

## On Hanging Chads ...and Abstentions

There always seems to be something that will complicate ...in national elections...even in synod assemblies. We hope our efforts will be smooth, orderly, and fairly conducted. That is the whole reason for using Robert's Rules of Order...and for having a parliamentarian in attendance. So Ron Jensen has done an excellent job in that position, supporting and advising the bishop. We have attempted to do it right.



Bishop Harold Usgaard

But then there were those abstentions...the white cards. On one of our close votes at the recent synod assembly, the abstentions were counted as votes. Because of that there was not a majority attained for the resolution and it was defeated. It had been a long day. We ruled on this after much discussion. Now, I think we made a mistake. It's those abstentions...they probably should not have been counted in this instance.

I regret the confusion that occurred. "I do not do the good that I want..." (Romans 7). Unfortunately, the record cannot be changed after the assembly adjourned. But we can learn for next year. Ron will be there again...me too...but no more abstentions. The white cards will only be used for questions of information.

And the big assembly hasn't even begun yet. No cards there...we will use machines. The Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America meets in Orlando, Florida, August 8-14. In this issue of *River Crossings* you can meet those attending from our synod. They were nominated in conference meetings and elected at the 2004 Synod Assembly. We introduce them to you so that you know who they are. I invite you to share your concerns and opinions with them. Then pray for them. And pray that the Holy Spirit will work in and through them in Orlando...the same way the Spirit works in our congregations...and in our synod...in spite of abstentions.

Shalom,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Huck". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Harold Usgaard  
Bishop