

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE FOR THEOLOGY AND ECUMENICAL RELATIONS

I. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION BY THE COUNCIL

With reference to Council Exhibit 13.1

Issues pertinent to the CTER arising from the Report of the Chairperson of the Board of the Lutheran Foundation for Interconfessional Research were discussed, and

It is

RECOMMENDED: to receive the Report of the Chairperson of the Board of the Lutheran Foundation for Interconfessional Research with appreciation; and
to express appreciation for the continued support by the Institute for the bilateral dialogues and for its substantial contributions to these dialogues.

With reference to Council Exhibits 9.2 and 9.2.1

The LWF study document on Lutheran Hermeneutics, prepared by a LWF working group, was discussed by the Committee, and

It is

RECOMMENDED: to receive the “In the Beginning was the Word.” The Bible in the Life of the Lutheran Communion—A Study Document on Lutheran Hermeneutics with appreciation, with the following addition and amendment:

Addition to recommendation b (p. 26):

Commit ourselves to learning from one another globally about the ways in which the Bible can best be heard in our diverse contexts. The books of the Bible were written at different times and in different places, and they offer a rich variety of perspectives. As the Bible is read in different contexts throughout the world, it engenders fresh perspectives. We benefit and are constructively challenged by hearing insights that emerge from contexts different from our own. We commit ourselves to creating opportunities for people from our member churches to meet and study the Scriptures, and to share those insights with the wider communion.

We therefore also commit ourselves to the ongoing task to translate the Scripture from the original languages to the respective native languages in order to make it accessible to people of our time.

Amendment to recommendation d (p. 27):

We commit ourselves to creating educational opportunities (including the development of a global network of Lutheran theologians) that prepare leaders globally to engage those they serve in the study of Scripture.

And

to request the Council to commend the document to the member churches for study and action; and
to encourage the LWF member churches and the Communion Office to draw on the key elements of the document to inform the deliberations around the commemoration of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation.

With reference to Council Exhibits 9.3 and 9.3.1

The LWF study document “The Church in the Public Space,” prepared by a LWF working group, was discussed in a joint session by the CTER and the CAPV.

It is

RECOMMENDED: to receive the study document “The Church in the Public Space” with appreciation; and
to request the Council to commend the document to the member churches for study and action, and
to request the Communion Office to continue strengthening the member churches’ public engagement, where possible, in cooperation with their ecumenical and interfaith partners, and to use the document as a tool to deepen contextual reflection and action.

With reference to Council Exhibit 9.4

The report of the Lutheran World Federation Task Force to Follow Up the “Mennonite Action” at the LWF Eleventh Assembly in 2010 was discussed by the Committee, and

It is

RECOMMENDED: to receive the Report of the Lutheran World Federation Task Force to Follow Up the Mennonite Action “Bearing Fruit: Implications of the 2010 Reconciliation between Lutherans and Mennonites/Anabaptists” with appreciation; and
to request the Council to commend the report to the member churches for study.

II. ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION BY THE COUNCIL

With reference to Council Exhibit 12, LWF Strategic Priority Areas 2017–2018 (formerly COOP)

The Committee

VOTED: to endorse the LWF Strategic Priority Areas 2017–2018, with the addition of a fifth, cross cutting theme, theological reflection and formation.

III. ISSUES DISCUSSED BY THE COMMITTEE - for information to the Council

With reference to Council Exhibit 9

The Committee discussed the Report of the General Secretary in a closed session. The following concerns were forwarded to the CAPV for consideration.

- Expressing our deep concern with the decision of the ELCL;
- Affirming the continuous dialogue with the member churches regarding women in the ordained ministry of the church. We are committed to journey together but we are not forcing anyone to move faster than they can;
- Affirming the commitment of the communion office to visit the ELCL and to continue the bilateral conversations with it. Encouraging the Communion Office also to listen with pastoral concern to the voices of women pastors of the ELCL;
- Calling the communion to make the distinction between the decision of the ELCL and the discussions in those churches that are not yet ordaining women.

With reference to Council Exhibit 9.6.2

Concerns were raised about changes to the size of the Council and issues around representation.

With reference to Council Exhibit 9.3.1

The Committee recommended that the Council adopt the statement “The Church in the Public Space,” which will be presented by the CAPV.

IV. ISSUES REFERRED TO THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

1. Report of the Implementation of the COOP 2015

The Committee for Theology and Ecumenical Relations endorses the Report of the Communion Office Operational Plan 2015 for the Department for Theology and Public Witness with appreciation as reflected in Council Exhibit 9.1.

2. LWF Budget 2017 and LWF Program and Budget Overview 2017

The Committee for Theology and Ecumenical Relations endorses the approval of the LWF Budget 2017 and LWF Program and Budget Overview 2017 of the Department for Theology and Public Witness in the amount of EUR 2 423 900 as reflected in Council Exhibits 12.1 and 12.1.1