

A Social Policy Resolution on Jubilee USA Network

Adopted by ELCA Church Council (November 2024) but unformatted.

Whereas the ELCA affirms in its “Social Message on Human Rights” that this church is called to participate in social structures, such as the economy, with hope but “critically as a public institution...and as a financial institution” (pg. 9);

Whereas multiple international human rights bodies “have consistently observed that excessive debt service payments constitute an obstacle to development and the realization of human rights in many developing countries;”¹

Whereas in its Social Statement on *Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All* (1999) the ELCA recognizes that “programs to pay off debt typically divert funds from much needed educational, health, and environmental efforts, and from infrastructures for economic development,” often leaving the poorest people in developing countries “adversely affected” (pg. 6);

Whereas the ELCA is a founding member of the Jubilee USA Network, which is a coalition aimed at debt relief of under-resourced countries around the world and the redirection of resources to reduction of poverty and provision of health care and education for people living in poverty and with deep need;

Whereas Jubilee USA Network deepens and extends the advocacy work of the ELCA through providing expertise, capacity, and targeted work on debt, tax, and trade policies that help end poverty;

Whereas the ELCA Churchwide Assembly adopted a resolution in support of the Jubilee 2000: USA Campaign in 1999;

Whereas work through and with Jubilee Network USA continues through the ELCA’s Witness in Society ministry;

BE IT RESOLVED:

To receive with gratitude the request of the Upstate New York Synod to reaffirm the ELCA’s support of the Jubilee USA Network;

To reaffirm this church’s commitment to advocating for the “reduction of overwhelming international debt burdens in ways that do not impose further deprivations on the poor, and cancellation of some or all debt where severe indebtedness immobilizes a country’s economy”²;

To reaffirm this church’s support of and collaboration with Jubilee USA Network;

¹ United Nations General Assembly, Human Rights Council, “Report of the Independent Expert on the effects of foreign debt and other related international financial obligations of States on the full enjoyment of all human rights, particularly economic, social and cultural rights” (A/HRC/20/23), Anex, pg. 9.

² ELCA, *A Social Statement on Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All* (Chicago: Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 1999), p. 7.

To commend staff of the ELCA's Witness in Society team for carrying forward the commitments of the ELCA's social teachings on international debt through ongoing collaboration with Jubilee USA Network;

To recognize the faithful work of congregations as advocates and supporters of economic justice through debt relief;

To encourage the churchwide organization of the ELCA to collaboratively draw attention to this commitment through publication of news releases or stories of Jubilee USA Network's success in reduction, cancellation, or restructuring of international debt;

To encourage ELCA-related colleges, universities, and seminaries to continue and increase education on the impact of international debt on development, poverty, and human rights; and

To call upon the churchwide organization, synods, congregations, and other worshipping communities to hold indebted countries in prayer.