

**Minutes of the Lutheran Episcopal Coordinating Committee (LECC)  
October 14-15 , 2008  
Des Moines, Iowa.**

Present for all or part of the sessions:

*Representatives of The Episcopal Church (TEC):* The Rt. Rev. Alan Scarfe (13) (*co-chair*), The Rt. Rev. Nedi Rivera (12), Ms. Kay Beach (12), Ms. Emily Perow (reappointed-14 ), the Rev. Jon Perez (14), The Rev. Jeanne Lutz, (14) and the Rt. Rev. C. Christopher Epting (*staff*)

*Representatives of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA):* Dr. Mitzi Budde, (*co-chair*). Bishop Jon Anderson, the Rev. Nancy Curtis (08), the Rev. Sherman Hicks (12), and the Rev. Donald McCoid (*staff*)

*Absent:* Bishop Elizabeth Eaton and the Rev. Lowell Almen of the ELCA

*Invited Visitors:* Rev. Darrell Morton and Rev. George Packard, federal chaplains, representatives

**Opening Devotions, Agenda and Minutes Adoption, Introductions and Personal Updates**

Co-chair Alan Scarfe opened with prayer in the St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral in Des Moines, Iowa. The proposed agenda was adopted and introductions of new members were made. The churches have decided to reduce the number of members to the minimum of six each rather than seven. Mitzi Budde and Alan Scarfe have been appointed co-chairs of the LECC by their respective presiding bishops.

Addressing new members, Christopher Epting summarized the history and challenges of the LECC and its role. He recalled the formation of the charter and the tense atmosphere of the original meetings. Since the LECC's inception, meetings have been held around the country so as to witness what is happening on the ground. Reports about the work of the Committee are made annually by the ecumenical officers to each church. Diaconal ministry has been extensively studied by LECC, and for a while, Lutheran ordinations under exceptions were being closely followed in detail. Jon Perez added there is a need for people to be given a direction for problem-solving in areas involving both churches. Prior to lunch, personal updates were made and the Eucharist was celebrated together, as it was also the next day.

**Shared Local Ministries between ELCA Domestic Disaster Response and Episcopal Disaster Relief**

Postville: Postville, Iowa has the largest kosher packing plant in the world. In May 2008 the United States government conducted a raid on the plant and arrested 496 people who were prosecuted for identity theft, the first time arrest for a felony was used to lead to

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deportation of illegal immigrants following prison time. Many had come to work there due to fraud perpetrated upon them back in Latin America, so the feeling of betrayal was enhanced. Families were separated. The plant brought in other workers from Somalia to take the place of those detained. More background information can be found in the book Postville: A Clash of Cultures in Heartland America by Stephen Bloom, and the PBS video "Postville: When Cultures Collide" made early in the decade to detail the unique nature of the community. A new book in Spanish is coming out about the events of the raid and these matters. [[Postville: La Criminialización De Los Migrantes. \(Cuadernos del presente imperfecto, 8\)](#) by Erik Camayd-Freixas, Omaira Hernández Fernández, Luz María Ramírez Hernández-Ede, and Luis Argueta, 2009].

When the raid occurred, a Catholic nun and a Lutheran pastor in his first call were the first to deal with the overwhelming needs. ELCA Domestic Disaster Response has called this a human disaster and the Episcopal Diocese of Iowa has shared in this assessment. Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service has been a key part of the response. A campus pastor from Luther College, David Vasquez, is bilingual and has been helping. Lutheran Bishop Steve Ullestad has testified to Congress.

Repercussions have been wider than Postville. Hispanic families began to be afraid and many simply disappeared. Ironically, if a child is born in this country, they become for FEMA purposes the head of household. But if humans cause the disaster, this is not so. Church assistance is necessary.

The presenters suggested that in all places where there are larger populations of immigrants (legal or not) LECC should encourage LDR and ERD to find each other now, because without warning such raids by the USICE may happen in other communities. Just knowing how possible coordination could occur would be very useful on the local level, for jail rules are different in every place. Staying connected with families is very difficult without advance planning. Language problems limit pastoral care and must be addressed in such planning.

#### Iowa Flooding:

Major floods occurred in Iowa in 2008, necessitating further Lutheran-Episcopal cooperation. Participants noted that the flooding itself was major, but that during the 2008-2009 winter, rental money is going to run out from FEMA. Generally speaking, there are "10 days crisis, 100 days immediate need, 1000 days in long term need." Estimates now show that it will be five years for recovery in Cedar Rapids. Cooperation led to the Episcopal Diocese of Iowa handling contributions for rent, for example. ELCA Domestic Disaster Response is involved, and the Methodists gave webmaster services for the joint site [www.iowawaters.org](http://www.iowawaters.org).

### **Relationships with the United Methodist Church and the Moravian Church**

#### United Methodist-ELCA Relationship

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Don McCoid reported that attending the General Conference of the UMC was like going to a LWF assembly, in that it is both multicultural and, different from the ELCA, multinational. The ELCA and the UMC have dialogued for more than thirty years. Significant breakthroughs regarding baptism and communion which elevated Methodist sacramentology to a new level aided the move toward full communion. Some of the continued discussion in the ELCA in considering full communion include: whether or not the UMC general membership understands the Real Presence as their documents affirm; the use of grape juice exclusively rather than wine in the sacrament; and the Wesleyan ordinance that allows the communion of the unbaptized as a part of conversion which should lead to baptism. A final area of question deals with the understanding of sanctification, especially the idea of moving toward perfection. Lutherans discuss sanctification in Confessions. Lutherans emphasize the second article of the Creed on justification. One way of mutual affirmation would be to emphasize that sanctification is what God does *in us*; justification is what God does *for us*. Lutherans thus also believe the move toward perfection too, even if after death.

The ELCA will vote on the agreement in August 2009. It has already passed in the Methodist Church by 98%. Passage by the ELCA would be by two-thirds, and there can be no amendments to the document passed by the UMC. *Confessing Our Faith Together* is the document that is used as a basis for our full communion vote. It has had generally wide acceptance and affirmation in the ELCA.

Bishop Ralph Dunkin shared with the ELCA bishops the celebration of a large, joint UMC-Episcopal-Lutheran service using dealcoholized wine. There has been one Lutheran-Methodist congregation in Altoona, PA for many decades. It is a "federated" congregation. Some Methodist congregations in the upper Midwest are contracting for the services of the Lutheran clergy, but it is due to declining population density more than a theological reason, according to Jon Anderson.

The historic black Methodist church branches have met together and forged something that can move toward full communion among them. Historic black churches have been concerned about the way their orders have been treated by the current UMC. There is hope that they could move not toward full communion, but into a closer relationship that is not merger. The emphasis therein is not on a move toward unity but a way to retain distinctiveness.

### *TEC-UMC Relationship*

Chris Epting reported that their two churches have historic ties which make discussion easier and different. In England Anglicans and British Methodists, who don't have bishops at all, but only district superintendents and an ordered church, met in dialogue, and the British Methodists have agreed in principle to re-establish the office of bishop.

In the United States there has been no previous history of bilateral conversation but multilateral through COCU (now CUIC). The ELCA has joined these multilaterals as a partner in mission and dialogue but the ELCA has agreed to pursue bilaterals for formal

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agreement, not multilaterals. After COCU, TEC had hoped a rich relationship would result, but CUIC has questionable survivability. So TEC decided bilaterals might be better and more productive. The Lutheran-Episcopal relationship was the first breakthrough TEC could make. Now dialogues begun in 2000 continue with Presbyterians and Methodists, but discussion has been going on through COCU already for forty years.

TEC is in the first step of interim Eucharistic sharing with the Methodists. The two sacramental documents outlining the theology seem to have recaptured Wesleyan roots. TEC and the UMC have reached the interim agreement, but the agreement (passed by Methodists by college of bishops) was voted in with very little debate at the last minute at an Episcopal General Assembly after a very difficult agenda. The bishops discussed it more than the deputies did. Presiders may stand together at the table but not interchangeably yet.

The Episcopal requirement that the two sacraments be administered with unflinching use of the words of the Lord's institution and the elements ordained by him leads to a problem. The presence of both wine and grape juice is required in interim sharing. A new question arose as a result--is dealcoholized wine "wine" for Episcopalians? The theology committee of the House of Bishops is dealing with the matter. Regarding baptism, as with Lutherans, the "converting ordinance" of communing the unbaptized is in clear violation of the canons of the TEC and yet is separately also becoming a some-time Episcopal practice. He pointed out that "sometimes ecumenism raises the issues you should be dealing with in your own house."

The document on the ECUSA website "Make Us One in Christ" sets out a way for congregations to interact. Dioceses have used it and joint conferences and conventions, as well. It highlights the whole reception issue—how does an ecumenical agreement get into the lives of people?

### *The Moravians*

Don McCoid said the ELCA voted for full communion yet with the Moravian Church, Alaska Province in 2007. They have not responded. There has been some concern about the ELCA's study on human sexuality. Chris Epting said that the Moravian dialogue and possible vote also affect TEC and pondered whether perhaps there should be a three-way coordinating committee instead of two bilaterals.

### **ELCA Social Statement on Human Sexuality**

Don McCoid explained the significance of social statements within the polity of the ELCA and gave the history of the upcoming sexuality statement. The task force sponsored more than a hundred hearings throughout the country. Sherman Hicks added that in the ELCA, a social statement is a teaching document for the church, even after adoption. In addition to hearings, the process also encouraged individual responses. Difference in responses related strongly to geography. A draft statement will be provided

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by the task force to the Church Council, which will vote on it and may pass it on to the CWA with a recommendation for adoption or with no recommendation. Even after the Churchwide Assembly (CWA) receives the proposed social statement, there will be multiple amendments.

Comments from other churches are invited. Comment received from the Conference of Bishops of the Catholic Church indicates there could be ecumenical consequences depending on what the ELCA considers and what decisions are made at the ELCA Assembly. The United Church of Christ (UCC) response is quite different from the Catholic response. The matter of possible “exceptions” for ordinations of those openly gay and lesbian persons along the lines of those of CCM exceptions has been opposed by gay and lesbian organizations within the ELCA as well as by others opposed to any such ordinations. Discussion followed about the difference in process between the ELCA and TEC.

### **Chaplaincy Joint Concerns**

Bishop George Packard (TEC) and Pastor Darrell Morton (ELCA) presented information to the group. The Rev. Martha Kester, a chaplaincy candidate, was also present for this portion of the meeting. Chaplains provide for those of their own religious backgrounds by doing such ministry themselves or by facilitating it. The ELCA and the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod provide ministry to each other’s constituencies, including sacramental ministry, within the military environment. In all joint ministries the ELCA has with the LCMS, this currently is the only place where sacraments are celebrated between the two churches.

Issues facing our Episcopal and Lutheran chaplains are similar. The first grows out of the misuse of the term “Protestant” within the military context. Because of the decline in mainstream denomination chaplains, worship from the “Protestant” perspective is more evangelical than liturgical and sacramental, and chaplains from liturgical denominations are being increasingly marginalized, discouraging the offering of weekly Eucharist, for instance. Three arenas of concern are training stations, war zones, and deployments to foreign countries where worship environments are absent or not accessible. Lutheran and Episcopalians should be used wisely in the assignment process, according to both men. These concerns were seriously considered by the Committee present and discussion ranged on how to address these issues.

The following was **moved** by Nedi Rivera:

**The Lutheran Episcopal Coordinating Committee was deeply concerned to learn of episodes of insensitivity by the Armed Forces by neglecting to provide liturgical and sacramental worship opportunities appropriate for Lutherans and Episcopalians. The LECC recommends that the executive bodies of our Churches call upon the Department of Defense to take measures to insure that the sacramental needs of Lutherans and Episcopalians are met by providing a minimum of a weekly celebration of the**

**Eucharist under an officially ordained person recognized by the two Churches.**

The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

**Exceptional Ordinations under CCM and Ongoing Matters of Coordination**

Of all ELCA ordinations since CCM was implemented, 98.2% of the ordinations in the ELCA have been conducted as foreseen by that document. In the last year, there were seven requests for exceptions of which five were granted.

Co-chair Alan Scarfe enumerated continuing concerns for both churches. Diaconal matters, although thoroughly looked at by LECC, remain an area which will remain open to future possible interactions. The expansion of consultative consistency in the provision of our pastoral ministries will be necessary, since in TEC, for example, there is not national education about congregational development and best use of joint resources where both churches have a presence. The Anglican-Lutheran Committee on Transitivity now exists which will be addressing the relationship of full communion partners to each other in an expanded way.

**St. Andrew's Draft of the Proposed Anglican Covenant**

When TEC found itself with an ordained openly gay bishop, the ecumenical office did not at first think that the issue would be church-dividing, but that it would perhaps engender reactions like that to the ordination of Barbara Harris. This was characterized now as naïve. Because of the concerns, what is known as the Windsor Report recommended that there should be three moratoria and one process. The Episcopal Church in the USA should cease and desist ordination of openly gay/lesbian bishops; not authorize rites for same sex unions in the national church; and cease and desist cross-border interventions of bishops coming in to confirm or to ordain, etc. The one process was to develop an Anglican covenant. Anglicans have always said they are not a confessional church. The need was there to fill a void, for there were no steps to take to resolve an issue which one province would decide which would stress another province.

The text which resulted is online at

[http://www.anglicancommunion.org/commission/covenant/st\\_andrews/draft\\_text.cfm](http://www.anglicancommunion.org/commission/covenant/st_andrews/draft_text.cfm)

In May the Anglican Consultative Council will receive it. Then they can either refer it back to the drafting committee; forward it to provinces for consideration; or vote it into their own governing documents in some way. A question remains about split acceptance if provinces accept the agreement and some do not. Those who would not agree would have "diminished status" within the Anglican Communion

Alan Scarfe explained The Windsor Report got picked up as a process and led to a Windsor Continuation Group of six bishops appointed by the Archbishop of Canterbury to oversee a review of what is going on with the situation. Additionally, the Lambeth Conference looked at the covenant and the process. The Indaba Report, found at

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<http://www.lambethconference.org/reflections/document.cfm>, came out of the Lambeth Conference. The GAFCON movement also is solidifying and identifying itself as “confessional Anglicans” (<http://www.gafcon.org/>). These realities may jump ahead of the Draft Covenant and the Windsor Continuation Group. For instance, George Packard shared that in the process of the Indaba the bishops asked if the U.S. church were “winking” at whether or not there are national rites for the blessing of same-sex unions. Chris Epting explained that a bishop can authorize a rite for a particular diocese for a pastoral reason. Although it may exist, such a rite is not an official liturgy of the church, which has to be authorized by General Convention. The bishops of other countries felt the rites might only be diocesan, but pointed out they are known by the faithful, etc., and thus perhaps take on national character.

In Pittsburgh, seventeen congregations are staying with TEC and the rest of the congregations going to the Southern Cone, but both groups are using the cathedral, which avoids a property question. The Diocese of Fort Worth diocese and Quincy, Springfield, IL are possible splits as well. Dioceses are going to Southern Cone, individuals often affiliating with Africans. About a hundred thousand people, which is a large number within the ECUSA, are considering leaving TEC. The financial impact is ongoing, since many of the dioceses had withheld money from the national church for a long time. An additional multimillion dollar shortfall occurs because of the legal bills in California and Pittsburgh.

### **Other matters**

Nedi Rivera will be the next secretary of the group.

Emily Perow **moved:**

**The LECC gives enormous thanks and gratitude to Nancy Curtis for her dedication, impressive note-taking and passion for the work and wisdom of this Committee and the people in the pews since its inception.**

The motion was seconded and passed.

### **Upcoming Meeting Dates**

LECC will meet June 2-3, 2009 in Chicago. The agenda will include a report on joint parishes guidelines; a review of the history of where CCM has brought the two churches and where we are going together; a proposed three-year plan; and a joint meeting about the missions. At that meeting actions of the General Conference and the Churchwide Assembly will be reviewed along with the newest draft statements.

Respectfully submitted,

The Rev. Nancy M. Curtis