



Women of the ELCA's support of efforts for peace and justice, especially within Liberia

Adopted by the Churchwide Executive Board of Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, meeting in Charlotte, North Carolina, October 19-20, 2012.

Whereas, American Lutheran women have a long-standing relationship with our Liberian Lutheran sisters, having prayed for and with each other over the decades, together, each in our own mission fields, sharing the redeeming and transforming love of God through Jesus Christ; and

Whereas, our commitment to stand with our Liberian Lutheran sisters is more critical today than ever as they restore peace to their war-ridden land. Their struggle is our struggle, their quest for peace is our quest for peace; and

Whereas, since at least 1916, American Lutheran women have shared financial support in Liberia, with Women of the ELCA serving as the current custodian of two endowment funds created for support of education and health ministries in Liberia; and

Whereas, as one means of observing the 25th anniversary of Women of the ELCA, our organization is sponsoring a trip to Liberia where we will accompany women of the National Lutheran Church Women Fellowship of Liberia (the women's organization of the Lutheran Church in Liberia); and

Whereas the 57th Commission on the Status of Women of the United Nations (March 4-15, 2013) will address the elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls; and

Whereas, in its 1994 Message on Community Violence, the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) stated that it is often "those in power" who extend "their racial, sexual, economic, and/or political domination through violent means" and it has been largely

women and the girl child that have suffered from rape in Liberia, knowing that “Short-term measures to counter violence are needed, as well as long term measures to counter social and economic inequalities and the brokenness that contribute to violence...” and

Whereas, we echo the ELCA’s Social Statement “For Peace in God’s World”, in that “we share with people everywhere hope for a more peaceful and just world,” and where it is further stated that it is “through the Law” that “the sovereign God of the nations holds all responsible for their neighbor, protects community, and blesses creation ever anew...”; and

Whereas, the “For Peace in God’s World” social statement also reminds us that “The Gospel of peace (Ephesians 6:15) heals our broken relationship with God, removing the ultimate root of violence and injustice” as it “breaks down the dividing walls of hostility among people,” showing that it is “The peace of the Gospel [that] is the final peace God intends for all”; and

Whereas, this statement also reminds us that the people of God and the church are to be a faithful presence fulfilling “the mandates of its divine calling” as “it helps in word and deed to create an environment conducive to peace” and “through the cross of Christ, God calls us to serve the needs of our neighbor, especially of those groups and individuals who suffer and are vulnerable” and that “the cross assures us that even in our vulnerability, suffering, and death, God’s power is active through us” and “in the cross we recognize that forgiveness, reconciliation, and love of enemy are essential to our efforts to build earthly peace’;

Whereas the United Nations reports that women’s voices and their participation in all aspects of society are more important than ever and has called on world leaders to advance women’s involvement in politics and empower them economically; therefore

BE IT RESOLVED that the churchwide executive board of Women of the ELCA, the women’s ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, on behalf of the whole organization, expresses its solidarity with the elected leadership of Liberia from President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf to the Nobel Peace Prize winner Leymah Gbowee and church leaders such as the Rev. D. Jensen Seyenkulo, bishop of the Lutheran Church in Liberia, and the women of the National Lutheran Church Women Fellowship of Liberia as they continue the work of peace-building in Liberia; and

BE IT RESOLVED that this organization, within all of its expressions, hold Liberia and its civic and religious leaders in deep prayer so they will not grow weary or become unduly discouraged in their invaluable work of forging a new nation; and

BE IT RESOLVED that Women of the ELCA, in all of its expressions, advocate for justice as may be requested by these leaders; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Women of the ELCA participants are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the work of the 57th Commission on the Status of Women of the United Nations so that they may support the elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls throughout the world.