

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN SOUTHERN AFRICA (N-T)

Reference for Members of Church Synod in preparation of Synod Meetings

I. Reference for Members :

1. The Church Synod is made up of the following:

48 elected lay people	48
12 elected pastors	12
5 ecclesiastical council	(5 max.)
7 church council	(7 max.)
<u>6 members co-opted by church council</u>	<u>(6 max.)</u>
78	78 (max. no. of delegates)
2. It is the intention of the constitution that lay members be in the majority. Thus the constitution underlines the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers and takes their responsibility seriously.
3. Members of the church synod are not bound to directions, commissions or requests of their respective congregations. Of course, they may present any request their congregations might have, but they are bound solely to their conscience.
4. By electing a synod member, the electorate show their confidence that he/she will take the right decision following his/her conscience.
5. The conscience of synod members is bound to the scripture and to the creed as promised in their pledge, "*that the church in unity of creed and in communion of love, grow towards him who is the head of the church, Christ.*" In this way influences foreign to the church shall be eliminated.
6. All the same, decisions of conscience can turn out in different ways - for instance, to touch upon a difficult topic, one Christian may be in favour of military service, while another may decide against it.
7. Membership in church synod is honorary. Besides all their professional and private responsibilities, members of synod are requested to thoroughly prepare themselves for church synod. **This includes thoroughly preparing and informing themselves and discussing, together with the congregation all synod material, before and after the synod!**
This is no easy task, because many papers have to be studied. But it is an important duty because it is meant to serve the "*unity of creed*" and the "*communion of love*".
8. Because the members of synod serve in an honorary capacity and in their spare time, the documents for the synod are distributed at a very early stage.
9. It is recommended to go through the documents, paragraph by paragraph, making use of a *highlighter* pen and to make notes on the margin.
10. If you are new to the synod or if you need information, turn to any member of synod or to your pastor **before** the meeting of synod. This will contribute to smooth proceedings at synod.

II. What are the tasks of the Church Synod?

1. "Church Synod personifies the unity and diversity of the congregations, institutions and services. It is convened for the purpose of making joint decisions in the ELCSA (N-T). Together with the bishop and church council it carries the supreme responsibility for the life and service of the ELCSA (N-T). "
2. " The legislative power of the church shall be vested in the church synod. "
3. " (1) The following matters shall require a church law:
 1. the introduction, repeal or amendment of service books, catechisms and hymnals;
 2. regulations governing church life (rules for Christian living);
 3. regulations for elections;
 4. regulations governing the basic service relationships of pastors and other church workers;
 5. regulations governing contributions and fees;

6. regulations governing basic doctrinal and pastoral discipline;
 7. the execution and supplementation of church laws of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (UELCSA);
 8. the authorisation of agreements with other churches and inter-church amalgamations;
 9. regulations governing theological training and examinations;
 10. all matters, which according to other provisions of this constitution, require a church law.
- (2) A church law shall further be required for the amendment or repeal of an existing church law and for the regulation of any other church matter, which in the opinion of the church council or by virtue of a resolution of church synod should be regulated by church law. "
4. " (1) Bills may be introduced by church council or from the body of the church synod. They shall contain the full text of the proposed law and be accompanied by a statement of the reasons therefore.
(2) Bills emanating from the body of the church synod shall be signed by at least 15 of its members. "
5. " (1) Bills emanating from church council shall be communicated to the members of church synod not later than the date on which the latter are notified of the time and place of the meeting of church synod.
(2) Bills emanating from the body of the church synod shall be submitted to the church council not less than two months prior to the synodal meeting.
(3) Church council shall submit bills contemplated in section 78 (1) to the ecclesiastical council for consideration. "
6. " (1) Amendments to the constitution can be effected only by a church law. They require the affirmative vote of two thirds of all members of church synod.
(2) The basic article is unalterable. "
7. " (1) Church council may be empowered by a church law to make regulations having the force of law. Content, purpose and extent of the power granted shall be defined by the empowering law. Regulations shall refer to the empowering law.
(2) Church council may regulate matters which require a church law by a regulation having the force of law when the church synod is not in session, its summoning is not feasible and the settlement of the matter permits no delay. Such regulation shall be submitted to synod at its next meeting for confirmation. The church synod can approve it by a church law, repeal it or amend it. "



Host Müller
Bishop