



Preliminary Minutes

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Tenth Biennial Churchwide Assembly
August 6–11, 2007—Chicago, Illinois

Plenary Session Three

Tuesday, August 7, 2007

2:00 P.M.—4:00 P.M.

The third plenary session of the tenth Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America was called to order at 2:03 P.M. Central Daylight Time on Tuesday, August 7, 2007, by the Rev. Mark S. Hanson, presiding bishop, in Exhibition Hall A at Navy Pier, Chicago, Illinois, following the singing of “Guide Me Ever, Great Redeemer” and “O Day of Rest and Gladness.”

Bible Study

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson welcomed Ms. Connie Thomas, a member of Lutheran Church of the Holy Spirit in Chicago and a member of the Task Force for Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Studies on Sexuality, to introduce the Bible studies and the day’s study leader.

Ms. Thomas introduced the Rev. David M. Rhoads, professor of New Testament at the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Chicago, who from memory presented a recitation of the letter to the Galatians.

Following the presentation, the assembly expressed its appreciation to Prof. Rhoads through its applause.

Acknowledgment of Bishops

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson presented to the assembly the following bishops who, since the 2005 Churchwide Assembly, had completed or soon would complete their terms in office: the Rev. Roy G. Almquist, bishop of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod (*in absentia*); the Rev. Robert D. Berg, bishop of the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin; the Rev. Paul J. Blom, bishop of the Texas-Louisiana Synod; the Rev. George G. Carlson, bishop of the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin; the Rev. Andrea DeGroot-Nesdahl, bishop of the South Dakota Synod; the Rev. Gary L. Hansen, bishop of the North/West Lower Michigan Synod; the Rev. Carol S. Hendrix, bishop of the Lower Susquehanna Synod; the Rev. Paul R. Landahl, bishop of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod; the Rev. A. Donald Main, bishop of the Upper Susquehanna Synod; the Rev. Margarita Martinez, bishop of the Caribbean Synod, who had died March 11, 2007; the Rev. Ronald D. Martinson, bishop of the Alaska Synod (*in absentia*); the Rev. Donald J. McCoid, bishop of the Southwest Pennsylvania Synod; the Rev. Marcus J. Miller, bishop of the Northeastern Ohio Synod; the Rev. Richard R. Omland, bishop of the Montana Synod; the Rev. Robert A. Rimbo, bishop of the Southeast Michigan Synod (*in absentia*); the Rev. Theodore F.

Schneider, bishop of the Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod; the Rev. Paul R. Swanson, bishop of the Oregon Synod; the Rev. Rolf P. Wangberg, bishop of the Northwestern Minnesota Synod; and the Rev. Ronald B. Warren, bishop of the Southeastern Synod. Presiding Bishop Hanson also thanked the Rev. Francisco L. Sosa, retired bishop of the Caribbean Synod, for his interim and acting service as bishop in the Caribbean Synod. The assembly expressed its appreciation to these bishops with a standing ovation.

Presiding Bishop Hanson introduced to the assembly those who had been elected to serve as bishop since the 2005 Churchwide Assembly: the Rev. David H. Brauer-Rieke, bishop of the Oregon Synod; the Rev. Claire S. Burkat, bishop of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod; the Rev. Bruce H. Burnside, bishop of the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin; the Rev. Jessica R. Crist, bishop of the Montana Synod; the Rev. Robert L. Driesen, bishop of the Upper Susquehanna Synod; the Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton, bishop of the Northeastern Ohio Synod; the Rev. H. Julian Gordy, bishop of the Southeastern Synod; the Rev. Richard H. Graham, bishop of the Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod; the Rev. B. Penrose Hoover, bishop of the Lower Susquehanna Synod; the Rev. Michael F. Keys, bishop of the Alaska Synod; the Rev. Kurt F. Kusserow, bishop of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod; the Rev. Felipe Lozada-Montañez, bishop of the Caribbean Synod; the Rev. Wayne N. Miller, bishop of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod; the Rev. Duane C. Pederson, bishop of the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin; the Rev. Michael W. Rinehart, bishop of the Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod; the Rev. John D. Schleicher, bishop of the North/West Lower Michigan Synod; the Rev. John H. Schreiber, bishop of the Southeastern Michigan Synod; the Rev. Stephen S. Talmage, bishop of the Grand Canyon Synod; the Rev. Lawrence R. Wohlrabe, bishop of the Northwestern Minnesota Synod; and the Rev. David B. Zellmer, bishop of the South Dakota Synod. The assembly welcomed these recently elected bishops with a standing ovation.

Election Report:

Second Ballot for Presiding Bishop

(Reference: 2007 Pre-Assembly Report, Section IV, pages 1–2; Section I, pages 17–19.)

Mr. Carlos E. Peña, vice president of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, called upon Mr. Phillip H. Harris, chair of the Elections Committee, for the report of the second ballot for presiding bishop.

Mr. Harris presented the report of the second ballot for presiding bishop. There were 1,029 ballots cast, including two illegal ballots, for a total of 1,027 legal ballots cast. The number of votes required for election was 772, or 75%. Those receiving votes and the number of votes received by each were:

Name	Votes	Percentage
Mark S. Hanson	888	86.30%
Karl Donfried	73	7.09%
Barbara Lundblad	18	1.75%
James Nestingen	17	1.65%
Michael Foss	7	.68%
Ernie Hinojosa	7	.68%
Larry Clark	4	.39%
David Tiede	2	
James Capers	1	
Kenneth Fauty	1	
Scott Grorud	1	
Phillip Haugen	1	
Mark L. Johnson	1	
Larry Jorstad	1	
Erica Kennedy	1	
David Lose	1	
Glen Nycklemoe	1	
Mark Ramseth	1	
Frank Senn	1	

Vice President Peña announced that there was an election on the second ballot for presiding bishop. Mr. Peña declared the Rev. Mark S. Hanson elected to a six-year term as presiding bishop.

Assembly

Action:

CA07.02.07 To declare elected the Rev. Mark S. Hanson to a six-year term, commencing November 1, 2007, as presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

The assembly responded with a standing ovation. Vice President Peña invited Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson, his wife, Ione, and their daughter, Elizabeth, to come to the stage.

Presiding Bishop Hanson responded to his election by saying that, as in 2001, he understood the process not as an election won, but as a call received. He expressed his conviction that this calling is one shared first and foremost with his wife, Ione; then with other members of his family; with gifted colleagues in the churchwide organization, whom he asked to stand and receive the assembly's applause; with the other officers of this church; and with the Church Council. He continued by reflecting that, when he accepted election in 2001, he invited this church to be involved in thoughtful and prayerful discernment about a plan for mission that would shape its work. He expressed his gratitude that this church had responded to his request. He revealed that he daily draws upon a deep wellspring of faith that has been nurtured by loving Christian parents, his sisters, and his parents-in-law. He said that it is humbling to know that he is being prayed for by many people in this church. He announced that he has the best call in the ELCA, because he has the privilege of traveling throughout this church, seeing how the Holy Spirit is stirring in and through its ministries for the sake of Jesus Christ, and telling stories of his discoveries, stories that inspire great courage and hope in others. He stated that he accepted the call to be presiding bishop with deep gratitude and expectant hopefulness.

Vice President Peña invited the assembly to stand and sing "Now Thank We All Our God." Mr. Peña announced that the report of the presiding bishop would be given during the fourth plenary session. As he loosened his tie, the vice president returned the chair to Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson. The assembly responded with applause.

Report of the Nominating Committee

(Reference: 2007 Pre-Assembly Report, Section VII, pages 1-91; Section I, pages 9, 13-15.)

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson welcomed the Rev. Darrel O. Lundby, chair of the Nominating Committee, to present its report.

Pr. Lundby announced that the 18 elected members of the Nominating Committee had met on April 27-28, 2007. They did their work with great care for this church and for its particular needs for leadership and service. As required by this church's governing documents, two nominees had been submitted for each position on the Church Council, boards, and committees and would be elected by this Churchwide Assembly. The Nominating Committee faced the substantial task of considering the many people whose names had been submitted for the positions. Some factors that were examined for each nomination included the current composition of the council, board, or committee; representational requirements outlined in Chapter 5 and Chapter 19 of the ELCA's constitution and bylaws; appropriate experience; geographical and synodical distribution; and age range. Pr. Lundby indicated that the report of the committee is presented in the 2007 Pre-Assembly Report, Section VII. He informed voting members that a change established by the 2005 Churchwide Assembly altered the nomination pattern for the Church Council and certain positions on program committees. Under that change, designated synods, through the Synod Assembly, present two nominees for Church Council. Other designated synods, also through the Synod Assembly, provide three names for positions on program committees; from those three names submitted by designated synods, the Nominating Committee selected two, based on the particular needs of the program committee. Pr. Lundby further explained that in addition to the submitted nominees for specific tickets, nominations from the floor would be permitted for certain positions. He instructed voting members to make such nominations at the Nominations Desk in the Assembly Secretariat located in Navy Pier 302 by 2:00 P.M., Wednesday, August 8, 2007. Floor nominations for positions on the program committee or board of a churchwide unit require, in addition to the nominator, the written support of at least ten other voting members; floor nominations for the Nominating Committee, Committee on Discipline, and the Committee on Appeals require, in addition to the nominator, the written support of at least twenty other voting members, he stated.

Pr. Lundby explained the voting procedure to the assembly. Ballots would be distributed to voting members by their respective synodical bishop during the Thursday morning plenary session.

The deadline for returning the ballots to the ballot boxes at the entrance to the plenary hall was 2:00 P.M., Thursday, August 9, 2007.

Introduction: Social Statement on Education

(Reference: 2007 Pre-Assembly Report, Section IV, pages 13–34; Section I, page 12.)

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson welcomed the Rev. Rebecca S. Larson, executive director of the Church in Society unit; the Rev. Ronald W. Duty and the Rev. Roger A. Willer, churchwide studies staff; and Mr. Paul J. Dove and Ms. Kristi Lines, co-chairs of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Task Force on Education, to introduce “Our Calling in Education,” which, if approved by the assembly, would become the tenth social statement of this church.

Pr. Duty reported that the 2001 Churchwide Assembly called for a social statement on education. The former Division for Church in Society had named the Task Force on Education in 2003, and it had met nine times over four years. It also held listening posts in various areas of this church, and published a study in January 2005. Congregations had been invited to use this study and to return responses to the task force. The first draft of the proposed social statement, including a version prepared in Spanish, was published in March 2006. Between March and October 2006, 40 synods had held hearings, two of which were bilingual or in Spanish. A second draft of the proposed social statement had been prepared in January 2007. The Church in Society program committee, the Conference of Bishops, and the Church Council had reviewed this second draft, and the Church Council had recommended this proposed social statement to the 2007 Churchwide Assembly for adoption.

Ms. Kristi Lines, co-chair, told the assembly that from the beginning the work of this task force had been unique and rewarding. The task force was composed of persons from diverse geographic regions, with varying work experiences and opinions, all of whom shared a passion for education and for this church. They were challenged by significant issues, and they encouraged one another to think differently about those issues. They engaged in rich and lively conversations, invited others to dialogue with them, called for collaborative efforts, wrote, reread what they had written, and engaged in additional conversations. Ms. Lines asked rhetorically what this statement, if adopted, would mean for this church. She replied that it would enhance the ELCA’s identity as a teaching and learning church and would help it live out its baptismal calling. It would help this church ground its discussions about education in a Lutheran understanding of the Word, and it would call this church to further collaborative efforts in education.

Mr. Dove explained that the proposed social statement on education, “Our Calling in Education,” comes at a time at which there are challenging issues in public and parochial schools, in Lutheran colleges and public universities, and in families as they address the faith formation of their children. In his opinion, the key message of the proposed statement is, “In gratitude for God’s love, we live out our vocation in our places of responsibilities in daily life—home, congregation, work place, neighborhood, nation, and global society” (“Prologue: Education and Vocation,” lines 47-50). He added that the proposed social statement is characterized by its grounding in the Lutheran tradition of vocation, its comprehensiveness, and its incompleteness—for one statement cannot exhaust the topic of education. The themes of the proposed statement are the role of family in faith formation,

the encouragement of Lutheran early childhood education centers and schools, the endorsement of access to public education for all, the affirmation of Lutheran colleges and universities and Lutheran campus ministries, and the call for financial aid for higher education. He considered the most promising theme of the proposed social statement to be collaboration, a theme consistent with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America’s mission strategy.

Mr. Dove thanked everyone for allowing him the privilege of serving on the task force. The assembly responded with applause.

Presiding Bishop Hanson announced that the open hearing on the proposed social statement was scheduled during the first session of hearings that evening. He also informed the assembly that the deadline for amendments to the proposed social statement was Wednesday morning, August 8, 2007, at 10:45 A.M.

Dwelling in the Word

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson introduced the Rev. Steven P. Loy, a member of the Church Council from Las Cruces, New Mexico, to provide the first segment of “Dwelling in the Word.”

When Pr. Loy’s microphone, which was identified to the chair with a red card, failed to project properly, Presiding Bishop Hanson asked him to move to a neighboring microphone, saying, “I think that God would prefer you to stand at green microphone when speaking about dwelling in the Word.”

Pr. Loy recounted that he had experienced a typical upbringing in the Lutheran church, but, because he grew up in Florida, most of his friends were Southern Baptists, who had a different understanding of the Bible from his Lutheran brothers and sisters. He revealed that his Baptist friends knew more about the Bible than he did, and told him when he was wrong about a verse or story. He confessed that he found their knowledge irritating, and that he wished that he had paid more attention in confirmation. In an introductory course on the Old Testament at the University of South Florida, Professor James Strange opened an exciting new world for Pr. Loy. As a result, he changed his major and decided to enter seminary. Studying the Bible is not a comfortable exercise for him, he explained. While some people find peace and serenity in Bible study, he reported that he finds there the unsettling questions that keep his faith lively and hope-filled.

The assembly responded to Pr. Loy’s presentation with applause.

Report: Memorials Committee

(Reference: 2007 Pre-Assembly Report, Section VI, pages 1–74; Section I, pages 6, 9, 11–12.)

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson called upon the Rev. Kenneth M. Rupp and Dr. Norma J. Hirsch, members of the Church Council and co-chairs of the Memorials Committee, to begin presentation of the committee’s report.

Pr. Rupp thanked the members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for submitting 125 memorials to the Churchwide Assembly. He gave thanks to God for the faith and hard work of so many people that had led to the creation of these memorials.

Dr. Hirsch informed the assembly that the Memorials Committee is appointed by the Church Council and is given the

responsibility to review memorials from Synod Assemblies and make appropriate recommendations for assembly action. The recommendations of the Memorials Committee are just that: recommendations, she explained. The purpose of the committee is to assist the assembly as it considers responses to a large number of memorials. Its goal is to make it as easy as possible for the Churchwide Assembly to engage in conversation about the memorials.

Pr. Ruppap continued by informing the assembly that memorials that address the same topic or related concerns were grouped together by the Memorials Committee in order to facilitate discussion. Some of the memorials were identical because several synods had adopted the same model memorial; other memorials present a broad range of opinions and recommended actions. The Memorials Committee used background information prepared by the churchwide staff and references to previous actions within the ELCA and its ecumenical partners as a basis for making its recommendations, he said.

Pr. Ruppap announced that the consideration of memorials would begin with Category A5, "Support for Congregations Assisting Returning Veterans" (Section VI, pages 13-14). The recommendation of the Memorials Committee was as follows:

Moved;

Seconded: To thank the Saint Paul Area Synod for its concern for the well-being and healthy reintegration of our returning military veterans; and

To urge all congregations and other expressions of the ELCA to provide a welcoming and supporting environment for returning military veterans and further urge the Conference of Bishops to partner with the ELCA Bureau for Federal Chaplaincy Ministries to explore means by which this church effectively might provide healing ministries to military veterans and their families.

The Rev. Peter Rogness, bishop of the Saint Paul Area Synod, spoke in support of the recommendation. He expressed his appreciation for the Memorials Committee's support and its recommended implementation process. He further stated that he is grateful that this church is not making the same mistake that this country made with Vietnam War veterans, when it allowed differences over the war to influence its treatment of returning veterans. Bp. Rogness called the assembly's attention to what he identified as the failure of the background material to mention this church's support of individuals who choose not to serve in military settings. He said that he presumed that an affirmative vote on the memorial also would embrace those who chose not to serve.

Ms. Glennady L. Ose (Saint Paul Area Synod) also spoke in favor of the committee's recommendation regarding this memorial. She spoke about two nephews who serve in the military and their need for support when they return from their service. She encouraged congregations to sponsor Camp Noahs for children of persons serving in the military.

Presiding Bishop Hanson called upon the Rev. Charles W. Mays, member of the Church Council, to lead the assembly in prayer before it voted on the Memorial Committee's recommendation.

Assembly

Action:

Yes-1,023; No-3

CA07.02.08 To thank the Saint Paul Area Synod for its concern for the well-being and healthy reintegration of our returning military veterans; and

To urge all congregations and other expressions of the ELCA to provide a welcoming and supporting environment for returning military veterans and further urge the Conference of Bishops to partner with the ELCA Bureau for Federal Chaplaincy Ministries to explore means by which this church effectively might provide healing ministries to military veterans and their families.

On behalf of the Memorials Committee, Pr. Ruppap presented the recommendation regarding criminal justice (Section VI, page 24).

Moved;

Seconded:

To thank the Rocky Mountain Synod, South Dakota Synod, and La Crosse Area Synod for their concern for this important social issue that affects those incarcerated, their families, and the broader society; and

To direct the Church in Society unit to develop a social statement on criminal justice, in accordance with "Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns"(2006), for possible consideration at the 2013 Churchwide Assembly.

The Rev. Mary K. Baum (South-Central Synod of Wisconsin) asked why the proposed social statement would not be considered until the 2013 Churchwide Assembly.

The Rebecca S. Larson, executive director of the Church in Society unit, answered that the number of social statements in process would dictate that a proposed social statement on criminal justice could not be prepared by 2011. The normal timeline for social statement development calls for a five-year preparatory process. A proposed social statement on human sexuality is due in 2009 and a proposed social statement on genetics is planned for 2011.

Assembly

Action:

Yes-957; No-68

CA07.02.09 To thank the Rocky Mountain Synod, South Dakota Synod, and La Crosse Area Synod for their concern for this important social issue that affects those incarcerated, their families, and the broader society; and

To direct the Church in Society unit to develop a social statement on criminal justice, in accordance with "Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns"

(2006), for possible consideration at the 2013 Churchwide Assembly.

Mr. Gary Diers (Minneapolis Area Synod) rose to a point of inquiry. He asked that the assembly be informed about the order in which memorials would come to the floor.

The presiding bishop said that he would take this request to the Memorials Committee and provide an answer to Mr. Diers's question during Plenary Session Four.

Consideration of the Churchwide Strategy on HIV and AIDS

(Reference: 2007 Pre-Assembly Report, Section IV, pages 37-39.)

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson introduced the consideration of the HIV and AIDS strategy by informing the assembly that both the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and its predecessor church bodies had a long history of work related to HIV and AIDS. He called attention to the recommended action found in Section IV, pages 38 and 39. The presiding bishop announced that the assembly would consider the HIV and AIDS strategy at a later time.

Update: Evangelism Strategy

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson welcomed the Rev. Richard A. Magnus, executive director of the Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission unit, to call upon the Rev. Kathryn I. Bradley-Love, assistant director for evangelism and director for prayer and spiritual renewal, for an update on the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's evangelism strategy, which had been adopted by the 2001 Churchwide Assembly.

Presiding Bishop Hanson, citing personal privilege, announced the retirement of Pr. Magnus at the end of 2007. He thanked Pr. Magnus for his leadership in planting new congregations and transforming existing congregations for mission. The assembly expressed its appreciation to Pr. Magnus through a standing ovation. Pr. Magnus responded by saying that it had been an incredible privilege for him to serve in the churchwide expression of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Pr. Magnus introduced Pr. Bradley-Love. The assembly greeted Pr. Bradley-Love with applause.

Pr. Bradley-Love reviewed the objectives of the evangelism strategy. The first objective was a call to prayer. She reported a dramatic increase in prayer requests on the Web site. In 2003 there was an average of 882 monthly prayer requests on the Web site; to this point in 2007 there was an average of 27,128 monthly prayer requests. There also has been an increase in prayer conferences, retreats, and workshops. The second objective of the evangelism strategy was to prepare and renew evangelical leaders, both lay and clergy. Pr. Bradley-Love announced that grants have been given in support of this objective. The third objective of the strategy was to teach disciples and train ethnic-specific leaders, especially Latino and Latina leaders. Surveys have been conducted in 398 congregations, and 52 of 65 synods have been involved in the coaching process. In addition, a biannual newsletter has been published and revival services have been hosted in a variety of regions of this church. The evangelism strategy's fourth objective was to start and renew congregations. Pr. Bradley-Love reported that 53 percent of all new mission starts have been among people

of color or primary language other than English. She declared that this church is seeking to be an evangelizing church in all its expressions, and that this church is evangelizing when it responds to Hurricane Katrina, when it spreads faith stories, when its children empty their piggy banks to feed the hungry, and when seminaries graduate evangelists. Pr. Bradley-Love invited assembly participants to become part of the evangelism strategy, and solicited their prayers.

Orientation to Hearings

(Reference: 2007 Pre-Assembly Report, Program 14 and Section I, page 20.)

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson provided voting members with an orientation to the two sets of hearings scheduled for Tuesday evening. He stated that these hearings had two main purposes: first, to help voting members become oriented to specific legislative items that they would be asked to consider and to get answers to the questions that voting members might have; and second, to provide a smaller group setting for discussion about the proposals that would be coming before this assembly. The topics of the hearings were the social statement on education; the "Book of Faith" initiative; the budget proposal; the Blue Ribbon Committee on Mission Funding; the Middle East Strategy; the World Hunger Appeal and Disaster Response; a churchwide strategy on HIV and AIDS; rural ministry; urban ministry; and an update on the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality. The presiding bishop noted that the hearing on the update would not include debate on the recommendations of the Memorials Committee with regard to issues focusing on human sexuality. Instead, this hearing would provide an update on the preparation of the proposed social statement on human sexuality.

Recess

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson called upon Secretary Lowell G. Almen to make announcements.

Secretary Almen reported that hearings would be held that evening at the Hyatt Regency Chicago Hotel. Dinner would be available for voting members in the Grand Ballroom of the Hyatt Regency Chicago Hotel between the 5:00 and 7:00 P.M. hearings.

The deadline for amendments to the constitution and bylaws, for removal of memorials from *en bloc* action, and for amendments to the proposed social statement on education would be Wednesday, August 8, 2007, at 10:45 A.M.

Seminary clusters would host receptions for voting members at Hyatt Regency Chicago Hotel in the West Tower on Tuesday evening, August 7.

The Reference and Counsel Committee would meet immediately following the plenary session.

The Memorials Committee would meet on Wednesday, August 8, 2007, at 7:00 A.M. in Room 328 at the Navy Pier.

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson introduced Ms. Faith A. Ashton, member of the Church Council, who led the closing worship of the plenary session. At 4:07 P.M. the chair declared the assembly to be in recess until 8:30 A.M., Wednesday, August 8, 2007.

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