

# VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Social Policy Resolution  
CA95.07.62



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
God's work. Our hands.

## Adopted by the 1995 Churchwide Assembly.

### Whereas

Whereas, violence against women is a tragic reality that pervades societies worldwide, expressing itself in not only extreme forms (such as beating, sexual abuse, rape, torture, and killing), but also cultural practices (such as discrimination, female infanticide, genital mutilation, dowry, and widow deaths); and

Whereas, Jesus Christ calls each Christian and the whole Church into a mission of love and compassion toward all peoples, and the Holy Scriptures repeatedly call the people of God to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God; and

Whereas, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, participating in God's mission, commits itself in its constitution to "lift its voice in concord and work with forces for good, to serve humanity, cooperating with church and other groups participating in activities that promote justice, relieve misery, and reconcile the estranged" (churchwide constitutional provision ELCA 4.03g.); and

Whereas, the Lutheran World Federation Council at its meeting in Kristiansand, Norway, in June 1993, asked the member churches to provide educational programs on the different forms of violence against women, to offer social support and practical aid for women, and to advocate for social policies and laws that protect women; and

Whereas, by action of the Church Council in April 1988, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America joined with other Christian churches in the "Ecumenical Decade: Churches in Solidarity with Women," the focus of which is on:

- "the full participation of women in both Church and society,"
- "the commitment to justice and peace for all," and
- "theology and spirituality which flow out of women's faith and life experience" (Church Council minutes, CC88.4.53); and

Whereas, widespread discrimination against women continues to permit the rationalization of violence against women and may result in a violation of their human rights; and

Whereas, the report from the United Nations World Conference on Human Rights, held in June 1993 in Vienna, Austria, calls for action by governments and non-governmental organizations to prevent violence against women, e.g., domestic

violence, abuse, rape, and killing of women during civil wars and at refugee camps, and considers these abhorrent acts as violations of the human rights of women; and

Whereas, 130 nations have ratified the International Convention against the Discrimination of Women, but the United States is among the minority that have not; and

Whereas, the United Nations has drafted a Declaration against Violence against Women and the U.N. Commission on Human Rights has appointed a Special Rapporteur on Violence against and

Whereas, the international relief and development agencies with whom the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America cooperates have identified the suffering of women as a major concern and have called upon churches and global institutions to respond; therefore be it

### **Resolved**

RESOLVED, that the 1995 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:

1. denounce and combat the beating, sexual abuse, raping, and killing that threaten the life and safety of women everywhere;
2. denounce the exploitation in visual print and electronic media of violence against women that simultaneously portrays, assumes, and reinforces the apathetic response of our society toward such violence;
3. encourage greater awareness among members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America about all forms of violence that threaten the life and safety of all women;
4. encourage all members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to make their homes, schools, and places of employment safe places where all may be free from physical, emotional, and verbal abuse and those elements of the mass media that extol violence and the exploitation of women;
5. support the efforts of all members and congregations of this church, synods, church-wide units, and church-related agencies and institutions that seek to provide both justice and security for women in Church and society through law, policy, care, service, and support within the Body of Christ;
6. encourage the development of culture-specific resources and programs that advise and educate women who may experience violence in their lives;
7. express appreciation to the United States Senate for the ratification of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination on June 24, 1994;
8. encourage the U.S. government to ratify the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and encourage church leaders and members, congregations, synods, the churchwide organization, and church-related agencies and institutions to advocate for the ratification of this important agreement; and

9. affirm the call made by the Lutheran World Federation to combat violence against women.