

**EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
CHURCH COUNCIL**

**MINUTES
April 13-16, 2007
Lutheran Center
Chicago, Illinois**

The fifty-sixth meeting of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) was convened at 12:31 P.M. in the Council Room of the Lutheran Center at Chicago, Illinois. The meeting began on Friday, April 13, 2007, with a worship service led by the Rev. Michael L. Burk, executive for worship and liturgical resources and chaplain to the Church Council. Mr. Kevin E. Anderson, associate director for worship and liturgical resources, provided musical accompaniment. Following the service, Mr. Carlos E. Peña, vice president of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and chair of the Church Council, recessed the council at 12:45 P.M. into committee meetings for the rest of the afternoon.

ORGANIZATION OF MEETING
(Agenda I.A.-I.E.)

The following persons were present for all or part of the meeting:

Voting Members

Officers:

The Rev. Mark S. Hanson, Presiding Bishop
Mr. Carlos E. Peña, Vice President
The Rev. Lowell G. Almen, Secretary
Ms. Christina Jackson-Skelton, Treasurer

Church Council:

Mr. Grieg L. Anderson	Mr. David M. Nelson
Ms. Faith A. Ashton	Ms. Ann F. Niedringhaus
Ms. Judy Biffle	Pr. J. Paul Rajashekar
Ms. Judith Anne Bunker	Ms. Lynette M. Reitz
Pr. Joseph G. Crippen	Pr. John C. Richter
Mr. Bradley Dokken	Pr. Kenneth M. Rupp
Mr. Mark S. Helmke	Ms. Sandra Schlesinger
Ms. Norma J. Hirsch	Pr. Jeffrey "Jeff" B. Sorenson
Pr. Keith A. Hunsinger	Pr. Sarah J. Stumme
Pr. David E. Jensen	Mr. Allan E. Thomas
Pr. Jonathan W. Linman	Pr. Jennifer J. Thomas
Mr. William R. Lloyd Jr.	Mr. David Truland
Pr. Steven P. Loy	Ms. Judith Tutt-Starr
Pr. Charles W. Mays	Mr. Richard L. Wahl
Ms. Jessica M. McKee	Ms. Phyllis L. Wallace
	Mr. Gary L. Wiperman

Representatives of the Conference of Bishops:

Bp. Leonard H. Bolick	Bp. Dean W. Nelson
Bp. Gary L. Hansen	Bp. E. Roy Riley
Bp. Marie C. Jerge	Bp. Peter Rogness
Bp. Kevin S. Kanouse	Bp. Paul Stumme-Diers (<i>excused</i>)
Bp. A. Donald Main	Bp. Steven L. Ullestad (<i>substitute</i>)
	Bp. Martin D. Wells

Advisory Members:

Youth:

Ms. Briana R. Watts

Mr. Samuel Schlouch

Advisors:

Pr. Virginia Anderson-Larson, chair, Global Mission program committee

Pr. James M. Brandt, chair, Church in Society program committee

Mr. Kent Burgess, social ministry organizations (*excused*)

Pr. Chi Shih Chen, Association of Asians and Pacific Islanders

Ms. Annette Citzler, chair of the Board of Trustees, Augsburg Fortress, Publishers

Pr. Khader El-Yateem, chair, Multicultural Ministries program committee

Mr. Joseph A. Husary, president, Association of Lutherans of Arab and Middle Eastern Heritage (*excused*)

Ms. Kathryn Johnson, chair, Vocation and Education program committee

Pr. Phillip D. W. Krey, ELCA seminaries

Ms. Kristen Kvam, chair, Consulting Committee for Justice for Women

Pr. O. Dennis Mims, president, African American Lutheran Association

Mr. Richard L. Torgerson, ELCA colleges and universities (*excused*)

Mr. Jack R. Ohle, ELCA colleges and universities (*substitute*)

Ms. Carmen Richards, president of the board, Women of the ELCA (*excused*)

Mr. Francis R. Ramos Scharron, chair,

Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission program committee

Pr. Francisco L. Sosa, president, Association of Latino Ministries (*excused*)

Mr. Larry Thiele, president, American Indian and Alaska Native Lutheran Association

Resource Persons

Office of the Presiding Bishop:

Pr. M. Wyvetta Bullock, Executive for Leadership Development

Pr. Kathie Bender Schwich, Executive for Synodical and Constituent Relations

Pr. Charles S. Miller, Executive for Administration

Ms. Myrna J. Sheie, Executive for Governance and Institutional Relations

Section Executives and Staff:

Pr. Michael L. Burk, Executive for Worship and Liturgical Resources and Chaplain

Mr. Kenneth W. Inskeep, Executive for Research and Evaluation

Pr. Randall R. Lee, Executive for Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations

Pr. Darrell D. Morton, Assistant to the Presiding Bishop for Federal Chaplaincy Ministries (*excused*)

Pr. A. Craig Settlage, Director for Mission Support

Ms. Else B. Thompson, Executive for Human Resources

Office of the Secretary:

Pr. Ruth E. Hamilton, Executive for Administration and Official Documentation

Mr. Phillip H. Harris, General Counsel

Pr. Paul A. Schreck, Executive for Constitutional and Rostering Interpretation and Oversight

Mr. David A. Ullrich, Associate General Counsel

Office of the Treasurer:

Section Executives and Staff:

Ms. Karen Rathbun, Executive for Management Services

Ms. LaRue R. Unglaube, Executive for Information Technology

Pr. Jeffrey R. King, Support Specialist, Information Technology

Program Unit Executives:

Ms. Linda Post Bushkofsky, Executive Director, Women of the ELCA
Pr. Sherman G. Hicks, Executive Director, Multicultural Ministries
Pr. Rebecca S. Larson, Executive Director, Church in Society
Ms. Beth A. Lewis, President, Augsburg Fortress, Publishers
Pr. Richard A. Magnus, Executive Director, Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission
Pr. Rafael Malpica-Padilla, Executive Director, Global Mission
Pr. Stanley N. Olson, Executive Director, Vocation and Education

Service Unit Executives:

Ms. Kristi S. Bangert, Executive Director, Communication Services
Pr. Donald M. Hallberg, President, Foundation of the ELCA, and Executive Director, Development Services
Mr. John G. Kapanke, President, Board of Pensions
Mr. Daniel J. Lehmann, Editor, *The Lutheran Magazine*
Ms. Eva M. Roby, Executive Vice President for Administration, Mission Investment Fund

Press:

Mr. John R. Brooks, Director, ELCA News Service
Ms. Elizabeth M. Hunter, *The Lutheran Magazine*
Mr. Frank F. Imhoff, Associate Director, ELCA News Service
Ms. Melissa Ramirez-Cooper, ELCA News Service

Ecumenical Guests:

Mr. Thomas C. Ferguson, The Episcopal Church
Canon Victoria L. Garvey, The Episcopal Church
Ms. Kathy J. Magnus, North American representative, Lutheran World Federation
Pr. Mary Ann Neevel, United Church of Christ
Bp. Raymond L. Schultz, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada
Moravian Church [position vacant]
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) [position vacant]
Reformed Church in America [position vacant]

**Saturday, April 14, 2007
Plenary Session I**

Prior to the first plenary session, Church Council members, advisors, and resource persons gathered at 8:04 A.M. for Morning Prayer, led by the Rev. Michael L. Burk, executive for worship and liturgical resources and chaplain to the Church Council. The Rev. Dean W. Nelson, bishop of the Southwest California Synod, provided the musical accompaniment.

Following the service, Vice President Carlos E. Peña called the first plenary session to order at 8:17 A.M.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

(Agenda 1.F.)

Background:

Agenda items had been distributed by mail. Additional items were distributed at the meeting to the members of the Church Council and invited resource and advisory persons.

Church Council Action:

Vice President Carlos E. Peña called on the Rev. Lowell G. Almen, secretary, to read the action pertaining to adoption of the agenda. After receiving a second, he called for discussion. Hearing none, he called for a vote.

VOTED:

CC07.04.01 To adopt the agenda and to permit the chair to call for consideration of agenda items in the order the chair deems most appropriate.

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Vice President Carlos E. Peña welcomed visitors, guests, and new advisors. He informed the Church Council of the presence of the Rev. Raymond L. Schultz, national bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, for whom a reception in recognition of his retirement was scheduled that evening. Vice President Peña announced those for whom prayers had been requested: the Caribbean Synod, mourning the death of its bishop, the Rev. Margarita Martinez; thanksgiving for the recovery of the wife of council member the Rev. Kenneth M. Rupp; and the congregation served by the wife of council member Mr. Bradley Dokken, whose building was destroyed by fire. He asked the Rev. Jeffrey "Jeff" B. Sorenson to lead the council in prayer. Vice President Peña made a number of other housekeeping announcements and identified the members of the prayer team: Pr. Sorenson, the Rev. Charles W. Mays, and Ms. Judith Anne Bunker.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

(Agenda I.G.)

Background:

The minutes of the November 11–13, 2006, meeting of the Church Council as well as the minutes of the council's Executive Committee meetings on November 10, 2006, January 18, 2007, and March 7, 2007, had been distributed to council members.

Church Council Action:

Vice President Carlos E. Peña asked Secretary Lowell G. Almen to read the action before the council. He called for a second, then for discussion. Hearing none, he called for a vote on the motion.

VOTED:

**CC07.04.02 To approve the minutes of the November 11-13, 2006, meeting of the Church Council; and
To ratify the actions of the council's Executive Committee as indicated in the minutes of the November 10, 2006, January 18, 2007, and March 7, 2007, meetings.**

REPORT OF THE PRESIDING BISHOP

(Agenda II.A.1.; Agenda/MINUTES Exhibit A, Part 1)

The Rev. Mark S. Hanson, presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, stated, “Living in God’s Amazing Grace: Thanks be to God!” is the theme for this Churchwide Assembly, but it is more than that. It is really descriptive of our Christian life and faith in the community of Christ’s body, the Church. This morning I want to take more time than I usually do to express, on behalf of this church, thanks to God. Thanks be to God for those ministries and partners whose milestones we are noting this year. First, our own: 20 years of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. . . . When you think about this in the landscape of the followers of Jesus over 2,000 years, we are a very young church body. We are still being richly formed by the predecessor church bodies that gathered to form us, but in many ways the Holy Spirit has worked among us, gifting, calling, directing us to be about God’s work, not only in this changing U.S. context but with ecumenical and global partners throughout our challenging world. So this year we say ‘Thanks be to God’ for the Ecumenical Lutheran Church in America.

“We also say ‘Thanks be to God’ for 100 years of Lutheran campus ministry. This week I was with rostered leaders in South Dakota. At the conclusion of the banquet honoring Bishop Andrea DeGroot-Nesdahl, three young students, rather shy, were standing around. I finally figured out that they were waiting to talk to me. The older one wanted to introduce his two young friends because, as he told me, he is a senior at the South Dakota School of Mines and has been the student leader of the campus ministry community and wanted me to meet the two first-year students who have now been elected as leaders of that campus ministry community. But more than that, he wanted to thank the ELCA for being present in their campus through campus ministry. And I thought, ‘In how many campuses over 100 years have Lutheran students and non-Lutheran students gathered to hear the Word of God proclaimed, to share in the Sacrament, to discern God’s call for their very vocations in life, to struggle with issues of peace and justice, probably becoming part of some agitating and organizing going on in response to war or human rights?’ So today we say ‘Thanks be to God’ for all those who have served, supported, and been served by Lutheran campus ministry.

“We also say ‘Thanks be to God’ for the Lutheran World Federation (LWF). Many ELCA folks were gathered in Lund, Sweden, to honor that 60 years of ministry and mission as the Lutheran World Federation. Why Lund, Sweden? Because 60 years ago, that was the birthplace of the LWF, where right after World War II, Lutherans gathered, devastated and divided by that war, confronting the reality that—depending on whom you listen to—one out of six or one out of five refugees from that war were Lutherans. So Lutherans said, ‘We need to respond out of compassion to those who have lost home and country and places of worship from the war. But even more deeply we need to confront the fact that Lutherans, because of nations being in the war that were predominantly or largely Lutheran, we need now to begin to build bridges of peace.’ And now, over 60 years, that sense of being a federation has deepened into being a communion of Lutheran churches, and much has changed. Those Nordic churches are now going from state churches to learning what it means to be churches apart from the state. I did my official LWF visits to the Church of Norway and the Church of Denmark as well as being in Sweden. It is very interesting what Lutherans are struggling with in those countries where high percentages of people belong to the church, but they do not want to be defined as believers. So we want to be belongers but we do not want to be believers. It is kind of the flip of what we have in the U.S. where 96 percent of the people say they believe, but not nearly that percentage belong to a community of faith gathered around Word and Sacrament.

“Much has changed. We are now being led, in many respects, by growing southern hemisphere churches that have a passion to share the story of Jesus, that understand that catechesis belongs to the life-long learning of the faith, that completely grasp that ministry and mission is holistic. One cannot separate the proclamation of the Word from teaching young people to read and write, from binding up those suffering from HIV and AIDS, to caring for creation, to struggling

for justice and peace. We are learning as we accompany those global partners more deeply what it means to be communion. We also know that the compassionate diaconal care that brought Lutherans together 60 years ago is now inseparable also from engaging in acts of justice. As a statement of the LWF says, ‘While *diakonia* begins as merciful service to the neighbor in need, it leads inevitably to social change that reforms and transforms and restores.’

“We say ‘Thanks be to God’ for Lutheran Services in America (LSA), which this year marks its 10th anniversary. In many respects it is still an unknown on the landscape of non-profit social services in the U.S., yet in many computations it is the largest provider of non-profit social services, a partnership between the ELCA and The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod. We thank God for the many places, social ministry organizations, and health-care centers that make up LSA.

“We also say ‘Thanks be to God’ for gifted leaders who have served this church and whose calls to their particular ministries come to an end this year. As has already been noted, we continue with Margarita’s family, with the people of the Caribbean Synod, with this church, with leaders and members of churches throughout Latin America, Central America, and the world to give thanks for the life and witness and ministry of Margarita Martinez, and to continue to realize that her death leaves a huge hole in this church and in the church globally.

I also say ‘Thanks be to God’ for three colleagues here who are retiring this year. Lowell Almen—we will honor him many times, but I wish I had on tape one week of what Lowell brings to this church through being the secretary of this church. Just in this last week the conversations where he can literally recall history—not only the history of this church but the history of our predecessor church bodies where he can recall the CNLC [Commission for a New Lutheran Church] debates that led to the decision and the formation of a particular part of our governing documents or structure. And Lowell, as he tends and stewards that memory of this church and the governing documents of this church, also as we experienced this week more than once, even in the Executive Committee yesterday, when he senses that we want to find a way to go a new direction, helps us find the words and the constitutional language and processes to navigate that new way, always reminding us, as I am sure that he will do in his report today, that as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America we are part of the one holy catholic and apostolic church, and challenging us to clarify continually and live out our ecclesiology. Thanks be to God for your ministry, Lowell.

“And for the leadership of Charles Miller, the executive for administration now, but he has been with the ELCA since its beginning. . . . I said to him yesterday, ‘Your report is wonderful because it really envelops your six years of leadership with us.’ The gift you have brought to help us do strategic thinking and planning and then literally implement that plan and not just make it. While in the midst of that, Chuck has an amazing capacity to manage a complex organization, tend to its budget, and supervise more direct reports than any administrator should probably have. Ione said to me, ‘Mark, if you are re-elected, what are you ever going to do without Chuck? Because Chuck frees you to be the public face and public leader who travels all over this church and on behalf of this church because you have such confidence in him and how he runs the churchwide organization day to day.’ Thank be to God for your many gifts, Chuck.

“And for Don Hallberg, who is not here today because he is at a memorial service for former Bishop [Paul] Erickson, who was a close friend of Don, but also representing all of us. If you have ever listened to Don speak publicly about this church, as I recall when he did it at the joint Minneapolis-Saint Paul Synod Assemblies at the fairgrounds as churchwide representative, he has an infectious passion for the Gospel and the ministry for what it means to be Lutheran Christians engaged in God’s mission today that is publicly shared and obviously quite personally persuasive in the number of people that he has worked with who have generously given to and remembered this church in their planned giving. We say ‘Thanks be to God’ today for Don Hallberg.

“And later today I will have the chance to say thanks for you, Ray [the Rev. Raymond L. Schultz, national bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada], so I will not do that now. You will get special attention a bit later.

“I also want to say ‘Thanks be to God’ for your leadership, especially the third of you who are leaving the council after six years. We began together, if you recall. My first Church Council meeting ever was your first Church Council meeting, so we kind of got broke in together. And Grieg, Faith, Judy, Joseph, Charlie, Jessica, David, Ken, Sarah, and Allan, you have brought many gifts to this council. One is clearly that you have called us to be a council in prayer, as we already have experienced today. You have shepherded through the strategic planning process in the midst of which we had to deal with some huge budget challenges. You have guided and shepherded a sexuality study process . . . with

great care. You have guided us through social statements on health and now education. You have listened as we have reflected the diversity of this church and sometimes the painful divisions in this church, but always finding a way to call us back to the unity that is God's gift to us in Christ. Thanks be to God for your leadership.

"Thanks be to God for the leadership of the twelve bishops whose terms come to an end, mostly by their own choice of retirement, but in a couple cases through term limits that some synods do have. . . . When you think about . . . 27 bishops' elections, the presiding bishop's election, and the secretary of this church's election this year, I wish I had the power literally to call this church to slow down and for the next four months be in intensive prayer. When I was with South Dakota rostered leaders, a person raised her hand and said, 'Bishop Hanson, I have never voted for a bishop. We are going to elect a new bishop. Can you help me understand what this process is about and what we should be doing?' And I said, 'Think of yourself as being a call committee for the synod. And what do call committees do? They spend a lot of time in prayer and in Scriptures. Call committees look at the landscape of the context in which God has placed us to do mission, so they are very attentive to context. They also look at the gifts and the strengths of the leader who is concluding his or her ministry so that they build upon those assets and do not do what we tend to do and that is look for the direct opposite and forget that we have great strengths on which to build. Then they begin to listen to the Spirit speaking to them and through those who have been lifted up as nominees.' I trust that the next four months will be that kind of time of prayerful discernment for this church as a churchwide expression and in our varied synod contexts. What a powerful witness it could be for us not to take on the rancor of the political climate and culture in which we live in the U.S. but model a different way to call people into leadership.

"I also want to say 'Thanks be to God' for the generosity of ELCA members, but I will not go more deeply into that because Christina [Jackson-Skelton, treasurer] will share that good news if you have not read it already.

"The second part of my report, 'Thanks be to God! Living in God's Amazing Grace' calls us to be engaged in God's mission today even as we give thanks for those who have served and gone before. The Plan for Mission is the structure, as you have called me to do, of my written report, which you will receive at the conclusion of this. I am not going to read all of that, but I am going to highlight a couple of things written and a couple of things not written under each of those strategic directions.

"The first direction: *Support congregations in their call to be faithful, welcoming, and generous, sharing the mind of Christ.* Ash Wednesday evening I flew to New Orleans to spend the next day, first seeing the magnitude of the devastation yet to be restored. If you have not been there, it is indescribable what remains yet to be done and how grateful for the continuing sending of teams from congregations and synods—1,000 ELCA college and campus ministry students went again during their spring break this year and last year 1,500, which is a testimony to what we know about ourselves as Lutherans responding to disasters: we are in for the long haul. Some of the conversation with members of ELCA congregations was painful, not only to hear the deep pain of personal lives destroyed but the struggle to restore congregations. It is clear that we are continually learning from the magnitude of Katrina and Rita how to do things better in the future. One of the things we have learned is we want to find ways to help congregations be restored as congregations, even as Lutheran Disaster Relief (LDR) is called and chartered to be the public face of this church responding to the needs of individuals, not just Lutherans but all who bear the image of God. So I will be convening a much larger table of partners: the Mission Investment Fund, Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission, LDR, synod bishops, to say how do we prepare in the future to respond to crises that congregations experience so that they can be up and running as centers of worship and distribution, even as LDR continues to be that strong public face. Later in my written report I remind you that although Katrina and Rita continue to get public attention and responses, as they should, LDR since then has responded to many other disasters and continues to be present on the ground.

"*Assist members, congregations, synods, and institutions and agencies of this church to grow in evangelical outreach.* Phil Krey [the Rev. Philip D. W. Krey, president of the Lutheran Seminary at Philadelphia] and I and the seminary presidents, and Stan [the Rev. Stanley N. Olson], and Jonathan [the Rev. Jonathan P. Strandjord], and Mark [the Rev. Mark N. Wilhelm] from Vocation and Education staff always go on retreat on Palm-Passion Sunday weekend, and we try to worship at the closest ELCA congregation to the hotel in which we are staying. So this year we said that we are going to worship with Camino Real, a new start in San Antonio. Well, as we checked, we found that Camino Real was going to be worshipping on Palm Sunday outdoors on the Riverwalk. . . . Well, it wasn't just Camino Real, we found out. They were joining with three other congregations for worship. How would you describe those three other

congregations? Clearly not Lutheran, probably Pentecostal, conservative evangelical, non-denominational—a new form of ecumenism. But it was pretty amazing. Arnie Hinojosa, pastor-developer, ELCA, was the preacher that day. Talk about new forms of evangelism and evangelical outreach. He stopped his sermon every time one of those sight-seeing boats would come by. He would say, ‘Hey! We are worshiping here. We will pray for you. When you get off the boat, come back.’ Or he would stop the next one and say, ‘We’re in worship here, but Jesus loves you. God forgives you. Christ died for you.’ I mean, it was taken seriously, the evangelical call we all have to preach the Gospel. So we grow in evangelical outreach in some phenomenally new ways.

“I am delighted that, because of the strong management by EOCM [the Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission unit] of their dollars and because of income over expenses, we were able to make available in the first quarter of this fiscal year \$10,000 grants to every one of our synods to be imaginative to put those dollars to work in evangelical outreach with fairly minimal strings attached, more guidance than strings, which is an indication that we are very serious when we say that we want to grow in evangelical outreach and we want that to be a partnership among all in this church.

“*Step forward as a public church that witnesses boldly to God’s love for all that God has created.* In my written report I begin that section by asking you to think about some questions that I think all of us in leadership must ask as we exercise our public leadership in a conflicted world and culture. I sent a letter in January inviting congregations and members of this church to be in prayerful and public discernment about what is a just and faithful response to the ongoing war in Iraq. Sometimes it baffles me how little evidence I hear and see that American people are even aware that we are a nation at war. Last night I listened to . . . Jim Lehrer, and he had David Brooks and [Mark] Shields doing their Friday night back-and-forth about the war in Iraq. And I cannot remember whether it was David Brooks or [Mark] Shields who quoted an historian who said, ‘If a nation is not willing to engage in war, then it must not send its armies to fight the war it is unwilling to engage in.’ I think we have growing evidence that this nation is not willing and does not discern it just to continue to be at war in Iraq, but we continue to send and to extend the terms of men and women to fight that war, men and women who pay an enormous price personally, and their families and their congregations, to say nothing of the cost to the Iraqi people. Yet I asked, as I always do when I am with rostered leaders, ‘How many of your congregations in the last four-and-a-half-years have convened public conversations around our social statement “God’s Peace for the World” about what is a moral and just way to conclude this war so that it might lead to a lasting and just peace? This week again not one person raised their hand; 200 leaders of ELCA congregations who have chosen not to engage in public conversation around the fact that we are a nation at war, and we have social statements that help to guide us in that conversation. I am encouraged by my most recent meeting with [Secretary of State] Condoleeza Rice. It was my fourth or fifth meeting with her. It felt very different. I was joined by . . . two leaders of the Islamic community, two leaders of the Jewish community, and two other Christian bishops. It was much more forthright as we focused on what will bring a lasting and just peace between Palestinians and Israelis. She seemed far less interested in giving cover to the president. She was much more aware that the legacy for her leadership should not be Iraq but might be a lasting peace between Israelis and Palestinians. At the end she committed that once every month or two the second undersecretary beneath her would meet with representatives of our group to give progress reports on this administration’s commitment to finding that lasting peace. I am hopeful that the religious leaders in Jerusalem—Muslim, Christian, and Jewish—who are now forming a religious council will come in October, and we as religious leaders in the U.S. will join them, at least in meeting Condoleeza Rice and with one another because so far President Bush has refused to meet with us.

“Finally, two other parts of public church. I call your attention to the Earth Day letter, which I think is now posted. If there is an issue that is at new levels of global consciousness, it is what we are doing in the destruction of the environment that we are called to steward. The awareness becomes the occasion for saying how will we repent, stop, and return to the call to be stewards rather than destroyers and consumers of the fragile ecosystems of which we are a part? I call that to your attention.

“*Deepen and extend our global, ecumenical, and interfaith relationships for the sake of God’s mission.* This is a difficult time for many Christian communions as we deal with internal differences, globally and nationally, often around questions of human sexuality but not solely. This is a perplexing time in many respects because the ecumenical landscape is being realigned by how churches tend to agree on issues of personal morality and individual personal morality more than on consensus about core doctrine and core teaching. Yet at a time when we are aware of deep

differences about personal morality and their potential to further divide and fragment the body of Christ, I remind you of the ELCA statement on ecumenism, which was adopted in 1991, early in the life of this church, that fundamentally commits this church to what I believe Lutherans always have been committed to—in fact, what I think the Reformation was about—and that is preserving the unity, deepening the unity, that is God’s gift to us in Christ and our task to deepen, express, and experience it together, even amidst the rich diversity of the body of Christ. One highlight in that part of my report: I am delighted that after six years of working to establish a conversation with at least one of the historic black churches of the U.S., we have had our first day of discourse with the African Methodist Episcopal Zion church, thanks in large part to Bishop Leonard Bollick from North Carolina where their national offices and their seminary are housed. It was a very productive day, and now we will meet again in the fall. We give thanks for that sign of growing understanding of one another.

“Assist this church to bring forth and support faithful, wise, and courageous leaders whose vocations serve God’s mission in a pluralistic world. In January I visited Dana College and Luther College. I am on a quest to be on all 28 of our college and university campuses because I just get incredibly energized hanging out with young adults. If you want to get a hopeful view of the world, just go hang out with young adults. They have an absolute passion for what matters in life. They have a passion for faith and an unquenchable curiosity to ask questions. They have a desire to experience the world in its rich diversity and complexity. . . . We had more applicants for Young Adults in Global Mission that we had placements for them and that is growing every year. . . . If you want to listen to the voices of young adults, at the end of the synod assembly video . . . , there is a trailer. It is 30 minutes of over an hour’s conversation that I had with . . . students at Luther College—not all Christians, some Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, Jewish, non-believer, non-persons of faith. We went at it for over an hour where I was just basically listening to them. We let the tape run and then edited it down to a half hour. It is a good teaching tool. . . . I am so thankful for our 28 colleges and universities, the students, the staff, the faculties, the boards who lead them.

“I also cited [in my written report] the African-descent young adult consultation that happened at LSTC [Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago]. A very interesting experience of over 30 young adults of African descent, many of whom described experiences of feeling that they were the only Lutheran, African-descent young adult of whom they had any awareness. Then they discovered each other. Let me read just a couple parts of an e-mail that came from one of the participants to Julius Carroll, who had a major role in putting it together. ‘Rev. Carroll: This is Loann Seward. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for organizing such a spectacular weekend for the African-descent young adults of the ELCA. I did not know what to expect, but I can recall the exact moment when the purpose started to make sense to me. I have never felt so spiritually fortified and in such a short space of time. Learning to recognize my spiritual gifts is something I have prayed for for a while, and I am thankful to finally know how to use what I have. I still do not know what I have been called to do, but things are much clearer now. There are no words to describe how full or how moved I have been since I returned, and I am looking into some opportunities to go abroad with Global Mission per Rev. Hicks’ recommendation. If there is any assistance I can provide with verbal or written support for the Multicultural Ministries program of the ELCA, please let me know because my professional work is communications, and please consider me for next year’s planning committee. You and the participating pastors ignited something in me that I have been searching for and yet running from for a long time, and I am no longer afraid to do the things that I have been called by God to do. God bless you, and thank you for changing my life.’ Isn’t that awesome?

“Commitments for implementation. It is very important that those not get lost in the Plan for Mission because they undergird all five strategic directions, and they are intended to be woven throughout all that we do. I only want to lift up two. One is *‘recognize and encourage the vital contributions and deepening relationship with institutions and agencies of this church, with Lutheran, ecumenical, and interfaith partners.’* . . . The call of the presiding bishop and the churchwide staff is first and foremost to steward the ecology of the interdependent ecosystems that make up the ELCA. . . . It is a marvelous description of how I see this church. . . . That is what that first commitment is. It is not just our polity: congregations, synod, churchwide—each the church but not the whole church without the others. It is also the ecology of all those partners: outdoor ministries and campus ministries and colleges and universities and seminaries and social ministry organizations, of which I spoke, but it is also the ecology of which we are a part that is larger than us: of our ecumenical partners, one holy catholic and apostolic church; the ecology of our global partners; and the widest ecology of all who live, inhabit, and care for God’s creation. . . .

“‘*Confront the scandalous realities*’ that divide us, that cause many to live in poverty with lack of dignity. How *kairos* it is that after—whatever it has been—ten days, that this country has been fixated on Don Imus that we not treat that as a one-time personality-focused media story that will go away but that around it we are asking the right questions. We are asking questions: ‘Just what is racism? What is the difference between racism and prejudice? What is acceptable in our public speech and our personal relationships? . . . What is white privilege, that which you and I and most in this room experience daily, almost unaware because we have come to take it so for granted as a right that belongs to us by virtue of being white? It is interesting: almost every time I speak publicly I usually end by talking about what a holy privilege it is to serve in leadership in this church, which I mean. But having read the article now on white privilege, I realize there is a twist to that statement of what a privilege it is that I do not often enough confront: how privileged I am as a white male in this church and in this society. How I continually embrace the gift of the privilege of the call but confront the privileges of being white and male in ways that transform the racism and sexism of this church and this society on the way towards the goal we have all set for this church to become increasingly multicultural and intentionally anti-racist?’

“Well, finally, ‘Living in God’s amazing grace’ frees us to embrace God’s future with a sense of expectant hopefulness. I am very hopefully anticipating the Churchwide Assembly. . . . I can tell you there is a lot of synergy already in this church around the ‘Book of Faith’ initiative. . . . It is broader than an initiative. It certainly not just a program out of the churchwide organization. It is really calling this church to—what I learned as a phrase in the consultation in January that really gave shape to this—to biblical, aural, and oral fluency in the first language of faith, which is the language of Scripture.

“I often tell the story of my aunt, of whom I wrote, who was also my baptismal sponsor, who died in January. I was privileged to have a bit of a sabbatical in December, so I changed my plans, and Ione and I went and moved into her apartment and she was in the care center and we literally walked with her in her final baptismal vocation of dying in the faith for two weeks. What a holy time. But she was very weak, and one day she was mumbling, and I leaned over and said, ‘What do you need?’ And she said, ‘Oh, nothing. I was just quoting the Psalms.’ And another day I leaned over and said, ‘Do you need something?’ ‘No, I was just saying the words of my favorite hymns.’ Then as she got stronger one day, she did two things. She said, ‘I am not strong enough to read the paper, but would you read the paper and give me the three best stories?’ Well, I said okay, and one was on the growth of Christianity in China, and one was on Tim Johnson, the South Dakota senator who had had the brain bleed and was recovering. Then she said, ‘Well, we have got to stop and pray for missionaries in China and the healing of Tim Johnson.’ . . . Then she said to me, ‘Oh, Mark, I feel so bad for all the people who will die, as I am dying, but are not fluent in the language of Scripture and have not memorized it because it will be so much harder for them.’ Knowing Scripture by heart was more than just rote memory. It was literally that she had internalized the language of Scripture so that it became her language, of her life and now in her dying. Then she said, ‘Mark, can’t you make the pastors in this church make confirmands memorize the Bible and hymns like we had to do?’ It was such a delight to say, ‘Oh, Betty, no, that is the power of the synod bishop, not the presiding bishop.’ I sense that we are gathering what has already been a rich part of this reforming movement, which was really born out of engagement with Scriptures, that has experienced many times of reformation and renewal because of the Spirit speaking to us through the living Word, that we are now being called to a similar time in the life of this church. I look forward to it with great anticipation.

“As I do with the Blue Ribbon Committee on Mission Funding. That can sound like a pretty bureaucratic label. Pay attention to what is in that report and recommendations that we are way down the road in implementing because it begins with forming people as generous stewards. It is deeply grounded in a biblical understanding of stewardship, a calling that we share with seminaries, with First Call Theological Education, with parishes and the churchwide expression. It is very attentive to building a better communication link so that the people of this church understand that they belong to this church and are part of this church engaged in mission, and it is also about increasing giving. So I think that you will hear, that you have already read if you have looked at your materials, that I am committing significant amounts of money in the budget that I am bringing to you to fund the recommendations of that Blue Ribbon Committee. It means that others will not have as much money as they had hoped for programs that are important, but I think these are critical for the next few years.

“I also am excited about the comprehensive communication plan. We have never looked at a part of this organization as critically as we have our communication. We have brought in experts. Now we have taken their wisdom, and Kristi [Bangert, executive director of Communication Services,] and her staff have put together a very ambitious, a very exciting—that will create some tension—communication plan, which she shared with the Planning and Evaluation Committee yesterday that I think you will see the fruits of very shortly. I am very excited about it.

“I am also very hopeful for the work that will come at the Churchwide Assembly on an HIV and AIDS initiative. That has been a deep commitment of this church and many of our partnerships globally through many of our grants, but I think it is time to heighten this church’s commitment to being a partner globally, ecumenically, and interfaith with non-governmental organizations and the private sector in eradicating HIV and AIDS. And so, too, the embracing of our social statement on education.

“Well, you can tell that I get energized about what God is up to, what the Spirit has gifted us for, that the risen Christ is alive. He has gone ahead of us to Galilee and all the Galilees in our lives to meet us, just as he promised, so what a joy to announce ‘Christ is risen. Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia! Thanks be to God!’”

The Rev. Jennifer J. Thomas inquired whether Presiding Bishop Hanson had tested the ecosystem metaphor among young adult groups, adding that she loved it. Presiding Bishop Hanson responded that when he had used it with young adults, it had worked well. He stated that it was crucial to find ways to capture the sense of the interdependence of the parts of this church as a core dimension of its ecclesiology, missiology, and vocation. Presiding Bishop Hanson recounted for the Church Council Professor Timothy J. Wengert’s comments at the South Dakota meeting about the sin of individualism, evidenced in focus on my self, my congregation, and my needs as a consumer of religion. Professor Wengert had declared that people have lost a sense of the communal dimension of their baptismal vocation and identity. Presiding Bishop Hanson commented that this is becoming more of a congregationalist church every day. He pointed out that in Denmark the Lutheran church consisted solely of bishops and congregations. The question was how to help congregations sense that they are part of something beyond themselves. This church, he said, was not just a federation of congregations, so new metaphors were needed to convey that relationship.

Mr. Grieg L. Anderson asked for highlights of the communication strategy. Presiding Bishop Hanson called upon Ms. Kristi S. Bangert, executive director of the Communication Services unit, to provide the requested information. Ms. Bangert explained that the strategy consisted of three parts: establishing the central message for this church, redesigning the Web site, and orchestrating the entire communication effort of the churchwide organization. The goal was a strong single message that all members know so that they can tell this church’s story, what God is doing with us and through us for the sake of the world. Telling the story, Ms. Bangert continued, would help people embrace the identity of this church. There is so much good news in this church to share, she said.

Presiding Bishop Hanson concluded his report by asking the Church Council to give thanks for those colleagues who served in the churchwide organization. The council responded with applause.

DWELLING IN THE WORD

Vice President Carlos E. Peña asked Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson to introduce the concept of “dwelling in the Word.” Presiding Bishop Hanson explained, citing a text from Paul’s letter to the Colossians, “We are called to dwell in the Word of God richly.” The Rev. Steven P. Loy shared his experience of growing up Lutheran in Florida, where there were many Baptists. Pr. Loy commented that it had not taken him long to discover that the Bible meant something different to his Baptist friends than it did to him, but he could not exactly identify the differences. He knew that Lutherans relied on grace in ways that Baptists did not, but he had not been sure what that meant either. He also became aware that they knew the Bible better than he did and used it to point out his errors, which, of course, he did not appreciate. For the first time he found himself wishing he had paid more attention in church and confirmation.

As a 19-year-old in college, majoring in criminal justice, Pr. Loy had elected an introductory course on the Old Testament. Although the teacher was himself a Southern Baptist, he taught the course using the historical-critical method, Pr. Loy continued, and he encouraged his students to ask how the story might have been used by the people who wrote it. The class opened to Pr. Loy a far more exciting world than pre-law. When Pr. Loy talked to his pastor about the class, he not only understood but gave him more books to read. By the end of the semester, Pr. Loy had changed

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majors and begun looking at seminaries. Later, in a senior seminar some of Pr. Loy's Baptist colleagues found the critical inquiry of the religious studies department troubling. As one of them put it, "Dissecting a frog causes its death, and that is what you are trying to do with God." Where that student found questioning troubling, Pr. Loy found it invigorating. He discovered that as one aspect of faith died, another was raised to life. "That is what Scripture does for me and continues to do to me," Pr. Loy declared. He did not find the Bible a comfortable book, nor is it easy or simple. Reading Scripture for him is Jacob wrestling with the angel: it puts his hip out of joint and sends him away changed. When he reads the Bible, Pr. Loy concluded, he hears the voices of his teachers, of the authors of the biblical books, of people of faith with many different perspectives in conversation with each other and with him as they try to understand what it means that God has claimed our lives. The conversations beckon him to faith in the God who lives beyond the text, a faith that is uncertain, lively, interesting, and fun. And while he rarely finds comfort in Scripture, he always finds in it great hope, he concluded.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Vice President Carlos E. Peña called on Secretary Lowell G. Almen for announcements.

RECESS

The first plenary session of the April 2007 meeting of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America recessed at 9:28 A.M.

**Saturday, April 14, 2007
Plenary Session II**

ANTI-RACISM EDUCATION

(Agenda III.C.1; Agenda/EXHIBIT B, Parts 3a–3c)

The voting members of the Church Council, its advisors, and the executive assistants to the presiding bishop and the secretary entered into anti-racism education at 9:45 A.M. The education session included viewing of the 1966 Lutheran Film Associates film, “A Time for Burning”; small-group discussions and shared reflections; and discussion of white privilege and internalized racial oppression. The education session was led by Ms. Shenandoah Gale, coordinator for anti-racism education and training, and council members Ms. Lynette N. Reitz, Mr. Samuel F. Schlouch, Ms. Brianna R. Watts, Mr. Allan E. Thomas, and Ms. Judith Tutt-Starr. It closed with a written evaluation by those who had participated.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Vice President Carlos E. Peña announced that the afternoon Bible study would be postponed due to the delay in the arrival of its leader, the Rev. Timothy J. Wengert, professor of Reformation history at the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia. He asked that Ms. Faith A. Ashton lead the council in prayer before the noon meal.

RECESS

The second plenary session of the April 2007 meeting of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America recessed at 11:52 A.M.

Saturday, April 14, 2007
Plenary Session III

The April 2007 meeting of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America resumed at 1:08 P.M. Prior to the beginning of the plenary session, Ms. Shenandoah Gale, coordinator for anti-racism education, provided location information about the resources used in the anti-racism education session held in the previous plenary session. That information later was posted on the council's online meeting.

REPORT OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

(Agenda II.A.2; Agenda/MINUTES Exhibit A, Part 2)

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson assumed the chair so that Mr. Carlos E. Peña, vice president of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and chair of the Church Council, could give his report. Vice President Peña began by saying what fun it had been for him, his wife Diane, their church family, and their community to host the Conference of Bishops a few weeks previously.

Vice President Peña echoed remarks made earlier by the presiding bishop concerning 'Thanks be to God' for the leaders of this church. He expressed his personal gratitude to Secretary Lowell G. Almen; the Rev. Charles S. Miller, executive for administration; and the Rev. Donald M. Hallberg, president of the Foundation of the ELCA and executive director of the Development Services unit, for the counsel, guidance, prayers, and knowledge of this church they had shared with him. Vice President Peña also expressed appreciation for the retiring synodical bishops for the leadership, courage, and advice they provided to their synods and the council meetings. From his experience as a former member of the Church Council, Vice President Peña acknowledged how much was expected of council leaders, and he thanked those who were finishing their terms for their commitment, thoughts, and comments.

Vice President Peña observed that he and Diane joined those present in mourning the death of the Rev. Margarita Martinez, bishop of the Caribbean Synod. He shared with the council the story of a recent trip to San Juan during which he remembered a visit to the congregation over which Bishop Martinez was presiding. A building meant for 100 people was packed with 250; 35 infants were to be baptized at that service. It was a great day of celebration, he said. He recalled that the sharing of the peace lasted 45 minutes because everyone wanted to hug Bp. Martinez and tell her about their lives. Vice President Peña recounted another encounter with Bishop Martinez at the 2003 Churchwide Assembly, when she said to him, "If you are elected, this is not just an election. This is a calling from God." Bishop Martinez, he concluded, clearly had a call from God.

Vice President Peña reminded council members to send in reports of their participation in Synod Council meetings and Synod Assemblies. If council members had not been contacted yet by the assembly planning coordinator or the bishop, they should call the bishop and let her or him know they were available. Council members planning to attend Synod Assemblies also should contact the churchwide representative as well.

Finally, Vice President Peña called attention to the annual churchwide appeal, "Vision for Mission," and encouraged Church Council members to support financially the ministries of this church. He noted that the amount of support was not as important as 100 percent participation from the council.

At the conclusion of his report, Vice President Peña resumed the chair.

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

(Agenda II.E.2)

Mr. Carlos E. Peña, vice president of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and chair of the Church Council, presented the report of the Executive Committee.

ANTI-RACISM EDUCATION FOR THE CHURCH COUNCIL

(Agenda III.C.1)

Background:

The anti-racism planning team was organized by the Church Council, and its members appointed by the vice president of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America at the November 2006 meeting of the council. Its general purpose, as directed by the council, is to work with the churchwide coordinator for anti-racism education and training and the director for racial justice ministries, especially as these people seek to educate and train the Church Council. The four council members on the anti-racism planning team are Ms. Judith Anne Bunker, Ms. Lynette M. Reitz, Mr. Allan E. Thomas, and Ms. Judith Tutt-Starr.

The group has met three times: first in an initial, brief “getting-to-know-you” session in November after the Church Council meeting; second by conference call to discover together the work of the group; and third for a one-day planning session on February 17, 2007, to develop recommendations for education and training for the Church Council.

The following short-term recommended actions were developed during the planning session on February 17 and were considered by the Executive Committee, which brought a specific recommendation to the Church Council for approval at the April 2007 meeting. The planning team’s short-term recommendations are:

1. To provide the Church Council with some pre-meeting materials, including working definitions for the April 2007 meeting and short pieces for further discussion during the meeting. [Note: these are printed as Exhibit B, Parts 3a-3c.]
2. To request the use of racial justice monitors at all council meetings as a mechanism for accountability.
3. To have the council name the duration and definition of the anti-racism team as an ongoing committee, not necessarily *ad hoc*, to demonstrate the importance of this work for this church.
4. To request workshop time at the 2007 Churchwide Assembly. [Note: this request has been granted.]

Long-term recommendations for the council included items to be researched more thoroughly by the coordinator for anti-racism education and training, the director for racial justice ministries, and the anti-racism planning team. These include:

1. Ensuring a continuous process of institutionalizing racially just policies and mechanisms. (Draw up a schedule for ongoing anti-racism education.)
2. Ask for regular reporting on racial justice to include anti-racism and institutional racial oppression. (Specifically for the Planning and Evaluation Committee of the Church Council in its role of evaluating programs of the churchwide organization.)
3. Assist Church Council members to recognize racism and the ways racist attitudes affect this church.
4. Develop a specific action of repentance, including a liturgical expression for the council and this whole church.

Church Council Action:

Vice President Carlos E. Peña introduced the proposed action and then requested that Secretary Lowell G. Almen read it.

Mr. Grieg L. Anderson requested more information about the use of racial justice monitors, about which he had some concerns.

The Rev. Kenneth M. Rupp, a member of the Executive Committee, explained that while the committee had heard about the usefulness of monitors in other settings, questions remained about how to utilize them in council meetings. The Executive Committee, therefore, while affirming the possibility they could be used, had left further development of a proposal for their use to the Board Development Committee.

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson indicated that the New England Synod had found it helpful to have a person of color and a white person help them reflect at the end of their meeting on how the decisions and conversations reflected their commitment to becoming an anti-racist, multicultural synod. The Unitarian Universalist Church has a different model, he noted. The Executive Committee had heard that there was, potentially, great help in having mirrors by which to reflect on their work. The monitor would not be a judge issuing a verdict. The committee thought that there was wisdom in trying the practice at one meeting and then discussing it before proceeding further.

Mr. Allan E. Thomas pointed out that someone from the council itself could be trained to do the work. The monitor

would not be a hindrance but a help as the council worked to build trust.

The Rev. Keith A. Hunsinger inquired what the council would receive from the monitor. Presiding Bishop Hanson responded that the monitor would provide an oral report at the end of meeting. The monitor would ask provocative questions and offer examples to help the council see what it had done consciously or unconsciously to further its commitment to becoming multicultural or to inhibit it. The goal would be to assist the council in seeing itself in a different light. The exact process would be a work in progress.

Ms. Lynette M. Reitz added that the planning team had considered different directions and various models but desired feedback from the council. Most of all, it wanted to make certain that the conversation continued.

Pr. Rupp commented that the Executive Committee saw the benefits of a small group planning an educational or training event, so rather than limit the agenda or set requirements about further education, the committee proposed to give the responsibility for the topic to the Board Development Committee.

Ms. Judy Biffle proposed altering the order of the paragraphs in the action. There being no objection, her proposal was accepted.

Mr. Gary L. Wipperman suggested that the council needed a mirror for other issues, such as sexism and effectiveness. He hoped that these others would be considered by the Board Development Committee as well.

Mr. Anderson expressed concern that a monitor might have a stifling effect on having full, open, and healthy debate on issues.

Ms. Jessica M. McKee replied that the Executive Committee had discussed how trust would have to be formed so that conversation would not be stifled. How that would work was yet to be determined.

Vice President Peña encouraged advisors to speak on the issue.

The Rev. Phillip D. W. Krey remarked that the primary time the council needed to be concerned about its commitment to becoming multicultural occurred when the budget was developed. That is the time when white privilege occurs, he asserted, especially when an ethnic strategy is adopted but not funded, for example.

Pr. Hunsinger expressed a desire that a trained person provide an example of how the monitor would interact with a council meeting to help him comprehend the process.

Ms. Reitz explained that the models made clear that it was a process of interaction and questioning about how decisions were made or reminding people to think about white privilege. Some models were very structured, and others less so, more like feedback. The proposed action just affirmed that more options would be considered.

The Rev. Virginia Anderson-Larson remarked that members of color served the monitor role at meetings of the Global Mission program committee. It was a sometimes painful but helpful mirror.

Ms. Biffle pointed out that the action did not have the same language concerning consultation as the action on the anti-racism strategy did. The Rev. Charles S. Miller, executive for administration, answered that because the Board Development Committee was staffed by members of the Office of the Presiding Bishop and because the coordinator for anti-racism education and training also was part of that office, the Board Development Committee would be working continuously with the coordinator for anti-racism education and training.

There being no further discussion, Vice President Peña called for a vote.

VOTED:

CC07.04.03

To assign to the Board Development Committee responsibility for continuing anti-racism training in relation to the Church Council;

To acknowledge that the Board Development Committee may appoint a subcommittee for assistance in addressing issues of anti-racism training; and

To affirm the possibility of engagement of a racial justice monitor or monitors at future meetings of the Church Council to provide observations on the process of deliberations of the council.

ANTI-SEXISM STRATEGY: EDUCATION AND TRAINING

(Agenda III.C.2)

Background:

At its November 2006 meeting, the Church Council voted [CC06.11.50]:

To request that the Office of the Presiding Bishop, working in consultation with the Church in Society program unit, bring forth a plan to the Church Council for its continuous education, reflection, and training on the issue of sexism, just as the Church Council has committed itself to continuous education, reflection, and training on the issue of racism.

In response, the Executive Committee, at the request of the Office of the Presiding Bishop and in consultation with the Church in Society unit, recommended the following action.

Church Council Action:

At the request of Vice President Carlos E. Peña Secretary Lowell G. Almen read the proposed action.

Vice President Peña opened the floor for discussion.

The Rev. Sarah J. Stumme raised a question about capitalization of the title “director for justice for women” in the proposed action. Secretary Almen assured her that the action conformed to the normal standards for capitalization.

Pr. Stumme requested that the source of the phrase “scandalous realities” be cited in the action. Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson proposed that the source be placed in a footnote. Pr. Stumme agreed.

The Rev. Jeffrey “Jeff” B. Sorenson inquired about the topic of the summer 2008 retreat. The Rev. Charles S. Miller, executive for administration, replied that all of the items listed in the commitment about “scandalous realities” would be addressed at the retreat.

Ms. Judy Biffle questioned why the language in the proposed action was different from that of the previous action. Presiding Bishop Hanson responded that the two actions had been created separately so their language was different.

Ms. Biffle proposed an amendment:

Moved;

Seconded:

To amend by deletion and addition:

. . . ~~Directing that~~ To assign to the Board Development Committee, in conjunction with the director for justice for women, responsibility for ~~evaluate~~ the Church Council’s continuing education; ~~reflection~~; and training related to the issue of sexism.

There being no further discussion, Vice President Peña called for a vote on the amendment.

Moved;

Seconded

Approved:

To amend by deletion and addition:

. . . ~~Directing that~~ To assign to the Board Development Committee, in conjunction with the director for justice for women, responsibility for ~~evaluate~~ the Church Council’s continuing education; ~~reflection~~; and training related to the issue of sexism.

Pr. Miller asked a question of clarification.

Hearing no further discussion, Vice President Peña called for a vote on the action as amended.

VOTED:

CC07.04.04

To engage in education, reflection, and training in the 2007-2008 biennium related to the issue of sexism through:

- 1. Receiving annual reports, both written and verbal, by the director for justice for women in accordance with this church’s governing documents;**
- 2. Participating in Bible studies, planned and led by the director for justice for**

- women, at the November 2007 meeting of the Church Council; and
3. Requesting that the Board Development Committee, in consultation with the director for justice for women, coordinate planning for the July 2008 Church Council retreat on the topic of “scandalous realities”*; and
- To assign to the Board Development Committee, in conjunction with the director for justice for women, responsibility for continuing education and training related to the issue of sexism.

* “Design for Mission through the Churchwide Organization” commitments for implementation: “3. 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”

THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH COUNCIL AND ITS ADVISORS

(Agenda III.C.3; Exhibit D, Part 2)

Background:

At its November 2006 meeting, the Church Council and its advisors participated in small-group discussions about the “role of the Church Council and its advisors.” The discussion focused around the following questions:

- In what activities of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America does this council have a stake?
- How do we keep the Plan for Mission before the council?
- How might the leadership of the council make a difference in the life and work of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America?
 - ▶ in building relationships with members, congregations, synods, pastors, and institutions and agencies;
 - ▶ in interpreting the Plan for Mission;
 - ▶ in monitoring commitments;
 - ▶ in providing adequate mission support;
 - ▶ in leadership development.
- How does the work of the committees and the way committee reports are given in plenary shape the work of the Church Council?
- How can the relationship between the Church Council and its advisors be strengthened?

The Church Council referred the suggestions for implementation generated by the small groups to the Executive Committee for response.

Church Council Action:

At the request of Vice President Carlos E. Peña Secretary Lowell G. Almen read the proposed action.

Vice President Peña opened the floor for discussion. Hearing none, he called for a vote.

VOTED:

CC07.04.05

To express gratitude for the contributions of the members of the Church Council and advisors in the small-group discussions at the November 2006 meeting;

To refer the information in Exhibit D, Part 2, to the Office of the Presiding Bishop, Executive Committee, and Board Development Committee for use in planning the orientation of newly elected and incumbent members of the Church Council at the November 2007 meeting; and

To envision that such an orientation will include both (1) a study of the governing documents related to the role of the Church Council and advisory members and (2) attention to building relationships, strengthening communication, focusing on the Plan for Mission, and increasing leadership skills for council effectiveness.

GREETINGS: THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CANADA

(Agenda VI.F.)

Background:

The closest neighbor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) is the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC). For the last several years, a representative of the ELCIC has been a guest at each spring meeting of the Church Council of the ELCA, just as a representative of the ELCA has been a guest at each fall meeting of the ELCIC National Church Council.

The Rev. Raymond L. Schultz, the national bishop of the ELCIC, had announced his retirement as of August 31, 2007. A reception in his honor was held during the Church Council meeting.

Church Council Information:

The Rev. Raymond L. Schultz, national bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC), addressed the Church Council: “It is great to be here again. The ELCA has become my other family on the North American continent, and I feel like it is my home—although since it has been renovated, I don’t exactly know where all the bedrooms are any more. . . . As you know, this is going to be my last meeting with you. I am retiring from the office of national bishop as of the end of August. And while I am glad to be leave the wake of the work behind, I am going to grieve terribly the loss of our association. As churchworkers, you have become my associates, and as people of God, you have become my friends. As a generous and hospitable church, you have given the ELCIC many gifts.

“The ELCIC is going to be meeting in convention June 21-24, 2007, in Winnipeg. That is a weekend. My successor will be elected by the evening of Friday, June 22. Our church is going to share a day of celebration with the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada. They are meeting in Winnipeg, holding their General Synod at the same time as we are meeting and holding our convention. Together we are going to give thanks for the Waterloo Declaration, which defines our full-communion relationship. I am using the term “giving thanks” deliberately because we are going to spend eight hours together and those eight hours are going to be one single Eucharistic service, which begins with an invocation and ends with the sending out, and in between has the meal and all kinds of activities. A single extended Eucharist.

“We are also going to acknowledge a document that has served us very well for 10 years, ‘Evangelical Declaration,’ a delightfully concise theology of missions, just two pages long. We are going to be proposing that its 10-year mandate be extended for another 10 years. From that document we derived the mission theme of our church. That theme is ‘to be in mission for others.’ It comes out of this sentence: ‘We will use our gifts deliberately to be the people of God for others.’ During this decade then we continued to derive supplementary themes from the general one of ‘In mission for others.’ So this year our convention theme will be ‘A people called,’ where we will look at ourselves as a community and a culture of Lutherans in Canada and understand what it is that God calls us to be in our nation. Then to show how that document works in our church and to honor it, we are going to derive from it a plan for environmental stewardship, which we will bring forth, that will begin with congregations but will extend to synods, to the national church, and to our international relationships over a period of years as the strategy unfolds.

“In our National Council we use a governance model called the relationship model that recognizes that it is notoriously difficult to quantify what it is that the church accomplishes. It is much easier to identify relationships in which we engage. . . . So the report of the national bishop’s office, then, will be the introduction of a number of people—beginning with your vice president, Carlos—to our convention, who will talk about the relationships that we have. We will include Kathy Magnus, representing the Lutheran World Federation; people from the church in Peru; from the church in Germany; Canadian Lutheran World Relief; and our international development, and so on. So we are going to begin our convention that way, with this wonderful theology of mission and then talking about the relationships that we have.

“We are going to be introducing the development of a social statement on human sexuality. I want to take this opportunity to say thank you to the ELCA for the assistance that it has provided us and the research and study that it has done, which has become a gift to us so that we do not have to begin right at point zero. We are going to bring yet again a resolution on blessing same-sex couples to our convention. We are trying to change the framing of it a little more. You know the adversarial approach is always to ask questions of sin and righteousness and doctrine and morality. So we are changing the frame and saying that this is a mission question. It is not like our church is exactly being invaded by people

who want to be participants. In the meantime, there are a few people who are coming and saying they want to and offering to do the right thing, and we are saying, 'No. Sorry.' So we are bringing forth a resolution that says our context hands us different challenges, and since 1995 when we discontinued the national office for mission planning and gave that responsibility to the synods, we therefore ask our synods to make strategic decisions about how best to minister to gay and lesbian committed couples in the context of their synod at this time. So we will see where that goes. As in the ELCA, our church faces a growing body of fundamentalist opinion that would rather divide the church than live with differences and continue in dialogue.

"Back to relationships with the ELCA. I am delighted that I am going to be one of the presenters at the Worship Jubilee in early August, and then my wife and I will be staying on for the Churchwide Assembly. In relationship to the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), I want to model orderly succession, so our national Church Council is going to be asking the council of the LWF to assign the remainder of my term on council to my successor. In the meantime I have been elected to chair a renewal committee for the LWF; I will continue to retain that position until the assembly in 2010 in Stuttgart. My last official work day is August 31, and then I am going to stay on for another month in September to do transition work with my successor and, if my successor is one of the synod bishops, to do transition work with that synod as well. Then in October my wife and I are going to move back to the west coast, where we plan to settle eventually on Vancouver Island. . . . In retirement I hope to do some writing, some woodcarving, and learning some new recipes. I am hoping I will have the opportunity to volunteer backstage at one of the live theaters there. I want to spend a lot of time making up for all those plays and concerts I had to forgo because of my travel schedule. And because air travel is one of my least favorite experiences, one of my plans includes going nowhere.

"So thanks for the memories; thanks for the fun; thanks be to God."

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson responded on behalf of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America: "It is my honor to say thanks be to God for you, Ray. Many words come to mind to describe your leadership. These are a few. You have an inquisitive mind, and you are gifted with theological wisdom. Beware if you ever give a speech in front of Ray when he is in the audience. You will experience his provocative questions, and then, more than likely, in the break a deepening of the conversation. One of the many images I will retain occurred when the former president of Finland gave a keynote address at the LWF assembly on 'The State of Europe Today.' Well, in the break, not surprisingly, I looked back on the stage. The former president of Finland was not having a cup of coffee. Ray had him cornered, and for a long conversation, because that is the nature of Ray's provocative mind. You have the gift of refreshing honesty, particularly as you have often, sometimes painfully for us, reminded us that we share a continent and that Canada is not the 51st state, nor is the ELCIC a wholly owned 66th synod of the ELCA. I need to say that after a couple of very painful times when we struggled with this—the relationship of our nation to yours and the size of this church to yours—I have winced when we have chosen to call ourselves the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and you chose to call yourselves the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada. It seems a clear description of the differentiated relationship into which you have called us, to which you and others need to continue to remind us. You have often said that you share more in context with parts of Europe than with parts of the U.S. . . . Thank you for calling us to mission and to continually raise up how to simplify bureaucracies for the sake of mission. You have done that and reminded us and led us in the way. Thank you for your global and ecumenical leadership. . . . At the behest of both the president and general secretary of the LWF, Ray will continue to chair the renewal committee, which is looking at the big theological, ecclesiological questions of the future of the LWF, and I am glad that you will bring your gifts to that leadership. For the many ways that we have partnered: *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* is one example of the collaborative, cooperative effort; our annual academies with your bishops and our bishops have deepened friendships and mutual understanding; the participation in global mission events and formation of global mission personnel; and just our times together. So we will pray for you and Lila, and we will continue to pray for your church as you are in the call process, as we are in ours. And we want to give you a small gift from us of our gratitude for you and the partnership we share. . . ." Presiding Bishop Hanson presented National Bishop Schultz with an icon of the mother of God, known as the Vladimir icon, written by the Rev. Gary L. Safrit of the ELCA.

Bishop Schultz expressed his gratitude for the icon. Mary's invitation to adore the Christ, he said, makes it an icon for the mission of the church.

DWELLING IN THE WORD

The Rev. Marie C. Jerge, bishop of the Upstate New York Synod, opened her comments by saying that the concept of “dwelling in the Word” was an odd one for her; rather, the Word always was dwelling around her. The Word was present as her mother read morning devotions. Her devotional books could be found even in the bathroom because it was there she could find peace and quiet. Bishop Jerge’s grandparents selected her confirmation verse: John 3:16, and it was handwritten in her Bible by her grandmother. The previous day, as part of the family tradition, Bishop Jerge had ordered a Bible to be engraved with the name of her niece and goddaughter for her confirmation. Contained in that Bible would be a letter listing those Scripture texts that were important in the life of the family. One of the texts is Isaiah 43:1–2. There are texts, Bishop Jerge explained, that come at a particular moment in life that change people and live with them forever. Isaiah 43 had been a gift from Bishop Jerge’s husband to her father. When her father was on trial one year, during the third week of Advent, he sent word that he needed to see her. Bishop Jerge’s husband Jim, who could not accompany her, wrote these words for her father: “Israel, the Lord who created you says, ‘Do not be afraid. I will save you. I have called you by name and you are mine. When you pass through deep waters, I will be with you, and your troubles will not overwhelm you, and when you pass through fire, you will not be burned. The hard trials that come will not hurt you.’” Bishop Jerge told the council that her father carried that piece of paper into the witness box and for the rest of his life. His fingerprints were all over it when it was found in his wallet after his death. She asked, “Was he holding the Word or was the Word holding him?” That text has become a part of her family, Bishop Jerge said. It was read at her mother’s funeral and her father’s second wedding and became another niece’s confirmation verse. Her family’s experience, she continued, was just one example of what it means to dwell in the Word. She expressed gratitude for the Word, for the way that texts become a part of lives, and for the people of the community of faith who continually hold up the Word before one another.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY

(Agenda II.A.3; Agenda/MINUTES Exhibit A, Part 3)

The Rev. Lowell G. Almen, secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, began his report by thanking Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson and Vice President Carlos E. Peña for their gracious words, spoken earlier, about his service.

Secretary Almen said, “He really was a giant in so many ways. He was a faithful parish pastor. He was a courageous U.S. Army chaplain during World War II and beyond. He became a distinguished theologian and ecumenical pioneer. He was one of the early participants, way back in 1965, in the U.S. Lutheran–Roman Catholic dialogue. His name is the Rev. Dr. Arthur Carl Piepkorn. He was these many things and more. He shaped in profound ways several generations of seminary students as a professor at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis. While he was a professor and pastor of The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod, we in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America benefit from his work in a number of the people that we received through the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches who had been shaped in their theological training by Dr. Piepkorn. He laid part of the solid foundation for what has proved to be that very fruitful Lutheran–Roman Catholic dialogue. The reason that I mention Dr. Piepkorn is this year on June 21 will mark the hundredth anniversary of his birth in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He died in December 1973, but the impact of his life continues to bless the Church, for throughout the 10th round of the U.S. Lutheran–Roman Catholic dialogue, which was conducted a quarter-century after his death, I found something fascinating. I discovered that barely a meeting that we had in that 10th round would pass without someone making some reference to something that Dr. Piepkorn had contributed to the dialogue, some insight from those early years, that other participants had remembered. Dr. Piepkorn in an essay shortly after the formation of the U.S. Lutheran–Roman Catholic dialogue reminded Lutherans and Catholics alike that for the first 1500 years of the Church’s history we shared a common history in the Latin rite of the western Church, and only what both Lutherans and Roman Catholics now see as necessary reforms from 500 years ago, reforms that led to our separation at that time, only the last 500 years were years of separation where customs, experiences, convictions, and events have presented roadblocks to overcoming divisions. Yet, under the guidance of God’s Spirit, we can hope that we find ways to reflect that unity that we, in fact, have been given through our baptism into Christ.

“I think the people of the Church, in their healthy moments spiritually, are really always standing on their tiptoes,

gazing at the horizon, waiting to embrace God's future that is coming for us and to us. But what the people of the Church sometimes, in less than healthy moments, demonstrate is that they begin to focus only on themselves and on the given moment or on a given issue of a given moment. They forget the communion of saints in heaven and on earth. If you want to do an analysis of some of the congregation fights that develop over various matters, I think one of the things that one almost consistently would discover is that folks in that fight turned in upon themselves and they forgot about the communion of saints and their part in that communion of saints. Or when you look at a congregation in a synod that begins to go its own way and make ugly gestures of one sort or another to other congregations or to the synod, again turning in upon itself and forgetting that larger communion of saints. When we are spiritually healthy, we are standing on our tiptoes, looking for the horizon of God's future. Even then what we sometimes forget is that we are not only standing on our own tiptoes, but we are standing on the shoulders of the giants in the faith who have gone before us.

"That is why I think it is so important to remember and understand our history because to remember and understand our history, both distant and proximate, helps us with clues as to perceiving the present and what is really important in the present, even as we prepare for possibilities of the future.

"In recent weeks, one of the reminders that I had of the way in which the Church's history is constantly unfolding was the moment I decided to do the math on the active roster of ordained ministers in this church to see how many of the ordination certificates have my signature on them. I discovered that 45 percent of the active roster of clergy now serving the ELCA have my signature on their ordination certificates. That is only 20 years, not really that long a span of time, but the ongoing life of the Church continues to evolve. We have an opportunity to serve for a block of time there, and I think we serve well when we remember the gifts we have been given by our forebears in the faith, continue to give thanks to God for those gifts, and look to God for the promise of the future that lies ahead of us.

"This is indeed the 56th meeting of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for me—56 meetings, 20 years of deliberations. In some notes that Myrna prepared for this meeting, she had some comment speculating on the number of cups of coffee I had downed during this whole period of time and added this cryptic note: 'He probably knows the number.' I estimate that it is about 890 cups of coffee, but I have not kept a record of it. I look back and admit some feelings of nostalgia, although I could not, as you suggested, describe each meeting of the 56. A few years ago I might have been able to do that, but the number has gotten a little high. In the midst of those feelings of nostalgia, what I feel even more deeply are feelings of gratitude—gratitude for the privilege of having served with folks like you in this place for the last two decades. On May 2, 1987, I was elected secretary of the ELCA. Just a month later, and only a month after their own elections, the members of that new Church Council of the ELCA met. We assembled in a crowded basement room—you are living in luxury compared to that first meeting room—a crowded basement room in the Hyatt O'Hare Hotel. Those early decisions in that meeting involved, well, people getting to know one another and then sometimes wondering how those backgrounds would inform decisions. They included the election of the first treasurer at that meeting, the election of the executive for administration, and the election of the executive for ecumenical affairs.

"This is not a significant note, but some of you may find it interesting, especially sitting with your laptops in front of you: because of the variety of locations in which materials for that meeting had been prepared, I had to learn to use three different and new, in my experience, word-processing programs for the agenda and for the subsequent preparation of the minutes of that meeting. In fact, the minutes of that meeting in some ways represent the earliest miracle in the life of the ELCA. It really was quite an adventure of discovery, both throughout that meeting, the three days and the first three days in June, and then in the months that immediately followed that.

"Well, as I got to thinking about that first meeting, I realized that first meeting for me was in a Hyatt Hotel, and ironically my last meeting with the Church Council will be in a Hyatt Hotel because we will be staying for the 2007 Churchwide Assembly in a Hyatt Hotel in downtown Chicago. That is a coincidence that has no historic significance because we get no money from the Pritzker family that owns the Hyatt, and they certainly have enough they could share it with us if they wished, but I will leave that to Don Hallberg [the Rev. Donald M. Hallberg, executive director of Development Services and president of the Foundation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America] to work on.

"As I now look back from the perspective of what really is for me my final meeting in this room with you, I realize how well the constitutional provisions and the bylaws that govern our work, how well they have guided our work throughout the past two decades. Now it is true that in 2005 we reorganized that chapter 14 on the council's work to

provide a somewhat greater clarity in the summary of duties, but the basic responsibilities, even the basic provisions and bylaws, have remained the same to a substantial degree for the past 20 years. Consider first the nature of the Church Council. In the organization of the ELCA, the Commission for a New Lutheran Church (CNLC) operated on this principle in understanding the work of the churchwide organization: that the churchwide organization would have one board of directors, and so from very beginning it is specified in 14.11. We read: '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.' Now at first reading the provision appears to give the council absolutely enormous authority: 'interim legislative authority'. Actually, the council's scope of authority is both broad and limited. 'Interim legislative authority' is broad indeed, but let us also look at the limitation because that also is important to remember, as indicated in provision 14.13.: "'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.' So the limitation is twofold: limitation by the actions and policies of the Churchwide Assembly and limitation by the constitution and bylaws of this church.

"Second, let us consider the types of decisions that are assigned then specifically to the Church Council. One significant area involves elections. Provision 14.14. assigns to the Church Council responsibility for electing to six-year terms the treasurer of this church. Further, provision 14.15. specifies that the council is to elect persons to fill unexpired terms on the Church Council, something that we will be doing at this meeting, as well as boards and committees of the churchwide organization. Except for what is otherwise specified for separately incorporated entities, the council also is the electing body for executive directors for program units. Now this responsibility for the council is one that is new in the last two years because previously division executive directors were elected by the respective boards. Election of a potential executive director now takes place upon nomination by the presiding bishop to the Church Council. Another significant responsibility of the council is review of program directions of the churchwide organization. This review is to ensure that the programs are in keeping with the six primary purposes of this church. Those purposes are specified in chapter four of the constitution, and they are:

- 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.
- 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.

So, as specified in bylaw 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.' This is the middle of the wheel with all of the spokes coming out from it and flowing into it. That bylaw further specifies this:

Each 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 approved by the unit, subject to ratification by the Church Council.
- b. All other policies shall be submitted to the Church Council for approval.

In regard to policies, bylaw 14.21.01. indicates: 'The Church Council shall act on the policies proposed by churchwide units, subject to review by the Churchwide Assembly.' That is why the extensive summary of the council's decisions is provided to each Churchwide Assembly. And as bylaw 14.21.04. says: 'The Church Council may adopt policies in accord with this church's constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.'

'The Church Council also has significant responsibilities in relation to the Churchwide Assembly. For instance, bylaw 14.21.03. specifies the process for submission of recommendations for action by the Churchwide Assembly. In that bylaw we read: 'The Church Council shall review all recommendations from churchwide units for consideration by the Churchwide Assembly.' The route to the Churchwide Assembly for the units is through the council. Furthermore, bylaw 14.21.08. stipulates: 'The Church Council shall report its actions to the Churchwide Assembly.' The ongoing review of unit program and planning in relationship to the strategic directions that we have heard about earlier today, that must be understood under the overall umbrella of the sixfold Statement of Purpose. We have that matter of the dynamic ecology that the presiding bishop spoke of this morning that is involved in this ongoing organizational ballet of the purposes and the strategic directions and the program directions of units.

'Now, having examined that broader scope of responsibility, let us look further at some of the duties of the council. Personnel policies are the responsibility of the Church Council for the churchwide organization. Bylaw 14.21.06. says: 'The Church Council shall adopt personnel policies for this church. Salary structures of churchwide units shall be within the personnel policies of this church, unless exceptions are granted by the Church Council.' Budget and expenditure authorizations are a significant part of the council's decision-making, as indicated in bylaw 14.21.05.: '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.' In this regard to planning, review, evaluation, and program directions, there are points at which bylaw 14.21.15. may apply. . . : '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.' Let me add a bit of a footnote to that point. One of the brilliant contributions, I think, to our life together that came out of the deliberations of the Commission for a New Lutheran Church (CNLC) was to lodge the program responsibilities for churchwide units in continuing resolutions. The reason for that was the intention to have an agile, flexible structure that could experience ongoing review and refinement because, as you know, continuing resolutions may be amended at any meeting of the Church Council by a two-thirds vote. They do not need to be submitted to the Churchwide Assembly, as is the case with bylaws or constitutional provisions. So the CNLC wanted this agile structure moving forward and found that as the approach to follow.

'In relation to the practice of interdependence within the life of this church, the council also plays an important role there. One aspect of that role is responding to actions from Synod Councils; specifically, bylaw 14.21.11. declares: 'The Church Council shall act on resolutions from synod councils.' That's a very brief bylaw but it is a very important one because it is a piece of that ongoing legislative conversation in this church body. It is also a place of discernment throughout the life of this church.

'There are other responsibilities assigned to the Church Council in the governing documents. Among those are the specific duties of each council's committee, and the listing of those duties is found in the continuing resolutions for each committee, and the committees, I suspect, are very aware of them. While we acknowledge the Church Council is the board of directors of the churchwide organization, we need to understand that the Church Council does not operate alone or in a vacuum. There are various roads that lead to these tables, and one example at this meeting is the proposed social statement on education. It is a very good example, for the process of the preparation of such statements involves a task force doing its work. Staff of the Church in Society unit coordinate the effort. The recommended text comes to the council from that unit, and then the council has the responsibility of transmitting the statement with a recommendation to the Churchwide Assembly. As specified in bylaw 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.’ Various other recommendations come to each meeting of the Church Council, as we know from the number of white pages in our agenda as well as the exhibits, because of that ongoing functional interaction of the various parts of the churchwide organization. The council itself is not the initiating body of much of its work, and that is the way this organization is designed to operate. That is what is made clear in the assignment of responsibilities to the council and the assignment of responsibilities to the various units.

“Now from time to time throughout the past 20 years, I have sometimes heard council people in this room argue that the council must take control of its own agenda. . . . Actually, the responsibility for the agenda does not rest with the council itself. Responsibility for thoughtful deliberation of the matters on the agenda—that does reside with the council. But the agenda itself is the agenda of the presiding bishop. It is one of the duties explicitly assigned to the presiding bishop in that rather long list of duties in the constitution. The responsibility arises from and relates to both the presiding bishop’s dual roles in the life of this church as being the chief pastor of this church as well as the chief executive officer of the churchwide organization.

“Now this lovely walk through the bylaws that, I am sure, has thrilled you all almost to the point of ecstasy, is something, of course, that I suspect that some of you or those new who are to join you in the fall will experience at that time too. Because I think it is important for our decision-making as a council to remember that we have been assigned particular responsibilities in the constitution and bylaws, responsibilities that are both broad and significant but also limited and relational in their nature. So I wanted to take the time in this report at this meeting to provide that overview once again of our life together and to testify, as one who has been in 56 decision-making meetings of the council, that the constitution and bylaws of this church . . . have served us well over the years in guiding our work and informing our decision-making.

“Let me offer a few postscripts. The written report of the secretary you will find in Exhibit A, Part 3. In response to requests, a summary of the bylaws and the position description related to the responsibilities of the secretary of this church is provided in Exhibit A, Part 3, Appendix 1. Appendix 2 provides reflections on the work of the secretary based on 20 years of accumulated experience. Those observations originally were prepared at the request of the Conference of Bishops at its October 2006 meeting and presented at the March 2007 meeting. Members of the Church Council also indicated an interest in having a chance to read those observations. So I hope that you find those helpful.

“Then further let me say to you something that I had hoped that I would have more information on before this meeting, but there are still some decisions to be made. . . . A couple of weeks ago, I was diagnosed with prostate cancer. The next steps on what will be done to deal with that problem are yet to be determined. As I said to my staff yesterday when I reported that to them, I would much rather that the cancer was discovered by means of biopsy than autopsy, and that is how it was discovered, but I do not have a schedule yet on what it will mean for the coming months and hope to have more information on that in the coming days. If I were to face surgery in the coming weeks—since we are together in this room, I am telling you now that that may be a prospect, rather than your getting an e-mail later, wondering why you were not told that such might be the case. So I share that with you now. I would rather that I would not have to face that this year. We have a lot of things planned for this year, as you know. We have that little party with 2,000 of our closest personal friends in August and some other things to take care of along the way, but that is what was discovered. Some of the subsequent tests are trying to determine how confined it may be and that will inform the treatment.

“The other personal note that I would want to share with you relates to this. Ken Ruppert is probably the only one in this room who would recognize the significance of this. This is a medal that is given by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to military chaplains who have served 20 years or more. . . . At the chaplains’ retreat in Coronado [California] in January, I had the privilege of preaching at the opening service and then delivering an address on the first 20 years of our life together in the ELCA. I also had that chance at the European regional chaplains conference and then the eastern region as well. At the closing banquet in Coronado, the four chaplains who had served more than 20 years each received this medal and then, much to my absolute surprise, for the first time in the life of the ELCA, one was also given to me. Sally said that it was probably the first time in our life together that she had seen me speechless. What I said to the chaplains I can say in your presence, that it was an act of absolute grace on their part to give me one because there is no way in the world that I would deserve it. I have not served as a military chaplain. I have not faced some of the dangerous situations that they have faced. I suppose that the most dangerous thing that I have had to face is being

parliamentarian at our congregation's annual meeting. It does not quite compare with that substantial number of ELCA pastors now, comparatively speaking, who are deployed in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere. But I wanted to tell you about that and acknowledge in your presence my gratitude for the kindness and generosity of our Lutheran military chaplains, even as I hold them all in such high regard for the distinctive kind of ministry they carry out on our behalf. Thank you all very much."

RECESS

The third plenary session of the April 2007 meeting of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America recessed at 2:44 P.M. It resumed at 3:06 P.M.

NOMINATIONS, APPOINTMENTS, AND ELECTIONS

(Agenda III.A; Exhibit C, Parts 1–2)

Background:

Between meetings of the Churchwide Assembly, the Church Council has the responsibility of electing people to fill unexpired terms on churchwide boards, steering committees of churchwide commissions, and certain advisory committees.

Church Council Action:

At the request of Vice President Carlos E. Peña, Secretary Lowell G. Almen reviewed the proposed action, which reflected the new pattern of governance with synod nominations for some positions.

Vice President Peña opened the floor for discussion.

The Rev. John C. Ritter inquired about when the term for the position on the Committee on Appeals would end. Secretary Almen responded that it would end in August 2007; the incumbent would be eligible for a new term.

Ms. Sandra Schlesinger asked whether positions reserved for clergy were divided into female and male categories. Secretary Almen replied that they were not.

Secretary Almen noted that the Church Council would be voting on some positions and transmitting a slate for other positions to the Churchwide Assembly.

VOTED:

CC07.04.06a To transmit from the Church Council as the Churchwide Nominating Committee to the 2007 Churchwide Assembly the following slate:

CHURCHWIDE NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Clergy [Term 2013]

1. a. Pr. Linwood H. Chamberlain, Jr., Lorain, Ohio (6E)
b. Pr. Jonathan L. Eilert, Loveland, Ohio (6F)
2. a. Pr. Simon G. Fensom, Spicer, Minn. (3F)
b. Pr. Loren D. Mai, Hutchinson, Kan. (4B)

Lay Female [Term 2013]

1. a. Ms. Gwen E. Arneson, Cottonwood, Minn. (3F)
b. Ms. Merle E. Freije, Mayville, N.D. (3B)
2. a. Ms. Linda N. Lovell, Ellicott City, Md. (8F)
b. Ms. Sara "Sally" C. Williams, Hollidaysburg, Pa. (8C)

Lay Male [Term 2013]

1. a. Mr. James M. Hushagen, Edgewood, Wash. (1C)
- b. Mr. Ronald L. Pittman, McMinnville, Ore. (1E)

Lay Male (PC/L) [Term 2013]

1. a. Mr. Wesley L. Crenshaw, Savannah, Ga. (9D)
- b. Mr. Jeremy D. Posadas, New York, N.Y. (7C)

VOTED:

CC07.04.06b To receive the report of the Nominating Committee and request that a ballot be prepared:

CHURCH COUNCIL

Clergy [Term 2011] - *to replace vacancy of Pr. Elizabeth A. Eaton, Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio (6E)*

1. a. Pr. David P. Anderson, Strongsville, Ohio (6E)
- b. Pr. Robert R. Henderson, Aurora, Ohio (6E)

PROGRAM COMMITTEE FOR MULTICULTURAL MINISTRIES

Clergy [Term 2009] - *to replace vacancy of Pr. Ramona S. Rank, Portland, Ore. (1E)*

1. a. Pr. Jesse D. Hill, Charlotte, N.C. (9B)
- b. Pr. Jackie E. Russell, Oaks, Okla. (4C)

ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR THE LUTHERAN

Clergy [Term 2013]

1. a. Pr. Robert L. Driver-Bishop, McLean, Va. (8G)
- b. Pr. Harold W. Eppley, Milwaukee, Wis. (5J)

Lay Male [Term 2011] - *to replace resignation of Mr. Ben McDonald-Coltvet, Waukesha, Wis. (5J)*

1. a. Mr. Jerry Strom, Walnut Creek, Calif. (2A)
- b. Mr. Rick White, Leck Kill, Pa. (8E)

Lay Male (PC/L) [Term 2013]

1. a. Mr. Keith Gatling, Liverpool, N.Y. (7D)
- b. Mr. Frank Ramos, Guaynabo, Puerto Rico (9F)

CHURCHWIDE COMMITTEE ON APPEALS

Clergy [Term 2007]- *to replace vacancy of Pr. Edmond Yee, Berkeley, Calif. (2B)*

1. a. Pr. A. Donald Main, Sunbury, Pa. (8E)
- b. Pr. Paul J. Blom, Houston, Texas (4F)

Mr. Grieg L. Anderson expressed his gratitude for the additional information on candidates that was available.

Ms. Judith Anne Bunker commented on her concern about not having sufficient time to research the candidates and positions.

Vice President Peña explained that the slate was prepared only after the meeting of the Executive Committee.

Secretary Almen added that the Executive Committee served as the nominating committee of the Church Council. Biographical information on the candidates is presented first as an exhibit for the Executive Committee, then put in council members' packets as an exhibit. The change in the information is the addition of a narrative description to try to give voters more information. He stated that the report of the churchwide Nominating Committee would be mailed in mid-July along with the report of the Memorials Committee.

REPORT OF THE LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL REVIEW COMMITTEE (Agenda II.E.3)

The Rev. Kenneth M. Ruppap, chair, presented the report of the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT ON LENGTH OF TERM OF YOUTH ADVISORY MEMBERS (Agenda III.D.2)

Background:

The Church Council in November 2006 through the Vocation and Education unit received a resolution that was adopted at the 2006 triennial convention of the Lutheran Youth Organization. The resolution urged a shift from two-year to three-year terms for the youth advisory members of the Church Council to enable such individuals to become better acquainted with the work of the council and the issues that are considered by it. The change of the length of term would require a bylaw amendment by the Churchwide Assembly.

Church Council Action:

The Rev. Kenneth M. Ruppap, chair of the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee, introduced the proposed amendment.

Mr. Samuel F. Schlouch, youth advisory member, provided the rationale for the proposed change, noting that two-year terms provided youth advisors with experience of only four Church Council meetings. An additional year would permit youth advisory members to get to know members of the Church Council and its work better.

The Rev. Keith A. Hunsinger asked how youth advisory members would be elected between assemblies. Mr. Schlouch replied that the assembly did not elect youth advisory members.

Pr. Ruppap read the motion.

Mr. Gary L. Wipperman asked why the last section of the bylaw was being deleted. Pr. Ruppap answered that the reason was that Churchwide Assemblies occurred only every two years.

There being no further discussion, Vice President Peña called for a vote.

VOTED:

CC07.04.07 *To recommend to the 2007 Churchwide Assembly amendment of the following bylaw related to the length of the term for youth advisory members of the Church Council:*

14.32.02. **The Church Council shall have two youth advisory members, each elected by the board of the youth organization of this church to a ~~two~~ three-year term beginning at the first meeting of the Church Council following each regular meeting of the Churchwide Assembly.**

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS RELATED TO APPROVAL PROCESS FOR CANDIDATES (Agenda III.D.3)

Background:

The Vocation and Education unit, in consultation with the Liaison Committee of the Conference of Bishops, had requested amendment of a bylaw in order to include seminaries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada in the approval process of candidates for ordination, where appropriate.

Church Council Action:

The Rev. Kenneth M. Rupp, chair of the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee, introduced the proposed amendment and read it.

The Rev. Stanley N. Olson, executive director of the Vocation and Education unit, pointed out that the background to the action should have said that the amendment had been proposed after consultation with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) and presidents of that church's seminaries and this church's seminaries.

Vice President Carlos E. Peña opened the floor for discussion.

The Rev. Marie C. Jerge, bishop of the Upstate New York Synod, commented that her synod had been asking for this change for 10 years. She explained that one ELCIC seminary was much closer to the territory of her synod than any ELCA seminary and there was frequent exchange of pastors, so the change in the bylaw made considerable sense.

There being no further discussion, Vice President Peña called for a vote.

VOTED:

CC07.04.08 *To recommend to the 2007 Churchwide Assembly amendment of the following bylaw:*
7.31.13. Preparation and Approval. Except as provided below, a candidate for ordination as a pastor shall have:

...

- d. completed at least one year of residency in a seminary of this church or of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, except when waived by the appropriate committee in consultation with the faculty of a seminary of this church or of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada;**
- e. been recommended for approval by the faculty of a seminary of this church or of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada; (*with the remainder unchanged*).**

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS RELATED TO THE FORMATION OF THE EUROPEAN-AMERICAN ASSOCIATION

(Agenda III.D.4)

Background:

The decision of the Church Council in November 2006 to authorize the formation of a European-American Association in the ELCA necessitated two proposed amendments of the bylaws.

Church Council Action:

The Rev. Kenneth M. Rupp, chair of the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee, introduced the proposed amendments and read them.

Vice President Carlos E. Peña opened the floor for discussion. Hearing none, he called for a vote.

VOTED:

CC07.04.09 *To recommend to the 2007 Churchwide Assembly amendment of the following bylaws to accomplish the formation of a European-American Association in the ELCA in connection with the Multicultural Ministries unit:*

- 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, and the European-American Association in the ELCA.**
- 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; European-American; and 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.

REVISED CONTINUING RESOLUTION RELATED TO THE EUROPEAN-AMERICAN ASSOCIATION

(Agenda III.D.5)

Background:

The action of the Church Council in November 2006 to authorize the creation of a European-American Association in the ELCA related to the Multicultural Ministries unit necessitated amendment of the continuing resolution related to that unit.

Church Council Action:

The Rev. Kenneth M. Rupp, chair of the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee, introduced the proposed amendment and read it.

Vice President Carlos E. Peña opened the floor for discussion. Hearing none, he called for a vote. The amendment was adopted by a greater than two-thirds vote.

VOTED:

Two-thirds vote required

CC07.04.10

To amend continuing resolution 16.12.E06. as 16.12.E07. to incorporate references to the newly forming European-American Association in the ELCA:

16.12.E07. Multicultural Ministries Unit

The Multicultural Ministries unit shall guide the churchwide organization in the multicultural dimensions of its work. To fulfill these responsibilities, this program unit shall:

...

m. assist this church in developing and implementing cooperative efforts among the African American, Black, Arab and Middle Eastern, Asian and Pacific Islander, Latino, American Indian, ~~and~~ Alaska Native, and European-American communities in society, in other Christian communions, and in other religious traditions.

AMENDMENT OF CONTINUING RESOLUTION RELATED TO ECCLESIASTICAL BALLOT

(Agenda III.D.6)

Background:

Upon line-by-line review of the election procedures related to the use of the ecclesiastical ballot, a lack of clarity was noted. Therefore, an amendment was proposed for continuing resolution 19.61.H98.

Church Council Action:

The Rev. Kenneth M. Rupp, chair of the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee, introduced the proposed amendment and read it.

Vice President Carlos E. Peña opened the floor for discussion.

Ms. Judy Biffle asked about the meaning of "should" in the continuing resolution, concerned that a ballot that did

not have the information would be invalid. Secretary Almen replied that “should” implied exhortation but did not mandate declaring void a ballot that did not contain such information.

Hearing no further discussion, Vice President Peña called for a vote. The amendment was adopted by a greater than two-thirds vote.

VOTED:

Two-thirds vote required

CC07.04.11

To amend continuing resolution 19.61.H98.c. as 19.61.H07.c., and revise as follows:

19.61.H07. Election Procedures Utilizing the Ecclesiastical Ballot

- c. 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, on the first ballot, any additional accurate information identifying the nominee, such as title, synod, or residence.*

NEW CONTINUING RESOLUTION ON BOARD DEVELOPMENT

(Agenda III.D.7)

Background:

As a result of discussion at the July 2006 retreat of the Church Council and in view of ongoing efforts to enhance the effectiveness of the council, a new continuing resolution was presented to the November 2006 meeting. Following extensive discussion, the proposed resolution was referred to the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee for further study, including consideration of biennial charters for council committees. If adopted, the following proposed continuing resolution would establish in an ongoing way the *ad hoc* board development committee of the current and past biennia.

Church Council Action:

The Rev. Kenneth M. Ruppap, chair of the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee, introduced the proposed amendment and read it.

Vice President Carlos E. Peña opened the floor for discussion. Hearing none, he called for a vote. The amendment was adopted by a greater than two-thirds vote.

VOTED:

Two-thirds vote required

CC07.04.12

To adopt the following continuing resolution for the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:

14.41.F07. Board Development Committee

A Board Development Committee—composed of six members, at least one of whom shall be a member of the Executive Committee—shall be appointed by the Executive Committee of the Church Council for two-year, renewable terms to assist the presiding bishop and the Church Council in developing and implementing efforts to help members of the Church Council to demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the council's role and fiduciary responsibility as the board of directors of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The executive for administration shall relate to this committee, with staff services provided by the Office of the Presiding Bishop. Members appointed to the Board Development Committee shall be eligible for service on other committees of the Church Council.

CHARTERS FOR CHURCH COUNCIL COMMITTEES

(Agenda III.D.8)

Background:

Charters for each committee of the Church Council, revised on a biennial basis after initial development, would enable a committee to outline its specific tasks for the biennium and also indicate a timeline for fulfillment of such duties.

Church Council Action:

The Rev. Kenneth M. Rupp, chair of the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee, introduced the proposed amendment and read it.

Vice President Carlos E. Peña opened the floor for discussion. Hearing none, he called for a vote.

VOTED:

CC07.04.13

To request that the Office of the Presiding Bishop—in collaboration with the respective committees—revise the orientation and operation manual for the Church Council to include development early within each biennium of

- 1. a charter of general and specific responsibilities for each committee in the biennium, consistent with the applicable continuing resolutions; and**
- 2. a projected timeline for the pursuit and fulfillment of those responsibilities.**

CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY RULES OF ORGANIZATION AND PROCEDURE

(Agenda III.D.9; Agenda/MINUTES Exhibit G, Part 1)

Background:

In each biennium, the Church Council submits a recommendation to the Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America on proposed rules of organization and procedure. Voting members of the assembly act on the rules in the first plenary session. A two-thirds vote of the assembly is required for adoption of the rules. These proposed rules for the 2007 Churchwide Assembly have been developed and refined as a result of the experiences of the nine previous Churchwide Assemblies as well as the experience of predecessor church bodies. The basic change in the current version is the listing of all of the deadlines in one section rather than scattered throughout the rules.

Church Council Action:

The Rev. Kenneth M. Rupp, chair of the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee, introduced the proposed action. He directed members to Exhibit G, page 15, pointing out that the changes included a question-and-answer time prior to the third ballot for nominees for secretary and vice president, as in elections for presiding bishop. Even though there is no election at the 2007 assembly for the office of vice president, he explained, the change would thus be in place for future assemblies. He reported that there had been some debate in the committee about the amount of time that should be devoted to the questioning. Rather than set an overall time limit, which would be limiting if there were more than seven candidates, the committee instead chose to limit the number of questions and the time for the individual nominees' responses.

Vice President Carlos E. Peña opened the floor for discussion.

The Rev. John C. Richter drew attention to Exhibit G, page 16, Part Seventeen, where the various deadlines for the assembly were listed, and asked what the deadline for non-germane resolutions would be. Secretary Lowell G. Almen pointed out that this deadline was set for August 9, 2007 at 10:45 A.M.

Mr. Richard L. Wahl reminded the members that at the April 2005 Church Council meeting the council had established a two-thirds voting rule for approving certain recommendations regarding the work of the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality. He asked what guidelines would be operative regarding changes in "Vision and Expectations—Ordained Ministers in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America" that were being requested by memorials from synod assemblies. Would such changes require a majority or a two-thirds vote, he queried, and did the council have a role at this meeting in establishing such rules? Mr. Wahl related his understanding that the Conference of Bishops had discussed this matter in some detail at its March 2007 meeting and asked whether the bishops might share

their thinking and their conclusions with the council. He further asked what the council's options were regarding changes to "Vision and Expectations." He referred members to the Metropolitan Chicago Synod resolution concerning the rules in Exhibit B, Part 1a, page 1.

Secretary Almen stated that the language before the council in the proposed rules for the assembly was that adopted by the 2005 Churchwide Assembly in Orlando related to task force reports. He reported that there had been a longer paragraph on this subject that had been debated in Orlando that had received a majority vote but lacked the two-thirds vote required for approval, and had not become part of the rules for that assembly. He stated that the earlier language had thus not been included in the proposed rules for the 2007 assembly on the basis of that experience. The secretary explained that the language on page nine, column 1, represented the language that had been approved by the assembly in Orlando.

Mr. Wahl pointed out that there was not a task force related to the expected synod memorials on "Vision and Expectations."

Secretary Almen reminded the council that there was, however, a task force on the social statement on education whose report would be heard.

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson stated that, in the case of a memorial from one or more synods that did not fall under the rubric of a task-force related recommendation, *Robert's Rules* would apply unless the assembly had its own rule that stated otherwise. The percentage, he explained, would depend on the nature of the motion. Changes in the governing documents would require a two-thirds vote. In the matter of instructing a churchwide unit or body to take action regarding policies and procedures of this church, he stated, the vote required would more than likely be a majority vote, depending on what was being asked for. He cautioned that he was speaking hypothetically, and that no ruling could be made in the abstract until a matter was actually before the assembly and he as chair was asked for a ruling. The presiding bishop stated that he saw his role as helping the assembly to do its work within the structures of the rules it adopted and within *Robert's Rules*, and that he would seek to perform that role as he had at the 2005 Churchwide Assembly.

Mr. Wahl reiterated his presumption that memorials regarding changes in "Vision and Expectations" would in fact come before the 2007 Churchwide Assembly and asked once again what the implications would be for the rules and procedures of the assembly.

Secretary Almen stated that he would not respond to speculative questions about potential memorials and resolutions. He suggested that it might be helpful to the council to repeat what had been said about the nature of the documents in question, "Vision and Expectations" and "Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline." He reminded members that there had been a process that had led to the preparation of those documents, and that the process had been provided for in the constitution and bylaws. Should this church desire to change the documents, he continued, the same pattern would need to be followed. "Vision and Expectations" was developed by the Division for Ministry (now the Vocation and Education unit). The bylaws provide for review of such a proposal by the Conference of Bishops, followed by consideration and approval by the Church Council. In the case of "Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline," the constitution calls for application of equitable measures of judgment in matters of discipline based on constitutional provisions and bylaws and assigns responsibility for development of definitions and guidelines (and any revisions thereto, in the secretary's opinion) to the Committee on Appeals. That committee has the task, according to Secretary Almen, of looking at the formulation of definitions and guidelines and recommending language to the council. He pointed out that such revisions had been undertaken as a result of the 1993 Churchwide Assembly decisions concerning lay rosters.

Secretary Almen then addressed the question of whether the assembly itself could change those two documents. He explained that this would require that the assembly amend the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA* to take possession of those documents; then it could engage in direct amendment of the documents, if it chose to do so. The secretary asserted that under the current constitution and bylaws, however, it did not appear to him that these documents could be altered directly by the assembly. The Churchwide Assembly could express its will about revisions, he stated, and the bodies responsible for the documents would need to hear the voice of the assembly and receive its direction. Secretary Almen further pointed out that it is possible to amend the bylaws in one meeting of the assembly, but not the constitution itself, because the six-month notice period required for constitutional revision was already past.

The Rev. Jennifer J. Thomas moved an amendment to the proposed rules in Part Ten under "Vote to Adopt Certain Recommendations from Task Force Reports."

Moved;

Seconded: To amend the proposed “Rules for Organization and Procedure for the 2007 Churchwide Assembly” by deleting the second paragraph under Part Ten, “Vote to Adopt Certain Recommendations from Task Force Reports.”

In speaking to her amendment, Pr. Thomas reminded the council that, when this rule was proposed at the April 2005 meeting, the council was looking at a specific task-force recommendation that was to be presented at the 2005 Churchwide Assembly. Were the rule to be included again in the proposed rules for the 2007 Churchwide Assembly, she commented, it would apply to any additional task-force reports or amendments and substitute motions related to them. She expressed her desire that bureaucracies be simplified for the sake of mission, fairness, and efficiency in all three expressions of this church. Pr. Thomas stated her concern that, were this particular paragraph allowed to stand two assemblies in a row, it would not be long before people would be saying that such a rule had always been this church’s practice.

Vice President Peña opened the floor for discussion of Pr. Thomas’s amendment.

The Rev. Steven P. Loy asked for clarification of how the two paragraphs in Part Ten, “Vote to Adopt Certain Recommendations from Task Force Reports,” differed from one another.

Pr. Ruppap explained that the second paragraph referred specifically to votes that would establish a policy that would be contrary to an existing policy that had been established by this church.

Presiding Bishop Hanson further clarified that the first paragraph related to the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA*, while the second related to policy.

The Rev. Joseph G. Crippen asked whether there were other places in the rules that spoke to potential changes of policy not related to task-force reports that might serve as guidance.

Secretary Almen asked for a few moments to research an answer to Pr. Crippen’s question.

While Secretary Almen sought an answer, the Rev. Keith A. Hunsinger asked the presiding bishop to refresh the council’s memory regarding the requirements for a supermajority according to *Robert’s Rules*.

Presiding Bishop Hanson responded that a supermajority was not required, according to his understanding, when the assembly is instructing or requesting actions by a particular body of the churchwide organization that are not contrary to the constitution and bylaws. He stated his opinion that there was nothing in the ELCA governing documents that would mandate a two-thirds vote for such action. He commented that the vast majority of actions that come before the assembly require only a simple majority for approval.

Returning to Pr. Crippen’s question, Secretary Almen stated that it appeared after his own research and consultation with others that the paragraph in question was the only reference in the rules to a two-thirds vote being required for policy changes. He reminded the council that the margin of two-thirds was required in the ELCA constitution for amendments to the constitution, amendments to bylaws, adoption of full-communion agreements, adoption of social statements, and any revision of a decision of a previous assembly that required two-thirds for adoption.

Presiding Bishop Hanson added that a change of the rules in the course of the assembly also required a two-thirds vote. Secretary Almen pointed out that the two-thirds voting requirement in that case was itself established by a rule of the assembly and not by the constitution.

Pr. Crippen stated his belief that an assembly should not be able to change something with a majority vote that had earlier required two-thirds. However, he continued, if it were a matter of changing something that had not previously required a two-thirds vote, it should not now require a two-thirds vote. If such were the case, he said, he would support the amendment.

Pr. Loy expressed his support for the amendment, arguing that requiring a two-thirds vote to change a policy established by the Church Council was “getting things backward,” because it gave more authority to the council than to the assembly.

The Rev. Jeffrey “Jeff” B. Sorenson spoke against the amendment and offered a substitute.

Moved;

Seconded To amend by deletion and addition:

~~“Vote to Adopt Certain Recommendations from Task Force Reports Provisions”~~

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

~~A two-thirds vote of the voting members of the Churchwide Assembly present and voting shall be required to adopt recommendations from a task force report or amendments or substitute motions related to them provisions 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.~~

Vice President Peña opened the floor for discussion of both Pr. Thomas’s amendment and Pr. Sorenson’s substitute.

Presiding Bishop Hanson queried whether “provisions” was a helpful term, or whether there might not be a more appropriate expression that could provide clarity to the assembly and its presiding officer. He encouraged Pr. Sorenson to find a clearer term.

Pr. Sorenson commented that all three sections in Part Ten seemed to be addressing categories of decisions that affect major policies and practices of this church that had come about or had been proposed through a process. He argued that the wording proposed in his motion would be more general and would ensure that such major policies would not be approved by 51 percent at one assembly and then be overturned by 51 percent at the subsequent assembly simply because people had “rallied the troops” to reverse a decision.

Presiding Bishop Hanson repeated his concern with the language of the substitute.

Secretary Almen suggested that the wording “actions, policies, or practices” might work better and would match Pr. Sorenson’s intent.

Pr. Sorenson agreed to this change.

**Moved;
Seconded**

To amend by deletion and addition:

~~“Vote to Adopt Certain Recommendations from Task Force Reports Actions, Policies, or Practices”~~

~~A two-thirds vote of the voting members of the Churchwide Assembly present and voting shall be required to adopt recommendations from a task force report or amendments or substitute motions related to them actions, policies, or practices that require amendment of a constitution or bylaw provision for implementation.~~

~~A two-thirds vote of the voting members of the Churchwide Assembly present and voting shall be required to adopt recommendations from a task force report or amendments or substitute motions related to them actions, policies, or practices 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.~~

Pr. Thomas spoke against the substitute motion, arguing that Pr. Sorenson’s substitute would give the Churchwide Assembly the option to change policy without processes, whereas the rule as proposed was talking about recommendations from task forces, which is the way in which this church participates in processes that lead to policy change.

The Rev. Charles W. Mays rose to speak against the substitute, stating that it played on a “fear factor,” the idea that the Churchwide Assembly might flip back and forth between decisions. He argued that to give preference to the action of one assembly overlooked the possibility that this church might have learned something in the course of two years that would change its decision. This rule, he suggested, would prevent this church from adopting a policy by the same majority by which a previous policy had been adopted. To require a supermajority for changing a policy that was established by simple majority would give too much weight to the earlier decision, in his opinion.

Mr. Grieg L. Anderson also spoke against the substitute, arguing that it would call for a supermajority for everything

the Church Council touches, which he saw as “overkill.” He stated his belief that the supermajority should apply only to major decisions. He asked whether there was not already a rule that required a two-thirds vote to overturn a decision that had been approved by a two-thirds vote. Were that the case, he saw less need for the rule in question. If not, he proposed that the substitute could be revised to specify that actions approved by two-thirds votes would require a two-thirds vote to be altered or reversed.

Secretary Almen reported that the constitutional provision that addresses the matter of previous adoption is ELCA 12.12., which states: “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.”

Pr. Hunsinger expressed confusion about the substitute motion because he did not see that it either improved or fundamentally changed what was already in the proposed rule. He argued that there should be a simple yes or no vote to Pr. Thomas’s amendment, because in his opinion the substitute did not materially change the paragraph as it was written.

Pr. Loy inquired whether the substitute motion had to be dealt with first.

Presiding Bishop Hanson stated that, by the rules, both motions would first have to be perfected, and then the council would vote on whether it was ready to substitute or not.

Vice President Peña confirmed that the substitute would be voted on first.

Ms. Lynette M. Reitz requested that the substitute motion be projected on the screen so the council could read what it was voting on.

The Rev. John C. Richter asked for clarification, saying that he had understood that the second paragraph had not been approved by the 2005 Churchwide Assembly as part of its rules.

Secretary Almen explained that there had been a third, longer paragraph that had been proposed to that assembly but that had never become part of its rules because it had not been approved by a two-thirds majority.

Mr. Mark S. Helmke asked for information concerning the history of the rule under discussion, questioning whether it had been a new provision added to the rules of the 2005 Churchwide Assembly in contemplation of a specific set of recommendations from a specific task force that might have called for stronger consensus, or if it had been intended as a broader matter of policy designed to limit the assembly’s “tinkering” with policies of the Church Council except by supermajority.

Pr. Ruppert reported his memory that the rule had been proposed at the November 2004 council meeting before the report of the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality had been released, and that the discussion had also included such things as relationships to predecessor church body social statements. The rule was considered again in April 2005, and the council decided at that point to leave it the way it was. The rule then became the subject of lengthy debate at the first plenary session of the 2005 Churchwide Assembly. The two paragraphs in the current Exhibit G represent what the assembly finally approved at the end of that session.

Mr. William R. Lloyd Jr. asked if now was the proper time to ask questions about the effect of Pr. Thomas’s motion, or whether Pr. Sorenson’s substitute would have to be voted on first.

Vice President Peña responded that both motions currently were on the floor.

Mr. Lloyd, addressing Secretary Almen, referred to the secretary’s earlier explanation of how “Vision and Expectations” could come before the assembly and be changed. He asked whether, if Pr. Thomas’s motion passed and the second paragraph were stricken, the secretary’s answer would change in any way.

Secretary Almen responded that neither paragraph under discussion related to either “Vision and Expectations” or “Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline.” Thus, his answer would not change, because the two paragraphs related to recommendations from a task force.

Mr. Richard L. Wahl spoke in favor of the substitute, which he saw as consistent with the actions of the 2005 Churchwide Assembly. He argued that extending the rule to actions, policies, and practices would provide continuity with the earlier assembly.

Mr. Anderson said that, while he appreciated what was “in play” with the substitute motion, he thought that it went too far. He suggested that the council was trying to express that major decisions that are “church-shaping” require a higher level of approval than garden-variety policy activity. He asserted that the substitute did not achieve that goal

because it made everything subject to a supermajority, and he would thus vote against it. However, he continued, he would like to find a way to put a rule in place that would address the consensus required for church-shaping decisions, but was unsure as to how that might be achieved.

Secretary Almen clarified that, when he had responded to Mr. Lloyd's question concerning the two documents, he was responding solely in relation to the section as it currently appeared before the body, and was not responding related to the implications of the proposed substitute.

Ms. Norma J. Hirsch voiced opposition to the substitute because she thought that it created an undue burden by requiring a two-thirds vote for things that had not required two-thirds in the first place. She was, however, in favor of Pr. Thomas's motion to amend by deletion. She related her memory that the 2004–2005 discussions of this rule had centered on a desire that a "church-dividing" issue not be decided on a 51–49 basis, and that it was not seen at that point as relating to all future task force reports *ad infinitum*. She concurred with Pr. Thomas's concern that leaving the rule in place would lead to future assemblies assuming that such a rule had always existed.

Presiding Bishop Hanson stated that he agreed with Ms. Hirsch's analysis. He expressed concern, however, that the council's intentions might be misinterpreted if the rule became too complex. He cautioned that, if the motivation of certain members of the Church Council was the knowledge of the likelihood of memorials coming before the assembly that would call for the amendment of "Vision and Expectations" and "Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline," and a desire that such amendment require a two-thirds vote, this rule would not apply to those memorials as they had been circulated in this church as long as the "task force" wording was present.

Pr. Loy sought to summarize what he thought he had heard the presiding bishop say: that to remove the words "task force" would significantly broaden the scope of the rule.

Presiding Bishop Hanson clarified that he had said that to leave the words "task force" in the rule would render it inapplicable to the memorials to which he had referred.

Pr. Loy characterized Pr. Sorenson's amendment as "a fairly radical departure from the previous norm."

Ms. Ann F. Niedringhaus spoke in favor of Pr. Thomas's amendment. She encouraged the council to consider the importance of thinking about process apart from particular issues. While she understood the concern two years prior about a particular issue, she urged the council to move with caution in the matter of taking away the rights of the assembly. She concurred with Pr. Thomas that doing this twice would effectively establish this as the practice of this church. She stressed that she was not linking this to one issue, but was speaking in a general way of good polity.

Pr. Crippen stated his agreement with Ms. Niedringhaus and warned that tinkering with rules before each assembly was "unseemly." He urged the council to "keep [the rules] simple and consistent," and asked how the council could make distinctions about which policies were more important. He called for the council to allow the constitution and bylaws to function as they were intended to, and to let the rules reflect that.

Ms. Judith Anne Bunker agreed with and supported Pr. Thomas's amendment and expressed her concurrence with the arguments of Ms. Niedringhaus and Pr. Crippen. She asked the council to remember that the Spirit works through the Churchwide Assembly as the primary decision-making body of this church, and urged that the council not burden the assembly by "over-ruling" on the basis of the council's own decisions on specific policy. She asserted that this church believes sincerely that the assembly is the body that has the Spirit and makes decisions for this church. Therefore, she argued, to burden the assembly with more rules and to not allow it to make majority decisions would not be in the assembly's best interests.

Presiding Bishop Hanson asked to make an observation that he stated he did not want to be interpreted as advocacy for one position or the other. He further stated that he would most likely not vote on this decision because he did not want his vote to be perceived as bias when it came time for him to preside over the assembly. Returning then to Pr. Crippen's argument concerning consistency, Presiding Bishop Hanson pointed out that there would be many persons in this church who would see a majority vote to change standards that could lead to rostering of gay and lesbian persons in committed relationships as a radical shift in the rules of this church, given that such action required a two-thirds vote in Orlando. He asserted that the nuances of the complex pathway that this issue had traveled would not be understood by the vast majority of persons in this church, and that the council would need to be mindful of the two sides of the consistency argument.

Mr. Lloyd expressed his confusion. He commented that the focus of discussion to this point had been on efforts to

change “Vision and Expectations.” He reminded the council that Recommendation Two of the Sexuality Task Force on blessing of same-sex relationships had been subject to only a majority vote at the 2005 Churchwide Assembly. He pointed out that the agenda for this meeting of the council included a resolution from his home synod requesting interpretation of Recommendation Two. Whatever the council chose to do about that resolution, he asserted, someone would be unhappy. He asked whether the removal of the second paragraph of the rule in question, as requested by Pr. Thomas’s amendment, would in any way affect the ability of voting members of the Churchwide Assembly or of synod assemblies through a memorial to put before the 2007 Churchwide Assembly the question of blessings of same-sex relationships. He commented that the debate before the body seemed to be “much ado about nothing” concerning “Vision and Expectations” because the rule would not seem to have any effect on that topic.

Secretary Almen responded that Pr. Thomas’s amendment would not have any effect on resolutions concerning blessing.

Pr. Mays urged the council to focus on what would best help the 2007 Churchwide Assembly carry out its business. In his opinion, the most helpful thing would be to eliminate the entire section from the rules, because at present there was nothing coming before the assembly that would be from a task force and would require a two-thirds vote to change a constitutional provisions. He recommended that the entire provision be eliminated until the next time such a matter was slated to come before the Churchwide Assembly.

Secretary Almen clarified that Pr. Mays was referring to elimination of the entire section, “Vote to Adopt Certain Recommendations from Task Force Reports.”

Pr. Mays confirmed the secretary’s understanding. He stressed that he was not making a motion, but was pointing out that this particular section of the rules was not germane to the work of the 2007 Churchwide Assembly, though he thought the substitute motion might be.

Secretary Almen explained that the first paragraph was intended to ensure consistency of action within a single Churchwide Assembly. He characterized it as a technical rule to accomplish that goal. He further stated that the second paragraph was of a different nature, as had been pointed out in debate.

Pr. Mays responded that the secretary needed to clarify the title of the section, as well, because as he read the language in the first paragraph, the title was not consistent with the rule. Pr. Mays judged that the secretary’s explanation was “larger than the title of the section.”

Presiding Bishop Hanson stated that no one had anticipated that the 2007 Churchwide Assembly might be revisiting actions similar to those taken in 2005 in response to the sexuality task force report. Now that the council was aware of memorials that would be coming before the 2007 assembly, the question was now how to craft rules that addressed that issue, and he thought that the discussion of the rule related to task force reports was perhaps not to the point. Perhaps, the presiding bishop suggested, the larger question should have been put on the table for discussion.

Vice President Peña pointed out that the same few people had been speaking to the amendment and the substitute, and asked that other members be given a chance to address the council.

Ms. Faith A. Ashton asked for clarification of her understanding that the secretary had said that the assembly would not be able to take control of “Vision and Expectations” and “Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline,” and that the presiding bishop had said that the rule under debate would not apply to the resolutions and memorials related to these documents that were anticipated from synod assemblies.

Secretary Almen confirmed that she had understood his statement accurately.

Presiding Bishop Hanson interjected that he would not go as far as Ms. Ashton’s summary of his own statement, suggesting that, as he had understood the secretary, it would be true of Pr. Thomas’s amendment, but not of Pr. Sorenson’s substitute.

Secretary Almen responded that the proposed substitute would have enormous scope in terms of its implications. Whether it would apply to a particular resolution would depend on the exact wording of the resolution, but in his reading of the substitute, it potentially would apply to certain types of resolutions.

Ms. Ashton stated that she was referring primarily to Pr. Thomas’s amendment, and asked whether striking paragraph two of this section would accomplish the goal of requiring a majority vote on revision of “Vision and Expectations” and “Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline.”

The secretary responded that paragraph two at this assembly would relate only to the work of the task force on the education social statement.

Ms. Ashton questioned why the rule was even on the table.

Pr. Thomas responded that she was not concerned about paragraph two in the context of the 2007 Churchwide Assembly, but rather was taking a longer view that looked toward future assemblies, where the rule might be seen as tradition. She saw the question as one of how we are to be church and how governing decisions were to be made by the Churchwide Assembly and the Church Council.

Vice President Peña asked if the body was prepared to vote, and received an affirmative response. He called for a vote on the motion to substitute.

Moved;

Seconded;

Defeated:

To amend by deletion and addition:

“Vote to Adopt Certain ~~Recommendations from Task Force Reports~~ Actions, Policies, or Practices”

A two-thirds vote of the voting members of the Churchwide Assembly present and voting shall be required to adopt ~~recommendations from a task force report or amendments or substitute motions related to them~~ actions, policies, or practices that require amendment of a constitution or bylaw provision for implementation.

A two-thirds vote of the voting members of the Churchwide Assembly present and voting shall be required to adopt ~~recommendations from a task force report or amendments or substitute motions related to them~~ actions, policies, or practices 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 motion failed. The chair then called for a vote on Pr. Thomas’s amendment, and asked the secretary to read it for the body.

After the reading, Pr. Sorenson asserted that there was a memorial that sought to bring before the 2007 Churchwide Assembly Recommendation Three that had failed at the 2005 assembly and that had come from a task force report. He began to ask about the effect on that memorial if the second paragraph were struck.

Presiding Bishop Hanson reminded the group that Recommendation Three on standards for rostered leadership had called for changes in the bylaws, and for that reason—regardless of the rule currently on the table—in the form in which it had been submitted in Orlando it had required a two-thirds vote. Recommendation Two on blessing of same-sex relationships had required a simple majority.

Ms. Ashton called for the question.

The chair called for a vote on the motion to close debate, which passed. He then called for a vote on Pr. Thomas’s amendment.

Moved;

Seconded;

Approved:

To amend the proposed “Rules for Organization and Procedure for the 2007 Churchwide Assembly” by deleting the second paragraph under Part Ten, “Vote to Adopt Certain Recommendations from Task Force Reports.”

The amendment was approved by voice vote. A division of the house was called. The result of the division was 24 yes votes and 6 no, with Presiding Bishop Hanson abstaining.

Vice President Peña announced that the council would return to consideration of the original motion as amended.

Mr. Grieg L. Anderson drew attention to Exhibit G, page 15, pointing out that the wording of the first sentence for the rules for the three different elections was slightly dissimilar, with only the description of the election of the presiding bishop specifying that there would be an ecclesiastical ballot. He wondered about the significance of this difference.

Secretary Almen replied that the language was taken from the corresponding bylaws related to each of the offices.

Pr. Ruppert pointed out that the key information on page 15 was the underlined material dealing with the question-and-answer sessions for candidates.

The Rev. Jennifer J. Thomas moved the following amendment.

Moved;

Seconded: To amend the proposed “Rules for Organization and Procedure for the 2007 Churchwide Assembly” by deleting Part Ten, “Vote to Adopt Certain Recommendations from Task Force Reports.”

Secretary Almen returned to his earlier explanation of the importance of this rule. He stated that, without this rule, it was conceivable that an assembly could pass a resolution by a simple majority and then if the resolution called for changes in the constitution or bylaws, the assembly could fail to achieve the two-thirds majority required for implementation of the resolution. He saw the rule as important for consistency within an assembly because it established the same margin for amendment of the motion and for changing the governing documents. The secretary also commented that the rule pre-dated the 2005 assembly.

Pr. Thomas asked if it might not be better simply to strike the words “task force report.”

Presiding Bishop Hanson responded that it was not a question of origin, it was a question of destination.

Secretary Almen responded that such a change would meet the needs of the situation he had described and would adequately protect consistency.

Pr. Thomas withdrew her amendment and moved the following.

Moved;

Seconded: To amend the proposed “Rules for Organization and Procedure for the 2007 Churchwide Assembly,” Part Ten, “Vote to Adopt Certain Recommendations from Task Force Reports,” by striking the words “task force report(s)” from the title and text

Speaking to her amendment, Pr. Thomas stated that her desire was for the Church Council to pass along to the Churchwide Assembly a proposal for rules that were consistent with rules for previous Churchwide Assemblies, in order to provide the continuity of simplification of bureaucracies for the sake of mission. She argued that a recommendation from a task force should require only a simple majority because of the diligent work that one could assume that a task force has done for this church.

Pr. Richter asked for clarification of whether the paragraph called for a two-thirds vote on any task-force recommendation or whether it was called for only if the recommendation called for revision of the constitution or bylaws. Secretary Almen responded that a two-thirds vote was required if the recommendation of the task force was in the form of a social statement.

Pr. Richter then asked whether, if the motion did not call for changes to the constitution or bylaws and was not a social statement, it would require only a simple majority. The secretary responded affirmatively.

Mr. Wahl asked whether amendments to the proposed social statement on education would require a majority vote or a two-thirds vote. Presiding Bishop Hanson responded that amendments would require a simple majority while the social statement itself would require a two-thirds vote for adoption.

Mr. Wahl asked for clarification of whether the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Committee on Mission Funding would be affected by this rule. Secretary Almen replied that this was a committee, not a task force, and thus would not be affected by the rule.

Mr. Anderson expressed his concern that the proposed amendment would seem to require a two-thirds vote to perfect a motion as well as to adopt it, and questioned whether the reference to amendments and substitute motions might not go further than the council wanted to in order to ensure the orderly business of the assembly.

Vice President Peña called for the council to move to the orders of the day.

Mr. Wahl stated that he agreed with Mr. Anderson that the proposed amendment was creating a problem that had not existed before. He called for the motion to be defeated or to be put over to the next day to give Pr. Thomas time to find language for the amendment that would meet her needs but not create the problem that Mr. Anderson was highlighting. He then moved to postpone.

Moved;

Seconded;

Approved: To postpone discussion of Pr. Thomas’s second amendment until the next day’s session.

ELECTIONS REPORT

(Agenda III.A.; Agenda/MINUTES Exhibit C, Parts 1--2)

Background:

Between meetings of the Churchwide Assembly, the Church Council has the responsibility of electing people to fill unexpired terms on churchwide boards, steering committees of churchwide commissions, and certain advisory committees.

Church Council Action:

VOTED:

CC07.04.14

To declare elected the following:

CHURCH COUNCIL

Clergy [Term 2011] - to replace vacancy of Pr. Elizabeth A. Eaton, Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio (6E)
Pr. David P. Anderson, Strongsville, Ohio (6E)

PROGRAM COMMITTEE FOR MULTICULTURAL MINISTRIES

Clergy [Term 2009] - *to replace vacancy of Pr. Ramona S. Rank, Portland, Ore. (1E)*
Pr. Jesse D. Hill, Charlotte, N.C. (9B)

ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR THE LUTHERAN

Clergy [Term 2013]
Pr. Harold W. Eppley, Milwaukee, Wis. (5J)

Lay Male [Term 2011] - *to replace Mr. Ben McDonald-Coltvet, Waukesha, Wis. (5J)*
Mr. Rick White, Leck Kill, Pa. (8E)

Lay Male (PC/L) [Term 2013]
Mr. Frank Ramos, Guaynabo, Puerto Rico (9F)

CHURCHWIDE COMMITTEE ON APPEALS

Clergy [Term 2007]- *to replace vacancy of Pr. Edmond Yee, Berkeley, Calif. (2B)*
Pr. A. Donald Main, Sunbury, Pa. (8E)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Vice President Peña announced that Bp. Gary L. Hansen and Ms. Kristin Kvam were celebrating birthdays and the group sang "Happy Birthday." He then called upon Secretary Lowell G. Almen to make additional announcements.

Secretary Almen announced that the offering for Sunday worship was to be donated to the housing project on the Mount of Olives being built by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land.

RECESS

The third plenary session of the April 2007 meeting of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America recessed at 5:01 P.M. Members of the council gathered for a service of Evening Prayer in the Lutheran Center Chapel, led by Ms. Ann F. Niedringhaus. Mr. Samuel F. Schlouch served as lector. Following Evening Prayer, a reception for the Rev. Raymond L. Schultz, national bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, was held at the O'Hare Marriott Hotel.

**Sunday, April 15, 2007
Plenary Session IV**

Prior to the fourth plenary session of the April 2007 meeting of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, members of the council gathered for a service of Holy Communion in the Lutheran Center Chapel. The Rev. Mark S. Hanson, presiding bishop, preached and presided. Ms. Brianna Watts served as assisting minister and Ms. Jessica M. McKee as lector. The Rev. Twila K. Schock, interim director for Europe and the Middle East in the Global Mission unit, served as musician. The offering, received for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land housing project on the Mount of Olives, totaled \$3,189. Mr. Carlos E. Peña, vice president and chair of the Church Council, reconvened the meeting at 10:01 A.M.

REPORT OF THE TREASURER

(Agenda II.A.4; Agenda/MINUTES Exhibit A, Part 4a-4d)

Ms. Christina Jackson-Skelton, treasurer of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, gave a financial overview of the year and a review of history back to 1989 in order to highlight trends. She was very positive about the financial year. She reported that there were a number of strong indicators. Directing members' attention to a summary of the current income and operating expenses, she pointed out that mission-support revenue had come in at \$65,600,000, which was \$180,000 ahead of the previous year and \$136,000 behind projections, yielding an increase of .3%. This was, however, the first increase in mission-support income in five years. The treasurer expressed her gratitude for this upturn. She also pointed out that total revenue was up \$915,000 over 2005 and approximately \$2,000,000 over projections. Expenses were up about \$1,800,000, though spending was still within authorized limits and approximately \$1,000,000 under projections. Total revenue compared to expense (net revenue) was approximately \$3,000,000 for the year.

Looking at net results over time, from 1989–2006, Treasurer Jackson-Skelton demonstrated that the organization had been successful in managing expenditures within income since 1991. She commented that, a few years prior when there had been steep declines in income, several adjustments to the spending authorization had needed to be made. In 2003, for example, net revenue had been less than \$100,000. Because of this, special attention had been giving to careful monitoring and working with the churchwide units to adjust their spending. In the current year, no such adjustments had had to be made. She explained that in the past three years there had been increases in total operating income, but when adjusted for inflation in real dollar value, there was nonetheless a decline. Compared to 1989, she cautioned, this church was at less than 60-percent capacity in terms of what could be accomplished toward mission and ministry goals.

The treasurer then turned to details on the revenue side. She explained that missionary sponsorship income represented a significant category of income for this church. This revenue had increased \$61,500, which was nevertheless a bit short of goal. Bequests and trusts income was down about \$626,00 over the previous year, but was almost \$1,000,000 favorable to budget. The previous year had been the second highest year ever for bequest and trust income, so there had been no expectation of matching that level. However, there had been three strong years in this category. Investment income was also very strong at \$1,400,000 over the prior year and \$1,300,000 over projections. This was due in large measure to restricted money that had come into church accounts as a result of generous response to the tsunami and Hurricane Katrina disasters, because the money is held and paid out over a number of years. She hastened to remind members that this was not money that could be counted on from year to year, and that the funds were being drawn down. Endowment income had registered a slight decrease. Over the previous few years, the distribution percentage had been lowered to 4.5 percent from 5 percent, based on a belief that this level is more sustainable over the course of time. There had been, however, overall growth in endowment, and it is a category that is expected to increase in coming years. The Mission Investment Fund, which provides support for mission developers, was on target with budgeted amounts. The "Vision for Mission" appeal was up \$150,000 over the previous year. Other categories were running very close to the prior year.

Treasurer Jackson-Skelton reported that mission-support income continued to be a vital source of funds for the churchwide organization, representing 79.1 percent of overall unrestricted income. Missionary sponsorship represented 4.6 percent of revenue. Bequests and trusts income was 4.2 percent of income. Investment income and endowment were the other largest categories of revenue in the current year.

She then asked members to look at a history of mission-support income compared to other income. Historically, total income has followed the same trend as mission-support revenue, which is logical given that it represents 79–80 percent of total operating income. She pointed out that over the past three years, despite decreases and flattening of mission-support income, total income had nonetheless increased, which she saw as very helpful to the overall picture. She commented that these years represented the first significant break in the historical pattern. Ms. Jackson-Skelton went on to show how mission-support giving tracks on a 12-month basis. She pointed out that there had been a high in April 2002 followed by a period of decline. However, she reported, the decline seemed to have flattened out and income was relatively stable, which was proving helpful. The present hope was to rebuild on some of the losses that had occurred in the prior year.

The treasurer reported that synods had filed their 2007 mission-support plans. She stated that the plans are looked at in March, when they are received, and then again in April after synods have sent any revisions to the plans. She demonstrated that in 1998, income was at almost 100 percent of plan, but this was easier to achieve, she commented, because income was on the rise. As income began to fall, it became more difficult to estimate mission-support income. However, due to a special concentration given to working with synods and congregations, the projection was back to almost 99 percent of the revised plan.

Looking at details of other categories of revenue, Treasurer Jackson-Skelton reminded members that, while missionary sponsorship income was short of the budgeted amount of \$4,000,000, the current level of revenue for this category had not been achieved since 1991. She noted also that there had been growth in the past year, particularly in the giving of certain individual donors, and that there would be efforts made to increase revenue in the category. Thus, the \$4,000,000 goal would be maintained for the upcoming budget.

“Vision for Mission” income was growing, she stated, though there had been a disappointing drop-off the previous year. The Development Services unit had worked hard in the past year to increase this giving, sending the mailing to an additional 70,000 households. That tactic proved effective in restoring income levels in this category of giving.

The treasurer pointed out that, while bequest and trust income was a relatively unstable category from year to year, over time it actually was quite consistent. In general, this category of income was trending upward, but she warned that it was necessary to be prepared for variances that might show up from year to year. She went on to explain that investment income also was a category with potential for great variability. While this year was the second highest ever for this category, she cautioned that members should expect it to decrease in the coming year.

The World Hunger Appeal, while a restricted fund, is one that is budgeted and for which expenses are planned. When it is included in revenues, this church’s total income reaches \$102,000,000. In that case, mission-support income represents 64.3 percent of the overall budget and the World Hunger Appeal represents 18.8 percent—and that category is growing, she said. Looking at the growth of giving to World Hunger over time, Ms. Jackson-Skelton showed that in 1988 there was \$12,000,000 in income; by 1999, the twenty-fifth anniversary of the appeal, giving grew to \$16,000,000; in 2006, the amount was \$19,100,000 plus \$680,000 from the “Stand with Africa” campaign, along with some smaller hunger campaigns, which brought this category over \$20,000,000 for the first time. The treasurer celebrated the commitment of this church to this important mission.

In the category of disaster response, \$37,800,000 had been given in the previous year, while \$8,500,000 had been received in the current year. As the treasurer explained, this category was directly linked to what was happening in the world. In breaking the response down, she showed that 14 percent had come from international appeals while 86 percent came from domestic appeals. Of the domestic portion, 72 percent had been given in response to Hurricane Katrina relief, 13.4 percent was undesignated domestic disaster relief, and 7.6 percent was international undesignated giving. Appeals for specific disasters beyond hurricane relief were relatively small. For example, appeals for the Kenyan drought and Sudan relief represented only one percent of giving.

Treasurer Jackson-Skelton reported that there are other revenues included in the consolidated financial statement. If those are added in, total revenue is approximately \$134,000,000. These other categories include the Youth Gathering, which is seven percent of that total. Money for the gathering comes in and is held for a couple of years before being applied to the event.

Turning to expenses, Treasurer Jackson-Skelton explained that the majority of the budget was allocated to the work of the program units. Multicultural ministry was being tracked across units because its work is done in more than one

unit. She drew attention to the budgets for the Offices of the Presiding Bishop, Treasurer, and Secretary, and of the service units that support the work of the churchwide organization. She pointed out other categories of expenses, including health care and pension obligations being provided for retirees of the predecessor church bodies.

Treasurer Jackson-Skelton next showed council members details of the budget for grant support, indicating where this money was being spent and the major partners who were benefitting from this giving and demonstrating where such funding was being supported by the World Hunger budget. Among the partners are the Lutheran World Federation, ELCA congregations, global companion churches, Lutheran World Relief, the eight ELCA seminaries, social ministry organizations, community organizations, synods, regions, campus ministries, and others.

Treasurer Jackson-Skelton spoke briefly about the increase in investment income and the variances. She mentioned that a cash-management policy had been approved at the last meeting of the Budget and Finance Committee, and then by the Church Council. She stressed that the churchwide organization tried to operate by covering restricted and designated funds and then one to two months of operating costs. She explained that the organization was operating within that range at the present time, but that more cash was being held because of the money that had come in because of the disasters. She pointed out that compared to a year prior the funds had been drawn down by approximately \$10,000,000. She then displayed information showing where assets were being held.

Treasurer Jackson-Skelton spoke next of the Blue Ribbon Committee on Mission Funding, commenting that the current year's positive financial picture put this church in a good position to build. She expressed her belief that the work done three or four years prior by the Round Table for Mission Funding had laid foundations for stewardship that were beginning to pay off.

The treasurer then gave a brief report on the reconfiguration of the Lutheran Center offices, announcing that the work was proceeding on schedule. Floors 7-10 were complete, and Floor 11 was almost done. Floor 5 was under construction; work on Floor 6 was about to begin. Following that would be some work on the chapel and general security, as well as some additional work on the media installation in the Council Room. She predicted that work would be finished by mid-June, which would coincide well with the Churchwide Assembly to be held in Chicago in August. Expectations were that the project would be finished under budget. She commended the work being done by Ms. Karen Rathbun, executive for management services, and Ms. LaRue Unglaube, executive for information technology. Not only were they planning for the final product, they were also coordinating the logistics of moving teams in and out of temporary space while the various floors were being worked on. She also thanked the churchwide organization staff for its flexibility, cooperation, and good humor in the midst of packing and unpacking.

The floor was then opened for questions and discussion.

The Rev. Steven P. Loy commented that it was often said that World Hunger was one of the better-managed hunger efforts. He asked Treasurer Jackson-Skelton if she could speak to how administrative costs for that ministry were funded and what percentage of each dollar given went directly to providing services.

The Rev. Donald M. Hallberg, president of the Foundation of the ELCA and executive director of the Development Services unit, responded that administrative costs currently were at approximately 7%, leaving 93 cents of each dollar for services.

Treasurer Jackson-Skelton explained that an inter-unit hunger staff team meets to set a budget for the appeal, basing it on such things as the increases in the numbers of potential donors listed in the database and the numbers of those who might be converted into long-term donors to World Hunger. Then the team looks at the implications of those projections for such things as increased mailing costs. Allocations are then sent to individual units, based in part on parameters spelled out in the constitution for domestic and international spending. She praised the staff for its success in holding down administrative costs of this program.

Pr. Loy then asked the source of the grants that were mentioned in Ms. Jackson-Skelton's report. After clarifying which grants Pr. Loy was referring to, Pr. Hallberg reported that approximately \$3,000,000 had come from the United States government through The United Methodist Church.

REPORT OF THE BUDGET AND FINANCE COMMITTEE
(Agenda II.E.1; Agenda/MINUTES Exhibit F, Parts 1a-6)

Ms. Ann F. Niedringhaus, co-chair, presented the report of the Budget and Finance Committee.

BLUE RIBBON COMMITTEE ON MISSION FUNDING
(Agenda III.B.1; Agenda/MINUTES Exhibit F, Part 5)

Background:

The November 2005 meeting of the Church Council authorized the creation of a Blue Ribbon Committee on Mission Funding for the purpose of studying mission funding in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and preparing a report with recommendations for the April 2007 Church Council meeting.

Church Council Action:

Mr. Grieg L. Anderson and the Rev. Jennifer J. Thomas presented the report of the Blue Ribbon Committee on Mission Funding. Mr. Anderson began by acknowledging the members of the committee and the staff members who had worked diligently on this project. He offered special thanks for the work of Mr. Earl L. Mummert, who had died in the course of the process but who had been instrumental in moving the committee forward. Mr. Anderson directed the council's attention to Exhibit F, Part 5, and reviewed the report. He reminded the council that the previous report had been in the form of an outline of the various ideas with which the committee was working. He acknowledged that some members of the Church Council had objected because there had been no theological foundation included in the report, along with some other concerns. Since the last meeting of the council, the committee had added a theological foundation that had been part of a 1993 report, as well as including history, context, affirmations, and philosophy so that members would have a better foundation for understanding the actions that were being proposed.

Mr. Anderson called attention to the graphs on page 4 of Exhibit F, Part 5. He reminded the body that this is a church that approaches stewardship from a view of abundance, rather than scarcity. He explained that the top line of the first graph represented giving to congregations, and that it had grown over time, when adjusted for inflation, even though the number of members had declined. The two other lines on that graph, he explained, represented money coming in to the synods and to the churchwide organization. Both showed significant decline in real revenue over the same period, with a greater decline in giving to the churchwide organization than to the synods. Mr. Anderson mentioned that other graphs in the report would indicate that giving over time has been relatively flat at approximately \$68,000,000 since the beginning of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. When adjusted for inflation, that figure translated into a decline. He suggested that this decline would need to be reversed in order for this church to continue its mission.

Pr. Thomas expressed her appreciation for the work that the committee had done, the wealth of experience of the members, and for the ongoing support of staff. She directed attention to Exhibit F, Part 5, pages 6–9, and reviewed the mission-support outcomes and goals listed there.

Mr. Anderson pointed out that the recommendations of the committee were foundational, and were aimed at long-term changes that would serve this church well over time, but that they would not be a “silver bullet” or quick fix. Rather, he said, the changes in training and attitude would take time for effects to be seen. That being said, however, he hastened to express gratitude to the Rev. Charles S. Miller and others who were focusing on immediate actions in such areas as the budget in order to make the recommendations of the committee active and alive.

He then directed members to page 6 of the agenda, where the two actions recommended by the committee were printed. He characterized the first as relating to things that could be implemented immediately by the Office of the Presiding Bishop and others without action by the assembly, while the second was to be sent to the 2007 Churchwide Assembly for its consideration. Mr. Anderson then asked for questions from the floor.

Ms. Judith Anne Bunker expressed her concern about the overall economic situation in this country and the economics of this church, which in the past has been very reliant on a healthy middle class. She asked whether these considerations had been part of the Blue Ribbon Committee's thinking. Mr. Anderson responded that they had been part of the discussion. He stated that the committee had observed that money was coming into the congregations, and that this church collectively has abundant money, economic resources, and time and talent. The committee's question was how these resources were moving in the system and where they were being distributed, whether in the congregation or

in the wider church. The committee was working, he reported, from a theology of abundance rather than of scarcity, confident that God had blessed this church. This theology is expressed in the economy, he stated, and is not based on divine intervention.

Ms. Bunker asked for confirmation that the committee saw that this abundance would continue and that congregations in the long run were going to continue to receive more money. Pr. Thomas stated the committee's belief that this church's work in evangelism and in articulating the Good News of Jesus Christ would lead to growth in congregations and that giving would thus increase. She pointed to the fact that individual giving continues to grow, even in declining congregations.

Ms. Bunker expressed her concern for a communication and education strategy that would take into account changes in society. Pr. Thomas responded that the committee had had much conversation about communication strategy and differences in attitudes toward giving across generational and other lines.

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson added that this church has been doing a very thorough analysis of the economics of this church and of this country. He assured the council that there would be targeted campaigns based on such analysis, citing as an example a study this church had done of the 100 largest ELCA congregations that was leading to a response tailored to them.

The Rev. Sarah J. Stumme commented that, as she looked at stewarding the ecology of interdependence, she found a systems approach to be helpful, with clearly defined expectations and relationship accountability. She pointed out that there is a clearly defined expectation for synods as far as percentage of mission-support contributions and other resources to be passed along to the churchwide organization. She observed, however, that there has been a refusal to define expectations for congregations as far as their giving. She also pointed out that congregations are not the only agencies that generate resources through stewardship. She cited seminaries as an example, and commented that she had never seen a statement of how much of the resources seminaries receive they were expected to send to the churchwide organization. If a camp receives offerings, she asked, how much should they be sending back to the wider church? She expressed her belief that it is helpful to congregations to say to them, "Here is the expectation of giving that we have of you." She quoted the late Mr. Earl L. Mummert, who taught that one should give three times: "Give for those who won't, give for those who can't, and give because you can."

Mr. Anderson directed members to Exhibit F, Part 5, page 9, Section VII, where what he called a "cascading conversation about stewardship" was described, in which the interconnected parts of this church hold conversations on giving that can define and offer accountability. The committee had not concluded that it could specify a number, but called instead for a conversation in which the amount of giving could be worked out in the context of the relationships in what he termed a "chain of accountability."

Presiding Bishop Hanson interjected that many bishops do give particular percentage challenges to congregations. The bishop also stated that the other thing called for was a consistency of acknowledging the varied ways in which congregations support the ministries of this church, as well as the ways in which synods give and share, as there is a wide range of patterns and practices.

The Rev. Steven P. Loy commented that there were differences in patterns of giving in many different groups, including different denominations.

The Rev. Jeffrey "Jeff" B. Sorenson turned the council's attention to Exhibit F, Part 5, Section 1.d, which called for a series of pilot proposals from synods for increasing mission-support giving. He reminded the council that this conversation had begun several years earlier with a proposal from the Saint Paul Area Synod, which the council had turned down. He recalled that an earlier version of this recommendation had included more definition about how proposals would be submitted, how they would be approved, guidelines for proposals, and so on. He did not see these details included in the recommendation as presented to the council. He wondered if there was more to the recommendation than was printed in the exhibit.

Mr. Anderson responded that the committee had removed quite a bit of detail from the first versions in an effort to make the document more readable. Much of that earlier information was still available, he stated. He went on to say that the intent was to encourage experimentation, but with the goal of increasing mission giving from the synods to the churchwide organization as well as giving to the synods.

Presiding Bishop Hanson added that the mission funding interpretation staff team was already beginning to develop

strategies on each of the outcomes listed in the subjoins of this particular recommendation. This group was “well down the road” in terms of defining, for example, how proposals would be solicited and what the parameters would be. Thus, he did not feel it necessary to include that level of detail in the report.

Pr. Sorenson asked whether, if the funding pattern proposed by a synod differed in any way from what is in the constitution, and then was used as a model for exploration, would it come to the Church Council for approval? Would there be room for others to try out the proposal for a time?

Presiding Bishop Hanson replied that that particular question had not been resolved. He mentioned that later in the meeting a recommendation would be presented for enabling action that would allow the Conference of Bishops to be brought into the process in a consultative, collaborative, and approving role. The bishop thought that this system could be made operational, pending the council’s adoption of that recommendation.

Secretary Lowell G. Almen pointed out that such agreements would have to come back to the council for approval because ELCA provision 10.71. assigns responsibility for exceptions on synodical mission-support contributions to the Church Council. While preliminary processes were still being worked out, the constitutional requirement would still bring proposals for exceptions to the council for approval.

Mr. Bradley Dokken asked for clarification regarding point 5.e of the recommendation to be sent to the Churchwide Assembly, which called for establishment of a requirement, by autumn 2009, for continuing education in stewardship for first-call rostered leaders. He wondered whether this education was something that each synod would do in its own way or if it would be standardized by the churchwide organization.

Mr. Anderson directed him to the goals and outcomes on page 8 of Exhibit F, Part 5, Section 5a, which stated, “The churchwide organization will develop a template for first call rostered leaders’ continuing education in stewardship.” His recollection was that the committee had already begun developing templates for this purpose, and were seeking to have them become part of the First Call Theological Education process.

The Rev. Richard A. Magnus, executive director of Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission (EOCM), pointed out that the Stewardship of Life Institute, mentioned directly above in Section 4.c, was working with the seminaries, EOCM, and the Vocation and Education (VE) unit on those templates.

Mr. Anderson stated that the plan was to have those templates available for the synods to use.

Ms. Ann F. Niedringhaus, co-chair, moved the committee’s recommendations.

There being no further discussion, Vice President Peña called for the vote on the recommendations.

VOTED:

CC07.04.15

To receive with gratitude the report of the Blue Ribbon Committee on Mission Funding and to commend the members of the committee for their creative and diligent efforts on behalf of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;

To request that the presiding bishop inaugurate implementation in the 2008 proposed expenditure authorization of the funding and staffing implications contained in the report and recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Committee on Mission Funding;

To delegate oversight and coordination for the implementation of the Blue Ribbon Committee’s report on mission funding to the Office of the Presiding Bishop—with special responsibility assigned to the Synodical Relations section and the Mission Funding and Interpretation Team—with an implementation plan, including specific measurements and evaluation cycles, to be presented to the November 2007 meeting of the Church Council and subsequently through regular progress reports to the Church Council commencing in April 2008; and

To urge that the Office of the Presiding Bishop develop, with the support of the Church Council, ways to foster throughout the ELCA’s congregations, synods, churchwide ministries, and related institutions and agencies a deeper and broader understanding of this church’s ecclesiology, polity, and philosophy of mission funding.

VOTED:

CC07.04.16

To transmit the report of the Blue Ribbon Committee on Mission Funding to the 2007 Churchwide Assembly and to recommend adoption by the 2007 Churchwide Assembly of the following resolution:

1. To give thanks for the manifold ways in which God has blessed richly the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America with faithful members and abundant resources;
2. To acknowledge God's summons to be good stewards in commitment to the mission entrusted to the Church and in the responsible management of the resources entrusted to members;
3. To receive with gratitude the report of the Blue Ribbon Committee on Mission Funding in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;
4. To commend the content of the report for study and reflection throughout this church; and
5. To foster renewed commitment to vigorous mission-support efforts throughout the congregations, synods, and churchwide ministries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in a wide variety of ways, including:
 - a. examination of "best practices" for mission funding, alternative methods of generating mission-support income, and an improved consultation process for synods and the churchwide organization;
 - b. commitment by the churchwide organization to convene stewardship leaders—including synodical stewardship committees, Lutheran professional advisers, and others—to encourage greater, widespread ownership of stewardship endeavors throughout this church and to provide training, motivation, and inspiration;
 - c. evaluation of stewardship education programs as well as the development and implementation of a strategy for stewardship leadership and staffing;
 - d. development of educational opportunities for all those preparing for rostered leadership in this church through seminaries, programs of theological education for emerging ministries, and lay schools of theology;
 - e. establishment of a requirement, by autumn 2009, for continuing education (6-10 hours) in financial stewardship for first-call rostered leaders to help them build upon competencies learned and practiced during their seminary education;
 - f. engagement of new models for the role of the churchwide organization in financial leadership; and
 - g. dissemination by the churchwide organization and synods to an increasing number of member households of regular, clear, and concise communication that is focused on mission interpretation.

RESPONSE TO CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY MEMORIAL
(Agenda III.B.2)

Ms. Ann F. Niedringhaus, co-chair, continued the report of the Budget and Finance Committee by presenting a proposed response to a memorial from the Grand Canyon Synod that had been received by the 2005 Churchwide Assembly.

FUND APPEAL FOR NEW MINISTRIES
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.

Response from the 2005 Churchwide Assembly

The Churchwide Assembly voted [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.

Churchwide Assembly Background [2005]

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 was 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 was a major churchwide campaign. The commentary indicated 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 fund-raising expenses (commensurate with the goals set). It would have a long window for return. In the current fund-raising and economic environment, the outcome of such a campaign is not certain.”

The recommendation accompanying the report advised “do not launch a major churchwide campaign at this time.” The report was presented to 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 was 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.

Background:

The 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America considered a memorial from the Grand Canyon Synod “to authorize a three-year professionally guided fund appeal to be used for the establishing of new congregations.” The 2005 Churchwide Assembly directed the memorial to certain churchwide units and the Conference of Bishops and requested that a report related to funding for new and renewing congregations be brought to the April 2007 meeting of the Church Council for transmission to the 2007 Churchwide Assembly.

Subsequently, following the constituting of the Blue Ribbon Committee on Mission Funding, the Church Council referred the 2005 memorial and the request for a report to the Blue Ribbon Committee for consideration.

The Blue Ribbon Committee consulted with the Conference of Bishops at its March 2007 meeting. The committee reported to the conference its conviction that the role of the synodical bishop is pivotal to a successful appeal. This implies a significant time commitment and personal gift to the fund appeal. There is also the expectation that synods would not be conducting their own formal appeals to their congregations during the period of a joint churchwide and synodical campaign. Consultation with the conference concluded with a “straw poll” indicating 80 percent support among the bishops to proceed with a feasibility study for the appeal.

Based on its own assessment of the memorial of the Grand Canyon Synod and its discussion with the Conference of Bishops, the committee affirms a feasibility study on a churchwide fund appeal to benefit both synodical and churchwide ministries.

The committee believes that fund appeals work best when several ministry areas are supported and therefore initially commends the ministry areas of new congregations, theological education, and global mission as the ministry areas to benefit from the appeal. The feasibility study not only will assist in ascertaining if these are the appropriate areas around which to organize a funding campaign, but will also provide a projection of an appropriate campaign goal.

The 25th anniversary of the ELCA in 2012 is an opportunity to strengthen relationships in this church, tell the story of God’s mission through this church, and raise capital for the mission to which God calls this church. This date coincides well with the time required for a feasibility study in 2008, consideration of the appeal by the 2009 Churchwide Assembly, and, if approved by the assembly, organization of the campaign.

If this church proceeds with a fund appeal of this nature, the committee believes that a joint committee of synodical and churchwide representatives must be constituted immediately after the 2007 Churchwide Assembly to oversee the feasibility study and develop the formulas needed for distribution of the appeal receipts.

The committee believes that this appeal will give this church a burst of focused energy and thus is worth the expenses related to organizing and implementing the appeal. The appeal will be a tangible reminder that this is one church and that the responsibility to assist key areas of our ministry in taking on new life is shared.

Response from the Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission unit [2007]

The response of the Blue Ribbon Committee on Mission Funding serves as the response from the Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission unit.

Church Council Action:

Ms. Ann F. Niedringhaus, co-chair, moved the committee's recommendation.

Vice President Carlos E. Peña opened the floor for discussion.

Mr. William R. Lloyd Jr. stated that he had heard concerns that if this church were going to emphasize increased mission-support giving that a single, churchwide appeal would work at cross-purposes to that goal. He asked for the committee's thoughts on that subject.

Ms Niedringhaus acknowledged that there had been considerable discussion of the issue. Some had espoused the view that people like to give in many ways, and that if only one alternative is offered, giving will be less. The committee had been swayed by the fact that 80 percent of the Conference of Bishops had been supportive of the undertaking. The committee thought that the 25th anniversary of this church presented a unique opportunity for an appeal that could benefit both synods and the churchwide organization, since people would tend to be willing to give and to look at things in new ways during such an anniversary.

The Rev. Keith A. Hunsinger added that the committee had decided that the research from a feasibility study, even if ultimately it were decided not to conduct an appeal, would be helpful for the overall stewardship endeavors of this church.

The Rev. Martin D. Wells, bishop of the Eastern Washington–Idaho Synod, drew attention to page 7 of the agenda, where it was stated that “There is also the expectation that synods would not be conducting their own formal appeals to their congregations during the period of a joint churchwide and synodical campaign.” He questioned how the campaign could be perceived as a joint one, apart from the bishop's personal gift that would be expected if this recommendation were approved.

Ms. Niedringhaus responded that the intent was that the money not be raised solely for churchwide ministries, and pointed out that the language referred to “benefitting synodical and churchwide ministries.” She expressed confidence that the design of a program, if it were finally approved, would grow out of the feasibility study and would be based on professional recommendations about the most effective mixture of emphases for raising money at this time of this church's life.

Bp. Wells replied that this was a critical interpretation component that needed to be articulated before the 2007 Churchwide Assembly.

The Rev. Jennifer J. Thomas noted that the committee had begun with the Grand Canyon Synod's memorial, which called for a special appeal for mission starts, but broadened the discussion to focus on the ministries that were shared between the synods and the churchwide organization.

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson stated that Bp. Wells' question was a provocative one. He summarized the assumptions that would be going to the feasibility study committee: an appeal would need to benefit both synods and the churchwide organization, and it would need to focus on ministries, probably threefold: theological education, global mission, and new mission starts. He noted that a case statement would need to be developed and tested in the feasibility study. He stated that he took seriously the challenge that was being raised, but that the churchwide organization knew that an appeal would need to benefit synods.

The Rev. Charles S. Miller, executive for administration, pointed to the background material on page 8 of the agenda, where the next-to-last paragraph stated that a joint committee of synodical and churchwide representatives would be working together to “oversee the feasibility study and develop the formulae needed for distribution of the appeal receipts.” He also pointed out that the final paragraph of the proposed action referred to “an ELCA fund appeal benefitting synodical and churchwide ministries.” He assured the council that every effort would be made in the pre-

Assembly materials to make as clear as possible the interpretation that the appeal was intended as a joint effort and as a joint distribution.

The Rev. Kenneth M. Ruppap inquired about the costs of doing such a study. He asked whether this action would authorize signing a contract and spending money for the actual feasibility study, or if it were simply authorizing in-house exploration of the advisability of doing a feasibility study. Pr. Miller confirmed that this action would give approval for actually conducting the feasibility study. Ms. Niedringhaus stated that the committee had been informed that costs would be between \$150,000 and \$250,000.

Pr. Ruppap asked where the money was to come from. Pr. Miller responded that, short of identifying other sources for funding, the committee would look to the Mission Development Fund that the Church Council had approved at its last meeting. He stated that the fund was now at over \$1,000,000. He commented that the fund had been designed especially to be able to address activities for which there was no budget.

Pr. Ruppap asked whether the committee would be willing to put a budget item into their recommendation. Presiding Bishop Hanson responded that such an action would change the way that budgets are developed, since the Office of the Bishop develops budgets and sends them to the council, and not the other way around. He did not feel that any action by the Church Council to specify a budget would be either necessary or helpful.

Pr. Ruppap asked whether there should not be some kind of figure specified for the cost. Pr. Miller suggested that it would be difficult to put such a number in the budget of the churchwide organization, but rather that a resource could be identified for funding the feasibility study.

The Rev. Donald M. Hallberg, president of the ELCA Foundation and executive director of the Development Services unit, expressed hesitation about naming a firm figure because potential consultants had not yet been approached, nor had the number of individual interviews of stakeholders been determined. He expressed his opinion that it was crucial that the 65 bishops be "on board," which would require one-on-one conversation. In addition, focus groups across this church would need to be conducted. To place a cost figure in the action could limit the scope of what could be accomplished in the study, he feared.

Ms. Niedringhaus stated that the process was about more than whether the appeal would be conducted, because all of the contacts involved in the study also would serve a developmental purpose of helping those persons think about giving to this church.

The Rev. Dean W. Nelson, bishop of the Southwest California Synod, proposed inserting the word "both" after the word "benefitting" in both occurrences in the proposed action. He thought that this addition would give greater emphasis to the fact that the campaign would be a joint effort between the churchwide organization and the synods.

Ms. Niedringhaus agreed that this amendment would be helpful and would fit with the intent of the committee, so she accepted the change as a friendly amendment.

Mr. Richard L. Wahl commented that, during the recent Region 8 consultation in Bedford, Pa., one of the bishops had mentioned that "Vision for Mission" revenue originally was intended to be shared between the churchwide organization and synods. That bishop, according to Mr. Wahl, did not believe that there had been any sharing to date. Mr. Wahl asked if someone could interpret the original intent and explain how there might have been change in this intent.

Secretary Almen responded by saying that what is now called "Vision for Mission" had begun in the early life of this church when the churchwide organization was faced with a significant downturn in the income anticipated by the initial budgets. In that very serious situation, the council and the presiding bishop had made the decision to proceed with a special annual offering. A few years into that pattern, there were two or three years when funds were allocated between the synods and the churchwide organization. Subsequently, a decision was made to move away from that pattern of sharing of the "Vision for Mission" fund for a variety of reasons. As the secretary recalled, among these reasons had been the development in many synods of the ability to receive not only regular mission-support funding but also to undertake special project funding. While this was not universally true across the synods, it did occur in a number of them. At this point, the "Vision for Mission" appeal was shifted back to its original pattern as a fund that gave people an opportunity to provide support for churchwide ministries. For at least the previous ten years, if not longer, the "Vision for Mission" offering had been a general undesignated contribution for churchwide ministries, according to the secretary. Secretary Almen stated that there had been an evolving history and that the recollection of the Region 8 bishop had been

accurate so long as there was not an implication that there had been something “nefarious” involved in the decision-making process about the fund. The secretary characterized the decisions that had been made to date as “orderly.”

Hearing no further discussion, Vice President Peña called for a voice vote on the recommendations.

VOTED:

CC07.04.17 To approve implementation of a feasibility study related to an ELCA fund appeal benefitting both synodical and churchwide ministries;

To request the Office of the Presiding Bishop, Office of the Treasurer, Development Services, Communication Services, and the Conference of Bishops to proceed with the steps required for a professionally conducted feasibility study; and

To request a report to the April 2009 meeting of the Church Council on the results of the feasibility study and recommendations pursuant to a fund appeal benefitting both synodical and churchwide ministries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

The action was approved.

Ms. Niedringhaus informed the body that the committee was going to reverse the order of the next two agenda items to address first constitutional changes related to the work of the Blue Ribbon Committee on Mission Funding.

The Rev. Kenneth M. Rupp, chair of the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee, introduced the proposed amendment, directing members’ attention to page 16 of the agenda.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT RELATED TO RECOMMENDATION OF BLUE RIBBON COMMITTEE

(Agenda III.D.1)

Background:

The Blue Ribbon Committee on Mission Funding suggested that greater involvement of the Conference of Bishops be sought in the evaluation of exceptions to the norm for the sharing of unrestricted income provided by congregations for synodical and churchwide mission support.

Provision 10.71. specifies the pattern for the sharing of mission-support income. That provision also allows for the granting of certain exceptions to the normative pattern as established by the Churchwide Assembly: “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.”

Church Council Action:

The Rev. Kenneth M. Rupp, chair of the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee, introduced and read a proposed bylaw to implement the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Committee on Mission Funding:

Moved;

Seconded:

To recommend to the 2007 Churchwide Assembly adoption of the following bylaw to allow implementation of the recommendation of the Blue Ribbon Committee on Mission Funding concerning consultation:

10.71.01. The mission-support plans of all synods shall be reviewed by the Conference of Bishops. Prior to any decision of the Church Council on a requested exception by a synod on the percentage for sharing donor-unrestricted receipts from congregations, consultation shall occur with, and a recommendation shall be received from, the Conference of Bishops on the request.

Vice President Carlos E. Peña opened the floor for discussion.

The Rev. Marie C. Jerge, bishop of the Upstate New York Synod, spoke against the recommendation. She

questioned whether this bylaw was a “natural outflow” from the work of the Blue Ribbon Committee. She saw the long-term goals of this effort as being increased mission-support funding for the work of this church and increased accountability in partnership. She stated that there was more work for this church to do than there were dollars. Bp. Jerge acknowledged that her synod was one that has never achieved a 55 percent mission-support target, but that in the previous year they had experienced an increase both in percentage and dollar giving. Her synod, she asserted, was trying slowly to turn around its relationship with the churchwide organization. Her fear was that “very legalistic” exception language in a bylaw would put synods like hers in a defensive posture precisely at a time that they were beginning a conversation on relationship that was beginning to bear fruit. She indicated that voting members from her synod would see this bylaw as confirmation that the churchwide organization was only interested in the synods’ money. She also saw the bylaw as shifting the role of the bishops, giving them more of a legislative than advisory role. She stated that this change would add an unnecessary layer of bureaucracy and that functionally it would be “a nightmare.” Bp. Jerge affirmed her desire that the conversation continue, but feared that the proposed bylaw would not help, nor would it help long term in the goal of developing partnerships. She argued that annual review of synods’ mission-support plans, when only 16 synods are meeting the 55 percent mission-support goal, would be an enormous task.

Mr. Grieg L. Anderson, co-chair of the Blue Ribbon Committee on Mission Funding, reported that the committee had spent a lot of time talking about and wrestling with the issue of accountability. He explained that the Budget and Finance Committee receives requests for exceptions to mission-support goals and is asked to make decisions without receiving information on which to base the decisions, a process that was not effective. He saw the question as being where and how accountability can be achieved in a constructive, supportive, but knowledgeable environment. The committee decided that the Conference of Bishops was the one place where everyone is facing essentially the same issues. He expressed a need for the synods to provide data in a uniform manner that would allow for understanding the information within equivalent contexts across the synods. The committee’s goal, he stated, was conversation and accountability. The members of the Blue Ribbon Committee saw this proposal as the vehicle to invite the accountability conversation. He added that the committee would respect a process initiated by the bishops. Mr. Anderson hoped that such a process could begin sooner rather than later, and reminded members that any proposed bylaw needed to go to the Churchwide Assembly. He stressed, however, that if there were other ways in which the goal might be achieved or other vehicles for ensuring the conversation, he would welcome them. The committee, he stated, was not tied to the specific words of the proposal.

Secretary Lowell G. Almen reminded the body that this bylaw, if adopted by the assembly, would stand in relation to constitutional provision 10.71., which he read.

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson stated that he agreed with Bp. Jerge’s assessment that this bylaw would give to the Conference of Bishops a sort of legislative authority when previously their role had been largely advisory. He did not, however, concur in her opposition to the bylaw. He agreed with Mr. Anderson that the Council had never figured out how to carry out this duty, either disregarding the constitutional responsibility or being perceived as heavy-handed. From the churchwide organization’s perspective, he noted, it would be very helpful to see the bishops as colleagues in stewardship. He emphasized that as soon as money comes into the synodical office from congregations, those are dollars to be shared with the churchwide organization. If the Conference of Bishops could be part of the process, as they are in the review tables for funding of new mission starts, it would allow them to see what other synods are struggling with, as well as to see what the churchwide organization is up against in making difficult decisions about limited resources for maximum impact. The presiding bishop argued that this bylaw would at least give this church something that could be tried in an effort to get things “unstuck.”

The Rev. Peter Rogness, bishop of the Saint Paul Area Synod, observed that there would be clear affirmation in the Conference of Bishops for stronger collegiality in the area of mission-support funding. He argued that the Conference of Bishops would be in a far better position than the Church Council to hold the conversation about accountability. He maintained that percentage targets really do not work, because of their lack of parallelism from one synod budget to another. He asserted that the percentages had only been left in so that there was some starting point for discussions with Synod Councils, but that they were not otherwise helpful. Bp. Rogness contended that the proposed bylaw would turn bishops from colleagues into canon lawyers. He was unsure of how the Conference of Bishops would respond to this proposal, since it had not been presented to them for discussion, and no conversation had taken place about taking on

the legislative authority. He concluded that it would not be prudent for the Church Council and the Churchwide Assembly to thrust the responsibility on the bishops without the Conference of Bishops ever having talked about the matter.

The Rev. Steven L. Ullestad, bishop of the Northeastern Iowa Synod, predicted that the conversation was going to continue. He recounted his synod's frustration at growing from 47 percent in mission-support giving to 53 percent and still being told that they had not succeeded. He called for continued struggling with how to help synods achieve their goals in light of the differences in synod budgets and realities.

The Rev. Joseph G. Crippen observed that, as a member of the Church Council, he tended to be supportive of arguments calling for more information and advice. He referred to Mr. Anderson's statement that the Blue Ribbon Committee was not necessarily in favor of the precise language of this bylaw. He questioned why the council was being asked to vote on this proposed bylaw if there were other possible wordings and if the bishops had not had an opportunity to discuss the proposal. He saw no provision in the proposed bylaw for creative solutions. He asked whether there might not be an opportunity to set consideration of the proposed bylaw aside to try to articulate more clearly how the council could get better information. He further stated that he did not remember ever going through the mission-support plans of the 49 synods who were not making their goals.

Presiding Bishop Hanson replied that the Budget and Finance Committee performed this task and that the council then approves their recommendations. He went on to say that he did not think the council should act on the proposal at that time, given that the bishops had not yet had a chance to see the proposal. He stated it would be inappropriate to impose something on the bishops that they had not had opportunity to review and comment on.

Mr. William R. Lloyd Jr. offered a motion to postpone consideration.

Moved;

Seconded;

Approved: To postpone consideration of proposed bylaw 10.71.01.

Ms. Judy Biffle inquired whether the proposal would have to come back before the body in the form of a bylaw. Secretary Almen responded that it did not have to come back as a bylaw.

The Rev. Steven P. Loy asked the difference between postponement and tabling. Secretary Almen explained that a motion that had been postponed could be postponed until a time certain or until the chair deemed it should be brought back.

Presiding Bishop Hanson proposed that at the end of the current session the advisory bishops designate representatives to meet with the chairpersons of the Blue Ribbon Committee and staff members about the issue.

REVISED 2007 EXPENDITURE AUTHORIZATION
(Agenda III.B.4; Agenda/MINUTES Exhibit F, Part 1a-1b)

Background:

Income estimates for 2007 had been revised since the November 2006 meeting. These estimates reflected an increase in total estimated current fund income of \$695,000 for a total of \$81,422,000.

The primary increase was in mission-support income, to \$65,800,000. In 2006, synods remitted at 98.9 percent of their mission-support plans as revised by April 2006. The revised 2007 mission-support estimate amounted to 97.6 percent of current revised synod mission support plans. Trends in bequests and trusts income indicated that an increase in unrestricted and temporarily restricted bequests and trust income of \$100,000 each was appropriate. Investment income was expected to be \$135,000 higher than the earlier estimate. "Vision for Mission" was anticipated to increase \$50,000 to \$1,250,000.

The increased expenditure authorization was distributed primarily to the program units in a proportionate manner. Due to the opportunity for the Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission unit to provide advance grant payments in 2006 for funding of new ministry starts, the unit did not receive an increased allocation in 2007. Communication Services received an additional \$195,000 to support its inauguration of a comprehensive churchwide communication strategy.

The 2006 general World Hunger Appeal results exceeded projections by \$1,650,000, reaching \$19,100,000. Of this,

\$500,000 was from the offering at the ELCA Youth Gathering. As a result of these strong results, the World Hunger income estimates have been raised to \$18,750,000 from the original estimate of \$17,500,000.

Church Council Action:

Ms. Ann F. Niedringhaus, co chair of the Budget and Finance Committee, introduced the proposed action.
Vice President Carlos E. Peña opened the floor for discussion. Hearing none, he called for a vote.

VOTED:

CC07.04.18 **To approve a revised current fund spending authorization for the 2007 fiscal year of \$81,422,000; and**
 To approve a revised 2007 World Hunger spending authorization for the 2007 fiscal year of \$18,750,000.

2008-2009 BIENNIUM BUDGET PROPOSAL

(Agenda III.B.3; Agenda/MINUTES Exhibit F, Part 2a-2b)

Background:

Mission-support income for the 2008-2009 biennium is anticipated to increase from revised 2007 levels by \$300,000 in 2008 and an additional \$200,000 in 2009. "Vision for Mission" income is anticipated to increase \$50,000 annually. Investment income is expected to decline by \$250,000 in 2008 as a result of the continued draw downs on disaster balances. Rent estimates have been increased as additional space in the Lutheran Center has been made available for lease. All of the temporarily restricted income sources are projected to remain level with revised 2007 amounts.

The World Hunger Appeal has realized several years of increased growth in dollars and number of donors. This increased donor base and the growing commitment to alleviating world hunger allows for an increase in budgeted World Hunger income of \$500,000 to \$19,250,000 in 2008. The next Youth Gathering is in 2009. Anticipating continued support of the World Hunger program, the 2009 income estimate has been increased by \$750,000 to \$20,000,000.

Salary and benefit increases have been estimated at the three-percent level for 2008, requiring an allocation of \$1,400,000. Financial support for recommendations coming from the Blue Ribbon Committee on Mission Funding also has been included in the 2008 proposal. Other significant allocations new in 2008 include \$166,000 for the Book of Faith initiative in the Vocation and Education unit and \$177,000 in the Office of the Presiding Bishop for a new executive assistant plus a half-time support-staff position. Additional adjustments in the Office of the Presiding Bishop were made to cover more adequately the travel of the presiding bishop (\$10,000) and to provide for conducting and implementing diversity audits within the churchwide organization (\$15,000). An anticipated reduction of \$300,000 in required contributions to the Board of Pensions for the retiree minimum health obligation was added to the strategic initiative fund line.

Offsetting the increased income of \$248,000 with the increases identified above required an additional \$1,857,000 in reductions. Specific reductions were made in the amount of \$122,000 in various sections of the Office of the Presiding Bishop, \$20,000 in the Office of the Secretary as an adjustment to the anticipated costs of Church Council that had been included in the 2007 budget, and \$100,000 in Communication Services related to staffing adjustments. The remaining reductions were applied proportionately to each of the program units with the exception of Multicultural Ministries. These program units will use established criteria for identifying programmatic priorities in determining which areas of their work cannot be affected by the reductions.

Church Council Action:

Ms. Ann F. Niedringhaus, co chair of the Budget and Finance Committee, introduced the proposed action.
Vice President Carlos E. Peña opened the floor for discussion. Hearing none, he called for a vote.

VOTED:

CC07.04.19 *To recommend to the 2007 Churchwide Assembly the following:*

2008 Budget Proposal

**To approve a 2008 current fund income proposal of \$81,670,000; and
To approve a 2008 World Hunger income proposal of \$19,250,000.**

2009 Budget Proposal

**To approve a 2009 current fund income proposal of \$81,920,000;
To approve a 2009 World Hunger income proposal of \$20,000,000; and
To authorize the Church Council to establish a spending authorization after
periodic review of revised income estimates.**

Concluding her report, Ms. Niedringhaus called attention to the election of Audit Committee members contained in the *en bloc* action. She also reported that, for the first time in memory, 19 synods reported an increase in mission-support plans for 2007.

DWELLING IN THE WORD

The Rev. Philip D.W. Krey, president of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, observed that Martin Luther called the Bible a “mouth house” rather than a “pen house,” a distinction that emphasized his understanding of the orality of the Bible. He noted that Luther rarely used the term “sola scriptura”; it was a late addition by the tradition rather than Luther himself. Lutherans, therefore, he said, should be careful about the Bible as text without considering its oral nature. Pr. Krey observed that Luther emphasized reading the Bible with prayer and meditation, while overcoming the assaults of the devil. Part of the Lutheran genius of Lutheranism, he continued, is that the hearing of the Word has moved beyond the congregation at worship into the home. Scripture, thus, has become a vernacular of the faith.

Illustrating this point, Pr. Krey informed the council that he came from a large immigrant family with 15 children. His parents were refugees of post-World War II Germany, who had been supported by Lutheran World Relief. Every day he saw his mother with a huge Bible on her lap, looking for the verse she would assign the children to memorize. Often the memorization assignment included a verse of a hymn as well. Pr. Krey commented that he and his siblings heard, learned, and meditated on those verses all day long and their whole life long as they wrestled with the evil one. His mother also evangelized from the Bible, Pr. Krey noted. When the children complained about her assignments, she replied that as a child she had to memorize the whole book of Genesis.

In the evening before the family left the dinner table, Pr. Krey’s father read from the Bible and Luther’s catechism. At confirmation, he was given Revelation 12:21 for his verse: “Be not overcome with evil, but overcome evil with good.” That verse, Pr. Krey indicated, became his motto for life. At confirmation he also was given a Bible, inscribed by his baptismal sponsor with this verse, “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path” (Psalm 119:105).

The gift of having heard the Scriptures read had given him the Scripture as part of his memory and consciousness his whole life, Pr. Krey said, and it had helped him enormously. The critical reading came later, but having it in his consciousness was an enormous gift.

Turning to the Word as Scripture, as something written, Pr. Krey argued that it also was important to read it. What the Scriptures have done was made him conversant with the classics of the Christian tradition and the liberal arts. Scripture, he asserted can help people learn to read and become conversant with the vernacular of tradition. Finally, Pr. Krey added, Scripture also taught him to become passionate about social justice.

**REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE FOR ADMINISTRATION
(Agenda II.C; Exhibit E, Part 1)**

The Rev. Charles S. Miller, executive for administration, focused his report on two topics, communications and the quality of the churchwide organization’s partnership with synods, sharing information with the council about significant,

direction-setting developments that had occurred recently.

In the area of communications, Pr. Miller observed that the Communication Services unit was well along in development of a comprehensive communications strategy for this church. Earlier in the week he and Ms. Kristi Bangert, executive director of Communication Services, convened “the tool kit committee,” a group of 13 persons from a variety of ministry settings and occupations in the field of communication. The committee’s assignment, he stated, was to design the ideal tool kit for communications to support the mission and ministries of this church. The idea for the meeting, he informed the council, had come from Ms. Kathy Tunheim, a communications consultant, who had assessed this church’s current efforts. Pr. Miller reported that the group was “on fire with creative energy and Spirit-filled passion for effective and imaginative communication in this church.” It will take months, he commented, to digest their vision and numerous suggestions. Their critique of present efforts, he continued, was numerous, filled with candor and grace. One of the committee’s tasks was to agree on the top five media in an ideal communications tool kit, Pr. Miller remarked, and within a few hours they had succeeded in doing so. For each medium, the committee also was asked to indicate the outcome of having it as a priority. To do this, the committee formulated “so that” phrases: “Give priority to this medium

- so that people are informed, nourished in faith, and connected to the larger church;
- so that congregations are equipped, empowered, and feel supported by the larger church;
- so that diverse visitors can learn, grow, feel valued, be equipped, and be inspired by the identity and mission of this church.

With this vision, the committee named the top five priorities:

1. The ELCA Web site. While there is work already underway in this area, Pr. Miller noted, the challenge was received with appreciation for the committee’s ideas.
2. A single magazine for this church, one that was segmented for a variety of audiences and focused on mission interpretation.
3. Increased attention to marketing, advertising, and brand identity.
4. The development of congregational tool kits on communications, segmented for different ministry settings and designed to equip congregations for their integral role in communicating this church’s ministries and mission.
5. Audience-specific electronic and print resources, with much more attention to ethnic communities and different languages and to greater differentiation between those who know about this church and those, both in this church and in society, who do not.

Pr. Miller indicated that the committee also recommended that any communication media not on the list be critically assessed and never supported at the expense of the five priorities. Finally, the group offered to come together annually, many at their own expense, to evaluate progress on the communications strategy. Needless to say, Pr. Miller commented, the offer was accepted.

Pr. Miller then addressed the churchwide organization’s partnership with synods in the development of new congregations. He reported that the Conference of Bishops had given a significant amount of time at its March meeting to the topic of starting new ministries. In the past week, a summary of information that had been gathered at the Conference of Bishops had been drafted by Mr. Kenneth W. Inskeep, executive for Research and Evaluation. The churchwide team receiving that information had taken the opportunity to discuss the implications for churchwide units in the critical arena of partnerships with synods.

Several things became clear during that discussion, Pr. Miller stated. First, a question had been raised during the Conference of Bishops meeting concerning whether there was a need for 65 synodical strategies on new starts or a single churchwide strategy. The answer was that there was a need both for contextually informed strategies by synods and a churchwide strategy cognizant of those individual strategies and responsive to national trends. Pr. Miller stated that in the churchwide organization there were several foundational documents useful for developing a churchwide strategy, particularly the evangelism strategy and documents developed by the Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission program unit. The churchwide organization was committed to developing a cohesive and comprehensive strategy on mission starts in the coming months, he said.

Second, Pr. Miller informed the council, there had been a strong message from the bishops that they expect the churchwide organization to continue and expand its major role in training and supporting mission developers, leading

to greater quality and a larger pool of such ministry developers. There had already been progress made on ways to do this, including a meeting with representatives of seminaries and synods to map out a plan of action.

Third was the area of partnership with the least amount of clarity, according to Pr. Miller: the funding and accountability of mission directors. This critical area needs more discussion with the Conference of Bishops in the future, in the opinion of the churchwide team, because the role of mission directors is so central to the development of new ministries.

Fourth, the churchwide team had concluded that there was a need for a clearer, crisper, more concise interpretation of the present funding, staffing, and program services of the various aspects of starting new ministries. Pr. Miller indicated that this clarity would help further the team's conversation with the Conference of Bishops on the entire topic of new ministry starts.

In conclusion, Pr. Miller expressed his appreciation for having had a regular spot on the council agenda to provide updates on administrative matters. He was grateful to Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson for the opportunity to serve in the position of executive for administration and praised the bishop's leadership. He gave thanks for serving alongside his colleagues in the Office of the Bishop and on the Cabinet of Executives. He concluded by giving God the glory and praise.

Vice President Carlos E. Peña thanked Pr. Miller for his work and for his contributions to this church.

REPORT OF THE PLANNING AND EVALUATION COMMITTEE (Agenda II.E.4)

The Rev. David E. Jensen, chair, presented the report of the Planning and Evaluation Committee.

REPORT ON JUSTICE FOR WOMEN (Agenda III.E.2; Agenda/MINUTES Exhibit K, Part 2-2a)

Background:

In accordance with "Faithful Yet Changing: Design for Mission through the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America," the director for justice for women will "... present a comprehensive plan and ongoing evaluation of the churchwide organization's work in this area. The plan will be developed collaboratively by churchwide staff from all units and partner organizations and be presented, along with an annual evaluation, to the Church Council (annually), as well as to the Churchwide Assembly (biennially)."

The 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA voted [CA05.04.09]:

... 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.

Church Council Action:

Ms. Mary Streufert, director for justice for women, located her work under all of this church's strategic directions and particularly under its commitment to "confront the scandalous reality of sexism." She explained her role under the new churchwide structure, where justice concerns for women are spread throughout the units of the churchwide organization. She described her work with directors of individual units, with those persons in each unit specifically charged with concern for gender justice issues, and with other churchwide employees whose jobs were not immediately related to women's justice. Ms. Streufert reported that she chaired each month the staff alliance on justice for women, one of four alliances integral to the new structure. The alliance on justice for women had set as its first priority a culture change within the churchwide organization, and was in the process of determining how the specific activities of each unit or section within the churchwide organization affect the ways in which the commitments to gender justice can be lived out. She gave examples of how various units were addressing gender concerns within their spheres.

Ms. Streufert stated that a report of gender justice work would be given to the 2007 Churchwide Assembly. She acknowledged the work of the consulting committee on justice for women, and recognized three members of the

committee who were present: the Rev. Jessica M. McKee, who represents the Church Council; Ms. Kristin Kvam, chair of the consulting committee; and the Rev. Charles S. Miller, executive for administration in the Office of the Bishop. She stated that the committee had conducted an analysis and had worked with her to develop program priorities, as well as to identify key programmatic activities. One priority would be to call for an ELCA social statement on gender justice, reflecting the profound recognition that the primary response of this church to gender justice is a theological one. She reviewed the theological premises laid out in the written report. Ms. Streufert raised a series of questions designed to challenge this church to look at how its beliefs, practices, and social policies serve either as a hindrance or a benefit to justice for women in church and in society. She stressed that the goal was not a prescribed plan, but rather a single, shared conceptual framework for approaching and understanding the work of justice for women for the entire ELCA. It would produce a pattern that could be taken up by any group, congregation, community, synod, church governing body, individual, or school, with the necessary freedom to take each local context into account. She ended by calling for this church to become both transformed and transforming in relation to gender justice.

The Rev. Sarah J. Stumme, recalling the resolution of thanks for the Commission for Women passed by 2005 Churchwide Assembly, inquired about the relationship of Ms. Streufert's work to the mandate of the Commission for Women. Ms. Streufert replied that restructuring of the churchwide organization spread out the work across the organization and consequently changed the way the work is being done. Her role was to relate to the many different places where work of promoting justice for women occurs.

The Rev. Charles S. Miller, executive for administration, added that part of preparing continuing resolutions describing all program units in the new structure involved taking the entire constitutional mandate for the Commission for Women and placing it word for word in appropriate program units. For example, leadership development related to women was located primarily in the Vocation and Education unit.

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson stated that his office could provide documentation of that process, if it were desired.

Pr. Stumme acknowledged that she had been unable to find the information and reminded the council that it was accountable for the work related to justice for women.

The Rev. Jeffrey "Jeff" B. Sorenson commended Ms. Streufert's work.

There being no further discussion, Vice President Peña called for a vote.

VOTED:

CC07.04.20

**To receive with gratitude the biennial report on justice for women and to commend the Church in Society unit and the consulting committee on justice for women for their efforts on behalf of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and
To transmit, in response to actions of the 2005 Churchwide Assembly, the biennial report on justice for women to the 2007 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, commending the content of the report for study, reflection, and response throughout this church.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

At the request of Vice President Carlos E. Peña. Secretary Almen made a number of announcements, noting the schedule for unit lunches and the afternoon Bible study. He reminded council members that they were free to plan their own dinners that night.

Vice President Peña asked that the Rev. Charles W. Mays lead the council in a table prayer.

RECESS

The fourth plenary session of the April 2007 meeting of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church recessed at 12:23 P.M.

BIBLE STUDY
(Agenda VI.A)

Vice President Carlos E. Peña reconvened the council meeting at 1:33 P.M. Vice President Carlos E. Peña asked the Rev. Rebecca S. Larson, executive for the Church in Society unit, to introduce the Bible study. She presented the Rev. Timothy J. Wengert, professor of Reformation history and Lutheran Confessions at the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia and member of the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality. Prof. Wengert led the Church Council in a study of Galatians and Luther's treatise, "On the Freedom of a Christian."

Prof. Wengert stated that it was a singular honor for him to address the Church Council, which had called him to serve this church as one of its teachers in 1989. During the time available, he proposed to outline Luther's basic points and then to reflect upon some passages of Scripture, including Mark 9 and the letter to the Galatians, passages upon which Luther doubtless was reflecting when he wrote his treatise. Finally, he intended to have the group reflect together on how these resources could assist this church in its deliberations on human sexuality.

Prof. Wengert stated that Luther's "On the Freedom of a Christian" is particularly useful in helping to rediscover some of the basic ingredients of Luther's witness to Christian faith and life. Prof. Wengert commented that it was easy to skip the first lines of Luther's tract, or to misunderstand them. Faith is not a virtue, according to Luther; that is, it is not something we do for God. One of the saddest things among Christians in the U.S. today, said Prof. Wengert, is the belief that faith is a commitment that we make. Luther argues, however, that faith is not a work we do or a decision we make, but an experience, something that happens to us through the power of the Holy Spirit when we encounter God's mercy in Christ. In the Small Catechism, Luther wrote, "I believe that by my own understanding or effort I cannot believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to him, but the Holy Spirit has called me through the Gospel." This goes to the nature of a promise at the heart of the Gospel. When we hear a promise and believe it, our trusting does not depend on us but rather on the promise itself and the character of the one making the promise. Scripture often calls God trustworthy and faithful. When we think of faith as something that we do, then doubt becomes the opposite of faith. However, since faith is not a virtue, but an experience of God's mercy in Christ, then we can confess with Luther that "God is bigger than our doubt." The opposite of trusting Christ is not doubt but trusting ourselves and our works. Trusting our decisions about God to save us is actually the opposite of faith, according to Prof. Wengert. Faith is what happens to us when we hear a promise. He directed the group's attention to Mark 9:14-29, which was a favorite passage of both Luther and Melancthon, who described it as the picture of what faith looks like. They pointed especially to v. 24, where the father cries out, "Lord, I believe. Help my unbelief." When Jesus talks about prayer in this passage, Prof. Wengert explained, he is not speaking of a work that we do but rather of begging God for help. We are the faithless generation, and therefore we need to cry out with this father, "Help our unbelief." Prof. Wengert posed this question to those listening: How are we both believer and unbeliever?

Prof. Wengert reminded his listeners that Luther taught that the Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none, and at the same time a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all. All works and decisions, even those we think of as spiritual, are actually external, part of living life in the world with others. If we trust in any of our works, we are dealing not with the person of faith but with the old creature in us, which trusts only ourselves. The new creature created by the Holy Spirit working through the Word trusts God alone. In the Small Catechism, Luther reminds us of the struggle between the old and the new in his fourth question on baptism, where he speaks of the old creature dying daily and the new creature daily coming to life as we return to the promises of our baptism.

Turning again to Mark 9, Prof. Wengert explained that Jesus was condemning not only his own generation as faithless, but ours as well. He encouraged his listeners to read Galatians 5:17 and to reflect upon where they see the battle between flesh and spirit in their own lives. He gave time for participants to discuss the issue amongst themselves.

Returning to Luther's teachings, Prof. Wengert stated that the single necessity is God's Word—that is, God creates faith through the Word of Law and Gospel. How does faith come about? He read Romans 10:17, and pointed out that Paul does not talk about decisions. Rather, according to Paul, faith comes by hearing. Luther stated that the only thing necessary for Christian life, righteousness, and freedom is the Word of God, the Gospel of Christ. Prof. Wengert explained that Luther was not talking only about the Bible. Rather, he meant the Gospel, God's Word proclaimed, and not the words in a book, what Luther called "the dead letter." For Luther, the words have to get out of the books and lay hold of our hearts. That only happens when someone "comes up to our chariots" and asks us if we understand what

we are reading, and proclaims to us that this one died and rose again for us. When we hear God's Word, we can never simply ask, "What does this mean?" or "What does this say?" We must go on to discover "What is this Word doing to me?"

Luther outlines the two chief functions or uses of God's Word, calling them Law and Gospel, Prof. Wengert continued. Law, for Luther, is not simply a list of God's commandments. Through this word of Law, God reveals us to be sinners, people who trust in themselves and their works and decisions. The commandments show us what we ought to do, but do not give us the power to do it. They are intended to teach human beings to know themselves, that through them they might recognize their inability to do good. In this recognition, we despair of our own abilities. Hope then comes from God and what God does in Christ, the Gospel. The promises of God, which declare the glory of God, come to our aid. The promises of God give what the commandments of God demand.

Prof. Wengert asked: How does Jesus create believers? By speaking a Word that drives out demons, forgives sin, and raises the dead. The rich young ruler gives us a picture of how Law and Gospel work, he says. First, Jesus shows that riches are no guarantee of God's blessings, and states that it is harder for a rich person to get into the kingdom of heaven than it is for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle. The disciples then are driven by this preaching of the Law to cry out, "Well, then who will be saved?" It is at this point that we finally hear the Gospel in this story, when Jesus says "No one—with mortals it is impossible, but not with God." Galatians shows the same progression from Law to Gospel, Prof. Wengert pointed out.

Prof. Wengert then discussed the three powers or effects of faith, as Luther saw them. First, faith unites us with God's Word. No work or decision can do that. Rather, it is a relationship, an experience that arises out of the experience of God's Word as promise and Gospel. Second, faith causes us to admit that we are sinners in need of God's mercy and forgiveness. Third, Luther compares faith to the union of a bride and groom. In Luther's day, Prof. Wengert informed the council, marriage was regulated according to Roman law, which distinguished between property (what we own) and possession (what we have full use of). This meaning of "possession" persists in the saying, "Possession is nine tenths of the law." In marriage what is the property of the one becomes the possession of the other and *vice versa*, in a joyous exchange. If Christ and the soul are one flesh in a true marriage, then it follows, according to Luther, that everything they have they hold in common. For if Christ is a bridegroom, he bestows on the soul all that is his, and in turn takes on all that is hers. Galatians 3:13-14 and 2 Cor 5:21 express Paul's understanding on this subject. Christ takes on our curse and gives us his blessing. Justification, then, takes place when God pronounces that this exchange has happened for us.

The results of this marriage of faith are threefold, according to Luther's treatise. First, it fulfills the first commandment and hence all the others. Second, works are completely excluded from a relation to God. Our relationship to God is not *if...then*, but *because...therefore*; that is, it is not the case that *if we love God, then God will love us*. Rather, it is *because God loves us, therefore God saves us*. It is unconditional. Third, faith makes us kings and priests. Because Christ is king, we are kings, by grace alone. Because Christ is High Priest, we also are priests. Luther makes clear that the priesthood he is speaking of is a spiritual one—how God controls us—and not a political one—how we control the congregation. Being priests means that we can pray for one another, remind one another of God's promises, and lay down our lives for one another.

Prof. Wengert inquired: What does this have to do with us and our neighbors? Gerhard Forde described the second half of "On the Freedom of the Christian" with this question: What are you going to do now that you do not have to do anything? That question captures the true freedom of faith. Luther captured the same idea in his statement that the Christian is both lord and servant of all. By faith we participate in the joyful exchange so that we are kings and priests and, Luther argues, we are christ. We do as Christ did, not because we can earn our way into God's good graces but because we are in God's grace and mercy. Our outward works do not create our relationship to God, but rather flow out of it. They serve faith.

Liberty is not libertine, however, Prof. Wengert indicated. The unconditional promise to love us does not result in bad works. Paul warns against using freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence in Galatians 5:13. Paul is recognizing that the old creature loves to invent new works—even bad ones—to prevent us from having to trust God. Through faith, we are called to freedom, but we are not to use freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but rather as an opportunity through love to become slaves to one another.

Prof. Wengert observed that Luther then focuses on two kinds of external works that result from faith. The first has to do with putting our flesh in its place. We want to judge others, to stand on our own good works, to serve our selfish desires. Karl Barth observed that “The old creature drowned in baptism is a good swimmer.” Good works are a result of faith, not a cause. Luther gives several analogies. For example, when a bishop or pastor performs the work of their office, those works do not make them pastors or bishops; rather, they do them because they hold such offices. Good builders make good buildings, but good buildings do not make a good builder. Because we are Christ’s, we do good works. Good works do not make a good person, but a good person does good works, according to Luther. Paul makes an additional distinction. He contrasts the *works* of the flesh with the *fruits* of the Spirit.

The first work that the free believer does is to crucify the flesh. The second work is for the neighbor. Because Christ lived and died for us, we can, as Christs to our neighbor, live and die for them. Because Christ died for us, we are freed from worrying about ourselves and our standing before God. What then do we do with ourselves? What better way to celebrate the joyous exchange of Christ’s righteousness for our sin than to take on our neighbor’s burdens, as stated in Philippians 2? We are to do nothing but what we see to be necessary and profitable for the neighbor. What does this mean for our good works? Any work that is not done for the purpose of keeping the body under control (the first fruit of faith) or serving one’s neighbor (as long as the neighbor asks nothing contrary to God) is not good or Christian. Christians, according to Luther, live not in themselves, but in Christ and in their neighbors. They live in Christ through faith and in their neighbor through love. Now that the whole law is fulfilled by faith and not by any work, the focus is on the needs of the neighbor. Prof. Wengert asked the group to discuss the question of who is our neighbor.

Following this discussion, Prof. Wengert asked the group to consider the implications of the Galatians passage and Luther’s treatise for the deliberations currently underway concerning a social statement on human sexuality. From his own experience as a teacher of the Church, Prof. Wengert made some observations:

1. Knowing that faith is a gift from God means that we are all equal before God. We find our unity in one place only: the free forgiveness of God in Christ. It also means that, when we encounter unbelief in ourselves or others, our response cannot simply be Law—you must believe or else—but Gospel. We must say that God chooses to forgive and love you in Jesus Christ.
2. In our discussions we must not confuse faith and works or Law and Gospel. Works are always external and cannot affect our faith. Law can only show us what we ought to do but does not give us the power to do it. God always uses Law to show us the truth of our human condition. Faith is that relationship with God where we trust God’s promised mercy in Christ. Gospel, therefore, is the unconditional promise that creates that faith.
3. In Christ we truly are free from all works and judgment. We are freed to serve our neighbor in need. Such service is not judgment and condemnation, but bearing one another’s burdens, the other’s weakness and sin. As Luther puts it, “I will therefore give myself as a Christ to my neighbor just as Christ offered himself to me.”

Prof. Wengert suggested that this perspective could support and enrich the entire conversation on sexuality, if we ask ourselves in a concrete situation, “How can I best be Christ to my neighbor in love?” When we find that we cannot be Christ to our neighbor in love, let that Law not drive us inside ourselves to find new strength, but rather let it drive us straight back into the arms of Christ, who forgives us anew and exchanges his righteousness for our sin, and sends us once again to be Christs to our neighbors. His prayer was that God might give us the faith to believe this good news and the freedom to love our neighbor.

Prof. Wengert then opened the floor to discussion and comments.

Mr. Grieg L. Anderson asked Prof. Wengert to explain how we as Christians use the Law to inform our behavior.

Prof. Wengert pointed out that Luther never spoke of what theologians sometimes call the “third use of the Law.” Later Lutherans invented this principle, starting with Melancthon in 1534. Luther, however, does not think in those terms. For him, the guideline for the Law is the neighbor’s need. Later Lutherans were nervous about this idea, so Melancthon stated that the Law is still there. Prof. Wengert explained that the first use of the law is to keep order in the world. The second use of the Law is to drive us to Christ and to reveal our sin. Melancthon speaks of a third use of the Law, which is for the Christian. This was in response to those who were saying that there was no need to do any good works at all. The third use of the Law was the first and second uses applied to Christians. The Law reveals what we should do with our neighbor and continues to drives us to ask God’s forgiveness. When the Book of Concord talks about this third use, it immediately points out how freely it is that we serve our neighbor, and that it is not under the Law

that we do so. The Reformers understood that the Christian life and its good works come out of “a free and merry spirit.”

The Rev. Jonathan W. Linman observed that many in the discussion of human sexuality would invoke natural law and orders. He asked how this fit into Pauline and Lutheran models.

Prof. Wengert stated that he was convinced that Luther had a healthy view of natural law. Luther saw natural law in the Ten Commandments, and believed that it was written in the heart of every human being. The term “orders of creation” was coined in the nineteenth century, and referred to something less than the mind of God, something less than the perfection that is in God’s own heart and will. Within fifty years, the same phrase was being used in exactly the opposite way, and the orders of creation were imagined as something that had come straight from the mind and heart of God. Nineteenth-century Lutheran ethicists had been trying to say, reflecting Luther, was that these are *ad hoc*, or as the Rev. Frank Fry used to call them, “reverent best guesses that we give.” Therefore we are always in a penultimate, less than perfect position, as far as how anything we do in this life reflects the will of God.

Prof. Wengert commented that Luther saw four different possibilities for how the Law might be used, with the fourth way being for the ignorant. Prof. Wengert observed that some people, when it comes to love, are “bone ignorant.” They do not know how to treat their lover. The Law comes to them and says, “Send flowers. She likes chocolate.” The Law in that case is not Law but rather invitation for the ignorant. So for the Christian who is totally ignorant of how to behave, the Law functions to invite that one into right living.

RECESS

The fourth plenary session of the April 2007 meeting of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America was declared in recess at 2:30 P.M.

**Sunday, April 15, 2007
Plenary V**

The fifth plenary session of the April 2007 meeting of the Church Council was convened at 2:45 P.M. by Vice President Carlos E. Peña.

REPORT OF THE PROGRAM AND SERVICES COMMITTEE
(Agenda II.E.5)

The Rev. Joseph G. Crippen, chair, presented the report of the Program and Services Committee.

SOCIAL STATEMENT ON EDUCATION
(Agenda III.F.1; Agenda/MINUTES Exhibit K, Part 1)

Background:

“Our Calling in Education” is the title of the proposed social statement on education for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Work on this statement was authorized at the 2001 Churchwide Assembly [CA01.06.40]. The goals for the social statement are to: 1) present a Lutheran vision of education for our time; 2) address issues of education and schooling for children and young people in our society, with attention to purpose and quality, equity and access for all, responsibilities, and religion’s role in public schooling; 3) set forth an understanding of this church’s own educational institutions (e.g., preschool, primary and secondary schools, and colleges and universities); and 4) consider this church’s ministries in relation to public schools and universities and the vocation of those involved in education in different roles. If approved by the 2007 Churchwide Assembly, it will be the ninth social statement of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

The development and adoption of social statements by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America are guided by the document “Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns,” adopted by the 1997 Churchwide Assembly and last revised by the Church Council in 2006. At the time of the inception of this social statement, the board of the Division for Church in Society had the responsibility to name an appropriate group to study the topic; encourage broad participation by congregations and members of this church; and provide for a study document and/or preliminary draft, designed for study and response. Both the Church Council and the Conference of Bishops are forums for deliberation on preliminary documents.

Work on this social statement began in 2003 with the appointment by the board of the Division for Church in Society of a task force to oversee development of study materials, a first draft, and a final draft on the topic of education. Members of the task force included Dr. Robert Benne, Ms. Shirley A. Brown, Dr. Marcia Bunge, Pr. Michael Domenech, Dr. Paul J. Dovre (co-chair), Ms. Christi Lines (co-chair), Ms. Marlene Lund, Dr. Susan W. McArver, Dr. David Pellauer, Ms. Ann Fretwell Schmidt, Dr. Barry Smith, Mr. Don Strickland, Bp. Harold Usgaard, Dr. Emily Van Dunk, Dr. Grace Wolf-Chase, and Pr. Jean A. Zietlow. Program Committee advisors included Dr. Kathryn Johnson of the Vocation and Education program unit, and Pr. Rosa Key of the Church in Society program unit. Staff members included Dr. Ronald Duty and Dr. John Stumme (lead studies staff). Other staff included Mr. Mark Carlson, Ms. Diane Monroe, Ms. Mary Nasby Lohre, Ms. Sue Rothmeyer, Dr. Mark Wilhelm, and Ms. Marilyn Campbell.

As part of the development process, the task force scheduled listening posts in a variety of locations in this church. It prepared and distributed a study document; responses to the study document helped to inform development of the first draft of the social statement. The first draft of the social statement was distributed in the winter of 2005. Over 225 written responses to the first draft were received. In addition, synods hosted 48 hearings in 40 synods, including for the first time one bilingual hearing and one conducted in Spanish.

The proposed social statement, “Our Calling in Education,” was reviewed by the program committee for the Church in Society unit in March 2007 and referred to the Church Council for consideration by the Rev. Rebecca S. Larson, executive director of the Church in Society unit.

Church Council Action:

The Rev. Rebecca S. Larson, executive director of the Church in Society unit, introduced the work of the task force that had begun four years earlier to create the social statement on education. She noted the amount of work that had gone into this project, not only by the task force itself, but by this whole church in conversations at all levels. Pr. Larson offered special thanks to the Rev. Ronald W. Duty, assistant director studies in the Church in Society unit, and Mr. John Stumme, former director of studies, for the work that they had given to this project. She asked Rev. Duty to introduce Dr. Paul J. Dovre, co-chair of the task force, who was presenting his report by telephone.

Dr. Dovre brought greetings on behalf of the task force. He began by sharing an experience from the morning worship during the last meeting of the task force in January 2007. The Rev. Mark N. Wilhelm of the Vocation and Education unit was preaching on the text in Luke 2 that describes Jesus' "coming-out party" in Nazareth. Jesus ended up being run out of town, and Pr. Wilhelm warned the task force that they might encounter the same fate, because the social statement is based on what Dr. Dovre called "the audacious claim that education is about the welfare of the neighbor, about the common good." This claim, he contended, is audacious in a culture in which education is viewed primarily as a vehicle for self-fulfillment and self-advancement. So, Pr. Wilhelm warned, there could be rough waters ahead for a church and its members who seek to live out their calling in education. Dr. Dovre observed that the social statement was coming at a particularly appropriate time in the life of this church and of this society. In the area of public schools there are continuing issues related to quality, equity, and access. Lutheran parochial schools, he pointed out, are on the one hand a mission success story for this church and on the other hand are challenged by a variety of resource issues. Parents and congregations are struggling with issues related to the faith formation of their children. Young people are leaving the Church in alarming numbers. Lutheran campus ministry at public universities in too many cases are struggling for viability. For these and other reasons, Dr. Dovre and the task force saw this as an important time for this church and its members to discern their calling in education.

Dr. Dovre characterized the key message of the statement in this way: In gratitude to God, Lutherans live out their vocation through education in the faith and through education that serves the neighbor and advances the common good. He then offered an overview of the social statement, highlighting its characteristics, some of its key themes and accents, the most difficult subject the task force faced, and the most promising theme that they discovered in the course of their work.

As for characteristics of the statement, Dr. Dovre stated that it was grounded in Lutheran tradition and in particular the Lutheran teachings on vocation. This emphasis is present from beginning to end, he stated, and is in strong evidence in the catechetical section at the beginning of the document. The statement is also comprehensive, he continued. It addresses education in the home and the congregation, public schools and Lutheran schools, Lutheran colleges and universities, Lutheran campus ministries, public higher education, seminaries, outdoor ministries, and continuing education centers. Paradoxically, he stated, the third characteristic of the statement is its incompleteness. While easily the longest social statement yet at 59 pages, it was not possible to say everything that could be said. For example, the task force could not explore all of the related theological matters in the catechetical section of the document, nor could they engage in an extended discussion of the debates on epistemology or the tension between professional and liberal education. In view of the space limitations, and the existence of a comprehensive statement on theological education approved by this church a decade earlier, theological education also was not dealt with extensively.

Dr. Dovre described the key themes and accents of the proposed statement. He directed attention to the prologue or executive summary at the beginning of the document. The primary themes are:

1. An emphasis on the role of families and congregations in the faith formation of youth and children,
2. Affirmation and encouragement of Lutheran early childhood education centers and schools,
3. Equitable access to quality public education for all students,
4. Affirmation and encouragement of Lutheran colleges and universities,
5. Affirmation and encouragement of Lutheran campus ministries and the need for new and creative efforts to sustain them,
6. Advocacy on behalf of expanded state and federal financial aid for low- and middle-income students.

Dr. Dovre explained that the most difficult issue that the task force faced was the series of conflicts and controversies nested around public education: the state of performance of public schools, equity in funding of public schools, school

choice, and school reforms in such areas as merit pay and class size, consolidation, longer school days, and more. These matters are made more complex, he said, because they are highly political and because of the extreme variation in the local contexts in which these matters are at issue.

Dr. Dovre stated that the most promising theme in the social statement was that of collaboration. The statement calls for collaboration at local levels among families, congregations, and public schools. The same collaboration, he stated, was urged in communities with Lutheran schools. There also is encouragement to extend emerging collaborative models involving Lutheran colleges, seminaries, and lifelong learning centers. He pointed out that this theme is consistent with the strategic realignment of the ELCA in which collaboration is no longer seen as an add-on but as integral to an effective mission strategy. This theme, Dr. Dovre asserted, was consistent with the creation of the Vocation and Education program unit.

He thanked the council on behalf of all the members of the task force for the privilege of serving this church through this project and for the ways in which the council individually and corporately had supported and encouraged the task force in its work.

Vice President Peña thanked Dr. Dovre and the task force on behalf of the council.

The Rev. Joseph G. Crippen read the recommendation of the Program and Services Committee regarding adoption of "Our Calling in Education." He stated that the committee was also presenting amendments to the social statement that were detailed in Exhibit K, Part 1, Appendix 1. The committee was asking the council to approve all of the remaining editorial amendments to the social statement with a single action. Most, he stated, were simple stylistic and editorial changes. The other changes were aimed at bringing the social statement into line with other ELCA statements by eliminating overuse of the pronouns "we" and "our," in view of presenting the statement to persons outside of the ELCA. However, this category of change would not apply to the questions posed in the section headings and subheadings of the document, because the committee and task force thought that these were important for engaging the reader in the statement. After voting on these amendments to the social statement, the council then would vote on the recommendation to send the social statement to the Churchwide Assembly.

The Rev. Keith A. Hunsinger asked for and received clarification on the contents of the proposed action. Hearing no further discussion, Vice President Peña called for a vote on the motion to amend.

VOTED:

CC07.04.21 To approve the amendments to the social statement on education as printed in Exhibit K, Part 1, Appendix 1.

Hearing no discussion on the main motion as amended, Vice President Peña called for a vote.

VOTED:

CC07.04.22 To recommend adoption by the 2007 Churchwide Assembly of the following resolution:

To adopt "Our Calling in Education" as a social statement of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, in accordance with "Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns" (2006).

Discussion then turned to the implementing resolutions. Ms. Judy Biffle asked whether the action just taken had included the implementing resolutions.

Pr. Crippen explained that the implementing resolutions were at the end of the text of the social statement but were not part of it. He further clarified that the Churchwide Assembly would need to pass the social statement itself by a two-thirds vote, while the implementing resolutions would require only a simple majority.

The council discussed whether previously the resolution to adopt a social statement had been separated from its implementing resolutions. The Rev. Charles S. Miller, executive for administration, reviewed some of the historical precedent, pointing out that with earlier social statements the Church Council had not had the authority to amend the

statement before sending it to the Churchwide Assembly for action.

There being no further discussion, a vote was taken.

VOTED:

CC07.04.23

To recommend to the 2007 Churchwide Assembly the following resolution:

Faith Formation and Lifelong Learning

1. To embrace our legacy as a teaching and learning church with gratitude and new vigor, and to pray for God's guidance and power to renew and live boldly our calling in education for a new century;
2. To call upon congregations and families to educate all generations in the faith and to be partners in creating and funding compelling and creative curricula and programs for all ages—children, youth, and adults—thus forming an environment of living faith;
3. To call upon members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to renew their calling in education as students, parents, educators, and citizens and to live out their baptismal vocation as lifelong learners in the faith and in their knowledge of the world;
4. To call upon the program units for Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission and Vocation and Education to collaborate with Augsburg Fortress to continue and expand the provision of creative and comprehensive resources necessary to enable parents and congregations to help form the faith of all generations;
5. To call upon the presiding bishop, synodical bishops, and the Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission and Vocation and Education units to work with Augsburg Fortress and other churchwide units persistently and persuasively to ensure that Christian education for all ages (adult, children, youth, and family ministry) is a priority in congregational life, seminary education, and synodical planning;
6. To call upon the Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission, Vocation and Education, and Augsburg Fortress program units to work with synods, regions, congregations, rostered leaders, the Lutheran Association of Christian Educators, Lutheran outdoor ministries, seminaries, and other groups and organizations to share best practices for Christian education and faith formation, and to encourage their use in congregations and other ministries;
7. To call upon ELCA seminaries and other teaching institutions of this church to continue their emphasis on preparing pastors, diaconal ministers, deaconesses, associates in ministry, and lay people for excellence in the practice of teaching Christian education and faith formation in service of lifelong learning;
8. To give thanks to God and recognize members who are educators in public, Lutheran, and other private schools at all levels of education, to encourage congregations to support them in their callings as educators, and to urge members and all expressions of this church to encourage youth and others to enter these callings;

Public Educational Institutions

9. To call upon all schools to prepare students for living in a complex and global

society as persons who are capable of critical thinking, continuing personal growth and concern for others, family responsibility, civic participation, artistic appreciation, productive work, and financial responsibility;

10. To call upon members of this church to advocate for equitable access to an excellent education for all children and youth, to support early childhood education, their public schools, colleges, and universities, advocating for policies that provide adequate resources and their fair distribution for these educational institutions;
11. To call upon members and congregations to develop strong connections with their public schools and to work with others to ensure high quality education for all students;
12. To call upon this church's advocacy ministries to support legislative initiatives that improve public schools and ensure excellent education for all students in ways that are consistent with this social statement and to support financial aid and tuition policies that provide more equitable access for low- and middle-income students to higher education;

Lutheran Institutions

13. To recognize and affirm early childhood education centers, elementary and secondary schools, colleges and universities, seminaries, campus ministries, and outdoor ministries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as part of this church's mission, and to call upon this church's leaders publicly and actively to support them;
14. To call upon this church's colleges, universities, seminaries, and lifelong learning partners to prepare and sustain leaders for schools and early childhood education centers of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and to provide ongoing professional development opportunities for them; to expect sponsoring congregations to ensure that their schools and early childhood education centers provide high quality Lutheran education; to encourage non-sponsoring congregations as well as synods to be in partnership with them; and to call upon the Vocation and Education unit to convene consultations throughout this church for the purpose of addressing the challenges and opportunities facing ELCA schools and early childhood education centers;
15. To call upon synods and congregations to support ELCA colleges and universities in their ministry of preparing people to fulfill their vocations in Church and world; to call upon the Vocation and Education unit to continue its support of ELCA colleges and universities through the convening of administrators and faculty; and to call upon the Vocation and Education unit to convene consultations throughout this church for the purpose of furthering the respective and mutual ministries of ELCA colleges and universities and this church;
16. To call upon synods and congregations to support campus ministries and to call upon the Vocation and Education unit to convene consultations throughout this church for the purpose of addressing the challenges and opportunities facing Lutheran campus ministry and developing a strategy to increase financial support, build new and stronger partnerships, and take such additional actions as may

- enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of this vital ministry;
17. To affirm the Study of Theological Education, as approved by the 1995 Churchwide Assembly, and its continuing value as a guide for the strengthening of the ELCA's theological education network;

Social Statement Reception

18. To call upon the Church in Society, Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission, and Vocation and Education units, in cooperation with other churchwide units, to provide leadership and consultation for synods, seminary clusters and networks, and congregations on the basis of this social statement;
19. To call upon the Vocation and Education, Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission units, in consultation with the Church in Society unit, to collaborate with Augsburg Fortress to develop educational resources to study and act upon this social statement;
20. To call upon teaching theologians, bishops, pastors, diaconal ministers, associates in ministry, deaconesses, educators, and others to continue to deepen the theoretical and practical understanding of our calling in education, through intellectual discourse and continued reflection;
21. To call upon all congregations, synods, early childhood education centers, elementary and secondary schools, colleges and universities, seminaries, campus ministries, outdoor ministries, social ministry organizations, public policy advocacy ministries, and all churchwide units to carry out the substance and spirit of this statement; and
22. To call upon the program units for Vocation and Education, Church in Society, Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission, and Augsburg Fortress to oversee a process of implementation and accountability for this social statement and to report on implementation of this social statement to the Church Council in 2009.

REPORT OF THE LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL REVIEW COMMITTEE (CONTINUED)

The Rev. Kenneth M. Ruppap, chair, resumed the report of the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee.

CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY RULES OF ORGANIZATION AND PROCEDURE (CONTINUED)

(Agenda III.D.9; Agenda/MINUTES Exhibit G, Part 1)

Background:

In each biennium, the Church Council submits a recommendation to the Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America on proposed rules of organization and procedure. Voting members of the assembly act on the rules in the first plenary session. A two-thirds vote of the assembly is required for adoption of the rules. These proposed rules for the 2007 Churchwide Assembly have been developed and refined as a result of the experiences of the nine previous Churchwide Assemblies as well as the experience of predecessor church bodies. The basic change in the current version is the listing of all of the deadlines in one section rather than scattered throughout the rules.

Church Council Action:

The Rev. Kenneth M. Ruppap directed members' attention to page 9 of Exhibit G, Part 1, and reopened discussion of the amendment proposed by the Rev. Jennifer J. Thomas.

Pr. Thomas announced that she was withdrawing her amendment.

Vice President Carlos E. Peña turned discussion back to page 19 of the agenda and reminded the council that there was a motion on the floor to adopt the assembly rules as amended.

Pr. Thomas made a motion to amend the final paragraph of the proposed action on page 19 of the agenda.

Moved;

Seconded: To amend the final paragraph by substitution:

To authorize the presiding bishop and secretary of this church to make appropriate changes in date and hour provisions and other necessary adjustments as the agenda and program of the assembly are finalized.

Addressing her motion, Pr. Thomas stated that she was substituting the language used in the rules for the 2005 Churchwide Assembly and previous assemblies. She argued that this language was clearer about the scope of authority that could be exercised by the presiding bishop and secretary in ordering the assembly.

The Rev. Keith A. Hunsinger asked for clarification of the difference in meaning between the rule as proposed and the rule as Pr. Thomas would amend it.

Secretary Lowell G. Almen commented that the agenda for the assembly technically is not finalized until the first plenary session of the assembly. Between the time of the current council meeting and the beginning of the assembly, times and dates of deadlines would need to be adjusted in relation to the assembly program and the agenda as recommended to the assembly in the first plenary session, he stated. The secretary confirmed that the language in Pr. Thomas's amendment was that of the authorizing action adopted in 2005. He had not checked other assemblies' rules, but confirmed that similar language had been used when the council had taken similar action in previous biennia. The intended effect of paragraph in the proposed rules was the same, he stated, but the language in Pr. Thomas's proposed amendment was more precise.

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson pointed out that once the assembly adopts its rules and agenda, it provides within its rules the vehicle for change of the agenda of the assembly. The rule in question dealt with actions up to the point of the adoption of the rules by the assembly. Secretary Almen concurred.

Hearing no further discussion, Vice President Peña called for a vote on Pr. Thomas's amendment.

Moved;

Seconded;

Carried: *To amend the final paragraph by substitution:*

To authorize the presiding bishop and secretary of this church to make appropriate changes in date and hour provisions and other necessary adjustments as the agenda and program of the assembly are finalized.

The chair announced that the recommendation as now amended was on the floor. There being no further discussion, he called for a vote.

VOTED:

CC07.04.24 *To recommend adoption of the following resolution by the voting members of the 2007 Churchwide Assembly:*

To adopt the "Rules of Organization and Procedure" for the 2007 Churchwide Assembly (exclusive of quoted and highlighted constitutional provisions and bylaws that are already in force); and

To authorize the presiding bishop and the secretary of this church to make appropriate changes in date and hour provisions and other necessary adjustments as the agenda and program of the assembly are finalized.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT RELATED TO RECOMMENDATION OF THE BLUE RIBBON COMMITTEE (CONTINUED)
(Agenda III.D.1)

The Rev. Kenneth M. Ruppap informed the council that, following the earlier discussion, the decision had been made to propose an amendment to a continuing resolution rather than a bylaw change. The committee proposed an amendment to continuing resolution 15.31.A03.

There being no discussion, Vice President Carlos E. Peña called for a vote. The amendment was adopted by a greater than two-thirds vote.

VOTED:

Two-thirds required

CC07.04.25

To amend continuing resolution 15.31.A03. as 15.31.A07. as follows:

15.31.A07. Responsibilities of the Conference of Bishops

The Conference of Bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall . . .

I. Assist the bishops in their role as leaders in fostering support for the work of this church by being a forum for discussion of annual mission-support plans and serving as a means of providing advice and counsel to the Church Council in the council's responsibility for approval of those plans.

AMENDMENT OF CONTINUING RESOLUTION 12.41.B04.

(Agenda III.D.10)

Background:

The Vocation and Education unit, in consultation with the Association of Teaching Theologians of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, had recommended an additional category of faculty resource persons for the Churchwide Assembly. The addition required an amendment to continuing resolution 12.41.B04.

Church Council Action:

The Rev. Kenneth M. Ruppap, chair, introduced the proposed action.

Hearing no discussion, Vice President Carlos E. Peña called for a vote. The amendment was adopted by a greater than two-thirds vote.

VOTED:

Two-thirds vote required

CC07.04.26

To amend continuing resolution 12.41.B04. as 12.41.B07. to read:

12.41.B04 07. *Seminary Faculty Resource Persons. A representative of the faculty of each seminary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be appointed by the president of each seminary to serve as a seminary faculty resource person for each Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. In addition, a teaching theologian who is a member of a congregation of this church and who is teaching at a college or university of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America may be appointed by the steering committee of the Association of Teaching Theologians in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to serve as a faculty resource person. The faculty representative Faculty resource persons shall have voice, if so granted in the assembly's rules, but not vote in plenary sessions of the assembly. Travel, food, and housing costs for the seminary faculty resource persons shall be an expense of the assembly. Other expenses will be the responsibility of the individual or sending institution.*

RECOMMENDATION OF AMENDMENT OF THE *MODEL CONSTITUTION FOR CONGREGATIONS*

(Agenda III.D.11)

Background:

To clarify the amendment process for the *Model Constitution for Congregations*, the following amendments are proposed for consideration by the tenth Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Church Council Action:

The Rev. Kenneth M. Rupp, chair, introduced the proposed action.
Hearing no discussion, Vice President Carlos E. Peña called for a vote.

VOTED:

CC07.04.27 *To recommend to the 2007 Churchwide Assembly the following amendments to the Model Constitution for Congregations:*

***C17.01.** Unless provision *C17.04. is applicable, those ~~Those~~ sections of this constitution that are not required, in accord with the *Model Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, may be amended in the following manner. Amendments may be proposed by at least _____ voting members or by the Congregation Council... (*with the remainder of the provision unchanged*).

***C17.04.** ~~Whenever the *Model Constitution for Congregations* is amended by the Churchwide Assembly, this~~ This constitution may be amended to ~~incorporate such amendment~~ bring any section into conformity with a section or sections, either required or not required, of the *Model Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*—as most recently amended by the Churchwide Assembly—by a simple majority vote of those voting members present and voting at any ~~subsequent~~ legally called meeting of the congregation without presentation at a prior meeting of the congregation, provided that the Congregation Council has submitted by mail notice to the congregation of such an amendment or amendments, together with the council's recommendations, at least 30 days prior to the meeting. Upon the request of _____ voting members of the congregation, the Congregation Council shall submit such notice. Following the adoption of an amendment, the secretary of the congregation shall submit a copy thereof to the synod. Such provisions shall become effective immediately following a vote of approval.

REPORT ON INSURANCE ALTERNATIVES TASK FORCE

Mr. Mark S. Helmke reported on the work of the Insurance Alternatives Task Force. At the council's November 2006 meeting, Mr. Helmke had informed the council about the difficulty congregations were having acquiring affordable property insurance and pointed out as other issues concerning the insurance program that the churchwide organization recommends for synods and congregations. A task force had been working on a feasibility study to consider alternatives. He reports that the feasibility study had been completed and that an affiliate of Arthur J. Gallagher and also Sigma Actuaries had been retained to complete the feasibility study on behalf of the task force. After receiving the initial report, these two organizations had been asked to carry out additional evaluation with regard to the possibilities that were being considered. Two basic possibilities were being evaluated: a self-insured retention program and a captive insurance

program. The task force met in February, some members participating by conference call due to winter weather. A subsequent meeting was held by conference call, and a future conference call was being organized. A number of issues were being addressed, including funding the initial capital requirements of whichever structure might be recommended, along with the legal questions of how such an entity or program would be organized. The work of the task force is ongoing, so it was not prepared at this time to offer a recommendation. Mr. Helmke predicted that the work of the task force would be completed soon and a recommendation would then be brought to the council. He encouraged members to direct questions to Mr. David A. Ullrich, associate general counsel, who had been deeply involved in the work of the task force.

DWELLING IN THE WORD

Ms. Judith Tutt-Starr began by quoting Psalm 133: "How good and pleasant it is when brothers and sisters dwell together in unity! It is like precious oil poured on the head, running down on the beard . . . for there the Lord bestows his blessing, even life forevermore." She told the group that her parents had divorced when she was 10, and three weeks later her father remarried a woman with four daughters and a son. Her mother was left to raise five daughters. Ms. Tutt-Starr, as a child, was baffled by her father's departure. For the next decade, she had no contact with her father, who provided no support to the family. Yet he mysteriously appeared at Ms. Tutt-Starr's college graduation.

Although her family was blessed with three pastors, an elder, and many other members of strong faith, Ms. Tutt-Starr continued, they nonetheless experienced great difficulty in learning to forgive, as would many families in that situation. In 1998 she, three of her sisters and their families, and three stepsisters and the stepbrother and their families converged on her father's ranch outside of Austin, Texas. Her father is a wealthy man, she reported. There were 26 persons involved in the meeting, coming from different parts of the country, yet all had come for a single purpose: to find forgiveness in the lives they had led. The gathering opened with introductions and seemingly pleasant conversations. Shortly thereafter, however, things turned ugly as they began to discuss as adults the things that had pulled them apart as families. It was not a churchlike atmosphere, Ms. Tutt-Starr stated. There were accusations made, real or perceived, and tears flowed. There was much anger in the room. Ms. Tutt-Starr was sitting on the floor in her father's livingroom, near an end table. There was a Bible at hand. She picked it up and opened it, and it fell open to Psalm 133. The words on that page were the only ones she could see: "How pleasant it is when brothers and sisters dwell together in unity!" She began to read the words aloud, and had to shout to make them heard over the argument. She read them over and over again, until all those present seemingly began to say the words together. The words of the psalm helped draw her family together, Ms. Tutt-Starr concluded, when nothing else could. Such is the power of dwelling in the Word.

REPORT OF THE CONFERENCE OF BISHOPS (Agenda II.B; Agenda/MINUTES Exhibit A, Part 5)

The Rev. E. Roy Riley Jr., bishop of the New Jersey Synod and chair of the Conference of Bishops, commented upon the March 2007 meeting of the conference, offering personal reflections upon the reception hosted in the home of Vice President Peña. In the course of the reception, a sheriff appeared, who proceeded to deputize Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson and Secretary Lowell G. Almen. Bp. Riley remarked that he had never seen Bp. Hanson rejoice so much in the law. Bp. Riley reported that the conference had chosen to meet in Galveston in order to be as near as possible to the Gulf Coast disaster area so that they might see how they could share in that need and get a report on the response. This goal was central to the bishops' meeting, he stated. The assistants to the bishops had met there the week previously and had done some on-site work. Bp. Marie C. Jerge was photographed while she was working on a roof. Approximately 22 of the bishops went to New Orleans the day after their meeting to spend another day with pastors and people there. Bp. Riley highlighted the section of his written report that noted that the synodical bishops were committed to working with the presiding bishop and Lutheran Disaster Response (LDR) staff to continue to build on the good work that has been done. Given the extent of this particular disaster, he observed, there is no way to measure disaster response preparedness. This disaster humbled what was supposedly the strongest government in the world, the bishop said, and he cautioned that one cannot judge LDR from its response to this event.

Bp. Riley reported that much of the spring Conference of Bishops meeting had been devoted to saying goodbye to treasured colleagues, 13 of whom would not be standing for re-election. In addition, they had learned that the Rev. Margarita Sanchez, bishop of the Caribbean Synod, was dying. When she died a few days later, five bishops were able to travel to Puerto Rico immediately for two nights of services that were held. The memorial service to be held by the churches of the Virgin Islands and Caribbean in April would see another 11 bishops travel there to join those churches in celebrating the life of Bp. Martinez. Bp. Riley stated that this church was only beginning to be aware of what a great loss it had suffered. In the bishops' meeting, Bp. Riley continued, they had given thanks for all of these leaders and offered a prayer of trust in God to raise up new leaders. The first synod assemblies were to take place the following weekend.

The Conference of Bishops also had spent considerable time on a number of agenda items. Among the items listed, Bp. Riley highlighted the serious conversations that were held about immigration and seminarian debt. They also discussed the fact that what had been viewed as a quiet synod assembly season would in fact be much busier than anticipated. Some of the resolutions, he commented, would be related to the ongoing journey concerning human sexuality. He directed attention to the pastoral message from the bishops printed on the last page of his report that confirmed the bishops' continued confidence in the journey this church has been on in relation to the human sexuality conversation and encouraged a continued journey in coming months, looking toward a social statement in 2009.

REPORT OF THE PLANNING AND EVALUATION COMMITTEE (CONTINUED) (Agenda II.E.4)

The Rev. David E. Jensen, chair, presented the report of the Planning and Evaluation Committee. He began by reviewing the mission of the committee, which includes examining and assessing this church's commitments to restructuring. Through its various ecological and interdependent expressions, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America keeps its focus on the strategic directions central to the Plan for Mission, he reported. The committee's meetings provide opportunity for conversation with staff whose primary responsibilities are for planning and monitoring this church's commitment to inclusion and diversity, he stated. Pr. Jensen directed the council to the action items beginning on page 20 of the agenda, and introduced the Rev. Sherman G Hicks, executive director of the Multicultural Ministries unit, to give the report of his program unit.

REPORT ON MULTICULTURAL MINISTRY STRATEGIES (Agenda III.E.1; Agenda/MINUTES Exhibit N, Part 1)

Background:

In accordance with "Faithful Yet Changing: Design for Mission through the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America," the executive director of the Multicultural Ministries unit will "... present a comprehensive plan and ongoing evaluation of the churchwide organization's work in the area of multicultural ministries. The plan will be developed collaboratively by churchwide staff from all units and partner organizations and presented, along with an evaluation, to the Church Council (annually) and to the Churchwide Assembly (biennially)."

The 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America approved a resolution of recommitment to ethnic-ministry strategies and requested, in part, that "... a report of plans and accomplishments be brought to the 2007 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America [CA05.05.19]."

Church Council Action:

The Rev. Sherman G. Hicks, executive director of the Multicultural Ministries unit, gave a brief update on the European-American Association, which had been approved at the November 2006 meeting of the Church Council. He announced that eight persons who had been involved in the development of that association had met that weekend at the Lutheran Center to work on a plan for organization, a constitution and bylaws, and a process for introducing the association into the life of this church. Pr. Hicks stated that he had been hesitant to give information about this association up to this point because he had not deemed it appropriate to report for another organization. Now that a meeting had been held, he noted, a progress report would be released shortly to the council and to the rest of this church.

He expressed his optimism and excitement concerning what this association would bring to the multicultural ministries of this church.

Pr. Hicks began by recounting some of this history of multicultural ministries in the ELCA. In 1987, the constituting convention set a goal that within 10 years membership of this church would be at least 10 percent persons of color and/or primary language other than English. This goal became the driving force for activities, programs, and projects in Commission for Multicultural Ministries and the current Multicultural Ministries program unit. In the 10 years that followed the founding of the ELCA, the 10 percent goal was not achieved. Table 1 of Pr. Hicks's report gave membership statistics based on parochial reports as of December 2005. Table 2 presented the membership trends of persons of color or language other than English from 1990–2005. While the original goal had not been reached, Pr. Hicks pointed out that there is a positive change overall in the racial-ethnic proportion of membership, but growth has been slow. The third table showed percentages of persons of color or language other than English among rostered leaders of this church. Approximately 4.2 percent of ordained ministers of Word and Sacrament fall in this category. The Deaconess Community marked the greatest percentage of members from this category at 9.7percent.

The report then addressed this church's approach to multicultural ministry. The Churchwide Assembly had adopted five ethnic-ministry strategies. Pr. Hicks pointed out that there are commonalities in the strategies, even though each was developed separately. He highlighted the nine areas of commonality, then indicated that the written report told how each of the strategies had been addressed to date. Pr. Hicks, in commenting on the progress of the strategies, stated that it was important that the 10 percent goal not be lost but advocated that other indicators besides membership be considered. In his evaluation, Pr. Hicks saw that the Plan for Mission and restructuring of the churchwide organization had assisted multicultural ministries greatly in the past year. He thanked personally his colleagues in Vocation and Education, Church in Society, Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission, and Research and Evaluation for their cooperation and participation in the implementation of the strategies. He stressed that it is not simply a structure that will make a difference, but rather the people operating within that structure. The four "c's" of coordination, cooperation, communication, and collaboration had been at the center of the efforts of staff from those units, Pr. Hicks observed. He encouraged the council to study the report to learn how the strategies were being implemented. He reminded the group that they had heard Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson speak of one of the most recent activities in the African-descent strategy, which was the convocation of young, African-descent adults. A number of these persons had indicated their interest in church vocations.

As part of the participation of other units, Vocation and Education had added a second staff member to relate to multicultural leadership development, Pr. Hicks reported. Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission has a full-time staff person working with the African-descent strategy and leadership in that unit. Tables had been established to work on implementation of the strategies, as well. The inter-unit staff team on ethnic-ministry strategies, which had helped to put together the report, was one of the tables that had resulted from restructuring. The leadership development table, chaired by the Rev. M. Wyvetta Bullock, executive for leadership development, was another table that was reacting not only to the ethnic-ministry strategies but to the evangelism strategy, as well. In addition, the Arab and Middle Eastern consultant staff from various units had met with pastors for two days at the Lutheran Center around certain issues. After that meeting, the Rev. Leslie F. Weber Jr., associate executive director of the Church in Society unit, had generated ideas based on the ideas generated, and a meeting was now planned between Church in Society and Multicultural Ministries to discuss those ideas. Pr. Hicks repeated his belief that the Plan for Mission and restructuring had already made a difference in multicultural ministries and would continue to do so.

Looking beyond the churchwide organization and into the future, Pr. Hicks observed that the report made clear that, while some things had happened and others still needed to happen, it was not the responsibility simply of the churchwide organization to implement the strategies fully. Synods and congregations also would have to be involved. In light of that reality, the goals of the Multicultural Ministries unit for 2007-09 called for the use of its staff and program unit resources to be actively involved with seminaries, synods, congregations, and the churchwide organization in providing resources and consultation in implementation of the strategies. Pr. Hicks then opened the floor for comments and questions.

Mr. Allan E. Thomas asked about the number of African Americans or persons of color currently enrolled in seminary.

Pr. Hicks responded that he did not have that information, and suggested that perhaps the Rev. Gregory J. Villalon, director for multicultural leadership development in the Vocation and Education unit, or the Rev. Stanley N. Olson, executive director of the Vocation and Education, might be able to provide an answer. Pr. Hicks expressed his opinion that more such students were needed. He added that such an increase had been one goal of the African-descent young adult consultation. He mentioned that there would be other activities undertaken in an effort to increase the numbers of persons of color and speakers of languages other than English in the seminaries. As an example, he cited the "Come, See, Discover Ministry in Action" events that reach out to ethnic communities and invite them to church vocation.

Pr. Olsen stated that he would see that information on seminary enrollments be provided at a later time.

Pr. Jensen then read the proposed action.

There being no further discussion, Vice President Carlos E. Peña called for a vote.

VOTED:

CC07.04.28 To receive with gratitude the biennial report on Multicultural Ministries and to commend the Multicultural Ministries program unit and the inter-unit staff team on ethnic ministry strategies for their efforts on behalf of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and

To transmit, in response to the actions of the 2005 Churchwide Assembly, the biennial report on Multicultural Ministries to the 2007 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, commending the content of the report for study, reflection, and response throughout this church.

Vice President Carlos E. Peña asked Ms. Brianna Watts to give a brief description of the 4:24 prayer campaign, based on Acts 4:24, which says, "When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God." The campaign urges youth to stop during their days to pray, as well as to pray together as a unified body in Christ.

Mr. Samuel F. Schlouch added that the Lutheran Youth Organization, at its meeting in 2006, had passed a resolution to take this campaign to this whole church and to ask everyone in this church to stop what they are doing at 4:24 P.M. each day to pray. He voiced the hope of the youth that the Church Council would be interested in doing so.

Vice President Peña committed to stopping the meeting at 4:24 P.M. to pray, and asked Mr. Schlouch to lead the council in prayer at that time.

CHURCH COUNCIL BOARD DEVELOPMENT

UPDATE FROM THE BOARD DEVELOPMENT TASK FORCE

Vice President Carlos E. Peña called upon Ms. Judy Biffle to bring a report from the Board Development Task Force. Two years prior, she stated, she had been invited to participate in an *ad hoc* group that would focus on board development on a short-term basis. Council action on Saturday of the current meeting had formally constituted the *ad hoc* group as a committee of the Church Council that would have an ongoing commitment to the life of the council. Ms. Biffle explained that the committee had been served over the past two years by four persons: Ms. Jessica M. McKee, Mr. Mark S. Helmke, Mr. Gary L. Wiperman, and Ms. Judy Biffle, with guidance from the Rev. Charles S. Miller, executive for administration, and Ms. Myrna J. Sheie, executive for governance and institutional relations. She expressed her gratitude in particular to Pr. Miller, and stated that he would be missed. Ms. Biffle reviewed the work that had been accomplished by the group over the past two years. Among the accomplishments were the Church Council member orientation manual, the design and coordination of the council retreat the previous summer, and the introduction and coordination of primers to help inform and educate the members of the council as responsible leaders of this church.

In other action originating with the Board Development Committee, Ms. Biffle continued, the Church Council had voted that all of its ongoing committees develop charters listing their responsibilities. Since the Board Development Committee was new, Ms. Biffle read its proposed charter to the group in hopes that it might serve as a model of how

charters might be written and to verify that it included everything for which the council had asked it to be responsible. The charter grouped the committee's responsibilities into four areas: 1) to provide materials and venues that nurture and grow members of the Church Council to be faithful, wise, and courageous leaders; 2) to connect directly with newly elected members of the Church Council and provide opportunity for appropriate closure with retiring members of the council; 3) to coordinate programs for and presentations to the council related to this church's commitments on race, ethnicity, culture, gender, and other similar matters; 4) to propose venues and opportunities for socializing and fellowship among council members, staff, and advisors for purposes of community and trust-building, and as recreation.

Ms. Biffle thanked the council for its input concerning definition of the goals and activities of the committee. She commended the council for its desire to be a stronger board, to be better educated, and to know and claim its responsibilities. She reminded members that she and Ms. McKee would be leaving the council and the committee. She expressed her hopes for the ways in which this committee might serve the council in the future, and she encouraged council members to consider service on the committee. Ms. Biffle ended by speaking of how her bishop, the Rev. Paul J. Blom, had invited her into a leadership role 20 years earlier, and how that invitation had changed her life. She urged the group never to underestimate the power and the gift of a simple invitation.

Vice President Peña voiced the thanks of the council for Ms. Biffle's role as leader of the task force, now committee, and for her efforts in creating the orientation manual.

REPORT OF THE PROGRAM AND SERVICES COMMITTEE (CONTINUED)

The Rev. Joseph G. Crippen, chair, continued the report of the Program and Services Committee.

BOOK OF FAITH: LUTHERANS READ THE BIBLE

(Agenda III.F.2; Exhibit O, Part 1a)

Background:

A Consultation and a Proposed Initiative

In response to many voices calling for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to renew its engagement with Scripture and Lutheran approaches to the Bible, including a memorial from the North Carolina Synod considered by the 2005 Churchwide Assembly [CA05.06.27], an *ad hoc* committee has been at work for almost two years. The Office of the Presiding Bishop, the Office of the Secretary, Augsburg Fortress, Publishers, and the Vocation and Education unit, in regular conversation with the Conference of Bishops and others, developed an initial proposal for a consultation and a five-year initiative.

As word spread of the draft proposal and when *The Lutheran* magazine and ELCA news service reported that such an initiative was under consideration in the ELCA, many individuals submitted suggestions, expressed strong support, and indicated an interest in participating in some way. These responses also shaped the concept.

The Church Council was kept apprised of the development of the initiative by regular reports. At its November 2006 meeting, the council voted [CC06.11.55]:

To receive the report of the *ad hoc* committee for a five-year initiative, "Book of Faith: Lutherans Read the Bible";

To affirm the planned January 2007 consultation, "Book of Faith: Lutherans Read the Bible";

To direct that a report on the proposed initiative be prepared, with recommendations and expenditure plan, for consideration by the Church Council in April 2007;

To request that a report and overview of the initiative, "Book of Faith: Lutherans Read the Bible," be developed for possible recommendation by the Church Council to the 2007 Churchwide Assembly; and

To assign direction of this initiative to the presiding bishop, with programmatic implementation to be carried out by the Vocation and Education unit.

Consultation—January 2007

The committee planned a consultation, “Book of Faith: Lutherans Read the Bible.” Its purpose was to explore issues around Lutheran understandings of the authority of Scripture and to lay groundwork for the proposed initiative.

Some 90 people were gathered in January 2007 for the consultation. These included lay people and rostered leaders, parish pastors, teaching theologians, bishops, specialists in such areas as worship, preaching, and theological education for all ages, and Augsburg Fortress staff. Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson convened the conversation with an opening address. Keynote speakers were Professor Diane Jacobson of Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minn., and Professor Erik Heen, Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, Penn. In a variety of ways, the consultation dwelt in the Word through worship, hearing, and study. The three presentations are available online at www.elca.org/bookoffaith.

Much of the consultation was devoted to eight working groups on aspects and arenas of the Bible’s place in Christian life: adult studies; children and the Bible; ethics, daily life, and contemporary issues; evangelizing and outreach; hermeneutics; theological education; worship and preaching; and youth and young adult ministries. Each group addressed the needs and opportunities in that area and moved toward initial identification of elements that might be part of the initiative.

The Book of Faith Initiative

A proposal for a five-year Book of Faith initiative has been developed from the consultation. The initiative would pursue the dual objective of broader and deeper engagement with Scripture in the ELCA and a renewed teaching and use of Lutheran approaches to Scripture, which have proven fruitful for 500 years. Book of Faith would not be merely a theme or emphasis that would be succeeded by other emphases. Rather, the intent is to form culture and customs in this church that will open it to a new level of valuing and being shaped by the power of the Word.

Although decisions about what would be included await approval of the initiative by the Church Council and the Churchwide Assembly, there is a clear consensus on several things that would help the ELCA seize the opportunity God is giving it now. There is a call for new learning resources for all ages; wider awareness of what is already available; common effort with Renewing Worship; an accessible resource on Lutheran approaches to Scripture (hermeneutics); a study of effective teaching methods for all ages; support in experiencing meditative uses of the Bible; and enabling the evangelizing use of the Scripture. Again and again, participants encouraged making use of emerging technologies for communication and taking particular interest in youth and young adults.

The initiative would aim to engage all expressions of the ELCA—congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization—as well as outdoor and campus ministries, colleges and universities, seminaries, and other agencies and institutions. Augsburg Fortress, Publishers, is committed enthusiastically to the effort and would collaborate with the Vocation and Education unit in leading the churchwide organization’s involvement. Leaders of the Women of the ELCA have expressed interest in building on their long role in engaging the Scriptures. The board of Lutheran Men in Mission at its February 2007 meeting voted to support the proposal for the Book of Faith initiative. The committee for the Heine-Fry Lecture Series, as it plans for the next several years, already has committed to collaborate with this initiative.

Ecumenical and global contexts and partnerships will be important in this effort. Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson, in his capacity as president of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), addressed the 60th anniversary celebration of the LWF in Lund, Sweden, and said, “I believe that central to this fundamental ecumenism will be renewed and new practices of hearing, reading, and studying Scripture together, both within our communion and with our companion churches. Could the decade leading up to 2017 have this as a primary and public focus? In our multicultural communion, can we commit to becoming fluent in the first language of faith—the language of Scripture? It is very important that we build upon the results of the LWF study published in *Witnessing to God’s Faithfulness: Issues of Biblical Authority*.”

Expenditures for 2007, the initiative’s first year, are anticipated to be less than \$50,000 and will come from the Vocation and Education budget and from a designated fund that was established by the Church Council for the proposed consultation and initiative. The draft Vocation and Education budget for 2008 contains \$166,000 for the initiative. This would supply staff, support, and resources, including some Web site development. The planning committee assumes that some projects, such as publication of major resources, expanded efforts for a particular age group, or expansion of Web usage, would require special subventions that might come in the form of designated gifts or grants.

Augsburg Fortress, Publishers, the publishing ministry of the ELCA, has been represented fully in the planning of

the consultation and initiative. Augsburg Fortress and the Vocation and Education unit anticipate a broad partnership, parallel to that between the churchwide organization and publishing ministry for the Renewing Worship project. Augsburg Fortress is prepared to commit staff and financial resources to the initiative.

Church Council Action:

The Rev. Stanley N. Olson, executive director of Vocation and Education, presented background information on the “Book of Faith: Lutherans Read the Bible” initiative, which he stated was aimed at renewal of the core concept of the Bible as God’s Word for us. He recounted the history of earlier efforts to encourage Bible study among Lutherans, but faulted them for being focused too specifically on resources for adults and for being publisher- or parachurch organization-focused. He preferred an earlier model, the Lutheran Reformation, which he described as a renewal of the Church growing out of the Word. The Word was at the core, it was high-profile, it had to do with institutions, it was directed to all ages and aspects of Christian life, and it was integrative.

Pr. Olson directed members to a page of notes from the final day of the January 2007 consultation on the initiative where they could see the outcomes of the eight working groups that had been addressing the issues. He focused on the proposed recommendations. The first he described as an affirmation of the “core”—that is, it was about essential things, including the contexts of history, this church’s confession of faith, and ecumenical and global relationships. The second recommendation was aimed at beginning the initiative, and he described it as invitational, envisioning, and enabling. The two parts of the proposed initiative, he stated, are aimed at a broader and deeper engagement with Scripture by this church, and at the intentional teaching, understanding, and use of those Lutheran approaches to Scripture that had proven so fruitful over the years. Pr. Olson noted that the initiative had already been picked up by others in this church, and there was excitement associated with this opportunity to be part of the initiative.

The Rev. Joseph G. Crippen, chair of the Program and Services Committee, introduced the first of the recommendations.

Vice President Carlos E. Peña, hearing no discussion, called for a vote on the recommendation.

VOTED:

CC07.04.29

To recommend adoption by the 2007 Churchwide Assembly of the following resolution:

To rejoice with the whole Church of Jesus Christ in the revelation of God’s Word conveyed to the people of every generation, declaring God’s gifts of mercy and grace, forgiveness and hope, reconciliation and peace, and to confess that we often have failed to hear and heed the Word of God and to benefit from God’s gifts;

To give thanks for the Bible through which the Word of God has spoken to God’s people throughout the ages;

To remember with enduring esteem the multitudes throughout the ages who embraced the tradition received by the community of the faithful and passed to succeeding generations the glad news of God’s steadfast love;

To recall with gratitude the work of Martin Luther and that of the other reformers whose Word-inspired renewal grew from their study of Scripture;

To acknowledge with joy the power of the Word of God in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, evident in many ways, including:

a. The affirmations of the constitutional Confession of Faith that

+ **“Jesus Christ is the Word of God,”**

+ **“The proclamation of God’s message to us as both Law and Gospel is the Word of God...,”**

+ **“The canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the written Word of God” (provision 2.02.a, b, and c), and**

- + “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” (provision 2.03.);
- b. The empowered proclamation, study, teaching, worship, meditation, song, community, and service through which the people of this church daily hear, share, and live the witness of Scripture;
- c. The members, congregations, synods, churchwide ministries, agencies, institutions, and networks of this church, and their planning and programs, including the ELCA Plan for Mission adopted in 2005, which are undergirded by the Bible and seek faithfully to express God’s Word;

To recognize that one of the six constitutionally stated purposes for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America through its congregations, synods, churchwide ministries, and related institutions and agencies is to nurture 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” (provision 4.02.e.);

To embrace the passion and commitment that is richly shared among people of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for the witness of Scripture in forming and guiding the members of this church individually and corporately in daily life;

To express the hope and desire that—in the time leading up to the ELCA’s 25th anniversary in 2012 and to the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation in 2017—this church will be sustained and renewed by the Word of God, thereby fostering deeper and broader use and understanding of Scripture for the life of disciples;

To recognize and give thanks that the Word of God speaks and is valued throughout Christ’s Church and that, globally and ecumenically, there are other movements and occasions for renewed attention to the authority of the Bible that will inform and enhance our own understanding, including the work already begun and anticipated in the Lutheran World Federation, the recent proposal among the U.S. Reformed churches for a Lutheran-Reformed consultation on the authority and role of the Word of God in the life of the churches, and the Roman Catholic Church’s intention to celebrate in 2015 the 50th anniversary of the Vatican II statement *Dei Verbum*; and

To acknowledge with gratitude the action of the 2005 North Carolina Synod Assembly in memorializing this church to undertake a renewed study of the authority of Scripture in the life of the Church.

The action was approved. Pr. Crippen then introduced the second recommendation, which would authorize development of the initiative.

Vice President Carlos E. Peña, hearing no discussion, called for a vote on the recommendation.

Church Council Action:

VOTED:

CC07.04.30

To recommend adoption by the 2007 Churchwide Assembly of the following

resolution:

To invite and encourage all members, expressions, institutions, and partners of this church to commit themselves regularly and increasingly to hearing, reading, studying, sharing, and being formed by God's Word;

To call members, congregations, synods, churchwide ministries, and institutions and agencies of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to engage in a five-year collaborative initiative—identified as “Book of Faith: Lutherans Read the Bible”—with the goal of raising to a new level this church's individual and collective engagement with the Bible and its teaching, yielding greater biblical fluency, deeper worship and devotion, and a more profound appreciation of Lutheran principles and approaches for the use of Scripture;

To urge that this initiative be designed and carried out in ways that affirm the Bible's power through the work of the Holy Spirit to speak in all settings and to all ages, with attention to individual and corporate use of the Bible by members and leaders in worship, devotion, study, proclamation, teaching, moral formation, addressing social issues, and evangelizing;

To commit the churchwide organization to substantial engagement in this initiative in extensive collaboration with synods and congregations;

To request that the presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America—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” (provision 13.21.)—lead this initiative personally and through collaborative programmatic work with the Vocation and Education unit in partnership with Augsburg Fortress, Publishers, as the publishing ministry of this church, and many others;

To anticipate the wide availability and use of a rich constellation of existing and new resources as well as the creative use of new means of communication, mindful of the global and ecumenical context, in exploration of the nature and authority of Scripture in the life of individuals and the whole Church;

To affirm funding of the churchwide organization's share of this “Book of Faith” initiative primarily through the regular operating budget in recognition not only that this initiative is of foundational and ongoing importance, but also in confidence that support for mission will grow from congregations through synods for churchwide ministries; and

To look beyond the time and scope of the “Book of Faith” initiative to what can be built on that work and to other ways in which God's Word continually will renew this church.

The motion was approved. Pr. Crippen thanked the council, the Office of the Presiding Bishop, and the Vocation and Education program unit for their work on the initiative.

Vice President Peña noted that it was 4:24 P.M., so he called for silent prayer, followed by vocal prayer led by Mr. Samuel F. Schlouch.

AFFIRMATION OF *EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN WORSHIP*
(Agenda III.F.3)

Background:

The 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America affirmed the outcomes of the five-

year Renewing Worship project and anticipated the 2006 publication of *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* [CA05.03.05].

Evangelical Lutheran Worship (ELW) was released on October 3, 2006, as part of a new series of worship resources—the primary resource in an unfolding family of new worship resources that will be available in print and in electronic form—and early sales have been brisk. Nearly 600,000 volumes of *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* were ordered in 2006; the fifth printing is now available.

Introductory efforts will culminate in “Worship Jubilee 2007,” a churchwide worship event designed to feature the flexibility of *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* and further the ongoing work of worship renewal throughout the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Worship Jubilee 2007 will be held in Chicago prior to the 2007 Churchwide Assembly.

Church Council Action:

The Rev. Joseph G. Crippen, chair of the Program and Services Committee, presented a proposed action concerning affirmation of *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*.

Hearing no discussion, Vice President Carlos E. Peña called for a vote.

VOTED:

CC07.04.31 *To recommend adoption by the 2007 Churchwide Assembly of the following resolution:*

To remember with joy that one of the six primary purposes of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is to “worship God in proclamation of the Word and administration of the sacraments and through lives of prayer, praise, thanksgiving, witness, and service” (ELCA constitutional provision 4.02.d.);

To applaud the 1997 statement of this church, *The Use of the Means of Grace: A Statement on the Practice of Word and Sacrament*, for the way that statement has contributed to the development of worship resources and continues to provide guidance for the ministry of Word and Sacrament;

To recall with gratitude the action of the Church Council in 2000 that authorized the “ELCA Next Generation of Worship Resources,” the churchwide effort that came to be known as Renewing Worship;

To acknowledge the subsequent action of the 2005 Churchwide Assembly regarding the ways in which the Renewing Worship effort:

- 1. reinforced the importance of widespread participation in the ongoing work of worship renewal;**
- 2. affirmed a collaborative approach to the development of worship resources, drawing on the wisdom of individuals, congregations, pastors, musicians, synodical bishops, teaching theologians and other leaders, institutions and agencies;**
- 3. demonstrated this church’s commitment to thorough liturgical and theological review of materials intended for use in worshipping assemblies; and**
- 4. encouraged and allowed for the completion of the new primary book of worship, *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*; and**

To express gratitude for:

- those who have provided leadership and oversight for the various facets of the development of *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*;**
- the widespread participation in introductory events, and to give thanks for the many individuals and synodical teams who have provided leadership in introducing *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*;**

To convey appreciation—through the national bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran

Church in Canada—to the pastors, bishops, and many individuals and congregations throughout the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada who contributed to the development and introduction of *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*;

To receive with thanksgiving *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* and celebrate the ways in which it:

- **bears the rich tradition of Christian worship practiced among Lutherans and, at the same time, seeks to renew that tradition in response to a generation of change in the Church and in the world;**
- **reflects a body of prayer and song that are worthy to hold in common, consistent with the commitment to the treasury of Christian worship affirmed in the Lutheran confessions;**
- **is grounded in Lutheran convictions about the centrality of the means of grace;**
- **continues to emphasize that freedom and flexibility in worship is a Lutheran inheritance, and therefore the book is designed to make more transparent the principle of fostering unity without imposing uniformity;**
- **represents the gifts of the breadth of the Church of Christ, and prizes the words and songs Lutherans hold in common with other Christians, while at the same time extending the particular accents of the Lutheran heritage as gifts to the whole Church; and**
- **reflects the understanding that worship is fundamentally about what God does, bringing to expression how God nourishes the people of the Church for mission and accompanies them as they bear the creative and redeeming Word of God, Jesus Christ, to the whole world; and**

To commit the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to the ongoing work of renewing worship, understanding that:

- **worship takes place in particular assemblies within particular contexts, yet every assembly gathered by the Holy Spirit for worship is connected to the whole Church;**
- **each Christian assembly worships in the midst of an ever-changing world; and**
- **worship is renewed in order to be both responsible and responsive to the world that the Church is called to serve.**

Vice President Peña informed the council that the remainder of the Program and Services Committee report would be addressed the following day.

DWELLING IN THE WORD

Vice President Carlos E. Peña called upon Ms. Ann F. Niedringhaus to address the council in a “Dwelling in the Word” segment. Ms. Niedringhaus invited the group to scan with her scattered images like snapshots from her “nomadic life.” In a Chicago duplex, she sits in her mother’s lap as she reads the daily story from *Marian’s Big Book of Bible Stories*. In a New Jersey parsonage, she stands next to her pastor father while he shows her Hebrew flashcards and explains to her how difficult it is to interpret the text, even when one knows Hebrew. Next come two pictures: her confirmation class gathered outside the church and her St. Olaf College graduation picture, both taken in places where every question was allowed and the Bible was explored freely. In a Saskatchewan garden, she and her father are weeding together while they argue about the Bible. Next are two pictures, taken seven and a half years apart, but similar, showing a mother, a father, and a toddler; in each, the little girl is pushing a walker. The smiling faces mask the anguish of

adjustment, and also hide that dwelling in the Word that was the only way to survive those times. In San Salvador, El Salvador, Martin Barro, an eventual martyr, testifies to his faith while he challenges his American visitors to criticize their government's policies. In a group home in a Saint Paul suburb, a young woman with disabilities sits on her bed finishing her daily Bible reading, looking at index cards given to her by her grandmother with Bible verses on them, verses about God's love and care, cards that the grandmother had carried herself and added to after her own husband's death. Finally, there are two pictures, groups of family and friends in each, one at Holden Village and the other at a Duluth, Minnesota, ELCA congregation—pictures taken in places where every question is allowed and the Bible is explored freely.

UPDATE FROM THE LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION REGIONAL OFFICER (Agenda V.A.1)

Church Council Information:

Ms. Kathy J. Magnus, Lutheran World Federation regional officer for North America, reminded the council that this year marked the 60th anniversary of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF). What began as a small group of committed Lutherans at the end of World War II has grown to become an organization encompassing 140 Lutheran churches in 78 countries, representing 66 million Lutherans, who can make a difference. She pointed out that a number of resources had been developed this year, including an interpretive map and a bulletin insert, both available through the Augsburg Fortress distribution center. She also pointed out the Web address, where additional resources, such as a special hymn commissioned for use this year, can be found. The story of the LWF is best told through pictures, said Ms. Magnus, so she showed the council a DVD of pictures and music that presented the history of the LWF in images by decade and area and portrayed examples of the wide variety of ministries being carried out around the globe. Looking toward the future, LWF sees itself being involved in questions of human rights, the environment, food, health, water, as it seeks reconciliation and hope for the earth's peoples. Ms. Magnus concluded, "66 million Lutherans do make a difference."

JOYS AND CONCERNS

Mr. Bradley Dokken, whose wife serves two parishes, reported that on February 17 the country church had burned to ground as the result of an electrical fire. On March 18 the congregation decided to rebuild and was holding a ground-blessing ceremony, even as the Church Council met. Construction was to begin immediately in hopes of holding worship in the new building by Christmas Eve. He stated that the response from this church had been outstanding, with donations of everything from hymnals to processional crosses. All sorts of people were asking what was needed and how they could help. He thanked everyone who had expressed concern.

Mr. Allen E. Thomas reported that his daughter, who had undergone radical brain surgery in 2002, was graduating from high school in June. He also shared that he and his wife would be celebrating their 25th wedding anniversary on April 24.

The Rev. Keith A. Hunsinger, whose wife of 31 years died in August 2004 after a two-year bout with lung cancer, announced that in February he had become engaged to a friend of long-standing, and the two were to be married on May 4 in the chapel of the Lutheran Center. He thanked Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson and the Rev. Michael L. Burk for the use of the chapel and for the assistance of Ms. Mary Beth Nowak in the wedding planning. He asked for the prayers of those present.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Secretary Lowell G. Almen reminded everyone that Evening Prayer would begin at about 5:00 P.M. in the chapel of the Lutheran Center. Members would be on their own for dinner, and breakfast would be served at 7:00 A.M. Members were advised to check out of their rooms in the morning and leave their luggage at the bellstand.

Ms. Ann F. Niedringhaus proposed that those who wanted to dine together make plans following the legal update.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: LEGAL UPDATE

The Church Council entered into executive session at 4:50 p.m. for the purposes of a briefing from the general counsel, Mr. Phillip H. Harris. No minutes were kept of that session.

RECESS

The fifth plenary session of the April 2007 meeting of the Church Council recessed at 5:05 P.M. The members of the council then gathered for a service of Evening Prayer, led by Ms. Sandra Schlesinger.

**Monday, April 16, 2007
Plenary Session VI**

Prior to the beginning of the sixth plenary session of the April 2007 meeting of the Church Council, the Rev. Michael L. Burk, executive for worship and liturgical resources and chaplain to the Church Council, led a service of Morning Prayer.

Mr. Carlos E. Peña, vice president of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and chair of the Church Council, opened the sixth plenary session at 8:23 A.M.

DWELLING IN THE WORD

Mr. Samuel F. Schlouch spoke of his journey through Holy Week, which he had begun in New Orleans, where the board of the Lutheran Youth Organization was meeting. On Palm Sunday, they worshiped at Bethlehem Lutheran Church, a primarily African American ELCA congregation. He had been inspired as the congregation in that devastated city sang the spiritual "Were You There?" He said that he left that place energized with the Spirit to go back to Augustana College. That Wednesday at Evening Prayer with the Lutheran Campus Ministry at Augustana College, Rock Island, the closing hymn was once again was "Were You There?" Hearing it, he was transported back to Bethlehem Church and the experience he had there. As Holy Week progressed, he went home to Springfield, Ill., where he sang at the Good Friday service. Once again, the closing hymn was "Were You There?" He was taken back not only to Bethlehem Church but also to Augustana College as the congregation at Grace Church in Springfield sang. In the course of one week, Mr. Schlouch concluded, he had experienced the same song in three very different settings within this church. It served to remind him that, even though this church faces many issues and is very diverse, its members are nonetheless united.

**CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTIONS REMOVED FROM THE *EN BLOC* ACTION
(Agenda IV; Exhibit B, Part 1)**

RULES FOR THE 2007 CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY

Metropolitan Chicago Synod (5A)

WHEREAS, the Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) is the highest legislative authority of this church and will next meet August 6-11, 2007, (ELCA constitutional provision 12.11.); and

WHEREAS, the Church Council of the ELCA is the interim legislative authority of this church and, as such, must act in accordance with the actions and policies of the Churchwide Assembly (ELCA 14.13.); and

WHEREAS, under the ELCA bylaws, the Church Council has authority to amend,¹ by a simple majority, "Definitions and Guidelines,"² "Vision and Expectations,"³ and the policy on reinstatement to the rosters of this church;⁴ and

WHEREAS, under the ELCA bylaws, the Churchwide Assembly does not itself have authority to amend these same policies but does have authority to direct the Church Council to amend them; and

WHEREAS, it does not seem appropriate that a greater majority should be required for the Churchwide Assembly to direct the Church Council to amend these policies when the Church Council can amend them on its own initiative by a simple majority; and

WHEREAS, the Church Council will recommend rules for the 2007 Churchwide Assembly; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Chicago Synod Council recommends and requests that the ELCA Church Council not recommend any rule for the 2007 Churchwide Assembly that would require anything other than a simple majority for matters relating to the rostered service of persons in a committed same-gender relationship; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this recommendation and request does not apply to those matters that are specified by the ELCA

¹ For this authority, see the minutes of the April 2005 ELCA Church Council meeting, p. 90, explanation by ELCA Secretary Lowell Almen.

² The legislative basis for "Definitions and Guidelines" is contained in ELCA bylaws 20.71.11. and 20.71.12.

³ The legislative basis for "Vision and Expectations" is contained in ELCA bylaws 7.31.11., 7.31.13., and 7.51.03.b.

⁴ The legislative basis for the policy on reinstatement is contained in ELCA Bylaws 7.31.15. and 7.52.13.

Constitution and Bylaws themselves as requiring a two-thirds supermajority for adoption by the Churchwide Assembly; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the secretary of this synod will transmit a copy of this resolution to the vice president of the ELCA (Mr. Carlos Peña), the secretary of the ELCA (Pr. Lowell Almen), and the chair of the Church Council's Legal and Constitutional Review Committee (Pr. Kenneth Ruppard).

Text of the ELCA bylaws cited in the preceding resolution

- 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.
- 20.71.12.** The Committee on Appeals shall present to the Church Council for consideration and recommendation a process and definitions, as required in bylaw 20.71.11.
- 7.31.11.** Persons admitted to and continued in the ordained ministry of this church shall satisfactorily meet and maintain the following, as defined by this church in its governing documents and in policies developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council:
- commitment to Christ;
 - acceptance of and adherence to the Confession of Faith of this church;
 - willingness and ability to serve in response to the needs of this church;
 - academic and practical qualifications for ministry, including leadership abilities and competence in interpersonal relationships;
 - commitment to lead a life worthy of the Gospel of Christ and in so doing to be an example in faithful service and holy living;
 - receipt and acceptance of a letter of call; and
 - membership in a congregation of this church.
- 7.31.13.** **Preparation and Approval.** Except as provided below, a candidate for ordination as a pastor shall have:
- membership in a congregation of this church and registration, by its pastor and council, of the candidate with the candidacy committee;
 - been endorsed by and under the guidance and supervision of the appropriate committee for at least a year before being approved for ordination;
 - satisfactorily completed the requirements for the Master of Divinity degree from an accredited theological school in North America, including practical preparation, as defined by the appropriate churchwide unit, such as internship and supervised clinical work;
 - completed at least one year of residency in a seminary of this church, except when waived by the appropriate committee in consultation with the faculty of a seminary of this church;
 - been recommended for approval by the faculty of a seminary of this church;
 - been examined and approved by the appropriate committee according to criteria, policies, and procedures established by the appropriate churchwide unit after consultation with the Conference of Bishops and adoption by the Church Council;
 - been recommended to a congregation or other entity by the bishop of the synod to which the candidate has been assigned for first call in accordance with the procedures recommended by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council; and
 - received and accepted a properly issued and attested letter of call.
- 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:
- 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
 - those who are approved, subsequent to September 1, 1993, as associates in ministry in this church according to policies and procedures developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council.
 - 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.
- Accountability for specific calls shall be exercised according to the policies and procedures of this church. Such persons may resign from the roster or may elect to be rostered in another ELCA category by meeting the appropriate criteria established by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and by relinquishing their previous roster category.

- 7.31.15. Reinstatement.** A person seeking reinstatement to the ordained ministry as a pastor, whether having served previously in this church or in one of its predecessor bodies, shall be registered by the pastor and council of the congregation of which such a person is a member with the candidacy committee of the synod in which the person was last rostered or, upon mutual agreement of the synodical bishops involved, after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church, with the candidacy committee of the synod of current residence. The person then shall be interviewed, examined, and approved by the candidacy committee under criteria, policies, and procedures recommended by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council. In this process, the committee shall review the circumstances related to the termination of earlier service together with subsequent developments. The person is reinstated after receiving and accepting a letter of call to serve as a pastor in this church.
- 7.52.13. Reinstatement.** A person seeking reinstatement as an associate in ministry, whether having previously served in this church or in one of its predecessor bodies, a deaconess of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, or a diaconal minister of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be endorsed by the pastor and council of the congregation of this church of which such a person is a member, and interviewed, examined, and approved for reinstatement by the synodical candidacy committee under criteria and procedures recommended by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council. In this process, the committee shall review the circumstances related to the termination of earlier service together with subsequent developments. The person is reinstated after receiving and accepting a letter of call in this church.
- a. Any person removed from a lay roster that existed on December 31, 1987, as cited herein, who seeks to return to active lay roster status must apply for acceptance to a roster of this church under the standards, criteria, policies, and procedures that apply to the official rosters of laypersons, as identified in 7.51.03.b. This same requirement shall apply to those certified during the period of January 1, 1988, through September 1, 1993, as associates in ministry of this church.
 - b. A person on the roster of a previous church body or a person on the roster of associates in ministry of this church, who was so certified during the period between January 1, 1988, and September 1, 1993, shall relinquish such a roster category upon being received and accepted on another roster of this church.

Church Council:

Secretary Lowell G. Almen moved the resolution.

Mr. Richard L. Wahl explained that he had asked to have this resolution removed from *en bloc* consideration because he thought it offered an opportunity for the council to understand better the range of options available to the Churchwide Assembly or to Synod Assemblies as they address the issues to which the resolution makes reference. Mr. Wahl stated that it would be helpful to him to reaffirm what constitutional provisions apply when a Synod Assembly recommends in a memorial to the Churchwide Assembly a change in "Vision and Expectations." He expressed his understanding that this would require a majority vote by the Synod Assembly and that such a recommendation would then come to the Churchwide Assembly, which by a majority vote could direct the Church Council to revise "Vision and Expectations." He asked whether his interpretation was correct.

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson asked Mr. Wahl to restate his question.

Mr. Wahl repeated his understanding that Synod Assemblies may submit a memorial to the Churchwide Assembly requesting that the Church Council change "Vision and Expectations" and that only a simple majority vote of the assembly would be required to approve this request.

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson reiterated his hesitation at giving opinions in the abstract. Any opinion stated in the abstract would become concrete as it might be reported through this church, he feared, and the bishop was concerned that he not be seen as having already ruled before any actions come before the assembly. After conferring with the secretary, the presiding bishop stated that memorials from Synod Assemblies addressing the Churchwide Assembly require a majority to be adopted. Memorials acted upon by the Churchwide Assembly also take a majority. In the case at hand, he offered a reminder that what the Churchwide Assembly would be dealing with, hypothetically speaking, should memorials relative to the subject come before the assembly, would be the recommendation of the Memorials Committee, and not knowing what that recommendation will be, it would depend on what vehicle the recommendation employed for the change. If the resolution called for changing bylaws or the constitution, then a two-thirds vote would be required. If the vehicle were the Churchwide Assembly instructing the Committee on Appeals (in the case of "Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline") or the Vocation and Education program unit (in the case of "Vision and Expectations") to make changes in those documents, it was the presiding bishop's understanding that the change would

take a majority, because there is nothing in *Robert's Rules* or in the assembly's rules that would call for a supermajority for that kind of action. He stressed that the chair does not rule, however, until there is something before the assembly, and that the assembly holds the authority to make the final decisions and can always overrule the chair.

Mr. Wahl then asked how the Churchwide Assembly could take ownership of "Vision and Expectations" away from the Church Council. As he read the constitution, that would require a bylaw change to 7.31.11. and 7.31.13. He asked for comment.

Presiding Bishop Hanson responded that this way of altering the documents had been addressed earlier by Secretary Lowell G. Almen. Because it would require changes to the governing documents, he suggested, it would require a two-thirds vote, and could not be completed in the course of a single assembly because of reporting requirements.

Secretary Almen replied that because it was a question of a bylaw change, it could in fact take place at the 2007 Churchwide Assembly. If that were the case, the process for amendment of the bylaws would need to be followed in order for the assembly to take ownership of the documents in question.

Mr. Wahl asked for confirmation that this was because a Church Council policy was embedded within a bylaw under the "Ministry" section (Chapter 7) of the constitution.

Secretary Almen responded that there was almost a "litany" throughout Chapter 7 related to ministry policies in this church: the policy is proposed by the appropriate unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council. As he understood Mr. Wahl's scenario, he said, it would involve an amendment to those bylaws that would remove that process and grant the Churchwide Assembly ownership of "Vision and Expectations." For clarity's sake, the secretary stated that he needed to distinguish between "Vision and Expectations" and "Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline," because the latter is assigned to the Committee on Appeals.

The Rev. Jeffrey "Jeff" B. Sorenson mentioned that he had seen proposed memorial language that would "direct" the Church Council to act in a certain manner. He asked whether that would be seen as taking ownership of the documents, thus requiring a supermajority, or whether such an action would require a simple majority.

Secretary Almen observed once again that it is very difficult to answer speculative questions on resolutions that are not in front of the body, because the precise wording of any resolution can have an impact upon whether requirement for a two-thirds vote would apply in certain instances. With that qualification, the secretary stated that it appeared to him that language directing that something shall occur would require a majority vote as long as it did not require revision of a constitutional provision or bylaw.

Pr. Sorenson asked what the procedure would be from that point, and whether the Church Council would be bound by the direction of the Churchwide Assembly or if the council would have the "free rein" that comes with the constitution's establishment of the council's ownership of the document.

Secretary Almen called Pr. Sorenson's question fascinating, and Presiding Bishop Hanson stated that it was one that was being pondered already. Secretary Almen stated that ELCA 14.13., which addresses the scope of authority of the Church Council and defines interim legislative authority, grants such authority "as long as the actions of the Church Council do not conflict with the actions of and policies established by the Churchwide Assembly."

Presiding Bishop Hanson commented that, whatever the Churchwide Assembly does in this arena of possible actions, and whatever the resulting decisions that might be before the Church Council, he hoped that the end result would not be perceived as a matter of "who had the most savvy in navigating complex governing documents and rules" but rather that it would reflect a church body deeply engaged in prayer and thoughtful, respectful conversation, and that out of that conversation the wisdom of the body—hopefully Spirit-led for the sake of the Gospel and the life of the world—would prevail.

The Rev. Keith A. Hunsinger observed that there had been discussion on the Internet and the periphery of discussions in the council room about the language of "ownership" of "Vision and Expectations." He stated his understanding that some of "Vision and Expectations" was embedded in bylaws. He asked for clarification of the status of "Vision and Expectations" within the documents of this church.

Secretary Almen responded that the document exists on the basis of the provision made for such ministry policies under Chapter 7 of the churchwide constitution, in the process outlined in several of the bylaws. Given the prescribed sequence (developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and then adopted by the Church Council), it did not appear to him that one could look upon ownership of that document or other ministry policies as unilaterally the possession of any in that trinity of process. His recollection was that when any of those policies had needed amendment, the process had begun with step one and continued through the council action. This

process ensures collective responsibility as assigned in the bylaws.

Presiding Bishop Hanson asked Secretary Almen to outline the differences between “Vision and Expectations” and “Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline.”

Secretary Almen stated that the “Vision and Expectations” documents were exactly what their titles implied: the vision and the expectations that this church has of its rostered leaders. The pattern of that document, according to the secretary, is that of a statement of expectations, but it is not a juridical document. It is not the document that forms the basis for disciplinary action, even though it is the document that in conversation often receives the most attention. In fact, he continued, the juridical document is “Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline,” the document that governs in an ecclesiastical “legal” sense (though the secretary stressed that the constitution does not use such language to describe that document). “Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline” serves as the code for this church’s process. He pointed out that specific reference to “Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline” was actually in ELCA bylaw 20.71.11. This document, according to this bylaw, establishes “clear and uniform application of the grounds for discipline” in the various categories described in that chapter of the constitution.

Mr. William R. Lloyd Jr. asked whether the Churchwide Assembly had the authority to direct the Committee on Appeals to change the grounds for discipline, and, if so, whether such action would require a majority or a two-thirds vote.

Secretary Almen cautioned that he was not the chair, and there was no specific language before the body to which he could refer, but he believed that, since it was a question of a resolution of sentiment and judgment of the assembly that would not otherwise require a two-thirds vote, unless it were also envisioning the amendment of the bylaws, it appeared that a majority vote would be all that was required.

Mr. Lloyd asked if it were within the authority of the Churchwide Assembly to direct changes in the document.

The secretary replied that this might be a matter that had not been envisaged in the drafting of the documents. He warned that he was speaking hypothetically, and that he was not issuing an official opinion. It seemed to him, though, that since the Committee on Appeals reports a summary of its decisions to the Churchwide Assembly, the Churchwide Assembly would be the highest legislative authority (albeit it not a juridical authority) and could express its opinion on a more general matter. The Churchwide Assembly does not have the authority to alter any decision of the Committee on Appeals, nor to engage in discussion of the committee’s report of its action.

Mr. Lloyd, acknowledging the *caveats* voiced by the secretary, asked whether a majority of the Churchwide Assembly could instruct the Committee on Appeal to propose a change in its rules, and then that proposal for change would come to the Church Council for action.

The secretary responded affirmatively.

Mr. Wahl stated that, in his review of the constitutional provisions for the discipline hearing committees, he noted that there was no reference to public statements following the conclusion of a discipline committee decision. He asked whether there were a precedent for public statements following a discipline committee hearing, and whether the council should be considering whether it might be appropriate to discourage or preclude such statements for the good of this church.

Secretary Almen replied that he did not have the many pages of rules about the discipline process memorized, and could not respond on that basis. To the question of whether there was precedent for one or both parties in a situation to have published or commented on the decision of a discipline hearing panel, the answer was “Yes.” Those who are obligated to provide for the process and ensure its orderly functioning do not publish such documents, however, he pointed out.

Vice President Peña reminded the council that it needed to continue with its agenda.

The Rev. Steven L. Ullestad, bishop of the Northeastern Iowa Synod, returned to Presiding Bishop Hanson’s comments about entering into the conversation prayerfully. He indicated that the bishops could be of assistance in the invitation to prayer as well as in making certain that all voting members have the same information, which could help engender a sense of trust. He asked whether there might be a document that could come to the bishops and council members in pre-assembly orientation materials to help articulate the distinction between those things that require a two-thirds vote and those that require a simple majority.

Vice President Peña called for a vote on the resolution.

VOTED:

CC07.04.32

**To receive the resolution of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod;
To acknowledge that the recommendation of the Church Council to the 2007 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America related to the “Rules of Organization and Procedure” will be the response of the Church Council to the resolution of the synod; and
To request that the secretary of this church notify the synod of this action.**

REPORT OF THE PRESIDING BISHOP: UPDATE ON TECHNOLOGY
(Agenda II.A.1)

RAISER’S EDGE DATABASE

(Agenda VI.D)

Background:

At its November 2006 meeting, the Church Council had received the following update from the Rev. Donald M. Hallberg, executive for Development Services and president of the Foundation of the ELCA: “The ... Budget and Finance committee, along with the Foundation Trustees and Development Services board have heard reports for some time regarding an integrated donor database for the churchwide offices. I am pleased to report that [the] Raiser’s Edge [software] has been implemented successfully. I am grateful to colleagues within the churchwide office who have worked diligently to bring this gigantic task into being. The Office of the Treasurer’s receipt-processing department is now entering gifts into the unified donor database, along with life-income agreements that are placed in the same database from the ELCA Foundation. This is also true for Global Mission support, World Hunger and Disaster Appeal, and all other churchwide programs that receive financial gifts. This eventually will provide greater efficiency, better use of development officer time, and research and integration between Development Services and the Foundation. We have already experienced very positive results. Gratitude goes to the Office of the Bishop and the Church Council for allocating the funds to bring resource development within the churchwide offices into a modern era. The next phase will be significant: to coordinate all databases within the churchwide offices.”

Church Council Information:

Mr. Patrick M. Nagaro, director for integrated database programs, demonstrated the Raiser’s Edge donor database program, emphasizing the importance of communication in its implementation. He reviewed the previous and the next steps in the ongoing development and implementation of the program. He emphasized the cost efficiencies that could be realized by careful tracking of information, avoiding duplicate mailings, better targeting appeals, and strengthening the relationships between this church and its constituents. He reported that the software had “gone live” in October 2006, and that four databases had been converted, including three large donor databases and one database of constituent names from Vocation and Education. Intensive training had been provided to the churchwide staff. Policies and procedures documentation had been developed before implementation of the software. As a result of the database integration, there were now 295,528 active constituents listed, with 10,000 of those being congregations. There were currently 5,025 projects linked to gifts from donors, with 1,500 of those endowment funds. The number of gifts processed since October numbered more than 50,000, with only eight staff members processing the gifts. Mr. Nagaro emphasized that communication with constituents was at the heart of the project. Phase 1 was now complete, he reported. Future steps included streamlining credit card giving. Analysis of the database to identify potential donors of major gifts also would be carried out. There were plans also to integrate the official congregation and roster databases into the system.

The Rev. Sarah J. Stumme inquired whether, looking beyond fund raising, consideration was being given to integration of the congregation roster database so that the system could do such things as provide information about ministries and ministry partners. Mr. Nagaro responded that other uses were being investigated.

Ms. Judith Anne Bunker raised the question of privacy issues. Mr. Nagaro explained that this was an important issue, and mentioned that the auditors had wanted to ensure privacy. Not all staff, for example, are able to see Social Security numbers contained in the database. Credit card numbers are not housed in the database. Connection to data

from outside is on a secure server. Staff members with access to the database are required to sign a confidentiality statement that had been reviewed by Human Resources.

The Rev. Kevin S. Kanouse, bishop of the Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod, asked whether there was hope or expectation of connecting synodical databases with the churchwide database. Mr. Nagaro thought that this connection would be a good idea, although it would require further discussion. Presiding Bishop Hanson encouraged Bp. Kanouse to promote the idea with his colleagues in the Conference of Bishops and to take a leadership position in championing the idea.

The Rev. Jennifer J. Thomas mentioned that the Blue Ribbon Committee on Mission Funding had discussed the idea of integrating the churchwide database with synodical databases. The committee's hope was that some synods would have that sort of and would be willing to share information on their constituents, specifically for mission interpretation purposes. She reported that there had been a certain amount of negative feedback to this idea.

Mr. Grieg L. Anderson asked whether this program might be the tool for a wider database. He expressed his vision of a day in which there might be millions of households listed in such a database so that this church might communicate with all of its members. He wondered whether this particular database could be expanded to meet such a need. Mr. Nagaro responded that this was "absolutely" the case. He judged that the program had tremendous potential, because the database was huge and the best possible server had been obtained to house it. He described the possibilities for such uses as "endless."

Mr. Anderson asked whether protections could be put into place so that data that came from sources that wanted it protected or restricted to certain purposes could be assured of those restrictions. Mr. Nagaro responded affirmatively. He cautioned, however, that one should place on computer systems only what one wants seen. One should not place on shared systems information that one wants kept confidential. Within the software there was the possibility of securing individual items. However, in the case of personal information such as "Only wants to work with this gift planner" or other such private preferences, Mr. Nagaro stated that he would not encourage such information being placed in the database. As a centralized database, one wants users to have a complete picture of a constituent.

Returning to the question of synods sharing information for the database, Mr. Anderson asked how the churchwide organization might assure synods that their information would be used in careful ways, so that synods would have confidence and a sense that everyone was working together and in one another's mutual interest. Mr. Nagaro replied that, from the outset, there had been a desire to establish protocols for how the database could be used, because people were concerned that other fundraising areas not "borrow" donors for their own purposes. There would have to be an administrative process for accessing the names. Per the confidentiality report, names could not be taken and placed on another computer to be used for solicitation. The planners had done their best to ensure that this concern would be honored. An administrative process with sign-offs had been put in place to be certain that information was guarded.

Pr. Stumme commented that her congregation was going through the process of creating a congregational database designed for communicating with one another and managing ministries. She encouraged integration of a database with the general membership of this church. She understood the privacy concerns, but also thought that to some degree this was a "generational" issue, since persons of her generation assume that they have given up their privacy in these days of the World Wide Web. She stated that money often follows activity and experiences, and argued that following up with seminarians and Lutheran college students based on their participation, rather than on their donor status, could yield exciting results.

Presiding Bishop Hanson observed that the organization was struggling with responsible controls on the information, but not controls in an effort to be possessive of that which belonged to all the expressions of this church for the sake of capacity in mission. He praised the staff and the magnitude of their accomplishments to date, and asked the council to express its gratitude to Mr. Nagaro in particular for his leadership of the effort. The council responded with applause.

ELECTRONIC DISTRIBUTION OF CHURCH COUNCIL MATERIALS

(Agenda VI.E)

Background:

The Office of the Presiding Bishop, in consultation with the Communication Services unit, had reviewed both current and future possibilities for electronic distribution of Church Council materials. It is anticipated that both distribution and access for materials will be improved within the year, but several volunteers are participating in a transitional plan that provides the materials for each meeting electronically. The volunteers include Ms. Judith Anne Bunker, the Rev. Joseph G. Crippen, Mr. Bradley Dokken, Ms. Norma J. Hirsch, Ms. Sandra Schlesinger, the Rev. Jeffrey "Jeff" B. Sorenson, the Rev. Jennifer J. Thomas, Mr. David Truland, and Mr. Gary L. Wipperman. Advisors include Mr. Daniel J. Lehmann, editor of *The Lutheran* magazine; Ms. Beth A. Lewis, president and chief executive officer of Augsburg Fortress, Publishers; and the Rev. Peter Rogness, bishop of the Saint Paul Area Synod.

During the transitional period:

1. Material for each meeting will continue to be mailed to all members on paper.
2. Members who have requested material on a CD will receive one when they arrive in Chicago. The CD will contain all of the documents, including any revisions. Revised pages or additional documents will be provided directly either on paper or by use of a thumb drive. Some of the volunteers may use the CD exclusively for the entire meeting and give feedback on the experience.
3. In the future, the new Raiser's Edge (Blackbaud) software will provide Web-based opportunities for secure access to information about council meetings, including an archive of minutes. A demonstration of the use of the Blackbaud system will be given during the meeting.

Mr. Paul D. Edison-Swift, director for interactive media and networks in the Communication Services unit, provided an overview of future options for Church Council members to receive and access information electronically. In preparation for the overview, the following summary was provided:

- The ELCA Church Council currently has an e-group on Ecnnet/LutherLink, which is primarily used for group announcements and discussion. Most council members participate in the e-group through e-mail.
- With the implementation of a new content management system for www.elca.org, the Church Council may have a number of other online collaboration options available, including, but not limited to, private:
 1. Password-protected login. Church Council members who log onto ELCA.org will see additional navigation and features that other site visitors will not see.
 2. Discussion forums with notes readable on the Web or through a member's e-mail address.
 3. Live chat or white board can be used for note taking or keeping a transcript of some live discussions.
 4. File libraries are annotated with file contents, which can be searched for key words. The libraries can be used to upload or download files.
 5. Online directory: a current listing of Church Council members with as much contact information as members are willing to share within the council.
 6. Special announcement pages for announcements, reminders, and other information for reference and action.
 7. Group calendar with dates of interest to Church Council members, including automated e-mail reminders.
 8. Group surveys or polls.
 9. Blogs, image albums, and personal pages are also options for this private group.

Church Council members were invited to consider additional collaboration features that would be helpful to support the work of the council.

Church Council Information:

Mr. Paul D. Edison-Swift, director for interactive media and networks in the Communication Services unit, gave a PowerPoint presentation about Raiser's Edge brought to the Web, accessible to all users. Mr. Edison-Swift reported that the www.elca.org Web site was being redeveloped from the ground up on the basis of a content management system, a more contemporary way to run a Web site of the size and complexity of this church's site. Enhancements will include a more unified look and feel, a unified message and tone across the entire site, better navigation, and customization that would allow the site to recognize users who come to the site who have registered on earlier visits. One requirement of the planning was that the new site integrate with Raiser's Edge. Three vendors offered content management systems that lent themselves to this requirement. Mr. Edison-Swift pointed out that the recently redesigned Board of Pensions site,

along with many commercial sites, now had a "Please sign in" option. By signing in, one can have a customized view of elca.org. The revised site is not yet ready, but perhaps will be rolled out in spring of 2008. The site is huge and complicated, and takes a great deal of effort to move into a new format. Mr. Edison-Swift gave a brief demonstration of a site from one of the vendors who is catering to faith-based organizations. Each registered user will have a profile, and the hope is that the information in it can be drawn from the Raiser's Edge database. Profiles eventually can be updated by the user. The site could also offer a list of interest areas that would allow targeted information. Members of groups such as the Church Council would have the option of participating in discussion groups with their peers. Groups and organizations could also have the option of creating Weblogs. There would also be the possibility of sharing documents and maintaining a document library that could allow for updates even as a meeting was going on. Event photos also could be posted. He stressed that the site could be tailored to help support the way members do the work of this church in a timely, cost-effective manner. Log-ins would also give access to other aspects of the site such as "Support ELCA—Donate now," which would offer a donation interface that could be personalized based on giving history. Mr. Edison-Swift solicited feedback from council members as the project continues.

Mr. Gary L. Wipperman asked if the process of vendor selection were underway currently.

Mr. Edison-Swift responded that a vendor selection was to be made by May 15, with proposals due the week of the council meeting. There are three primary vendors in the bidding process: SiteCorps (the vendor that provided the system for the Board of Pensions site), Blackbaud NetCommunity (which provided the platform for the Reformed Church in America's site, www.rca.org) and Convio (the system just chosen by the United Church of Christ for their Web site www.ucc.org).

REPORT OF THE PROGRAM AND SERVICES COMMITTEE (CONTINUED)

(Agenda II.E.5)

The Rev. Joseph G. Crippen, chair of the Program and Services Committee, continued with that committee's report.

WORLD HUNGER APPEAL

(Agenda III.F.5)

Background:

In fall of 1998, staff of the World Hunger Appeal and Program in the former divisions for Congregational Ministries and Church in Society discussed with a variety of groups the possibility of using the 25th anniversary of the World Hunger Program in 1999 to encourage renewed interest and giving for the World Hunger Appeal. At its October 1998 meeting, the Conference of Bishops voted to encourage the Church Council to affirm plans for a 25th anniversary celebration of the World Hunger program as a special accent in this church during 1999 and called on congregations and individuals to support this effort. The bishops also affirmed a goal of raising \$25 million in honor of the 25th anniversary. Since that time, the World Hunger Appeal has grown and in 2006 reached a milestone, with more than \$20 million contributed in one year.

Church Council Action:

The Rev. Joseph G. Crippen introduced the proposed action, pointing out a minor editorial change and a small addition. In the last paragraph the words "and surpass" had been inserted to emphasize that the \$25 million goal was not to be the stopping point, but that this church should continue striving to increase the amount each year.

Hearing no discussion, Vice President Carlos E. Peña called for a vote on the resolution.

VOTED:

CC07.04.33

To celebrate the milestone of more than \$20 million contributed in one year during fiscal 2006 to the World Hunger Appeal of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA);

To give thanks to God for the generosity of members in reaching for the first time this new level in annual giving to the World Hunger Appeal;

To remember with thanksgiving the vision and commitment of ELCA predecessor church bodies in initiating the World Hunger Appeal in 1974;

To rejoice in the fruitful efforts of churches as well as governmental and non-governmental agencies in the battle against hunger, resulting in numerically fewer people going to bed hungry in the world today than in 1974, in spite of the substantial increase in the population of the globe;

To express abiding appreciation to the 1999 Churchwide Assembly for establishing the annual goal of \$25 million for World Hunger giving and for those who have used wisely and effectively the funds provided through the World Hunger Appeal of this church and its predecessors throughout the past 33 years, especially:

- a. the Lutheran World Federation, the 140-member communion of churches through which the ELCA joins in coordinated international efforts to respond to crises and engage in long-term, sustainable development work;
- b. Lutheran World Relief, a ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS), individuals, and parish groups in international relief, development, advocacy, and social responsibility;
- c. missionaries of the ELCA who witness to God's grace through their service and advocacy on behalf of persons living in extreme poverty;
- d. ecumenical partners and others of good will with whom this church serves in response to God's love in meeting human needs; and
- e. those who serve through congregations, synods, churchwide ministries, community organizations, and Lutheran agencies and institutions advocating for persons experiencing hunger and living in poverty;

To call upon each congregation of the ELCA to participate in the World Hunger Appeal and to invite members to contribute; and

To invite renewed efforts by members and congregations to reach and surpass the goal of \$25 million in annual giving by individuals and congregations to the World Hunger Appeal of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

CHURCHWIDE STRATEGY ON HIV AND AIDS

(Agenda III.F.4)

Background:

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, like its predecessor church bodies, has a long history of work related to HIV and AIDS. Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson and several representatives from this church participated in the International AIDS Conference and ecumenical pre-conference event in July 2006. Following the conference, Bishop Hanson encouraged consideration by the Church Council and the 2007 Churchwide Assembly of a request to develop a comprehensive churchwide strategy on HIV and AIDS.

A planning group was organized, which includes representatives from the Church in Society unit, the Global Mission unit, the Communication Services unit, and the Office of the Presiding Bishop. In November 2006, a larger group was convened involving members of an existing interunit staff working group on HIV and AIDS, missionaries, advocacy staff, and others. Prior to the meeting, staff conducted an inventory of existing work, policies, and funds that support AIDS ministries in this church. The meeting consisted of an asset-mapping process designed to lead to the development of a comprehensive strategy on AIDS ministries in this church.

Church Council Action:

The Rev. Joseph G. Crippen directed members to turn to p. 31 of the agenda for the resolution regarding this church's response to the HIV and AIDS crisis. He pointed out that the Whereas paragraphs had been deleted for reasons of length, but that the committee thought that they included important points that needed to be said. They were to be

reconstructed into a narrative that would be included in the background information that would be sent to voting members of the 2007 Churchwide Assembly in the *Pre-Assembly Reports*. He called upon the Rev. Rafael Malpica-Padilla, director of the Global Mission program unit, to introduce the resolution.

Pr. Malpica-Padilla reported that Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson, after his participation in the international AIDS conference in Toronto, called on churchwide staff to deepen and extend this church's participation in work on HIV and AIDS. Pr. Malpica-Padilla explained that the resolution before the council called upon the ELCA to commit itself to a deeper engagement in addressing the AIDS pandemic, to express solidarity with people living with HIV and AIDS, to encourage this church in all its expressions to continue and extend their ministries among and with people living with HIV and AIDS, and to convey the deep appreciation of this church to all those who care for and support those living with this condition and to those who seek a cure. Pr. Malpica-Padilla repeated what Pr. Crippen had said about the Whereas paragraphs, then went on to give examples of the people whose lives lie behind the words of those paragraphs. He reviewed this church's efforts in the past to respond to the pandemic domestically and internationally through education, prevention, palliative care, prevention of mother-to-child transmission, and the care of orphans. Through the extraordinary support of the World Hunger Appeal, this church was able to fund fully hunger projects for this year both domestically and globally, a fact that is important because of the strong link between hunger and poverty and HIV infection rates. More than \$1 million of the surplus of the World Hunger Appeal had been allocated to support the response to HIV and AIDS. Half of that would go to support the ELCA churchwide strategy. The other half would go to support the Lutheran World Federation's HIV and AIDS program for 2007-2009.

Pr. Crippen reviewed the key points of the resolution.

Vice President Peña opened the floor to discussion.

Ms. Faith A. Ashton, speaking as an HIV researcher, expressed her pride in this church's efforts to respond to this disease, along with its partners in the Lutheran World Federation. She reported that the National Institutes for Health (NIH) had made the major clinical researchers in the U.S. open trial sites in Africa eight years earlier. Two sites that Pr. Malpica-Padilla had mentioned in his talk, one in Malawi and one in South Africa, were affiliated with her program. She stated her belief that this churchwide strategy would be beneficial, given the continued stigma associated with HIV.

Pr. Crippen explained that the strategy would change this church's response from a stance of short-term crisis management to one of long-term engagement.

Mr. Gary L. Wipperman pointed out that throughout the resolution there were references to the "epidemic," though in one instance it was termed a "pandemic." He asked whether this usage had been intentional.

The Rev. Rebecca S. Larson, director of Church in Society, proposed that all such references be changed to "pandemic."

Pr. Crippen accepted this change as a friendly amendment.

Hearing no further discussion, Vice President Carlos E. Peña called for a vote on the resolution.

VOTED:

CC07.04.34 *To recommend adoption by the 2007 Churchwide Assembly of the following resolution:*

- 1. To commit the ELCA in America to a deeper engagement in addressing the AIDS pandemic through the development of a churchwide strategy for action in the coming decade, which will:**
 - a. build on the experience and commitments of the past and the strength of ELCA congregations, synods, churchwide structures, institutions, and agencies;**
 - b. utilize the best thinking of ELCA experts, practitioners, congregational leaders, related institutions and agencies, and people living with HIV and AIDS, as well as ecumenical and global companions, in the development of this strategy;**

- c. express the ELCA's commitment to work in cooperation with the Lutheran World Federation, in tandem with ecumenical partners both in this country and throughout the world;
 - d. express the ELCA's commitment to engage proactively with others of good will in civil society and in government as they respond to the AIDS crisis; and
 - e. continue to move from crisis management to a more integrated, effective, and sustainable long-term response to the AIDS pandemic; and
2. To express the solidarity of the ELCA with all people who are living with HIV and AIDS and with their families, both in this country and throughout the world:
 - a. recognizing and giving thanks for the gifts, skills, and experience that people living with HIV and AIDS bring to addressing the pandemic and committing this church to work closely with them in its response;
 - b. rejecting categorically the stigma and discrimination that are at times associated with HIV and AIDS;
 - c. working to ensure universal access both to compassionate care and to effective treatment and prevention;
 - d. engaging in education to prevent the further spread of HIV and AIDS; and
 - e. providing a welcome in all aspects of church and congregational life to people living with or affected by HIV and AIDS; and
3. To encourage ELCA members, congregations, agencies and institutions, synods, and the churchwide organization, at the same time this strategy is being developed, to:
 - a. continue and extend their ministries among and with people living with HIV and AIDS;
 - b. pray for people directly affected by HIV and AIDS and for churches, communities, and governments, that they may have both the will and the wisdom to act boldly and effectively to address this crisis;
 - c. intensify their support for the second-mile "Stand with Africa" campaign as well as the broader World Hunger Appeal, which enable this church to assist companions throughout the world as they respond to the AIDS crisis; and
 - d. advocate with the U.S. government, urging it to:
 1. demonstrate global leadership to achieve agreed-upon international goals, including universal access to treatment, care and prevention by 2010;
 2. contribute its proportionate share to fund fully the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria;
 3. abolish its extraordinary requirements that make it difficult and painful for people living with HIV to receive a visa to enter the United States for any purpose, and prohibit discrimination against people living with HIV and AIDS; and
4. To convey the deep appreciation of this church:
 - a. to all those who provide care and support for those living with HIV and AIDS and those who seek a cure for this disease, in particular those members of this church who live out their Christian vocation as nurses, doctors, health researchers, and care providers;

- b. to ELCA pastors and congregations actively engaged in ministry with people living with HIV and AIDS as they support, counsel, and advocate with them for just and compassionate action in the church and in the wider society;
 - c. to all those who have provided financial support to HIV and AIDS research and care, both in this country and throughout the world;
 - d. to all those ELCA members whose financial gifts have enabled the ELCA to walk with companion churches in their response to the AIDS crisis, in particular through their “second mile” giving to the World Hunger Appeal’s “Stand with Africa” campaign and companion synod action;
 - e. to Lutheran social ministry organizations, hospitals, health facilities, and voluntary organizations, including the Lutheran AIDS Network (LANET), that provide assistance to people living with HIV and AIDS as well as leadership in church and society on this issue;
 - f. to the Lutheran World Federation, Lutheran World Relief, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, ecumenical agencies (both domestic and global), and others with which the ELCA partners to provide care, address the impact of HIV and AIDS in communities, prevent the further spread of the disease, and advocate with governments to step up their action in addressing this pandemic; and
 - g. to companion churches in other countries, with which the ELCA is privileged to walk in ministry, as they respond to often overwhelming human need resulting from the spread of HIV; and
5. To request that the Church in Society and Global Mission program units take the lead in developing this strategy, which will be brought to the Church Council for adoption in 2008 and reported to the 2009 Churchwide Assembly.

SEXUALITY STUDIES UPDATE

(Agenda VI.G; Agenda/MINUTES Exhibit K, Part 3)

Church Council Information:

Ms. Norma J. Hirsch, the Church Council advisor to the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality, commended the task force for its hard work and thoughtful deliberation. Some members have been working on the task force for years already and still have years ahead of them, she acknowledged. Ms. Hirsch also praised the support that was being received from staff members, naming in particular the Rev. Rebecca S. Larson, the Rev. Roger A. Willer, and the Rev. Kaari M. Reiersen, and their colleagues in the Church in Society unit. The third installment of the study was published in print and on the Web in December 2006. Earlier in April it had been made available in Spanish. A youth-friendly version is anticipated for this summer. Ms. Hirsch encouraged those present to participate in the study and to ask others to do so. Where possible, she urged that others attend and participate in hearings that would occur between March and September 2008. She also asked for early feedback in the Church Council process so that it could be most effectively integrated. The first draft is to be available for feedback in March 2008, with the final draft due early in 2009. She asked for continued prayer for the work of these servants of the Church. Ms. Hirsch thanked the council for the privilege of serving as its liaison to the task force and expressed her confidence that its work would be a gift to this church.

The Rev. Roger A. Willer, director for the department for studies of the Church in Society unit, reminded the council that the umbrella theme for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality remains “Journey Together Faithfully,” and observed that it had been one long journey of study and dialogue. While there might be a certain fatigue in that knowledge, he said, whenever he has had occasion to lead the study, he nonetheless had noticed a certain excitement and a strong appreciation. He observed that people recognize that this study “hits the bull’s eye” on many challenges in contemporary

culture and provides a valuable Lutheran engagement with them.

Pr. Willer highlighted the three areas with which the task force is working. First is the development of resources. He reminded those present that the “Free in Christ to Serve the Neighbor” DVD featuring Professors David L. Tiede and Timothy J. Wengert is available through SELECT Video Resources. The DVD offers in a summary form and through dialogue the same kind of Bible study provided by Prof. Wengert to the council. Pr. Willer stated that many persons find this DVD to be a useful resource. There is also a Spanish version. Church in Society continues to encourage use of the “Free in Christ to Serve the Neighbor” study. A number of staff members have been leading synod workshops, he reported. Within another week, there was to be a new page on the Web site with helps for using the study that will offer tips for using the study in constructive ways. The hope is that the use of study will snowball, with momentum gaining throughout the year. The task force was now turning attention to the first draft of the social statement on sexuality. A writing team would be meeting at the end of April. They will draft material on structure and content that the task force will then spend the summer discussing by e-mail. There is to be a meeting in October 2007, in conjunction with the Conference of Bishops meeting, with conversation on both groups’ agendas. Pr. Willer referred members to the timeline in the exhibits, highlighting the availability of the first draft in February or March 2008. He solicited questions and comments.

Mr. Grieg L. Anderson asked Pr. Willer to comment on the range and structure that was likely to emerge from the work of the task force, including whether the proposed social statement would be based in any way on the 1993 and 1994 statements of the predecessor bodies. Pr. Willer replied that the task force had designated the “Journey Together Faithfully” framework, with the three studies and the responses to them taken together, as the material to be engaged in the 2008 first draft of a social statement. While the task force is not unaware of the 1993 and 1994 statements and other conversations that have gone on in this church, the primary material is what happens during the study process, so the three studies would serve as the primary source—which is why it is so important that the task force have the responses and that the council champion the use of the third study, according to Pr. Willer.

The Rev. Jeffrey “Jeff” B. Sorenson asked if the task force had contemplated what would occur if the Churchwide Assembly or Church Council took actions in the intervening period and wondered how such actions might affect the task force’s timeline. Pr. Willer stated that he had not given attention to that possibility. However, the task force serves at the direction of council and the assembly, and would respond to any decisions made by those bodies.

Pr. Larson commented that the development of a social statement is governed by policies and procedures. The council or the assembly in making any decision would have to wrestle with concurrence or lack thereof with existing social policy in predecessor church body documents. She observed that the task force and Church in Society were “journeying together faithfully” in the process and are committed to the existing timeline, as required by “Policies and Procedures for Social Statements.”

Pr. Crippen, hearing no further discussion, reported that his committee had several other actions *en bloc*. Among them, he highlighted a resolution to expand this church’s full-communion relationship with the Moravian Church in America to include the East West Indies Province and to invite the Alaska Province to join the agreement as well. Pr. Crippen then reiterated Ms. Hirsch’s statement of the importance of the council’s engagement in the process for the social statement on sexuality. He asked that members send e-mails to him, Ms. Myrna J. Sheie, or any member of the Program and Services Committee with reactions to the process of involvement of council members with the social statement on education. This information would be important as protocols are developed for responding to the social statement on sexuality. He urged council members to get involved with the first draft of the statement so that the council would not speak only at the end of the process.

Pr. Crippen mentioned that he was ending his term on the Church Council, and reported that Program and Services had elected a new chair for the next biennium, the Rev. Steven P. Loy.

DWELLING IN THE WORD

Mr. Carlos E. Peña presented the “Dwelling in the Word” segment. He admitted that he was jealous, and asked the group to keep that in mind. As he had listened to the other “Dwelling in the Word” segments, he had heard that many of the speakers were raised Lutheran and had grown up in Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, and church camp. If not, many had parents who read the Bible to them regularly, giving a focus and foundation on which to build for future Bible study. His own children had that experience, learning Bible stories and songs. However, Mr. Peña had not had

that background. He was raised Roman Catholic, and he and his brothers had performed the minimum requirements for first communion, some eight weeks of catechism. His father, an immigrant from Mexico, was a product of Catholic schools. While Mr. Peña's parents thought it important that their children believe in God, church attendance was not a priority. The family attended Mass only on important occasions. There was no Sunday School, no Vacation Bible School, no Bible songs or church camp, and no Bible in the house. It was not until he joined a Lutheran church in his late 20s that he discovered what he had missed. He could relate to the young lady whose story had been told in Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson's sermon the previous day, who had stopped attending mass because of the need for confession. As he listened to the sermon, Mr. Peña was reminded of his own first experience with a Lutheran service and his surprise at seeing a public confession of sin. As his church attendance became more regular and he began attending his first Sunday School class, another world opened up. He had never imagined adults sitting together and discussing the Bible. He began to read the Bible and to apply what he had learned to his everyday life and to the life of his family. Fast-forwarding 25 years, he related his trip to the Holy Land, a moving and transforming experience. He saw with his own eyes the places where Christ had walked. That trip, coupled with trips to Istanbul, Nicaea, and Rome, helped him gain a broader perspective and increased his understanding of the Bible. While faith is abstract, he said, a matter of believing what we cannot see, his travels had provided concrete, physical evidence that brought the Bible to life for him. Our understanding increases, he observed, when we can relate that which we know to that which we do not know.

Many passages in Scripture have special meaning for Mr. Peña, most for "selfish reasons." The first is Psalm 23. Another favorite is Matthew 11:28-30, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, 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 in your souls, for my yoke is easy and my burden is light." The family prayed Psalm 23 when Mr. Peña's father died, and he has the text framed in his office. Both passages speak comfort and strength to him in difficult times. His favorite story, however, is that of Jonah. He can relate to it, perhaps because he lives near water, or because it was read repeatedly to his children. However, he sees parallels in this story with his own life. While Jonah was a prophet and Mr. Peña a businessman, he sees three major points in the story that speak to him: the power of the sea, trying to impose one's will on God, and the question, "Why fight it?" Living on the Gulf Coast of Texas, he has seen the power of rough seas. He can visualize the scene aboard the boat in which Jonah is traveling. He has also come to the realization that we cannot fight the will of God. Jonah went to great lengths to avoid going to Ninevah as God willed. He could have saved himself a great deal of trouble if he had simply gone in the first place. Mr. Peña wondered, How often had he resisted what God has presented? As a business owner, he is used to "calling the shots" and being in charge. To put his life in God's hands and wait for his direction is difficult for Mr. Peña. He stated that he is trying to learn to let go and follow. Along with Jonah, he has come to understand that what God has planned will happen eventually, so there is no point in fighting it. Our wills are no match for God's will. He repeated his opening statement that he was jealous. All along there had been a source of wisdom and comfort that he had been unaware of. Now he was trying to catch up. He expressed his thankfulness for this church because it encourages Bible study and the use of the Bible as a resource in everyday life.

RECESS

At 10:06 A.M. Vice President Carlos E. Peña declared the sixth plenary session of the April 2007 meeting of the Church Council to be in recess.

Monday, April 16, 2007
Plenary Session VII

Mr. Carlos E. Peña, vice president of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and chair of the Church Council, opened the plenary session at 10:28 A.M.

RESPONSES TO SYNODICAL RESOLUTIONS
(Agenda III.G.1)

INTERPRETATION OF 1993 CONFERENCE OF BISHOPS STATEMENT
Allegheny Synod (8C)

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America at its 2005 Churchwide Assembly adopted the following [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; and

WHEREAS, the Synod Council of the New England Synod adopted “Guidelines for pastors and congregations of the New England Synod, regarding the blessing of unions of same-sex couples; and

WHEREAS, ever since the adoption of Recommendation Two at the 2005 Churchwide Assembly, there has been a lack of clarity in some quarters as to whether “pastoral care” means the approval of the blessing of same-sex unions; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Allegheny Synod Council request that the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America provide an interpretation of the action passed by the 2005 Churchwide Assembly.

Background:

The request contained in the Allegheny Synod Council resolution has been raised previously. At its July 2005 meeting, the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod Council approved the following resolution, which requested that the Church Council consider clarification of its Recommendation for Assembly Action related to Recommendation Two of the ELCA Studies on Sexuality:

WHEREAS, there is a wide variety of interpretation and widespread confusion about the intent of the Church Council’s Recommendation Two on the ELCA Studies on Sexuality; and

WHEREAS, memorials to the Churchwide Assembly in response to Recommendation Two range in understanding all the way from saying that it will establish policy that does not support the blessing of same-sex couples to making the blessing of same-sex couples a matter of discernment entrusted to pastors and congregations; and

WHEREAS, Recommendation Two of the Church Council resolves to continue to respect the guidance of the 1993 statement of the Conference of Bishops and also reminds this church of our actions to welcome gay and lesbian persons into our life and to “trust pastors and congregations to discern ways to provide faithful pastoral care to same-sex couples”; and

WHEREAS, there is no definition provided for what pastoral care means concerning same-gender relationships and if the blessing of same-sex couples is precluded or provided for within this pastoral care; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Synod Council of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod request that the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America at its pre-assembly meeting in August

2005 provide clarifying information about the intention of Recommendation Two and provide interpretation to the 2005 Churchwide Assembly voting members about what is being considered so that they will have clarity about the recommendation prior to discussion, consideration, and action.

Following discussion, the Church Council at its August 2005 meeting voted [CC05.08.48]:

To receive the resolution of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod Council requesting further clarification about the intention of Recommendation Two related to the ELCA Studies on Sexuality;

To acknowledge with gratitude that the extensive dialogue and discernment within the Church Council has been echoed within the Conference of Bishops and the congregations and synods of this church and to anticipate that the dialogue and discernment will continue through the deliberations of the 2005 Churchwide Assembly;

To express concern that additional information provided by the Church Council in response to the request of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod may further complicate rather than clarify the information prepared by the Church Council, which has been widely distributed and discussed throughout this church; and

To express trust and confidence in the voting members of the 2005 Churchwide Assembly and to anticipate that their ongoing dialogue and discernment will establish the clarity sought by the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod.

The 2005 Churchwide Assembly discussed Recommendation Two extensively. A number of attempts to amend the recommendation were made, some of which would have provided the clarity desired. The assembly defeated the following proposed 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."

It also defeated the following substitute motion:

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.

It defeated as well the following proposed amendment [changes underlined]:

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.

It also defeated the following proposed amendment [changes underlined]:

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 recommendation remains unchanged].

It approved a proposed substitution, which returned Recommendation Two to the original language of the Conference of Bishops' statement:

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.

It is clear, then, that the 2005 Churchwide Assembly declined to provide through amendment of the recommendation interpretation or clarification of Recommendation Two. It would be inappropriate for the Church Council to do what the assembly itself declined to do.

Church Council Action:

Hearing no discussion of the recommendation, the chair called for a vote.

VOTED:

CC07.04.35

**To receive the resolution of the Allegheny Synod Council;
To indicate that, in response to previous requests, the Conference of Bishops, the Church Council, and the Churchwide Assembly have declined to interpret further the 1993 statement of the Conference of Bishops or the action of the 2005 Churchwide Assembly; and
To request that the secretary provide the background information (above) as the response of the Church Council to the resolution.**

SEXUALITY TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATION THREE

Southeast Michigan Synod (6A)

RESOLVED, that the Southeast Michigan Synod Council request that the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America recommend to the 2007 Churchwide Assembly that the third recommendation of the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality, as presented to the 2005 Churchwide Assembly, be placed on the agenda of the 2007 Churchwide Assembly and adopted. The recommendation reads as follows:

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 life-long, 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 life-long, 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 life-long, 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 life-long, 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 life-long, 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 life-long, 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 life-long, 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 [or the appropriate churchwide unit] and reviewed by the Conference of Bishops and by the Church Council.

Church Council Action:

The chair called upon Secretary Lowell G. Almen to read the proposed action. Hearing no discussion, Vice President Peña called for a vote.

VOTED:

CC07.04.36

- To receive the resolution of the Southeast Michigan Synod;**
- To acknowledge that the third recommendation of the Task Force for the ELCA Studies in Sexuality, as presented to the 2005 Churchwide Assembly, was defeated;**
- To acknowledge that work toward a social statement on human sexuality continues, including the current study, “Free in Christ to Serve the Neighbor: Lutherans Talk about Human Sexuality” and that social statement will be considered by the 2009 Churchwide Assembly; and**
- To request that the secretary of this church inform the synod of this action.**

***EN BLOC* APPROVAL OF CERTAIN ITEMS**

(Agenda IV)

Background:

Inclusion of items in the *en bloc* action reflects a judgment that they are relatively noncontroversial in nature and may not require a plenary discussion and separate vote. On the first day of the council meeting, the chair provided an opportunity for members to express whether they wished to discuss separately any of the items listed in the *en bloc* resolution.

Church Council Action:

VOTED:

CC07.04.37

- To take action *en bloc* on the items listed below, the full texts of which are found in the body of the agenda or in the exhibit as noted:**

EN BLOC

VOTED:

CC07.04.38

- Responses to Synodical Resolutions Directed to the Church Council, p. 107;**

EN BLOC

VOTED:

CC07.04.39

- Responses to Churchwide Assembly Referrals Directed to the Church Council, p. 119;**

EN BLOC

VOTED:

CC07.04.40

- Approval of Amendments to ELCA Pension and Other Benefits Program, p. 124;**

EN BLOC

VOTED:

CC07.04.41

- Audit Committee Membership, p. 128;**

EN BLOC

VOTED:

CC07.04.42

- Synodical-Churchwide Consultation on Mission-Support Plans, p. 129;**

EN BLOC

VOTED:

CC07.04.43

- Approval of Lutheran Men in Mission Articles of Incorporation, p. 131;**

EN BLOC

VOTED:

CC07.04.44

- Global Mission Personnel, p. 132;**

EN BLOC

VOTED:

CC07.04.45

- Approval of Amendments to Seminary Governing Documents, p. 133;**

EN BLOC

- VOTED: EN BLOC
CC07.04.46 Approval of Amendments to Seminary Cluster Governing Documents, p. 133;
- VOTED: EN BLOC
CC07.04.47 Approval of Independent Lutheran Organization Status for Lutheran Association of Missionaries and Pilots–Canada and Lutheran Association of Missionaries and Pilots U.S., p. 134;
- VOTED: EN BLOC
CC07.04.48 Policy on Criteria for Synodically Authorized Worshiping Communities, p. 134;
- VOTED: EN BLOC
CC07.04.49 Approval of Revised Message on Immigration, p. 139;
- VOTED: EN BLOC
CC07.04.50 Approval of Revisions to the Churchwide Organization Personnel Policies, p. 139;
- VOTED: EN BLOC
CC07.04.51 Proposed Full-Communion Agreement between the Alaska Province and the East West Indies Province of the Moravian Church in America and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, p. 140;
- VOTED: EN BLOC
CC07.04.52 Nominations, Appointments, and Elections, p. 142

1. RESPONSES TO SYNODICAL RESOLUTIONS DIRECTED TO THE CHURCH COUNCIL
(Agenda IV.A.1; Agenda/MINUTES Exhibit B, Part 1a-1b)

- VOTED: EN BLOC
CC07.04.38 To adopt *en bloc* the following responses to synodical resolutions submitted to the Church Council:

A. HUMAN SEXUALITY STUDY
North Carolina Synod (9B)

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has been in a study process (*Journey Together Faithfully*) since 2001; and

WHEREAS, the decisions of the 2005 Churchwide Assembly were the result of that study process; and

WHEREAS, the 2005 Churchwide Assembly resolved that the “members, congregations, synods, churchwide organization, and agencies and institutions [of this church] 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 have as members of the body of Christ” [CA05.05.17]; and

WHEREAS, the study process adopted by the Churchwide Assembly in 2001 is ongoing, leading to a social statement on human sexuality to be presented at the 2009 Churchwide Assembly; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the North Carolina Synod ask the Church Council to continue the current study process and consider no changes to “Vision and Expectations” and “Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline” pending completion of the study process and adoption of a human sexuality social statement.

- VOTED: EN BLOC
CC07.04.38a To receive with gratitude the resolution of the North Carolina Synod related to the ELCA Studies on Sexuality;
To acknowledge that the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions* of this church

provide a process for the development and possible revision of “Vision and Expectations” and “Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline”; and

To affirm the importance of consultation with the Conference of Bishops, the Office of the Presiding Bishop, the Office of the Secretary, and the Vocation and Education unit before consideration of any revisions; and

To request that the secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America inform the synod of this action.

B. PENSION EQUALIZATION

Northwestern Minnesota Synod (3D)

WHEREAS, pastors’ salary recommendations forwarded each year to the parishes of the ELCA are not mandatory and are not uniformly applied, particularly in rural parishes; and

WHEREAS, pastors serving in rural parishes most often must live in a parsonage and are not given a housing allowance. The rural pastor consequently cannot realize the advantage of equity growth from owning and reselling a home that is realized by those in urban settings who have this advantage; and

WHEREAS, rural parishes do not equally provide extra benefits, such as social security and FICA payments and other bonuses; and

WHEREAS, work opportunities for a pastor’s spouse are very limited and very often non-existent in rural communities; and

WHEREAS, living on low salaries that are provided to rural pastors does not allow much, if any, opportunity for personal investment in IRAs, real estate, or other insurance or investment products to enhance retirement living, as their urban counterparts are privileged to experience; and

WHEREAS, pension benefits are tied to the salary provisions that they have experienced during their years of active ministry; and

WHEREAS, there is a consequent disparity between the resulting pensions paid to those pastors who have worked in rural ministries in contrast to those who have worked in urban ministries, often resulting in actual poverty or near poverty situations for those on the lower end of the pension benefit scale; and

WHEREAS, lay members of congregations, with the exception of the few who serve in leadership positions, are almost totally uninformed as to how the pension plan works or how unfairly that plan plays out for some retired pastors; and

WHEREAS, the present pension plan plays right into the ever present temptation to ignore the servant model demonstrated by our Lord Jesus Christ: “Whoever would be first among you let him be your servant. Even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many” (Matt. 20:27-28), seeking and holding onto those pastoral positions that are highly remunerated and with the consequent higher pension payouts; and

WHEREAS, this seemingly necessary game of always seeking to flee to the urban, well-paid pastoral positions and abandon the rural, low-paid pastoral positions leads to an intensifying of the rural ministry crisis that is facing our church today; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Northwestern Minnesota Synod, in assembly, direct the Northwestern Minnesota Synod Council to request the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to prepare a proposal to restructure the ELCA pension plan, working toward equalization or, at the very least, setting a base minimum of pension payments for all pastors; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Church Council bring this restructured plan to the 2007 Churchwide Assembly for full consideration and implementation; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Northwestern Minnesota Synod Council establish a task force to consider possible synod response to pension inequity.

Response from the Church Council

At its November 2006 meeting, the Church Council voted [CC06.11.60a]:

To receive the resolution of the Northwestern Minnesota Synod related to pension equalization; and

To refer the resolution to the Board of Pensions with a request that a report and possible recommendations be brought to the April 2007 meeting of the ELCA Church Council; and

To anticipate that the report and possible recommendations be included in the summary of Church Council actions prepared for the 2007 ELCA Churchwide Assembly.

Response from the Board of Pensions

This report is the ELCA Board of Pensions’ response to the resolution of the Northwestern Minnesota Synod related

to pension equalization. It draws heavily from the more comprehensive report on this subject prepared by the Board of Pensions in 2003. A copy of the report is available on the resource table.

Since the formation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, there has been much concern and discussion about the issue of low compensation and pensions for rostered leaders in this church. Although most, if not all, ELCA synods maintain minimum guidelines for cash compensation, actual compensation varies widely—with many rostered leaders paid below guideline.

As for pensions (i.e., retirement income), the ELCA Retirement Plan is similar to other employer-sponsored retirement plans that provide benefits related to the level of compensation earned during an employee's years of active service. Thus, rostered leaders who receive low compensation during their years of active service tend to have lower retirement income in retirement when compared with those who received higher compensation. (Rostered leaders have the option to annuitize, partially annuitize, or not annuitize their ELCA retirement account as a source of their retirement income.)

Several Churchwide Assemblies and many Synod Assemblies have considered the issue of low compensation and low pensions. The response of this church has been to establish the Special Needs Retirement Fund in order to provide additional income for those retired rostered leaders and surviving spouses in need and supplement retirement income for those currently serving at low salaries.

Most recently, the 2001 Churchwide Assembly addressed low compensation and pension benefits and passed a resolution that called upon the ELCA to

- acknowledge the serious concern about inadequate compensation and pensions expressed in the memorials of the Northwest Washington Synod, the Western North Dakota Synod, and the Northern Great Lakes Synod;
- encourage continued efforts within this church to seek adequate levels of compensation for clergy and other rostered leaders;
- encourage synods to adopt adequate compensation guidelines and to urge congregations to meet or exceed them when possible;
- acknowledge the action of the 1993 Churchwide Assembly which created the Special Needs Retirement Fund for retired rostered leaders and surviving spouses who live in poverty;
- call upon congregations and members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to give generously to the Special Needs Retirement Fund, noting that \$5 million in additional funding will enable the ELCA to supplement pensions for the approximately 170 retired pastors and spouses living below the poverty level;
- encourage giving beyond \$5 million so the Special Needs Retirement Fund will have sufficient funds to address the need for pension supplementation for pastors currently serving in low-salaried positions; and
- direct the Board of Pensions to prepare methods to bring into equity pensions of professional leaders and to report its findings to the Church Council for further consideration and possible implementation (CA01.06.39).

Summary of 2003 study:

In response to the directive from the 2001 Churchwide Assembly, the Board of Pensions examined possible methods of achieving pension equity for the professional leaders of the ELCA. The key observations from that study were:

- Low compensation is a widespread issue within the ELCA. Our analysis of clergy compensation in six ELCA synods revealed that more than half of the parish pastors in those synods are paid below the minimum guideline.
- If compensation is low, then pensions, which are proportional to compensation and years of service, also will be low. The preferred solution, and the only way to achieve true equity, is to raise compensation levels and thereby pensions as well. This would not be easy. While pension policy is managed on a churchwide basis, compensation decisions are made locally.
- A far less effective solution would be to provide disproportionate pensions to narrow the inequities. However, this would not address the primary issue of low compensation. Instead, it could produce a pension program where low-salaried rostered leaders receive more income in retirement than they received while they were in active service.
- Our ecumenical partners have dealt with this issue in different ways. The Episcopal Church and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) have defined benefit pension plans with minimum pension provisions that provide proportionately greater benefits to low-salaried members. The United Church of Christ (UCC) has an individual account plan similar to the ELCA Retirement Plan. The UCC receives a special offering each year—as much as \$1 million—to provide relief to retired ministers and surviving spouses with very low incomes.

- The defined benefit approach is not practical for the ELCA because of this church's long history of individual account pension plans with member-directed investments and distributions. The only practical approach to improving pensions for the low-salaried rostered leaders would be through a minimum pension contribution year-by-year. A minimum equal to 10 percent of the "guideline defined compensation" would mean rostered leaders who are paid below their synod's minimum guideline would receive a pension contribution as if they were paid the guideline amount.
- There are two key drawbacks to the minimum contribution concept. First, it would apply only to future years of service. As a result, the improvement for low-salaried rostered leaders would be realized only gradually over a period of many years. Second, the cost to provide a minimum contribution equal to 10 percent of the applicable synod guideline for all rostered leaders in congregations is very high—an estimated \$4.4 million per year or 0.7 percent of total defined compensation for all sponsored members.
- Funding supplemental contributions could be achieved by requiring additional contributions of 0.7 percent of defined compensation. But this would be a substantial increase and would be on top of the 0.9 percent of defined compensation being collected to help fund retiree medical subsidies. The combined amount would represent a six percent surcharge on the cost of ELCA benefits. This could discourage plan participation and be especially burdensome for smaller congregations.
- With the Special Needs Retirement Fund, the ELCA has a program that was created, in part, for the very purpose of supplementing retirement contributions for low-salaried rostered leaders. However, this fund has grown very slowly and, as of December 31, 2006, amounted to only \$5.6 million. The main challenge is to strengthen fundraising efforts so the Special Needs Retirement Fund can fulfill the objectives for which it was established.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC07.04.38b

To acknowledge with thanks the background information and recommendations provided by the Board of Pensions in response to the resolution from the Northwestern Minnesota Synod on pension equalization;

To acknowledge that the issue of pension equity (i.e., retirement income) can best be addressed by providing compensation for rostered leaders that is at or above synodical minimum compensation guidelines;

To acknowledge that additional efforts to grow the Special Needs Retirement Fund are critical, to meet the needs both of those who served at low compensation in the past and now have low retirement income and those currently serving at low salaries;

To decline to initiate a proposal to restructure the ELCA Retirement Plan as a means to address disparities in retirement income; and

To request the secretary of this church to convey the background information and this response to the resolution to the Northwestern Minnesota Synod.

C. COMMERCIALISM

Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod (8B)

WHEREAS, voluntary giving by church members remains the primary method of financing ministry; and

WHEREAS, our stewardship represents our faith-filled response to God's amazing grace; and

WHEREAS, commercialism, the selling of goods or services in the name of the church with the purpose of securing funds for the operation and mission of the church, its auxiliaries, and church-related institutions, continues to increase steadily in this church; and

WHEREAS, the influence that the secular world, which relies on the selling of goods and services, which encourages the selling of goods and services to support its various benevolent activities and programs, is affecting our decision-making as a church; and

WHEREAS, commercialism is a concern that needs to be addressed in the context of faithful stewardship within our congregations and within our church; and

WHEREAS, two of the predecessor church bodies to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America developed statements on commercialism with the church, statements to which many congregations looked for guidance in making decisions regarding the relationship between stewardship and the selling of goods and services; and

WHEREAS, this church lacks a clear and current policy statement regarding commercialism to guide its synods, congregations, agencies, institutions, *The Lutheran* magazine, Augsburg Fortress, Publishers, and other related entities, such as Thrivent Financial for Lutherans; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America be asked to consider and study the issue of commercialism in the church so that it can provide this church with a clear policy statement similar to the statements of our predecessor church bodies for guidance to the churchwide, synodical, and local expressions of this church for implementation in our stewardship understanding and practices.

Response from Church in Society unit

The Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod has asked the Church Council “to consider and study the issue of commercialism in the church so that it can provide this church with a clear policy statement” for guidance in the area of stewardship. It says that commercialism in the church is increasing and references the guidance provided by predecessor church bodies.

In 1964, The American Lutheran Church offered a statement on “Commercialism in the Church” as a guide to pastors and congregations, boards, agencies, institutions, and auxiliaries for their policies and actions. Also in 1964, the second biennial convention of the Lutheran Church in America adopted a social statement on commercialism. Both statements explain the dangers of commercialism in the church to a Christian understanding of stewardship; the consciences of both members and non-members; distinctions from private business; and the church’s tax status with the state. Both statements also have in view the need to address this issue in a pastoral, practical manner “in the spirit of Christian love and evangelical freedom” (ALC, page 4) that educates so as to “replace poor practices with better ones” (LCA, n.p.). In the absence of ELCA policy, these predecessor church body statements continue to serve as guidance to this church, though their relevance is tempered by the passage of time.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America adopted *Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All: A Social Statement on Economic Life* in 1999. The purpose of this statement is to address economic injustice in the broader society and world as opposed to commercialism in the church: “Out of deep concern for those affected adversely [by the market-based economy], we of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America here assess economic life today. . .” (p. 1). At the same time, this statement recognizes that:

- “Economic life pervades our lives . . .” (p. 1);
- “Market-based thought and practices dominate our world today in ways that seem to eclipse other economic, social, political, and religious perspectives” (p. 1);
- “If the economic arena becomes a reigning power for us, the question arises: in what or whom shall we place our trust and hope?” (p. 2); and
- “Economic assumptions can conflict with what we as a church confess. Who we are in Christ places us in tension with priorities given to money, consumption, competition, and profit in our economic system” (p. 3).

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC07.04.38c

To thank the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod for its concern for stewardship in the church and how stewardship affects the church’s position in society as a whole;

To acknowledge the existence of predecessor church body statements on commercialism in the church;

To decline, at this time, to develop a policy statement on commercialism in the church; and

To request that the secretary of this church notify the synod of this action and the background information provided.

D. CONGREGATIONAL VOTING MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod (8B)

RESOLVED, to transmit to the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America a request that the Model Constitution for Congregations be amended to exempt military personnel from the voting member requirement (*C8.02.c.) of having communed in and made a contribution of record to the congregation of membership during the current or preceding calendar year.

Response from the Executive Committee

The Executive Committee voted [EC06.09.32a]:

To receive the resolution of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod related to congregational voting membership requirements for military personnel; and

To refer the resolution to the Office of the Secretary with the request that a report and possible recommendations be brought to the April 2007 meeting of the Church Council.

Response from the Office of the Secretary

The matter has been studied. Clearly, no simple solution exists and possible constitutional solutions may be more complicated than the application of reasonable exception under the circumstances.

The issue of absent military personnel has especially presented itself during the past four years in view of the largest call-up of National Guard units since World War II. Many hope that this circumstance and practice will not be of long-term duration.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC07.04.38d

To acknowledge with gratitude the expression of concern of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod for military personnel absent because of duty for extended duration from their respective congregations;

To encourage all congregations to continue to demonstrate ongoing pastoral care for military personnel and their families throughout the period of their service;

To note that persons who cease to be voting members under the requirements of *C8.02. in the *Model Constitution for Congregations* are not terminated automatically from the role of the baptized (*C8.02.a.) and confirmed (*C8.02.b.) members of a congregation;

To note further that provision *C8.05. specifies that the bylaws of a congregation define the meaning of "inactivity" in regard to membership in a congregation;

To advise the synod that a congregation, by means of council resolution, continuing resolution, or approved bylaw, may provide reasonable exemption to the membership requirement of *C8.02.c. for deployed military personnel;

To observe that C10.05 precludes absentee ballot or proxy voting, and further that the requirements in *C8.02.c for voting members to have communed and contributed could be satisfied as recently as the day of a congregational meeting or as far in the past as two full calendar years, perhaps resulting in few if any exclusions for inactivity on the participating members; and

To ask the secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to convey this response to the resolution of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod.

E. PERSECUTION OF CHRISTIANS AND PROSELYTES IN ISLAMIC STATES

West Virginia–Western Maryland Synod (8H)

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America maintains relations with the Islamic community through, among other means, the National Council of the Churches in Christ in the U.S.A. (NCC); and

WHEREAS, the NCC subscribes to the fifth mark of faithfulness in inter-religious dialogue, which states, "True relationship is rooted in accountability and respect. We approach others in humility, not arrogance. In our relationships, we will call ourselves and our partners to a mutual accountability. We will invite each other to join in building a world of love and justice, but we will also challenge each other's unjust behavior. We can do both only from an attitude of mutual respect"; and

WHEREAS, the state-sponsored or sanctioned persecution of Christians for the faith in Islamic states demonstrates both basic injustice and a lack of respect for the Christian faith and those who subscribe to it; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the West Virginia–Western Maryland Synod Council memorialize the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to condemn the state-sponsored or sanctioned persecution of Christians and proselytes for the faith in Islamic states, demanding of Islamic leaders in the U.S.A. that they join in this condemnation and exercise all salutary influence upon their coreligionists; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the West Virginia–Western Maryland Synod Council communicate to the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America that it is the opinion of this synod that fruitful Christian–Islamic dialogue is

not possible so long as Christians are executed, tortured, imprisoned, and otherwise persecuted for the faith in Islamic states.

Response from the Church Council

At its November 2006 meeting, the Church Council voted [CC06.11.60d]:

To receive the resolution of the West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod related to the persecution of Christians and proselytes in Islamic states; and

To refer the resolution to the Ecumenical and Inter-religious Relations section of the Office of the Presiding Bishop with the request that a report and possible recommendations be brought to the April 2007 meeting of the Church Council.

Response from the Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations section

The resolution from the West Virginia–Western Maryland Synod seeks to address the conditions of persecuted Christians and proselytes in predominantly Islamic states and concludes that such conditions should have a bearing on the ELCA’s participation in Christian-Muslim dialogue.

Similar topics were addressed at the 2003 Churchwide Assembly [CA03.06.40] and the 1997 Churchwide Assembly [CA97.06.48]. Both actions call upon members of the ELCA “to pray for all victims of religious persecution, both Christians and non-Christians, and for their oppressors.” Likewise, this church was encouraged to “foster respect, tolerance, and understanding of other faiths, including an examination of the causes and manifestations of religious extremism in a variety of religious contexts.”

The “whereas” clauses of the current West Virginia–Western Maryland Synod resolution rely heavily on the conception of inter-religious dialogue adopted by the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. (NCCC), a conciliar body of which the ELCA is an active participant. It is affirmed in the “fifth mark of faithfulness in inter-religious dialogue,” that dialogue should exhibit “accountability and respect” where representatives of different traditions approach one another “in humility.”

Religious persecution perpetrated by any group trespasses all children of God, is a violation of basic human rights, and is an affront to the spirit of possibility in inter-religious cooperation, dialogue, and relationships. However, as the 2003 and 1997 actions make clear, the existence of religious persecution does not create a condition in which “fruitful Christian-Islamic dialogue is not possible.” In fact, the history of inter-religious work and relationships in the ELCA, including local congregations, churchwide assembly actions, and international efforts through the global alliance of Action by Churches Together (ACT) and the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), all reveal that conditions of conflict are precisely when dialogue and relationships toward reconciliation are most necessary, constructive, and vital to peaceful co-existence.

The West Virginia–Western Maryland Synod resolution is concerned with “state-sponsored or sanctioned persecution of Christians for the faith in Islamic states.” Insofar as the ELCA is committed to a model of accompaniment in mission with global partner churches, ACT, and the LWF, the ELCA recommendations and policies regarding Christian involvement in the world are deeply informed by partner perspectives in their respective contexts. For instance, partner churches in Tanzania, Madagascar, and Ethiopia express appreciation to the ELCA for pursuing dialogue and relationships about issues of conflict on their behalf. The ELCA needs to be conscientious about recommendations from these global partners rather than calling for an end to Christian-Islamic dialogue.

Concern expressed in the resolution for Christian minorities around the world is deeply felt. It is important to remember, however, that not all points of conflict involving Christians within largely Islamic societies can be attributed to Islam itself. For instance, Christian minorities in Muslim majority Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Lebanon have differing experiences given their varied political and historical contexts. Furthermore, through the auspices of the LWF and ACT, the ELCA works throughout the world with Muslim partners against the pandemic of HIV and AIDS; provides assistance, such as that to the thousands of Muslims and Christians at the Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya; welcomes Muslim students to study at ELCA colleges, universities, and seminaries; and encourages the use of church facilities for Christian-Muslim dialogue and relationships that encourage understanding, reconciliation, and peaceful co-existence.

In addition, North American Christians and Muslims struggle with many of the same social and cultural concerns. Dialogue and relationships in North America take place in a highly politicized context, which includes fear of the other. In this shared context, inter-religious cooperation between Christians and Muslims is and will be increasingly important.

In his own historical context, Martin Luther lived through a period of politicized fear related to Islam. Luther steadfastly resisted calls for a renewed crusade against Muslims. Although he had no opportunities for dialogue like the ones provided by churches today, Luther sought to promote knowledge of Islam from the best possible sources. Similar commitments are reflected in inter-religious dialogue and relationships today.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer observed that living as a human meant having both “responsibility towards the past” and a “desire to shape the future.” Through inter-religious dialogue and relationships, Christians and Muslims deepen their relationships with others outside of their faith tradition, seeking to find common ground to shape a common future with other people of faith and conscience.

One important step toward deepening the ELCA’s awareness and dialogue with Muslim communities in North America is a forthcoming Lutheran-Muslim Consultative Panel, through the auspices of the Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations section of the Office of the Presiding Bishop. The Lutheran-Muslim Consultative Panel will reflect on Christian and Islamic traditions of religious toleration, including reflection on the Qur’anic pronouncement, “There is no compulsion in religion” (2:256). The Lutheran-Muslim Consultative Panel will consult with the Global Mission unit, the Church in Society unit, and the Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations section to assess the role of religious minorities in Christian and Muslim contexts, paying express attention to the 2003 and 1997 actions to examine “the causes and manifestations of religious extremism.”

It is recommended that the Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations section, the Global Mission unit, and the Church in Society unit work together in keeping with the ELCA’s commitment to the accompaniment model of mission with global church partners by communicating with global companions in regions with Christian minorities and larger Muslim population centers. In the spirit of the 2003 and 1997 Churchwide Assembly actions, it is recommended that the churchwide offices continue to produce literature, programs, presentations, and public opportunities committed to countering fear and conflict with a commitment to inter-religious dialogue and relationships filled with accountability and respect, humility, faithfulness, and forthrightness.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC07.04.38e

**To thank the West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod for its resolution of concern related to the persecution of Christians and proselytes in Islamic states;
To receive the report from the Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations section; and
To request that the secretary of this church transmit the report as the response of the Church Council to the resolution of the West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod.**

F. NATURAL CHURCH DEVELOPMENT

New Jersey Synod (7A)

WHEREAS, the kingdom of God can be compared to a man scattering seed on the ground. Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. All by itself the soil produces grain—first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head. As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it because the harvest has come (Mark 4:26-29); and

WHEREAS, the creation of vital and healthy congregations does not consist of pushing or pulling congregations in human strengths and efforts but in releasing and developing their “all by itself” potential God has given to build the Church; and

WHEREAS, Natural Church Development is an approach to church growth that strives to release the “all by itself” growth potential that God has put into every congregation; and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, through its Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission unit, has adopted Natural Church Development as an assessment tool and now is using it with mid-sized and larger congregations, with new mission starts, with plateaued or declining congregations, and with congregations that are in need of more significant transformation to assess the health of their ministry and gauge its capacity for growth; and

WHEREAS, within a clear biblical, theological, and missional framework, the Natural Church Development tool provides congregations with guidance to build healthy ministries that can grow both in the quality of ministry and in the numbers of faithful and engaged participants, increases congregational capacity for ministry and evangelical outreach, and thereby provides a promising base for healthy ministry development and renewal for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and

WHEREAS, promoting a healthy culture is something every congregation struggles with at various times in its life-cycle; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission unit work in cooperation with Augsburg Fortress, Publishers both to create new and to repurpose existing resources that could be used by congregations using the Natural Church Development tool; and be it further

RESOLVED, that consideration be given that such resources be organized and marketed in such a way as to correspond with the eight quality characteristics of Natural Church Development in order to facilitate congregational efforts to address their "minimum factor" (weakest characteristic) as they strive to grow naturally as God has given them the ability to grow as vital centers for mission and ministry; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the New Jersey Synod Assembly direct the New Jersey Synod Council to forward this resolution to the Executive Committee of the Church Council for proper referral and disposition under the bylaws and continuing resolutions of this church.

Response from the Executive Committee of the Church Council

At its July 2006 meeting, the Executive Committee of the Church Council voted [EC06.07.24a]:

To receive and refer the resolution of the New Jersey Synod related to Natural Church Development to the Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission unit in consultation with Augsburg Fortress, Publishers;

To request that a report and possible recommendations be brought to the April 2007 meeting of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and

To request that the secretary of this church inform the synod of this action.

Response from Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission and Augsburg Fortress, Publishers

Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission (EOCM) staff are pleased that Natural Church Development (NCD) is being explored and received with enthusiasm. The unit is working diligently to increase the number of coaches available to assist congregations in its use. In addition, new updates to Natural Church Development materials are being received and incorporated into training and materials that the unit is using or developing.

As part of this ongoing work and in response to the memorial from the New Jersey Synod:

1. EOCM staff will work with Augsburg Fortress, Publishers, through an existing resource management team to assess current Augsburg Fortress resources and their relevance to Natural Church Development characteristics and the Natural Church Development process. A bibliography will be compiled that includes these resources and their appropriateness for various Natural Church Development quality characteristics and steps. This will be available online and as a download at the EOCM Web site during 2007. The bibliography will include active links to the listed resources available at the Augsburg Fortress Web site.
2. EOCM staff will write a series of shorter resources relating specifically to each of the eight quality characteristics, the organic growth (formerly biotic) principles, and the Natural Church Development process. These will be available for congregational use as they are completed. Conversation at the resource management team will determine whether these resources are best produced in print or for downloading from the Internet. Each resource will offer both insights to clarify Lutheran connections and concerns within each specific characteristic and information related to appropriate portion of the bibliography and resource list mentioned above.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC07.04.38f

To offer gratitude to the New Jersey Synod for its resolution related to Natural Church Development; and

To acknowledge the information provided by the Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission unit as the response of the Church Council to the resolution; and

To request that the secretary of this church inform the synod of this action.

G. MISSION TO THE ANTITRINITARIANS

West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod (8H)

WHEREAS, promulgation and propagation of right doctrine is an essential of the Great Commission; and

WHEREAS, failure to do so among our antitrinitarian brothers and sisters is a failure in Christian love; and

WHEREAS, failure to equip the members of this church to defend the faith from the assaults of antitrinitarianism is also a failure in Christian love; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Synod Council of the West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod memorialize the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to take appropriate measures to develop and provide for this church the resources needed to mount a vigorous missionary campaign for outreach to our brothers and sisters who refer to our Lord Jesus as Messiah or Christ without the blessing of the knowledge of the Christ's divinity or his consubstantiality with the Father and the Holy Spirit without confusion of the persons; and be it further

RESOLVED, that such resources be particularly mindful of the impoverished condition of our psilanthropist, tritheist, and modalist brothers and sisters who claim Jesus as Messiah or Christ and withal be well suited for use in apologetics and proselytization.

Executive Committee Response

At its June 2006 meeting, the Executive Committee of the Church Council voted [EC06.06.20a]:

To receive the resolution of the Western Virginia-Western Maryland Synod regarding mission and outreach to antitrinitarianists;

To refer the resolution to the Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission unit with a request that a report and possible recommendations be brought to the April 2007 meeting of the Church Council; and

To request that the secretary of this church inform the synod of this action.

Response from the Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission unit

Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission unit staff researched issues raised in the resolution within the broader scope of witnessing to all people. Many of the issues concerning engagement with nontrinitarian groups are comparable to those encountered among the unchurched and among those who hold decision, fundamentalist, or conservative evangelical theologies. In response, the Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission unit will continue to:

1. Encourage the development and use of resources that:
 - a. witness confidently to what God has done for us in Jesus Christ; and
 - b. uphold the commitment not only to treat people of other faiths with respect, but also as people to be loved rather than enemies to be defeated.
2. Define this issue in the context of the desire for this church to reclaim the word "evangelical." As evangelizing people, the priority is preparation for encounters with people in general, including those with whom there may be disagreement. These encounters are opportunities to manifest the presence of Christ in our lives.
3. Work for long-term change within this church to create a biblically literate and theologically confident membership. This is part of the unit's existing goal to promote a culture of discipleship within the ELCA and its congregations. The institutional change necessary will require extensive time and attention. EOCM also will continue to partner and contribute to other units within this church to ensure that emphases such as "Book of Faith: Lutherans Read the Bible" build confidence and competence among ELCA members.
4. Work with the evangelism and outreach staff within EOCM to increase awareness of existing resources for witnessing, especially those available online. In addition, EOCM will:
 - a. develop and incorporate simple and practical resources and practices into the implementation of the current evangelism strategy;
 - b. review evangelism and witnessing resources in consultation with campus ministry staff to ensure that resources and practices are accessible and appropriate for campus applications;
 - c. review evangelism and witnessing resources to ensure accessibility and applicability for a wider Lutheran audience, seeking to broaden the ability of all members of the ELCA to witness in their daily lives and to engage people of other faiths in lively and respectful conversations.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC07.04.38g

To receive the resolution of the West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod related to mission to antitrinitarians;

To acknowledge the report of the Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission unit, including the unit's commitments to:

- 1. Encourage the development and use of resources that:
 - a. witness confidently to what God has done for us in Jesus Christ; and**
 - b. uphold the commitment not only to treat people of other faiths with respect, but also as people to be loved rather than enemies to be defeated;****
- 2. Define this issue in the context of the desire for this church to reclaim the word "evangelical." As evangelizing people, the priority is preparation for encounters with people in general, including those with whom there may be disagreement. These encounters are opportunities to manifest the presence of Christ in our lives.**
- 3. Work for long-term change within this church to create a biblically literate and theologically confident membership. This is part of the unit's existing goal to promote a culture of discipleship within the ELCA and its congregations. The institutional change necessary will require extensive time and attention. EOCM also will continue to partner and contribute to other units within the church to ensure that emphases such as "Book of Faith: Lutherans Read the Bible" build confidence and competence among ELCA members.**
- 4. Work with the evangelism and outreach staff within EOCM to increase awareness of existing resources for witnessing, especially those available online. In addition, EOCM will:
 - a. develop and incorporate simple and practical resources and practices into the implementation of the current evangelism strategy.**
 - b. review evangelism and witnessing resources in consultation with campus ministry staff to ensure that resources and practices are accessible and appropriate for campus applications.**
 - c. review evangelism and witnessing resources to ensure accessibility and applicability for a wider Lutheran audience, seeking to broaden the ability of all members of the ELCA to witness in their daily lives and to engage people of other faiths in lively and respectful conversations; and****

To request that the secretary of this church inform the synod of this action.

H. LOCAL CHAPTERS OF ELCA ETHNIC ASSOCIATIONS

Northeastern Ohio Synod (6E)

RESOLVED, that the Northeastern Ohio Synod Executive Committee request clarification from the Executive Committee of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America regarding the status, mutual accountability, and constitutional standing of local chapters of ELCA ethnic associations.

Executive Committee Response

At its June 2006 meeting, the Executive Committee of the Church Council voted [EC06.06.20b]:

To receive the resolution of the Northeastern Ohio Synod Executive Committee requesting clarification concerning local chapters of ELCA ethnic associations;

To refer the resolution to the Multicultural Ministries unit with a request that a report and possible recommendations be brought to the April 2007 meeting of the Church Council; and

To request that the secretary of this church inform the synod of this action.

Response from the Multicultural Ministries unit

Chapter 16 of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* treats ELCA ethnic associations [16.12.E05.]:

The Multicultural Ministries unit shall guide the churchwide organization in the multicultural dimensions of its work. To fulfill these responsibilities, this program unit shall: . . .

- f. relate to and assist the African American Lutheran Association in the ELCA, the American Indian and Alaska Native 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, and the Association of Latino Ministries in the ELCA, and encourage and support associations in their relationship with other churchwide units.

Each ethnic association in the ELCA has a constitution and each has its own organizational structure. The only ELCA association that has local chapters is the African American Lutheran Association in the ELCA. The constitution of the African American Lutheran Association in the ELCA addresses local chapters in Article III:

III.01. Association with this organization shall be by chapter and individual membership.

III.03. Chapters shall be made up of individual members as defined in Section III.02 of this Article and in B. Chapter IV, section 1 of the by-laws.

The by-laws of the African American Lutheran Association in the ELCA address local chapters in Chapter IV:

B.IV.1.01. The philosophy of this organization is to encourage chapter formation along the geographical boundaries set forth in Subsection B.IV.2.01. of these By-Laws. As indicated in Subsection B.IV.1.02 below, a minimum number of members are necessary to form a chapter. There maybe more than one chapter formed in close geographical proximity, although the latter is not desirable or encouraged. Chapters are encouraged to foster a cooperative spirit and to coordinate mutual goals and plan and implement programs and projects jointly to further the goals and purposes of this organization.

B.IV.1.02. A chapter shall consist of at least ten (10) members who agree to be bound by this organization's Constitution and By-Laws.

B.IV.1.03. No single congregation shall form more than one (1) chapter.

B.IV.1.04. Chapters shall meet regularly and conduct business consistent with the vision, goals and purposes of this organization as provided in the Constitution and By-Laws.

Article II of the constitution of the African American Lutheran Association in the ELCA provides additional information related to the vision and purpose of local chapters of the association:

II.01. We, the African American Lutheran Association, are people of God rooted in the gospel and redeemed by Jesus Christ. We are committed to living out our faith by expressing our love for one another and affirming ourselves and our cultural heritage as gifts to the church (ELCA).

II.02. God, our Creator, has richly endowed each individual with gifts. Humanity, however, has fallen into bondage to sin and stands separated from God. This sin expresses itself in many ways, including exclusivism and separation among people manifested in racism. We believe that Jesus Christ is our True Liberator, having come into the world proclaiming a Gospel, which gives sight to the blind and released the captives. We believe that we have been called to a ministry of reconciliation (II Corinthians 5), serving as ambassadors for Christ. The church is to be a fully inclusive fellowship, which celebrates the contributions of all members. In recognition and adherence to these principles, this organization exists to:

II.02.a. Help assure that each individual will be respected as a unique gift of God (Imago Dei, Genesis 1:31);

II.02.b. Help exorcise personal and institutional racism in church and society;

II.02.c. Work towards a full realization of the unity that is to be found in Jesus Christ;

II.02.d. Celebrate, not worship, diversity in the human family;

II.02.e. Proclaim Christ's message of material and spiritual liberation to all peoples;

II.02.f. Exercise a ministry of reconciliation among diverse peoples in the church and society; and

II.02.g. Encourage members to become fully involved with the affairs of church assemblies, synods, regions and congregations.

The above portions from the African American Lutheran Association in the ELCA's constitution and by-laws define local chapters. The Statement of Vision and Purpose speaks to the goals and purposes of the association, which the local chapters are encouraged to support and implement. In that capacity, local chapters do not speak for the association or for the entire ethnic or cultural group of which it is a part. Local chapters do, however, "foster a cooperative spirit and coordinate and implement mutual goals and purposes of the association." A natural example of the latter would be the Cleveland chapter of the African American Lutheran Association in the ELCA, which assisted in the development and implementation of "A Strategy for Outreach with African American/African Persons in Northeastern Ohio, ELCA."

If the Executive Committee of the Northeastern Ohio Synod has concerns about the local chapter on its territory, the Multicultural Ministries unit would be pleased to convene a meeting to discuss such concerns so that the ministry of outreach and reconciliation can move forward in the name of Christ.

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC07.04.38h **To receive the resolution of the Northeastern Ohio Synod related to local chapters of ELCA ethnic associations; and**
 To acknowledge the report of the Multicultural Ministries unit, including the unit's openness to convene a meeting for further discussion of the synod's concerns; and
 To request that the secretary of this church provide the report of the Multicultural Ministries unit (above) as the response of the Church Council to the synod's resolution.

2. RESPONSES TO CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY REFERRALS DIRECTED TO THE CHURCH COUNCIL (Agenda IV.A.2; Exhibit B, Part 2b)

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC07.04.39 **To adopt *en bloc* the following responses to Churchwide Assembly referrals directed to the Church Council:**

A. NEW MISSION STARTS

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) to identify and raise up missional leaders whom God calls to mission development and redevelopment.

Response from the 2005 Churchwide Assembly

The Churchwide Assembly voted [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.

Churchwide Assembly Background [2005]

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 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 either to 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 who 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 onetime 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.

Response from Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission [2007]

Significant work was done during the 2005-2007 biennium that responds to the 2005 Southeastern Minnesota Synod memorial on new mission starts. The Office of the Presiding Bishop brought together staff of the Vocation and Education, Multicultural Ministries, and Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission units as well as the Office of the Secretary, the Mission Investment Fund, and Research and Evaluation to study the congregational new start process. That process resulted in increased knowledge and partnerships within the churchwide organization to strengthen

the work of new starts. The Conference of Bishops also discussed new starts at their meetings in October 2006 and March 2007. Material was developed that informs and guides the process. The first paper, "Biblical Principles for Starting New Congregations: A Paper to Ground Lutheran Mission in the Twenty-first Century," sets out the learning of a group that included seminary professors, mission developers, churchwide staff, and bishops to outline biblical principles for starting new congregations. It was included in the materials for the November 2006 meeting of the Church Council as Exhibit B, Part 2b, Appendix 1.

The second paper, "New Starts Process," was developed by staff of the Vocation and Education and Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission units to describe the work of new starts and to invite stronger partnership in the work as was requested in the memorial of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod. It is printed as Exhibit B, Part 2b, Appendix 1 in the materials for the April 2007 meeting of the Church Council.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

- CC07.04.39a** **To acknowledge the memorial of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod related to new mission starts; and**
 To acknowledge with gratitude the ministry and partnerships of individuals, congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization in the process of starting new congregations and renewing existing congregations;
 To receive the paper "New Mission Starts" as a resource for deepening understanding of this work throughout the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;
 To request that the secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America convey this paper and this action to the Southeastern Minnesota Synod as the response of the Church Council.

B. STUDENT LOAN INDEBTEDNESS

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.

Response from the Churchwide Assembly

The 2005 Churchwide Assembly voted [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.

Churchwide Assembly 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.

Response from the Church Council [2005]

At its November 2005 meeting, the Church Council voted (CC05.11.77i):

To refer the action of the Churchwide Assembly on student loan indebtedness to the Vocation and Education unit in consultation with seminaries; and

To request that a report and possible recommendations be brought to the April 2007 meeting of the Church Council.

Response from the Vocation and Education unit [2007]

The level of indebtedness continues to be a concern for those working with candidates and rostered leaders. ELCA seminaries attend to the total debt level and projected need of each student who applies for financial aid and offers counsel in a variety of ways. Synod candidacy committees increasingly raise these questions with candidates during the years of preparation and discernment. Committees are required to ask the candidate about debt at the entrance interview and at the approval interview. Committees occasionally must challenge a candidate to make specific plans for addressing debt, including the possibility of taking a period off from study. A number of synods have developed specific plans to help address education costs for their candidates, and some are attempting to facilitate debt reduction for rostered leaders in their first years of service. The Vocation and Education unit gathers and monitors anecdotal and systematic data from these various sources. At the initiation of the seminaries and as part of the work of the Blue Ribbon Committee on Mission Support, there is growing attention to stewardship education and formation of candidates, including personal financial management.

In response to the Churchwide Assembly memorial, Vocation and Education staff have consulted with ELCA seminary presidents and other leaders about how best to proceed in assessing current levels and trends of ELCA seminarian indebtedness and in determining what actions would be most helpful. On January 30, 2007, a telephone meeting of seminary presidents and leadership of the Conference of Bishops, the Fund for Leaders, and the Board of Pensions reviewed historical data on seminarian student debt, both in the ELCA and in other denominations; made plans for a full survey of debt levels of the most recent graduating class; and agreed to meet face-to-face with a somewhat expanded table in the spring to consider possible courses of coordinated action. A survey instrument has been designed in consultation with the financial aid offices of the seminaries, and the data gathered will be discussed at a May 23, 2007, meeting convened by Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson at the Lutheran Center.

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 \$15 million with commitments of an additional \$15 million. To date, the Fund for Leaders has provided more than \$2.2 million in scholarships. For the 2006-2007 school year, grants totaling \$640,000 were awarded to 122 students. This figure includes grants from Fund programs established by individual synods. The ELCA Foundation and the Vocation and Education unit continue to work systematically to urge the members of the ELCA to support this fund.

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC07.04.39b **To express thanks to the Indiana-Kentucky Synod for its attention to indebtedness among candidates and rostered leaders within its synod and throughout this church; and**
 To express sincere thanks and support for congregations, synods, seminaries, churchwide units that monitor this debt and seek to address it in a variety of ways, including through collaborative efforts ; and
 To urge the members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to give strong and consistent financial support for scholarship aid to candidates through congregations and seminaries and through the Fund for Leaders in Mission; and
 To request that the secretary of this church notify the synod of this action.

3. APPROVAL OF AMENDMENTS TO THE ELCA PENSION AND OTHER BENEFITS PROGRAM
(Agenda IV.B)

The Board of Trustees of the Board of Pensions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America met February 23-25, 2007, in Chicago, Ill. Below is an executive summary of the amendments to the plan approved by the Board of Pensions and proposed for approval by the Church Council.

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC07.04.40 **To approve *en bloc* the following amendments to the ELCA pension and other benefits program.**

A. AMENDMENTS TO THE ELCA RETIREMENT PLAN: WITHDRAWALS AND DISTRIBUTIONS
(Agenda IV.B.1.a.)

Section 9.10 (*Payment of Small Amounts*) was amended to allow the Board of Pensions to roll certain terminated members' accounts to IRAs.

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC07.04.40a **To adopt the amendment to Section 9.10 of Article IX of the ELCA Retirement Plan.**

B. AMENDMENTS TO THE ELCA RETIREMENT PLAN: MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS
(Agenda IV.B.1.b.)

Sections 12.05(a) (*Appeals Procedure*) and 12.12 (*Amendments*) were amended to modify and simplify the plan amendment approval process.

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC07.04.40b **To adopt amendments to Sections 12.05(a) and 12.12 of Article XII of the ELCA Retirement Plan.**

C. AMENDMENTS TO THE ELCA MEDICAL AND DENTAL BENEFITS PLAN: COVERAGE FOR SPOUSE AND CHILD
(Agenda IV.B.2.a.)

Section 4.01(b) (*In General*) was amended to correct enrollment eligibility period from monthly to yearly.

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC07.04.40c **To adopt the amendment to Section 4.01(b) of Article IV of the ELCA Medical and Dental Benefits Plan.**

D. AMENDMENTS TO THE ELCA MEDICAL AND DENTAL BENEFITS PLAN: MISCELLANEOUS
(Agenda IV.B.2.b.)

Sections 4.02 (*Eligible Spouse*), 9.04 (*Mid-Year Changes in Coverage*), 13.03 (*Limits on Eligible Dental Benefits Expenses*), and 17.15 (*Special Provisions for Foreign Missionaries Employed by ELCA Global Mission*) were amended to clarify current practice.

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC07.04.40d **To adopt amendments to Section 4.02 of Article IV, Section 9.04 of Article IX, Section 13.03 of Article XIII, and Section 17.15 of Article XVII of the ELCA Medical and Dental Benefits Plan.**

E. AMENDMENTS TO THE ELCA MEDICAL AND DENTAL BENEFITS PLAN: BEHAVIORAL HEALTH BENEFITS COVERAGE
(Agenda IV.B.2.c.)

Section 14.13 (*Transitional Behavioral Health Care*) was eliminated due to the continuing contract with the behavioral health administrator.

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC07.04.40e **To adopt the amendment to Section 14.13 of Article XIV of the ELCA Medical and Dental Benefits Plan.**

F. AMENDMENTS TO THE ELCA MEDICAL AND DENTAL BENEFITS PLAN: CLAIMS APPEAL PROCEDURE
(Agenda IV.B.2.d.)

Section 16.02 (*Appeals Procedure*) was amended to correct an inadvertent omission of “Prescription Drug Administrator” from the list of plan administrators.

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC07.04.40f **To adopt the amendment to Section 16.02 of Article XVI of the ELCA Medical and Dental Benefits Plan.**

G. AMENDMENTS TO THE ELCA MEDICAL AND DENTAL BENEFITS PLAN: COVERAGE FOR SPOUSE AND CHILD
(Agenda IV.B.2.e.)

Section 4.05 (*Age or Disability Requirements*) was amended to allow a part-time student to participate in the plan if his or her qualified health care provider verifies that the child is only able to attend school part-time due to health reasons.

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC07.04.40g **To adopt the amendment to Section 4.05 of Article IV of the ELCA Medical and Dental Benefits Plan.**

H. AMENDMENTS TO THE ELCA MEDICAL AND DENTAL BENEFITS PLAN: CLAIMS APPEAL PROCEDURE
(Agenda IV.B.2.f.)

Sections 16.02(a) (*Appeals Procedure*) and 17.11 (*Amendments*) were amended to modify and simplify the plan amendment approval process.

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC07.04.40h **To adopt amendments to Section 16.02(a) of Article XVI and Section 17.11 of Article XVII of the ELCA Medical and Dental Benefits Plan.**

I. AMENDMENTS TO THE ELCA MEDICAL AND DENTAL BENEFITS PLAN: INTRODUCTION
(Agenda IV.B.2.g.)

Section 1.02 (*History of the Medical and Dental Benefits Plan*) was amended to update the plan’s history.

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC07.04.40i **To adopt the amendment to Section 1.02 of Article I of the ELCA Medical and Dental Benefits Plan.**

**J. AMENDMENTS TO THE ELCA MEDICAL AND DENTAL BENEFITS PLAN:
BENEFITS COVERAGE AND GENERAL PROVISIONS**

(Agenda IV.B.2.h.)

Sections 9.01 (*Members who have Medical Benefits Coverage*), 9.03 (*Members who have Prescription Drug, Behavioral Health and Dental Benefits Coverage*), 9.04 (*Mid-Year Changes in Coverage*), 12.07 (*Other Eligible Medical Expenses*), 12.08 (*Exclusions from Eligible Medical Expenses*), 12.10 (*Other Precertification Review*), 12.11 (*Disease Management Program*), 16.02 (*Appeals Procedure*), 17.04 (*Correction of Errors*), 18.21 (*Medical Necessity/Medically Necessary*) and 18.25 (*Reasonable and Customary*) were amended to reflect the removal of Standard Benefits Coverage.

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC07.04.40j To adopt the amendments to Sections 9.01, 9.03 and 9.04 of Article IX; Sections 12.07, 12.08, 12.10 and 12.11 of Article XII; Section 16.02 of Article XVI; Section 17.04 of Article XVII; and Sections 18.21 and 18.25 of Article XVIII of the ELCA Medical and Dental Benefits Plan.

**K. AMENDMENTS TO THE ELCA MEDICAL AND DENTAL BENEFITS PLAN:
PPO MEDICAL BENEFITS COVERAGE AND ELIGIBLE MEDICAL EXPENSES**

(Agenda IV.B.2.i.)

Sections 10.03 (*Benefits for Eligible Expenses for Preventive Services*) and 12.06 (*Preventive Services*) were amended to reflect increased preventive services benefits designed to encourage optimal utilization and earlier identification of medical conditions.

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC07.04.40k To adopt amendments to Section 10.03 of Article X and Section 12.06 of Article XII of the ELCA Medical and Dental Benefits Plan.

L. AMENDMENTS TO THE ELCA MEDICAL AND DENTAL BENEFITS PLAN: PPO MEDICAL BENEFITS COVERAGE

(Agenda IV.B.2.j.)

Sections 10.04 (*Deductibles and Percent Copayments for In-network Eligible Medical Expenses Other Than Preventive Services*), 10.05 (*Maximum Out-of-Pocket Amount for In-network Eligible Medical Expenses*), 10.06 (*Deductibles and Percent Copayments for Out-of-network Eligible Medical Expenses Other Than Preventive Services*), and 10.07 (*Maximum Out-of-Pocket Amount for Out-of-network Eligible Medical Expenses*) were amended to reflect the 2008 plan design, which features deductibles based on coverage option elected (e.g., member only, member and spouse, member plus children, and member plus spouse plus children).

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC07.04.40l To adopt amendments to Sections 10.04, 10.05, 10.06 and 10.07 of Article X of the ELCA Medical and Dental Benefits Plan.

M. AMENDMENTS TO THE ELCA MEDICAL AND DENTAL BENEFITS PLAN: PPO MEDICAL BENEFITS COVERAGE

(Agenda IV.B.2.k.)

Section 10.10 (*Transitional Medical Care*) was amended to allow flexibility to implement the PPO vendor's transition rules due to 2008 changes.

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC07.04.40m To adopt the amendment to Section 10.10 of Article X of the ELCA Medical and Dental Benefits Plan.

**N. AMENDMENTS TO THE ELCA MEDICAL AND DENTAL BENEFITS PLAN:
ELIGIBLE MEDICAL EXPENSES AND SUPPORTING SERVICES**

(Agenda IV.B.2.l.)

Section 12.12 (*Eligible Medical Expenses Under Medicare Supplement Coverage*) was amended to include language recognizing that members with PPO Benefits or Standard Benefits Coverage at the end of 2007 immediately prior to Medicare are eligible for this benefit.

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC07.04.40n **To adopt the amendment to Section 12.12 of Article XIX of the ELCA Medical and Dental Benefits Plan.**

O. AMENDMENTS TO THE ELCA MEDICAL AND DENTAL BENEFITS PLAN: APPENDIX
(Agenda IV.B.2.m.)

The appendix to the plan (*Certain Amounts Related to Benefits*) was amended to set the deductibles and copayments in the 2008 plan design.

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC07.04.40o **To adopt amendments to the Appendix of the ELCA Medical and Dental Benefits Plan.**

P. AMENDMENTS TO THE ELCA SURVIVOR BENEFITS PLAN: MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS
(Agenda IV.B.3.a.)

Sections 9.04(a) (*Appeals Procedure*) and 9.13 (*Amendments*) were amended to modify and simplify the plan amendment approval process.

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC07.04.40p **To adopt amendments to Sections 9.04(a) and 9.13 of Article IX of the ELCA Disability Benefits Plan.**

Q. AMENDMENTS TO THE ELCA DISABILITY BENEFITS PLAN: MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS
(Agenda IV.B.4.a.)

Sections 10.04(a) (*Appeals Procedure*) and 10.12 (*Amendments*) were amended to modify and simplify the plan amendment approval process.

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC07.04.40q **To adopt amendments to Sections 10.04(a) and 10.12 of Article X of the ELCA Disability Benefits Plan.**

R. AMENDMENTS TO THE ELCA MASTER INSTITUTIONAL RETIREMENT PLAN: WITHDRAWALS AND DISTRIBUTIONS
(Agenda IV.B.5.a.)

Section 8.10 (*Payment of Small Amounts*) was amended to allow the Board of Pensions to roll certain terminated members' small accounts to IRAs.

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC07.04.40r **To adopt the amendment to Section 8.10 of Article VIII of the ELCA Master Institutional Retirement Plan.**

S. AMENDMENTS TO THE ELCA MASTER INSTITUTIONAL RETIREMENT PLAN: MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS
(Agenda IV.B.5.b.)

Sections 11.05(a) (*Appeals Procedure*) and 11.12 (*Amendments to the Plan*) were amended to modify and simplify the plan amendment approval process.

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC07.04.40s **To adopt amendments to Sections 11.05(a) and 11.12 of Article XI of the ELCA Master Institutional Retirement Plan.**

T. AMENDMENTS TO THE ELCA RETIREMENT PLAN FOR THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN GOOD SAMARITAN SOCIETY: WITHDRAWALS AND DISTRIBUTIONS
(Agenda IV.B.6.a.)

Section 8.10 (*Payment of Small Amounts*) was amended to allow the Board of Pensions to roll certain terminated members' small accounts to IRAs.

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC07.04.40t **To adopt the amendment to Section 8.10 of Article VIII of the ELCA Retirement Plan for The Evangelical Lutheran Good Samaritan Society.**

U. AMENDMENTS TO THE ELCA RETIREMENT PLAN FOR THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN GOOD SAMARITAN SOCIETY: MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

(Agenda IV.B.6.b.)

Sections 11.05(a) (*Appeals Procedure*) and 11.12 (*Amendments to the Plan*) were amended to modify and simplify the plan amendment approval process.

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC07.04.40u **To adopt amendments to Sections 11.05(a) and 11.12 of Article XI of the ELCA Retirement Plan for The Evangelical Lutheran Good Samaritan Society.**

V. AMENDMENTS TO THE ELCA 457(B) DEFERRED COMPENSATION PLAN: AMENDMENT OF THE PLAN
(Agenda IV.B.7.a.)

Section 14.01 (*Amendment of the Plan*) was amended to modify and simplify the plan amendment approval process.

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC07.04.40v **To adopt amendments to Section 14.01 of Article XIV of the ELCA 457(b) Deferred Compensation Plan.**

W. AMENDMENTS TO THE ELCA CONTINUATION OF THE ALC AND LCA MINIMUM AND NON-CONTRIBUTORY PENSION PLANS: MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

(Agenda IV.B.8.a.)

Section 4.04(a) (*Appeals Procedure*) and 4.08 (*Amendments*) were amended to modify and simplify the plan amendment approval process.

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC07.04.40w **To adopt amendments to Sections 4.04(a) and 4.08 of Article IV of the ELCA Continuation of the ALC and LCA Minimum and Non-Contributory Pension Plans.**

X. AMENDMENTS TO THE ELCA SUPPLEMENTAL RETIREMENT PLAN FOR GOVERNMENT CHAPLAINS: MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

(Agenda IV.B.9.a.)

Sections 5.03(a) (*Unclaimed Benefits*) and 5.08 (*Amendments*) were amended to modify and simplify the plan amendment approval process.

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC07.04.40x **To adopt amendments to Sections 5.03(a) and 5.08 of Article V of the ELCA Supplemental Retirement Plan for Government Chaplains.**

4. AUDIT COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

(Agenda IV.C.1; Agenda/MINUTES Exhibit F, Part 6)

The Audit Committee shall consist of six members. A minimum of two members should be ELCA Church Council Budget and Finance Committee members. Members of the committee shall be appointed by the Budget and Finance Committee and forwarded to the Church Council for approval. Budget and Finance Committee members should be appointed for a two-year term with the possibility of reappointment up to the end of their Church Council term. Non-Church Council members should be appointed for a two-year term, renewable for two additional terms. Terms need to be staggered in recognition of the need for continuity of committee membership from year to year.

Members of the Audit Committee and current term end date are: Ms. Ingrid Stafford (August 2007), the Rev. John C. Richter (April 2007); Ms. Ann F. Niedringhaus (August 2007); Ms. Michele Harbeck Haley (April 2008); Mr. John F. Timmer (August 2008). Ms. Stafford is completing her final term.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC07.04.41 To re-elect Audit Committee member the Rev. John Richter for a two-year term beginning April 2007;
To re-elect Audit Committee member Ms. Ann F. Niedringhaus for a two-year term beginning August 2007; and
To elect Mr. Timothy Stephan to the Audit Committee for a two-year term beginning August 2007.

5. SYNODICAL-CHURCHWIDE MISSION-SUPPORT PLANS AND CONSULTATIONS

(Agenda IV.C.2; Exhibit F, Part 4)

The Church Council has responsibility for reviewing and acting on synod mission-support plans.

A. REVISIONS TO 2007 MISSION-SUPPORT PLANS

Since the November 2006 meeting of the Church Council, revisions to six synod mission-support plans have been received, as well as one new submission received that had been outstanding.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC07.04.42a To acknowledge that the ELCA constitution established the process for determination of the percentage for the sharing of mission support contributions for synodical and churchwide ministries and that this process has been affirmed by actions of the 1995 Churchwide Assembly;

To underscore that this process specifies that the implementation of churchwide constitutional provision 10.71. and †S15.12. in the Constitution for Synods for the sharing of mission support funds shall involve mutual consultation, mutual agreement, and mutual affirmation;

To affirm the revised 2007 mission-support dollar estimates for the sharing of mission support contributions by congregations for synodical and churchwide ministries of the following synods: South Dakota, Southeastern Minnesota, Northeastern Pennsylvania, Lower Susquehanna, and Southeastern synods.

To affirm with sincere appreciation the increases in the percentage for the sharing of 2007 mission-support contributions by congregations for the synodical and churchwide ministries of the following synod: Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod.

To acknowledge the decision of the following synod to request a reduction of its previously established percentage for the sharing of mission-support contributions by congregations for synodical and churchwide ministries; to affirm its prayerful efforts in continuing to be strong partners; to encourage it to restore its percentage to the previous level in the future; and to commit to supporting it in this process through continuing conversation and collaboration on behalf of our shared ministries: Alaska Synod.

B. 2008 MISSION-SUPPORT PLANS

Synodical-churchwide mission-support consultations were held September 2006 through March 2007. Regional consultations were held in Regions 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, and 8. Consultations with individual synods were held in Regions 1, 5, and 9. The typical pattern for these consultations was to have two representatives from the churchwide offices meet with synodical representatives.

This year's format began with questions that invited participants to discuss the relationship between their synod and the churchwide organization. Synodical representatives were asked to reflect on the strongest aspects of that relationship as well as those aspects that were troublesome or challenging. The reports from these consultations indicated that these questions elicited significant conversation between the synodical and churchwide representatives with ideas generated to continue to strengthen the partnership between synods and the churchwide organization.

The second segment of this year's consultations included extensive discussion of financial and funding realities in each synod and the churchwide organization. This segment included discussion of the "challenges we face together." These challenges include the importance of our Lutheran identity, mission support giving from abundance and not scarcity, and how ministries will be funded in the future. Extensive notes from each consultation were kept by the churchwide representatives and will be used as a resource in developing future consultations between the churchwide organization and synods.

At the March 1-6, 2007, meeting of the Conference of Bishops the new director for mission support, Pr. Craig Settlage, spoke to the conference about his commitment to support the mission and ministry of the ELCA by close collaboration with the synods in interpreting that mission and ministry to the members and congregations of the synods. He spoke of the need for expanded consultations that will be based on transparency and mutual accountability. The report and recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Committee on Mission Funding will give direction and content to his work in the coming years.

Annually, synods are requested to forward their mission support numbers to the churchwide organization by March 15. Forms indicating 2008 mission support plans including both dollar and percentage estimates have been received from 58 synods. Two additional synods have supplied estimates for percentage sharing, but do not yet have dollar estimates available.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC07.04.42b

To acknowledge that the ELCA constitution established the process for determination of the percentage for the sharing of mission support contributions for synodical and churchwide ministries and this process has been affirmed by actions of the 1995 Churchwide Assembly;

To underscore that this process specifies that the implementation of churchwide constitutional provision 10.71. and +S15.12. in the Constitution for Synods for the sharing for mission support funds shall involve mutual consultation, mutual agreement, and mutual affirmation;

To affirm the 2008 mission support dollar estimates for the sharing of mission support contributions by congregations for synodical and churchwide ministries of the following synods: Southwestern Washington, Rocky Mountain, Eastern North Dakota, South Dakota, Northeastern Minnesota, Southwestern Minnesota, Saint Paul Area, Southeastern Minnesota, Central States, Arkansas-Oklahoma, Southwestern Texas, Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast, Metropolitan Chicago, Northern Illinois, Central/Southern Illinois, Southeastern Iowa, Northwest Synod of Wisconsin, East-Central Synod of Wisconsin, Greater Milwaukee, South-Central Synod of Wisconsin, North/West Lower Michigan, Indiana-Kentucky, Northwestern Ohio, Northeastern Ohio, New Jersey, New England, Metropolitan New York, Northeastern Pennsylvania, Southeastern Pennsylvania, Southwestern Pennsylvania, Lower Susquehanna, Upper

Susquehanna, Delaware-Maryland, Metropolitan Washington, D.C., West Virginia-Western Maryland, and the Southeastern synods;

To affirm with sincere appreciation the increases in the percentage for the sharing of 2008 mission-support contributions by congregations for synodical and churchwide ministries of the following synods: Northwest Washington, Eastern Washington-Idaho, Oregon, Montana, Sierra Pacific, Southwest California, Pacifica, Grand Canyon, Western North Dakota, Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana, Western Iowa, Northeastern Iowa, Southern Ohio, Slovak Zion, Northwestern Pennsylvania, Virginia, North Carolina, and the Florida-Bahamas synods;

To acknowledge the decision of the following synods to request a reduction of their previously established percentage for the sharing of mission support contributions by congregations for synodical and churchwide ministries: to affirm their prayerful efforts in continuing to be strong partners; to encourage them to restore their percentage to their previous level in the future; and to commit to supporting them in this process through continuing conversation and collaboration on behalf of our shared ministries: Alaska, Northern Great Lakes, South Carolina, and the Caribbean synods; and

To refer action on 2008 mission support plans to the Church Council Executive Committee for the following synods: Northwestern Minnesota, Minneapolis Area, Nebraska, La Crosse Area, Southeast Michigan, Upstate New York, Allegheny, and the Florida-Bahamas synods.

6. APPROVAL OF LUTHERAN MEN IN MISSION ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION

(Agenda IV.E.1)

Lutheran Men in Mission (LMM) has experienced steady and solid growth every year since 1993. More than 35,000 copies of the *Master Builders Bible* are in circulation. In addition, LMM has identified 15 congregations in each synod to receive Bibles and build an effective men's ministry. Spanish-language New Testaments have been published and given as gifts at no cost to congregations involved in mission. LMM works with young men, the most unchurched generation there is, and has established a young men's leadership committee.

Incorporation has always been a goal of LMM. LMM leaders believe that incorporation will have a significant impact on donations and assist the organization to achieve more visibility and identity. To assist Lutheran Men in Mission in achieving its goal of incorporation, at its April 2006 meeting the Church Council voted [06.04.10]:

To request that the Church Council affirm Lutheran Men in Mission (LMM) as the men's organization of the ELCA and affirm Lutheran Men in Mission's desire for deeper connection with this church;

To request that the Church Council affirm the resolution passed by Lutheran Men in Mission and the board of the former Division for Congregational Ministries that LMM continue moving toward the formation of a non-profit corporation to further ministries to men in the ELCA:

- a. as a separately incorporated 501(c)(3) organization with a strong relationship to the church structure through a relationship with the Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission unit and engagement with all units of this church; and
- b. With the triennial assembly of Lutheran Men in Mission being the highest authority for the organization and a board of directors empowered to conduct the business of the organization between assemblies under the constitution, bylaws, and personnel policies of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and as a next step

To refer this process to the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee of the Church Council for further direction.

After consultation with Mr. David A. Ullrich, associate general counsel, Lutheran Men in Mission voted to submit the restated Articles of Incorporation to the Church Council for approval.

Due to the length of the amended constitution, complete copies of the text with amendments indicated was provided only to members of the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee. One complete copy also is available for review by Church Council members at the materials distribution table.

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC07.04.43 To approve the restated Articles of Incorporation of Lutheran Men in Mission.

7. GLOBAL MISSION PERSONNEL (Agenda IV.E.2; Exhibit M, Part 1)

Previously all long-term mission personnel, both lay and clergy, and rostered individuals serving under provisions of a Letter of Agreement or Global Mission two-year and Global Mission associate appointments received a call from the board of the Division for Global Mission. Action is required to accept their resignations or retirements upon completion of service.

The action below contains the names of ELCA mission personnel appointed by a board call committee who have resigned from service between January 1, 2006, and December 31, 2006.

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC07.04.44a To accept the following resignations with gratitude for the commitment and service given in the global mission program of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, effective on or about the dates indicated:

Assigned

Persson, Lennart (Thailand) effective November 30, 2006; Schick, Robert (India) effective September 30, 2006; Schubert, Daryl (Tanzania) effective August 31, 2006; Sorum, Jonathan (Slovakia) effective October 13, 2006; and

Associate

Persson, Carin (Thailand) effective November 30, 2006; Schubert, Jane (Tanzania) effective November 16, 2006; and

Contract

Redfield, Guy (Norway) effective September 30, 2006; and

Full-time Regular

Johnson, Scott (Madagascar) effective May 15, 2006; Yuen, Royan and Candice (Hong Kong) effective January 31, 2006; Swanson, William (Germany) effective April 20, 2006; and

Full-time Team

Roth Johnson, Heather (Madagascar) effective September 15, 2006; and

GM2

Bradway, H. Leroy (Slovakia) effective October 3, 2006; Quello, J. Christian (Lithuania) effective August 26, 2006; Nipp, Jessica (Germany) effective September 30, 2006; and

Global Mission Associate

Lunn, John (India) effective June 30, 2006; Satran, Shelly (Haiti) effective February 6, 2006; Douglass, Katherine (France) effective August 31, 2006; Anderson, William (China) August 1, 2006.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC07.04.44b To acknowledge with gratitude the following person who died during the course of service in the global mission program of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:

Associate

Murnyak, Meredith (Tanzania) effective March 24, 2006.

8. AMENDMENTS TO SEMINARY GOVERNING DOCUMENTS

(Agenda IV.E.3)

Bylaw 8.31.01. provides both for the independent incorporation of ELCA seminaries and for a churchwide role in the approval of their governing documents: "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 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."

This process of approval is accomplished by the following steps:

1. The appropriate seminary president notifies the director for theological education that the seminary board has taken action to amend its governing documents.
2. The director for theological education consults with the president on the content and intent of the amendment(s).
3. The director for theological education consults with the executive director of Vocation and Education and ELCA legal counsel.
4. The executive director of Vocation and Education and the director for theological education recommend appropriate amendments to the Church Council at its next meeting.
5. The Office of the Secretary notifies the seminary president and the executive director of Vocation and Education of the action taken by the Church Council on the recommendation.
6. The amendment(s) become(s) effective upon approval of the Church Council.

Due to the length of the amended constitution, complete copies of the text with amendments indicated was provided only to members of the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee. One complete copy also was available for review by Church Council members at the materials distribution table.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC07.04.45 To approve the amended constitution of Trinity Lutheran Seminary, Columbus, Ohio; and To approve the amended constitution of the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, Ill.

9. AMENDMENTS TO SEMINARY CLUSTER GOVERNING DOCUMENTS

(Agenda IV.E.4)

Bylaw 8.31.01. provides for a churchwide role in the approval of governing documents for seminary clusters: "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."

This process of approval is accomplished by the following steps:

1. The appropriate seminary cluster notifies the director for theological education that the seminary cluster has taken action to amend its governing documents.
2. The director for theological education consults with the cluster on the content and intent of the amendment(s).

3. The director for theological education consults with the executive director of Vocation and Education and ELCA legal counsel.
4. The executive director of Vocation and Education and the director for theological education recommend appropriate amendments to the Church Council at its next meeting.
5. The Office of the Secretary notifies the seminary cluster and the executive director of Vocation and Education of the action taken by the Church Council on the recommendation.
6. The amendment(s) become(s) effective upon approval of the Church Council.

Due to the length of the amended governing documents, complete copies of the text with amendments indicated was provided only to members of the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee. One complete copy also is available for review by Church Council members at the materials distribution table.

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC07.04.46 **To approve the amended governing documents of the Western Mission Cluster.**

**10. LUTHERAN ASSOCIATION OF MISSIONARIES AND PILOTS—CANADA AND
LUTHERAN ASSOCIATION OF MISSIONARIES AND PILOTS U.S.**

(Agenda IV.E.5)

At its April 2006 meeting, the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America voted (CC06.04.27) to approve a revised “Policy on Relationships of Churchwide Units with Independent Lutheran Organizations.” The revision was made necessary by changes in structure, governance, and the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*. In accord with the revised policy, the Rev. Sherman G. Hicks, executive director of the Multicultural Ministries unit, is recommending the establishment of relationships with the Lutheran Association of Missionaries and Pilots (LAMP; also known as LAMP Ministry Inc. and LAMP-Canada) and with Lutheran Association of Missionaries and Pilots U.S. through the Multicultural Ministries unit.

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC07.04.47 **To acknowledge, in accord with bylaw 14.21.16. of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* and the “Policy on Relationships of Churchwide Units with Independent Lutheran Organizations,” the Lutheran Association of Missionaries and Pilots (LAMP, also known as LAMP Ministry Inc. and LAMP–Canada) and Lutheran Association of Missionaries and Pilots U.S. as independent Lutheran organizations, which will relate to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America through the Multicultural Ministries unit of the churchwide organization.**

11. POLICY ON CRITERIA FOR SYNODICALLY AUTHORIZED WORSHIPING COMMUNITIES

(Agenda IV.E.6)

An amendment of the relevant bylaws and revised terminology for the appropriate churchwide unit prompt the need for slight revision of the “Policy on Criteria for Synodically Authorized Worshiping Communities” (Exhibit G, Part 2).

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC07.04.48 **To approve the revised document, “Policy on Criteria for Synodically Authorized Worshiping Communities” in accord with bylaw 10.02.03. in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* and provision S7.26. in the *Constitution for Synods* as follows:**

Policy on Criteria for Synodically Authorized Worshiping Communities

1. BASIS

The possibility of synodically authorized worshiping communities being acknowledged by synods exists on the basis of churchwide bylaws and an optional provision in the *Constitution for Synods*.

Churchwide bylaw 10.02.03. says: “Within the territory of each geographic synod, the synod—in keeping with criteria, policies, and procedures proposed by the 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.”

Further, churchwide bylaw 10.41.04. indicates: “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.”

In the *Constitution for Synods*, S7.26., if adopted by the synod, provides: “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. Authorized worshiping communities, acknowledged under criteria, policies, and procedures 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.”

2. CRITERIA

- a. The primary criteria for acknowledgment of such synodically authorized worshiping communities, under the governing documents of this church, include agreement to:
 - (1) Accept and adhere to the Confession of Faith of this church (Chapter 2 of the churchwide constitution);
 - (2) Accept and adhere to the Statement of Purpose of this church (Chapter 4 of the churchwide constitution);
 - (3) Be served by leadership appointed or called on an annual basis by the synod under the criteria of this church;
 - (4) Be subject to the discipline [pattern of order] of this church;
 - (5) Be evaluated annually by the synod to determine next year’s status; and
 - (6) Function under the corporation established through the guidance of the synod.
- b. Other criteria for such synodically authorized worshiping communities (hereafter known as “chapels,” unless otherwise designated) include:
 - (1) Participatory worship for the chapel, consistent with Lutheran expectations, provided under the leadership of a pastor of this church or a licensed lay person;
 - (2) Ability to be a financially self-supporting ministry, unless other arrangements are made in accord with policies of the Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission unit on developing ministries;
 - (3) Participation in benevolent (“mission support”) giving to the synod and churchwide

- organization, with the expectation that 15 percent of the offerings of such chapels will be provided to the respective synod as a sign of commitment to the overall ministry of this church;
- (4) Commitment to evangelical outreach to unchurched persons within the area of the chapel;
 - (5) Authorization by the synod for a specified duration, generally for one year, subject to possible renewal following evaluation jointly by the synod and the Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission unit;
 - (6) Maintenance by the leadership appointed or called to serve the chapel of a listing of regular participants to be filed annually with the synod¹;
 - (7) Proper recording of such pastoral acts as baptism (see item 4.b.1.); and
 - (8) If an authorized worship community is discontinuing, refer remaining participants to a regularly recognized congregation of this church for possible membership.

3. EXAMPLES OF CHAPELS AND OTHER AUTHORIZED WORSHIPING COMMUNITIES

Generic designation—*Chapels*: Such gatherings of small groups sometimes are known as preaching points and places where the population base is insufficient to establish or maintain a congregation, as defined in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* (9.11., 9.21., 9.23., 9.25., and 9.31.).

- a. *Former congregation*: A small group that has dissolved as a congregation and who can no longer call a pastor, but who may continue worshiping as a chapel.
 - (1) An authorized worshiping community may be a way in which the synod may continue to serve a group of people in an area where a congregation has dissolved or where several congregations have dissolved.
 - (2) Before being identified as an authorized worshiping community, an existing congregation that may no longer be viable would have to complete the necessary steps for dissolution as a congregation.
 - (3) Subsequent to the dissolution, a new corporation would be established with the synod as the corporate member for the purposes of the chapel.
- b. *Small groups*: A small group of Lutherans may request Lutheran worship in an area where the potential for growth is limited and could not be expected to achieve a self-reliant congregation nor to call a full-time pastor. This group, however, could generate enough income to pay for worship costs and the service of a part-time pastor or other synodically authorized leader.
- c. *Test a Field*: An opportunity may be sought to test the potential of a new development prior to the commitment of churchwide resources for development of a congregation. This may be a vehicle for experimentation to reach a specialized community of people whose population base is not sufficient to guarantee viable development of a congregation.
- d. *Seasonal and Recreational Ministries*: In situations where recreational and vacation communities exist, seasonal worship needs might be met, even though a year-round worship schedule would not be possible.
- e. *A Former Ministry Development*: A former ministry under development may not have developed sufficiently for formal organization as a recognized congregation. Yet a long-term commitment was found within a group of loyal “members.” They may be organized into a chapel as participants in such an authorized worshiping community.

¹ A temporary roster of participants is to be filed annually with the synod. The synod will use this listing in determining status as to voting rights at the Synod Assembly. Records are also to be maintained of any official pastoral acts [see item 4.b.(1) below].

4. LISTING OF CHAPELS AND OTHER AUTHORIZED WORSHIPING COMMUNITIES

- a. Upon acknowledgment by the Synod Council in the synod to which the chapel is related, the synod shall report such acknowledgment to the Office of the Secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for recording on the list of acknowledged chapels and other authorized worshiping communities.
 - (1) An identification number will be assigned to the authorized worshiping community by the Office of the Secretary.
 - (2) Upon filing of the required authorization, the community will be listed in the ELCA churchwide organization's next annual report to the Internal Revenue Service, to be covered by the ELCA Group Exemption Number for nonprofit status.
 - (3) Each synodically authorized worshiping community is to obtain an Employer Identification Number to be used for payment of the salary and benefits of the pastor or other leader serving the authorized worshiping community.
 - (4) A corporation is to be established for each worshiping community by the synod designating such a ministry, under the laws of a state selected by the Office of the Secretary and using standard corporate governing documents developed by the Office of the Secretary.
 - (5) This corporation is to be qualified, if necessary, as a foreign corporation in the state in which the chapel or other authorized worshiping community will be functioning.
- b. Records shall be maintained on an annual basis of the regular participants of each acknowledged chapel and of all pastoral acts conducted within each chapel, the latter retained on a permanent basis.
 - (1) For retention on a permanent basis, the synod shall designate an existing congregation as a congregation of record for the recording of all pastoral acts conducted within a synod's authorized worshiping communities.
 - (2) Those participants in an authorized worshiping community who are received by affirmation of faith or adult baptism shall be recorded as members in the congregation of record (cited immediately above) for the duration of participation in the authorized worshiping community.
 - (3) Those participants in an authorized worshiping community who already are members of an existing congregation shall continue to be listed as members of such an existing congregation during the period of their participation in the authorized worshiping community.

5. PROVISIONS FOR PROPERTY, FINANCES, AND INSURANCE

- a. Care must be taken to assure appropriate maintenance, insurance, management, liability protection, exemption from state and local taxes, and other matters.
- b. If title to any real property is held in the name of the synod, but leased to the community, arrangements may be developed through the Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission unit to provide insurance coverage.
- c. Each authorized worshiping community is to make provision for bond coverage for the handling of finances in the authorized worshiping community.

6. PROCEDURES

The authorized worshiping community:

- a. May select a steering committee from the list of participants to work with the synodically designated leader.
- b. Should develop and approve an annual spending plan, including the commitment to 15 percent of all offerings to benevolence ("mission support").
- c. Should function under a governing document that includes: fully and without alteration or

amendment the Confession of Faith and Statement of Purpose of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; a statement of the community's relationship to the synod; agreement to be served by leadership appointed or called by the synod; agreement to be subject to the discipline of this church; agreement to be reviewed by the synod and the Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission unit annually to determine the next year's status; and any definition of internal organization and decision-making.

- d. May elect representation to the Synod Assembly, if such a provision is made in the synod's constitution.

7. CHANGING STATUS

Status may be shifted from a synodically authorized worshipping community to a congregation under development or a recognized congregation:

- a. When the population of the community has sufficient potential to warrant full-time mission development, this ministry may be declared a congregation under development by the synod and the Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission unit.
- b. When the participants of this ministry are of a sufficient number and leadership ability and when they have fulfilled the organizing steps leading to recognition and reception as a congregation, then the synod and the Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission unit may complete the process for the recognition and reception of a congregation of this church, in accord with the churchwide constitutional provision 9.25.

8. IN EVENT OF DISCONTINUANCE OF AUTHORIZATION

- a. A plan, effective upon discontinuance of authorization, should be established for the transfer of any remaining participants to regular membership in congregations of this church.
- b. Arrangements, in consultation with the synod, should be made for the orderly disposition of any interests in real estate, other than capital items, supplies and other material, and the payment of all debts.
- c. Arrangements and historical materials of the chapel should be gathered and transferred to the synod for archival filing.
- d. The corporation of the formerly authorized community must be legally dissolved.

Revised policy adopted by the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America April 6, 2003, and updated April 14, 2007, to reflect constitutional amendments and the new churchwide structure.

12. REVISED MESSAGE ON IMMIGRATION

(Agenda IV.G.1)

At its November 2006 meeting, the Church Council approved the following action in response to resolutions from four synods (CC06.11.60e):

To direct the Church in Society program unit to develop, in cooperation with Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS), a new message on immigration in response to resolutions from the Rocky Mountain, Northeastern Ohio, New Jersey, and Metropolitan Washington, D.C. synods; and

To request that the new message on immigration be brought to the ELCA Church Council for consideration in November 2007, with a preliminary draft brought to the Program and Services Committee of the Church Council in April 2007; and

To request the Church in Society program unit to consider the feasibility of working with LIRS to develop supporting material for the message following its adoption by the Church Council; and

To request that the secretary of this church inform the synods of this action.

Due to staffing limitations, the executive director of the Church in Society unit has requested a delay in the timeline for a revised message on immigration.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC07.04.49

To authorize a delay in the development of a revised message on immigration by the Church in Society program unit, in cooperation with Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS); and

To request that the new message on immigration be brought to the ELCA Church Council for consideration in April 2008, with a preliminary draft brought to the Program and Services Committee of the Church Council in November 2007; and

To request that the secretary of this church inform the Rocky Mountain, Northeastern Ohio, New Jersey, and Metropolitan Washington, D.C., synods of this action.

13. REVISIONS TO CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION PERSONNEL POLICIES

(Agenda IV.G.2)

The Human Resources section of the Office of the Presiding Bishop has recommended changes to two of the Personnel Policies of the Churchwide Organization. The policies in revision include 7.4 *Overtime* and 9.6 *Time Off for Voting*. The proposed revisions are being made to clarify the intent of each policy. They have been reviewed by ELCA legal counsel.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC07.04.50

To approve the following revisions to the ELCA Churchwide Personnel Policies:
Section 7.4

Overtime

- A. All non-exempt employees are eligible for overtime pay at the rate of one and one-half times their regular hourly rate for time worked in excess of 40 hours in any normal work week.**
- B. Overtime is calculated using actual hours worked. Sick leave, personal leave, vacation time, community service, holidays and other types of leave referenced in these personnel policies do not count as hours worked.**
- C. Under limited circumstances, a non-exempt employee may be granted time off in lieu of overtime pay, if it meets the criteria for compensatory leave set forth in policy 11.15, and both the supervisor and the employee agree to the arrangement.**
- D. Supervisors have the right to manage an employee into a 40-hour workweek by altering the normal weekly work schedule.**

Section 9.6

Time Off for Voting

Any employee, who is eligible to vote in national, state or local elections, is encouraged to exercise those voting privileges. Work schedules normally permit adequate time for an employee to vote, either before or after normal working hours. However, in unusual circumstances, an employee's work schedule or work commitments may make it impossible for him or her to vote during non-working hours. In this case, the employee's immediate supervisor may approve up to two

consecutive hours of paid time off for the purpose of voting in the election. (The supervisor may specify the hours during which the employee may be absent.)

This time must be requested by the employee prior to the day of the election along with a signed statement indicating the specific circumstances which require the time off, to be retained with the employee's time records for the applicable month.

If an employee otherwise will have difficulty voting, he or she may wish to inquire with the Board of Elections (or other applicable state entity) about the possibility of voting early or by absentee ballot.

14. PROPOSED FULL-COMMUNION AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE ALASKA PROVINCE AND THE EAST WEST INDIES PROVINCE OF THE MORAVIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA AND THE ELCA (Agenda IV.G.3)

Following seven years of formal dialogue, the 1999 ELCA Churchwide Assembly voted 1007 to 11 (CA99.04.11) to adopt the following action, which established a relationship of full communion between this church and the Northern and Southern Provinces of the Moravian Church in America:

The Northern and Southern Provinces of the Moravian Church in America, hereinafter termed the Moravian Church in America, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America hereby agree that in their respective assemblies there shall be one vote to accept or reject, without separate amendment, the resolutions which follow. If adopted by both churches, each church agrees to take these measures to establish full communion:

WHEREAS, Jesus our Shepherd calls us to unity so that the world may believe; and

WHEREAS, Moravians and Lutherans share common theological traditions and commitments to mission; and

WHEREAS, in North America Lutherans and Moravians have developed distinct church bodies while cooperating in serving our Lord; and

WHEREAS, "Following Our Shepherd to Full Communion," the report of the Lutheran-Moravian dialogue, affirmed that there are no "church-dividing differences" precluding full communion between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Moravian Church in America; therefore, be it

RESOLVED that:

1. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Moravian Church in America hereby recognize in one another the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic faith as it is expressed in the Scriptures, confessed in the Church's historic creeds, attested to in the Unaltered Augsburg Confession and Small Catechism, and the Ground of the Unity of the Unitas Fratrum;
2. The Moravian Church in America and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America hereby
 - recognize the authenticity of each other's Baptisms and Eucharists, and
 - extend sacramental hospitality to one another's members;
3. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Moravian Church in America hereby
 - recognize each other's ordinations of persons to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament; and
 - recognize each other's polity and ministries of oversight (including the interpretation of church doctrines, discipline of members, authorization of persons for ordained and lay ministries, and provision for administrative functions);
4. The Moravian Church in America and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America hereby recognize the full interchangeability and reciprocity of all ordained ministers of Word and Sacrament, subject to the constitutionally approved invitation for ministry in each other's churches;
5. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Moravian Church in America hereby authorize the establishment of a joint commission by June 2000
 - to coordinate the implementation of these resolutions,
 - to assist joint planning for mission,
 - to facilitate consultation and common decision-making through appropriate channels in fundamental

- matters that the churches may face together in the future, and
 - to report regularly and appropriately to each church;
6. The Moravian Church in America and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America through the aforementioned joint commission shall
 - encourage the development of worship materials to celebrate the churches' full communion,
 - encourage on-going theological discussion,
 - encourage joint formulation of educational materials, and
 - encourage continuing education for church professionals regarding the churches' full communion;
 7. The Moravian Church in America and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America hereby affirm that neither will issue an official commentary on the text of these resolutions that has not been approved by the joint commission as a legitimate interpretation thereof;
 8. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Moravian Church in America hereby agree that each will continue to be in communion with all the churches with which each is in communion presently;
 9. The Moravian Church in America and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America hereby
 - pledge to take each other and these agreements into account at every stage of their dialogues and agreements with other churches and faith traditions,
 - pledge to seek to engage in joint dialogue when appropriate, and pledge not to enter into formal agreements with other churches and faith traditions without prior consultation with the other.

In the course of the dialogue that led to the establishment of this relationship of full communion, it was not possible for the Alaska Province of the Moravian Church in America and the East West Indies Province of the Moravian Church in America to participate in the conversations even though geographically these two provinces overlap with the territory of this church. The Lutheran-Moravian Coordinating Committee has encouraged church leaders in those two areas to engage in conversation about deepening their cooperative efforts and have received periodic reports on these conversations. On the basis of these local dialogues the Coordinating Committee has urged this church and the Northern and Southern Provinces to invite the Alaska Province and the East West Indies Province to vote to enter this relationship of full communion by adopting "Following Our Shepherd to Full Communion." The East West Indies Province voted on August 17, 2006, to adopt "Following our Shepherd." The Alaska Province is considering a similar action.

The executive for ecumenical and inter-religious relations, on behalf of the presiding bishop as the chief ecumenical officer of this church and the Lutheran-Moravian Coordinating Committee, requested that the Church Council take the following action.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC07.04.51

To recommend to the 2007 Churchwide Assembly the following:

To continue to rejoice in the relationship of full communion between this church and the Northern Province and the Southern Province of the Moravian Church in America; and

To recognize that these two provinces of the Moravian Church in America do not cover all the geographical territory encompassed by this church; and

To acknowledge that by extending the relationship of full communion as outlined in "Following Our Shepherd to Full Communion" to the Alaska Province and to the East West Indies Province more people can participate in the closer working relationship allowed by full communion; and

To rejoice in the action of the East West Indies Province, which approved a relationship of full communion with this church by adopting "Following Our Shepherd to Full Communion";

To encourage the Alaska Province to take a similar action;

To invite the Alaska Province and the East West Indies Province to appoint members to the Lutheran-Moravian Coordinating Committee in order to live into this relationship of full communion more effectively; and

To declare that a relationship of full communion exists between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the East West Indies Province of the Moravian

Church in America and between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Alaska Province of the Moravian Church in America, pending approval by the Alaska Province.

15. OTHER NOMINATIONS, APPOINTMENTS, AND ELECTIONS (Agenda IV.H)

A. BOARDS OF ELCA SEMINARIES (Agenda IV.H.1)

Bylaw 8.31.02. outlines basic parameters for the election of members to the boards of ELCA seminaries. Subsection 8.31.02.a. provides for churchwide representation: "At least one-fifth nominated, in consultation with the seminaries, by the appropriate churchwide unit and elected by the Church Council." This process of nomination and election is accomplished by these steps:

1. The appropriate seminary president notifies the director for theological education of an upcoming board vacancy and the term of that board position (as specified in the seminary's governing documents).
2. The director for theological education contacts the seminary president in order to consult on filling the vacancy and, with the concurrence of the executive director of Vocation and Education, reaches an agreement on a single nomination.
3. The director for theological education submits that nomination in a letter also signed by the executive director to the secretary of the ELCA for inclusion in the agenda of the Church Council. This letter will include a brief candidate vita and a summary of the gifts this person brings to this service.
4. The Church Council is asked to ratify the nomination at its next meeting.
5. The Office of the Secretary notifies the seminary president of the action taken on the nomination, sending a copy to the director for theological education for the unit's records.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC07.04.52a

To elect as at-large members of the board of directors of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, Pa., to three-year terms expiring in 2011: Ms. Suzanne Moyer, Mr. Larry Weber, and Dr. Gwen Halaas;

To elect as an at-large member of the board of directors of Trinity Lutheran Seminary at Columbus, Ohio, to a two- year term expiring in 2011: Dr. Thomas Ludwig;

To elect as at-large members of the board of directors of the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, Ill., to a three-year term expiring in 2010: Ms. Sarah Stegemoeller and Ms. Trina Gould;

To elect as an at-large member of the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, Ill., to a two-year term expiring in 2009: Dr. David Wegge;

To elect as at-large members of the board of directors of Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minn., to a four-year term expiring in 2011: Ms. Beth Lewis and Mr. Robert Torkelson; and

To elect as at-large members of the board of directors of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, Penn., to a three-year term expiring in 2010: Ms. Addie J. Butler and Ms. Lynn H. Askew.

B. SOCIAL MINISTRY ORGANIZATION BOARDS

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America serves as a corporate member of certain inter-Lutheran organizations and affiliated social ministry organizations. The role of corporate members includes the responsibility to elect ELCA representatives to the organization's board of directors as prescribed in the organization's governing documents. The relationship of the ELCA to certain inter-Lutheran organizations and affiliated social ministry organizations is expressed

through the Church in Society unit.

The ELCA serves as a corporate member of Lutheran Health Care, Brooklyn, New York (formerly Lutheran Medical Center, Brooklyn, N.Y.); the Evangelical Lutheran Good Samaritan Society, Sioux Falls, S.D.; Lutheran Services in America, Baltimore, Md.; Mosaic, Inc., Omaha, Neb.; and Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, Baltimore, Md. The Church in Society program unit has forwarded to the Church Council the following nominations for positions on the boards of these organizations.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC07.04.52b To elect Ms. Karen Hawkins and Ms. Julie Schlueter to the board of directors of Mosaic, Inc. for terms ending in 2010.

**PRIMER ON THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH COUNCIL AT THE 2007 CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY
(Agenda VI.C; Agenda/MINUTES Exhibit R, Part 1)**

Ms. Myrna J. Sheie, executive for governance and institutional relations, and the Rev. Lowell G. Almen, secretary, summarized the work that the Church Council had already accomplished as the interim legislative authority of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in preparing for the 2007 Churchwide Assembly: review and transmittal of recommendations to the assembly, arranging for elections, submission of a budget proposal, and appointment of committees (e.g., Memorials and Reference and Counsel). Ms. Sheie explained the roles of the Reference and Counsel Committee and of the Memorials Committee. She characterized the council's role at the assembly as advising, working, leading, hosting, and praying. She explained the roles that council members would play on committees, mentioning in particular the *ad hoc* committee that would review any amendments to the proposed social statement on education. Ms. Sheie also highlighted the role council members would exercise in hosting nominees for the offices of secretary and presiding bishop, describing this as "accompaniment." The Executive Committee members would also be involved in preparing questions to be addressed by nominees for the constitutional offices.

In response to earlier requests from the council, Secretary Almen addressed the advisory role of council members at the assembly. He described this role as a "delicate" one that had been a matter of sensitivity at some past assemblies. He explained that the pattern followed at recent assemblies had been to have a separate microphone that can be used by advisory members of the assembly and resource persons. Some voting members had perceived this microphone as "favored" and had expressed feelings that speakers at this microphone took time away from voting members. Secretary Almen read the rule that had been in effect in earlier assemblies that states that voting members, including *ex officio* members, always have the prior right to obtain the floor; advisory members can take the floor only if doing so does not prevent voting members from being heard. Resource members of the assembly are to address only matters within their expertise and may do so only if it does not prevent voting members from speaking. The secretary proposed that it might make sense at the 2007 Churchwide Assembly for advisory members to line up with voting members and wait to be recognized in the sequence established by the queuing system. He pointed out that if one read the rule literally, it would mean that no advisor or resource person would ever be allowed to speak in the assembly because it has never occurred that there were no voting members lined up to speak. He urged council members to use "utmost diplomacy" as advisory members of the assembly. They were not to engage in debate, but rather to give advice when it was solicited. The secretary also stressed the importance of council members not "working the floor" to influence votes on questions before the assembly.

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson commented that there can be awkward moments when voting members come to the microphone to ask for the "perspective of the Church Council" or for background on how the council approached a particular issue because individual members of the council will have differing understandings and perspectives. He urged council members to develop a system whereby they might defer such questions to Vice President Carlos E. Peña or to one of the committee chairpersons or another appropriate person for response in order to avoid awkwardness.

The Rev. Jeffrey "Jeff" B. Sorenson asked the presiding bishop to inform the council as to whom he would be likely to call upon, rather than leaving the question open-ended. The presiding bishop stated that he would be willing to think through the question with the council, but was concerned that he not be put in the position of appearing to manage the debate. He agreed that the vice president could perhaps be helpful in referring particular questions to the appropriate spokesperson.

Several members raised questions about specific issues of travel arrangements and reimbursement for the assembly.

These were directed to Ms. Mary Beth Nowak, coordinator for the assembly.

Ms. Sheie reviewed key dates and times for assembly events as they related to council members.

JOYS AND CONCERNS

The Rev. Jennifer J. Thomas gave an update on the health of the Rev. Mary Ann Neevel, ecumenical representative from the United Church of Christ. Pr. Neevel has been dealing with cancer over the past several years, she indicated, and had suffered serious complications from recent surgery. She has recovered from those complications, but learned that the cancer had not been completely removed, so she was looking at treatment options. Pr. Thomas asked for prayer for Pr. Neevel.

Ms. Jessica M. McKee expressed her gratitude for the years that she had been able to serve on the council, and observed that she had begun as the youngest voting member of the Church Council and still held that distinction. She urged those council members who were voting members of the Churchwide Assembly to consider age diversity when making decisions, and encouraged synods to give young adults the opportunity to serve this church.

Ms. Judith Anne Bunker thanked the council and Vice President Peña for the privilege of serving on the anti-racism planning group. She asked forgiveness if she had offended anyone with her comments the previous day during the discussion of the Blue Ribbon Committee on Mission Funding.

INFORMAL EVALUATION OF PROCESS FOR PROGRAM AND SERVICES COMMITTEE'S CONSIDERATION OF SOCIAL STATEMENTS

The Rev. Joseph G. Crippen solicited feedback from the council concerning the process for involving the council in the social statement on education from February 2006 to the present. In particular, he asked for comments on opportunities to be involved in considering the text of the statement before attending the spring meeting of the council. He asked for members' insights in order to help the Program and Services Committee put together the protocol for the proposed social statement on human sexuality. He explained that the policies and procedures for consideration of a social statement were already set, but that the committee was seeking the best means of helping the council carry out its role in that process. He asked whether it would be helpful for the Program and Services Committee to develop a set of questions for reflection to be distributed along with drafts of social statements.

The Rev. Jennifer J. Thomas commented that, if there were less feedback than hoped for, it might be useful to approach people personally to invite responses. Pr. Crippen observed that silence could also indicate that members thought the work had been done well and did not require much in the way of comments, so it might be difficult to find the right balance with that approach.

Mr. Grieg L. Anderson stated that he had appreciated the opportunity but had not availed himself of it as he might have. He commented that it might be helpful to have an informal discussion opportunity for council members to reflect together on a document. While he recognized the importance of the online responses, he also was aware that he did some of his best thinking when prompted by the comments of others.

Pr. Crippen reported that in discussion with staff there had been agreement that the most significant opportunity for input is after the first draft appears, as that would allow for more response. Typically, the full council does not receive the draft at that point, but rather only the Program and Services Committee. He proposed that consideration be given to offering the full council an opportunity at that point to give initial input.

Mr. William R. Lloyd Jr. observed that much time had been spent two years ago drafting legislative language for the sexuality task force report. He recognized that this situation was different because it concerned a social statement, but he wondered whether some of the implementing language the council had worked on earlier might be in the statement. The requirement to have amendments by a fixed time serves a purpose, he argued, but it cuts off the opportunity to hear and perfect others' proposals. He stated that a procedure should be developed to allow for further amendment of what is likely to be a much more controversial document.

Pr. Crippen responded that the committee had not been clear if the deadline that had been given council members for responding to the social statement on education would preclude amendments on the floor. His personal view was that the deadline was more of a courtesy guideline rather than an absolute. He thought that the question of how to deal with "floor conversation" after deadlines needed to be addressed.

The Rev. David E. Jensen expressed his opinion that the question approach proposed by Pr. Crippen would be

helpful, especially earlier in the draft stage. He reported that his congregation had used the draft as the basis of discussion in an adult forum, and that he had benefitted from the comments of his parishioners. He urged that questions be developed that could be used not only by council members but in the parish as well.

The Rev. John C. Richter commented that he twice had opportunity in Church in Society program committee meetings to review the education document, and the process used there had forced him to raise the issue to the top of his pile of work. At the program committee meetings the document was broken up into sections with different groups reflecting on different parts of the document. Individuals were expected to have read the entire document, while focusing on their assigned section. Small groups then spent 90 minutes reviewing their sections. He wondered whether it might not be wise to use council time for such an important discussion for the life of this church. Pr. Crippen replied that the Program and Services Committee could consider in the fall whether to ask for time for this purpose on the April council meeting agenda.

Ms. Myrna J. Sheie clarified that all members of the Church Council had received the first draft of the social statement on education, but that only the Program and Services Committee receives interim versions of the statement. Pr. Crippen acknowledged that he had misspoken, and specified that the committee had not talked about the draft at the council meeting.

Ms. Sheie stated that it was critical with all social statements that council members engage in every opportunity for giving feedback because these statements establish policy for this church.

REVIEW BY ADVISORS

Mr. Francis R. Ramos Scharron, chair of the program committee for Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission, reported that several of the advisors, including the Rev. Virginia Anderson-Larson, the Rev. James Brandt, Ms. Kathryn Johnson, and Ms. Kristin Kvam, had written a statement summarizing their comments on the meeting. They expressed their gratitude for the attention given by the council and the Executive Committee to the evolving role of advisory members. They valued the opportunity to have voice in the council meeting and its committee meetings. They appreciated also the opportunity to gather as committee chairs to update one another on the work of their respective committees, exchange best practices, and explore with one another the continuing transition from boards to program committees. They valued as well the new perspectives that they would take from the Church Council to their work with their individual committees. They welcomed the decision of the Executive Committee to ask advisors for observations at the end of council meetings, but also regretted that most advisors had already made travel arrangements that prevented them from doing so.

Addressing specific observations, Mr. Ramos Scharron stated that advisors were excited by the energizing and faith-deepening potential of the Book of Faith initiative, as well as by the Dwelling in the Word segments that council members had led. He reported that the Global Mission program committee was very hopeful about the contributions that could be made by a racial justice observer. Finally, he reported that the cooperative efforts toward leadership development for new communities, especially multicultural communities, were encouraging. The advisors affirmed the careful process of considering the social statement on education, and hoped that this experience would be helpful as the council looked toward the statement on sexuality. They applauded the ways in which the council is attentive to building relationships of care and trust among council members and with advisors because it makes the council a more deeply faithful body, capable of the sorts of conversations that require time together in order to nurture them. Mr. Ramos Scharron also recognized a deepening appreciation of the complexity of this church's mandate to have concerns for justice for women and for minorities that permeate this entire church and its actions. He drew attention to Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson's report, in which the bishop had pointed out the invisibility of the ongoing war in Iraq for many of national leaders and in this church's conscience. Mr. Ramos Scharron observed that this issue had largely been unmentioned in the course of the council's deliberations, and stated his belief that this was a vital point of public policy that must be addressed by this church more frequently and more powerfully.

EVALUATION AND DEBRIEFING

Ms. Faith A. Ashton rose to a point of privilege to address an issue that she said she had raised in the North Carolina Synod Assembly in 1987. She pointed out that no representational principles apply to clergy leaders on Synod Councils or on the Church Council. Now that there are as many women in this church's seminaries as there are men, she said, it

was time for the council to reflect upon the fact that the Rev. Jennifer J. Thomas might be the only female clergy member on the Church Council in the coming year, depending on elections at the Churchwide Assembly. She asked for consideration of a requirement for representation of women clergy in numbers reflective of their representation on the active rosters of this church.

Mr. Gary L. Wipperman stated his appreciation for the availability of materials online and in other electronic formats, as well as for the wireless connection in the council room that allowed him to access information in the course of the meeting. He asked what the process would be for feedback to improve these resources.

Ms. Myrna J. Sheie replied that an e-mail requesting feedback would be sent out to council members, or they could write their comments down and send them to her. She offered to share the feedback with Mr. Paul Edison-Swift, director for interactive media and networks, and Ms. Paula Berger, executive administrative assistant in the Office of the Presiding Bishop.

Vice President Carlos E. Peña reminded members of the annual "Vision for Mission" appeal and asked them to fill in the response form and either leave it with staff or mail it in.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Secretary Lowell G. Almen made closing announcements. First, he expressed his concern that he might not have adequately reviewed the process for amendment of the bylaws and constitution. He repeated the *caveat* that it is difficult to address specific issues of amendment without seeing the text.

Second, he reported that the treatment of the process for approval of social statements by the Rev. Charles S. Miller and himself had been incomplete. In the past, he stated, both the transmission and recommendation of the text of social statements and the implementing resolutions were dealt with in a single action. In the early days of social statements, however, the implementing resolutions had been very brief. Further, at that time the margin of vote related to social statements had been expressed in the rules of the assembly as well as in a policy document. At present, the provision is in the bylaws of the governing documents, and the language of the bylaw makes very specific reference to requiring a two-thirds vote for the adoption of a social statement, though it makes no reference to any implementing resolutions. So the action of the council at this meeting of having separate recommendations on the social statement itself and then on the implementing resolution seemed wise to the secretary, given that there would technically be different margins of vote required on the two: a majority on the implementing resolution and two-thirds on the social statement itself.

Third, Secretary Almen gave a brief update on his own health. He thanked members for their expressions of concern. He reported that an MRI the previous week suggested that his cancer was localized, which was good news.

Fourth, he reminded members that Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson had noted the 60th anniversary of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), which was formed at a time of urgent need for relief and reconciliation in the world. As a preface to that story of the formation of the LWF in 1947, though, the secretary wanted to share what he considered to be one of the most amazing stories of Lutherans in North America. In 1944 and 1945 Lutherans throughout this country committed to raising significant money for relief and reconciliation at the end of the hostilities of World War II. Some years ago Secretary Almen had looked at the sum to which Lutherans had committed and converted it to contemporary dollars. Although he had forgotten the exact amount, he remembered being shocked at how massive it was. Such a fund appeal at that level today would bring derisive laughter. He asked members to bear in mind what Lutherans were doing then and the context in which they were doing it. They began raising the money in 1944 and 1945, before D-Day, June 6, 1944. They continued raising the funds during the months of June, July, and August, when little progress was being made in moving beyond the beaches of Normandy into France, Belgium, and the Netherlands. They continued to give during the Battle of the Bulge in December and January amidst high casualties. They kept giving into 1945, through February, March, and April, and on into the discovery of the concentration camps in Germany. They continued raising those dollars when the war ended and when so many people were homeless or displaced. Then they sent people from the Lutheran congregations in this country to work in refugee relief and to explore avenues of reconciliation. It was amazing to Secretary Almen that some people were able to get into a military-governed territory so soon. Through pulling effective political connections in Washington, Lutherans were able to be there. The secretary observed that we stand on the shoulders of our forebears, and hoped that this church would have the courage and vision of its forebears in its commitment to relief and reconciliation throughout our world. The secretary pointed out that the leaders of the Lutheran churches had been behind that World War II appeal, the synod and district presidents had been behind it, along with the pastors and the congregation councils, and together they ensured that it happened.

The Rev. Peter Rogness, bishop of the Saint Paul Area Synod, asked that the secretary locate the figure in question and share it with council members.

Presiding Bishop Hanson urged members who would be attending Synod Assemblies to connect with the representative of the churchwide organization. He explained that the representatives were all executives within the churchwide organization who had been trained in interaction with the synods. The representatives could serve as resources for council members, and could join with council members in speaking against motions to reduce support for the churchwide organization in favor of local initiatives.

The Rev. John C. Richter asked for a list of those from the churchwide organization who would be attending each assembly.

The presiding bishop assured him that this information would be sent out. He went on to thank the staff who had worked so hard on organizing the council meeting, as well as Vice President Peña.

CLOSING PRAYER

The Rev. Michael L. Burk, executive for worship and liturgical resources and chaplain of the Church Council, led in a closing prayer.

ADJOURNMENT

The fifty-sixth meeting of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) was adjourned at 11:29 A.M.