the life of the congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and

To express gratitude to congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America that have sought to become places of welcome for all people and to encourage pastors and lay leaders to use resources such as “Congregational Hospitality to Gay and Lesbian People.”

Category G1: Extension of Full-Communion Status

Reference: 2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section VI, page 110.

1. Northwest Washington Synod (1B) [2005 Memorial]

RESOLVED, that the Northwest Washington Synod memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to make provision for a relationship of full communion to be granted to all rostered persons in good standing who for reasons of conscience may find it necessary to leave the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and yet find no conflict with continued service in an Evangelical Lutheran Church in America congregation or setting; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Northwest Washington Synod memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to keep on its rosters all persons in good standing who desire to remain on the roster even if their congregation or setting chooses to leave the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

BACKGROUND

Relationships of full communion are church-to-church agreements. These are established in keeping with the definition of such agreements as outlined in “Ecumenism: The Vision of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.”

The memorial appears to reflect a misunderstanding of the nature of full-communion relationships as well as of the constitutional provisions, bylaws, and policies that govern the rosters of this church.

Under provision 9.21. in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, congregations of this church “by their practice as well as their governing documents” must agree to call pastoral leadership from the clergy roster of this church or properly approved candidates for the roster. Moreover, bylaw 7.31.11.g. specifies that an ordained minister of this church must be a member of a congregation of this church. Ordained ministers of this church serve under call in ELCA ministry settings or in places related to the mission and ministry of this church, such as missionaries in companion churches.

A variety of issues related to accountability, commitment to the Confession of Faith of this church, fulfillment of the responsibility to preach, teach, and serve in accord with the faith of this church, and the duty to increase the support by a congregation to the work of this whole church (bylaw 7.31.12.b.4) are raised by this memorial.

Good order and appropriate service on behalf of this church are important concerns. This church’s existing governing documents provide such order and outline the duties and responsibilities of congregations and those who serve in rostered ministries on behalf of this church.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

EN BLOC

CA05.07.39x To refer the memorial of the Northwest Washington Synod on “extension of full communion” to the Office of the Secretary for development—in consultation with the Conference of Bishops and appropriate churchwide units—of a report to the April 2006 meeting of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Category G2: Student Loan Indebtedness

Reference: 2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section VI, page 111.

1. Indiana-Kentucky Synod (6C) [2005 Memorial]

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America requires four years of graduate education beyond a bachelor’s degree for ordained ministry and at least two years of graduate education for most other rostered leaders; and

WHEREAS, tuition rates at both the undergraduate and seminary level have increased at well beyond the rate of inflation for more than a decade, leading to increased student loan indebtedness for those pursuing degrees leading to rostered ministry; and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America through its churchwide and synodical budgets and special appeals subsidizes about 23 percent of the costs of seminary education, so that the average debt load for seminary graduates accepting their first call was approximately \$24,600 in 1999, an increase of 137 percent over the average debt of about \$10,400 in 1991 (a trend which has continued since 1999); and

WHEREAS, average salaries for rostered leaders have at best kept pace with inflation, so that many who have entered rostered ministry recently are faced with serious financial challenges due to student loan indebtedness; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Indiana-Kentucky Synod Council be encouraged to develop programs (perhaps similar to the Eastern North Dakota Synod’s endowment fund) that help relieve student loan indebtedness for rostered leaders; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Indiana-Kentucky Synod memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to consider plans for relieving student loan indebtedness for current rostered leaders.

BACKGROUND

The Indiana-Kentucky Synod memorial identifies a significant reality facing rostered leaders in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America—that of increasing educational and consumer indebtedness for many seminary students and first-call rostered leaders. Many of these students enter seminary with significant educational and consumer debt. While there are still a significant percentage of ELCA candidates who graduate without indebtedness, the number of those with debt and the size of indebtedness are increasing. While tuition rates are a factor in this indebtedness, the net tuition increases have been modest due to increased financial aid. The ELCA Fund for Leaders in Mission, established in 1999, is a long-term churchwide strategy to provide tuition scholarships for all ELCA candidates at ELCA seminaries. The Fund presently has an endowment of over \$10 million and to date has provided more than \$1.2 million in scholarships. The ELCA Foundation and the Division for Ministry continue to urge the members of the ELCA to support this fund.

In 2004–2005 the Division for Ministry participated in an inter-Lutheran study of indebtedness of seminarians and rostered leaders funded by Thrivent Financial for Lutherans,

which indicated that both student loans and consumer indebtedness is an increasing reality. There is a commitment from all three Lutheran church bodies to continue to monitor this and consider possible strategies to address this issue.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

EN BLOC

CA05.07.39y To thank the Indiana-Kentucky Synod for the memorial on student loan indebtedness;

To request that the Division for Ministry (or the appropriate churchwide unit), in consultation with ELCA seminaries, continue to monitor the level of indebtedness among ELCA candidates and first-call rostered leaders, to investigate existing programs to address this issue, and to report biennially to the Church Council concerning this topic including possible strategies to address this issue; and

To encourage members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to support generously the Fund for Leaders in Mission.

Reconsideration of the Churchwide Strategy for Engagement in Israel and Palestine

Reference: 2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section IV, pages 75–78; Section V, pages 48–58.

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson announced that he would place on the agenda the motion to reconsider the Churchwide Strategy for Engagement in Israel and Palestine, which had been offered earlier.

The Rev. Alfon “Chip” W. Larson [Sierra Pacific Synod], speaking to his motion to reconsider, emphasized the discovery during debate the previous day that there had been little or no Lutheran-Jewish dialogue on the strategy. A true strategy for engagement with both Israel and Palestine required conversation with all parties involved, he contended, and this church would have to find the will and the way to involve Jewish persons, both Americans and Israelis, from the beginning of any such discussion. Only by following this process would an honest and authentic engagement take place, he said.

Mr. Knute Ogren [New England Synod] pointed out that it was incorrect to think that all Palestinians and all Israelis would think alike on the matter. It would be impossible to listen to every voice. He expressed appreciation for this church’s prophetic voice speaking up when something was unjust.

Ms. Bonnie Nordvall [Northwestern Minnesota Synod] wondered why the strategy had radically departed from this church’s position of listening to all voices. Why, she asked, had this church decided that the voice of Israel was not worthy of being heard?

The Rev. John K. Stendahl [New England Synod], a member of the Consultative Panel for Lutheran-Jewish Relations, concurred with the need for conversation with Jewish people. The title of the strategy was problematic, he acknowledged, but the text did not deny the right of Israel to self-defense. It only expressed concern about the wall that had been constructed

on Palestinian land and spoke on behalf of voiceless Palestinians, he said. This church had an obligation to both peoples.

Ms. Diane L. Jacobson [Saint Paul Area Synod] begged the assembly to reconsider the strategy. While its intentions were real and sincere, its language was inflammatory, she asserted. Mindful of Lutherans' historical relationship with Jewish people, this church needed to be careful about its language, she said.

The Rev. G. Scott Cady [New England Synod] admitted that the language might not be what it could be, but wondered how this church's silence on the subject would be understood. It was essential to say something, he declared.

Mr. Jeff L. Kane [New England Synod] called the previous question.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To end debate.

Presiding Bishop Hanson called for a vote on the motion to end debate.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

CARRIED: To end debate.

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

YES-699; NO-130

Debate being ended, Presiding Bishop Hanson reminded the assembly that it was next voting on the motion to reconsider.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

DEFEATED: To reconsider the churchwide strategy for engagement in Israel and Palestine.

YES-376; NO-451

Report of the Reference and Counsel Committee

Reference: *2005 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section VIII, pages 1–12.

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson announced the final report of the Committee of Reference and Counsel and called upon the Rev. Jonathan L. Eilert and Ms. Phyllis L. Wallace, co-chairs, for the final resolutions for consideration.

Motion F: Resolution for the Nominating Program

Reference: *2005 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section VIII, page 6.

Motion F was submitted by Mr. John D. Litke [Metropolitan New York Synod]:

WHEREAS, the "Recommendations: Proposed Changes in Pattern of Governance," which is the report on governance from the Church Council, is received by the Churchwide Assembly as information only; and

WHEREAS, many details of these proposed changes are to be implemented as continuing resolutions that have not yet been enacted by the Church Council; and

WHEREAS, the *Pre-Assembly Report*, Section IV, page 9, Section C, "Proposals," Item 2, notes the expectation that two-thirds of the members of program committees would be nominated by synod assemblies; and

WHEREAS, the requirement for one six-year non-renewable term, in concert with the balance requirements between male and female, lay and ordained, and persons of color or whose primary

language is not English and the intended synodical nomination rotation means that the opportunity for nomination for service in the churchwide office will vary substantially from synod to synod; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, the Churchwide Assembly encourage the Church Council to so order the nomination process for program committees that nominations from the floor of the Churchwide Assembly are not precluded.

CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY ACTION

The Rev. Jonathan L. Eilert, co-chair of the Committee of Reference and Counsel, explained that the resolution was in concert with the governance proposal approved by this assembly, and made the following motion:

**Moved;
Seconded:**

WHEREAS, the “Recommendations: Proposed Changes in Pattern of Governance,” which is the report on governance from the Church Council, is received by the Churchwide Assembly as information only; and

WHEREAS, many details of these proposed changes are to be implemented as continuing resolutions that have not yet been enacted by the Church Council; and

WHEREAS, the *Pre-Assembly Report*, Section IV, page 9, Section C, “Proposals,” Item 2, notes the expectation that two-thirds of the members of program committees would be nominated by synod assemblies; and

WHEREAS, the requirement for one six-year non-renewable term, in concert with the balance requirements between male and female, lay and ordained, and persons of color or whose primary language is not English and the intended synodical nomination rotation means that the opportunity for nomination for service in the churchwide office will vary substantially from synod to synod; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, the Churchwide Assembly encourage the Church Council to so order the nomination process for program committees that nominations from the floor of the Churchwide Assembly are not precluded.

Mr. Litke declined to speak to his motion, given the committee’s recommendation and the lack of debate.

The chair called for a vote on the motion.

**ASSEMBLY
ACTION
CA05.07.40**

Yes-744; No-33

WHEREAS, the “Recommendations: Proposed Changes in Pattern of Governance,” which is the report on governance from the Church Council, is received by the Churchwide Assembly as information only; and

WHEREAS, many details of these proposed changes are to be implemented as continuing resolutions that have not yet been enacted by the Church Council; and

WHEREAS, the *Pre-Assembly Report*, Section IV, page 9, Section C, “Proposals,” Item 2, notes the expectation that two-thirds of the members of program committees would be nominated by synod assemblies; and

WHEREAS, the requirement for one six-year non-renewable term, in concert with the balance requirements between male and female, lay and ordained, and persons of color or whose primary language is not English and the intended synodical nomination rotation means that the opportunity for nomination for service in the churchwide office will vary substantially from synod to synod; therefore, be it
RESOLVED, the Churchwide Assembly encourage the Church Council to so order the nomination process for program committees that nominations from the floor of the Churchwide Assembly are not precluded.

Motion G: Youth as Voting Members of the Churchwide Assembly

Reference: *2005 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section VIII, page 7.

Motion G was submitted by Ms. Susan Berg [Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod] and the Rev. Kathleen D. McCallum Sachse [Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod]:

WHEREAS, the youth of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America are not only the leaders of tomorrow but the leaders of today; and

WHEREAS, according to the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions* of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, one of the ELCA's primary purposes is to "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 4.02.f.); and

WHEREAS, the stated purpose of the ELCA's Vocation and Education unit includes assisting in "the development of faithful, wise, and courageous leaders" and serving as steward "of the ELCA's networks and systems for leadership development" (*2005 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section V, page 8); and

WHEREAS, the rules for "Eligibility to serve as a voting member" of a Churchwide Assembly state that "the criterion for voting membership in the congregation from which a voting member is elected shall be in effect regarding minimum age for the voting member" (ELCA 12.41.13.), thus providing opportunity for youth to attend a Churchwide Assembly as voting members; and

WHEREAS, the gifts of youth uplift, strengthen, challenge, and enrich the body of Christ; and

WHEREAS, the diversity within the body of Christ is a gift from God and that the gifts of each are to be treasured by all; and

WHEREAS, the 2005 Churchwide Assembly received with applause a challenge from the 2005 Youth Convocation to increase youth participation in future Churchwide Assemblies; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA hereby encourage each synod of the ELCA to include among its voting members to future Churchwide Assemblies at least one youth representative.

CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY ACTION

The Rev. Jonathan L. Eilert, co-chair of the Committee of Reference and Counsel, summarized the contents of the resolution and announced that the committee affirmed the witness of youth voting members and therefore recommended approval of the motion. He moved the following:

MOVED;

SECONDED:

WHEREAS, the youth of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America are not only the leaders of tomorrow but the leaders of today; and

WHEREAS, according to the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions* of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, one of the ELCA's

primary purposes is to “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 4.02.f.); and

WHEREAS, the stated purpose of the ELCA’s Vocation and Education unit includes assisting in “the development of faithful, wise, and courageous leaders” and serving as steward “of the ELCA’s networks and systems for leadership development” (2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section V, page 8); and

WHEREAS, the rules for “Eligibility to serve as a voting member” of a Churchwide Assembly state that “the criterion for voting membership in the congregation from which a voting member is elected shall be in effect regarding minimum age for the voting member” (ELCA 12.41.13.), thus providing opportunity for youth to attend a Churchwide Assembly as voting members; and

WHEREAS, the gifts of youth uplift, strengthen, challenge, and enrich the body of Christ; and

WHEREAS, the diversity within the body of Christ is a gift from God and that the gifts of each are to be treasured by all; and

WHEREAS, the 2005 Churchwide Assembly received with applause a challenge from the 2005 Youth Convocation to increase youth participation in future Churchwide Assemblies; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA hereby encourage each synod of the ELCA to include among its voting members to future Churchwide Assemblies at least one youth representative.

Mr. Culynn Curtis [South Dakota Synod], a youth voting member, thanked this church for its ministry to and with youth. He asked the assembly to approve the resolution in order to encourage youth to be involved not only in youth ministry but also the business of this church. He hoped that every synod would have a youth voting member at the 2007 Churchwide Assembly.

Ms. Susan Berg [Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod] expressed gratitude to all those youth and young adults who attended the assembly as visitors, convocation participants, and voting members. She was disappointed that some synods had no youth in attendance and commented that the resolution challenged everyone to include synodical youth as voting members.

The Rev. Peter A. Vorhes [Northern Great Lakes Synod] recounted that his daughter had preceded him to Churchwide Assembly when she attended the Youth Convocation ten years previous. He supported the resolution.

Presiding Bishop Hanson announced that since three people had spoken in favor, the assembly would proceed to vote.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

CA05.07.41

Yes-758; No-52

WHEREAS, the youth of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America are not only the leaders of tomorrow but the leaders of today; and

WHEREAS, according to the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions* of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, one of the ELCA’s primary purposes is to “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 4.02.f.); and

WHEREAS, the stated purpose of the ELCA’s Vocation and Education unit includes assisting in “the development of faithful, wise, and courageous leaders” and serving as steward “of the ELCA’s networks and systems for leadership development” (2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section V, page 8); and

WHEREAS, the rules for “Eligibility to serve as a voting member” of a Churchwide Assembly state that “the criterion for voting membership in the congregation from which a voting member is elected shall be in effect regarding minimum age for the voting member” (ELCA 12.41.13.), thus providing opportunity for youth to attend a Churchwide Assembly as voting members; and

WHEREAS, the gifts of youth uplift, strengthen, challenge, and enrich the body of Christ; and

WHEREAS, the diversity within the body of Christ is a gift from God and that the gifts of each are to be treasured by all; and

WHEREAS, the 2005 Churchwide Assembly received with applause a challenge from the 2005 Youth Convocation to increase youth participation in future Churchwide Assemblies; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA hereby encourage each synod of the ELCA to include among its voting members to future Churchwide Assemblies at least one youth representative.

Motion H: Educational Diversity

Reference: 2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section VIII, page 8.

Motion H was submitted by the Rev. Timothy J. Swenson [Western North Dakota Synod]:

RESOLVED, the Nominating Committee of this church shall establish “educational diversity” as one of the selection criteria when determining the slate of candidates for election by the Churchwide Assembly.

CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY ACTION

Ms. Phyllis L. Wallace, co-chair of the Committee of Reference and Counsel, moved the following:

MOVED;

SECONDED:

To refer Motion H to the Office of the Secretary in consultation with the Vocation and Education unit to bring a report and possible recommendations to the November 2006 Church Council meeting.

The Rev. Darrell H. Jodock [Southwestern Minnesota Synod] opposed the resolution, saying that it was as unwise to mandate lack of education as it would be to require a certain level of education for nominees.

Ms. Sarah W. Wing [Northwest Washington Synod] objected to adding qualifications for candidates and micro-managing the elections process. She recommended that voters review carefully the published list of qualifications of each candidate.

Ms. Elaine L. Nygaard [Western North Dakota Synod] called the previous question.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To end debate.

Presiding Bishop Hanson called for a vote on the motion to end debate.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

CARRIED: To end debate.

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

YES-747; NO-55

The chair indicated that the assembly would be voting on the recommendation of the Committee of Reference and Counsel regarding Motion H.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

DEFEATED:

To refer Motion H to the Office of the Secretary in consultation with the Vocation and Education unit to bring a report and possible recommendations to the November 2006 Church Council meeting.

YES-209; NO-604

Motion B: Procedural Reference Bureau

Reference: 2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section VIII, page 2.

Motion B was submitted by Mr. Eric M. Peterson [Northwest Synod of Wisconsin]:

WHEREAS, voting members of the Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America have a history of confusion and misunderstanding regarding the elements of procedures, the rules of the assembly, and the intricacies of legislative business and authority; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the 2005 Churchwide Assembly direct the creation of an independent advisory panel for voting members, to be named the "Procedural Reference Bureau," which would enact the following points:

1. The ELCA shall employ for the term of the Churchwide Assembly at least three persons, at least one of whom is a registered parliamentarian, and none of whom may be full-time employees of the ELCA, to serve as staff of the bureau.
2. These staff members shall be available to any and all voting members to assist in guidance, legislative drafting, and other parliamentary and procedural guidance as requested, with the understanding these services are:
 - a. not to duplicate the work of the secretary or his/her designees,
 - b. not to remove from the voting member the responsibilities or ownership of legislative action, and
 - c. confidential unless made public by the concerned voting member or when the ownership of the concerned business is assumed by the assembly.
3. The Churchwide Assembly confers to the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee of the Church Council executive authority over this bureau and orders that funds deemed necessary by that committee for the bureau shall be provided from the Churchwide Assembly budget without barrier.

4. The bureau shall be in operation from the commencement of an assembly until the adjournment of that assembly, beginning with the 2007 Churchwide Assembly and in all subsequent assemblies until a majority vote of voting members orders the bureau's dissolution.
5. The bureau is to be physically located as near as possible to the voting members' floor area, but not in the voting members' seating area and not in close proximity to the stations of the secretary or his/her designees. If the bureau is separated from the floor area by a solid barrier, electronic monitoring must be provided to ensure accurate viewing and following of the plenary sessions; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Churchwide Assembly transmit to the Church Council, churchwide officers, and churchwide staff the assembly's understanding of legislative intent regarding this resolution, namely that this new bureau is to serve voting members independent of the legislative priorities of the Church Council, churchwide officers, agencies, employees, synodical bishops, or the Conference of Bishops, and the Church Council is respectfully reminded to take no action regarding this bureau that would be in violation of the ELCA Constitution (ELCA 14.13.a.), or any action that would imply or demonstrate an affront to the integrity of the independence of this new bureau.

CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY ACTION

Ms. Phyllis L. Wallace, co-chair of the Committee of Reference and Counsel, moved the following:

MOVED;

SECONDED: To refer Motion B to the Office of the Presiding Bishop and the Office of the Secretary with the request that a report and possible recommendations be brought to the April 2006 meeting of the Church Council.

Speaking to his motion, Mr. Peterson remarked that virtually every member of the assembly had been confused about procedure at some time during the week. He argued that the resolution would create an independent entity to assist voting members in their work. He expressed support for the committee's recommendation.

Ms. Tanja Haaland [South Dakota Synod] called the question.

MOVED;

SECONDED: To end debate.

Presiding Bishop Hanson called for a vote on the motion to end debate.

MOVED;

SECONDED;

CARRIED: To end debate.

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

YES-756; NO-46

Presiding Bishop Hanson called for a vote on the committee's recommendation concerning Motion B.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

YES-475; NO-324

CA05.07.42

To refer Motion B to the Office of the Presiding Bishop and the Office of the Secretary with the request that a report and possible recommendations be brought to the April 2006 meeting of the Church Council.

Motion O: Resolution of Appreciation and Thanksgiving

Reference: 2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section VIII, page 12.

Ms. Phyllis L. Wallace, co-chair of the Committee of Reference and Counsel, read Motion O, which was approved by acclamation.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

CA05.07.43

WHEREAS, the voting members of this ninth Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, children of God marked with the cross of Christ forever, have been privileged not only to do the vital work of deliberation and decision-making that Christ might be made known to the world but also to experience the grace and presence of Christ in our midst; and

WHEREAS, in this week together in Orlando we have been enabled here to do our appointed work as servants and leaders of this church by the many ELCA staff members whose efforts and labor—not only on our behalf and for our sake, but in Christ’s name and for his sake—we often take for granted; and

WHEREAS, we have been blessed as we have lived and worked here by the hospitality, graciousness, and hard work of the Florida-Bahamas Synod, by the countless hours and the tireless efforts generously given by so many volunteers, by the talents shared by musicians and artists, by worship leaders, and by the often invisible and often overlooked labor of the staff of the Marriott World Center Resort—food preparers, custodians, housekeepers, hotel staff, and many others; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that we express our gratitude to our churchwide staff; the Florida-Bahamas Synod and local planners and arrangers; all volunteers, musicians, and artists; worship leaders; and so many workers, who have enabled us to do our work and to be the body of Christ in this place; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we who have been so richly blessed now offer thanksgiving to the Triune God for all those who have provided for us and in that praise and thanksgiving express also our joyous and humble gratitude to these blessed servants of God.

Acknowledging the work of many people who help plan and implement the Churchwide Assembly, Presiding Bishop Hanson singled out two for special mention: Ms. Myrna J. Sheie, executive assistant to the presiding bishop, who is responsible for developing the assembly's agenda; and Ms. Mary Beth Nowak, director for meeting management and travel in the Office of the Secretary. The assembly gave them a rousing round of applause.

Motion N: Appreciation for Treasurer Christina Jackson-Skelton

Reference: *2005 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section VIII, page 11.

The Rev. Jonathan L. Eilert, co-chair of the Committee of Reference and Counsel, read Motion N, which was approved by acclamation.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

CA05.07.44 With sincere gratitude, we thank Treasurer Christina Jackson-Skelton for her very thorough report to the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

We are grateful to Treasurer Jackson-Skelton for her extensive knowledge of the finances of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. We recognize her leadership in maintaining the budget of this church and in keeping spending within appropriate guidelines.

We are thankful for the way she serves, with a calm spirit, integrity, clarity, and a vision for the future of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

We thank God for her guidance in working with the churchwide units and staff in ways that lead to good stewardship of resources, as demonstrated by spending within the resources allocated to them.

We are most appreciative of her fiduciary and managerial skills, as demonstrated in her role and responsibilities with several church-related programs and organizations such as the Mission Investment Fund.

Motion L: Appreciation for Vice President Carlos E. Peña

Reference: *2005 Pre-Assembly Report*, Section VIII, page 11.

The Rev. Jonathan L. Eilert, co-chair of the Committee of Reference and Counsel, read Motion L, which was approved by acclamation.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

CA05.07.45 With appreciation and sincere gratitude, we, the members of the 2005 Churchwide Assembly, on behalf of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, receive the report of Vice President Carlos E. Peña.

We appreciate the gifts that he brings to his role as vice president, including his wit, sense of humor, creativity, approachable manner, ability to listen, and willingness to devote generous amounts of time to the responsibilities of the office. He has shown his strong support of the churchwide staff and Church Council. He has been an admirable and dedicated ambassador of the Church Council and of this church across the country and abroad. He has shown a deep commitment to the faith.

We thank him for his first two years of service as vice president of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and look forward to his continued leadership.

Motion M: Appreciation for Secretary Lowell G. Almen

Reference: 2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section VIII, page 11.

The Rev. Jonathan L. Eilert, co-chair of the Committee of Reference and Counsel, introduced Motion M, which was approved by acclamation.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

CA05.07.46

We, the members of the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, express our deep appreciation to the Rev. Lowell G. Almen, secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

We are thankful to Secretary Almen for being a diligent keeper of the history and steward of the structure of this church. We also are thankful for his amazing memory and recall, conscientious ability, care for members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and deep concern for unity in this church. We appreciate his gentle spirit, humor, and aquatic agility.

We are sincerely grateful to Secretary Almen and the Office of the Secretary for the planning and preparations that have gone into the 2005 Churchwide Assembly. We realize that there are myriad details and behind-the-scenes needs, and we are thankful that they are taken care of in such an efficient and competent manner.

We thank him for his reminder there is an interdependence between all expressions of this church and that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall remain one church. We thank him for his report to the 2005 Churchwide Assembly in which he encouraged us to keep our eyes on the horizon and work together in common mission for the sake of the Gospel.

Presiding Bishop Hanson informed the assembly that Secretary Lowell and Sally Almen were celebrating their 40th wedding anniversary that day. The assembly responded with sustained applause.

Acknowledging that voting members wished to thank a number of churchwide staff members, Presiding Bishop Hanson asked that it be understood that they were blanketed with thanks.

Motion K: Appreciation for Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson

Reference: 2005 Pre-Assembly Report, Section VIII, page 11.

Ms. Phyllis L. Wallace, co-chair of the Committee of Reference and Counsel, introduced Motion K, which was approved by acclamation.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

CA05.07.47

We, as members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America gathered as the 2005 Churchwide Assembly, receive with the gratitude of this entire church the report of Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson.

We thank God for Bishop Hanson's pastoral and visionary leadership in guiding this church through myriad challenges and opportunities:

- restructuring the churchwide organization;
- seeking to renew our worship;
- striving for more effective ministry to and with the Arab and Middle Eastern community and persons of African descent;
- deepening our life together with our brothers and sisters of the United Methodist Church; and
- struggling with issues related to "God's mysterious, wonderful gift of sexuality";

We have been blessed by Bishop Hanson's powerful preaching at our opening worship and his reassuring reminder that we need not walk on water as we approach the work of the assembly. We have been uplifted by his humility, patience, and humor in presiding over the work of the assembly, even in the face of long agendas, parliamentary quagmire, contentious issues, and a never-ending stream of "white cards."

We accept Bishop Hanson's challenge to teach and tell more consistently and creatively who we are:

- boldly, humbly, and clearly claiming the title of **EVANGELICAL**
- evangelical, ecumenical, and reforming **LUTHERANS**
- a living organism of many interdependent parts making up one **CHURCH**

- **called to be a freedom-loving, generous, compassionate, and justice-seeking voice IN AMERICA.**

We commit ourselves to carry this message with us to our congregations and synods, our homes and workplaces, as we leave this assembly.

Presiding Bishop Hanson introduced his wife, Ione, “. . . without whom I would not be here, and whose love and prayers I cherish every day, and who had prepared me for this by parenting with me our six children and our two grandchildren, and who is absolutely a delight to me and, I trust, to you.” The assembly responded with another round of applause.

Ms. Wallace announced that the report of the Committee of Reference and Counsel was concluded.

Pr. James F. Culver Jr. [Indiana-Kentucky Synod] asked Presiding Bishop to lead the assembly in the blessing that he had taught them earlier in the week. Presiding Bishop Hanson responded that it would be forthcoming.

Presiding Bishop Hanson stated, “I want to say my word of deep, deep gratitude to you for your work. We have begun, ended, and centered each day where we find our unity in Christ: around the means of grace. We have become in many respects a community this week that is a microcosm of the community that we already are because that is God’s gift to us. God in Christ through the Holy Spirit gifts us both with unity and diversity. Both are God’s gifts. Both become our tasks. Our task is to receive the gifts of unity and diversity, to protect them, to deepen them, to enrich them, to express them, and to celebrate them. I trust as you leave this Churchwide Assembly, however your votes prevailed or failed to prevail, you will leave with a renewed sense of hope, hope in God. For our hope is finally not those things for which we hope but the one in whom we hope.

“I trust that you are leaving with a sense of hope in Christ that gives you a new sense of expectation for this church, this church that has been so richly blessed with a theological heritage that goes back to Martin Luther, that has been so wonderfully formed by our predecessor church bodies. But I hope you also go back with a sense of expectancy for the church God is calling us to become for the sake of the Gospel and for the sake of the life of the world. In many respects your actions this week and conversations have begun to be part of the forming of the church that we are yet to become, a church that will wipe away the tear of everyone who mourns, a church that will not cease to be compassionate until every hungry person is fed, a church that will be persistent in its evangelical pursuit of peace until there is no more violence.

“And yet we recognize that those are just signs of the in-breaking of God’s wonderful reign, when God in God’s fullness will dwell among us, and the Lamb who was slain, who makes all things new. I have great hope for this church. It has been deepened this week. And I can never, ever convey to you what a privilege it has been to preside over your assembly as you have done your work. Thank you, thank you, thank you for the privilege of this holy calling.

“I would invite you to place your hands on your head, recalling how baptismal grace was washed over you and words were spoken to you, and repeat, ‘I am baptized; I am chosen; I am a child of God; I belong to Jesus Christ; I am marked with the cross of Christ forever.’ Make that sign of the cross as you then extend your arm to place your hand upon another’s

head as we pray . . . : ‘Father in heaven, for Jesus’ sake, stir up in these women and men the gift of your Holy Spirit. Confirm their faith, guide their life, empower them in their serving, give them patience in suffering, and bring them to everlasting life. Amen’”

Announcement of the 2007 Churchwide Assembly

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson called upon Secretary Lowell G. Almen for an announcement. Scenes of Chicago rolled on the projection screens as Secretary Almen announced, “I hereby announce the date and location of the next regular meeting of the Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The tenth Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA will be held August 6–12, 2007, at Navy Pier in Chicago. The assembly will begin on the first Monday of August in 2007 and adjourn no later than the following Sunday noon. Chicago—my kind of town.”

Adjournment

The assembly concluded by singing, “We All Are One in Mission.” Presiding Bishop Hanson led the assembly in the Order for Closing of the Churchwide Assembly, which included a litany, final prayer, and blessing.

The ninth Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America adjourned at 11:42 A.M. Eastern Daylight Time.

