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INTERNATIONAL LUTHERAN-PENTECOSTAL DIALOGUE

Communiqué

Fourth meeting of the International Lutheran-Pentecostal Dialogue

September 7-13, 2019, Antananarivo, Madagascar

Representatives of various classical Pentecostal churches that belong to the Pentecostal World Fellowship, and member churches of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) began a five-year dialogue in 2016, preceded by preparatory meetings from 2004 -2010 at the Institute for Ecumenical Research in Strasbourg, France. The fourth meeting took place September 7-13, 2019 at the Center of the Malagasy Lutheran Church (MLC) in Antananarivo, the capital city of Madagascar. Through annual meetings, the partners seek to understand each other better, at both international and local levels, in order to appreciate each other's theological and spiritual traditions and to find ways for common witness.

The theme of this meeting of the dialogue focused on healing and deliverance in light of Luke 4:18b, "Proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free". Each day began and ended with devotions led by the various members of the dialogue. Rev. Dr. Opoku Onyiah from the Church of Pentecost in Ghana presented a paper on "Pentecostal Understanding of Freedom, Healing and Deliverance". Rev. Dr. Joseph Randrianasolo and Rev. Dr. Noel Rabemanatsoa from the Malagasy Lutheran Church gave presentations on Fifohazana, a Christian revival movement in Madagascar, which has a strong healing ministry and an ecumenical outreach in the local context. All presentations were followed by lively discussions about the role of healing and deliverance in the life of the church. Discussions emphasized the sovereignty of God in healing and the importance of prayer and intercessions, as well as professional counseling.

On Sunday, September 8, the dialogue members joined a Lutheran worship service that took place in the framework of this year's annual meeting of the Antananarivo Synod. The lively service brought together thousands of participants; the delegation members were greeted by the President of the Malagasy Lutheran Church, Rev. Dr. David Rakotonirina. The two Co-Chairs of the Lutheran-Pentecostal dialogue, Rev. Dr. Walter Altmann from the Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil, and Dr. Jean-Daniel Plüss from the Pentecostal Assemblies of Switzerland, both brought greetings to the gathering. The Lutheran Co-Chair, Rev. Dr. Walter Altmann publicly presented a letter of appreciation from the LWF to the MLC President, thanking the church for its support in organizing this year's dialogue meeting. The participants were generously invited for lunch afterwards, which also offered an opportunity to meet several pastors and church members from the Antananarivo Synod.

On Tuesday, September 10, the Malagasy Lutheran Church offered participants a festive hospitality dinner, which included a cultural program and a presentation of the structure and activities of the MLC. On Wednesday, September 11, the dialogue members had an opportunity to visit one of the revival camps of the Malagasy Lutheran Church in Antananarivo, Toby Betesda Ambohibao, where the well-known female leader of the movement, Germaine Volahavana, better known as Nenilava (1918-1998), had spent several years of her life. The revival camp cares for mentally and physically ill people and those suffering from addiction. The group attended a worship service at the camp, which included both healing and deliverance. The President of the MLC, Rev. Dr. David Rakotonirina, besides having participated actively at the dialogue meeting, and on various public occasions, stressed the importance of the Lutheran-Pentecostal dialogue for the churches in Madagascar.

Members of the Pentecostal team who participated in the meeting are: Dr. Jean-Daniel Plüss, Co-Chair (Pentecostal Assemblies of Switzerland), Rev. Dr. Cecil M. Robeck, Jr. (Assemblies of God, USA), Rev. Tham Wan Yee and Rev. Moon Tee Yee (Assemblies of God, Malaysia/Philippines), and Rev. Dr. Opoku Onyinah (Church of Pentecost in Ghana) as a guest presenter. Members of the Lutheran team who participated in the meeting are: Rev. Dr. Walter Altmann, Co-Chair (Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil), Rev. Dr. Tamás Gáncs (Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hungary), Rev. Dr. Cheryl Peterson (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America), Rev. Dr. Johannes Zeiler (Church of Sweden), Rev. Dr. Sarah Hinlicky Wilson (Consultant on behalf of the Institute for Ecumenical Research, Strasbourg, France/Japan) and Rev. Anne Burghardt (Communion Office staff support on behalf of the LWF/Estonia). Rev. Dr. Joseph Randrianasolo and Rev. Dr. Noel Rabemanatsoa from the Malagasy Lutheran Church attended the meeting as local participants.

Rev. Gani Wiyono (Assemblies of God, Indonesia), Dr. Olga Zaprometova (Church of God, Russia), Rev. Dr. Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen (Pentecostal theological consultant, Finland/USA) and Rev. Dr. Wilfred J. Samuel (Evangelical Lutheran Church of Malaysia) were unable to attend.

The next and the last annual meeting of this round of dialogue is scheduled to be held in 2020 in Pasadena, California, USA. During this meeting, dialogue members will work on the final report, based upon presentations, discussions and encounters from the previous four years.

Antananarivo, Madagascar, September 13, 2019

[https://www.lutheranworld.org/sites/default/files/2019/documents/lutheran_pentecostal_final_communique.pdf]