



THE NATURE OF THE CHURCH AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH GOVERNMENT

Adopted by the Tenth General Convention of The American Lutheran Church (GC80.6.85) as a statement of the policy and practice of this Church. Ballot vote tally: Yes—734; No—92; Abstain—31.

A. INTRODUCTION

An increasingly complex society has produced growing interdependence and interaction among groups, persons, and resources in the governmental, economic, and voluntary sectors. The government's responsibilities to maintain equity and order have led both the churches and the state into greater contact and, at times, into tension. As governmental bodies seek to perform their roles and the churches seek to fulfill their missions, each needs to be aware of the other's purposes, principles, and methods. In their endeavors, both the churches and the government have the task of formulating and clarifying position statements and guidelines for implementation and application when appropriate.

The Lutheran Council in the USA, a cooperative agency of The American Lutheran Church, Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches, Lutheran Church in America, and Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, is aware of rising concern within its participating bodies over governmental activity in matters affecting the churches and their ministries. There are instances in which laws, rulings, and regulatory procedures on the part of government appear to infringe upon the churches and their agencies and institutions. Governmental efforts to define the nature, mission, ministries, and structure of religious organizations are likely to continue. These developments have raised questions within the Lutheran churches about the right and competence of government to define the nature, mission, ministries, and structure of religious bodies.

The Lutheran Council recognizes that an ongoing process of communication within the Lutheran family of churches and with other religious bodies and organizations in the voluntary sector is proper and timely as response is given to the government. Government officials need to be informed about the positions and perspectives of the Lutheran churches.

On these grounds the Lutheran Council convened a consultation on church-state issues which resulted in the following statement and recommendations. The report of the consultation was adopted by the council's 1979 annual meeting on May 16 in Minneapolis.

B. STATEMENT OF AFFIRMATION

Church and Government in God's World

God's omnipotent activity in creation is dynamic; that is, it is living, active, and powerful in all human affairs. The structure and politics of civil and Christian communities are determined and arranged by tradition, circumstances, and needs.

Lutherans acknowledge the twofold reign of God, under which Christians live simultaneously. God is ruler of both the world and the church. The church is primarily the agency of the Gospel in the new age of Christ, while the state is primarily the agency of the Law in the old age of Adam.

Given the balance of interests and differing responsibilities of the churches and the government in God's world, the Lutheran churches advocate a relationship between the churches and the government which may be expressed as "institutional separation and functional interaction."

Both the churches and the government are to delineate and describe the proper and responsible extent of their functional interaction in the context of God's rule and the institutional separation of church and state.

2. Institutional Separation

In affirming the principle of separation of church and state, Lutherans in the United States respectfully acknowledge and support the tradition that the churches and the government are to be separate in structure. As the U.S. Constitution provides, government neither establishes nor favors any religion. It also safeguards the rights of all persons and groups in society to the free exercise of their religious beliefs, worship, practices, and organizational arrangements within the laws of morality, human rights, and property. The government is to make no decisions regarding the validity or orthodoxy of any doctrine, recognizing that it is the province of religious groups to state their doctrines, determine their polities, train their leaders, conduct worship, and carry on their mission and ministries without undue interference from or entanglement with government.

a. *The Church's Mission*

1) The central mission of the church is the proclamation of the Gospel; that is, "the good news" or promise of God that all persons are forgiven by and reconciled with God and one another by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

2) The church is the fellowship of such forgiven and reconciled persons united in Jesus Christ and guided by the Holy Spirit to be sons and daughters of the Father. In and through that fellowship Christians express their love for, confidence in, and reliance upon God through worship, education, social action, and service.

3) The church is also the people of God called and sent to minister under his authority in his world. God also calls the church to be a creative critic of the social order, an advocate for the needy and distressed, a pioneer in developing and improving services through which care is offered and human dignity is enhanced, and a supportive voice for the establishment and maintenance of good order, justice, and concord. Another mark of the presence of the church in the world is in its ministries involving activities, agencies, and institutions through which the church and society seek to fulfill their goals in mutual respect and cooperation.

4) Lutherans hold that their churches have the responsibility to describe and clarify to their members and to society the mission of the Lutheran churches and to determine, establish, maintain, and alter the various forms through which that mission is expressed and structured.

5) The distinctive mission of the churches includes the proclamation of God's Word in worship, in public preaching, in teaching, in administration of the sacraments, in evangelism, in educational ministries, in social service ministries, and in being advocates of justice for participants in the social order.

6) On the basis of their commitment to him who is both Lord of the church and Lord of the world, Lutheran churches establish, support, operate, and hold accountable their congregations, agencies, institutions, schools, organizations and other appropriate bodies.

7) While church bodies have differing polities, it is fitting to describe them, including their duly constituted agencies, according to their ecclesiastically recognized functions and activities.

8) Lutheran churches have the authority, prerogative, and responsibility to determine and designate persons to be professional church workers, both clergy and lay; to establish criteria for entrance into and continuance in the functions carried on by professional church workers; to create educational institutions for training professional church workers; and to provide for the spiritual, professional, and material support of such persons. Such support extends throughout the preparation for, activity in, and retirement from service in the several ministries of the churches.

9) Lutheran churches have the authority and prerogative to enter into relationships, associations, and organizations with one another; with overseas Lutheran churches and bodies; with other Christian fellowships or other religious groups on regional, national, and international levels; and with voluntary or governmental agencies which the Lutheran churches and other groups deem helpful and fitting to their respective purposes.

b. *The Government's Role*

1) According to Lutheran theology, the civil government's distinctive calling by God is to maintain peace, to establish justice, to protect and advance human rights, and to promote the general welfare of all persons.

2) As one of God's agents, government has the authority and power in the secular dimensions of life to ensure that individuals and groups, including religious communities and their agencies, adhere to the civil law. The churches and their agencies in the United States are often subject to the same legislative, judicial, and administrative provisions which affect other groups in society. When necessary to assure free exercise of religion, however, Lutheran churches claim treatment or consideration by government different from that granted to voluntary, benevolent, eleemosynary, and educational nonprofit organizations in society.

3) Government enters into relationships, associations, and organizational arrangements with nongovernmental groups, including churches, according to the nation's laws and traditions, in order to fulfill its God-given calling and without compromising or inhibiting the integrity of either the groups or the government.

4) Government exceeds its authority when it defines, determines or otherwise influences the churches' decisions concerning their nature, mission, and ministries, doctrines, worship and other responses to God, except when such decisions by the churches would violate the laws of morality and property or infringe on human rights.

3. Functional Interaction

Lutherans in the United States affirm the principle of functional interaction between the government and religious bodies in areas of mutual endeavor, so that such interaction assists in the maintenance of good order, the protection and extension of civil rights, the establishment of social justice and equality of opportunity, the promotion of the general welfare, and the advancement of the dignity of all persons. This principle underscores the Lutheran view that God rules both the civil and spiritual dimensions of life, making it appropriate for the government and the churches to relate creatively and responsibly to each other.

In this functional interaction, the government may conclude that efforts and programs of the churches provide services of broad social benefit. In such instances and within the limits of the law, the government may offer and the churches may accept various forms of assistance to furnish the services. Functional interaction also includes the role of the churches in informing persons about, advocating for, and speaking publicly on issues and proposals related to social justice and human rights. From the Lutheran perspective, the church has the task of addressing God's Word to its own activities and to government. The U.S. Constitution guarantees the right of the churches to communicate concerns to the public and to the government.

a. The Church's Responsible Cooperation with the Government

1) The church relates to the interests of the state by offering intercessory prayers on its behalf. Christians are called to offer supplications and thanksgiving for all persons, especially "for kings and all who are in high positions" (1 Timothy 2:1).

2) The church relates to the interests of the state by encouraging responsible citizenship and government service. The church has always admonished its members to be "subject to the governing authorities" (Romans 13:1) out of respect for the civil power ordained by God.

3) The church relates to the interests of the state by holding it accountable to the sovereign law of God, in order to provide judgment and guidance for those leaders responsible under God for the peace, justice, and freedom of the world.

4) The church relates to the interests of the state by contributing to the civil consensus which supports it. Especially under the U.S. system, which provides for wide participation, the church has the responsibility to help create a moral base and legal climate in which just solutions to vexing political problems can take place.

5) The church relates to the interests of the state by championing the human and civil rights of all its citizens. Christians believe that under God the state exists for people, not people for the state. In addition, the church may volunteer its resources as a channel for meeting the needs of society through cooperation with government.

b. The Government's Responsible Cooperation with the Church

1) The state relates to the interests of the church by ensuring religious liberty for all.

2) The state relates to the interests of the church by acknowledging that human rights are not the creation of the state.

3) The state relates to the interests of the church by maintaining an attitude of "wholesome neutrality" toward church bodies in the context of the religious pluralism of our culture.

4) The state relates to the interests of the church by providing incidental benefits on a nonpreferential basis in recognition of the church's civil services which are also of secular benefit to the community.

5) The state relates to the interests of the church by providing funding on a nonpreferential basis to church agencies engaged in the performance of educational or social services which are also of secular benefit to the community.

C. PUBLIC POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The foregoing "Statement of Affirmation," prepared by the Lutheran Council's Consultation on the Nature of the Church and Its Relationship with Government, speaks in broad terms about a Lutheran understanding of the appropriate relationship between church and government, under God, which has been described in terms of "institutional separation and functional interaction."

The consultation applied this understanding to a number of concrete issues presently confronting Lutheran churches, their agencies and institutions in their relationship with government. The following recommendations, which deal with current issues, illustrate ways our churches can address future issues and should be understood as relating to the "Statement of Affirmation."

1. Religious Liberty

We affirm in principle the civil right of the free exercise of religion by a wide variety of groups in our pluralistic culture. We acknowledge that the constitutional guarantees protecting religious beliefs are absolute. However, we recognize that those guarantees governing religious practices are not absolute. The violation of human rights and the breaking of just laws in the name of religion are deplored by our churches.

Recommended:

That the Lutheran Council encourage the participating churches to oppose any attempt by government to curb religious liberty through criminal and/or administrative measures focused at groups, except in cases posing a grave and immediate threat to the public's health, safety, or welfare.

2. Regulatory Processes

Lutheran churches, together with other churches and voluntary organizations, perceive a trend toward greater governmental intervention and regulation leading to erosion of civil and religious liberties.

Recommended:

That the Lutheran Council urge Congress to review the regulatory processes, to ensure that they afford adequate notice and opportunity to the public to study and respond to proposed regulations and rulings.

3. Integrated Auxiliaries

Prior to 1969 most religious organizations, including churches and their related agencies, were exempted from filing informational returns with the Internal Revenue Service. The Tax Reform Act of 1969, however, stipulated that all organizations exempt from taxation under Section 501 (a) of the Tax Code would henceforth have to file an annual informational Form 990 return—except churches, their "integrated auxiliaries," conventions and associations of churches, the exclusively religious activities of any religious order, and exempt organizations with gross receipts under \$5,000 annually. The law involves the reporting of information; no payment of taxes is involved.

The problem for the IRS since 1969 has been to define "integrated auxiliaries," since that term had no legal meaning and no common definition among religious groups. In February 1976 the IRS issued proposed regulations which had the net effect of providing for all churches a single and extremely narrow definition of

religious mission. Protests by a number of religious organizations led to some modifications in the "final" regulations issued in January 1977, but the regulations continue to be restrictive. Explicitly excluded from the definition of "integrated auxiliaries" are church-related hospitals, orphanages, homes for the elderly, colleges, universities, and elementary schools, although elementary and secondary schools are exempt from filing.

The heart of the issue is that the regulation relative to "integrated auxiliaries" seeks to impose on the churches a definition of "religious" and "church" which the churches cannot accept theologically, one which constitutes an unwarranted intrusion by the government into the affairs of the churches. The narrow definition introduces confusion within the churches and their agencies and institutions. Questions are raised in the agencies and their constituencies about whether these ministries are considered to be part of the churches' mission. It also leads the government to attempt other intrusions into the activities of the churches and church-related agencies and institutions, e.g., the Department of Labor's stance in the unemployment insurance tax issue (see section 5, below).

Our churches would probably not object to the disclosure of most of the information required by Form 990 by those agencies and institutions of the church whose ministries appear to have counterparts in the public sphere, if such requirement of disclosure were not predicated upon a denial that those ministries are an integral part of the churches' mission. But the churches object on principle to having any of their ministries, including their agencies and institutions, be treated as "not religious." These agencies and institutions perform ministries which are essential to the churches' mission and must not be put in a different category from the strictly sacerdotal functions of the churches.

Recommended:

- That the Lutheran Council encourage the participating churches to seek statutory change which will recognize the religious character of the churches' ministries through their agencies and institutions;
- That the Lutheran Council encourage the participating churches to urge selected agencies and institutions to initiate a court test of the present IRS definition of "integrated auxiliaries." The intention of such action would be (a) to assure the churches' agencies and institutions that the church bodies continue to consider them an integral part of their mission; (b) to assist Congress in achieving a better understanding of this issue; and (c) to achieve a court ruling restoring the recognition of the integrity of the churches' ministry through their agencies and institutions.

4. IRS and Private School Desegregation

A religious organization, as other organizations otherwise entitled to a tax-exempt status, cannot claim the exempt status and at the same time operate contrary to established public policy on racial nondiscrimination. Withholding or withdrawing of the tax exemption by government must be based on an organization's racially discriminatory policy or practice determined on facts within a framework of due process. Presumptions on general circumstances or external conditions are inadequate for this purpose.

On August 22, 1978, the Internal Revenue Service issued a "Proposed Revenue Procedure on Private Tax-Exempt Schools." The proposal set forth guidelines which would be used by the IRS to determine whether such schools are operated on a racially discriminatory basis and whether they are entitled to tax exemption

under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code. On December 5, 1978, the IRS held hearings on the proposed revenue procedure. At that time, Lutheran church bodies presented testimony opposing the proposed procedure. On February 9, 1979, the IRS revised its original proposal. The revised revenue procedure is a reasonable procedure for dealing with racial discrimination by private schools. It may have been unnecessary, but it is not objectionable.

Recommended:

That the Lutheran Council urge the participating churches to support the withholding or withdrawing of the tax-exempt status of organizations which, in fact, have a policy or practice of racial discrimination.

5. Unemployment Insurance Tax

To understand the current issues involving the churches' exemption from unemployment insurance coverage, the following points must be remembered:

First, the statutory exemption from coverage under the unemployment insurance law is based on structure, i.e., "church," "convention or association of churches" and "organization operated primarily for religious purposes." The Department of Labor is trying to qualify this by reading into it a functional test, narrowly tied to worship.

Second, elimination of the exemption would seem to have only a negligible impact on free exercise of religion. The direct effect would be paying a tax. There would be an indirect effect of possibly paying a higher tax (depending on experience rating) based upon discharging employees for what the organization might regard to be misconduct on religious grounds but which the government would decide was not such misconduct.

Both religion clauses of the First Amendment are violated when the government establishes an exemption based on structure and then applies it on the basis of the government's perception of whether an activity is or is not religious or sufficiently religious.

Recommended:

That the Lutheran Council, while not necessarily opposing legislation which would eliminate the churches' exemption from unemployment insurance coverage, encourage the participating churches to oppose efforts by regulatory agencies of government to include the churches in unemployment insurance programs by definitions that appear to be contradictory to existing legislation.

6. Public Funding and Regulation of Church-Related Education and Social Services

Education and social services are the tasks of society as a whole. These are public services. When churches contribute to the fulfillment of these public services, they may accept a measure of public support and a concomitant degree of monitoring by government on behalf of the public. That is, government may provide assistance on a nonpreferential basis in recognition of the public services and benefits provided by church-related educational institutions and by social service agencies and institutions of the churches. In relation to these public services, government regulation of church-related institutions and agencies is not per se objectionable.

Recommended:

- That the Lutheran Council urge the participating churches to object when governmental regulation of church-related educational institutions and social service agencies or institutions violates due process, exceeds statutory authority or infringes on First Amendment guarantees;
- That the Lutheran Council encourage the participating churches to join when possible, with other members of the voluntary sector in objecting to unreasonable regulations. Only when there is a bona fide constitutional question at stake should the Free Exercise Clause be invoked as the basis for objection to regulation;
- That in order to maximize the access of citizens in our pluralistic society to education and social services from agencies and institutions of their choice the Lutheran Council encourage the further exploration and assessment of all constitutional means of government support for a variety of social and educational services at all levels, whether public, private, or church-related.

7. Specialized Ministries of Clergy

Church and government are presently interacting in two sets of circumstances involving the specialized ministries of the churches' clergy. One has to do with specialization in pastoral counseling and the other with chaplaincies in specialized settings. Both of these ministries are more often conducted apart from and on behalf of congregations than through specific local congregations.

The point of intersection between church and state with respect to specialization in pastoral counseling is where governmental units seek to license or otherwise regulate such ministries. The normal counseling dimension in the work of parish pastors is not a part of the issue.

The points of interaction between church and state with respect to chaplaincies in specialized settings have to do with the right of churches to have adequate access in order to serve persons in such settings, the right of individuals in those settings to have access to the ministries of the churches, and the best way to combine these two rights of access.

Attention is drawn to the statement defining pastoral counseling and suggesting standards for certification and accountability approved by the Lutheran Council's Division of Theological Studies and Department of Specialized Pastoral Care and Clinical Education and by the council itself. Additionally, two studies are currently underway in the DTS in consultation with the DSPCCE: one on state licensure of pastoral counselors and the second on institutional chaplaincies.

Recommended:

- That the Lutheran Council encourage the participating churches to establish standards of approval and accountability for professional pastoral counselors and urge the states to recognize the status of such pastoral counselors;
- That the Lutheran Council urge the participating churches to maintain their right of access to restricted environments (e.g., prisons, hospitals, and the military) in order to serve people in those environments, assert the right of people in such environments to access to the ministry of the church, and assert that these two rights of access are best served when qualified persons are integrated into the total function of that environment.

8. Regulation of Lobbying Activity

Advocacy on behalf of justice is an integral part of our churches' mission. The "substantiality" test as applied to lobbying activity requires that "no substantial part" of the income or activities of any tax-exempt organization may be directed toward "carrying on propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation" (Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code). Such a test unfairly penalizes, through the threat of loss of tax exemption, those churches which regard public advocacy as part of their mission. Moreover, the effect of this test is to give preferred status, in violation of the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment, to those churches which do not participate actively in the debate on public policy.

Recommended:

That the Lutheran Council urge the participating churches to resist in principle the "substantiality test" as applied to lobbying activity by the churches.

Regulation of lobbying activity may jeopardize the constitutional rights of freedom of speech and freedom to petition the government for redress of grievances which, in turn, is contrary to the interest of open government and the public's right to be informed on issues. It is the responsibility of those who sponsor legislation that may seriously jeopardize those rights guaranteed under the First Amendment to certify that there is a compelling need for government intervention and regulation.

Lobby disclosure legislation which has been proposed extends its scope beyond those organizations engaged in major and continuing lobbying activity. It would, in fact, lay heavy burdens upon small, nonprofit organizations and thus limit many of the services they render in search of peace, justice, and human rights.

Recommended:

That the Lutheran Council publicize the arguments it has set forth as testimony on March 14, 1979, before the House Subcommittee on Administrative Law and Governmental Relations, Committee on the Judiciary, stating opposition in principle to many of the components of far-reaching lobby disclosure legislation.

Lobby disclosure legislation which includes provisions requiring the reporting of grass-roots lobbying and the disclosure of the names of contributors will substantially restrict the free exercise of religion. Such legislation may well result in intimidation of the churches in carrying out their mission because of the massive record keeping that it would require. Disclosure of names poses a potential threat to those who might be inclined to address specific issues through contributions to the churches. Such legislation could also lead to excessive entanglement of government in the work of the churches.

Recommended:

That the Lutheran Council urge the participating churches to oppose any lobby disclosure legislation which would substantially restrict the free exercise of religion.

The method for enforcing any lobby disclosure requirements is an important issue. Criminal sanctions are inappropriate in that they lead to intimidation of those who would be inclined to address government and thus will have a chilling effect on free speech and the right to petition the government.

Recommended:

That the Lutheran Council recommend that the participating churches continue to oppose criminal sanctions within the context of any present or future lobby disclosure legislation.

9. Fund-Raising Disclosure

Lutherans support in principle the concept of fund-raising disclosure. The members of this consultation gladly endorse voluntary reporting of financial operations by church-related and other charitable organizations and encourage the maintenance of an informed giving public. However, in saying this, we are not endorsing every legislative or administrative effort that may be proposed to implement disclosure.

While aware of legitimate interest in curbing past abuses, we oppose federal legislation and regulation which would encompass the entire charitable community in an effort to reach and expose the activities of a very small number of fraudulent operators who solicit money from the general public.

There is no compelling need for legislation requiring charitable solicitation disclosure, given existing laws. Broad and inclusive legislation in this area would likely lead to an expansion of bureaucracy and could create serious constitutional difficulties.

Recommended:

That the Lutheran Council urge the participating churches to oppose any legislation relating to fund-raising disclosure which leads to an unwarranted expansion of government bureaucracy without a justifying and compelling need, an unwarranted and excessive entanglement by government in the affairs of the church, or an unconstitutional involvement by the government in defining the church, its mission, ministry, or membership.

10. Tax Exemptions and Deductions

Religious organizations receive a number of tax exemptions and deductions under state and federal law. However, not every benefit of exemptions and deductions presently enjoyed is indispensable to the free exercise of religion. Lutherans in the USA must never be willing to subordinate their right to such free exercise of religion in exchange for, or as a condition of, the continuation of all benefits of exemptions and deductions currently in effect.

Recommended:

- That the Lutheran Council lend its support to coordinated efforts to ensure the continuance of all proper tax exemptions and deductions for all organizations in the voluntary sector, including religious organizations, as long as acceptance of these exemptions and deductions does not jeopardize constitutionally protected religious rights and freedoms;
- That the Lutheran Council urge repudiation of the concept that exemptions and deductions for organizations in the voluntary sector are tax expenditures.

11. Enhancing the Importance of Charitable Contributions

Studies have shown that changes in tax forms to simplify filing have had an adverse effect upon charitable giving. To reverse this trend, legislation has been introduced to make the charitable deduction available to all taxpayers, whether they elect the standard deduction or itemize their deductions.

Allowing a separate charitable deduction for all taxpayers whether or not they itemize their other deductions would (a) represent an important incentive to personal giving to voluntary human services, (b) recognize the unique nature of the charitable deduction in contrast with other currently itemized deductions, (c) democratize the charitable deduction's base by extending its use to most middle and low-middle income taxpayers, (d) reverse the current trend toward decreased use of this deduction, and (e) avoid the regulatory and related governmental requirements associated with direct forms of federal assistance.

Under another proposal such a charitable deduction for all taxpayers would be allowed only if the charitable contributions exceed a certain amount or percentage of income (the "floor"). Establishing a "floor" would negate the positive effects of a proposal which permits all taxpayers to deduct gifts to charity on their individual income tax returns.

Recommended:

- That the Lutheran Council continue to support legislation that would allow all taxpayers to take a deduction for their charitable gifts, whether or not they itemize their other deductions;
- That the Lutheran Council inform its participating church bodies and the Congress of the justification and need for such a deduction;
- That the Lutheran Council continue to oppose any new limitations, such as a "floor," on the use of the charitable deduction.

D. IMPLEMENTATION OF CONSULTATION GOALS

For implementation of the goals of the consultation on church-state issues, the following actions were taken by the annual meeting of the Lutheran Council in May 1979:

- Adopted the above report of the consultation as a policy statement for the guidance of the work of the council;
- Authorized the general secretary of the Lutheran Council to have the report and the recommendations as adopted printed and distributed to the church bodies participating in the consultation;
- Authorized the general secretary of the Lutheran Council or his representative to present testimony thereon before committees of the Congress, legislative bodies, and agencies of government as opportunity arises, the precise testimony in each instance being subject to approval by the presidents of the participating church bodies or their appointees;
- Requested the presidents of the four participating church bodies to nominate persons for election by the council to constitute a continuing consultative committee of seven, responsible for studying church-state issues, this committee to meet at least twice a year with the staff of the council's Office for Governmental Affairs;
- Authorized the appointment by the general secretary of the Lutheran Council, in consultation with the executive director of the Office for Governmental Affairs, of a committee of legal consultants, including lawyers drawn from the four participating church bodies, to meet on call of the general secretary for deliberation of legal aspects of church-state issues;

- Authorized the Office for Governmental Affairs in cooperation with the Division of Theological Studies and the Division of Mission and Ministry to hold a follow-up consultation with representatives of other church bodies and others interested in matters considered by the consultation;
- Referred the report and recommendations of the consultation as adopted by the council to the participating bodies for their endorsement in substance.



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