

Floor Committee 13: Congregation and Ministry Support Group #2

Subject: Special Ministries, Adult Discipleship, Youth and Family Ministry

Reference: *Book of Reports and Memorials*, pp.57-66

Report No. 01

Special Ministries

- 1) While the WELS Commission on Special Ministries employs only three full-time called workers, we recognize that much of the work of its eight committees is carried out by an army of thousands of unpaid volunteers in local congregations and in the privacy of their own homes. We praise God for this wonderful blessing!
- 2) We support the restoration of budgeted synodical support for civilian chaplaincy and the prison ministry as soon as it is financially feasible. We further note that \$50,000 for Military Services and \$50,000 for Prison Ministry are listed as #7 and #9, respectively, on the WELS Unfunded Priority List.

Commission on Adult Discipleship

- 1) We note with joy that the Conference of Presidents has approved the calling of a WELS Director of Discipleship who will oversee the work of both the Commission on Adult Discipleship and the Commission on Youth and Family Ministry.
- 2) We support the efforts of our synod to provide guidelines and encouragement to WELS congregations as they support continuing education. In response to unpublished memorial 2017-07 and 2017-08, we support professional growth and ongoing training for both called workers and lay leaders as a means of strengthening our churches; however, it is not the practice of the synod to mandate continuing education policies and practices to congregations.

Commission on Youth and Family Ministry

- 1) Memorial 2017-05 proposes that WELS call a full-time Sunday school coordinator. We believe that this need will be addressed sufficiently by calling a WELS Director of Discipleship. Through his oversight of the Commission of Youth and Family Ministry, the Director of Discipleship will provide the leadership needed to enhance WELS Sunday school programs.
- 2) We concur with the concerns regarding the need for publicity to encourage excellence in teaching as well as a heightened awareness of the need for high quality WELS Sunday school programs (reference: Memorial 2017-05). Through the leadership of WELS Youth and Family Commission, we encourage the organization of Sunday school institutes wherever they are feasible in the districts and circuits of WELS.

3) We encourage leaders of our churches to provide congregational support to enhance the quality of Sunday school programs, including training of teachers, adequate financial support, and increased publicity.

In conclusion, the committee recognizes the importance of using Special Ministries to reach out in love to those with special needs and circumstances. We further recognize that the key to lifetime adult discipleship is ongoing spiritual growth. Finally, we believe and support enhanced and vibrant Sunday school programs that train our youth for a lifetime of discipleship.

Teacher Greg Thiesfeldt, chairman
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