

SHAPING THE PEACE (AFTER WORLD WAR II)

A Social Document of the
ULCA



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

A Series of Statements of the United Lutheran Church in America, 1944, 1946

1944: Minutes, 14th Biennial Convention, ULCA, pp. 346-47, 354, 397.

The Convention resolved:

That this convention endorse the principles upon which the statement of "An Inter-Faith Declaration on World Peace" is based, namely

1. The moral law must govern world order.
2. The rights of the individual must be assured.
3. The rights of oppressed, weak or colonial peoples must be protected.
4. The rights of minorities must be secured.
5. International institutions to maintain peace with justice must be organized.
6. International economic cooperation must be developed.
7. A just social order within each state must be achieved.

That, since the declared purpose of the United Nations in the war now being waged is the achievement of political, cultural and spiritual freedom throughout the world and economic justice and a higher standard of living for all peoples, the Church urge our government to formulate in the spirit not of vengeance but of Christian justice and mercy, specific proposals for such a peace and to make them known to the governments and peoples of all lands.

Recognizing that the cessation of hostilities in Europe may come suddenly and with little warning, that the Church urge its pastors, either individually or in conjunction with other pastors, to make immediate arrangements to observe that event with a service of thanksgiving and humiliation, and a dedication to the cause of lasting peace.

That the Church approve the use by its pastors and people of all available resources in working out a definite Christian program for the readjustment of returning service men and women, uprooted industrial workers and all other persons in our nation who have become dislocated by the exigencies of war, so that they may be assisted in adjusting themselves to the normal life of their homes, congregations and communities.

1946: Minutes, 15th Biennial Convention, ULCA, pp. 460-61, 467.

In order that the church may more effectively meet its responsibility in Our day, The United Lutheran Church in America recommends:

1. That our pastors recognize as their first contribution to world order the preaching of the Gospel whereby men may be brought to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ and to constructive relations with each other in our human society.
2. That our churches, as members of a world-wide Christian community, the improvement of colonial administrations with every effort fellowship including different races, nations, and classes, give a demonstration in their own life of orderly and mutually helpful community.
3. That our people, conscious of their membership in the worldwide Christian community, seek to heal the wounds of war and lay foundations for lasting peace:
 - a. by praying God to cleanse their hearts from all feeling of hatred and vengeance, and to renew a right spirit within them;
 - b. by contributing sacrificially to the relief and rehabilitation of people in devastated areas;
 - c. by using every means to make the peace settlements adequate and effective for cooperative international living.
4. That our people, in their capacity as citizens, recognize in the United Nations an important means for achieving world order and contribute to its effective operation and to its progressive improvement.
5. That, our people recognize in the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs, established by the World Council of Churches in process of formation and the International Missionary Council, an important agency through which Christian testimony can be offered to the world of nations, and that the Lutheran World Federation be requested to sustain such relationships with this commission as may be deemed appropriate.
6. That, as Christian citizens, our people encourage and support particularly those activities of the United Nations which are positive and creative, such as:
 - a. the development of international law in order that international force may be progressively subordinate to law;
 - b. the reduction and regulation of national armaments by international action;
 - c. the promotion of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms with full regard for the primary place of religious liberty;
 - d. to bring non-self-governing peoples to self-government or independence as speedily as possible;
 - e. the development of international economic co-operation in order that economic tensions among nations may be relieved.

7. That parish programs of study and action place appropriate and continuing emphasis upon membership in the world Christian community and upon Christian responsibility to the world of nations.
8. That our people, in their effort to make God's power decisive in their own lives and in the life of the world, seek full reliance upon the spiritual resources which God places at their disposal in Jesus Christ.