

### The Banning of Nuclear Weapons

Whereas the ELCA social teaching statement “Church in Society: a Lutheran Perspective” calls for the church to engage in moral deliberations regarding governmental policy, and “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 the 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 nuclear weapons are immoral, do not increase our safety, do not keep the peace, breed fear and mistrust among nations, and are useless in addressing any of today’s real security threats, such as climate change, extreme poverty, and disease; and

Whereas nuclear weapon programs divert public funds from health care, education, repair of the infrastructure, disaster relief, and other vital services; and

Whereas the entire life cycle of nuclear weapons (from mining to disposal) causes harm — even if the weapons are never exploded; and

Whereas the risk of a nuclear war and global annihilation has been greatly increased by the escalation of the new nuclear arms race by pulling out of treaties, the nuclear weapons standoff between the United States and North Korea, the U.S. deployment of more “low yield” nuclear warheads on submarines, and the frequent U.S. threats to other nations that “all military options are on the table”; therefore be it

Resolved that the Bishop of the Minneapolis Area Synod urge U.S. Representatives in Congregational Districts 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, and 8, and U.S. Senators for Minnesota to take a leadership role in current opportunities to bring together the nine nuclear nations to work toward the total elimination of nuclear weapons and the signing and ratification of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

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47 **Background for Resolution:**

48 *From “For Peace in God’s World”, ELCA Social Statement, p. 18-19:*

49 “Give high priority to arms control and reduction. We particularly urge a sharp reduction in the  
50 number of weapons of mass destruction. We call for arms control agreements that are substantial,  
51 equitable, verifiable, and progressive.<sup>16</sup> We support mutual confidence-building measures to  
52 improve mutually assured security. In particular, we give priority to:

- 53 • ◆ agreements among the leading nuclear powers to reduce their nuclear stockpiles and  
54 to decrease the possibility of nuclear confrontation or accident;
- 55 • ◆ the successful negotiation of a renewed Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty, the  
56 strengthening of mechanisms to monitor and enforce nuclear treaties, and efforts that  
57 move toward the elimination of nuclear weapons; .....

58 Control and reduce the arms trade. Heavily armed nations continue to spend billions on arms. As  
59 one of the world’s leading arms exporters, the United States has special responsibility to reduce  
60 arms sales and to seek proper international control agreements over the worldwide sale and  
61 transfer of arms by the major exporters.”

62 *A Statement of the United Lutheran Church in America, 1960*

63 “We call upon the governments of the United States and other nuclear powers to persist in the  
64 efforts to arrive at effective multilateral agreements on the cessation of all kinds of nuclear  
65 weapons testing with provision for adequate inspection and control. Toward this end we believe  
66 that a moratorium on testing should be continued until every opportunity to secure such effective  
67 agreements has been utilized. We advocate this position not only because hazards to health will  
68 thereby be kept at a minimum but also because agreement on the cessation of testing could serve  
69 to allay suspicion and provide an international experience in inspection and control which are  
70 deemed essential to the regulation and reduction of armaments in a manner that will not  
71 endanger the security of any nation.

72 Recognizing that an open-ended armaments race poses grave peril for ourselves and all nations,  
73 we urge the governments of the United States and Canada to engage in untiring search for new  
74 and viable forms of arms limitations and control. We believe that this requires dealing  
75 realistically with the unsolved problems of the cold war. Any approach should therefore include  
76 efforts directed at relaxation on international tensions and settlement of political problems, and  
77 calls for the readiness for step-by-step progress and patience with limited achievement.”

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