

AGENDA 2.2.6

LCANZ to seek full membership of LWF and ILC

PROPOSED MOTION

Submitted by Belconnen Holy Cross Congregation

PROPOSED THAT the Lutheran Church of Australia and New Zealand becomes a full member of both the Lutheran World Federation and of the International Lutheran Council.

REASONS FOR PROPOSAL

1. The Lutheran Church of Australia and New Zealand (LCANZ) is at present an associate member of both the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and of the International Lutheran Council (ILC). As an associate member, the LCANZ participates in assemblies of the LWF and the ILC at which it can speak, but cannot influence decision-making as it is excluded from voting or holding elected office.
2. The LWF is a global communion of 145 churches in the Lutheran tradition, representing over 77 million Christians in 98 countries. The LWF confesses the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the only source and norm of its doctrine, life and service. It sees in the three Ecumenical Creeds and in the Confessions of the Lutheran Church, especially in the unaltered Augsburg Confession and the Small Catechism of Martin Luther, a pure exposition of the Word of God. The LWF was established in 1947 as a Federation of Lutheran churches. Lutherans worldwide wanted to confess, reflect, reconcile and respond together to human suffering in the aftermath of the Second World War. The LWF strives to put Lutheran faith into action within and beyond the communion, and seeks God's Word and Spirit to guide it. This action takes a variety of forms from theological reflection and dialogue with other churches and faiths, to deepening relationships, sharing about our faith, serving those in need and advocating for a more just, peaceful and reconciled world. The LWF shares a vision, purpose and values. It works to strengthen Lutheran relationships and build an inclusive, respectful communion. It is on a common journey of renewal shaped and enriched by the different contexts within which we live.
3. The ILC is a worldwide association of 37 established confessional Lutheran church bodies comprising some 7.15 million members which proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ on the basis of an unconditional commitment to the Holy Scriptures as the inspired and infallible Word of God and to the Lutheran Confessions contained in the Book of Concord as the true and faithful exposition of the Word of God. The ILC, which can be traced to a meeting of leaders of confessional Lutheran churches in 1952, exists for the purpose of encouraging, strengthening and promoting confessional Lutheran theology and practice focussing on Jesus Christ, both among member churches and throughout the world:
 - by providing opportunities for the joint study of contemporary theological issues;
 - by giving mutual support and encouragement to the heads of member church bodies;
 - by encouraging and assisting member churches in planning for mission outreach;
 - by strengthening theological education through conferences of theologians and seminary teachers, mission staff and those involved with human care;
 - by facilitating communication between confessional Lutheran churches of the world through the publication of ILC News;
 - by stimulating and facilitating the preparation and publication of confessional Lutheran literature.

4. Similar proposals were made at the 2018 Convention of Synod. It was resolved at that Synod to refer full membership of both the LWF and of the ILC for review. Almost three years have passed without any outcome of the review having been publicised. The proposal is therefore presented again.
5. Full membership of the LWF and the ILC would enable the LCANZ to participate fully, including in decision-making, voting and by being able to hold elected office.