

### Floor Committee #3: Commission on Inter-Church Relations

#### **Subject: The work of the Commission on Inter-Church Relations**

Reference: *Book of Reports and Memorials*, pp. 23-27

Report No. 01

Praise God for the work of the Commission on Inter-Church Relations. The purpose of this commission is to represent WELS “in doctrinal discussions with other church bodies who are, or are not, in fellowship with the synod” and to “keep itself informed on the doctrinal trends in other church bodies.”

The Commission on Inter-Church Relations “receives updates about sister synods throughout the world. It also reviews doctrinal statements and constitutions from groups recommended for fellowship by our World Missions One Teams and responds to questions from them.”

The One Team concept guides the work of the Commission on Inter-Church Relations together with WELS Board for World Missions, “interacting with emerging churches throughout the world that require theological education and mentoring in order to bring them to a more mature confessional stance.” This applies also to individuals. The One Team concept allows the Commission on Inter-Church Relations to contribute doctrinally, working in partnership with world missionaries who, for example, bring insights about financial assistance or logistics.

We affirm the Commission on Inter-Church Relations and its use of a “four-stage toolkit . . . containing guidelines for the various visits, interviews, doctrinal discussions, and official communication that take place between WELS representatives and church bodies that are seeking fellowship with WELS. [This toolkit] has resulted in increasing blessings in our communication with the church bodies throughout the world with whom we are now in fellowship or are in the process of establishing fellowship.”

May God continue to guide the work of the Commission on Inter-Church Relations in Africa, Asia-Oceania, Europe, and Latin America and with domestic church bodies in North America. We pray for God’s wisdom and strength as the Commission on Inter-Church Relations responds to requests from many of these church bodies about doctrine and confession. We are glad that the Commission on Inter-Church Relations encourages and supports the translation of the Book of Concord as needed into all the languages of the people among whom they are working.

We acknowledge that the Bulgarian Lutheran Church no longer gathers as a church around Word and sacraments, and thus they are no longer a church with whom we may be in fellowship.

Christ is at work around the world. “The next international convention of the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference (CELC)—a worldwide fellowship of Lutheran church bodies of which WELS is a member—is planned for May 29–June 1, 2026, in Lusaka, Zambia” (the first time an international CELC convention will be held on the continent of Africa).

Representatives of WELS, the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, and the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod continue to meet for informal discussions, outside the framework for fellowship. We rejoice that the Commission on Inter-Church Relations is communicating to the members of the WELS the purpose and results of these informal discussions.

We support the thoughtful decision of the Commission on Inter-Church Relations to defer a declaration of fellowship with the Africa Mission Evangelism Church in Tanzania. This allows the Africa Mission Evangelism Church to rally around its new leadership, as this church body distributes and discusses its statement of faith as widely as possible.

We are heartened to know that our One Africa Team has concrete plans to maintain close contact with the Africa Mission Evangelism Church. We ask God to grant his blessing as we continue “with great patience and careful instruction” (2 Timothy 4:2) to work toward the day when we will be able to declare fellowship with them.

Finally, by the grace of God four men have served faithfully on the Commission on Inter-Church Relations (Pastor Bart Brauer, Pastor Thomas Fricke, Prof. Bill Tackmier, and Pastor Benjamin Tomczak). This summer they “will complete their final terms on the commission. This represents a significant change for a body with only ten members. We thank God for their service to him and his church. We pray that the three pastors and one professor who will be succeeding them after this summer’s convention will be equally blessed as they carry out the privileged task of seeking out and fostering church relations.”

Pastor Daron Lindemann, chairman  
Teacher Zachary Seeger, secretary