

Resolution: 13
Recommendation of the Resolutions Committee: Do pass
Action Taken: Adopted
(yes = 475, no = 10, abstain = 9)

Subject: Freedom for Mission Resolution Encouraging Mission Partnerships
Source: Evangelical Outreach Committee

WHEREAS, Jesus teaches, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." (Luke 12:34) and the New Testament Church grew with the Holy Spirit working through the generosity of its members who "had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need" (Acts 2:45); and

WHEREAS, Chapter 4.02b of the Constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America states: "To participate in God's mission, this church shall: Carry out Christ's Great Commission by reaching out to all people to bring them to faith in Christ..." and "To fulfill these purposes, this church shall: receive, establish and support those congregations, ministries, organizations, institutions and agencies necessary to carry out God's mission through this church;" and

WHEREAS, one of the five strategic directions adopted by the Church Council of the ELCA in April of 2003 is to "Assist members, congregations, synods, and institutions and agencies of this church to grow in evangelical outreach;" and

WHEREAS, in the pursuit of this strategy, God has led this church to "engage leaders in the formation of evangelizing congregations that make disciples for Jesus Christ..."¹ so that one day all will come to know the Freedom of the Gospel of Jesus Christ; and

WHEREAS, God's gift of Freedom for mission in South Dakota has inspired many congregations and individuals over the last 25 years to generously share gifts of *prayer, presence and presents*² with new and renewing ministries so that they, in turn become a blessing to others; and

WHEREAS, God has made use of these gifts to bring about a wider sharing of the good news of Jesus Christ through such ministries as Holy Cross, Gloria Dei, Messiah New Hope, Spirit of Joy, Augustana Lutheran in Sioux Falls, Holy Cross in Aberdeen, Christ the King in Yankton; and

WHEREAS, God continues to bring about new opportunities for partnership and the sharing of gifts through such ministries as Rejoice! in Sioux Falls, Lutheran Lakota Share Ministries in Pine Ridge, Woyatan in Rapid City, The African Ministry at First Lutheran, Messiah New Hope and Springdale in Sioux Falls and St. Dysmas in Sioux Falls and Yankton;³ and

WHEREAS, our experience in God's mission in South Dakota has taught us that the healthiest missions are those that are strongly supported by the synod and by local congregations and by ELCA Christians from around South Dakota; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that in the Freedom and Joy of the Gospel, we as congregations and members of the South Dakota Synod give our hands to God’s work toward the renewal of congregations, starting new evangelizing congregations and starting new ministries with the poor; and be it further

RESOLVED, that in the Freedom and Joy of the Gospel, every congregation in South Dakota offer *Prayers* for our new and renewing congregations who have been designated as mission partners⁴ for the sake of God’s mission; and be it further

RESOLVED, that in the Freedom and Joy of the Gospel every congregation council in South Dakota schedule time in their meeting agendas to formally consider entering into a “Mission Partner” relationship with one of our new or renewing ministries of the South Dakota Synod; and be it further

RESOLVED, that in the freedom and joy of the Gospel such congregations who chose to enter into a formal “Mission Partner” relationship with one of our new or renewing ministries of the South Dakota Synod would freely share their *Presence* with their mission partner through worship visitation and relationship building with the leaders and participants in the mission; and be it further

RESOLVED, that in the freedom and joy of the Gospel such congregations who chose to enter into a formal “Mission Partner” relationship with one of our new or renewing ministries of the South Dakota Synod would freely give their hands to God's work through the offering of *Presents* with their mission partner: such as the sharing of the talents of members and the sharing of generous financial support as God makes them able.

.

¹ Unit for Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission (EOCM) Purpose Statement, September, 2007 (The Unit for Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission is the largest Unit of the ELCA. It oversees the development of new and renewing congregations and new ministries with the poor.)

² The words “Prayer, Presence and Presents” have long been used in Mission Partner communications of the ELCA to describe what one congregation may offer another as its mission partner. For example from the ELCA website on Mission Partners: “Through supportive relationships—*Prayer, Presence, and Presents*—these congregations share in the excitement of proclaiming God’s love. They understand that God has blessed them to be blessings for others.” For more information about Mission Partnerships see the following link on the ELCA website: <http://www.elca.org/Growing-In-Faith/Discipleship/Mission-Partners-Founders-Builders.aspx>

³ For further information on Mission Partner opportunities in South Dakota please see the Mission Partner Focus magazine or speak to Pastor Bill Tesch, the Director of Evangelical Mission for the South Dakota Synod at: btesch@sdsynod.org, or visit the South Dakota synod Website at www.sdsynod.org.