



2019 Churchwide Assembly Report of the Policy Statement *Ad Hoc* Committee

Wednesday, August 7, 2019

The purpose of the Policy Statement *Ad Hoc* Committee is to facilitate the work of the Churchwide Assembly through discussion and evaluation of amendments related to the recommended proposed policy statement “A Declaration of Inter-Religious Commitment.” The deadline for submitting changes to the recommended proposed social statement was 8:30 a.m. on Wednesday, August 7, 2019. One amendment was submitted by assembly voting member Zachary Johnson (Northwestern Minnesota Synod) and addressed by the Policy Statement *Ad Hoc* Committee.

The amendment submitted to the committee proposed: “to strike lines 630 to 655 as inconsistent with scripture. John 14:6 clearly states ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.’ We have a clear statement from Jesus, who is fully God and fully man. We do therefore have a basis to know God's views on religions that do not require faith in Jesus Christ as God's son. The lines to be deleted are not necessary to the document and should be stricken as inconsistent with God's word.” The committee expresses gratitude to Mr. Johnson for his participation in the hearings for the policy statement, and for his response to the text.

The concerns raised by this proposed amendment were discussed and addressed at length by the full Task Force in its deliberations following the processes of review and consultation across the ELCA, and with ecumenical and inter-religious partners. The Task Force then, and this committee now, discerns that this proposed amendment should be declined for two primary reasons:

- 1) The designated lines, which fall within a larger section entitled “What Lutheran Convictions Influence Our Calling?,” define a theological perspective drawing upon Luther’s own teaching and Luther’s interpretation of Scripture.
- 2) This section undergirds a posture of curiosity and humility that we bring as we seek to learn from, and engage with, our inter-religious neighbors.

Therefore, the committee is forwarding no recommendations to the Assembly for its consideration.

Respectfully submitted:

Bishop Patricia J. Lull
The Rev. Darrell Jodock
Ms. Kathryn M. Lohre
Bishop Don Kreiss, adviser