

ELCIC Village Voices



By participating in the following discussion, you become part of the ELCIC Village Voices. The Tenth Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation will be gathering in Winnipeg, in July 2003, under the theme, "For the Healing of the World." During the Assembly, participants will be discussing this topic and nine others in what is referred to as Village Groups. You become part of the village by sharing your thoughts on this topic with the ELCIC Assembly delegates, including ELCIC National Bishop Ray Schultz. Thank you for sharing your voices so that we become part of the healing of the world.

Village Voice #6: The Church's Ministry of Healing

Then Jesus called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal. (Luke 9:1-2)

The healing of persons has long been considered part of the Church's pastoral and diaconal calling. For Lutherans, the ministry of healing is grounded in the Word, sacraments and prayer. Some churches have focused on healing through prayer and exorcism, whereas others view these practices with suspicion. Many churches are involved in healing through various diaconal ministries, such as lay preachers, parish nurses, deaconesses, etc. Approaching healing as a commitment can bridge the gap between gospel proclamation and Christian service in the world. Although we can never guarantee the results, working to enable others to live a good life is a critical touchstone of the Church's ministry.

Consider how we as "the Church" can live out the ministry of healing:

1. Share some healing experiences from your church. What part has faith played in those experiences?

2. How is individual healing related to wider social issues such as poverty, racism, alcoholism, etc.?

3. How should the ELCIC (and your congregation) be addressing healing challenges in our world today?

Bishop Ray's Musings on The Church's Ministry of Healing: Healing is about more than overcoming illness. Healing is about the redemption of relationships, overcoming the despair and loneliness of being separated from who we think we should be, from friends and family, from other people, and from God. There is much in our life together that needs healing. In Canada, healing the relationship with native peoples is certainly one of the most urgent.

As Lutherans in Canada prepare for the Tenth Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation in Winnipeg, how can the church help in healing the relationship with First Nations peoples? Tell me what you think.

Prayer: Christ, you reached out to touch all who needed healing—the sick, the sinner, the seeker. Heal us now of our blindness, fear and prejudices so that we are able to share our faith in a way that offers hope and healing, whether that be to a loved one or to a stranger; to an individual or to the wider community. Amen.

Indicate the type of group that participated in this discussion (ELW, adult forum, youth group, etc.):

**Return by April 30, 2003 to:
ELCIC Village Voices, c/o ELW, 302-393 Portage Ave., Winnipeg MB R3B 3H6.**