

SENSE INC.

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18 November 82

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Lutheran World Federation*

Dr. Norman Barth, Director
Lutheran World Relief
15th Floor
360 Park Avenue South
New York City, New York 10010

Dear Dr. Barth:

As we discussed per our telephone conversation on November 17, I've enclosed a copy of the proposal from the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) to the American Lutheran Church to support development of a funding base to address indigenous peoples' concerns, enable American Indian leaders to meet with other representative indigenous groups, and raise domestic/international awareness of the current plight of indigenous populations. The ALC forwarded the proposal to the National Indian Lutheran Board (NILB) of the Lutheran Council in the USA. On November 12, the NCAI received a rejection letter from the NILB noting board "sympathy about the South American situation," but concluding that the NILB commitment is to North American Indians. As a somewhat rude aside, the NILB included a rather descriptive statement on current atrocities against South American Indians by a Mary Solberg titled, "Reflections on a Journey Through Central America" dated 11/5/82 (pages 11 - 13 of memo 82-43).

I discussed the proposal rejection with Dr. Sorenson of the ALC who referred me to Mark Thompson, Director of the ALC Division of World Missions, and to your Lutheran World Relief office. Thompson indicated that he had no available financial support and was currently supporting a "study" of the Central American situation by a former ALC missionary: Phil Anderson. According to Thompson, no funding would be available for over a year. There was a possibility for support after the study was completed.

According to my conversation with you, the Lutheran World Relief charter prohibits funding domestic concerns. Thus, the NCAI proposal is in a Catch-22 limbo in terms of ALC consideration. Hopefully, you would share this proposal with the Lutheran World Ministries for consideration.

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As you will note in the attached proposal, the time is appropriate for North American Indian involvement in expressing concern and acting on behalf of indigenous populations in Central/South America. As you know from experience, time is crucial to save indigenous peoples lives. Unfortunately, exploratory missions and year-long studies may produce mission schools and churches in the distant future, but it will do nothing to alleviate the continuing misery and suffering of indigenous populations.

Central and South American Indians have lived for centuries as peaceful societies. Their land, unfortunately, has increased dramatically in value in recent years. Motivated by politics labeling the Indians as communists or rebels, the ultimate objective is to control the land for government or personal/corporate gain. Genocide is the solution to this greed.

As you and Ms. Solberg have recently returned from Central America, we would appeal to your sense of Christian concern and humanitarian justice in helping the NCAI secure initial support in heightening public awareness to the atrocities committed against their indigenous populations. I am sure you are aware that any successful movement requires organized political coalitions and public vehicles to heighten general public awareness and indignation. Initial Lutheran support would place NCAI in a much stronger position to advocate on behalf of their brothers and sisters south of the border. Only a concerted and organized effort will halt these injustices! This proposal is but the first step towards increased financial and public support.

I look forward to your reply at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,



Joe Tallakson
President

Enclosure

cc: Joe DeLa Cruz, President, NCAI
Rudy Ryser, NCAI

JT:ab