

Reference and Counsel – Motion 1.6

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RELATING TO: The Biennium Reconciliation Initiative Task Force move to an Advisory Committee under the Director of Public Policy and Service Ministries, Eastern Synod, ELCIC, to continue the work of reconciliation and right relationships with Indigenous Peoples.

SUBMITTED BY: Director of Public Policy and Service Ministries, Eastern Synod, ELCIC

PREAMBLE:

The Biennium Reconciliation Initiative task force (BRITF) is grateful for the support of the Eastern Synod, for the establishment of the initiative and for the two year extension of its mandate at last Synod Assembly (2016), moving together toward reconciliation and right relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada.

Across our Synod, ministry areas, congregations, and individual members have taken up the necessary challenge of learning about our collective history regarding residential schools, their aim of cultural genocide¹, and the traumatic legacy (social, psychological, spiritual, economic) on Indigenous peoples and communities.

We are grateful for the work of our National church in repudiating the Doctrine of Discovery² as being “fundamentally opposed” to the gospel of Jesus Christ and a spurious justification to take land and to eradicate peoples. We are grateful that our seminary, Waterloo Lutheran Seminary, has offered ways into right relationship for students, faculty and staff. We are grateful for the challenging yet life-giving work that ministry areas, congregations, individual members have undertaken to foster right relationships by adopting a posture of listening, by planning and working *with* Indigenous partners rather than *for*, by stepping into the discomfort of unfamiliarity, and by a willingness to learn what it means to be neighbour. We are grateful for the many Indigenous partners who have graciously entered into relationship with us on this journey toward reconciliation.

As grateful as we are, we recognize the dire need to continue the work of undoing the devastating effects of colonization, of dismantling racist and oppressive structures, policies, behaviours and attitudes, and of how to “walk with Indigenous peoples in their ongoing efforts to exercise their inherent sovereignty and fundamental human rights and renew our commitment to truth, reconciliation and equity.”³

We know we still have much work to do. The national inquiry on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls is hoping for an extension to its mandate. Should it not receive an extension its report is due November 2018. Bill C262 - An Act to ensure that the laws of Canada are in harmony with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples - has reached third reading in the House of Commons and now moves to the Senate for review.

¹ http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Findings/Exec_Summary_2015_05_31_web_o.pdf

² <http://elcic.ca/Documents/documents/DoctrineofDiscoveryMotionFINAL.pdf>

³ *ibid*

These two important processes will continue to broaden and inform our common life together, our ministries, and our relationships as Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

MOTION:

We commit ourselves to the ongoing tasks of reconciliation and right relationships and move that the Biennium Reconciliation Initiative Task Force and its mandate become an Advisory Committee (to be named) under the portfolio of the Director of Public Policy and Service Ministries, Eastern Synod, and that,

1. representation come from across our Synod, using available technologies to bridge distance, and includes Indigenous partners,
2. the Truth and Reconciliation Commission 94 Calls to Action http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Findings/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf and the ELCIC's Resolution on the Doctrine of Discovery <http://elcic.ca/Documents/documents/DoctrineofDiscoveryMotionFINAL.pdf> be guiding frameworks in our ongoing work,
3. a budget of \$1,000.00 annually be set for education and resources,
4. resources and information from the advisory committee be regularly posted to the Eastern Synod website and other media, via the Director of Public Policy,
5. and, annual reporting occur from the advisory committee to the Director of Public Policy and Service Ministries.

RECOMMENDATION:

Adoption