

2011 Churchwide Assembly Ad Hoc Committee Reports on:

I. Amendments to the Recommended Proposed Social Statement *Genetics, Faith and Responsibility* and

II. Amendments to the Recommended Proposed Implementing Resolutions

Introduction

The purpose of the Ad Hoc Committee is to facilitate the work of the assembly through discussion and evaluation of amendments to proposed social statements and related proposed implementing resolutions. As part of their work, the committee is responsible for:

- Ensuring clarity of each amendment submitted by the assembly deadline;
- Assisting those who have submitted amendments with language or wording;
- Assisting, if possible, in forming consensus with authors of motions of like substance or interest;
- Proposing recommendations to the assembly relative to each amendment for use in deliberations.

The deadline for submitting amendments to the proposed social statement and related implementing resolutions was 9:00 a.m. on Wednesday, August 17, 2011. Four amendments were addressed by the Ad Hoc Committee to enable more effective action by the assembly. We express our gratitude to all who worked on behalf of the church to respond to the text of the proposed social statement and related implementing resolutions.

For purpose of consistency and clarity, the Ad Hoc Committee made some minor grammatical and editorial corrections to one or more of the amendments in partnership with the originating author.

Throughout their deliberations, the committee was intentional about recommending adoption of amendments that strengthened the intent and coherence of the existing text. Likewise, the committee recommended not adopting amendments that, in its judgment, were inconsistent with the intent and coherence of the existing text.

Recommendations for all amendments are addressed by the Ad Hoc Committee in the following pages of this document.

Report I. Amendments to the Recommended Proposed Social Statement *Genetics, Faith and Responsibility*

- A. The Ad Hoc Committee recommends the following amendments to the proposed social statement *Genetics, Faith and Responsibility* be adopted.**

Amendment A1

Submitted By: Steven M. Krefting (Sierra Pacific Synod)

Proposed Amendment: Revise the statement in lines 1197-99 as follows:

- 1197 • expand genetic research or technology while knowingly
1198 and ~~unduly~~ unjustifiably endangering plant and animal species,
1199 microflora or fauna, or the existence of biodiversity;

Rationale: The term “unduly” is ambiguous. The term “unjustifiable” clarifies and strengthens the intent of the conviction.

Amendment A2

Submitted By: Steven M. Krefting (Sierra Pacific Synod)

Proposed Amendment: Move the revised section (reference amendment A1) to the previous section of the document, immediately after line 1194, reordering the lines of the section appropriately as follows:

- 1182 Likewise, this church *rejects beliefs, goals and policies that:*
1183 • rely upon or encourage . . .
.
1193 • practice institutional or ideological human eugenic
1194 programs; and
1195 • expand genetic research or technology while knowingly
1196 and unjustifiably endangering plant and animal species,
1197 microflora or fauna, or the existence of biodiversity;
- ~~4495~~1198 Likewise, the ELCA *will raise searching questions about*
~~4495~~1199 *goals and policies that:*
1197 • ~~expand genetic research or technology while knowingly~~
1198 ~~and unduly endangering plant and animal species,~~
1199 ~~microflora or fauna, or the existence of biodiversity;~~
1200 • impact negatively on individual and . . .

Rationale: The task force originally considered placing line 1197 in the “rejects beliefs, goals and policies” category but decided to place it in the “searching questions about goals and policies” category in the absence of clear consensus. However, the proposed change in placement is consistent with the moral framework of the document.

The Ad Hoc Committee recommends the following amendment to the proposed social statement *Genetics, Faith and Responsibility* not be adopted.

Amendment B1

Submitted By: Bradley Gee (Southeast Michigan Synod)

Proposed Amendment: Change Lines 117-19 as follows:

117 This church recognizes and embraces evolution as the
scientifically valid framework on which the study ~~the theoretical~~
118 ~~frameworks on which the science~~ of genetics
119 rests—a frameworks informed by paleontology, biochemistry,
120 molecular biology, embryology, physiology, anatomy and
121 related fields of scientific endeavor. These frameworks . . .

Rationale: The committee recommends against adoption of this amendment for the following reasons:

- The point of this section of the text in the proposed social statement (lines 111-125) is to affirm the science of genetics and scientific endeavor as expressions of the vocation of innovative stewardship.
- It also affirms genetic science and scientific endeavor as indispensable sources of insight for Christian responsibility today. Lines 121-23 offer two reasons why this church needs to encourage and learn from good science.
- The text of the statement as it stands has been reviewed through the hearing and review process, including by many scientists across the ELCA. There was no notable call for amending the text to specifically address the broad topic of evolution in the statement.
- The suggested amendment is unnecessary in light of the section’s purpose and in light of the extensive review already undertaken.
- The focus of the social statement on genetics is the appropriate use and application of the field of genetics and genetic technology.
- The topic of evolution deserves broader and more appropriate forums than this social statement was designed to provide. This conversation is taking place within the ELCA in other forums, e.g. the ELCA Alliance for Faith, Science and Technology. (Visit elca.org/faithandscience.)

Report II: Amendment to the Recommended Proposed Implementing Resolutions

- C. **The Ad Hoc Committee recommends the following amendment to the proposed implementing resolutions be adopted.**

Amendment C1

Submitted By: Kenneth Olson (Metro Chicago Synod)

Proposed Amendment: Change proposed Implementing Resolution 9 (Lines 50-52) as indicated below:

47 9. To call upon the Office of the Presiding Bishop to
48 establish and oversee a process of
49 implementation and accountability for “Genetics,
50 Faith and Responsibility” and to report annually on
51 implementation to the ELCA Church Council ~~in~~
52 through November 2015-; with progress reports
made available through www.elca.org.

Rationale: The Ad Hoc committee recommends adoption of this amendment as consistent with the intent of this church to ensure timely communications on the progress of our strategic work together.

Respectfully submitted:

Dr. Per Anderson
Rev. Dr. Marcus Kunz
Dr. Susan McArver
Mr. Jack Munday
Ms. Sandra Schlesinger (chair)
Bishop Steven Ullestad
Rev. Dr. Roger Willer
Ms. Janet Williams