



# NEWS

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## LUTHERANS, ROMAN CATHOLICS END STUDY ON JUSTIFICATION

WASHINGTON--Lutheran and Roman Catholic theologians concluded a five-year study on justification by faith with substantial agreement on an issue that has been a source of division and misunderstanding between the two traditions since the 16th century Reformation.

The 20 theologians recognized their differences on the doctrine but did not consider these disagreements to be "church-dividing," according to a communique released after the (September 15-18) meeting, held at the Archbishop Cousins Catholic Center in Milwaukee.

The paper is the 7th completed by the U.S. theologians since the dialogue began in 1965. Other papers were on the Nicene Creed, Baptism, Eucharist as Sacrifice, Eucharist as Ministry, Papal Primacy, and Infallibility and Teaching Authority of the Church. The communique, issued on behalf of the group by its co-chairman, the Rev. Dr. H. George Anderson, President of Luther College, Decorah, Iowa, said the more than 21,000-word document is expected to be released "soon."

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Dr. Anderson made the statement also on behalf of the other co-chairman Auxiliary Bishop T. Austin Murphy of Baltimore, who was ill and unable to attend the meeting.

"This dialogue has to be seen as part of a continuing process of discussing theological differences between our two church bodies," said the communique.

"In contrast to some of the earlier topics in the US Lutheran-Roman Catholic dialogues," the communique said, "the doctrine of justification lets us talk about our basic relationship to God rather than about Church practices and structures. In discovering the basic orientation of the two churches on this question, we were able to get behind stereotypes and historical caricatures."

The communique added: "We can and do confess together that our hopes for salvation rest entirely on God's merciful action in Christ. We recognize that there are differences between our two traditions with regard to the doctrine of justification but we are convinced that these are not church-dividing."

The justification by faith paper is currently undergoing minor editorial revisions. It will deal with the topic at much greater depth.

The theologians at the meeting also began work on their 8th topic: Mary and the Saints.

Lutheran participants in the dialogue are Dr. Anderson; Dr. Robert W. Bertram, Christ Seminary-Seminex, St. Louis;

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Dr. Joseph A. Burgess, Lutheran Church/USA, New York; Dr. Gerhard O. Forde, Luther/Northwestern Theological Seminary, St. Paul, MN; Dr. Karlfried Froehlich, Princeton Theological Seminary, New Jersey; Dr. Eric W. Gritsch, Gettysburg Theological Seminary in Pennsylvania; Dr. Kenneth Hagen, Marquette University, Milwaukee; Dr. John F. Johnson, Our Savior Lutheran Church, St. Petersburg, Fla.; Dr. Fred Kramer, Springfield, IL.; Dr. George A. Lindbeck, Yale Divinity School; and Dr. John Reumann, Lutheran Theological Seminary, Philadelphia. Serving as staff to the participants were Dr. Paul A. Wee and Dr. David Burke of Lutheran World Ministries.

The Catholic participants are Bishop Murphy; Father Avery Dulles, S.J. of the Catholic University of America; Father Robert B. Eno, S.S., Theological College, Washington, D.C.; Father Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J., Georgetown Jesuit Community, Washington, D.C.; Father Kilian McDonnell, O.S.B., of St. John's University, Collegeville, MN; Father Carl J. Peter, The Catholic University of America; Father Jerome D. Quinn, St. Paul, MN; Dr. Jill Raitt, University of Missouri-Columbia; and Father George Tavard, Methodist Theological School, Delaware, Ohio. The staff persons are Fathers John F. Hotchkin and Joseph W. Witmer of the Bishops' Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs (BCEIA).

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