

**Disciples-ELCA Pre-Dialogue Session
Chicago, October 8-9, 2003**

Present: Randy Lee
David Truemper
Kurt Hendel
Steven Ullestad

Robert Welsh
Richard Guentert
Cynthia Lindner
Lydia Veliko (UCC observer)

I. The *goal identified for this gathering* was to arrive at a recommendation to be made to the appropriate persons (or official bodies) in our two communions regarding the launching of a formal dialogue between the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and to identify the key issues that should be dealt with in a future dialogue (if that is the recommendation of this group).

II. In a lively and substantive conversation over our 24 hours together reflecting on the history, ethos, ecclesiology and basic norms of each of our churches, five specific *recommendations* were offered regarding a future dialogue between Disciples and the ELCA:

1. The goal of a formal dialogue between our two churches should be full communion.
2. The overarching theme for the first phase of the dialogue is proposed to be "The role, place, and power of the sacraments and the Confessions in shaping our identities as church [thus addressing the core understandings of our churches as being sacramental/covenantal (for Disciples) and confessional (for the ELCA)]."
3. The make-up of the dialogue team would be 4-6 persons from each church, to include persons with expertise in the areas of Bible, sacramental theology, liturgy, church history (including patristics) and governance; we also affirmed continuing to have a United Church of Christ representative in the dialogue as an observer.
4. The frequency of the dialogue sessions would be twice a year, with Chicago serving as the primary site for the dialogue sessions.
5. Proposed dates for 2004 are April 29-May 2, and November 4-7 [the first meeting will focus on the role of confession in shaping the church's identity].

III. *Next Steps*: (1) Randy Lee will submit this proposal to the Presiding Bishop of the ELCA for official action and approval; Robert Welsh will submit this proposal to the Board of the Council on Christian Unity (the ecumenical office of the Disciples) for official action and approval. (2) When both actions have been taken, Randy and Robert will move forward in naming their representatives to the dialogue team, and in working out the details in relation to the first meeting of the dialogue in late April, 2004.

Prepared by Robert Welsh, November 2, 2004