

To: 2017 CELC Convention  
From: CELC Reformation Anniversary Committee  
Re: *Ninety-Five Theses for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*

## **A. Background**

The 2014 CELC Convention authorized the appointment of a CELC Reformation Anniversary Committee and approved the writing and distribution of a new set of *Ninety-Five Theses* in honor of the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation. In June 2016, the CELC Planning Committee approved fifteen pastors from around the world to serve on this committee. With internet collaboration, this Reformation Anniversary Committee prepared a new set of *Theses*, which they are pleased to present to the 2017 CELC Convention for official approval, along with some plans for publication and use.

## **B. The Content of the *Ninety-Five Theses for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century***

The new *Ninety-Five Theses for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* are a simple summary of the basic teachings of the Bible as confessed in the Lutheran Church. The *Theses* follow the outline of Luther's Small Catechism, which is treasured as a teaching tool throughout the churches of the CELC.

With these *Theses*, CELC churches have a chance to confess their Lutheran faith jointly to the world, giving thanks to God for what they have received as heirs of the Lutheran Reformation.

## **C. Official Approval of the *Theses***

The CELC Reformation Anniversary Committee is looking for the 2017 CELC Convention to approve the *Ninety-Five Theses for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, hopefully on the first day of the convention—Thursday, June 29.

If there is something that should be changed in the wording of the *Theses*, proposals can be discussed and voted on at the convention. The Anniversary Committee hopes that such proposals will be few and reserved for matters of substance and not minor editorial matters. The draft that is being shared has been reviewed by the CELC Theological Commission and others, in addition to the fifteen members of the Anniversary Committee.

## **D. Publication of the *Theses***

Northwestern Publishing House (NPH) has been engaged to prepare a high quality English edition of the *Theses*. The NPH layout is being shared with convention attendees in a preliminary "Draft for Grimma." This edition is not to circulate beyond the convention.

Once the wording of the *Theses* has been formally approved, the official publication will be produced. NPH will print copies with a color cover and will make them available. The digital file will be posted on the CELC website in a pdf format, so interested individuals can print their own copies, if desired.

The digital file of the NPH layout will also be available in a Microsoft Word format, if any church would like to remove the English and substitute a different language, keeping the same format.

#### **E. CELC Recording of the *Theses***

The Bethany Lutheran College Media Department is planning to prepare a video recording of people from around the world reading the new *Theses*. Such a recording should be a nice way to confess our common faith.

A large portion of the recording will be done at the Grimma convention. Each church body represented at Grimma will be invited to have one person record several theses. Thomas Nass (WELS) will arrange the schedule, and Paul Fries (ELS) will do the recording.

If English is not used by a church body, the representative of that church will read his portion in his own language. This means that he or someone else will have to translate that portion. There will be a teleprompter available in Grimma to display the text for everyone while they are reading.

When the video is prepared, English captioning will be added, along with five Luther hymns, recorded by choirs at Bethany Lutheran College and Martin Luther College.

#### **F. Use of the Recording on October 31 and Other Dates**

On October 31, the video presentation of the *Ninety-Five Theses for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* will be streamed from the WELS website for people around the world to watch. The video presentation will also be uploaded to the CELC website, so people anywhere can watch it anytime they want.

Members of our churches can be invited to use this as a way to celebrate the Reformation anniversary in their homes. Some congregations may like to gather as a group to watch the presentation or to use it in a special worship service.

### **G. Other Uses for the *Theses***

CELC churches and individuals are encouraged to use the *Ninety-Five Theses for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* in additional ways—whatever works in their particular setting. The suggestion was made that a Bible study or worship service be prepared to supplement the *Theses*, but neither of these was prepared by the CELC Reformation Anniversary Committee. Such items could be prepared by others. Each church is invited to think of ways to use the *Theses*.

### **H. CELC Reformation Committee Members**

The following were privileged to serve as the CELC Reformation Anniversary Committee.

Prasad Babu	India	Christ Evangelical Lutheran Ministries
Jorge Briones	Mexico	Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Church
Kesten Chinyanga	Malawi	Lutheran Church of Central Africa—Malawi
Oyvind Edvardsen	Finland	St. John’s Evangelical Lutheran Congregation
Alexei Feringer	Russia	Concord Evangelical Lutheran Church
Albrecht Hoffmann	Germany	Evangelical Lutheran Free Church
*John Moldstad	USA	Evangelical Lutheran Synod
*Thomas Nass	USA	Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod
Takeshi Nidaira	Japan	Lutheran Evangelical Christian Church
Anders Nissen	Sweden	Lutheran Confessional Church in Sweden
G. J. Ananda Raju	India	Lutheran Mission of Salvation—India
Medi Sutrisno	Indonesia	Gereja Lutheran
Fainos Tarisayi	Zambia	Lutheran Church of Central Africa—Zambia
Juhani Viitala	Finland	Lutheran Confessional Church in Finland
Tor Jakob Welde	Norway	Lutheran Confessional Church in Norway
* Co-Chairmen		