

Jewel Ekern – National Assembly Report

This was my first church-wide assembly after had attended at least 10 different synod assemblies in 6 synods.

I was impressed with many things; the size of the convention center and the ease in which the convention center staff handled that many voting members. I love being able to meet and talk with many interesting and diverse people from a variety of places. I was moved by the passion and interest showed by the youth voting members in attendance. Also, I was very impressed with the ease Bishop Hanson ran the assembly and how he helped the people at the microphones, not to mention his compassion for the church. The abilities and dedication of the national office staff in the midst of all the reorganization; the amount of work done by the LIFT and Genetics Task Force. The genetics task force was particularly impressive to me – The quality of their work was reflected in the ease in which it was passed.

Last but definitely not least – the worship time in middle of the day with wonderful singing and dynamic preachers was a highlight.

There were also some things that bothered me; The many amendments and lengthy debates on minor issues and the lack of respect by some of the voting members of the work done by task force members, committees and the church-wide office staff. While I love the idea of a Global Mission festival – it should be more interactive – like global mission events; although I did enjoy the choir of Liberian refugees from Philadelphia and the global mission meal and global band.

While the mass meals were great - some of the other eating places within the convention center were not so good and accommodating. High Velocity in particular was overpriced with poor service. I was not impressed when a cook can't get a hamburger well done and it takes 1 ½ hours to get sandwich and fries. The buffet was very good tho – also Starbucks (a necessity for LaDonna).

My overall experience was very good. I like talking to people, and met many interesting people. It was also good to renew relationships with some Wartburg seminary people, as well as other synod friends. The national assembly was a great experience. The national officers have a great faith, are true servants of Christ – plus they have a great sense of humor. It is evident that the theme – “Freed in Christ to Serve” is truly lived by them!

. As with synod assemblies, it would be great if more people could have this experience.