

DRAFT MINUTES

Minutes of the Lutheran Episcopal Coordinating Committee (LECC)
June 21-23, 2004
Chicago, Illinois

Present for all or part of the sessions:

Representatives of The Episcopal Church (ECUSA): the Very Rev. Donald Brown (*co-chair*), the Rt. Rev. Leopold Frade, Ms. Emily Perow, The Rev. Dr. Al Moss, the Rev. Grant Abbott, the Rt. Rev. Carolyn Tanner Irish, Mr. Thomas Ferguson (*staff*).

Representatives of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA): Ms. Terry Bowes, the Rev. Nancy Curtis, Bishop Andrea DeGroot Nesdaahl, the Rev. Norman Wahl, Mr. Michael Trice (*staff*), the Rev. Dr. Duane Larson (*co-chair*), the Rev. Dr. Randall Lee (*staff*),

Absent: Ms. Midge Roof, Bishop Ronald B. Warren, the Rev. Gregory Villalon, the Rt. Rev. C. Christopher Epting (*staff*)

The meeting was opened in the conference room of the Lutheran Center of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, our host for this meeting.

Issues and events

After devotions and group personal sharing, Randy Lee outlined possible actions regarding our relationships at the upcoming ELCA Churchwide Assembly (CWA) in August, 2005. Currently there is a memorial from the South Dakota Synod asking the ELCA not to maintain two rosters (one of pastors ordained by laying of hands by a bishop and the other consisting of those not so ordained). He explained that that has never been done and is not envisioned. Another memorial requests an episcopal bylaw exception, which was soundly defeated in 2003.

Discussion of an impending report of the ELCA sexuality task force to the 2005 CWA included updates from those present on the continuing ramifications of the consecration of an actively gay bishop in the ECUSA and the committee re-examined ground covered in this discussion in Atlanta at the February, 2004 meeting.

Shared mission

A comprehensive discussion of current shared mission and future possibilities included receiving a partial list of present common mission shared between the two churches. Of

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strong interest continues to be the possibility of a shared youth gathering as well as other ministry possibilities.

Diaconal ministry

Tom Ferguson reported that the document LECC had received as a work in progress in February, 2004, was being circulated in the ecumenical offices.

Processes of consultation between the ECUSA and the ELCA

Duane Larson led a discussion about the processes of consultation, which broadly defined takes place in four areas: one-time events, representation on each other's boards and commissions, shared congregations (both new and mergers), and informal consultation between the two churches on specific issues. The consensus of the group was for these processes of consultation to be innovative, using a variety of methods, and to enable more collegial relationships in areas of specific interest, such as in the matter of youth. Flagging issues within ecumenical offices for short-term consultation would be helpful.

Resolution Calling for a Discussion of the Election and Consecration of the Rev. Canon V. Gene Robinson as Bishop Diocesan of New Hampshire

*Whereas the vote in favor of the election and subsequent consecration of the Rev. Canon V. Gene Robinson has caused confusion, difficulty, and division for a significant number of people in the Episcopal Church and for many in the Anglican Communion; and
whereas the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is in process to discuss and perhaps to vote on significant legislation with respect to the ordination of gay and lesbian persons and to the blessing of their unions at its Churchwide Assembly in Orlando, Florida, in August, 2005;
be it therefore resolved that the Lutheran Episcopal Coordinating Committee request the Anglican Theological Review, Dialog, the Historical Society of the Episcopal Church and the Society of Anglican and Lutheran Theologians to engage in public reflection on the reasons for the approval of the election and consecration of the Right Rev. V. Gene Robinson as bishop diocesan of New Hampshire, reasons against his election and rebuttals, as well as reflections on the implications to our life together in common mission, by June, 2005, to assist both churches in their deliberations upon this difficult issue.*

The motion was moved by Grant Abbott, was seconded and was passed.

Resolution Regarding a Joint 5th Anniversary Publication

Be it hereby resolved that the publications of The Lutheran and Episcopal Life, working together, create to complement the 5th anniversary celebration on

February 5, 2006 a common insert or special issue for their respective magazines reporting at ground level those accomplishments and challenges to date under Called to Common Mission.

The resolution was moved by Leo Frade, was seconded and was passed.

Canon 9 in the ECUSA Eliminated

As information for the ELCA members, the ECUSA has eliminated Canon 9, which had provided for ordination of nonstipendiary priests without seminary training in certain local areas. No “ordination to place” exists any longer within the ECUSA. Therefore, there are no longer any differences in ordination between those with and without seminary education. Currently, different dioceses handle preparation and training for ordination in vastly different ways.

Resolution regarding Joint Meeting of Bishops

*Whereas the Conference of Bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the House of Bishops of ECUSA met together in the Poconos in October 1996 to foster opportunities for dialogue; and
whereas since that time both church bodies have adopted “Called to Common Mission” and are living into that common mission; and
whereas since 1996 there has been significant turnover in both the Conference of Bishops and the House of Bishops; therefore
be it resolved that in the spirit of developing renewed trust, cooperation, and mission between our two churches, the Lutheran Episcopal Coordinating Committee encourages the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Episcopal Church in the USA to plan a joint meeting of bishops in the near future possibly in conjunction with the fifth anniversary of “Called to Common Mission” on February 5, 2006, in Washington, D.C. to explore regional strategies for mission.*

The above resolution was moved by Terry Bowes, was seconded and was passed.

Celebration of the 5th Anniversary of “Called to Common Mission”

Tom Andrews, Mitzi Budde, Roy Enquist and Scott Ickert joined the Committee for specific discussion of the Washington, DC celebration of the fifth anniversary event in 2006. After much discussion about possibilities for this event, a consensus was reached that there should be a worship planning subcommittee—Al Moss, Randall Lee, Chris Epting, and the Cathedral staff, which would report on specifics to the LECC in February and June, 2005. There was also consensus to urge both churches on the synodical and diocesan levels to plan a recognition together to take place in that anniversary year.

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Transitivity of Full Communion among the ELCIC, ECUSA, ELCA and the Anglican Church in Canada

The documents of full communion between the Lutheran and Episcopal bodies in Canada and the United States contain different provisions, such as regarding the terms of bishops and the laying-on of hands. Possible transitivity issues such as these are to be the subject of a meeting in 2005 including all four church bodies. Delicate questions involve how to deal with cross-fertilization not necessarily to include all the provisions in all the agreements, while enabling full communion among all four bodies. If the terms of the agreements are not transitive, then another document could be created to say which of the terms are applicable to all the churches and set out the parameters for full communion. The definition of full communion by the six current categories would remain as is. The payoff for such an agreement would be mission. The Lutheran World Federation and the Anglican Communion are aware of this discussion and are awaiting with interest the proposals, since there are no templates which currently exist for this work worldwide.

February, 2005 Meeting of LECC

Chris Epting will have the responsibility for logistics at this site. A possible change from the planned Las Vegas site to Los Angeles was discussed; the decision regarding site will be made by Labor Day.

Anglican-Lutheran Historical Conference Participation

The morning of June 23rd, the Committee served as panelists at the Anglican-Lutheran Historical Conference “Lutherans and Anglicans: Living into Common Mission Together” along with presenting historians Maria Erling, Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, Pa., and J. Robert Wright, General Theological Seminary, New York. The panel answered questions and received feedback from the Conference participants.

Approval of Minutes of the February, 2004 Meeting

The minutes were approved by consensus with the addition of the churchwide resolution as an appendix and minor clerical corrections.

Closing Discussion

Closing discussion centered on possibilities raised by the morning interaction with the panel and the participants at the historical conference; more input on the 2006 anniversary celebration; and the Las Vegas meeting focus.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned on June 23rd at 11:30 a.m. The next meeting of the Committee will be 3 p.m. Sunday, February 6, 2005, in Las Vegas, Nevada.

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Respectfully submitted,

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Nancy M. Curtis