

REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE FOR CONSTITUTION AND MEMBERSHIP

I. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION BY THE COUNCIL

1.1 Communion of Protestant Christian Church (ONKP)

The Committee learned that in early 2012, the Communion of Protestant Christian Church (ONKP) (based in Indonesia) applied for membership in the LWF. ONKP was originally part of an LWF member church, the Protestant Christian Church (BNKP). In 1952, it separated from BNKP and became an independent church. The main reason had to do with geographical distance and the challenges that presented. The decision was taken on good mutual terms. And on 16 April 1952, the next day, ONKP was established. However, it was only officially registered as a church in Indonesia in 1988.

The ONKP is in fellowship with the rest of the LWF member churches in Indonesia through the LWF National Committee. ONKP's current membership is 63,274, in 56 parish churches. Its Bishop is Rev.Hulu Waruwu; its General Secretary is Rev.Matias Daeli.

The late Dr Mangisi Simorangkir (LWF Council Member) and Rev Basa Hutabarat (Executive Secretary of LWF National Committee in Indonesia) visited ONKP in Nias on 29 and 30 May 2013. Subsequent to the visit, both the BNKP and LWF National Committee have issued letters of recommendation for the ONKP to be an LWF member. In addition, the Lutheran Communion in Asia (LUCAS) meeting also endorsed the application in March 2014.

It is

RECOMMENDED: to welcome with joy the Communion of Protestant Christian Church (ONKP) into membership in the Lutheran World Federation.

1.2 Guatemala Lutheran Church (ILUGUA)

The Committee was informed that the Guatemala Lutheran Church (ILUGUA) has applied for full membership in the LWF. The ILUGUA currently consists of some 80 families with about 300 members. This number will be increasing because of outreach into the local indigenous communities.

The ILUGUA has its roots in the Independent Lutheran Communities in Guatemala formed in 1984. ILUGUA was founded in 1997 under the name "Iglesia Luterana Guatemalteca". The ILUGUA's main goal is to accompany vulnerable indigenous communities in order to share God's love, celebrate God's presence in the community (through the sacraments and sharing Bible study), promote life in the communities through sustainable development and food security, and advocate for the rights of indigenous communities.

The major reason for the LWF membership request is that the ILUGUA wants to live in communion and be accompanied and supported by Lutheran churches in the region and the world with opportunity to enhance their prophetic ministry focused in the Zacapa and Chiquimula regions among indigenous communities.

There is currently no LWF member church in Guatemala, but there are other Lutheran congregations, including one LWF Recognized Congregation. Discussions and consultations with those other Lutheran congregations in Guatemala have taken place; there is no objection to ILUGUA becoming an LWF member. On the regional level, LWF has received an endorsement letter from the Salvadoran Lutheran Church for ILUGUA's membership application.

It is

RECOMMENDED: to welcome with joy the Guatemala Lutheran Church (ILUGUA) into membership in the Lutheran World Federation.

1.3 Addition to the Council's Rules of Procedure

The Committee understands that the LWF is facing a problem arising from repeated non-attendance by certain members of the Council, committees appointed by the Council, or ecumenical dialogue commissions. This makes it more difficult for these bodies to successfully carry out their work and is discouraging for the members who do attend and for the staff who help organize and prepare these meetings.

It is

RECOMMENDED: to add a new Section 10 to the Rules of Procedure, as follows:

10. Attendance at Meetings

Members of the Council, Advisers, and members of committees or commissions appointed by the Council are expected to attend meetings, and are requested to give timely notice if they are unable to do so. Those who are absent for two consecutive meetings may be requested by the regional vice-president to resign. Those who are absent for three consecutive meetings shall be considered to be "no longer present for his/her term of office" (see LWF Constitution Section VIII(1)).

II. ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION BY THE COUNCIL

There were no issues for which a discussion by the Council is requested.

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

The Committee discussed topical areas for proposed amendments to the LWF Constitution, and corresponding amendments to the Bylaws that should be prepared in time for consideration and action at a future Council meeting.

The Committee heard updates on applications or inquiries for membership by the North American Lutheran Church, the North Western Gossner Evangelical Lutheran Church (based in India), the Uganda Lutheran Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Gambia. The Committee affirmed the Communion Office's process for dealing with these applications.

In addition, the Evangelical Church of Maraland, a church in Mizoram State, India which is already a member of the World Communion of Reformed Churches, has voted to begin discussions with the LWF about membership.

The Committee also discussed the possibility of holding virtual meetings (e.g. via Skype, etc.) in advance of Council meetings to expedite its work at the meetings of the Council.

IV. ISSUES REFERRED TO THE MEETING OF OFFICERS

In the context of its discussion on possible amendments to the Constitution and the By-Laws, the Committee referred the question of a possible re-definition of the LWF regions to the Meeting of Officers with the request that they ask the Communion Office to prepare a paper on this topic for discussion and dialogue at next year's regional meetings as well as at the Council.