



Preliminary Minutes

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

Plenary Session Four Wednesday, August 8, 2007 8:30 A.M.—11:00 A.M.

The Rev. Mark S. Hanson, presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, called the fourth plenary session of the tenth Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to order at 8:30 A.M. Central Daylight Time on Wednesday, August 8, 2007, in Exhibition Hall A at Navy Pier, Chicago, Illinois. After ringing the bells and lighting the candle, Presiding Bishop Hanson called upon Ms. Jessica M. McKee, a member of the Church Council from Vancouver, Washington, to open the session with prayer. The assembly sang “Blessed Be the God of Israel” during Morning Prayer, which included a reading from Ephesians.

Opening Remarks

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson began his opening remarks by thanking the musicians for their service to the assembly and expressing gratitude to all participants for their excellent work in the previous day’s sessions and hearings. He offered his hope that during the hearings held Tuesday evening voting members had learned more about matters before the assembly and had had an opportunity to listen to each other’s perspectives. He noted that voting members’ careful listening and reflection would facilitate the assembly’s deliberations. Presiding Bishop Hanson observed that assembly participants had a full day ahead of them. He proposed that the schedule for the morning’s plenary session include the following items:

- Report of the presiding bishop
- Consideration of memorials
- Keynote address by Musimbi Kanyoro
- Consideration of a resolution related to a churchwide strategy on HIV and AIDS
- Report on justice for women

Presiding Bishop Hanson stated that, if time permitted, the assembly would hear an update from the Committee of Reference and Counsel. He also proposed the afternoon plenary session include the following items:

- Report of the treasurer
- Report on the Mission Investment Fund
- Report of the Blue Ribbon Committee on Mission Funding
- Ecumenical greeting from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada
- “Quasi committee of the whole”
- College corporation meetings
- Consideration of memorials

Presiding Bishop Hanson asked voting members to approve this agenda by unanimous consent. The assembly assented by voice vote. The presiding bishop then yielded the chair to Vice President Carlos E. Peña in order to give his report to the assembly.

Report of the Presiding Bishop

(Reference: 2007 *Pre-Assembly Report*, Section II, pages 1–6; Section I, page 20.)

Vice President Carlos E. Peña introduced Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson, who then presented his report to the assembly. The full text of the oral report of the presiding bishop was made available to voting members, and will be included in the final minutes of the assembly. Presiding Bishop Hanson challenged participants to imagine this “sent” church in the future, particularly in the context of leadership and “followership.” The presiding bishop asked participants to share with one another experiences related to being a mentor and being mentored. Later he asked those gathered to share with one another a single descriptor they would use in introducing Christ to another person.

Presiding Bishop Hanson challenged this church to achieve the goal of having dedicated, designated evangelists in half of the congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) by 2012. He recommended a recent book by Eugene Peterson, *Eat This Book: A Conversation in the Art of Spiritual Reading*, in the context of increasing the fluency of this church in matters of faith, Scripture, and church polity. He noted that 70 percent of the members of this church are unaware that they belong to a church body beyond their own congregations.

The presiding bishop lifted up new communication tools, including new print advertisements with the theme, “Evangelical Lutheran Church in America: God’s Work, Our Hands.” The advertisements are part of a campaign designed to communicate the many ways in which this church answers its call to share God’s boundless love within the world. He then asked participants to tell one another stories from their own congregations and communities related to the theme, “God’s Work, Our Hands.” He further noted plans to redesign the ELCA Web site, www.elca.org, and mentioned development of additional strategies intended to help this church step forward as a public church.

The presiding bishop challenged the assembly and this church to fund fully its many vital ministries, and to endorse wholeheartedly the report of the Blue Ribbon Committee on Mission Funding. He then discussed multicultural strategies, and called upon this church to renew its commitment to increase diversity in its membership. Presiding Bishop Hanson invited participants to share with one another activities and strategies aimed at embracing diversity within their congregations, communities, synods, and campuses.

Speaking to the interdependence of the agencies, institutions, and programs of this church, the presiding bishop described as a core strength of this church the “ecology of interdependence” both within this church and with its ecumenical and inter-Lutheran partners. He offered thanks to God for all those who are leaders in these networks of connectivity.

After noting the root meaning of the word “pontiff” as “bridge-builder,” the presiding bishop discussed the importance of building and tending bridges between communities within this church and with its full-communion partners, including, among others, the Lutheran World Federation.

Presiding Bishop Hanson challenged this church to speak the truth to situations of rampant materialism, ecocide, war, and injustice, while avoiding a “pious veneer.” He noted three social statements currently in development, including the social statement on education to be considered by the 2007 Churchwide Assembly, an anticipated social statement on human sexuality for 2009, and one on complex questions related to genetics, scheduled to come to the 2011 Churchwide Assembly.

He furthered challenged the leaders of this church to be mindful of the well-being of their whole person, and to commit to those daily disciplines that improve physical, mental, and spiritual health. He closed with a prayer asking God’s blessings on the work of this church and its members.

Presiding Bishop Hanson’s report was received by the assembly with a standing ovation, following which Vice President Peña invited participants to remain standing and sing “Praise the One Who Breaks the Darkness.” The report of the presiding bishop was then referred without comment to the Committee of Reference and Counsel. Vice President Peña yielded back the chair to Presiding Bishop Hanson.

Young Rostered Leaders

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson at this time recognized a first-ever gathering of young rostered leaders. He noted that they had been wearing lime-green “NPG” (Navy Pier Gathering) buttons and t-shirts. This group of 100 ELCA rostered leaders, all under age 32, met during the assembly to explore themes that impact their ministry, personal lives, and discernment and understanding of God’s call. He invited them to stand as the assembly gave thanks to God for their ministries within this church.

Report of the Memorials Committee

(Reference: 2007 *Pre-Assembly Report*, Section VI, pages 28-32 and 32-33.)

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson began the continued consideration of memorials by responding to the previous day’s inquiry of Mr. Gary Diers [Minneapolis Area Synod] regarding the ordering of memorials. Following consultation with the chairs of the Memorials Committee, the presiding bishop reported consideration first would be given to those memorials listed for separate consideration.

Three memorials had been removed from *en bloc*: Category B6, “Genocide in Darfur”; one action in Category D4, “Change the Policy of Lutheran Disaster Response”; and Category E3, “Restraint in Discipline Proceedings.” The chair reported that the Memorials Committee was continuing to evaluate the order for consideration of these memorials.

Presiding Bishop Hanson advised the assembly that memorials found in Category E, including Category E3, would be considered during Plenary Session Seven. He noted that the Memorials Committee had been asked to make recommendations related to the order in which the assembly would consider substitute motions and amendments related to this category.

The chair then directed the assembly to refer to Section VI of the 2007 *Pre-Assembly Report*, and invited the Rev. Kenneth M. Rupp and Dr. Norma J. Hirsch, co-chairs of the Memorials Committee, to continue consideration of the committee’s report.

Dr. Hirsch introduced a resolution on the war in Iraq, Category B5, pages 28-32 of the report of the Memorials Committee.

Moved;

Seconded: To acknowledge with gratitude the memorials of the Northwest Washington Synod, Southwest California Synod, Northern Illinois Synod, South-Central Synod of Wisconsin, La Crosse Area Synod, and Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod related to the war in Iraq;

To reaffirm the resolution of the 2005 Churchwide Assembly, “Opposition to War” (CA05.07.39d), and urge members, congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization to call upon the government of the United States of America and its allies to work with the government of Iraq to take immediate and comprehensive steps to end the violence and establish a peaceful, stable, and just society in that country;

To declare this assembly’s opposition to any escalation of the war in Iraq and “To appeal to all leaders to engage in a national debate to determine whether the policy of pre-emptive war is the best means to achieve peace in a post-9/11 world”;

To urge the government of the United States of America to work in concert with the international community and the United Nations to support peacemaking and nation-building operations in Iraq, and to provide generous support to this international effort; and

To urge members and congregations of this church to:

- pray for peace;
- pray for those who serve in the armed forces and their families;
- study and discuss the ELCA social statement “For Peace in God’s World” and the ELCA message “Living in a Time of Terrorism”;
- minister to service personnel and their families whose lives have been adversely affected by this war;
- engage in moral deliberation about the situation in Iraq and the policies and actions of the government of the United States of America in relation to them; and
- make their views known to their congressional representatives and senators.

The Rev. Daniel W. Doering [Southeast Minnesota Synod] raised a question concerning the designation of Category E3, which the chair had misidentified as Category E2. The presiding bishop thanked Pr. Doering for the clarification.

Presiding Bishop Hanson called for discussion on the question. There being none, the chair called for a vote on the memorial.

Assembly

Action: Yes-874; No-78

CA07.03.10 To acknowledge with gratitude the memorials of the Northwest Washington Synod, Southwest California Synod, Northern Illinois Synod, South-Central Synod of Wisconsin, La Crosse Area Synod, and Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod related to the war in Iraq;

To reaffirm the resolution of the 2005 Churchwide Assembly, "Opposition to War" (CA05.07.39d), and urge members, congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization to call upon the government of the United States of America and its allies to work with the government of Iraq to take immediate and comprehensive steps to end the violence and establish a peaceful, stable, and just society in that country;

To declare this assembly's opposition to any escalation of the war in Iraq and "To appeal to all leaders to engage in a national debate to determine whether the policy of pre-emptive war is the best means to achieve peace in a post-9/11 world";

To urge the government of the United States of America to work in concert with the international community and the United Nations to support peacemaking and nation-building operations in Iraq, and to provide generous support to this international effort; and

To urge members and congregations of this church to:

- pray for peace;
- pray for those who serve in the armed forces and their families;
- study and discuss the ELCA social statement "For Peace in God's World" and the ELCA message "Living in a Time of Terrorism";
- minister to service personnel and their families whose lives have been adversely affected by this war;
- engage in moral deliberation about the situation in Iraq and the policies and actions of the government of the United States of America in relation to them; and
- make their views known to their congressional representatives and senators.

Dr. Hirsch next called for consideration of a memorial related to Darfur, Category B6, pages 32-33 of the report of the Memorials Committee.

Moved;

Seconded: To thank the New England Synod for its concern for the people of Darfur and its encouragement to the ELCA to become better informed about the situation and to act on their behalf through prayer, advocacy, and relief efforts where these are possible;

To thank the presiding bishop for raising up the needs of the people of Darfur and to support the efforts both he and the Lutheran World Federation are making to address this critical situation; and

To encourage ELCA congregations and members to utilize the e-Advocacy network to advocate to federal officials on behalf of Darfur.

The chair called for discussion on the question.

The Rev. Lisa C. Anderson [New England Synod] rose to speak in favor of the memorial. She called the assembly's attention to the deterioration of the human rights situation in Darfur that has occurred since the global community began to take notice of the ongoing genocide in this region of Sudan. Specifically, Pr. Anderson noted that there were more displaced persons in Darfur than in Iraq.

There being no further discussion, the presiding bishop called for a vote.

Assembly

Action: Yes-976; No-11

CA07.03.11 To thank the New England Synod for its concern for the people of Darfur and its encouragement to the ELCA to become better informed about the situation and to act on their behalf through prayer, advocacy, and relief efforts where these are possible;

To thank the presiding bishop for raising up the needs of the people of Darfur and to support the efforts both he and the Lutheran World Federation are making to address this critical situation; and

To encourage ELCA congregations and members to utilize the e-Advocacy network to advocate to federal officials on behalf of Darfur.

Keynote Address: Musimbi Kanyoro, World YWCA

Presiding Bishop Hanson introduced Dr. Musimbi Kanyoro to present the keynote address. Dr. Kanyoro, a social scientist, educator, and activist, is the General Secretary of the World YWCA. Born in Kenya, she is the first woman in the organization's existence to hold this position, overseeing activities in 121 nations.

The assembly greeted Dr. Kanyoro with a standing ovation. She began by reminding participants of her appearance before the

1997 Churchwide Assembly in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, at a time when she was moving from a position with the Lutheran World Federation working on issues related to justice for women to her leadership of the World YWCA.

The speaker discussed the history of the YWCA, and her perspective as its leader. She related her hope that this keynote address would serve as a prelude to the assembly's pending consideration of the justice for women report.

Dr. Kanyoro described hope as an inseparable component of faith, even in the face of situations that might appear devoid of hope, including those related to war, hunger, the HIV and AIDS pandemic, and the exclusion of women from full participation in churches and societies.

She reported that her work has led her to recognize the image of God in every woman as well as in every man—indeed, every person, regardless of status.

Participants should consider what it means to be prophetic in the present day, Dr. Kanyoro urged. Lack of knowledge does not create the conditions of injustice, discord, and damage, and even where there is ignorance, such lack of knowledge can be addressed, she argued. What is lacking is not knowledge, she said, but courage to speak and act prophetically. "Justice delayed is justice denied," she reminded the assembly, before making reference to the book *The Church in the Round*, by the late Harvard professor Letty Russell.

Anticipating the assembly's forthcoming consideration of the report on justice for women, Dr. Kanyoro spoke to the importance of advocacy, and offered the acronym *ADVOCATE* as a means of understanding the underlying concepts: *A* for assessing situations, *D* for detailing challenges, *V* for vocalizing concerns, *O* for opposing injustice, *C* for collaborating with others, *A* for advancing the status of women, *T* for talking with elected leaders, and *E* for engaging the public on the benefits of justice for women.

She offered thanks to God for the continued work of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to promote justice for women. Dr. Kanyoro then noted four areas of special attention this church might consider: 1) continuous work on transforming power relationships between men and women, among women, and among men; 2) nurturing that which adds to the peace of women; 3) accountability to women, ensuring that no woman's story is silenced; and 4) defining and upholding the authority of women. In the course of enumerating these areas of emphasis, Dr. Kanyoro noted that the international Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) has not been signed by the government of the United States, and encouraged participants to advocate for CEDAW's adoption.

Dr. Kanyoro invited the assembly to join her in reciting a pledge being promoted by the worldwide YWCA organization, as its text was projected:

I pledge to do everything in my capacity to respond positively, proactively, and practically to the unprecedented challenges presented by the global AIDS pandemic.

IN MY OWN LIFE,

I will continually challenge my beliefs, question my negative assumptions, and confront the seeds of discrimination,

prejudice, and stigma that perpetuate the spread of HIV. I will use thoughts and words which are inclusive and respectful of others, seeking to build on what unites us and not what divides us.

I will reach out and make connections with those most disenfranchised and affected by HIV, always questioning motives for my actions and showing empathy.

IN MY HOME, WORKPLACE, AND FRIENDSHIPS,

I will support others to overcome negative beliefs, attitudes, and practices towards HIV and AIDS and people living with the virus.

I will increase my awareness and that of others about the presence and relevance of HIV and AIDS in all of our communities.

I will uphold the human rights of all women and girls.

I will challenge all forms of gender inequality, racism, and other forms of social, economic, political, and legal injustice.

I will confront individual behaviors and institutional strategies that place women and girls at risk of violence and HIV infection.

IN MY COUNTRY,

I will create meaningful spaces for the issues and views of women and girls living with HIV and their caregivers to be heard and included.

I will encourage service providers working on HIV and AIDS to prominently, openly, and conscientiously promote equality in all that they do.

I will commit my time and resources to organizations working toward a better future for women and girls, and especially those working to address the impact of HIV and AIDS on women and girls.

The assembly thanked Dr. Kanyoro with a standing ovation, after which Presiding Bishop Hanson asked participants to remain standing and to join in singing "Goodness is Stronger Than Evil."

Consideration of Churchwide Strategy on HIV and AIDS

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

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson called to the stage the Rev. Rebecca S. Larson, executive director of the Church in Society program unit; the Rev. Rafael Malpica-Padilla, executive director of the Global Mission program unit; and Ms. Josselyn N. Bennett, director for poverty ministries in the Church in Society program unit, to serve as resource persons for the discussion of the proposed Churchwide Strategy on HIV and AIDS.

Moved;

- Seconded:** 1. To commit the Evangelical Lutheran Church 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

- 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.

Presiding Bishop Hanson called for discussion on the question.

The Rev. Paul W. Stumme-Diers, bishop of the Greater Milwaukee Synod, spoke in favor of the resolution and called on the assembly to commit resources to supporting financially the strategy's recommendations.

The Rev. Gladys G. Moore [New Jersey Synod] rose to speak in favor of the resolution, and urged this church to fund adequately "Stand with Africa," which, she said, has suffered decreased income.

The Rev. Lisa D. Barry [Florida-Bahamas Synod] spoke in favor of the resolution, adding that within her home community in southern Florida the fastest-growing demographic segment of those living with HIV and AIDS is elderly persons.

There being no further discussion, the presiding bishop called for a vote.

Assembly

Action:

Yes-925; No-22

CA07.03.12

1. To commit the Evangelical Lutheran Church 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 and in tandem with ecumenical partners both in this country and throughout

- d. 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;
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;
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; and
 - (3) abolish the 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;
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 this 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.

The presiding bishop deferred consideration of the report from the director for justice for women until Plenary Session Five.

The Rev. Michael A. Dubsky [Delaware-Maryland Synod] moved to amend the order of business by advancing the first ballot for secretary to Plenary Session Five.

Moved;

Seconded: To amend the assembly’s order of business by advancing the first ballot for secretary to Plenary Session Five.

Presiding Bishop Hanson called for discussion on the question.

Mr. John Elmquist [Metropolitan Chicago Synod] raised a point of personal privilege, noting that there was no offering taken during morning worship. Presiding Bishop Hanson asked if he were speaking to the motion before the assembly. He was not; therefore, the chair recommended that Mr. Elmquist ask his question again after the vote on the pending motion.

There being no further discussion, the chair called for a vote on the motion.

Assembly

Two-Thirds Vote Required

Action:

Yes-748; No-220

CA07.03.13 To amend the assembly’s order of business by advancing the first ballot for secretary to Plenary Session Five.

Mr. John Elmquist rose to suggest that offerings from remaining worship services during the course of the assembly be designated to support work related to HIV and AIDS. Presiding Bishop Hanson thanked Mr. Elmquist for the suggestion and indicated it would be brought before the worship planning team of the assembly.

Recess

The chair called upon Secretary Lowell G. Almen for announcements, which included a reminder that the deadline for nominations was 2:00 P.M.

Presiding Bishop Hanson called upon Mr. David M. Nelson, a member of the Church Council from Bertrand, Nebraska, to lead the assembly in a closing prayer. Mr. Nelson asked that God would ground this church in God's Word.

The bell was sounded, the candle was extinguished, and Plenary Session Four of the tenth Churchwide Assembly ended at 10:58 A.M., Central Daylight Time.