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BRAZIL LUTHERANS PRESENT  
CHURCH-STATE DOCUMENT  
TO COUNTRY'S PRESIDENT

Porto Alegre, Brazil --(LWF)--A delegation from the Evangelical Church of Lutheran Confession in Brazil (IECLB) has presented a statement on the relationship between church and state to the nation's President.

The Seventh General Synod of the 750,000-member IECLB unanimously adopted the statement without abstention during its meeting in Curitiba, October 22-25.

It commissioned the church's president, the Rev. Karl Gottschald; the Rev. Augusto Kunert, vice-president, and the Rev. Ernesto Schlieper of Brasilia to present the statement personally to the Brazilian chief of state, President Emilio Garrastazu Medici. The presentation took place at a private audience in Brasilia, the nation's capital.

At this encounter with the IECLB delegation, President Medici welcomed the frankness of the church's statement and the readiness toward dialogue.

The church's headquarters here decided to give the text of the declaration to the press only after federal elections on November 15.

In addition, all IECLB clergymen and parishes have received the statement. Aside from the Roman Catholic Church, this Lutheran church is the only denomination to announce publicly its position toward the government.

The statement was drafted by a theology commission and was further edited by a commission on social, political, and economic matters.

The IECLB council also assisted in preparation of the statement and comments also were made by a section at the Curitiba Synod which dealt with politics.

The complete text of the Curitiba declaration follows:

At its Seventh General Synod in Curitiba from October 22-25, 1970, the Evangelical Church of Lutheran Confession in Brazil resolves, in accordance with its Commission as Church of Jesus Christ, the following declaration:

## I. Theses concerning the relationship of state and church

1. The goal of the Christian message is the salvation of mankind, a salvation that goes beyond human possibilities, including the political. This message is from God -- not of this world, but it is for this world and gives witness to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior of the world. Therefore, the church may not lead an isolated existence, in which it keeps for itself the message which has been entrusted to it. The church has the commission to proclaim the word of God and cannot withdraw from this commission except at the price of being disobedient to its Lord.

The message of the church directs itself always to man as a whole, and not merely to his "soul." Therefore the message has consequences for the total sphere of the life of man, also for the physical, cultural, social, economic and political spheres. Its purpose exists not merely to order relationships of Christians with other men, but to enter into all questions in dialogue with other citizens and groups which have to do with the common good.

2. The "public" message of the church of Christ, that is the message which has to do directly with the problems of the world, cannot be separated from the "inner witness," since this "inner witness" includes the former. Therefore, the church may not place its public witness at the disposal of the interest of such political ideologies or groups or parties that are seeking power or have power at a particular moment. In making its public witness, a church may never use any methods that are not in keeping with the Gospel.

3. In principle, state and church are separate entities, as is also documented in the constitution of our land. Nevertheless, on the basis of the consequences that the Christian message has for the secular area, and on the basis of the fact that Christians are at the same time disciples of Jesus and citizens of their land, it is not possible to completely separate the area of responsibility of the state from that of the church, even though one must differentiate these areas. Where the two areas overlap, the church which itself needs the critique of the world, exercises a critical function -- not a control function but the function of a watchman (Ezekiel 33, 7), and serves as the conscience of the nation. The church will seek the attention of public officials in certain situations and make them aware of their responsibility, doing this in a non-political manner and always with the intention of finding a just and objective solution.

4. The church seeks a free and objective dialogue with the state in an atmosphere of openness, freedom and genuine partnership. The purpose of this dialogue is to find solutions to problems facing society. As co-partner of the worldly government, the church is obedient to the law of the Lord, which says: "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's" (Mark 12, 17). From this basic principle, the church is aware of its call to cooperate with government agencies on a broad level of tasks, such as, for example, the education and training of the young generation, literacy programs for adults, social action on the part of the government, combating sickness, poverty, and the problems arising out of dislocation of people, and in other tasks that are not only of a purely technical nature. This cooperation includes the constant effort to eliminate causes which are responsible for a particular evil.

5. As a result of the public proclamation of the church, tensions with government offices may result either on the basis of human error or on the basis of fundamental issues. In these cases the church will not attempt to call into question the power of the state as if the church were a political party, but will proclaim the lordship of Christ. Where the church finds itself forced to oppose measures undertaken by the state, it will seek to enter into dialogue with the relevant state organs before taking a public stand in the matter. In any event, the church will act without being demagogic in order to make clear that it knows itself called to intercede for all men who suffer.

## II. Matters which give cause for concern on the part of the church.

1. Uniqueness of Christian worship. The church has the view that the service of worship must be maintained as the central event in the life of the Christian, which nourishes him spiritually, has its uniqueness as a service of God, as devotion, as Christian community, and as dialogue with God. Jesus Christ is the only Lord of Christian worship.

A worship service has political consequences because it awakens political responsibility, though it may not be used as means to facilitate certain political trends. Fatherland and government are objects of intercessory prayer on the part of the gathered congregation, in order that righteousness and peace may be fostered among men; the congregation will continually thank its Lord for these valuable gifts. The fatherland will be honored and loved, its symbols will be respected and used as a treasure of the citizenry in a legitimate way. However, the Christian may not speak of his fatherland in an idolatrous way. A dialogue between church and state can have as a result the acceptance of common responsibility for planning of national holidays through which the fatherland is honored.

2. Christian education and "moral and civil education." Even though the state is interested in avoiding a spirit of division in the area of education, in a multi-confessional society such as that of Brazil, we believe that it is absolutely necessary for Christian education to be maintained in schools. We are of the opinion that "moral and civil education" is a necessary part of the curriculum for the development of a citizen, but do not believe that it can or should replace Christian education. "Moral and civil education," with its declared ideological basis, has confused the areas pertaining to the state and the church for many Christians. We understand that genuine moral and civil behavior has its roots in a genuine confession. "Theistic but non-confessional" education as it is formulated in law number 869/69, can lead many people to understand such education as a substitute for Christian education and the ideological basis as an alternative to a confessional Christian orientation. Teachers as well as students will almost inevitably be led into conflicts of conscience, in the event that such a view prevails.

It is in the interest of the IECLB that this matter become the object of common investigation on the part of representatives of the church and the state.

3. Human rights. Countless Christians find themselves confused through the flood of alarming reports concerning inhuman actions that are said to be taking place in our land, above all with respect to the treatment of political prisoners. This brings about an atmosphere of unrest, which is intensified through a lack of exact and objective information. Even though the reports that are being spread in foreign countries often tend to be of a one-sided character, even though official declarations in our land have repeatedly claimed that these reports are unfounded, the atmosphere of unrest has been brought about by information which has not been denied in the local press concerning cases in which organs of the police have applied inhuman methods -- whether in the case of the treatment of normal prisoners, political terrorists, or people who are suspected of subversive activities.

As a church we take the position that not even an exceptional situation justifies measures which violate human rights.

In view of the ethical principles involved, we deem it necessary as a church to call attention to the necessity of speaking with the government about these concerns, simply because of the obvious seriousness of the questions. Further, we need to oppose all practiced abuses against even the least of the Brazilians, including those of a different political belief, and give them the absolute certainty that they will be dealt with according to the basic principles of the very law with which they may conceivably have come into conflict.

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## STATEMENT OF SOLIDARITY

In Brazil federal police (some trained in Washington D.C.) investigate Church efforts toward human promotion, indict members of movements striving for the oppressed majority of this Third World nation, and employ repressive tactics, even torture, to suppress any further popular protest or initiative. All of this done in the name of law and order, under the auspices of democracy, for the good of the nation. Such governmental actions and attitudes the world press condemns as dictatorship.

The United States government silently supports this type of government by continuing negotiations with it. Devastating as this may be for any American citizen who accepts freedom as our creed, it is intolerable that in the name of law and order, our Federal government should adopt similar attitudes and indict on January 6, six persons, engaged in peaceful protest, of kidnapping and sabotage plots. Just as justifiable that we, the citizens, should indict the United States government for kidnapping and sabotage plots:

--by holding lives in bondage through commercial exploitation of the Third World;

--by scheming at the destruction of peoples through imperialistic attitudes and warfare.

In solidarity with all those indicted and in support of our sisters, Beverly Bell and Marjorie Schuman, we demand in the name of law and order, the justification of such charges.

THE SISTERS OF NOTRE, MARANHA, BRAZIL:

Sister Nancy Simonds  
Sister Joan Krimin  
Sister Rebecca Spires  
Sister Dorothy Stang  
Sister Mary Carol Clemens  
Sister Jo Anne Depweg

Sister Mary Alice McCabe  
Sister Mary Jude Dahrieo  
Sister Therese Drummond  
Sister Loretta Mary Jordan  
Sister Barbara Ann English  
Sister Marlene De Nardo  
Sister Marie Damien Chavez

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