

JOINT STATEMENT ON JUSTIFICATION FROM "THE REPORT OF THE LUTHERAN-EPISCOPAL DIALOGUE SECOND SERIES, 1976-1980" (Forward Movement Publications, 1981)

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Lutheran-Episcopal Dialogue II Joint Statements

Joint Statement on Justification

A. We the participants in the Lutheran-Episcopal Dialogue understand that our respective churches confess the gospel of Jesus Christ as God's saving word of grace to a fallen world. Together, we affirm that the gospel is

the good news that for us and for our salvation God's Son was made man, fulfilled all righteousness, died and rose again from the dead according to the scriptures. Through the proclamation of this gospel in word and sacraments, the Holy Spirit calls, works faith, gathers, enlightens and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on earth and preserves it in union with Jesus Christ in the one true faith. The Spirit thereby leads us into a life of service and praise of God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

B. At the time of the Reformation, Anglicans and Lutherans shared a common confession and understanding of God's justifying grace, i.e. that we are accounted righteous before God only for the merit of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, by faith, and not for our own works or deservings. This good news of salvation continues to comfort the people of God and to establish them in the hope and promise of eternal life. In preaching and teaching, in liturgy and sacraments, both communions confess the radical gift of God's grace and righteousness in the crucified and risen Jesus Christ to the human race, which has no righteousness of its own.

C. In the western cultural setting in which our communions, Episcopal and Lutheran, find themselves, the gospel of justification continues to address the needs of human beings alienated from a holy and gracious God. Therefore, it is the task of the church to minister this gospel with vivid and fresh proclamation and to utilize all available resources for the theological enrichment of this ministry.

D. In both communions the understanding of the term "salvation" has had different emphases. Among Lutherans, salvation has commonly been synonymous with the forgiveness of sins; among Episcopalians, salvation has commonly included not only the forgiveness of sins but also the call to and promise of sanctification. As we continue to listen to each other, may God grant that

justification by grace and the new life in the Spirit abound.

E. We rejoice in these common convictions, and recommend them to our churches for reflection and use.