

**EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CANADA
MINUTES OF NATIONAL CHURCH COUNCIL**

REVISED: APRIL 4, 2005

March 3-5, 2005

St. Benedict's Retreat & Conference Centre, Winnipeg MB

Present:

Officers: Bishop Raymond Schultz Donald Storch, Secretary
Rev. Susan Johnson, Vice-President Norman Thompson, Treasurer
(Chair)

Council: Judy Baribeau Rev. Lynne Hutchison
Tom Brook Rev. Stewart Miller
Margaret Fast Dr. Roger Kingsley
Maaïke Froelich Judy Kochendorfer
Elizabeth Hachborn Rev. Ilze Kuplens-Ewart
Rev. Sonja Free Rev. Dr. Peter Mikelic
Carl Sorensen Rev. Nolan Gingrich
Rev. Roger Haugen Judy Wry

ACC REP The Very Rev. Peter Wall

Regrets: Rev. Charles Miller, Executive Assistant to the Bishop, ELCA

Synod Rev. Cindy Halmarson, SK Synod Rev. Michael Pryse, Eastern Synod
Bishops: Rev. Stephen Kristenson, ABT Synod Rev. Richard Smith, MNO Synod
Rev. Gerhard Preibisch, BC Synod

Guests: Kathy Magnus, Lutheran World Federation Regional Officer for North America
Hildy Thiessen, Executive Director, ELCIC Group Services, Inc. (March 4th a.m. only)
Ruth Vince, Executive Director, Evangelical Lutheran Women (ELW) (March 4th a.m. only)
Rev. Les Stahlke, author of *Governance Matters* (March 3rd only)

Staff: Rev. Elaine Sauer, Assistant to the Bishop, Synodical Relations
Rev. Paul Johnson, Assistant to the Bishop, Ecumenical Relations
Rev. Dr. David Pfrimmer, ELCIC Office of Public Policy
Gloria McNabb, Director of Finance and Administration
Laveme Johnson, Recording Secretary

THURSDAY, MARCH 3, 2005

National Church Council (NCC) held a Governance Planning Session with Les Stahlke.

FRIDAY, MARCH 4, 2005

After welcoming the Council and making some introductions, Bishop Schultz advised that Rev. Susan Johnson, Vice-President, would chair this meeting. Tom Brook opened the session with devotions.

AGENDA

The agenda for the meeting was reviewed.

CC-05-01 MS that the agenda for the meeting be approved with changes. Discussion regarding the budget will be moved to Unfinished Business. The Bishop's letter to the PM will be discussed under Recommendation to Convention Regarding Same Sex Blessing. Due to a conflict of interest, Tom Brook asked to be excused when the Manager of Communications position is discussed.

CARRIED

CC-05-02 MS that the Minutes from the September 2004 meeting be adopted as presented.

CARRIED

BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MINUTES

CC-04-46 Review of legal counsel. Bishop Schultz reported that interview appointments are being set up and a decision will be made after the interviews have taken place.

CC-04-67 That NCC accept the invitation from the ELCA to send two observers to their "Task Force for Studies on Sexuality". Bishop Cindy Halmarson and Rev. Dr. Richard Crossman are the observers. Cindy has attended previous meetings and both will attend the next meeting.

CC-04-70 That the officers determine the status of the social statement of our predecessor church. David Pfrimmer stated that we are still guided by former social statements but they are not policy for this church.

CC-04-75 That a study be done on proportional cost-sharing for conventions and reported to the March NCC meeting. Gloria McNabb reported on the analysis which appeared in Appendix 13, Convention Fees.

CC-05-03 MS that the study on proportional-cost sharing for the convention be referred to the Convention Renewal Task Force for report to the convention.

CARRIED

CC-04-87 The national Bishop is to contact the chair of ELW re: communications. A face to face meeting has not yet been possible due to scheduling difficulties. The national Bishop will try again for an in person meeting and if not possible, use a telephone call.

REPORT OF THE OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

National Bishop (Docket p. 1-11)

Recommendations re: Communications (p. 1)

Tom Brook excused himself during this discussion. Bishop Schultz gave an update on the communications department.

ELCIC Appointee to CLWR (Docket p. 3.)

There were two nominations for a vacancy on the Board. No second nominee is available at this time.

- CC-05-04** MS recommended that NCC appoint Dr. Faith Rohrbough to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Rev. Rebekah Eckert.
- CARRIED

Dates for 2007 Convention (Docket p. 7)

- CC-05-05** MS that NCC designate 21-24 June 2007 as the dates of the 11th biennial convention.
- CARRIED

Call for Special Service

- CC-05-06** MS that NCC approve the request for Letter of Call to Special Service with the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus for Rev. Arthur Lechnitz for 2005.
- CARRIED

Assistant for Ecumenical Relations (Docket p. 12-14)

- CC-05-07** MS that NCC approve the Joint Anglican Lutheran Commission (JALC) recommendation for giving the Council of General Synod (COGS) representative to NCC both voice and vote and ask the Constitution Committee to bring back appropriate amendments to the Constitution.
- CARRIED

- CC-05-08** MS that the ELCIC officers work with Anglican counterparts to arrange a joint NCC and CoGS meeting.
- CARRIED
- Date for such meetings to be arranged by the national Bishop.

- CC-05-09** MS that NCC approve the addition of an Anglican representative with voice but not vote, to the Faith, Order and Doctrine Committee.
- CARRIED

- CC-05-10** MS that NCC needs to have a recommendation from the Constitution Committee and the Secretary at this meeting to make possible first reading of a constitutional amendment by the National Convention in 2005 so that a final reading may occur in time for the joint meeting with ACC General Synod in 2007.
- CARRIED

Canadian Council of Churches

- CC-05-11** MS that the Rev. Kayko Driedger-Hesslein be appointed to the Governing Board of the Canadian Council of Churches for a three-year-renewable term, January 1, 2005 through December 31, 2007.
- CARRIED

- CC-05-12** MS that the ELCIC endorse the call by the Canadian Council of Churches Governing Board to accept the Micah Challenge by signing "The Micah Call". (Appendix 1), recognizing this as a unique opportunity for CCC members and Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFT) members to bear witness together.
- CARRIED

All members of the EFT have signed "The Micah Call," accepting the Micah Challenge (Appendix 2).

CC-05-13 MS that the ELCIC officially welcome the Mennonite Church Canada as a full member with this church of the Canadian Council of Churches.

CARRIED

Mission in the World

Policy Implications: At the ELCIC/ELCA Key Leader's Meeting last August, closer cooperation was discussed for many areas of ministry, as part of strengthening the North American Region of LWF, and building on a long history of Lutheran partnership within the North American context. Question: Whether the specific area is Mission in the World/Division for Global Mission, or perhaps Global, Hunger and Development Appeal/World Hunger and Disaster Appeal, how might management be guided in exploring and possibly preparing for closer ties, especially while keeping the membership of the ELCIC informed and involved, and strengthening the mission of this church?

Feedback is required on the policy implication. The process for development requires clarification. NCC will wait until the Strategic Planning process is discussed at the July meeting.

Worship - Program Committee for Worship (PCW)

CC-05-14 MS that NCC recommend the Renewing Worship resources (to be published in 2006) to this church in National Convention for acceptance as the next generation of official worship resources; specifics to be supplied by the PCW in time for the NCC March meeting.

CARRIED

Global Hunger and Development Appeal

CC-05-15 MS that NCC recommends to this church in Convention that the mandate of GHDA be extended for another four years, through 2009.

CARRIED

Assistant for Synodical Relations (Docket p. 15-17)

CC-05-16 MS that NCC approve in principle the implementation of the Stewardship Strategy II, 2006-2010 and to refer to the convention for endorsement.

CARRIED

REPORT OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN WOMEN INC. (ELW)

Ruth Vince requested names of people who have academic or technical knowledge in dealing with sexual exploitation (from Vancouver, Calgary). Positive feedback was expressed on the Esprit magazine's new format. Possible funding for ELW projects may be available from CECF.

REPORT OF GROUP SERVICES INC. (GSI) (Docket p. 22-23)

Hildy Thiessen reviewed the results of ELCIC's pension plan for 2004. Only one congregation is behind in their payments for 2004. Donald Storch expressed his appreciation for work well done.

REPORT OF THE VICE PRESIDENT (Docket p. 18)

For information.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY (Docket p. 19-21)

Convention Issues

NCC received registration packages at the meeting. NCC will stay in one place during the convention. Bulletin Reports for the Convention are due April 15th. The ELCIC officers will prepare the NCC report for the convention. There is some trouble in recruiting volunteers for the convention due to the demands made on volunteers by recent LWF Assembly held in Winnipeg.

REPORT OF THE TREASURER

CECF Motions (Appendix 10)

- CC-05-17** MS that the CECF Management Handbook be amended at B. Capital Fund, II. Operating Policies, I. Interest Rate, to replace item 1. with the following: “The interest rates for an initial Capital Fund loan shall be established by the Board on an annual basis, calculated semi-annually not in advance, for years one (1) to five (5) respectively for a five-year term amortized over twenty-five years. The percentage increase will be one percent over the previous year for the first five years of the initial mortgage.”
CARRIED
- CC-05-18** MS that the CECF Management Handbook be amended at B. Capital Fund, II. Operating Policies, J. Capital Reduction Incentive Program so that item 1 is removed since the incentive program is completed, and subsequent items are to be renumbered.
CARRIED
- CC-05-19** MS that the CECF Management Handbook be amended at B. Capital Fund, II. Operating Policies, K. Extension of Mature Capital Fund Loans, I.e. such that the following words be deleted: “~~i.e. year six is eight percent per annum, and etc.,~~” so that the parenthetical phrase reads: “(with the intent of approaching market rates)”.
CARRIED
- CC-05-20** MS that the membership of the Advisory Board be revised to use titles of appointees only and not names of individuals.
CARRIED
- CC-05-21** MS that the Director of Finance and Administration to prepare a revision of the Management Handbook that replaces “Treasurer” with “Director of Finance and Administration” wherever applicable throughout the policy for the day-to-day activities.
CARRIED
- CC-05-22** MS that the CECF Management Handbook be amended at A. Administration so that item 2 includes: “Each two year term the Advisory Board shall elect a Chair of the Advisory Board, renewable.”
CARRIED

Audit Report

Audited financial statements will be sent electronically to NCC for approval prior to the convention. A teleconference call will be scheduled to review the statements in May 2005.

RECOMMENDATION TO CONVENTION REGARDING SAME SEX BLESSING

Current Study Process

A study guide has been prepared. Twenty-two essays have been submitted. The study guide and essays are available on the ELCIC Website.

NCC appointed a Task Group consisting of Tom Brook, Roger Haugen, David Pfrimmer, Gerhardt Preibisch to reflect on the discussion today and come forward with a motion for debate on Saturday.

OTHER REPORTS

Lutheran World Federation

Kathy Magnus (RONA) distributed the LWF magazine (order through Kathy) and statistical report. The Mission in Context magazine is now downloadable from the LWF website. Kathy thanked Bishop Schultz, Paul Johnson, Elaine Sauer, Judy Baribeau, Susan Johnson and David Pfrimmer for their support. The restructure of ELCA is effective September 2005. The new website link is www.elca.org/lwf.

ELCIC Synod Bishops

Rev. Michael Pryse, Rev. Richard Smith, Rev. Cindy Halmarson, Rev. Stephen Kristenson and Rev. Gerhard Priebisch gave reports about activities in their territories.

COMMITTEE REPORTS AND NOTICE OF MOTIONS

The following NCC committees met prior to or during the Council meeting:

Communication - no report

Constitution - Donald Storch - docket pages 28-35 - seven motions for approval

Convention Renewal - no report

Finance - approval of the 2005, 2006, 2007 budgets

Faith Order and Doctrine - no report

Public Policy - three motions for approval

Tom Brook closed the session with an evening prayer.

Adjourned at 5:05 p.m.

SATURDAY, MARCH 5, 2005

Tom Brook opened the session with devotions.

AMENDMENT TO THE AGENDA

CC-05-23 MS that NCC discuss the session with Les Stalke under New Business.

CARRIED

LETTER TO NCC (Appendix 6)

CC-04-80 that NCC receive the motion ES-04-33 re: ordination to the ministry of openly lesbian and gay persons (see Bishop's Report p. 3) and defer discussion of this matter until the meeting March 2005

CC-05-24 MS that NCC defer CC-04-80 to the September 2005 meeting.

CARRIED

MOTIONS FROM COMMITTEE REPORTS

Constitution

CC-05-25 MS that motions NC-03-05 to NC-03-09 go forward to the 2005 Convention for second reading.

CARRIED

CC-05-26 MS that motion NC-03-23 go forward to the 2005 Convention for second reading.

CARRIED

CC-05-27 MS that forwarding to convention that the content from sections 4 to 7 in the motion NC-03-23 on the convention be transferred from the Constitution to the Administrative By-laws.

CARRIED

CC-05-28 MS that as per the Communication Review Task Force the Editor of the Canada Lutheran be a staff position under the responsibility of the National Bishop.

CARRIED

CC-05-29 MS that the approval of the Eastern Synod motions ES04-01 to ES 04-05 which modify the Synodical Constitution.

CARRIED

CC-05-30 MS that the proposed amendments to the current SK Synod constitution, SSC 0405 to SSC 0407 be approved.

CARRIED

CC-05-31 MS that Administrative Bylaws, Part VI, Section 3 (Re-election of National Bishop) be approved for forwarding to the Convention. When an incumbent officer is willing to be re-elected to their current position, the fist ballot shall contain only their name. A two thirds majority is required for re-election. If that percentage is not achieved on the first ballot, then the procedure described above shall be followed to fill the position.

CARRIED

CC-05-32 MS that under Constitution, a new article IX, "Ordered ministers of churches with which this church has a full communion agreement, who are serving in this church under the provisions of that full communion agreement, shall have the same rights and privileges as the equivalent order of ministry in this church.

CARRIED

CC-05-33 MS that under Constitution, Article XI, there shall be a National Church Council comprised of the officers of this church, who shall serve as the officers of the council and additional members from the synods allocated on the basis of proportional representation according to baptized membership, and other members from full communion agreements.... The distribution of additional members shall be specified in the administrative bylaws.

CARRIED

CC-05-34 MS that under Bylaws, Part VII, there shall be one additional member appointed by the Council of General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada for a term to be determined by the COGS.

CARRIED

Public Policy

CC-05-35 MS that the ELCIC endorse in principle plans for an ecumenical pre-event to the HIV/AIDS Conference to be held in Toronto in 2006 and approve fundraising for \$6000 in support in 2005 and \$6000 in 2006.

CARRIED

CC-05-36 MS that the ELCIC endorse the KAIROS Campaign for Refugee Rights.

CARRIED

CC-05-37 MS that the ELCIC join the Ecumenical Advocacy in the areas of HIV/AIDS and global trade.

CARRIED

RECOMMENDATIONS TO CONVENTION REGARDING SAMESEX BLESSINGS (Continued)

CC-05-38 MS NCC recommends that the ELCIC acknowledge the inadequacy of sections of *Sex, Marriage and the Family, A Social Statement of the Lutheran Church in America, 1970* referring to homosexuality and homosexual behavior in light of developing theological, pastoral and sociological scholarship and that the ELCIC suspend the application of those references.

That the ELCIC allow pastors to perform blessings for same sex couples who want to make a life-long commitment to one another in the presence of God and their community of faith. Authorization to perform such blessings shall require the consent of the pastor, the consent of the congregation or calling agency as expressed by a 2/3 majority vote at a duly called meeting, and consultation with the synodical bishop. These blessings shall use a rite authorized by this church.

That the ELCIC's Program Committee on Worship be requested to develop a provisional rite for the blessing of same sex couples in committed relationships.

Background Statement

In recent years there has been considerable discussion across Canada regarding the question of blessing same sex unions. During the past year the National Church Council has encouraged church-wide study with the hope of developing an appropriate response.

As a result of that process, some observations can be made:

- Many people in the ELCIC are sincerely struggling with attitudes toward homosexuality in church and society. Nevertheless, many are open to gay and lesbian people affirming their commitment to their partners.
- There is a growing understanding in some contexts that the provision of same sex blessing is primarily an issue of pastoral care and not confessional integrity. The ELCIC needs to develop a pastoral practice to address the expressed needs of gay and lesbian people.
- While homosexuality remains a controversial issue in the church, there is growing dissatisfaction with references to homosexuality in *Sex, Marriage and the Family, A Social Statement of the Lutheran Church in America, 1970* which guides this church in matters of marriage and family.
- ELCIC Bishops and pastors have requested guidance from the church regarding the blessing of same sex relationships.
- There is openness among many to recognizing same sex committed relationships but not defining these relationships as marriage.
- It is further recognized that whatever action is taken by the ELCIC, our ecumenical and international partners desire to be included in dialogue.
- There is recognition that an ELCIC recommended practice should acknowledge the diversity of opinions in our church and at the same time seek to affirm what our church is able to say together at this time.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

CC-05-39 MS that NCC refer the Same Sex Blessing Resolution to the officers for the development of a communications strategy for the release of this information.

CARRIED

CC-05-40 MS that the National Bishop report the NCC recommendations on Same Sex Blessing to the NA LWF Consultation in Chicago in March/April 2005 for discussion with international partners. Further that the Bishop write to the LWF Taskforce on Human Sexuality sharing the study papers and actions of the NCC and asking for their response and understanding in recognizing the pastoral situation being faced by the ELCIC.

CARRIED

MS that NCC table the motion to investigate the appropriateness of ELCIC clergy continuing to participate as servants of the province in the practice of solemnization of marriage.

CARRIED

Bishop Schultz, the NCC officers, David Pfrimmer and Tom Brook met over lunch to map out a communications plan for the same sex blessing

CC-05-41 MS that it will be released to the NCC members and the Synod Bishops on Monday, to the general membership on Wednesday, to the public and posted to the website on Friday. Questions on the same sex blessing resolution are to be forwarded to Bishop Schultz so an answer sheet can be prepared. Paul Johnson is the media contact the ELCIC National Office.

CARRIED

REFLECTIONS FROM OUR CONFERENCE OF GENERAL SYNOD PARTNER, THE VERY REV. PETER WALL

Rev. Peter Wall gave his reflections on the conference.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Treasurer's Report (Continued)

Approve Budgets for 2005, 2006, 2007

CC-05-42 MS that NCC approve the budgets for 2005, 2006, 2007 as presented.

CARRIED

Social Statements

CC-05-43 MS that NCC investigate the possibility of collaborating with ELCA in developing a Social Statement on Sexuality. National Bishop to communicate with the ELCA regarding this item. An initial report to be brought to the July NCC meeting.

CARRIED

NEW BUSINESS

Discussion of Session with Les Stalke

Bishop Schultz wanted the NCC members to hear Les Stalhke's proposal about the revision to constitution and bylaws and apologized for any discomfort it may have caused. The first draft of the governance manual will be circulated for comments prior to the July meeting.

NEXT MEETING DATES:

July 20-21, 2005
September 15-17, 2005
March 9-11, 2006
September 14-16, 2006

Chaplain for the July 2005 meeting will be Rev. Stewart Miller.

Tom Brooks closed the meeting with a hymn and prayer.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Laveme Johnson
Recording Secretary