

Minutes of the Lutheran Episcopal Coordinating Committee (LECC)
June 20-22, 2005
Seattle, Washington

Present for all or some of the sessions:

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

Representatives of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA): Ms. Terry Bowes, the Rev. Nancy Curtis, the Rev. Norman Wahl, the Rev. Dr. Randall Lee (*staff*), Bishop Ronald B. Warren,

Absent: Ms. Midge Roof, Ms. Emily Perow, Mr. Thomas Ferguson (*staff*), all of the ECUSA; and Bishop Andrea DeGroot Nesdahl, Mr. Michael Trice (*staff*), the Rev. Gregory Villalon, the Rev. Dr. Duane Larson (*co-chair*), all of the ELCA.

The Lutheran Episcopal Coordinating Committee meeting was preceded by Morning Prayer held in St. Marks Cathedral Chapel, Seattle, Washington on June 20, 2005. The meeting was formally opened in the offices of the Cathedral at 9 a.m.

AGENDA

After a time of sharing, the agenda was discussed and approved.

FREQUENCY OF LECC MEETINGS

Frequency of LECC meetings was discussed. During the conversation, Randy Lee shared how the three coordinating committees for Lutheran full communion relationships are operating have developed separate foci for their meetings. He raised the possibility of meeting every nine months instead of twice a year. The consensus reached was to continue LECC's twice-yearly meeting schedule, remaining open to the possibility of meeting less frequently in the future.

NEXT MEETING DATES

February 7-9, 2006, Tuesday through Thursday, in Berkeley, California. Chris Epting and Randy Lee are to make arrangements.

July 18-20, 2006, 9 a.m. Tuesday to noon on Thursday in the Boston/Cambridge Springfield/Worcester area will focus on youth issues and spirituality as emphases.

The change in the February meeting place from a Washington, DC celebration of the fifth anniversary was due to the concerns with low turnout due to the Super Bowl. Both Presiding Bishops were to be consulted to see if there were a common date for such a possible celebration.

REPORT ON ECUSA MATTERS

Chris Epting presented the history of the formation of the Christian Churches Together in the USA (CCTU). In June 2005 by consensus the launch of this body has been delayed to work on recruiting black churches and increase National Evangelical Association (NEA) churches' participation. The primary focus is on poverty. As to the Churches Uniting in Christ organization, the ECUSA may possibly change their participation similar to the ELCA's status of watching and supporting.

REPORT ON ELCA MATTERS

Randy Lee set out the topics to be discussed at the ELCA Churchwide Assembly (CWA) in Orlando, August 8-15, 2005. Restructuring the churchwide organization according to five strategic directions will be one. Another will be interim Eucharistic sharing with the United Methodist Church. The human sexuality piece will be acted upon. The Church Council has taken the recommendations of the task force and framed them in legislative language. The Council accepted the first two recommendations of the task force. The first recommits to the unity of the ELCA; the second not to develop a rite, but pastoral circumstances might lead to different actions. The third was to ordain gays and lesbians in committed relationships. The Church Council endorsed using a process whereby exceptions may be granted to the policy in "Vision and Expectations" for rostered leaders that homosexuals must be celibate in their lifestyle. Because it is an exception to practice, it requires a 2/3 vote for approval. Renewing worship is an additional subject upon which to be acted. Episcopalians in the group observed the difference between locking the music into Lutheran liturgy but not into the Episcopalian. Regarding CCM, The Southwestern Synod of Minnesota has forwarded a memorial asking for its rescission. No other memorials were received.

It was **MOVED** by Grant Abbott **that the LECC request the presiding bishop of the ECUSA create a prayer to be used in Episcopal churches prior to and during the Lutheran Churchwide Assembly**. Seconded and passed.

Status of Exceptions to CCM in the ELCA

Randy Lee continued to report on the status of the Exceptions Bylaw before the Church Council. The Policy for Ordination in Unusual Circumstances in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America requires an essay written by the petitioner. The content of that essay has been insufficient to help give a bishop rationale to grant the exception. The policy which governs the implementation of the bylaw is that it shall be periodically reviewed by the Division for Ministry. The bishops endorsed and Church Council

June 20-22, 2005

Seattle, Washington

adopted slightly more specificity to what had to be considered in making the decision and contained within the essay, to wit:

“The decision should enhance and extend the ministry and mission purposes of this church.”

and that the petitioner shall show how granting the exception will include the consideration that “the decision should contribute to the unity of the Church.”

This change was made in the hope it would increase theological reflection on the part of the candidates for ordination.

The Division for Ministry analyzed the number of ordinations and exceptions, beginning reporting in 2002 because the bylaw was adopted in August, 2001. There were no exceptions granted in 2001. In 2002 the ELCA had 285 ordinations and 5 exceptions. In 2003 there were 306 ordinations with 8 exceptions. From 2004 to date recorded (there is a lag time between the time of the ordination and the reporting to the national office of 6 to 9 months) there have been 266 ordinations with 7 exceptions. The exceptions are reported directly to the office of the presiding bishop; regular ordinations are not, so there may have been more ordinations than that. Of the 20 exceptional ordinations, two are “snowstorm” situations; there are 18 other exceptions. All of them are from Minnesota and Eastern North Dakota. The ELCA has received one request for an exception this year.

REPORT FROM THE ANGLICAN CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL JUNE 2005 IN NOTTINGHAM, ENGLAND

Chris Epting reported that the ECUSA continues in the “Windsor process” since 2003 when an openly gay bishop was consecrated. The ramifications have been broader and deeper than they thought. The Lambeth Commission was convened to report how the Anglican Communion remain a communion. The recommendations included that the ECUSA was to call a moratorium on ordaining gay bishops; on the blessing of same-sex unions; and bishops were to respect diocesan boundaries. Then the primates met and asked for the moratoriums to continue. The Anglican Consultative Council met regarding this issue. Thus, each of the four “instruments of unity” will have spoken to the matter of this ordination of an openly gay bishop, although none have legislative authority. There is no way to expel anyone from the Anglican communion, but there is the possibility of increasing marginalization. Extensive discussion regarding the polity of Anglicans and Lutherans on a global scale followed as LECC members shared the similarities and differences in dealing with matters of homosexuality within these structures.

THE DIACONATE

Madelyn Busse joined the group to continue to present a paper by Suzanne Epting and others regarding the relationship between the ECUSA and the ELCA and their deacons, diaconal ministers and deaconesses. Since the February meeting, further discussion has

June 20-22, 2005

Seattle, Washington

taken place. Ron Warren continued to raise concerns about dividing lay rosters. Clarifying history of the diaconate, especially within the ELCA, was added by LECC members. The question of appointment of diaconal ministers to LECC and further consideration of the recommendations was commended to the next meeting of the Committee after the Lutheran members of LECC would have had a chance to caucus the day before the meeting on this matter.

Nancy Curtis **MOVED not to make the category of deacons and diaconal ministries one of LECC membership in either the ECUSA or the ELCA.** The motion was seconded and then after discussion **WITHDRAWN** since currently no formal categories exist for membership on the Committee.

As a point of discussion and information, the committee was reminded that the last meeting for those going off LECC will be the summer meeting of 2006. That will be when the changeover will begin. The new people come on in February 2007.

As is the committees custom, LECC heard about and visited joint ministries in the area. The committee visited a Lutheran-Episcopal ministry headed by the Rev. Karen Ward in the highly unchurched area of Fremont, Washington. The committee was joined by the Episcopal bishop who shared the impact of the joint ministries in the area.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Curtis

Lutheran-Episcopal Coordinating Committee
June 20-22, 2005
Seattle, Washington

page 5 of 5