



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

Summary Report from a

Day of Discernment

The Lutheran Center
8765 W. Higgins Road, Chicago, IL 60631

July 26, 2018

Introduction, Background and Context

Introduction. Forty-five volunteer participants gathered for a one-day program at The Lutheran Center focused on ELCA efforts to deepen awareness and engagement concerning on-going war-time activities by our nation. The framework for this discernment emphasized the ELCA social statement, *For Peace in God's World*.

The aim of this day was to collect insights, ideas and concerns from the presentations, responses and table conversations. Notes assembled with the help of scribes assigned to groups are presented below and intended to be useful in curriculum writing for congregational use going forward.

The day involved background statements followed by three topical presentations (25-30 minutes). Each presentation was followed by a brief response (7-10 minutes) and table talk among six, small groups. The final session was structured for table talk so participants can summarize key points from the day.

Background and Context. The background and context for this summary report takes seriously that the United States of America has been at war and involved in overt and frank military activities for the longest period of time in the nation's history. The US Air Force has flown military missions continuously over and around Iraq since the 1991 Gulf War (sometimes called the First Gulf War). The cessation of conflict at the end of the First Gulf War instituted a no-fly zone to prohibit Iraqi military control of the air space above and beyond their borders. When the Evangelical Lutheran Church gathered for the 2016 Churchwide Assembly in New Orleans, the US had been in military conflict in the middle East and Southwest Asia for twenty-five years.

The foundational teaching document for addressing war and peace in the ELCA is this church's social statement, *For Peace in God's World (FPGW)*. That document carries forward the strong influences of social statements from predecessor church bodies. *FPGW* was crafted at in the context of the transition away from the Cold War stand-off between the US and USSR and the collapse of the Soviet Union. As the policy and doctrinal shifts away from the nuclear stance of "mutually-assured destruction" gave way to both new hopes for a less dangerous world and increasing aspirations for economic and political freedoms, the social statement was significantly influenced by such developments. With the attacks of 9-11 on the World Trade Towers, the Pentagon and the disrupted attack with Flight 93, terrorism became the dominant headline. Non-state actors took on new prominence and vulnerable seams where governments were unable or unwilling to secure their populations shifted the aims and methods for pursuing security.

The impetus for this Day of Discernment emerged from the 2016 ELCA Churchwide Assembly (CWA), New Orleans, LA. A synod resolution was brought forward seeking to memorialize the CWA in calling this church to on-going discernment. This action was referred to the ELCA Church Council which directed the Office of the Bishop, Federal Chaplaincy Ministries to develop action steps. In cooperation with colleagues in the Office of the Bishop and the Lutheran Office for World Community, this Day of Discernment was arranged to set the stage for preparing a new curriculum and renewed attention to the ELCA social statement, *For Peace in God's World*. You can find the resolution and background information as presented to the CWA, including the original resolution by the Minneapolis Area Synod to the CWA, on page 63ff.

A Word On Reading This Summary Report

Capturing the energy, passion and vision of the forty-five participants in the Day of Discernment is impossible. We are blessed to have the manuscripts or notes (and in one case, slides) from our Presenters as well as scripts or notes from Respondents. As submitted, with very modest editing, these are included as the most faithful record of what Presenters and Respondents offered at the Day of Discernment.

The table groups, which spent time discussing the three major presentations and responses and then dedicated a full and final hour to collecting up important questions, concerns and themes to be provided for the follow-on curriculum writing project. Even with six superbly talented Scribes, collecting all the questions, comments and discussions in the six discussion tables proved supremely challenging.

What you find in this Summary Report collects up as many of the documented contributions for the "Day of Discernment" along with all the notes by Scribes from the table discussions. There has been editing only to the degree that we wanted to

present the material in a coherent format and sequence. There has not been editing with regard to the content of what was presented.

As you read this, then, you will be catching from afar the presentations, responses and the words and ideas expressed and captured by the Scribes at six different tables. This material, in raw form, is to give you a chance to see and read how the words and ideas were expressed as participants made contributions to the Day of Discernment and offered insights based on their faith, their hopes and their experiences.

All of the information in this summary report was provided to colleagues working on a new study guide to use with *For Peace in God's World (FPGW)*. The study guide is scheduled to be published in 2019 and is currently in development under the direction of the Theological Discernment Team in the Office of the Bishop.

Agenda for Day of Discernment
Maj Gen Howard “H” Stendahl, Chaplain of the Day

<u>Time</u>	<u>Event</u>
7:30 am	Breakfast
8:05 am	Morning Prayer and Statement of Purpose
8:30 am	“Context: ELCA on War and Peace” The Rev. Dr. Roger Willer and the Rev. Dr. John Stumme on process, background and trajectory of 1995 statement: For Peace in God’s World
9:00 am	“20th Century Perspectives on Morality, Faith and Use of Force” Presenter: Dr. Eric Patterson, Georgetown University’s Berkley Center and Regent University and Author, Politics in a Religious World: Building a Religiously Informed U.S. Foreign Policy Respondent: Rev. Dr. José Rodriguez, Professor, Lutheran Theological Seminary at Chicago followed by Table Talk with Scribes
10:30 am	“Enduring Insights: Theological Treasures from For Peace in God’s World” Presenter: Dr. Dan Bell, Professor of Theology, Lenoir Rhyne University and Author, Just War as Christian Discipleship: Recentring the Tradition in the Church Rather Than the State Respondent: The Rev. Amy Reumann, ELCA Director of Advocacy, Domestic Mission followed by Table Talk with Scribes
12:00 pm	Lunch
1:00 pm	“Contemporary Challenges and Topics for Discernment” Presenter: Chaplain (Colonel) Timothy Mallard, Director, Army Chief of Chaplains Ecclesiastical Relations and Convener, 2018 International Ethics Symposium, US Army and Royal Army Chaplains Department, UK Respondent: Mr. Dennis Frado, Director, Lutheran Office for World Community and LWF, New York followed by Table Talk with Scribes
2:30 pm	“Collecting Essential Insights for Future Directions in Church Teaching” Presenter Chaplain, Maj Gen Howard “H” Stendahl, USAF (Ret) Facilitated Small Group Reflection and Synthesis: A Day of Discernment: How Do We Turn this into a Churchwide Discernment? How does our effort provide a springboard for the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">* Naming the context and issues around expanding and continuing war-time efforts* Faith resources from ELCA in social statements* Proposed activities and practical steps
4:00 pm	Dismissal

Background Statements

“Context: ELCA on War and Peace”

Process, background and trajectory of 1995 statement: *For Peace in God’s World*

The Rev. Dr. Roger Willer and the Rev. Dr. John Stumme

Roger Willer:

- This day is a response to CWA talking about our current time having such heavy military activity and presence. We live in a time of moral ambiguity; the ELCA needs to engage in moral discernment.
- Our social teaching documents set the stage for today's work. Present a moral vision and provide framework. They also have teaching authority. Arise out of testing and moral deliberation.

John Stumme:

- We all recognize the distance between the early 90s and today.
- 1992, declaration of the end of the Cold War. We wrote this statement in the post-Cold War time.
- Themes from statement: Set within worship, starts and ends with worship. It's about God and God's resolve for peace. Peace includes both law and gospel. Relies on scripture but makes no claims to biblical policy.
- Highlighted pg. 5, first paragraph, "For Peace in God's World." How the biblical story provides context for the stories we live in.
- Earthly peace is partial and not the same and the promised peace of God's eternal reign. Everyone seeks peace, but they seek peace of their own liking.
- Document tries to address peace when integration and particularity are both important.

Presentation and Topic One

"Twentieth Century Perspectives on Morality, Faith and Use of Force"

Dr. Eric Patterson, Georgetown University's Berkley Center and Regent University and Author, Politics in a Religious World: Building a Religiously Informed U.S. Foreign Policy

Professional Background:

Serves as a commissioned officer in the Air National Guard 22 years

Air Force believes it's been at war since 1991—when they entered the Middle East to enforce the "no fly zone" and they never left

Worked in both the National Security Council and traveled for US State Department for 3 years

Presentation:

Christianity and US National Security Policy in the 20th Century: expressed in three debates

Setting:

100 years ago—McKinley was up for reelection. TR was his second VP. McKinley was a person of deep faith. The church first pressed him to intervene in Cuba from 1875. The majority of US Christian leaders wanted to get the White House to intervene in Cuba.

Pre-Civil War, Northerners didn't want Cuba to become a state. However, there were concentration camps in Cuba and the church wanted the US to do a humanitarian intervention.

McKinley prayed and felt God told him to intervene—for humanity's sake, not to acquire more territory

American foreign policy has always struggled with people of faith, who often disagree

Biggest debate at the turn of the 19th to the 20th century was should we do this, or will it launch the U.S into an imperialistic dynasty?

Three debates:

Idealism vs. Christian realism

Just war thinking vs. Pacifism

Morality (moralism) (virtue ethics) vs. Utilitarianism

Idealism vs. Christian realism

End of WWI—Wilson went to Europe as a conquering hero. 7 treaties came out of the end of WWI, each had to sign the League of Nations treaty. Wilson's plan had 14 points—and he believed he had a divine calling to transform world politics. The U.S. and victorious allies could dramatically choose to change the world order. The force of history in terms of progress was pushing us.

Wilson was a man of the age who had a belief: we can change politics. Human structures are perfectible. We can do better than the past. There are no such things as cycles of history. There's a focus on rationality, not on the individual.

Most churches tended toward a pacifistic response. WWI was so destructive that there was a concerted belief that we must do better than that. That's a reaction but not a theological approach.

Wilson's vision was an entire set of written documents written to outlaw war and pursue and achieve world peace through international cooperation and legislation.

1930's—caused a reevaluation of this project and led to the emergence of an adapted faith approach:

Christian realism with its leading proponent, Reinhold Niebuhr—sad duty of politics is to establish justice in a sinful world

Christian realism asserts there is no way to legislate against war. Power must match power. Niebuhr developed these thoughts from communism and the civil rights movements in Detroit in the 1920's. There was no way the weaker

party(labor) could negotiate with Henry Ford. There had to be a recalibration of power to create social peace. From a theological and anthropological point of view, this was a more Augustinian approach—human dilemma starts with sin.

Power differentiations were focused on in pursuing justice. UN was a way to match power with power. Democracy is good because it separates power and creates checks and balances. That's not how we talk about democracy today—the focus at the end of the twentieth century shifted to individual human flourishing.

By the end of WWII, the world needed the U.S., but also needed NATO. Rebuilding the world needed US troops in Europe (and to a lesser extent Asia), and the Marshall Plan.

Christian realism asserts there are historical situations in which refusal to defend the inheritance of a civilization however imperfect, against tyranny and aggression may result in consequences even worse than war. These debates persist all the way through the next 70 years.

Niebuhr's thinking is said to go on to influence Jimmy Carter, Obama.

Realism gives way, after 9/11, to an idealism about the use of force: we're going to slam the bad guys and get out—install justice, punishment, basic order vs. a negotiated and collaborative process. We're going to go in and shake up the whole region on behalf of democracy.

International Criminal Court emerges to see justice, but—does it really punish anybody? Does it actually deter misconduct or abuse of power?

Or might it be more accurate to think about how powers do a power balancing?

It might be a both** need both.

Is the presupposition that there's good in everybody and we can rationally talk and figure it out.

Or is it that humans get more sinful in groups? Can two groups sit down? Hard with democracies because reelection becomes an end in itself.

Law on paper vs. Law that has teeth—mechanisms. Assumptions about human responsibility
Christian realist vs. Idealist==each are rooted in the role of the human

Just war vs. Pacifism.

Holy War also is a third approach to using power—however, we haven't seen that claimed in the West. In the Balkans—a case is made that people took a conflict and made it a holy war. Niebuhr and others realized there were movements in the 20's that were holy wars/crusades—e.g. zeal of Lenin or Marxists. These convictions spurred people to become willing to burn down the world to build their new order—those approximate holy wars. These may be a dogma that doesn't have a supernatural basis—but if there're going to build a new society by building the old one, that's a holy war.

Past 45 years, we've seen more Just War vs. Pacifism

Do we have a generation that is disengaged from having a sense of responsibility for our society?

Political institutions are a good that fall under the justice of God. Legitimate authorities can act on a just cause with right intention (order of these criteria matters).

Just War thinking distinguishes force from violence. Force is lawful and within the hands of legitimate authorities. Limited and escalating force used by police is different from police brutality. There's a moral difference.

Preventing a wrong, punishing a wrongdoer—these are elements just war. Fighting on behalf of greed, rage, lust is wrong. (Augustine and scripture express that the Lord looks on the heart—can tell difference in intentions.

Just war has a more greyscale view of morality—and differentiates that end doesn't justify the means. Not true that you can do the right thing for the wrong reasons or reverse.

Caritas is emphasized—asks leaders how do you care for your constituents and those outside that sphere?

Pacifism, though surfacing in every era, isn't a part of mainstream Christianity. Just war thinking emerged as Christianity grappled with every form of authority. Pacifism has not been predominant for 2,000 years. Most Christian expressions are variations of just war thinking.

The Reformation included the Anabaptist challenge. *Schleifthum*. Romans 13 says we need civil magistrates. As Christians we can't wield the sword but there are secular authorities who can.

The pacifism we've seen cropping up in the last 50 years doesn't have theological depth or heritage as expressed in Anabaptist resistance — most contemporary pacifism is rooted in Gandhi-ism.

Some modern pacifists looked at the atomic bomb and the horror of WWI and WWII and said there's got to be a better way. That aspiration is not theologically driven.

In 1934, Bonhoeffer went to the Bishop of Chichester wanting to visit Gandhi. He was interested in the rights of the populace against the British Empire.

Martin Luther King, Jr. said if your enemy has a conscience follow Gandhi, if he doesn't (like Hitler), follow Bonhoeffer. Bonhoeffer chose a different form of action culminating in the Valkyrie project.

Popular pacifism since the 1960's has been nonviolent direct action and tried to apply it to international affairs. There's not a rich theological basis for this method or application.

There's a disengagement from young people. For some expressions of the church today, there is an understanding of the community as a remnant that needs to escape from society and go into the cloister.

He was impressed by the document [find which document was sent **] emphasizing moral injury and PTSD. Just war tradition says there's a vocation to some people for public service. When the soldier protects the innocent, kills the bad guy, that's a good thing. A different view says there's blood on his hands, there's a lesser evil. There's a grey area we don't understand between the two.**

But, the Just War tradition has helped warriors and police and magistrates go through healing and recovery. There's the redemptive properties of the gospel and the theological basis for service. The contemporary pacifist critique of public service doesn't have the theological resources for healing for warriors.

Morality vs. Utilitarianism.
What is right vs. what works

Is virtue and morality really at the heart of our political national security enterprise?

Is the best way to think about that in terms of what works?

The virtue is in what is good for the state

What was the argument made in favor of having nukes in the 40's-60's? We need them as a deterrent to the Soviets and Chinese who have a goal of world domination and who treat their people poorly. The genie is out of the bottle. Part of that rationale is utilitarian: the ends justify the means.

Critics were saying utilitarian things as well. If we drop a bomb it kills everyone—it will ruin the environment, we might all die.

In both the justification and the criticism of atomic weapons, arguments weren't virtue-based but pragmatic.

Paul Ramsay vs. Catholics—50's/60's.
Linked today to drones and autonomous systems.

Ramsay said when we look at nuclear weapons, let's look at them thru just war thinking. We want them in the hands of legitimate political authorities. Are we taking steps to ensure non-proliferation etc.?

We should flush out the right intention thinking. For instance, we could say we will never ever strike against a city. Ramsay distinguished between counter force (military bases, sea, knock missiles out of sky) and indiscriminate, massive use (mutual-assured destruction).

Deception—nuclear deterrents works through your enemy not know when you would strike. What it would take. Where's the line to cross with camouflage and deception? This is in contrast to assertions which are brazen lies about what you wouldn't do vs. what you intend to do.

National Security Strategy (NSS) is the guiding document for protecting and promoting national interests and influence. The NSS goes from the White House (civilian, elected officials and staff) and goes to DoD for implementation of national military strategies. It's not the case that someone can lie and push a button. We need Christian thinking in that entire policy realm—more decisions being made, not reflexive, reactionary decisions. Proportionality, discrimination. Do we outlaw the big AND small bombs? Moscow vs. Little village etc.

We can wash our hands and say it's too complicated we won't do it. Or we can say that there are people in our churches with this vocation and we're going to pray for them and push them toward ethics.

Programmer of Drones isn't thinking morality, just bits and bytes

Cyber warfare is just action and reaction

Are we equipping folks with tools and resources for a moral element?

What is the role of the church? Sometimes we think that everyone in the church has to be doing the same thing—not the case. Different people, different vocations. Pre-, during and post-conflicts all are phases in which faith can play an important role. For example, in post-conflict situations, Christians are the last to leave places of human suffering. When the military and UN go home, it's people of faith still on the ground, serving. Christians are called to empower moral thinking and action in all three phases of thinking about the use of force.

Response by Dr. Jose Rodriquez, Lutheran Theological Seminary at Chicago

History of Christian faith presents many conflicts and ways of thinking about them. Jesus was crucified because, to the Roman Empire, he sounded like a terrorist, talking about this alternative kingdom (of God).

- Realism vs. idealism are both legitimate, but are there other ways of looking at things?
 - Using the civil rights movement is another way, skirting violent resistance and non-violent change within a nation.
 - Henry David Thoreau.
 - Anti-apartheid struggle with an emphasis on international pressure and moral norms.
 - College students in Tiananmen Square and mass protest.
- There's a difference between collective and individual initiatives. We have a more holistic understanding of human beings nowadays. This led to the formation of the United Nations.
- Need to explore morality. Where is the basis of true, universal morality? The authority of scriptures?
- There's no doubt that there has to be a presence of a Christian faith in our social and political life.
- When looking at the history of the Christian faith, there's no doubt that there were stances and positions against things (for example, look at the stance against the Roman Empire that led to Jesus's crucifixion).
- This division between realism and idealism. Is it a reduction of reality? Were there other political movements that provided a lot of more?
- The civil rights movement might be an "in-between expression" of realism and idealism. Rodriguez doesn't think the theology behind the civil rights movement was most central. It was a collection of groups that came together. Civil rights movement was influenced by Gandhi and non-violent resistance. Other international movements influenced by Gandhi, too → South Africa, Tiananmen Square in China
- There is a distinction between collective and individualistic initiatives.
- Is our understanding of this more holistic today?
- Perhaps a collective identity of the human person led to recognize important human efforts.
- Consider the question of morality: Where is the basis of true, universal morality? Is it in our understanding of faith?

Table Talk Notes

First question--

Realism vs idealism—typologies have their limit. Is that dichotomy a reduction of reality? Were there other movements?

Civil rights movement—might be an in-between expression worth exploring more carefully.

Theology behind the civil rights movement was not as strong as the Christian Realism led Niebuhr.

CRM was a collection of groups that came together. Many of those groups weren't part of the dominant sections of society. Minority movements drew from Gandhi, black leaders visited India from 1930's-50's. Others drew from Thoreau. These then fed freedom movements internationally. Anti-apartheid in South Africa. Communist resistance in Czechoslovakia. China—Tiananmen Square.

In the 21st century, political resistance does have a strong theological grounding. For Niebuhr there's a distinction between collective and individual initiatives.

Do we have a more holistic understanding of humans today?

Groups turned to international bodies to defend their security. Collective identity of human person led to recognize important collective efforts.

Another important question and concern to explore more carefully is the issue about morality. Where is the basis of true universal morality? Is shared morality contingent on our understanding of faith? When the church became the religion of the empire—people understood authority of the scriptures differently.

How do we think about the Scriptures now?

One constant theme is nations pursue what is in their best interest. Relying on interests may shroud what nations do; in actuality, humanitarian aid provides food to starving people not because leaders care about them but because their need presents a nation with opportunity to advance national interests. Every nation act in its own interest. There's not a strong sense of humanitarianism in terms of statesmanship. A nation wants a "return on investment."

In contrast, non-government organizations (NGOs) are mostly interested in humanitarianism. NGOs will also struggle with each other to get good pictures in order to get more funding and so that their people get their salaries.

Are nations really interested in morality?

Protest movement may need different strategies, responding differently to an oppositional leader with or without a conscience. Such calculations increase our dilemma as Christians.

(A different respondent:) Regarding humanitarian organizations—the military is routinely employed in humanitarian missions. Humanitarian assistance may not be the mission that soldiers are assigned. In other cases, soldiers, on their free time, go out into the communities to assist with local needs. That's a pretty good statement of who America really is.

Military authorizes humanitarian activities to win hearts and minds. Those events are coordinated by State Department in foreign countries.

Some humanitarian assistance is comprised of individual Christians who have a vocation—we're not saying that people outside the Christian faith will never do anything good or help anyone.

Do the nation and faith communities have a role / responsibility for developing morality in individuals—yes. For some, America has sold its moral authority. For another, America never had any pre-eminent moral authority – the USA never was sitting on a hill. The USA is just as morally utilitarian as others, and sometimes we shroud our actions with lofty motives. Individuals may do acts of charity out of their understanding of their call. We didn't intercede with Hitler until we had to.

Patterson pushed a both/and perspective. Our conversation tends to categorize people and actions, and our discussion needs to resist that. Yes, the individual actions of soldiers can be viewed as humanitarian and yes, they're also supportive of a military agenda.

It's a both/and world.

That's important in our current discussion because people resist complex, multi-factor explanations.

Does the average American really know what the military's purpose is? These were answered by some with *one immediate no, another no*.

The military doesn't help with clarity about motives and missions.

One respondent, as a military veteran, was often called a baby killer. In truth, the police are there to prevent crime, same with the military.

Navy's tagline was "global force for good"--that confuses the purpose of the military. The military is a global force for breaking things and killing people. That's the purpose of the military. When we, as a nation or as the military, advertises we're humanitarians, that confuses who we are. That's not saying people want to mislead, but when the purpose is confused, you get in trouble.

The purpose of the military is to be willing to step in and to commit acts of war through the use of force.

The purpose of the military is lethality.

Civilians are the ones who put the military into war.

As citizens, we have a tendency to get caught up in the day's events, the tyranny of the immediate. Patterson cast his perspective using poles of reaction over the course of a century of history. This respondent appreciated the calmness of that approach vs. the news.

In the third century, Christianity became a state religion; now we're heading into a post-Christian culture. What's the relevance of the church engaging the culture and influencing policy makers when the church is not as dominant?

For whom is the social statement intended? The statement *For Peace in God's World* is for no one outside the church, it's for people of the ELCA to figure out who we are. It feeds our public policy. There's not a member of Congress asking what the ELCA is saying.

Lawyers are concerned about the yes or no legality. That's how missions are planned. Any chaplain in that situation is silent. It's intriguing in situations where the leader turns to chaplains asking, "what do you think?"

One respondent worked with religious leaders in Iraq. Is the chaplain an intel officer? Military leaders want to know what the chaplain learned from inter-religious leader discussion.

The comments on pacifism were jarring. He [Patterson] doesn't know it. Realism discussion was too idealistic. His presentation was oblivious to Mennonite tradition/theology. He didn't hear both/and for those.

Also, Patterson's observations of young people were off-base. Young people come not from pacifism but from despair.

We've got the history of Quakers and others being very involved seeking peace. The role and rationale of Quakers didn't come out in the presentation. It's in the social statement.

One asserted that Gandhi got his pacifism from Christianity.

A number of chaplains have been sharing the 2018 film, *Hacksaw Ridge*, to have discussions about pacifism and the call to serve.

Around the table, participants offered a range of views about young people.

Young people are not indifferent to the happenings of today. They have strong convictions—love to be involved. When their voice isn't heard then they get turned off.

Studies have shown that young people don't have a sense that you need to "pay your dues" in order to speak. They want to have a full voice from the first moment.

Young people are scared of responsibility. In basic military training, they get responsibility and they freak out.

Young folks one respondent works with—doing a study on toughness—they want to be challenged until they are tough. Other hand, many young people want nothing to do with it.

Army doesn't instill discipline through punishment—it has responsibility.

What's the future of the military? Young people want the privileges but not the responsibility. Guard and Reserve units were called up—one young soldier in the MN area said (s)he couldn't go on active duty—(s)he has kids. Parents misunderstood they would have to transfer permanent custody when on active duty. In fact, military personnel have a care plan that if as a single parent, you've arranged for who is going to take care of your children.

What we are talking about is the hurt and pain experiences of those facing real-life dilemmas. Creating an ethical framework is part of the lived experience of our sons and daughters. Exigency ethics: gotta do it or I'll die. Exigency ethics can lead to moral complications.

Jesus wasn't mentioned in the presentation. What is the nature of Jesus' power? His power is symbolized in a lamb; what power does a lamb have? Why do we celebrate MLK Day and not Lyndon Johnson day? Compassion and love are a power. If you are helping someone, they will feel it if you are genuine. Further, in the Christian faith, what is the power of the cross? What power is in a victim? Power in war is a way of victimizing people. When you victimize people, you become a victim yourself. How has the country's history affected the people? Christianity started with Jesus (not Augustine) and for the first 300 years, Christianity was a non-violent religion.

View of presidents on international relations. Carter, Bush, Obama, etc. Trump and his followers: we really can't do government. Self-interest is so strong. What's the view of Donald Trump and the folks around him now? How do we fill in some of the detail?

The emergence of terrorism changes things significantly. In countering terrorism, authorities classify folks. People become means, not ends. How do people of faith maintain the dignity of God's creation? How can we as citizens and believers, in processes of change, maintain values? Who understands the value of family? There are Christian understandings of social changes that need to be taken into consideration. Supreme Court decisions in US have been used in other countries to create law.

One expressed the view, "I don't think the morality piece fits into the war."

Civil rights changes were important to become changes in laws.

Consider differences in how Augustine saw government and Jesus saw government? How different were their perspectives? Seeing the divine in every face.

Jesus was not seen as a pacifist. He was bringing the word, the kingdom of God. He was the Messiah.

Violence is homicide, mass killings, etc. God is the God of all humanity. God doesn't want anyone dead.

You have to challenge the enemies. Living in the Roman Empire and Jesus was not a pacifist and was challenging the social order of the time which was blasphemous. He put God's empire over the Roman Empire.

Dealing with Idealism vs Realism: is there something in between?

Eric Patterson's response: These are terms of art in the social sciences. Terminology of the era. "Pessimistic view of Neibuhr (sp?)" but has to do with presuppositions. Hopeful, visionary, but rooted in political action.

How we look at human nature- sinful and self-absorbed or out for good? How actions are interpreted impacts thoughts. Conversations of how we operate through institutions - moral ambiguity - can be very messy. Institutions add layers. Church, as institution, adds layers. While there is moral ambiguity, eventually we have to make a decision.

Romans 13- issues of morality and Just War, and submission to authority. It can be a temptation to color our final decision- where do we stand? Paul writing to a marginal group, was persecuted. There was practicality and theology- prudence- which is read differently now. In a different time read by different people- more power, privilege, white male in USA...

Take it with Romans 12- focus on individual ethics. Combine them. Many evangelicals do not have the theology of vocation - Lutherans do. Build bridges, "turn the other cheek", operate out of love. Romans 12 and 13 are not in conflict, it's a mature view- behave differently when wearing the uniform versus at home with neighbors. Relationships with children versus with spouse- both love centric, but different. For those in service, "ours is not the reason why, it is what to do or die"

What is the intention behind the action? The reason behind actions, forces engagement and discussion. We are so polarized today "this is my position" vs trying to understand the thought behind other's and our own actions.

Ends and Means are related and inherently connected - how is that in concert with Just War thinking? The moral problems that have to do with war are not about humans dying - we're all going to die someday. Because people are dying, that is the only problem, is not a compelling argument. **The use of force, judiciously used, for self-defense, to stop terrible violence, is justified. If we didn't have someone to stop the bad guys - would we be fulfilling our commitment to protect our neighbors and ourselves and Christian thought?**

Considering moral injury - there is something corrupting about doing something that you know, and feel is wrong. In the Just War tradition - stopping the evil doer is a moral and just thing - helps with the healing of the moral injury. Where does the line draw? Just War theory exacerbates moral injury in some people and some situations as people are tied to Following the rules of engagement- cheap grace that causes the "it's ok that I did that" thinking but people still face moral injury. BUT the enemy knows this and uses innocent victims to hurt soldiers' moral compass. In order to mess with the minds of marines/soldiers/airmen (and get it in the news!), the enemy uses civilians as ploys to sabotage the military effort. Makes military look like "bumbling idiots" when they are following protocol/orders and the enemy is using it against us. I.e. Vehicle not stopping at a checkpoint- ORDER: stop the vehicle at all costs. End up killing innocent civilians sent by the enemy as ploys.

There are not rituals of absolution/prayer/counseling or structures to help people transition back into society. It's hours on the way home, then back to "normal". Not enough time to decompress and work together to talk about the horrors of war. Leads to complications/PTSD. Historically it took weeks for soldiers to return home, that was time to process what happened and what they went through. Now it is merely hours, often alone on civilian planes.

There is a difference between restraining evil and the Peace of God. Restraining evil can be horrific and deadly. Restraining evil does not equal the Peace of God. Peace is what we want to achieve and experience. Restraining evil brings stability- social and economic, which allows for an opportunity to preach the gospel, but does not necessarily BRING peace.

Nonviolent responses have been effective. Not always, but non-violence can be effective. As a people of faith, we need to take seriously pacifism. It is rooted in theology and Jesus.

- What thoughts or questions do you have before we begin?
 - Paul Ramsey played a seminal role in the debate of nuclear ethics in the 20th c. His is a tremendous model that we can hold up in these discussions.
 - I am interested in the necessity of moral reflection on hacking technology, machines fight machines, and the realms of artificial intelligence.
 - I am interested in pacifism vs. just war, not just one or the other, but both/and.
 - How are we equipping people in the pews—average Christians—with the ability to discern where our decisions fall along continuum of moral choices?
 - My formative years growing up were around nuclear weapons and war. I do not see having a large role in my children's ethical formation.
- What are the moral demands of someone who's flying a drone in safety?
 -

- The film *Eye in the Sky* (2016) raises questions about what its like to be fighting from a distance. There is a scene in this film which demonstrates an idealized situation where people with many perspectives sit around a table and debate and discuss the right use of force. This is used as a teaching tool in the Army for leader development; the scene is screened and discussed.
- Due to the distance from and lack of personal engagement with the enemy on the ground, and the repetitiveness and specialization of their job, they are often desensitized to the role because they either continue to do the same task on multiple deployments or leave the military and work for a company in the private sector doing similar work.
- What are the pastoral concerns regarding these issues?
 - What is the influence of Reinhold Neibuhr's writings on power?
- Gandhi also spoke and taught about power—meeting power with power to generate a new kind of power.
 - There is a place for both idealism and realism. As Christians we would lose our identity if we lost our idealism. Gandhi spent hours in front of the crucifix when he visited the Vatican, and he recognized that progress often requires sacrifice. Finding the truth in both of these ideologies is the role of the church.
- What is our vision for a whole society?
 - It is the American way to exert influence and enact change by getting other people to do things? (I.e. young people must spend years in Iraq or Afghanistan to better the world order.) It's different when you don't need to take action on your own.
 - Collective security is a great ideal and has been, in fact, employed at certain times successfully, but there is also a real question whether *Responsibility to Protect* (R2P) has a real future. Logistical burdens often bring collective security onto the rocks.
 - A visitor from Ghana told me his country is a much safer place because of President Bush's initiative on HIV/AIDS. This was not militaristic, but it did invite the participation of the American public, even if just by contributing money.
- What are our resources to teach about war/peace in our classrooms and churches?
 - We need to familiarize our people much more with the church's historical teachings and thoughts on these ideas. Early Christian teachers assumed that Christians could not be in the military; God did not deem it fitting to take a life, nor was it compatible with the life and teachings of Jesus. But these teachers did not write off war entirely.
 - After the fall of the Roman Empire, Christians moved to teaching a theory of "just war", but there is nobody to enforce it.
 - Repugnance for violence is part of our Christian identity. It can be necessary, but it is always tragic.
 - I am struck by the idea of a "just peace" (not only "just war"). I want to consider what God's vision for a "just peace" would be, not only to consider what would constitute a "just war".

Several bishops are currently reading *The Patient Ferment of the Early Church* by Alan Kreider. This book asserts that early church made its witness by quietly living its own life; Christians refused to participate in making these decisions.

- Contrast of individual discernment vs. navigating ambiguity in groups.
- Quote about America never taking territory by force. Sugar-coating of Manifest Destiny. The Native Americans would see that quite differently. Selective history.
- Millennials are more socially concerned than students in the 1980s. Not willing to write them off as disengaged.
- Wanted to see more discussion about these dualities in today's context.
- How do we initiate moral conversation while there's a lack of knowledge of theology?
- Astonished by Parkland students after the shooting. Why didn't it happen after Columbine? Columbine was the first, a fluke. Students nowadays see themselves as being on the front line; they are literally in danger.
- It's hard for students to be loyal to an Empire, which is how they see the US. Loss of hope and faith in institutions, including the church. "We can't count on the adults of this country to actually do anything." Despair. Very few have good feelings for what the US stands for right now. People don't control their own destinies; multinational corporations do.
- There's more uncertainty, cynicism and despair in play than there was 20 years ago. How do we even survive? Forget about thriving, how do we survive?
- Euphoria of the end of the Cold War was illogical; it's just that no one wanted to deal with the reality of the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Reagan and Bush's New World Order was hollow. The wonder of Just War theory is so clear – we love it. The key is the intention of the actors.
 - How is that compromised by a world of fake news? How do we even determine intention now? What happens when some are intentionally confusing intention? How do we decide what is just when everyone is lying all the time? How do we retrieve governmental voracity?

- Balkan war and Rwanda genocide, etc., we see power of myth, false historical narrative, and how they influence actions and how actions are perceived.
- That pacifist churches are not being involved in public vocations/public service is inaccurate.
- Are there conscientious objectors in today's all-volunteer military, or are they now extinct, not needed?
- Holy war IS present in the west. Gun manufacturers put bible verses on M16s. The hyper-masculinity of Jesus.
- We are always mixed motives. We can do the right thing for the wrong reason. Morality is sometimes retroactive. Intention requires a great deal of self-awareness.

- William McKinley being pressed by the church to intervene in Cuba (described as a man of deep faith)
 - Concentration camps in Cuba (by the Spanish)
 - "Remember the Maine"
 - Spanish/American War
- There can be a force for justice that is limited force
- Should we do this because it's going to save human life or is it for imperialistic dynasty? (McKinley's question)
- American Moral impulse about what the Bible has to say about helping the neighbor
- Three debates
 - 1) Idealism vs. Christian Realism
 - 2) Just War Thinking vs. Pacifism
 - 3) Morality vs. Utilitarianism
- Wilsonian politics→ Idealism
 - We can do better
 - We can perfect human things
 - League of Nations Treaty
 - Written documents to try outlaw war and legislate world peace
- Reinhold Niebuhr→ Christian Realism
 - Power must match power
 - No way that the weaker party could negotiate w/the person in power
 - e.g.) Henry Ford with black labor civil rights movement
 - Democracy is good because it separates power and creates checks and balances – Niebuhr
 - Maybe we need both; maybe it's not either/or
 - Assumptions about human nature, assumptions about collectives, assumptions about human responsibility
- Just war vs. pacifism
 - Do we have a generation who is disengaged in their public society? (millennials)
 - Political institutions are institutions from God (?)
 - Distinguishes force from violence
 - Just war is Christian in that it emphasizes *caritas*, love of neighbor
 - Pacifism is not a part of main stream Christianity
 - Anabaptism—we will pray for those who wield a sword, but we can't do it
 - Benedictine option—maybe the church today is just an escape from the public like a monastery
 - Just war says there's a vocation to public service
- Morality vs. Utilitarian
 - What is right vs. what works?
 - e.g.) nuclear weapons (those who are pro nuke and anti-nuke are both utilitarians)
 - Argument in the 60's → we need them because look at how others treat their people. We have to have this to protect ourselves.
 - Look at nuclear weapons through just war thinking
 - Be in the hands of those with just thinking
 - We should flush out the just cause and way of thinking about how nuclear weapons will be used
 - There has to be a limit. This is not how everything goes
 - What is the role of the church?

Presentation and Topic Two

"Enduring Insights: Biblical, Theological and Pastoral Resources from *For Peace in God's World*"

Dr. Dan Bell, Professor of Theology, Lenoir Rhyne University and Author, *Just War as Christian Discipleship: Recentering the Tradition in the Church Rather Than the State*

Response by the Rev. Amy Reumann, ELCA Director of Advocacy, Office of the Presiding Bishop

Notes below are from Dr. Bell.

Introduction

I have been invited to briefly summarize a few key biblical, theological and pastoral insights from the social statement. In what follows, I offer such a summary, with a twist. In particular, I will identify some of the obstacles or challenges (which are really opportunities) to this theological vision taking hold in the imaginations and lives of our congregations.

Begin with the biblical- theological. 3 points

Biblical - Theological

1. God of Peace

Document rests on theological claim that we worship a God of peace (Rom 15:33, 16:20; 1 Cor 14:33, etc. see pp. 2). God who creates in peaceable communion, preserves and redeems for the sake of peace on earth (Lk 2:14). Jesus Christ is our peace who breaks down divisions, reconciles (Eph 2:13-22).

Earthly peace both links and contrasts Final / Eternal peace (think of Peaceable Kingdom texts Isa 2, 9, 65, Rev 21) and Earthly/ present peace (Augustine, COG Bk XIX; Jer. 29).

Links to Final / Eternal peace is foundation of our calling to be peacemakers (Mt 5.9) while also contrasting in the sense that it recognizes earthly peace is not same as eternal reign of God (3.B, p. 8). Earthly peace is fleeting, partial, always mixed with sin. (Military action, JWT is lesser evil, tragic concession to persistence of sin....)

* * *

But biblical witness and the lived theology of many Christians is not so clear in preferring and seeking peace. This ambiguity threatens to undercut the practical, formative power of the social statement. Consider:

Penal vision of atonement – that God demands blood, a sacrificial victim – presents anything but a vision of a God of peace.

The theological ideas of damnation and hell, likewise, challenge the notion that we worship a God of peace who desires reconciliation and communion.

And, of course, there is the biblical witness of the violence of God. From the ark to Armageddon.

Various components of Lutheran political theology ~ right hand and left hand of God, two kingdoms, law and gospel, God's mercy v God's righteousness - justice. Certainly, can create impression that God is not God of peace. (Except in Orwellian sense of War is peace.)

Resources:

Christopher Marshall, *Beyond Retribution*

Walter Brueggemann, *Divine Presence Amid Violence*

Terence Fretheim, "God and Violence in OT" *Word & World* 24.1 (2004)

John Collins, *Does the Bible Justify Violence?*

Patricia McDonald, *God and Violence*

My point: Making the case for the God of peace will require work acknowledging and addressing the counter-examples. Indeed, I venture that most do NOT see God as god of peace in the clear and straightforward manner the social statement assumes.

2. Peace as Communion

For Peace in God's World lifts up a particular vision of peace as communion and reconciliation, the renewal and restoration of right relations among peoples.

Eph 2:13-22 and see FN 3 re Colossians, Philippians, Romans, Corinthians, Gal 3.28, etc
Jn 14.27 "My peace I give, not as world gives...."

Again, allow me to briefly suggest a few obstacles or challenges to the social statement's powerful vision.

- The concerns just noted related to images of God threaten the persuasiveness of peace as communion. If God is not really about peace as reconciliation but peace as destruction of enemy and the forces of evil, then it is going to be hard to sell communion and reconciliation.

- I dare say that peace as dominion and destruction of the opposition/enemy is the dominant vision of peace in our current context.

Roman historian Tacitus, speaking of corrupt Roman empire: "They plunder, they slaughter, and they steal . . . and where they make a wasteland, they call it peace" (*Agricola*, c 30).

- Likewise, there is a widespread (mis)understanding of peace advocacy as passivity, of condoning impunity, of letting evil prevail unopposed, uncorrected...

All of which is to say that part of the challenge of the social statement is articulating and embodying a commitment to peace with justice.

In Christian tradition, peace is the fruit of righteousness (Mat 5.9). "The effect of righteousness will be peace." Isa 32.16-7
Aquinas. Peace is not a virtue but fruit of virtue.

In a Christian vision peace, mercy and justice are not opposed, as is so often the case in west, (retribution v amnesty) but work together to renew and sustain right relations. [This is atonement rightly understood] Peace and justice kiss. (Ps 85.10)

- Theologically, the eschatological proviso, the contrast between Eternal and Earthly peace that the document lifts up, threatens to undercut peaceable work here and now. It is easy to dismiss calls for nonviolent work, communion, even restraints like Just War thinking, as utopian appeals to a Final peace that is not yet.

- In a related vein, the *simul – simul justus et peccator* – can quite easily become an excuse - practical dismissal of a vocation – a mission – a ministry of peace. Peace, understood as communion, becomes an aspiration that only takes hold in the future. [Ditto law-gospel, with ethics = law]

- Finally, the proper and appropriate Lutheran exaltation of justification by grace can easily drowned out sanctification and the mission to do good works like make peace, develop community, etc.

3. The Ministry / Mission of Reconciliation

Running through the social statement is a presumption that the Christian community has a calling, a ministry, a mission of community-building, of reconciliation (2 Cor 5).

At this point, we can see that my points are cumulative. In the sense that the challenges to our vision of God as a God of peace and to peace as reconciliation and communion stand as challenges to the social statement's strong claim that the church is about the mission of developing communion.

• I suppose that at this point all I want to add to these previous points is that, frankly, we just do not hear much about this approach to the mission and activities of the church.

Our cultural situation is such that many congregational leaders are thrilled if they can just get folks to show up for worship. So, they focus on the good news of peace with God. And love of neighbor becomes secondary, auxiliary (contra 1 Jn 4; Mt 22.36) often reduced to charity and a few outreach programs.

And if love of neighbors becomes almost an after-thought, love of enemies is not even mentioned. (How often do we pray for enemies in worship?)

• Common Good. Finally, with regard to this ministry / mission of reconciliation, we might also mention the common good. The social statement refers to the global common good and challenges conceptions of national interest (p.9) that are not compatible with the common good.

Like the ministry of reconciliation, of which it is a part, the common good is something we do not hear much about.

And proclaiming the good news of a shared love, a common good that unites in communion / community... Proclaiming and embodying a gospel that sets us free to look not after our own interests but the interests of others (Phil 2), that, as Luther said, sets us free so that once we have Christ our whole life becomes a surplus with which to love and serve our neighbors

<in notes> Luther: "A man does not live for himself alone in this mortal body . . . , but he lives also for all men on earth; rather **he lives only for others and not for himself**. . . Therefore, he should be guided in all his works by this thought and contemplate this one thing alone, that he may serve and benefit others in all that he does, considering nothing except the need and the advantage of his neighbor. . . This is what makes caring for the body a Christian work, that through its health and comfort we may be able to work, to acquire, and lay by funds with which to aid those who are in need" (LW 31:364-5)

This is going to run up against the polarized, interest-group driven, turned-in-on-ourselves politics of our age.

(FYI, if interested, Eric Wester put me on to an article by Wanda Deifelt that does nice job of connecting common good to Lutheran confessional tradition.)

Pastoral

Move quickly and briefly to pastoral dimension of the social statement, to the embodiment of our theology, still considering challenges / opportunities. I really only have one point here, with several dimensions or implications.

1. From Advocacy to Witness

For Peace in God's World is heavily geared toward public policy advocacy. This is an important but narrow vision of political responsibility and citizenship.

Suggest it needs to be supplemented with the witness of a body of people. A people who embody these convictions / call in their daily lives and communities and not just at voting booth. (Mind you, this is not absent in social statement, although it comes through more in the post-social statement study materials.)

• I propose a shift from emphasis on advocacy to embodiment / witness has implications for models of ministry and the meaning of membership.

Models of Ministry. Beyond accompaniment, beyond managers to leadership. How much do we really train and screen rostered ministers for genuine leadership? Theological and moral-political leadership? (Community development, conflict resolution?)

Personal experience / confession: too often assume that if given information, rostered ministers have tools and skills to implement. But they do not. Decade ago integrated leadership into my teaching....

Related: How many are theologically equipped to address the theological challenges I named above? Atonement,

violence of God, peace not passive; justice not retributions?

- Meaning of membership

Baptism as enlistment. Joining a mission larger than myself.... meeting my felt needs.
(My story re Eisenhower Auditorium at CGSC)

★How much enlisting and equipping do we really do? Without this approach to faith formation and engagement in church communities, the social statement cannot take hold and take flight....

3. Politics of Witness Requires Renewed Emphasis on Vocations of Laity 128 hrs a Week

Related to this, we largely treat Christianity as part-time hobby. A few hours a week primarily associated with church building and programs, few percentage points of income, etc. We say church is not a building (and associated staff and programming), but we do not act like it. (Look at church websites.)

Luther's emphasis on the vocation of laity (the baptized) is all but forgotten. Giving legs to the social statement entails recovering sense of centrality of laity and supporting role of rostered ministry. The mission of peace is the mission of laity, 128 hrs a week. In all their vocations and occupations.

How are we validating this calling and equipping believers for this mission? How are we breaking down modern compartmentalization of life and reinforcing discipleship as 128 hours a week? How helping them intentionally discern and connect their vocations [all time, all money and resources] to common good, peace-making, communion-developing?

Not simple education, but training, mentoring, etc. [Think about sports, hobbies, etc. odd that they seem to entail more training than Christianity....]

Conclusion

Think I will stop here. The social statement has some rich biblical, theological, pastoral themes. The challenge is how to give them legs in our current theo-political context.

Below are Scribe Notes about the presentation by Dr. Dan Bell - recorded by Jennifer Johnson

Biblical/Theological Points

1. The God of Peace- the document rests on the claim that we rest on the God of Peace. Christ is our peace who breaks down divisions. Romans and Eph.
 - a. Links the spiritual piece and the earthly part. Our calling to be peacemakers.
 - b. The biblical witness and lived theology of Christians IS NOT SO CLEAR. The ambiguity undercuts the practical power of the social statement. The atonement understanding, idea of damnation and hell, the biblical witness of the violence of god. **It's not obvious that we worship a god of peace. The social statement starts with a god of peace, but that is not where many people are.**
 - c. Lutheran theology, the two kingdoms- right and left hand of god- the law of gospel, work against the notion of a God of peace. Two sides, two perspectives.
2. Social statement lifts up a vision of peace as renewal of communion and reconciliation. Eph 2- Christ breaking down dividing walls.
 - a. Obstacles- first, still- the image of God of peace- on shaky ground.
 - b. Peace- destruction of the enemy. Hard to sell reconciliation and communion when God is out "smiting the bad people".
 - c. Where they plunder and slaughter and steal- that is a vision of peace in some. VICTORY. Destruction of our enemy.
 - d. Peace as advocacy of passivity. Letting evil prevail unopposed. Passive vs permissive.
 - e. A JUST peace. Peace is not a virtue, peace is the fruit of virtue. Peace that goes out and works- that produces the fruit.
 - f. Theology- the contrast between the earthly peace and the heavenly peace can undercut the work that is being done here and now.
 - g. Sinner and saint- can become an excuse for not forgiving or can be distorted and warped.
 - h. Can drown out the works of righteousness.

3. The mission/ministry of reconciliation. Running through is the presumption that the Christian community has a calling of reconciliation.
 - a. We don't hear much about our mission of reconciliation and community building.
 - b. Many leaders are thrilled if they can just get people to show up for worship- love of neighbor becomes secondary. Charity and outreach programs. Focus is on "love of God" over love of neighbor. How are we supposed to love our enemies??? Loving our neighbors is too much of a stretch.
 - c. Show up for the works of piety- forget the works of mercy.
 - d. The "common good". the statement challenges things that are not compatible with the global "common good". A shared law.
 - e. Proclaiming a gospel that sets up free so that once we have Christ our whole lives becomes a surplus with which to love and serve our neighbors. Through our labors, we're able to serve our neighbors. That doesn't work in a political interest focused world. We don't talk about this. Common good is one of the strengths of our document.
 - f. How does the church present itself in public? Christians are just another interest group in our society. How do we break through this and present ourselves differently? Focus on community outreach and reconciliation....

Pastoral dimension of the statement

One point- the statement is heavily geared toward public policy advocacy. This is important but narrow vision of political responsibility of Christian citizenship. We need to supplement with the witness of a body of people. People who embody these convictions in their daily lives, not just in the voting booth.

This change from advocacy to witness has implications- for model of ministry and membership.

Move beyond thinking in terms of accompaniment to thinking of LEADERSHIP. (Not functioning as managers, but as leaders). How much training do ministers actually get for conflict resolution and leadership? Lacking skills to lead and grow a congregation. Think about leadership and how we can equip our leaders to lead and not just manage.

Challenges to the meaning of membership. **Baptism is a kind of enlistment.** Joining a mission larger than myself. **You're involved in something BIGGER THAN YOURSELF.** Our hobbies we commit to, training and formation. Compare that to what is asked of in our congregations. Church requires less training than our children's' sports. How much enlisting and equipping do we really do?

This formation of this statement is going to require a renewed emphasis on a vocation of laity. It's often perceived as a "part time hobby". It's not something only some people do- staff and pastors. IT's 128 hours a week in the lives of the laity. **Luther's emphasis on the vocation of laity is all but forgotten in the statement. It needs to be revisited.** How are we helping laity intentionally discern and connect their vocations, time and resources to the common good? to peace making?

Notes below are from The Rev. Amy Reumann, Assistant to the Presiding Bishop and Director of Advocacy

My first encounter with this social statement was when it was in its drafting process and I was leading a study session at the congregation I served at the time. One person spoke about living through two wars and how much it meant to her that the church cared about these matters.

In the Advocacy office, if a social statement doesn’t address a particular concern, neither do we.

Social statements aim to answer these questions: What is our voice? What is our place in the world? What does God envision us doing in our role as a public church?

The social statements act as mirrors for us to reflect upon our thoughts, teachings, and convictions. They ask us questions about who we are as a church in society. To what actions are we called?

The *For Peace in God’s World* social statement has helpful descriptions of the role of government. Especially important for our Advocacy work is the social statement’s discussion of economic aid, hunger relief, and other forms of international assistance (on p. 16).

We also use these social statements to determine our position on migration and immigration matters. Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services is responsible for 300-400 family reunifications, and ELCA pastors are providing spiritual counseling services to these families.

We also use the *Peace* social statement when evaluating congress’ proposed budget. We look at how the non-defense discretionary spending line and other budget appropriations are sliced, reduced, and balanced with rising military spending. Although years of military spending caps in previous budgets have created problems and recent increases aim to balance this out, as a church we still care about military and non-military spending.

For the first time, the Department of Defense is being audited, and our office is looking forward to what that will uncover. It will help us to see where our resources are best allocated, and how accurate our information is.

The *Peace* social statement indicates that the church is to be a “disturbing” presence, which is not what one may expect from a social statement about peace. But in the face of rising nationalism and populism, the church must encourage nonviolent opposition and direct action. Around the country, ELCA members have an involvement with the Poor People’s Campaign, which is one example of taking direct action.

As a church, we do not teach enough about being a “reconciling” presence. What does this mean? The Roman Catholic Church is rapidly training people to build empathy and diffuse tension at events such as the protests and marches last year in Charlottesville, Virginia. Where are the Lutherans?

The church is also to be a “serving” presence. We must encourage public debate, but pastors are often scared to speak about these issues. How do we talk together as Christians about difficult issues? The ELCA is a sea of purple—red and blue voters alike. The church is one of the last safe spaces in our society to have these debates.

The presenter mentioned the doctrine of Two Kingdoms and how this could be a stumbling block to the message of the *Peace* social statement. He also mentioned how the social statement asserts that ours is a god of peace, but that Biblical evidence does not always support this claim. On these matters, limitless debate is possible. I am not certain that Luther always knew what he was saying regarding the Two Kingdoms doctrine. But he was clear when he said that salvation is not ours for our private benefit, but that this salvation turns us outwards. We are called to a public faith. We are a public church, called to activism.

I believe that we could put the *Peace* social statement with its international focus, together with the social message on community violence with its local focus, to affect global change.

Dr. Bell also stated that the *simul* presents a theological challenge to the message of the *Peace* social statement. The *simul* often leads people towards works righteousness and/or the attempt to avoid it. As we are a public church, we are active peacemakers, we begin with confession and our own complicity in the problem. (The social statement on race begins this

way.) This confession sets us free, to be active with humility as we try to get it right. And, we are freed anew each day in our baptism to try over again.

We should be training leaders to lead amidst division—training and equipping them for the discussion that should take place in the church. All Saint Paul did was moderate different groups going at one another!

Moving from advocacy to witness—they are one and the same. They support one another. Training people to speak with their legislators by studying Scripture, they come out of their meetings and realize that they just publicly witnessed and testified. They said, "Here I stand! These are my concerns." This gives us the confidence to say that ours is a church that stands on the Gospel.

Dr. Bell said that we too often focus on church as a building, and that how we invite people in often begins with the appeal of a building. I recently attended a synod assembly meeting where a former Young Adult in Global Mission spoke. She said that the church will not attract Millennials with "coffee shop" church or outdoor church, but by inviting people to make a meaningful difference in people's lives through service and advocacy.

Through Global Mission and the Lutheran World Federation, we can talk about these issues globally, discussing with people what it means in their own contexts.

As far as political responsibility goes, our church has a presence in these "unimportant" nations, is active in places occupied by enemies. God is already there, and so are the neighbors that we are called to serve alongside with.

Below are Scribe Notes about the response by the Rev. Amy Reumann

Advocacy by the ELCA relies on the language and points of the social statements. Who are we as a church in this society? To what accountabilities are we held? On what actions are we called? On whose behalf?

This statement is used broadly, much on humanitarian aid and hunger work. The purpose of economic assistance is to reduce hunger and poverty in a sustainable and reliable way. Reuniting families. Where do our dollars go? How should funds be allocated?

Faithful presence- what does it mean for the church to be a faithful presence in society? And Disturbing presence- debate.

Support in the social statement for grassroots, nonviolent movements.

Public church- salvation is not ours for our own private benefit. We are called to a public faith.

Table Talk Notes

We as a church spend too much time talking about justice we should be talking about mercy. We are an organization of grace, grace operationalized is mercy. Justice is to create the peace of heaven on earth. The world is broken and can't be fixed by our work. We do acts of mercy to proclaim the grace of God. The document doesn't talk about mercy. We do acts of goodwill as tokens of mercy, as a foretaste of peace. We're not about the fixing of the world. You start in the wrong place you end in the wrong place.

There's an apple tree out in the garden at the ELCA. We live in a broken world and are broken. How we attempt to do acts of mercy is also broken.

Violence in the OT is hard to deal with. God with a baseball bat. God was in adolescence—in the end God will be fully grown. There's fruit to be born from being real. We have to wrestle with all of scripture not cherry-pick what we like.

Praying for my enemies—if one respondent had said that in chapel, they would have received a negative response, which is good.

Zion, IL was founded to be heaven on earth. Became a very legalistic place. The Lutheran message is important in this day and age.

We as the church are not an advocacy organization. You might want to talk to your senator, but the way and how. We're responding to grace. Do we talk about that? Do we talk about the core of the gospel before we do it?

Another respondent challenged that one to try ELCA advocacy in different ways to see if his critiques stood.

The social statement tries to set that in context.
Statement starts from worship.

In the Christian tradition, justice and mercy are not at odds. Justice is about right relationships. They work together.
Restorative justice vs. Retributive justice.

Christopher Marshall in NZ—NT vision of Crime and Punishment—book on restorative justice.

It isn't clear that what the document is talking about is restorative justice. The movement was just beginning in 1995.

New study guide could incorporate that more.

Heal me—don't say that it doesn't matter.

How do you change the teaching? Is there a fundamental concept that we have re: the atonement of Christ that puts us against restorative justice?

"Does God demand blood?" chapter

How do you use the traditional language? Atonement isn't child abuse—let's reread it that as more faithful to scripture.
Keeps traditionalists on board.

Anselm says sin is an insult against God's eye—what is God's role for humanity? Community. Sin offends God because it defeats communion.

Reviewing confirmand's statements of faith before they were confirmed. They spoke as if "I can do whatever I want and be forgiven." That's not the way it should be. There was no repentance. Cheap grace.

How are we going to equip people?

Grace doesn't not just pardon—it empowers.

Undergrads one respondent teaches think you have to earn salvation. The message is not getting out there.

Marit Trelstad has a strong chapter on atonement in *Transformative Lutheran Theologies*.

Youth aren't aware –how do we equip people to teach them about grace effectively?

If politicians did what the statement called for—they'd get voted out.

Those statements don't get out to the general population as they should. If they hear it, people don't like them.

What's it going to take? Theological work—we acknowledge? Is there a more faithful way to read Scripture?

There are ways of reading this—but we need to get people to see it.

If one respondent was ever elected to an office, he said he'd be only elected once. Would he serve his constituents vs. The greater good?

Idea of common good—what do we send our elected officials to do? Discern greater good, not just the constituent's beliefs

There's nothing we can do to serve our interests—there's nothing we can do to save ourselves. Stay healthy to serve neighbors, not self, etc.

People get perfectly free but don't hear bound to all.
Lay theological education

If you're a Christian as a full-time job and not a hobby, how does our training reflect that? What is the church offer to help train people in that?

We're good on Christ, not on Jesus.

A voice and leadership in church. How do we as ELCA Lutherans begin to articulate that we believe within our nation and our own context. We are not a denomination of like-mind. Big debates and big departures. How can we be a voice in today's world to pull us together instead of divide?

Scripture is great, but it does work against us sometimes. What Jesus said and taught.

We don't do a good job at how to interpret scripture.

My guess is 95% of Lutherans and Christians do not see Jesus as non-violent. They use the story of Jesus in the temple. "As I think about my time in the military, I cannot think of Jesus doing what I saw in the infantry." Muhammad and Moses didn't say love your enemies; Jesus said that. Once Christianity returns to the non-violent ways of Jesus, it won't know how to implement it.

A shift from advocacy to witness. Advocacy leads to witness. How do we do justice?

We don't say 'Lord, have justice on me'. We say, 'Lord, have mercy'
Jesus bring mercy and mercy brings justice.

Retaliation is eye for an eye. Action to change is not retaliation.

The presenters are challenging us to look at today. Are the social statements accurate today?

The social statements may have to be updated.

Moral deliberation: the church can bring together. Where are our boundaries?

What is our witness? What needs to be done by force, _____? Force means violence, mass slaughter. Jesus is a threat to dominance of power. Before Constantine you could not serve in the military if you were there to kill. Constantine came to power and you could kill in the military.

Is there a document that could be made available to congregants?

New study guide will be written to accompany the social statement *For Peace in God's World*

Almost a call for reformation- he talks about God of Peace- really? It's not obvious that we worship a God of peace. Do we need a reformation as a church? We should examine our theology as it relates to peace.

The defense budget has been increased drastically- spend on things that benefit the common good. Decreasing the defense budget creates social problems globally. The number of military members to contractors (in the field) was unprecedented. 1-to-1.43 contractors. Created a global human trafficking network- slave labor in combat service support positions. IF we decrease the budget, is that actually for the benefit of the common good?? Creating slavery through the privatization of war.

How much we spend and how we spend it, private contractors, needs, causes a whole host of issues. How much should the government spend? How is it spent? Huge discussions. Military, healthcare, vets, hospitals, transport, etc.

What are the costs of war? To us? To our society? To our budgets? Implications? When we go to war, we have an informed understanding of what the costs?

It feels like we went to the last war without much thinking of the costs of war. As Christians, shouldn't we have been having that thought and discussion? What are these costs? We can debate the merits as good or bad but shouldn't we all at least be aware of the cost.

We've never thought about the full costs of war- rebuilding Iraq and Afghanistan. Veteran's costs. Paying military personnel. We never consider all the implications. We'd have second thoughts about going to war so quickly if we knew.

The common good, putting emphasis on moral injury, the whole society experiences a cost that isn't recognized. Embracing the common good as a goal, needs to be an acceptable focus. Our common good, and our enemy's common good.

We seem to have 2 camps- military vs non-military. There is widespread ignorance of what military personnel face and what engaging in war actually means and does to a society.

Issues of war and conscience and faith are not talked about. Military training is not often talked about in regard to Christian faith. Ending someone's life... why isn't it talked about? Even just war theory- it's not discussed.

The amount of time devoted to faith formation is so limited. We need to encourage the training of leaders in the church. In seminaries? Is there a difference in the aptitude for leadership in second career clergy vs first career? Mentors and support need to be put in place. You have to learn to work for somebody, be guided. **There are real questions about the training of our pastors.** Lay leadership as well. The challenge to take this opportunity, I was thinking about theology vocation education. Going to seminary is not viable anymore. How did the early church prepare its catechumens? 16th Century, seminaries are formed. Instead of buying a lot of property and caring for it; buy a small building and the congregations provide the courses. Not to undermine to but to strengthen church leaders.

We need to deal with our complicity/complacency as a society. Some of it is subtle. We don't realize our lifestyle and choices and even what we do for a living are contributing to the world's woes. Our tax money, our leaders are sending others to war.

Witness is understanding, being engaged and reflecting. Complicity and moral ambiguity occurs everywhere. You're meeting a real need, you're ministering, but there are limits and not every action is helping everyone. Inadvertent slave labor companies, etc.

- It seemed as if both speakers were speaking past each other.
- I am opposed to Dr. Bell's statement that congregations are not aware of what is going on.
- What is the status of the document?
 - The social statement on human sexuality was descriptive but was not intended to change the way that people in congregations were meant to think about things.
 - The social statements are not intended to shape individual piety and behavior.
 - Congregations still use them for education and discussion, but not everybody agree with everything in them.
 - This statement is only one piece, but this is acutely tied to the social message on community violence which is more relevant to people who are working at a local level, in people's lives.
 - This statement is not the main tool of formation.
 - It is difficult to use documents like this for personal development.
 - How much attention is paid depends on the statement. (A lot more attention was paid to the social statement on human sexuality.)
 - For this document, people could look at the title, *For Peace in God's World*, and say "I'm for it, let's move on."
 - It's clear from the statement what responsibilities the church has, but it is not clear what responsibilities an individual member has. ("I'm in favor of peace. I want my church to do these things. But what are the personal costs?")
 - People often say: "I have nothing to do with the costs of wars or the decision to go or not to go war."
 - Except in the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod where people are involved with these decisions. In places like this, people's personal vocations make a big difference in the world

- community. How soybean farmers in Iowa go about their job does not necessarily have the same impact.
- Individuals have no responsibility to these statements, but pastors have a responsibility to introduce them to the church.
 - This could affect the candidates who they vote for. People might seek to find how candidates are equipped to bring about peace, how they affect international situations, rather than being dedicated to a political party which people are doing more and more.
- People often don’t understand or care how government affects their lives on a daily basis, unless it regards something like Social Security [which affects their wallets].
- Social statements are foundations from which the church’s social policy is developed.
- Dr. Bell gave me the impression that the social statement was a critique of the church at the time, when people were often divorced from living a Christian life.
 - Around the time this social statement was published, I was serving as interim pastor of a congregation. The church was broken into, and members looked to me for guidance on what to do. I suggested that the first thing we must do was pray for the people who committed the crime. People looked at me like I was out of my mind.
 - After September 11, 2001, we offered an intercessory prayer for Osama bin Laden.
 - It’s hard to be different in our world; one of the most oft-quoted Bible portions in the early church was “pray for your enemies”.
 - When I do visits to Capitol Hill visits, we tell lawmakers and staffers that we are praying for them, that we understand how difficult it is to do that job, but how thankful we are for their vocation. This has brought some people to tears.
 - A restaurant in Lexington, Virginia made news for denying service to workers in the Trump administration. This is wrong—the secular equivalent of withholding the Eucharist. It would be more useful to have a friendly conversation.
- The local versus global dimension is important; unless you’re a specialist, it’s hard to keep your conversation at the global level mentioned in the social statement. Focusing on the local level can help us connect to the global.
- It was helpful to hear how the social statement is used in the work of the Advocacy office.
 - The social statement on sexuality provided Advocacy with language to work on pornography.
 - The social statement on criminal justice was really, really helpful to many people because of its relevance to their vocation.
- A social statement does not need to change the way that every single member looks at the world, but for some people these will be very important documents.
 - The social statements are useful to get the congregation talking. If a pastor wants to start a conversation about peace, this gives him or her a resource.
 - One congregation I know of created “holy ground,” by drawing a line on a map marking the community surrounding the church building. The members asked, how can we make a difference in this place for the community? Some ideas included, “adopting” a school and accompanying resident.
 - I know of a congregation that established an all-night hospitality center in the entertainment district of the city. They welcomed anyone in need—cops on the beat, partygoers, and the homeless. They stopped in, enjoyed some complimentary snacks and refreshments, and some chose to pray with lay and clergy members from the church.
 - The church should encourage and support nonviolent action, calling for education on nonviolence in churches, and providing pastoral support to those who do so.
 - Some of the people who end up doing this sort of training are interim pastors, because they are often asked to serve in places where there is unresolved conflict. Though they’re often hardnosed and not cuddly, they are often successful and have a lot of reason to train people to be a peaceful presence
 - As a chaplain, we do a lot of dialogue with religious leaders and there is a growing emphasis in the field of reconciliation after conflict—how to reset the conditions from war to peace, from violence to nonviolence. Soldiers are worn out by military action needed in the last twenty years, though certain situations were successfully overcome through military intervention. Nonviolence is not spoken often about in the armed forces, but we can help people in communities and congregations work towards that.

- Historically, this church emphasized ministry in daily life. But it's no longer there. And that's why we're not making progress; no one's in charge of that work anymore.
- Lay faith formation is often about training laity to step in for a lack of rostered ministers, not about sustainment of church in daily life.
- Teaching resources get lost in the pressure to meet the budget. How do we get back to leadership programs in seminary curriculum?
- When you're working on a social statement, you have to wonder, "Is it worth it?" Some pastors have said they use everyone all the time, but not so much anymore.
- "Word & Witness" curriculum was a way to do that work in community and live it out in a sustained way. Leadership is about staying connected.
- Have used the statements in classes. Found that many pastors don't even know they exist.
- Vocation grants support both rostered ministers and lay leadership. Not threatening, not prescriptive. Vocation and job aren't mutually exclusive.
- Young people say, "Call me into the church to make a difference in the world." So many veterans come out of military service and struggle to build a life. We need to find ways to connect those young people with returning veterans, tap into that passion.
- So many congregations have practical mission statements, mission-oriented experience of faith.
- Fantasy – make Labor Day part of the church calendar, in order to start the conversation about mission in daily life, i.e. vocation. We need mission-awareness in our daily life, to see how we're already living our vocations, and then see how we can deepen that. Recognize teachers and doctors, but also plumbers, electricians, lawyers, etc.
- Why do we only have Temple Talks during stewardship campaigns?
- At chapel on Thursdays, the pastor asks questions and has the congregants sign up and tell their answers, their stories. Those services are always electric.
- How do you reconcile some of the vindictive parts of the bible with the God of peace that we like to talk about? It's counter-intuitive. God's work is always very hidden.
- Parting of the Red Sea – some people didn't face a happy, peaceful ending there. And in Jericho, women and children were slaughtered.
- Jesus said, "I have not come to bring peace but a sword."
- You have to get into the reality of the context of the cultures and communities at a that time. Those horrible events haven't gone away; we face them today and still struggle to make sense of them. "I'm both Saint and sinner. It's my free pass! What do you expect?"
- The Divine Calling on pg. 3 does talk about church's community, reconciliation.
- Appreciated Dr. Bell's critique
 - Lifting up contradictions with certain Biblical images and what the statement is about
 - Referring to things that people in our pews will be maybe thinking about
 - Ministry of reconciliation and the common good
 - Related to the social statement—doesn't hear pastors, lay leaders, members talk about peace much—except for spiritual peace
 - Laity hears pacifist and it shuts down conversation
 - Where does ELCA articulate/help members talk about peace and to act as peace members outside the congregation
 - People don't connect advocacy and hunger advocacy as acts of peace
 - How do we connect it?
- Liked talking about praying for the enemy
 - Response from people when told to pray for the enemy is shock
- Love for God, for neighbor is harder, love for enemy hardest
- Materials for advocacy; enemy is abstract for most people; when you have to deal face-to-face
 - Army meeting with Taliban and try to eat a meal and talk
 - "Nobody dies today" not just soldiers, but not one person
- Sometimes what the church does becomes toxic charity because there's no analysis of what we do
 - Then there's a feel good "high" but no analysis of what is actually occurring
- Start with analysis of Vietnam War
 - People of color being bombed with agent orange
 - Vets coming back and not being loved by communities
 - Churches being silent
 - Power of US entangled in dominating people of color

- Institutions like churches have to wrestle with that
- What does that mean when we’re protecting white fragility?
- In order for institutions to not critically think in how they show up in not supporting peace, it becomes easier to do the charity and to keep doing this dominance globally
- Implications of young black men in Vietnam on the front line
 - Race and socioeconomics
 - Spirituality and folks struggle with decision making
- Connect with advocacy, “Why doesn’t the church show up?”
- Why public witness shows up only in advocacy→ advocacy is the comfortable way, but can show up in the deeper way
- How do we engage the physical and emotional distancing?
- Relationship between justice and peace
- People sense the absence of justice and when there’s an absence of justice it leads to non-peace
- Issue of justice is what tips the balance
- Sometimes advocacy is more about passivism; talking about the agenda
- Who gets exploited in *just war*?
 - People of color
 - Poor white people
- Courageous to go into a senator’s office
- Even more courageous to stand up/show up with a group of people who are showing up for gun control, etc.
 - Living in the tension of trying to not go to the easier default
- Working with young people to do all these things
 - Charity – food for homeless
 - Advocacy–going to the Hill
 - Accompaniment piece of showing up—walk out at school, protests, social action
 - Finding the balance and not retreating into only one place
- Uncomfortable with the idea of “Baptism as a kind of enlistment”
 - Yes, it is becoming a part of something bigger; it’s becoming a part of the family of God
 - It’s an invitation to come as you are; you are loved as you are
 - Not all people view enlistment that way (as inclusive and loving)
- Peace is a process maybe not just the point you arrive at
 - Peace can become a spiritual process
- We need more leaders connecting the dots of both/and to connect charity, advocacy, social
- Bigger issue of: how do we engage our neighbors in conversation?
 - Shouted out of room→ us versus them
- Computer games make these faceless “other” things so that it’s not engaging a person. You just get rid of them.
 - Advocacy jumps on the solution and try to get there instead of having the discussions with the people who live it
 - Relational part of the advocacy piece
- Thinking of the Vietnam war with the Vietnamese as people of color. Not as enemy; as people
 - People getting orders/boots on the ground were black and brown people and poor white people
 - Conflict in African American communities about whether to serve or not serve; that stems from treatment of people of color serving in Vietnam and WWII
- “Minor surgery is what happens to someone else”
 - Once you’ve been affected by this, it becomes collective through the individual’s story
- How do we preach as pastors?
 - Do I arouse the passions of people to make a point?
 - Or get them to participate or think critically?
 - Maybe we’re not ready for that
 - Not enough diversity in the denomination to really dig into that
 - Here’s the cause, we’ll rile you up, and then there’s the people in between
- People distance themselves from the violence to create “Us” and “Them”
 - Issue of ethics and morality
 - Some military groups watch their targets for months to get to know them so that they can identify a target
 - Changes in technology add to issues of ethics and morality
 - It’s not PTSD; it’s moral injuries

Presentation and Topic Three

"Contemporary Challenges and Topics for Discernment"

Chaplain (Colonel) Timothy Mallard, Command Chaplain, United States Army Europe/7th Army, Wiesbaden, Federal Republic of Germany

- When navigating a boat, you don't look at the water around your boat or you'll get disoriented; you look at the horizon.
- R2P = Responsibility to Protect. Came out of 1994 post-Rwanda but its relevance is being debated today.
- In training, you don't fight the last war, you fight the next war.
- Terrorism has dominated the conversation for the past 20 years. But another conversation has been around religion as both driver of warfare and devise for reconciliation. Religion has great potential for post-war reconciliation.

Looking at the horizon:

- What does it mean to be involved in public theology?
- Bonhoeffer was moved towards treason because he had to do something to engage the tyranny of the national socialist state. Why did he become part of the conspiracy?
- In the future, we will need public theologians to work within the institutions of one's nation/state.

Concerns:

- The rise of artificial intelligence and autonomous weapons and the importance of human control and guidance. So far, there is always someone in control of that drone. But the move in that field is towards weapons that learn. When that happens, whose values will teach that system?
- Human control and ethical discernment make something a profession. We're moving towards the military no longer being a profession in that sense.
- Opportunity cost = what must be given up in order to get something else.
 - Rise of moral and spiritual injury of our forces needs to be talked about as the opportunity cost to our nation. Not to mention the 22 veteran suicides per day.
- Lack of moral formation by the church, by most American faith communities, before going into the body politic. Seeing a generation of leaders with zero values. Whatever works -- that's what they do, with no moral discernment or guiding belief system.
- The vast majority of government budget, going forward, will be spent on Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, and national debt. This will be a huge burden to all Americans.
- Civil divide of the military and civilian construct. "We are at risk of becoming a highly effective military force out of touch with the people that we serve." The all-volunteer force (self-selected, i.e. not selected at random) means that they often have no ties to the larger community they serve.
- Religious leadership may cease to have any relevance in 25 years.
- 60% of seminary students won't be pursuing ordained, congregational life. It's a crisis. And it hampers our ability to do public theology in the first place.
- There is a growing need within many governmental institutions for federal chaplains of all denominations. Government and congregations are competing for ordained leaders.

Notes below are from Mr. Dennis Frado, Director of the Office for Lutheran World Community and the United Nations

1. Changing global security environment
 - R2P – questions being raised
 - DRC
 - Libya, Syria
 - Authorization mission
2. Terrorism and sub-state actors
 - Last war / next war
 - Counter-insurgency trap
 - USS Cole
 - Kenya / Tanzania bombings
3. Importance of geo-political level religion or religions
 - Violent extremism
 - Drivers of conflict or catalyst for reconciliation
 - Economic – cover for conflict
 - _____ for cultural constraints
 - Post-war reconciliation

Challenges in next decade

1. Rise of artificial intelligence, AWS, human values, and control of those systems
 - ICRC comments – humanitarian law
 - New semi-autonomous
 - Footnote: drones delivering aid
 - Will humans' control, and whose values will control those systems?
 - Professions, human control
 - Reflective judgement
2. Opportunity, cost of moral and spiritual injury among armed services of US
 - Calculate in future decisions
 - 22 post-veteran suicides a day
3. What does it mean to be involved in a public theology?
 - Bonhoeffer/Niebuhr
 - Treason
 - Free and responsible action to confront the tyrannical
 - The theological proxies of reflective thought about institutions and one's identified nation
 - Need to develop leaders to work within structures of their nation states
4. Growing burden of statutory requirements due to federal spending on social security, Medicare, Medicaid, and payment on the national debt
 - Can't fund military with economic burden on Americans
5. Divide in military-civilian construct since 1970s' all-volunteer force
 - Professionalized mercenaries for a nation that doesn't know what they do
 - Tech-competent military disassociated from people they serve
6. Lack of moral formation by church to prepare for healthy integration as citizens
 - Moral deliberation
 - Seeing value and neutral participants
7. Religious leadership in crisis and may cease to function within 25 years
 - What about the crisis over who to believe?
 - Truth and traditional deference to religious and moral leadership for direction?
 - Lack of trust, question everything from clergy

Below are notes from the Scribe about Response by Dennis Frado

1. Nuclear non-participation and disarmament
 - Possession of nuclear weapons, Vatican stance
 2. Humanitarian consequences – peacekeeping on the cheap
 3. Respect for rule of law and human rights
 4. Common good vs. national interests – SC, GA
 5. Migration, also xenophobia
 6. Exclusionary populism
 - Hungary
 - Italy
 - Philippines
 7. Arms Trade Treaty 2014
 8. Indiscriminate weapons
 - CCW, landmines
 9. Pollution related to weapons use
 - Effects of weapons residue
 10. Non-violent peace force
- R2P is a key question. The problem with that is the notion of sovereignty. Who is responsible for any community?
 - The UN is a club of UN members, so they have a tendency to not look at their own actions through the lens of terrorism.
 - After 9/11, the conversation between many world powers simply froze.
 - The robes of religion are covering up the socio-economic problems in Christian/Muslim relations.
 - A.I. – a major moral and ethical issue that we're going to have to deal with, as well as other indiscriminate weapons, i.e. land mines, cluster bombs, etc.
 - US budget priorities. How important are those traditional social safety nets? There are too many vulnerable people to simply start reducing those budgets. Not opposed to looking at the question, but there have to be alternatives in place.
 - If US citizens aren't informed about a particular war, or are opposed to it, that influences how they welcome veterans back into civilian life.
 - Exclusionary populism – when you lose that moral compass, it undercuts our ability to even have public discourse.
 - Nuclear disarmament – the current Pope asserted that the possession of nuclear weapons is morally questionable. This was a surprise because prior Popes have not weighed in on the issue.
 - Humanitarian aid on the cheap is a huge problem.
 - The UN charter charges its members to look after the well-being of humanity, but the reality is, members just look after themselves.
 - Want more investigation into weapons pollution and its effects on veterans. We all bear responsibility there.
 - Cyber-warfare doesn't seem to result in physical injury, but when you start taking down electrical grids, etc., certainly there are very negative physical impacts.

Table Talk Notes

National interest vs. Common good is tricky

Can corporations be moral?

Balkans—were we there for moral good or for national interest? Stabilization of Europe*

International relations—let's not ascribe to a false narrative

Africa can be unstable because it won't economically impact us

Common language can slip into the greatest good for the greatest number. Common good is also my good. It doesn't sacrifice my good. We don't want to slip.

We need to educate on that but it's difficult.

Common good is supposed to be common.

National budget—solution is to often cut back on programs like Medicare/aid. Many programs are solved if we share the burden. We think of healthcare as a private burden not a shared burden.

Fundamental change in structures—we're resistant

Can tax more or grow economy.

If you get an extra \$10, you spend \$15.

Challenge of religious leadership. We as a nation are wed to denominational structures. If those fail, it doesn't mean we won't have religious leadership.

Dept of labor—there are more paid positions for chaplains than pastors in the US

That doesn't mean there's not religious leadership.

Religion is being redefined—not necessarily bad.

All chaplains need to be pastors before serving as chaplains—not necessarily the answer.

What does failed religious leadership look like?

Many people don't want to go into traditional pastor roles.

Spiritual but not religious is not illegitimate

50's were the organization period of our nation

If you believe in God and want to help the poor—we better get organized

Every ship still has a phalanx system—defense safe system. Puts up a wall of titanium

Rarely do you put those systems on automatic. When you're doing planned maintenance checks—you do have to cycle the system into automatic. There have been instances where human failure has left the system in automatic and it fires without human intervention.

Aegis system—if missiles are coming in too fast for humans, computers will take over in order to defend the ship. One respondent is very concerned about autonomous weapons—weaponizing little tiny insects that can fly and swarm. Increasing divide of professional military force and the public. Lack of understanding. Distance and vague understanding. Complicity in warfare. **Warfare is no longer face-to-face, no more looking into the eyes of your enemy. The same distance and divide is happening between military and public- separate entities. The use of drones and pilots who are removed from the direct action, is causing a void of emotion. People become desensitized to the effects of war.**

We're quickly moving away human intervention.

It's not just automation--It's the move towards robotics.

Increasing divide between populace and military would be exasperated by autonomous tech and robots.

When there are great fluctuations in armament, we have automatic systems. Goldman Sachs is dumping or buying, human intervention can't keep up. We rely on the systems to hedge.

There is a cost.

Drones—you don't see the devastation, or you see it remotely.

Chlorine gas Heber—developed the weapon for peace. When they see how awful it is people will throw down their arms.

In actuality, the opposite happened—they wanted more.

The horrors of war cause us not to engage in war, or it causes more.

Make it lethal as can be to get it over faster.

People double down.

Need to have both human and artificial intelligence.

Need checks and balances—one human can't be in control.

System of checks and balances where someone more neutral gets to decide who gets the resources.

Early days, nothing left the ship in terms of information without the permission of the CO.

How are racism and sexism infecting the technology (through the biases of the programmers)? We may claim it was not our sin, it's the technology, but we built it.

(above) Another reason for checks and balances

As Christians we want to be good and do good, but our efforts to help can have unintended negative consequences.

With technology—women can do more physically. Can pass old tests easily—need to change standards.

What does that say about our lawyers? Are they fighting for corporate America, national security interest?

How all this would change if we went back to a national draft? Everyone would have to complete some sort of national service like in Switzerland. This "endless war" keeps going because it doesn't affect everyone the same way. If you aren't involved in the war, you don't fully understand the cost of military service and the ongoing war. Requirement of national service would shock and solve the disconnect of society and the ongoing war.

The disconnect is something we are not paying for as we go along. If individuals had to pay, \$50,000 per person would be the cost of the war.

The constitution was written to not have a standing army, congress was to declare war, congress kept the purse strings. The draft for Vietnam caused an issue today that there is a lack of recruits.

Commander: "Our nation is at war." Soldier: "Correction Sir, we are at war. At home, they are shopping."

Before January 2018, the mission statement said that the DOD would provide "the military forces needed to deter war and to protect the security of our country." The new Mission Statement reads, "The mission of the Department of Defense is to provide a lethal Joint Force to defend the security of our country and sustain American influence abroad."

It's not just dollars and cents and people's lives but there are environmental consequences. Refugees are also a cost not factored into the cost of war.

Militarization of the American mindset. Selling excess military weapons to police departments. Teaching schools how to react to takeovers.

Mindset: to get rid of evil, use evil to destroy it. Jesus' way was to overcome evil by doing good.

Church is failing in formation of young people in moral issues.

These are important issues, and everyone should be informed about participation in the military. ELCA we support conscientious objection and selective conscientious objection, participation in military in conscience. What would we do if asked to enlist?

If we have more people saying, "I'm not going" What do we do when we keep creating weapons

ALC and LCA 1970s 650 Lutheran Chaplains (military, VA, hospitals, BoP). TODAY: 152 Lutheran Chaplains. Evangelicals are filling those positions. Navy/Marine Chief of Chaplains said that 85% of chaplains can't talk about abortion, sexuality, etc due to denominational restrictions. ELCA Chaplains can do that due to our Social Statements.

Chaplains said many times at the Chaplain Education and Training event that many soldiers say that the Lutheran Chaplains Office is the only place they felt safe to talk.

"It don't mean nothing." Vietnam War was a pointless slaughter.

We need to call our church back to be a Christ-centered church to those in uniform.

What about the morals of those controlling drones and AI warfare? What's coming when people are no longer involved? What values and morals are applied here? Do we keep putting human checks in AI processes? Or fully autonomous? Or are we really creating "new life" that is more efficient. Yet, morals are imposed in the creation of this device, by those creating it.

We're discriminating more by using technology to target specific points as opposed to bombing from 30,000 feet. So, by using technology we're actually being more precise. We have a desire to step away from killing- remove ourselves from the direct kill. (Throw hand grenades over firing a gun.)

Family preparation and readiness- 72-hour mobilization period. A move in a positive direction. Movie- Sargent York. Aroused a sense of hatred of the Germans. But there are so many examples of compassion and kindness of soldiers, not taking the life when they could.

A healthy human being has an aversion to killing other people. The military works hard to help and train people to accept it. Kill on reflex, override your conscience (?). But the conscience is still there, it will come back. Have to live with the memory or impact of shooting. (said by a pacifist with no military training). The opportunity costs and moral injury are huge.

Our military training is so focused, and the rules of engagement are so serious- **we are not training killers**. There are so many professions in the military where people are really taught dignity and respect of the local population. Laws of armed conflict. Today- you can't identify the enemy based on appearance, you cannot make a decision without an action ensuing.

It's not just military- police too. People are trained so severely to hold back before taking action. It's easy to point the finger at someone who took action.

Hollywood portrayals of the military tend to be more bloodthirsty- and it's just not the truth. Leadership taking advantage of youth and inexperience and bad training has led to many issues. And miscommunication about what the military is really like. And a small percentage are seeking help for these types of experiences.

- What have denominations and faith groups done to prevent moral injury, and what can they do to assist those in their communities who have been harmed.
 - The term "moral injury" first came up in the 1970s by clinicians in the V.A. The prevalence of American Vietnam veterans who returned home with guilt over things done and undone was prevalent.
 - It's not [easily] diagnosable, and it's not in the DSM.
 - One person can be suffering from a syndrome but also have a moral injury.
 - Faith communities have largely been absent from the debate because clinical communities are controlling the conversation, mostly in pursuit of grant dollars.
 - I have, from a theological perspective, been trying to discuss the difference between moral injury and spiritual injury.
 - The injuries often extend to the family, and to the community, and then to the nation.
 - Some faith communities are just becoming aware of this, including the ELCA.
 - The effect of moral/spiritual injury even on a denomination's own chaplain is often overlooked.
 - It is a significant burden on our country.
 - I recommend the book *Moral Warriors, Moral Wounds: The Ministry of the Christian Ethic* by Wollom A. Jensen and James M Childs, Jr.
 - As chaplains have attempted to reclaim the treatment of moral injuries, the army has been positively receptive.

- Faith leaders may see the symptoms of a moral injury, but not know what to call it.
- A clinical psychologist has noticed that we are seeing a tremendous upsurge in moral injury because soldiers are deployed, away from a community, separated from family, friends, and neighbors. Soldiers often feel unconnected from their community, not like a representative of their hometown. And, they are surrounded by other soldiers in the same situation.
 - As faith communities, we often do not offer sending ceremonies or returning ceremonies for soldiers being deployed or coming home from armed service, which is something we should do.
 - This disconnect between soldiers and civilians began during the Vietnam war.
 - Many civilians have never met anybody who served in the military before. When people meet me, they are often baffled, and people ask me what it's like to hold a gun.
 - American soldiers are being deployed "in a vacuum".
 - The United Kingdom has welcoming and sending ceremonies for soldiers, where they often serve alongside other men and women from their hometowns. The United Kingdom armed forces experience about 1/3 less moral/spiritual injury than the United States.
 - Communities are distanced from war and only familiar with peace, which makes it difficult to make a connection.
 - Chaplains are being turned to for guidance in dealing with this crisis.
 - The effects of the problem are magnified because, when soldiers return home, they are even separated from each other. Some return to rural areas, and they lose all of their connections and resources.
- The problem of moral and spiritual injury does not end when the uniform comes off.
- Climate change is a national security issue, particularly for nations in and around the Pacific. Militaries are allowed to save people when violence makes their countries uninhabitable, but not from climate change when it makes their land uninhabitable. Should this change? And if populations are moved, does their sovereignty move with them?
- Guam, ocean acidity, killing coral reefs. Norfolk, largest naval base, is at altitude of 10 ft. What happens in 25 years?
- Some of the 6M refugees in the world are climate change refugees.
- Migration isn't a problem to be solved; it's a reality to be managed in a fair and compassionate way. It's always been there.
- The military has been acting upon climate change security issues for the past decade. They don't care what governmental policy or public opinion is.
 - Find a point of commonality and work from the bottom up rather than the top down. Don't wait until government decides to address these issues.
- Church leaders need to start talking about Medicare and Medicaid and SS and the threats to these programs.
- ICE putting children in cages is a moral issue, not a red or blue issue.
- How refugee children are a threat to the most powerful nation in the world is directly related to the public narrative of fear.
- Engagement between civilian and military – on the one hand, military are praised all over, there's a respect; having a volunteer army changes things. Should citizenship = service?
- An unintended consequence of moving away from the draft is the separation of the professional force from wider civilian population. It's something to watch because the military has the bigger guns.
- We're now relying on the military to save us from the irrational behavior of governmental leaders. Can you believe we're even saying this? Thank God we have a professional military!
- People in the military are often folks whose parent(s) has been in the military. It becomes a familial expectation, and culture, a community. It both under- and over-represents certain segments of our society.
- We've lost the conversation from conscientious objectors on moral ambiguity of bearing arms because of the self-selecting military. The military used to address that and work around it, but it's no longer even an issue.
 - In Israel, where military service is obligatory, they have soldiers saying that they will defend Israel against enemies, but they will not be stationed in order to maintain the occupation, i.e. conscientious objection.
- When a parent is out serving in the military, the family shouldn't have to apply for public aid. It means soldiers may have to leave the army in order to support their families.
- Navy was one of the first groups to recognize climate change as a huge issue because of changing sea temperatures
 - Diminishment of polar ice and extreme temperatures
 - Why is this in denial? When people in our military are also showing/saying climate change is a factor
- Information warfare
 - War and peace do not simply mean war and imposition of power, it's so much more
 - First person to speak up against the reduction of State Department is Department of Defense
 - If have less diplomacy, buy more weapons

- What is just? When justice is absent, people rise up one way or another
- To act next to those, we feel injustice is the greatest interest in peacemaking
- Divide in the civil military construct; disassociation with the military/what the military does
 - Is it a lack of connection? Or is it more the fact that the things we've fought for the nation (citizens) didn't support
 - National debate we need to have; every now and then we have the national public service debate
 - Some people say the draft is the most popular way to prevent an unpopular war because everyone has skin in the game
 - With professional mercenary style, people don't have skin in the game unless someone gets hurt
 - Virtual warfare, which means anything goes
 - What they target first is the morals and public trust of the nation
 - If can collapse that, then can flush other things out
 - Take a look at Ukraine→ cyber and virtual warfare there, it's a new way of looking at warfare
 - Professional military w/no accountability for what they're doing
 - Truth and trust are foundational to this; military leadership is entirely built on truth and trust
 - In the military, adultery is a felony. If you can't trust the person over you in authority, can't trust them in a life-threatening situation
 - Then whole system breaks down
 - Are we not thinking big enough of what warfare means?
 - Martin Luther King talked about the three evils
 - Capitalism—profit over people
 - Racism
 - Militarism
 - Not about peace keeping, just want more of the resources, more money
 - Extreme militarism
 - How our law enforcement now looks more like our military→ to be at war with their own people
 - On the other hand, if you don't do it, there are systems out there that can take them out on the street in a second.
 - Teach them the morals
 - One you may have a force for good
 - Other one you may have people who do unjust killings on people of color
 - Hurricane Katrina
 - People dying – Targeting drugs, and gay people
 - Put military down there with guns, but the guns weren't armed
 - Ferguson
 - National Guard called in after all those violent frustrations
 - Some clergy who were active and tried to show up and be the peace keepers
 - They were told, "You're too late"
 - There's no solidarity, mistrust because they weren't present from the beginning
 - Have a certain level of consciousness to what's happening around us, so that can build up trust
 - Otherwise we've missed our cue
 - Get the church out there on the streets. The church is already there, the religious leadership wasn't there, but the church was already there. → Public church
 - Don't see bringing the military in as the only option; don't pit Americans against Americans (whether that's sending in the military or police brutality)
 - North Carolina
 - Clergy said there was a moment where law enforcement who was outnumbered by protestors
 - Clergy shielded the officers and brought down some of the tension with the protestors so that it could be a more peaceful protest
 - If police force no longer represents the people, then that's where some of our problems begin
 - Connection with racism

Presentation and Topic Three: "Contemporary Challenges and Topics for Discernment"

- Current trends of who's behind bars→ black/brown bodies
 - They make the clothing for the defense departments (in prisons)
 - Corporate interests
- It's all connected
 - Sinful and justified; sinner and saint
 - Technology can be used for great evil
 - Cell phones and computers are result of that same industry; (used for good)

Concluding Session Four

A Day of Discernment: How do we turn this into a Churchwide Discernment?

Convener: *The Rev. Howard "H" Stendahl, Pastor and Chaplain, Major General, USAF (Retired)*

Table Talk Notes

Reagan: peace through power

This quote inspired one respondent as a young man, but he then said he is not as idealistic today as he was then. He doesn't believe any more than if you're really strong, that helps you maintain peace

The US is losing its technological advantage. What's our technological advantage now? Now it will be our sailors.

It's the individual who is the strategic advantage. Their ability to free think and problem solve is believed to be unique.

We are talking about humans and what ethically informs those decisions.

How do we make our sailors ready? That's a wholeness. Physically, financially, spiritually.

Are we equipping our young people and members to have their readiness flag flying? Their faith flags? Something that reminds them. What can they have around (i.e. their readiness flag) that can see them through?

You're a Christian 100% of the time—you're always ready.

Sailors feel when they leave the ship, they're not a sailor anymore. No. You're a sailor 100% of the time.

National Study of Youth and Religion—20-year study

Young people (in study) deeply buy into the compartmentalization of life.

People have a box for the church—what doesn't fit in that box, doesn't go in.

Does the sequence of grace inspire action? If you recognize this as your response to God...

You need an emphasis less on the rigors of making sure the sequence is right and more emphasis a better fruit, nourishing to the world. You don't want to not have any fruit until you have the theology right.

Is it going to multiply the action because I believe enough in our reading of the gospel so that it has most results?

Religion has nothing to do with how people vote. It's a problem.

People don't enter the military to serve. They go in for the benefits. They're 18-20-years old. The growing edge of the military is to think beyond themselves.

The church needs to speak to the fact that recruiters for the military recruit more from communities of color and poor communities. There should also be a witness about the lack of economic and mental health support for veterans.

Who do we recruit from? We recruit from the lower economic levels of our society. They're folks who didn't have the support to go to college. The people who serve our country are poor and they're carrying the burden. The all-volunteer force contains a sense of inequality.

The qualifications have risen tremendously—they used to take anybody. Later, it was harder to recruit.

Kids without discipline at a high school didn't graduate high school. They weren't mature enough to handle the responsibility they were given.

Most young people go into the military for the educational benefits. Justification to the defense dollars for this is that you'll pay more taxes post-military.

Poor young people do not mean they're bad soldiers. (*One respondent implicitly heard the use of low income, non-white soldiers as meaning they were inherently inferior soldiers.*)

The draft was equal opportunity.

How do we turn this into a Churchwide Discernment?

PCUSA-Risking peace in a violent world"----good resource

It depends on the narrative of what America's role is or should be—even if they don't realize it's a narrative.

Ann Marie Slaughter—different narrative for America

PCUSA:

1. from a dominant position of control to credible influence in a more open geopolitical system;
2. from "containment to sustainment," based on domestic redevelopment and better modeling of the behavior we seek in other nations;
3. from "deterrence and defense to civilian engagement and competition," which would reemphasize trade and diplomacy, while still modernizing "a security complex that includes all domestic and foreign policy assets";
4. from "zero sum to positive sum global politics/economics," preferring interdependence and universal values to isolation and exclusion of other nations;
5. from "national security to national prosperity and security," a shift that would involve a new National Prosperity and Security Act to replace the 1947 National Security Act.

More Americans die from xyz than from terrorism.

We need an intelligent discussion of America in the world today.

What makes America great? Address these things from a more reasoned discussion rather than a fear-driven discussion.

What is our theology of a nation state/? Empire vs. Kingdom

How has America become an empire? Jesus was killed because he was a threat to empire.

Lutheran political theology has a lot of room for that.

It would be a hard discussion to have—start from Bible—look at implications. If you do it correctly, people will engage.

Nation state allows you to help neighbors. It's a mean of serving neighbors outside.

Nations as units of service, not as delivery services for self-interest.

Divine role of the state**

1930—Lutherans get uncomfortable

Peace of Westphalia has impacted us today—and world through colonialism. We see state through a very Western lens.

State to Luther is not state to us.

Our past failures can become resources. Romans 13 to Revelations 13

Bible has three institutions—state, church, family—we rely on them—each is responsible in its own right and accountable to the other two

Church wields the sword of the Word, State wield the sword

Church's job is to correct the state

Word is supposed to correct the church

The State was protecting Luther...Luther doesn't want to talk too badly about the state

Militarization of the police—police do not need military-grade weapons—why do we have so many to sell them?

Resources: Mark's Gospel—God wants everything, no part time Christians

A branch will have a day where they all stand down and study something. Why don't you have all Lutheran leadership stand down and study the vocation of the laity. How do we help our congregations start to discern?

Anybody can say they're Christian—I like to be a Disciple of Christ—a follower. A follower requires action.

America great—we don't need anybody else, or we need our allies—two definitions. The doc doesn't discuss that

Do we need to address how we can get there with our collaboration with other countries?

International church—that's a huge resource we don't draw on enough. Bring others to the table to see how we're enriched by others. Our walls cutting us off deprives our own lives.

That's also part of changing the narrative.

A yearlong discernment course using Romans 13 as the text. Look at it thru Lutheran eyes.

Do we have the ability to contact ELCA folks who serve or have served?

Militarization of the police—what's the supply and demand there? What's the role of the media?

Technology designed for a warzone being used on US citizens on US soil.

Are the media responding because of the trust or lack of trust?

When the military does something not trustworthy--it makes the news.

The VA hospitals are fantastic. They need a better reputation.

What formative experiences can we provide young people to grapple with this stuff?

Study on peace—referenced a study to study biblical texts on peace or justice. resources like that—Bible studies. We need help reading the non-peaceable texts. Bibliography. Help people read through atonement, work through the Bible contradicting itself.

A lot of congregations sending money up to the synod and Churchwide is a black hole. How do we better inform folks about what's going on with their mission support, have pastors share that with the congregants?

Someone who could do a reader's digest version, so the laity might take time to read it. (Note: that does exist.)

Make three different versions—one for people in pews, one more advanced, one clergy/church professionals.

Leader's guide to teaching the statement. A three pager could give the pastor something people would come to.

Military understands better than clergy that men do not want to kill. Psychologists did research (Men Under Fire by Marshall) after WWII. 80-85% said they would not shoot to kill but would shoot to miss at the enemies. Korean War, 50% soldiers fired at enemy. Vietnam War, 90-95% soldiers fired at enemy. As the training to kill, the suicide rate skyrocketed. There is nothing more holy than the human face. Once you destroy that face, you destroy the face of God. Every human is the temple of the Holy Spirit.

We train them to kill. But what are we doing to help them when they return?

Our brains aren't fully formed until age 25. Programmed to kill and PTSD can cause a soldier to

Very passionate for this area. The VA helps veterans, but it doesn't help as much as we'd hope. The Church can address why veterans are not being helped. Morally injurious activities come from the National Guard. National Guard goes into combat thinking they will only be driving a truck in convoys. But they are trained to not stop the convoy if someone is in the street but to just run over them.

More intentional on formation of living your faith in the public arena. The government thinks it needs to be the police of the world, then military increases. The United Nations must discern and make decisions. There is a disconnect between the Church and the State that doesn't allow oneself to bring their faith to light (not being able to bring your whole self to work).

They are young. It's a lot to put on such a young person.

Working together to see what is good for all of us. That takes a different mind frame. It's not just about you the individual.

We have a disconnect between the seminaries and the actual world. We don't train our seminarians to get out in the world but only train them for parish ministry.

Roger: One of Dan Bell's point-church leaders need to prepare to be leaders in all circumstances.

Jose: LSTC has center for religious studies. Need to expand to more seminaries, rostered leaders

Paul K Chapelle – Teach How to be Peace

Theological Education: not sure it is being taught Christian non-violence.

Value-Neutral folks, are they going to pick up on this? (Social Statements)

The focus on the individuality, soul connecting, soul searching. We are in a time of anxiety and fear. Requires cultivation to treating life as it matters. Our bodies are temples. The challenge is to connect to someone who is more value-neutral.

Things that were said that I need to think about more. Our nation really no longer owns this dilemma because we have a completely voluntary military. AND the soldiers are at war, the people back home are shopping. We are in a war for 17 years. Has a son-in-law in Afghanistan. Not sure if he wasn't there, would Bishop Finck be thinking about it as much? Our theology of the cross doesn't allow us to ignore the war and the effects of it.

Most fascinating experience was in a town, built by priests, where Israelis and Palestinians live together. The Israel government does not like it. Take the risk to intentionally create the coherence between the knowledge and practice. You need to gain the experience.

Startling and most troubling, Mallard brought up that our weapons are semi-automatic now but could become automatic. It's scary that the weapons could take over and do what they want.

Our country can decide to ban automatic weapons, but nothing is stopping other countries from doing so.

Expert in Artificial Intelligence – can become autonomous. When it develops, how do you address it when it happens?

In that mindset, we have landmines that are killing people.

November 11, 2018 is 100th Anniversary of Armistice Day. WWI was supposed to be the war of all wars. But here we are, in a 17-year war. Nov 11, 2018 is a Sunday. Let's ring the bells at 11:00 am, pray and publish in Seeds for the Parish, Living Lutheran.

Confessing is the practice, Confession is the act of confessing. The Social Statement is sort of a replacement to the Book of Concord and the Augsburg Confession. When teaching, he uses the Social Statement to show that we are still a Confessing Church.

How do congregations engage?

"Responsible Conversations" – A guide on how to have difficult conversations. This is how you connect. How do we connect to those that differ from us?

From Jack Nelson-Pallmeyer whose health issues prevented his attendance: Where are we; how did we get here? How do we change course?

The United States has no moral authority or unique calling, no economic capacity, no effective military means, and no security need that justifies embracing permanent warfare; invading, occupying, and bombing other nations or continuing wasteful military spending.

There are solutions but not military ones to most of the problems we face. It will be nearly impossible to solve our problems until we dismantle the permanent warfare state.

"Our US military aren't dying for their country. They're dying for the indifference of their countrymen and women who can't be bothered to pay attention to the reasons why we are sending people to war."

Where are we; how did we get here? How do we change course?

The United States has no moral authority or unique calling, no economic capacity, no effective military means, and no security need that justifies embracing permanent warfare; invading, occupying, and bombing other nations or continuing wasteful military spending.

There are solutions but not military ones to most of the problems we face. It will be nearly impossible to solve our problems until we dismantle the permanent warfare state.

How do we turn this into a churchwide discernment? (So, what's next?)

Who else should be included in this and future discussions? What are other denominations doing related to this topic?

Music being created to go with the statement- narration with recommended peace statements. Happening in Minnesota. Beginning conversations and a new way to present this topic to a wider audience.

We focused on a small focal point within a much larger scope of "peace and justice"- we focused on military chaplaincy. This issue is broad and far-reaching.

How would this statement look different today- use of force by police, civil strife might be more of a focus. And cyber warfare, AI warfare, drones, etc. The statement is a solid document. Needs to be updated a bit (25 years old) but the bones are good.

Clergy isn't talking with youth about participating in war or conscience objection. The moral framework isn't a discussion. This is something we should try to work for. Get the conversation going about moral impact and personal values.

We live in the tension and the paradox- just war. Saints and sinners.

How can we explore our complicities in the paradox?

If we could find a way to introduce this at a congregational level, that will be best. We need to understand the consequences of going to war before that decision is made. Be aware of what the needs might be when people come home, before they go out. We need to talk about warfare in our congregations.

Nov 11- 100th anniversary of the armistice. Remembering the point behind veteran's day- to end war. To seek a world of peace. Should be called to attention of pastors now. It's on a Sunday this year- call to attention. A wake-up call for everyone.

A message from the presiding bishop to inform clergy and laity of this message and the impact of these conversations. Conference of Bishops and ELCA Church Council can encourage.

ELCA 3 faithful positions in regard to military service: serve, conscientious objector, selective objection to wars that are considered "unjust". Other churches have these same distinctions. The law does not acknowledge selective objection. The government does not seem sympathetic to selective objection. Individuals often feel "this is wrong" but not "all war is wrong" because they don't know all war.

The Draft Registration is required by all- even conscientious objectors. Some don't, but they are breaking the law. IF the draft is ever implemented, then there is a time for objection.

The process for discharge as a conscientious objector is involved- written application, 20 questions. Series of interviews- chaplain, psych, _____. 10-12-month process.

What resources are available for congregations to have similar congregations? And what's happening in seminaries- training leaders to help congregants engage in conversations around peace and justice and warfare? In meaningful conversation. And what about theological conferences- at a synod level?

What about Sunday school and youth group materials? How can we teach conflict resolution to children- at a practical level and at a group level?

Is there value in thinking about this conversation with other denominations? Should we take the lead and step in to facilitate something larger ecumenically? How can we utilize and draw in other input? **If the COMMON GOOD is our focus, we need to include others. Unity will help.**

Economic justice and war and peace have a lot of intersectionality. This should be part of the ongoing conversation as well. Take existing social statements and find intersecting questions and thoughts.

Develop a resource that is potentially going to attract millennials... have the conversation of what can be done to make an impact in the world. Specific ways to get involved. Attract people with action.

Name the context and issues around expanding and continuing war-time efforts

- What is possible when people are capable of waging war from a great distance?
 - Lutherans approach the Advocacy office, wanting us to support anti-drone networks, but because we do not have clarity on new military technologies in the church's social teaching—how we should evaluate them and speak about them, Advocacy must pass on these offers.
 - Lutheran community groups who are opposed to drones show resistance with monthly vigils and acts of civil disobedience.
 - Drones are especially problematic because, in many cases, they are used to limit casualties. Snipers are a historical example of this.
 - The long-time dream has been to completely dehumanize warfare. Historically, warring parties would each pick a hero, and whoever's hero won the fight won the war.
- What resources do our armed forces need? How do we determine that?
 - Even when the Pentagon says they don't need money, Congress gives allocates it to produce jobs.
 - Quakers do active advocacy to reducing the military budget; the ELCA does not.
 - On the radio in Washington, D.C. there are adverts promoting weapon systems, military vehicles, etc. They'll even mention how parts of the vehicles are manufactured in 35 different states, etc. They do this because the people who represent those states then feel obliged to support these spending programs, because if they don't, their districts and states could suffer economically.
 - President Eisenhower said the military-industrial complex was a new phenomenon that we should beware of. But he didn't say that we didn't need it.
 - Some of the new weapons systems and ships are very expensive because they can be handled by a very small crew. The ship is a one-time purchase, but the crew is paid for from when they enlist to the day they die. [Fewer crew members also means fewer chances of US casualties.]
 - Some of the people I know who show the greatest opposition to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are military officers.
- It would be wrong to not think about these things.
 - On the Sunday closest to a Veteran's Day in memory, the deacon was leading intercessory prayers and there was a general nod to the holiday. As the pastor, I didn't think that much of this. But a woman who had recently returned from combat was very upset that there was not more said. She needed emotional and spiritual support. Now I am highly aware of recognizing Veteran's Day in the congregation.
 - On the question of flags in the sanctuary, in some places that debate will be different and more difficult.
 - There are likely geographical differences in how these issues will be handled in congregations.
 - At a political march I attended, I approached a group of supporters of President Trump and told them that I appreciated them being there and expressing their viewpoints. They thought that I was mocking them because conversation across the aisle is so rare now.
- A lot of people think that God and country just go together. Jesus says that your God is whoever you give your money to.
 - There is a relationship between being a disciple and being a citizen.
 - We make a confirmation promise to strive for justice and peace in all the earth, but we don't talk about what it means to be a citizen enough. What does it mean to be a Christian citizen? What are our citizenships?
 - On my European travels, I visited the congregation of John Calvin and saw a membership roster which noted that the profession of a few men in Calvin's time were "torturers". These were Christian men, and their vocation was to torture criminals.

Faith resources from the ELCA in existing social statements

- The statements are important to people to whom their subjects' matter, especially people who are involved with these subjects professionally. Some of the best conversations I've had were with lawyers regarding the social statement on criminal justice.
- The social statement on sexuality was very important to people, and it was a very interesting document.

- The shorter the social statements are, the more interesting people will find them because they will read them in their entirety. People often proofread the longer statements and only read the sections they're interested in.
- I've never come across anything in a social statement that I disagree with, but there's often a lot unsaid that I wish was in there.
- The contemporary social statements try to speak to more people, but sometimes become more tedious.
- The *Peace* social statement surprisingly did not feel dated.

Proposed future activities and practical steps

- Equip people with the knowledge of the early church. (Christians can't go to war, but war is not necessarily prohibited.)
- Equip people with a knowledge of the principles of just war.
- What is the common good?
- Social statements seem to answer the question: What does the church have to say about current events? The church is transitioning from taking care of personal piety, self, and family to being more "out there" in society. But young people want to know what this has to do with them personally.
 - People who did not live through the experience of war will have different viewpoints.
 - It is often difficult for people to talk about their civil actions and how it relates to their faith.
- Something like this Day of Discernment with a similar grouping of people should be done in Washington, D.C. and other places in the country where it would be fun to have conversations about public theologians as public servants.
- Conversations such as this Day of Discernment should be used to further develop the forthcoming study resource, or to test it out.
- Having a synod engage the documents would be hoped for.
- Violent and war-related imagery (i.e. bullet points) are pervasive in our everyday language, in our lives, in a way that we are not even conscience of.
- I want the church to provide a list of recommended pop culture articles which people who are interested in these topics could consume to learn more, or to further challenge their viewpoint. Many people desire to connect movies, television, music, and books to these theological issues.
- Conversations around social statements should begin with personal experience, and then go into the contents of the documents. They should not be presented saying "This is what the church believes."

"What topics do we select for future deliberation?"

- Models of ministry, and the meaning of membership. What does it mean to have a vital connection to your faith?
- Emphasis on laity and vocation, baptism.
- Point of entry conversation -- What is your experience with military people? Can lead to all kinds of discussion around society, war, veterans, protesting.
- Hopes outcome of congregational conversations to be new vocabulary, relationship, global church, citizenship. Wants people to know the church is there before wars start to facilitate diplomacy, and they're there afterwards to provide aid and healing.
- A.I. – "autonomous weapons systems scare the bejeezus outta me."
 - When human intervention is taken away, does that lower risk, or raise it?
- Actionable suggestions at the end of the statement.
- Nuclear arms race is far from over.
- Peace is more than the absence of conflict. Peace can only exist with justice. Peace is an active engagement, not the absence of action. So how do we do peacemaking? How do we operationalize this?
- Find ways to weave this into prayer life. Use the Sunday near Veterans Day for prayer, ministry, and action.
- Ecumenical initiatives? More effective and over-arching?
- Broadly speaking, we're on the same track with other Christian denominations. But then there are historical and theological implications that would make it impossible to have a unified action.
- How has the Lutheran church wrestled with the history of Nazi-ism in post-WWII America?
 - Lutheran-Jewish relations in the US are not the same as Lutheran-Jewish relations in Germany. There is still suspicion here because we haven't done the work.
 - German school groups are taught the history of WWII and it's illegal to use any Nazi language or symbols. They are facing it head-on. Which is the way you need to do it.
- Suggested reading list?

- Is there a way to engage young adults and confirmands in this conversation? Several ELCA seminaries have ROTC programs on their campuses.
- Inform our seminaries, et al, about these statements.
- Ambiguity of the enemy affects many of the conversations, i.e. guerrilla warfare, not knowing who the enemy is, urban warfare. And when the nature of warfare changes, the nature of peacemaking must change.
- What does it mean to be patriotic? What does it mean to be a US citizen? If you remove yourself from citizenship, you also remove yourself from the conversation and destroy your own credibility.
- When ISIS undermines all social structures and imposes their own, it's hard to deal with violence and ideology that extreme. Holy war isn't part of the western conversation about war. There's no compromise possible when you're warring in the name of God. You can't build a common good in an either-or situation.
- What kind of commons (gathering spaces) do we have in the age of the Internet? No churches, no malls, no town square.
- No human interaction means no knowledge of non-verbal cues, no attention span, limits learning in schools, but also limits learning about each other as individuals.
- Despite the proliferation of fake news and mistrust of institutions, there are still universal truths. Not everything is up for debate.
- What is right vs. what is working? Just because it's working doesn't mean it's right. Profit share, popularity, bottom line -- doesn't mean it's right.
- Increasingly find that people don't have the ability to put themselves in someone else's shoes. Lack of empathy, emotional detachment. Desensitization. A number of politicians display no empathy. Crisis point.
- Geopolitical realities. Will China dominate the world in 20 years? Will Russia? We have to talk about that. Our national interests often happen at the expense of others' national interests. National interests are always considered in conjunction with national values, until recently. And here's the military trying to hang onto morality, values, the common good.
- National security – people have lots of assumptions about what that means. The church and its pastors (military chaplains included) are more concerned with human security than national security, but Washington D.C. doesn't understand that language. They are concerned with preserving the nation in which they hold office.
- 2021 Youth Gathering – vocation, moral deliberation, responsibility to exercise judgement. How do you present it in a way that doesn't make it seem partisan? Because that's immediately where some parents' minds will go. Conversation around citizenship. In the liturgy for baptism -- "and strive for peace and justice in all the world." It's in the red book, not a party platform.
- Pastors have a tendency to out-pace their congregations, who then get mad because they're not being represented. Have to be careful in this conversation not to get too far ahead, lest they lose their pulpits.
- It's one thing to see the physical devastation to an area, it's another thing to see the long-reaching impact it has on the human population of that area.

- There's a great opportunity this year, probably too soon to pull resources together this year
 - It's 100th anniversary of WWII and veteran's day → lands on a Sunday
 - Pull some resources together and put online?
- Where can the ELCA be a more deliberate advocate for justice?
 - e.g.) sign in front yard that says "science is real, love is love, black lives matter"
 - Public witness: How does that become a spiritual practice of the church? Really defining that and giving as many options as possible
 - How have we internalized racial oppression; how are we not loving ourselves; how can that become a spiritual practice?
 - Revealing the truth of God
 - Task and the tension with the saint/sinner, wrath of God
 - Let's wrestle with that because people want to see the church do that because others have the same theological questions of what does God's justice look like?
 - So that we can articulate the truth of God
 - God is Justice, Peace, Love, Unity (for this person)
 - Everyone at the table would use these things, but do we mean the same thing? Do we use those terms differently? Or can we as the ELCA embody these terms?
 - How can the ELCA behave publicly with theology in a way that brings healing?
 - Public policy check list compared to a Christian discipleship check list

Concluding Session Four: "A Day of Discernment: How do we turn this into a Churchwide Discernment?"

- Christian discipleship check list about what is good for others? To be God's people for others
 - e.g.) what's the best outcome for Iraqis? Afghanis?
 - Not a checklist but faith in action/way of life
- Melian dialogue
 - We want this from you→ gave an impossible task
 - Used that as a reason to get their way
 - The powerful do what they can and the weak do what they must
 - National interest of way of doing things→ can we do? It vs should we do it?
- Moral injury→ If it is a greater cost to do the virtue-based decision making, wouldn't that have a favorable outcome in terms of moral injury? Would it be a healthy thing to prevent moral injury? If we engaged to a greater extent/advocated to a greater extent?
 - Moral injury is inevitable in war. If don't have that conversation, moral injury goes off the charts
 - Soldiers who don't claim to be spiritual still have a moral ground
 - Then when confronted with things that violates their morals when their out in the field they can rationalize that they don't have to do it that way, but have moral authority
- What should the ELCA use in a study document?
 - We do a lot of things part time; why not do the right thing all the time? We think we do so much and then we feel good about it
 - It's not just about Sundays or how you act in front of the authority, it's how you show up all the time
- How can we get officers to view prisoners as people?
 - Blaming others instead of viewing them as people
 - A divide; we are our worst enemies
 - We are all the body of Christ
 - Chaplains are in the middle trying to give the same message to both sides
- What can the ELCA do in prisons?
 - More education—keep educating yourself on other traditions, meet other people from other traditions to keep educating yourself
 - In military systems you can refer soldiers to other spiritual leaders, can't do that in the prison; have to bring someone into the prison so that they can teach the inmates/talk with inmates
 - Where are other places where you can feel the Holy Spirit? How can you expose yourself to different experiences, traditions, people to feel the Holy Spirit?
- Our nation's/government's lack of using religion as another lens to look at how many conflicts are in religion, but many of our solutions are in religion, too
 - We've not trained our diplomats and other officials to go into a country with religious lenses. → How can this help us use this to learn more about others to diffuse tension?
 - How does religion play into culture?
 - People weaponize religion instead of seeing it as a bridge of understanding
 - Lynchpin analysis→ you want to create an accurate narrative of whoever you're studying, but you want it in their terms, not your terms
 - We've neglected religion in the equation; we've secularized our thinking and we don't use the resource that so many people have at their disposal
- How do we engage people who are not in our communities? We have not been able to embrace that within our own denomination. How do we hold ourselves accountable to that? How can we name how we aren't showing up? How can we be relational? How can we relate this to parables to create relationships and makes sense to many people?
- Who are we supposed to advocate for/with? Who are we supposed to see?
- Encourage interfaith activity→ perhaps, especially with Muslims
 - It's not easy to disrespect or suspect someone who's known
 - Create relationships to create understanding and relationships
 - It's easy to do that to someone who's unknown
 - e.g.) host Ramadan dinner for Muslim community
 - e.g.) black man assaulted by three white supremacists and judge asked black man what to do. Black man said they have to come to dinner with once a week for a length amount of time
 - Some of how this happens is through formation and training of leadership
 - Not just dumping it in at the seminary level
 - What if people had a day like today—to explore these topics in these contexts?
 - Offer different continuing education events that offer talks on topics around these

Concluding Session Four: "A Day of Discernment: How do we turn this into a Churchwide Discernment?"

- How do we keep our leadership accountable to do this?
- Create discussion groups with leaders of different faith communities
 - So that you are connected to people that when disasters happen in your community, people can join together and not divide
 - Small gestures can mean so much
- What can we build in?
 - How do we begin to talk about peace to build it in to talk with children about peace?
 - Lutheran Peace Fellowship has many resources to talk with children (website)
 - Strategy teams—in Chicago school systems have peace keeper teams that are peer led, breaking down conflict
 - UCC in Chicago got a grant to train their congregations to practice restorative justice
- How can the church practice restorative justice work? Many communities around the world have many ways to do this. What do we have in our Christian community that models that? How can we talk about conflict in a way that doesn't carry conflict out into the community?
- Set expectations→ e.g.) quit wearing body armor to meeting, encourage dialogue
- How can you humanize the "enemy" the "other"?
 - Praying for the enemy is one way to start humanizing the "other"
 - The other is also a brother, sister, mother, etc...

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June 14, 2016

Discernment on Peace and Expanded War Efforts (Proposed Title)

**Soul-Searching on Expanded War Efforts
Minneapolis Area Synod (3G) [2015]**

WHEREAS, the ELCA social teaching statement “Church in Society: A Lutheran Perspective” calls for this church to engage in moral deliberations regarding governmental policy and to “discern when to support and when to confront society’s cultural patterns, values, and powers;” and

WHEREAS, the ELCA social teaching statement “For Peace in God’s World” calls for this church to engage actively in making peace not war, naming and resisting “idols that lead to false security, injustice, and war, and [calling] for repentance;” and

WHEREAS, our world finds itself simultaneously dealing with promoters of religious war and of war between nuclear powers; and

WHEREAS, since 1990, U.S. policy has expanded its targets for lethal military action to many global settings; and

WHEREAS, in waging war, harm to the next generations in environmental destruction and genetic mutation is caused as well as much acute human misery; and

WHEREAS, in waging war, great public expense is incurred removing resources from life-sustaining and vital social needs; and

WHEREAS, in waging war since Sept. 11, 2001, nearly half of American military personnel have identified themselves as suffering from chronic disabilities, according to the Veterans’ Administration, impairing life for themselves and their families/communities and causing an epidemic in suicide and early deaths; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Minneapolis Area Synod Assembly memorialize the 2016 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to call the synods, congregations, institutions and people of this church to a time of communal soul-searching on the moral impact and societal consequences of expanded U.S. war efforts, and reflection on what reacting to violence with more violence has achieved; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Minneapolis Area Synod Assembly memorialize the 2016 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to call the people of this church to re-engage and study the ELCA social teaching statements “For Peace in God’s World” and “Church in Society: A Lutheran Perspective” as part of this reflection; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Minneapolis Area Synod Assembly memorialize the 2016 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to call upon the presiding bishop and the Church Council of the ELCA to communicate this church’s desire for national reflection and soul-searching on the moral impact and societal consequences of expanded U.S. war efforts to appropriate government leaders.

Background Information for the Assembly

On multiple occasions and through varied means the ELCA has addressed issues of what promotes earthly peace. These questions include discernment around the responsibilities and limits of government for earthly peace and security, especially in terms of the use of war to deter aggression and violence since war always “represents a horrendous failure of politics.” (FBGW, p. 11¹). The ELCA social statement, *For Peace in God’s World* (1995) provides as contemporary articulation of ELCA teaching drawn from the biblical witness, theological reflection, and political assessment while offering guidance for discernment and pastoral care, action and advocacy.

This statement is rooted in the Just War tradition, which Lutherans historically have embraced, even while it lifts up and respects the prophetic witness of those who seek to establish peace and justice on earth by nonviolent power alone. It accepts Just War principles as the normative framework for political, social and personal decisions about the employment of force and for statutes and codes in ethically using military force. Most crucially, the social statement

¹ “For Peace in God’s World,” Social Statement of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, adopted at the 4th Churchwide Assembly, August 20, 1995, Minneapolis, MN.

teaches that the ELCA “shares with the Church of Jesus in all times and places the calling to be peacemakers.” (p. 1) It commits the ELCA to seeking both the creation of conditions that lead to peace and the search for solutions that avoid war through careful negotiation and wise political action. It describes earthly peace as relationships among and within nations that are just, harmonious, and free from war.

For Peace in God’s World also expresses the Lutheran belief that God works through two different governing strategies in a world of sin (traditionally called “Two Kingdoms”) The call to be peace-makers recognizes both strategies as God’s work. God work is done through both the proclamation of Gospel of God’s final peace as well as efforts that seek earthly peace through means, though marred by sin and failure, aim to limit evil and promote the common good. This dual understanding explains, for instance, why the ELCA can support both the “vocation of men and women in the military who in conscience directly face the ambiguities of relative evils,” and at the same time support “members who conscientiously object to bearing arms in military service.” (p. 12)

The just war tradition and the call to be peace-makers *both* assume and require continued discernment and constant attention. Contributions toward peace across human boundaries and improved security and justice among people around the world are only possible through active engagement and discernment on the part of this, or any, nation. This church, then, as a community of peace interacting with the world is to be:

...a **disturbing** presence...resisting idols that lead to false security...

...a **reconciling** presence [which] creates bonds among different peoples....

...a **servicing** presence...support[ing] efforts by governments and others to secure a just peace....and...

...a **deliberating** presence...a setting of freedom and respect where believers learn...in the unity of faith. (5)

In multiple ways this church lives out the calling. Lutherans participate in public life as citizens, elected officials and workers in government institutions. Given the public roles of citizenship, government service, and accepting commissions or enlisting for military service by its members, Lutheran congregations might emphasize prayer, Scripture-study, and careful consideration of teaching documents to help form a people capable of living as ambassadors of the Prince of Peace. Such formation prepares for better discernment on the justifiability of war and for action toward peace in and through civic life.

Primary resources for the church in this engagement are prayer and Scripture study. Yet these tools distinctive to faith must be supplemented by astute political analysis, social data, and attention to the conflicting voices of self-interest. While multiple resources are needed, congregational leaders and pastors certainly need to lift up and use the teaching resources of social statements and tools for moral deliberation. In this case, three tools are especially useful: *Church in Society: A Lutheran Perspective*, *For Peace in God’s World* and *Talking Together as Christians about Tough Social Issues*.²

This church’s efforts toward earthly peace, also have included the public voice of the church. Regularly, presiding bishops have communicated timely and urgent concerns both to members of this church and to public officials. Among actions relevant to examining the use of military force by the United States, misuse of religious language to promote violence and arrangements among nuclear-armed or nuclear-seeking states, the presiding bishops have written:

Bishop H. George Anderson to President George H.W. Bush, October 11, 2001

Bishop Mark S. Hanson statement on Iraq and the US, August 30, 2002

Bishop Hanson message to the ELCA on Iraq War, March 19, 2003

Bishop Hanson message to the ELCA on death of Bin Laden, May 2, 2011

Bishop Hanson message to the ELCA approaching 10th anniversary 9-11, May 24, 2011

Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton and other heads of communions about Ukraine, March 5, 2014

Bishop Eaton message to the ELCA on religious violence in Iraq, August 15, 2014

Bishop Eaton to President Barack Obama on root causes of violence in Syria and Iraq, March 16, 2015

² Both are available to download or order at www.elca.org/socialstatements

Bishop Eaton to Members of Congress on Iran's nuclear program on August 4, 2015

The ELCA Church Council has acted on behalf of the ELCA by adopting a social message on “*Living in the Age of Terrorism*” (April, 2004). These actions by the presiding bishop and the Church Council, along with other actions by synod bishops, attest to the enduring convictions of the leadership of this church to the moral impact and social concerns of the risks and limitations of the use of force in light of the social teachings of the ELCA.

While other synods in the past have also spoken for and encouraged peace-making, this memorial comes from the Minneapolis-Area Synod as a call for re-engagement with ELCA resources and a call for robust discernment. For three consecutive years, beginning in 2014 the synod has adopted resolutions toward these concerns and memorialized the 2016 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to call the people, congregations, synods, institutions, presiding bishop and Church Council to soul-searching, study and reflection about extent of war efforts by the United States of America. It urges the whole church to reengage pastoral and teaching resources and calls for all to do soul-searching around the wisdom of United States policy on extensive military engagement for over a decade.

Recommendations for Assembly Action

1. To receive with gratitude, the memorials of the Minneapolis-Area Synod regarding their call for the people, congregations, synods, institutions, presiding bishop and church council of the ELCA to study, reflect, search and act in light of on-going and widening war efforts.
2. To recognize with gratitude the efforts of the current and previous presiding bishops, the ELCA Church Council, synod bishops, clergy and the laity to engage as responsible citizens living out the baptismal calling.
3. To issue a call for people in congregations of the ELCA to engage in prayer, Scripture-study and communal reading of the teaching resources of this church, particularly *Church in Society: A Lutheran Perspective* and *For Peace in God's World* and *Talking Together as Christians about Tough Social Issues*;³ and finally
4. To invite this church to a particular time of prayer and communal discernment during the election season of 2016 on the moral impact and societal consequences of current U.S. foreign and military efforts and that this time of prayer and discernment be communicated by the presiding bishop to the president, and Members of Congress.

³ Both are available to download or order at www.elca.org/socialstatements