

Minutes of the Lutheran Episcopal Coordinating Committee (LECC)
February 7-9, 2006
Berkeley, California

Present for all or some of the sessions:

Representatives of The Episcopal Church (ECUSA): The Very Rev. Donald Brown (*co-chair*), the Rt. Rev. Steven Miller, the Rev. Dr. Al Moss, the Rev. Grant Abbott, the Rt. Rev. Carolyn Tanner Irish, and Dr. Thomas Ferguson (*staff*).

Representatives of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA): the Rev. Nancy Curtis, the Rev. Norman Wahl, the Rev. Dr. Randall Lee (*staff*), Bishop Ronald B. Warren, the Rev. Dr. Duane Larson (*co-chair*).

Absent: Ms. Midge Roof, Ms. Emily Perow, the Rt. Rev. C. Christopher Epting (*staff*), all of the ECUSA; and Bishop Andrea DeGroot Nesdahl, Ms. Terry Bowes, Mr. Michael Trice (*staff*), the Rev. Gregory Villalon, all of the ELCA.

Co-chair Don Brown opened with prayer at 9 a.m. At the Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary. Present as guests were Suzanne Epting, Madelyn Busse, and Craig Settlege. After sharing personal updates, the Committee worshiped at Morning Prayer in the Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary chapel.

MATTERS REGARDING THE DIACONATE

The Lutherans had caucused the day before this meeting to consider the paper presented at the Seattle meeting and to consider aspects. Co-chair Duane Larson emphasized this conversation regarding the diaconate in the two churches is a strategic and urgent opportunity to equip the people of God for servant ministry. He went on to summarize the commitment of the Lutherans to be a servant church, faithful to our ecumenical mandate to address interchangeability, for the sake of mission, and to address preparation issues for such diaconal ministries and their impact on the ministry of Word and sacrament. He summarized the fears of Lutherans that the office might become more major than the mandate or even a topdown attempt to institute a threefold ministry in the ELCA. In short, Larson emphasized, the Lutheran commitment is to holistic vision and the fear is reductionism, which happens when people get too caught up in mechanics rather than the iconic value of the mission of the church.

Extensive discussion ensued about where the recommendations of LECC would be discussed in the two churches. The ECUSA is far more diocesan-oriented and the ELCA is far more centralized in matters relating to ministry and those occupying the rostered

offices. Therefore, it was suggested that process and content would have to be separate issues.

After a break, the Committee spent a great deal of time crafting a motion regarding diaconal ministries in the two churches, working from recommendations on page 19 of a paper on the diaconate presented to the LECC by Suzanne Epting (ECUSA) and Madelyn Busse (ELCA) at a previous meeting.

MOTION OF GRATITUDE

Don Brown MOVED that the Lutheran-Episcopal Coordinating Committee express profound gratitude for this paper and to commend it to the units of the two churches for consideration. Seconded and PASSED.

MOTION REGARDING *DIAKONIA*

Whereas the Lutheran Episcopal Coordinating Committee (LECC) has a strong commitment to address *diakonia* faithfully, imaginatively, strategically, holistically and contextually so as to equip the whole people of God for servant ministry, therefore BE IT RESOLVED :

- 1. That LECC establish a process whereby it regularly asks how our full communion partnership is contributing to prophetic and practical *diakonia* and to equip our various members to take up their call to serve, in order to expand common mission, link common resources, and build synergy for shared mission. This would include intentionally identifying areas of mutual concern (social services, disasters services, etc.) and how we might strengthen our common efforts through diaconal leadership and might include advocacy for financial support for joint ministry, providing resources for how to establish local partnerships, training sponsored on a national level in public church issues; and that**
- 2. provision for Episcopal Church deacons and ELCA diaconal ministers and deaconesses to serve in one another's liturgies be reviewed by the appropriate units of the respective church bodies; and that**
- 3. the "Suggested Customary" or guidelines for liturgical exchange be reviewed by the appropriate units of the respective church bodies; and that**
- 4. the concept of the orderly exchange of deacons, diaconal ministers, and deaconesses, allowing service in the other church be reviewed by the appropriate units of the respective church bodies; and that**
- 5. new patterns of stipendiary and nonstipendiary ministry, shared theological education, formation, and continuing education as they relate to deacons,**

- diaconal ministers and deaconesses be reviewed by the appropriate units of the respective church bodies; and that**
- 6. LECC encourage the respective presiding bishops to include diaconal representation (which may include Episcopal deacons, ELCA deaconesses, diaconal ministers or associates in ministry) in the membership of LECC; and that**
 - 7. LECC look at what we have to offer to future ecumenical dialogues regarding the diaconate, particularly with the United Methodist Church which has a strong cadre of deacons bearing strong resemblance to both the ECUSA and ELCA diaconates, because the continuing exploration of our shared understanding of the diaconate can contribute to our separate but common bilateral discussions with the United Methodists and perhaps others as well; and finally that**
 - 8. LECC receive a report from appropriate units of the two church bodies by April 1, 2007.**

The motion was seconded and **passed**, [Note: The date of April 1 replaced the original February 1 date after a unanimous vote for reconsideration and passage of that change and clerical corrections on February 8]

PRESENTATION OF PLTS

Following a lunch break, Dr. Phyllis Anderson, president of Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, Dr. Cheryl Heuer, dean, and Dr. Michael Aune presented to the committee how PLTS is shaping leadership under the vision of *Called to Common Mission* (CCM).

To develop an ecumenical consciousness, Dr. Anderson emphasized one must experience the diversity of denominational expressions; to embrace one's own tradition in depth so as to reason from it; and to reflect intentionally on the unity of the church. To that end, in each course the four aspects of Lutheran identity, multiculturalism, religious pluralism, and the public sphere must be included. Dr. Aune went into detail about how this is accomplished, especially with respect to the first and last years of the curriculum. Dr. Heuer fleshed out how ecumenism is lived personally by the students and faculty. The nine schools of the Graduate Theological Union (GTU) offer many opportunities for interaction. The committee engaged in dialogue with the presenters regarding specificities of these areas.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE JULY 2005 MINUTES OF LECC

Steven Miller **MOVED** to approve the June 2005 minutes of the Committee with clerical corrections.

The motion was seconded and **passed**.

MOTION REGARDING PRAYER FOR THE ECUSA

Norman Wahl **MOVED to thank the Presiding Bishop of the ECUSA for providing the prayer for the ELCA Churchwide Assembly and requested that Presiding Bishop Hanson provide a prayer for the General Convention of the ECUSA to be held in the summer of 2006.**

Seconded and **passed.**

UPDATES

Bishop Ron Warren presented the actions of the 2005 Churchwide Assembly for the benefit of the ECUSA members of the Committee. The two Episcopal bishops reflected on the way decisions are made within Anglicanism, and Dr. Ferguson presented the matters coming before the 2006 General Convention June 13-21 in Columbus, Ohio.

PRESENTATION FROM THE CDSP AND VANCOUVER SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

On Wednesday, February 8, 2006, LECC reconvened at the Church Divinity School of the Pacific, the local ECUSA seminary. Dr. Rod Douglas, dean of the School for Deacons, which trains deacons for three dioceses in this area; Dr. David Gortner, Director of the Center of Leadership and Life, the University School of the Pacific online; the Rev. Dr. John Kater, acting president, retired professor of Ministry Development, CDSP; and Dr. Richard Leggett, a Vancouver School of Theology professor, joined the Committee to present information about ecumenical formation within the CDSP and at the Canadian School of Theology where Dr. Leggett teaches. Extensive discussion focused on diaconal formation and use of distance learning and online resources in the formation of servants for the church.

MEETING DATES

The next meeting will be in New England July 25-27 to enable LECC members to participate in the Global Mission Event being offered jointly by the two churches. April 24-27, 2007 will be the following meeting of LECC.

MUTUAL UPDATE ON ECUMENICAL DIALOGUES

Randall Lee presented the status of the ELCA's ecumenical dialogue with the United Methodist Church. Thomas Ferguson presented the ECUSA's interim Eucharistic sharing proposal as well. CUIC relationships were discussed. Presbyterian dialogues and the CCT relationships were also delineated by staff for the Committee, and the Committee asked clarifying questions regarding the Canadian situation, due to the presence of Dr. Leggett.

MOTION TO AMEND THE CHARTER OF LECC

Steven Miller **moved** to amend the charter adopted by the Lutheran-Episcopal Coordinating Committee at its initial meeting to indicate that the committee will meet **“on the average roughly every nine months or more often as needed.”**

The motion was seconded and **passed**.

REPORT FROM THE CANADIAN CHURCHES

Richard Leggett presented the work of the Joint Anglican-Lutheran Commission in Canada and discussion was held regarding the similarities and differences and the Canadian interest in the transitivity of full communion issue.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned with prayer about 5 p.m. Wednesday, February 8, 2006.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy M. Curtis