



NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OFFICIAL LUTHERAN-ROMAN CATHOLIC DIALOGUE OF 27 YEARS TO CONTINUE

WASHINGTON--A Lutheran-Roman Catholic consultation of theologians and church leaders meeting in West Palm Beach, Florida, last week called for continuation of the 27-year theological dialogue between the two religious denominations. The consultation called for the establishment of a process which would lead to a declaration that some of the Reformation-era condemnations are not applicable today.

The consultation, which brought together Catholics and Lutherans from Europe and North America, suggested 1997 as a target date for setting aside some 16th-century condemnations. 1997 will be both the Lutheran World Federation's Ninth Worldwide assembly and the 450th anniversary of the Council of Trent's statement condemning the Lutheran understanding of justification.

The consultation was co-chaired by the Most Rev. Rembert G. Weakland, O.S.B., Archbishop of Milwaukee and Chairman of the Ecumenical Committee of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, and the Rev. Herbert Chilstrom, Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. International participants included Cardinal Edward Cassidy, President of the Vatican's Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity; the Rev. Heinz-Albert Raem of the Pontifical Council; Dr. Eugene Brand, Assistant General Secretary for Ecumenical Affairs at the Lutheran World Federation; and Dr. Harding Meyer and Dr. Michael Root from the Institute for Ecumenical Research, Strasbourg, France.

The consultation's 36 participants urged the churches to

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The consultation's 36 participants urged the churches to continue the theological dialogue among scholars. They also recommended that a new round of dialogue look at the "understanding and practice of the Church as communion/koinonia with a focus on the steps required for the realization of full communion between us."

The group suggested that U.S. Catholics and Lutherans plan a "public act of affirmation of the goal of full communion" to lift up 27 years of dialogue process and to dispel the notion that ecumenical interest and progress has slowed.

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