

Minutes of the Lutheran Episcopal Coordinating Committee (LECC)
February 2-4, 2004
Atlanta, Georgia

Present:

Representatives of The Episcopal Church (ECUSA): the Very Rev. Donald Brown (*co-chair*), the Rt. Rev. Leopold Frade, Ms. Midge Roof, the Rt. Rev. C. Christopher Epting (staff), Ms. Emily Perow.

Representatives of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA): Ms. Terry Bowes, the Rev. Nancy Curtis, Bishop Andrea DeGroot-Nesdahl, the Rev. Norman Wahl, Bishop Ronald B. Warren, The Rev. Jon Enslin (staff),

Absent: The Rev. Dr. Al Moss, the Rev. Dr. Duane Larson, the Rev. Dr. Randall Lee, the Rev. Grant Abbott, the Rev. Gregory Villalon, the Rt. Rev. Carolyn Tanner Irish

The meeting was opened by co-chair Don Brown in the conference room of the Southeastern Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, our host for this event.

General Convention of the Episcopal Church

After personal updates, Chris Epting reported on the General Convention of ECUSA. There, the resolution LECC discussed at the June meeting regarding the **bylaw exception in the ELCA** was changed to read as follows:

“Resolved, the House of Deputies concurring,

That the Standing Commission on Ecumenical Relations is hereby requested to be in conversation with representatives of the ELCA to monitor the ways and extent to which the ELCA ordination bylaw exception may cause any additional limitations upon the full communion that has been jointly established, to clarify the intent and meaning of paragraph 20 of ‘Called to Common Mission’ and the ELCA bylaw 7.31.17 ‘Ordination Under Unusual Circumstances,’ and to report their findings and any recommendations to the next General Convention.”

Action was taken to allow simple **reception into membership of ELCA members transferring to ECUSA congregations** rather than by what affirmation of faith.

“Resolved, the House of Deputies concurring,

That the rubrics of the Book of Common Prayer *and the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church* allow reception of members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.”

February 2-4, 2004

Atlanta, Georgia

Chris Epting led the committee through a discussion of the "Summary of Resolutions of the 74th General Convention with Ecumenical & Interreligious Implications" prepared by the Office of Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations of ECUSA.

Lutheran World Federation Assembly in July, 2003 in Winnipeg, Canada

Jon Enslin reported to the committee about ecumenical implications of the Lutheran World Federation assembly held in Winnipeg, Canada. This federation is a communion and represents geographically Lutherans worldwide. At this meeting, ELCA Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson was elected President of the Lutheran World Federation.

Churchwide Assembly (CWA) of the ELCA in August, 2003 in Milwaukee

The Episcopal ecumenical officer gave a wonderful sermon as part of that and there were excellent ecumenical presentations as well. There were some resolutions which would have made ecumenical relations much more difficult, then there were also proposed exceptions for historic episcopacy which failed.

Upcoming Assemblies and Issues

The ELCA Churchwide Assembly in 2005 will discuss the sexuality issue. All ecumenical partners are receiving inquiries about the implications of the decisions and there will be an ecumenical consultation about this matter to which the ECUSA has been invited as a full communion partner.

Both Jon Enslin and Chris Epting reported further for the two churches. They spoke of the churches' bilateral dialogues with the United Methodist Church and reported on relationships with Churches Uniting in Christ (CUIC).

Developments within the Anglican Communion and Ecumenical Partners regarding the Ordination of Rev. Canon V. Gene Robinson

Chris Epting reported on the effect of the Convention's approval of the ordination of the Rev. Canon V. Gene Robinson as bishop of the diocese of New Hampshire both within the Anglican Communion and ecumenically. He explained the way that the Anglican Communion works in contrast to the Lutheran World Federation as churches who are in communion with the Archbishop of Canterbury rather than directly with each other.

During the subsequent lengthy discussion about the ordination, including the absence of the ELCA bishop at the ordination due to a previous commitment, members of the committee became aware of the very different ways that the two churches' polities address similar issues. In the case of matters of sexuality, for instance, for Anglicans, schism is to be avoided at all costs, and action can precede doctrinal stance, since the core doctrines of the faith and the Book of Common prayer hold the church together; for Lutherans, study comes first, doctrinal decisions, and then action.

The Diaconate in the Two Churches

Suzanne Epting gave a progress report about discussions on the diaconate. The paper, written primarily by her and Madelyn Busse, Dick Bruesehoff, Bud Holland (ECUSA ministry development), Christopher Epting, Randall Lee, and Lynn Griffo (ECUSA ministry development) is an attempt to arrive at common understandings about the diaconate. The version presented to LECC in June of 2002 was updated with additions on the diaconate in both churches. Several ELCA members present recommended inclusion of a discussion of AIMs and their relationship to the diaconate as a next step in the process and all commended the group for their work. Madelyn Busse has been asked by the leadership team to discuss some of the internal ELCA issues, especially regarding synodically authorized diaconal ministers, deaconesses, ELCA rostered diaconal ministers, and others. Further exploration in each of the traditions must be addressed in the meeting in March 2004, Suzanne Epting reported. Terri Bowes volunteered to be the liaison from LECC to the group working on the diaconal issues of CCM. Discussion continued over the next two days regarding suggestions for this writing team.

Presence on denominational ecumenical commissions

Andrea deGroot Nesdahl moved that **the respective churches shall continue reciprocal representation at the meetings of Church Council (ELCA) and Executive Council (ECUSA). Action to make such representatives members of each governing body is referred to both churches through the ecumenical officers of the respective denominations.**

Seconded and passed unanimously.

Conference Call including Duane Larson

The co-chair, Duane Larson, joined the committee for a conference call during the meeting for the following discussion.

Action CA03.06.27 of the 2003 ELCA Churchwide Assembly

A document called the Admonition for the Unity of the Church was brought by Normal Wahl to the committee as a result of action of the Minneapolis Area synod's memorial and action by the ELCA 2003 Churchwide Assembly.

Nancy Curtis moved that **the Lutheran Episcopal Coordinating Committee receive as information Action CA03.06.27 of the 2003 ELCA churchwide assembly, and the relevant memorials of the Minneapolis Area Synod and the South Dakota Synod.**

The motion was seconded and passed

Presence of Bishops at Installations/Ordinations

Don Brown moved to respond to Action CA03.06.27 above as follows:

In a discussion concerning bishops being present at services of ordination/installation, it was noted that the commitment in Called to Common Mission is that “...both churches...promise to include regularly one or more bishops of the other church to participate in the laying on of hands at the ordinations/installations of their own bishops.” (paragraph 12). This is to signify the full communion relationship.

However, the important thing is that the installation/ordination of bishops will be through prayer for the gift of the Holy Spirit and with the laying-on-of-hands by bishops, at least three of whom are to be in the historic succession. Such bishops can be from the ELCA or ECUSA.

The motion was seconded and was passed.

Transitivity of Full Communion

The intransitivity of interdenominational ecumenical agreements is being studied with a focus on the Canadian situation. The ELCA is in full communion with the ELCIC; ECUSA is in full communion with the Anglican Church in Canada; the latter is in full communion with the ELCIC and the ELCA and the ECUSA are in full communion. However, at present, the ELCIC is not in full communion with the ECUSA and the ELCA is not in full communion with the Anglican Church in Canada. Further reporting on this matter in this and like situations will occur in the future.

Future Meetings and Agenda Items:

June 21-23, 2004 in Chicago at the Lutheran Center, with the ELCA to host. This meeting's agenda will include revision of diaconal paper; both staffs will research issues around terms of people on this committee. LECC will have more intentionality about worship, especially devotions within the group. The Anglican Lutheran Historical Society meeting will coincide with these dates and LECC will make a presentation. Plans for the fifth anniversary of CCM will be further discussed

February 6-8, 2005 meeting in Las Vegas, a fast-growing mission field. Chris Epting will be in charge of that. The ECUSA bishop there would be interested in interacting with us. And one of the largest ELCA congregations is there, “Community Church.”

June 12-15, 2005—in Seattle, Washington.

Lutheran Episcopal Coordinating Committee
February 2-4, 2004
Atlanta, Georgia

page 5 of 5

February 5, 2006 in Washington, D. C.—the National Cathedral consortium of the Lutherans and Episcopalians in the area are planning the anniversary of CCM worship service as a local event. It is envisioned that the LOGA office and equivalent office for the ECUSA allowing briefings from state department and other places will present how they work together as two separate offices.

Leo Frade moved acclamation for hospitality and help of the synod in this meeting and the Lutheran Episcopal Coordinating Committee adjourned until June 21, 2004 in Chicago.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Curtis