

Session Three – Thursday, July 10, 2008, 1:30 p.m.

The Session was begun with song, led by Debbie Lou Ludolph and a team of singers and musicians.

Rev. Joel Crouse, Ministry Director of Youth and Young Adults, presented a video related to youth and young adult ministries. Be true to God. BTRU2U.

Bishop Pryse introduced Rev. Dr. Dieter Kays, President of FaithLife Financial. Rev. Kays spoke of the work and mission of FaithLife, the increase of membership, grants and chapters, all in service to the church community as partners of the Lord's work. A video clip was shown further reviewing the ways in which FaithLife works.

Report on the Committee of Elections

Alven Choi, chairperson of the Committee of Elections, reported the results of the first ballot for the WLS Board of Governors.

Elected to WLS Board of Governors: Marianne Thornton, lay, 2008-2011; Marge Watters-Knebel, lay, 2009-2012.

The First Ballot was distributed for Synod Council; the Second Ballot was distributed for WLS Board of Governors.

Report of Committee on Reference and Counsel

Rev. Mark Van House, chairperson of Reference and Counsel, presented the first report of the Committee.

ES 08-09 MSC that this synod express its support for the U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples adopted by the General Assembly on September 13, 2007, and express its disappointment that the Canadian Government has chosen not to commit Canada to fulfilling our responsibilities under this universal human rights standard – the first time that Canada has sought to be exempted from a human rights standard adopted by the General Assembly. The synod encourages the Government of Canada and the Governments of all the Provinces to join with the overwhelming majority of states, jurisdictions, Indigenous peoples and human rights organizations worldwide that endorse this standard.

ES 08-10 MSC that this synod express its solidarity with our sisters and brothers in our full communion partner, the Anglican Church in Canada and our Aboriginal sisters and brothers as they continue to implement and live out the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement through the launch of Canada's *Truth and Reconciliation Commission* and that we encourage the congregations of synod to likewise be aware of, sensitive to and supportive of the work of reconciliation and transformation among the peoples of these communities.

ES 08-11 MS Defeated that this synod express its concern and disappointment at the Canadian Government's failure to address the growing reality of poverty and especially child poverty in Canada and that the Eastern Synod in Assembly call on our national government and each provincial government to develop and implement a national poverty reduction strategy.

ES 08-12 MS that this synod express its concern and disappointment at ~~the Canadian Government's failure to address~~ the growing reality of poverty and especially child poverty in Canada and that the Eastern Synod in Assembly call on our national government and each provincial government to develop and implement a national poverty reduction strategy.

MSC to refer the motion back to Reference and Counsel.

ES 08-13 MSC that the following submitted motion:

As the ELCIC is currently divided on issues related to the full inclusion of its gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered members in the full life of the church, we move that

this Eastern Synod Assembly encourage our Bishop and Synod Council to refrain from or demonstrate restraint in disciplining those congregations, pastors and members who, as a matter of conscience and faithfulness to the Gospel, call pastors who are “self-declared and practicing homosexuals,” and

that this Assembly encourage our Bishop and Synod Council to refrain from or demonstrate restraint in disciplining those pastors who as a matter of conscience and faithfulness to the Gospel conduct marriages for queer couples in compliance with provincial law.

be split, amended, and recommended for adoption as follows:

That the Eastern Synod Assembly encourage our Bishop and Synod Council to exercise restraint in disciplining those congregations, pastors and members who, as a matter of conscience and faithfulness to the Gospel, call individuals who are “self-declared and practicing homosexuals.”

That the Eastern Synod Assembly encourage our Bishop and Synod Council to exercise restraint in disciplining those pastors who as a matter of conscience and faithfulness to the Gospel bless or marry same-gendered couples in compliance with provincial law.

MS Amended that the words “and faithfulness to the Gospel” be deleted from the above two paragraphs.

[The final approved motion reads:

That the Eastern Synod Assembly encourage our Bishop and Synod Council to exercise restraint in disciplining those congregations, pastors and members who, as a matter of conscience call individuals who are “self-declared and practicing homosexuals”; and,

That the Eastern Synod Assembly encourage our Bishop and Synod Council to exercise restraint in disciplining those pastors who as a matter of conscience bless or marry same-gendered couples in compliance with provincial law.]

Special Order: ELCIC Group Services

Bishop Pryse introduced Hildy Thiessen, the Executive Director of ELCIC Group Services Inc. Hildy was joined by John Wolff, the chairperson of the GSI Board of Directors. Hildy spoke of the various services provided by the pension plan. She also encouraged members to plan ahead in order to attain their retirement goals.

After a break, Bishop Pryse welcomed the Very Reverend Dean Peter Wall, co-chair of the Joint Anglican Lutheran Commission, who spoke of the many gifts and relationships that our two churches share. Rev. Wall also brought greetings from the Niagara Diocese of the Anglican Church of Canada.

Report of Synod Council

Bishop Pryse called upon the Secretary, Rev. Wendell Grahlman, and Rev. Mark Harris and Rev. Jim Koellner to present the Compensation Schedule for 2009 and 2010. (See Appendix D).

ES 08-14 MSC that the Compensation Schedule for Pastors, Diaconal Ministers and Pastoral Supply 2009 and 2010 be adopted.

The Secretary presented the motion to affirm *A Renewed Vision for Mission*. Synod Councillors Rev. Brad Mittleholtz and Carol Christensen encouraged the Assembly to continue its work in mission for others.

ES 08-15 MSC that this Synod Assembly affirm *A Renewed Vision for Mission in the Eastern Synod 2006-2010*.

Report of Committee on Reference and Counsel

Rev. Mark Van House, chairperson of Reference and Counsel, continued the first report of the Committee.

ES 08-16 MSC that no action is recommended to R&C Motion 1.5.

That this assembly direct the Bishop of the Eastern Synod to refrain from discipline, whether of persons or congregations, in connection with the ordination of persons vetted through the Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries candidacy process, pending an ELCIC decision to ordain qualified individuals who are openly gay or lesbian and/or in committed same-sex relationships.

ES 08-17 MSC that no action is recommended to R&C Motion 1.6.

That pending a decision on the part of the ELCIC to authorize such unions, this assembly directs the bishop to refrain from discipline in connection with pastors who, with the support of their congregations, bless or marry individuals in committed same-sex relationships.

ES 08-18 MSC that no action is recommended to R&C Motion 1.7.

In the name of Jesus Christ, all glory, thanks and honour to God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

Our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, died for our sins and speaks to us through the Bible. God's Word is the truth and the only way to salvation. Jesus said: "If you love me, you will obey what I command John." 14:15 (NIV). The man who says, "I know Him, but does not do what He commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him." I John 2:4 (NIV). "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets: I have come not to abolish but to fulfill them." Matt. 5:17 (NIV)

A motion, known as the "local option", was defeated at the 2007 ELCIC National Convention. The ELCIC Convention as well as our Congregation agreed that blessing a sin was contrary to God's Word.

Therefore, we petition all people at this Assembly to uphold our Constitution and reject the blessing of same-sex relationships as well as other revisionist motions that are contrary to God's Word, the Lutheran Confessions, and the Constitution. Such motions weaken the witness of the Church and threaten our unity.

ES 08-19 MSC that the following be referred to National Church Council:

We move that the Eastern Synod Assembly 2008 encourage the ELCIC Convention 2009 to instruct ELCIC Group Services Inc. to establish an optional fixed income investments account for persons age 55 and above.

ES 08-20 MSC that the Eastern Synod call upon the Government of Ontario:

- to prohibit further exploration and mining in Ontario on Indigenous lands that violate constitutionally protected Aboriginal rights, including the right to consultation and accommodation or in other developed areas without the approval of local communities and a full comprehensive independent environmental assessment;

- to begin an immediate public comprehensive review of the Ontario Mining Act – including the free entry system - in consultation with Aboriginal peoples and affected stakeholders; and
- to develop effective regulatory measures safeguard Ontario’s water resources and to uphold the public interest to exercise responsible stewardship in developing and preserving a socially and ecologically sustainable future for future generations in Ontario; and
- that the Synod ask the Bishop to write to the Premier of Ontario communicating this action, that the issue be referred to the Synod’s Committee on Public Policy for further monitoring and implementation, and that Kairos be asked for their help in promoting support for this resolution.

(It is understood that other provincial judicatories will be included in letters and communication.)

ES 08-20 MSC that the Eastern Synod encourage deeper theological study and ethical reflection by the ELCIC, its congregations and members concerning the urgent crisis posed by climate change; and

that the Eastern Synod encourages congregations and members to implement measures that reduce their carbon foot print; and

that the Eastern Synod call upon the ELCIC to support the LWF carbon offset program for air travel; and

that the Eastern Synod call upon all levels of Government in Canada:

- to promote strong political commitments that would lead to achieving a 40 per cent reduction of CO2 emissions compared to the 1990 levels of CO2 by 2020;
- to encourage advocacy for rapid transition from coal and other fossil fuels for power generation to non –nuclear renewable energy sources; and

that the Synod ask the Bishop to write to the Prime Minister of Canada and Premiers of the Provinces communicating this action; and

that the issue be referred to the Synod’s Committee on Public Policy for further monitoring and implementation.

ES 08-21 MSC that no action is recommended to R&C Motion 2.5.

That a summary of each session of the synod convention of the Eastern Synod of the ELCIC be compiled and distributed to each delegate who is in attendance at this assembly.

ES 08-22 MSC that the following be referred to Synod Council for consideration and reporting back to the 2010 Assembly.

That the Synod Council explore the possibility of forgiving, in whole or in part, the \$500,000 loan that the synod made to Waterloo Lutheran Seminary, and that this determination be made in consultation with the seminary to determine what might be appropriate according to their needs, and that synod council be authorized to take action as they deem appropriate, and that such determination be made in advance of the 2014 due date of the loan, and that synod council report their decision and action to the synod.

The Session was adjourned with the singing of the Doxology, led by National Bishop Susan Johnson.