

LWF Tenth Assembly ▪ Winnipeg, Canada ▪ 21–31 July 2003

For the Healing of the World

Official Report



The Lutheran World Federation

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**The Lutheran World Federation
Tenth Assembly
Winnipeg, Canada, 21–31 July 2003**

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LWF Tenth Assembly

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of the World**



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LWF Tenth Assembly, Winnipeg. Scarf-waving dancers grace the “LWF Presents Itself” plenary session.

Foreword

Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko

As we live through an Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) we are mindful of the fact that the church, by its very nature, is an assembly (*ekklesia*). The LWF is a communion of churches, which are themselves assembled—primarily in worship and in many other ways—in their own localities. As an ecclesial communion, the LWF also requires representative assemblies at various levels, including at the global level. Assemblies are necessary for joint counsel and action. They anticipate the unity of the church that we seek. They provide a setting for eucharistic fellowship—a place and opportunity for heal-

ing, sharing and strengthening of the many spiritual bonds that exist among the people of God.

The LWF brings churches from different nations into fellowship—some with fresh memories of wounds and scars from combat or discord with one another. Through God’s grace and the sharing of a common faith in Christ, they are constituted into one body.

One of the very concrete and evident aspects of an Assembly is the travelling involved—the temporary taking leave of one’s own setting to be with others in another place chosen specifically for that

purpose. Freedom to travel and cross borders is essential to enable people from different countries and regions to meet and build relations. But, as the Assembly experienced, such freedom of movement within the global village has become seriously hampered during the past two years.

of brokenness in our world showed its deep need for healing. Nonetheless, it was impressive to see hundreds upon hundreds of participants from over seventy countries gather at the St Boniface Cathedral in Winnipeg for the opening eucharistic service. The presence of so many people from different cul-

The Assembly plenary sessions took place in the Winnipeg Convention Centre.
© Winnipeg Convention Centre



"The Forks" in downtown Winnipeg has been an important meeting place for more than 6,000 years.
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D. Reede



Particularly painful for the LWF global communion was to learn that as many as fifty delegates, all from developing countries—including some of the world's poorest—would be denied visas and excluded from our Assembly. This small but direct sign

tures, church environments and nationalities was in itself a strong expression of the conciliar dimension of such an assembly. The greetings brought by ecumenical guests were an affirmation of the LWF as a partial expression of the church universal.

Delegates and official guests committed themselves to a future marked by joint action in many spheres of church life. Careful reading of this report will provide a picture of the broad range of commitments made by this Assembly, giving direction to the kinds of programs that the LWF and its member churches are likely to prioritize in the next period.

As in earlier Assemblies, daily business began with worship and Bible studies organized on a regional basis: Africa, Asia, Central Western Europe, Central Eastern Europe, the Nordic Countries, Latin America and the Caribbean, and North America. Each region presented a Bible study to illustrate how the selected

passage was experienced in that particular region; so the Assembly could experience the cultural diversity and flavor of the Lutheran communion.

As was the case at the LWF Ninth Assembly, the many topical issues of content were discussed in ten “Village Groups.” Every official participant was assigned to a “Village.” Each village provided its participants with a base from which they had an opportunity to effect the outcome of the Assembly. At the village level, participants could share with one another the life stories of their church, nation, and more. They reflected together on the theme, on presentations made in the plenaries, and on specific issues of common interest.

This official Assembly Report provides a formal record of the Assembly message, resolutions, commitments and public statements, and of the spoken addresses and sermons preached. Minutes of the Assembly will appear as a separate document. This report and the minutes are a vital aide-memoire for the LWF Council and member churches as they seek to define areas of joint action in God’s mission. Future generations will review what we did on the basis of these records.

Let me thank each and everyone who contributed to this Assembly—the member churches, the outgoing President, Council members, advisers to the committees, the former general secretaries of the LWF, ecumenical guests, media representatives, the staff of the Federation, and the many others who assumed leadership roles.

Very special thanks go to the host church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church



in Canada, its National Bishop Raymond L. Schultz and other bishops, the church staff and, not least, the large number of volunteers in yellow event bibs, who came to Winnipeg mainly from all over Canada, as well as from the United States, to do everything possible to lay the groundwork for a good Assembly.

1997 LWF Ninth Assembly, Hong Kong. Candles are lit at the beginning of the Sunday Festival eucharistic service marking the 50th Anniversary of the LWF. © LWF/P. Williams





LWF President Bishop em. Dr Christian Krause

The LWF from Hong Kong to Winnipeg

Address of the President

*Bishop emeritus
Dr Christian Krause*

Ladies and Gentlemen,
Sisters and Brothers,

This Assembly is both taking leave and making a new start. Those who were entrusted six years ago in Hong Kong with the leadership of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), and with accompanying and advising on its various programs, will come to the end of their term of office here in Winnipeg. Some will be setting out again

on that common path. Others will stay behind when the caravan moves on. The president is one of the latter.

At the end of our meeting, I shall undoubtedly still have plenty of opportunity to say the farewells. Nevertheless, I do not wish to begin my last “President’s Address” without expressing what moves me personally most at this moment between taking leave and making a new start, namely a deep sense of gratitude to God for the gift of communion in Christ which transcends all borders and divisions. And also my heart-felt thanks to the many people who have given me—and, when we traveled together, my wife and me—their

(Translated from the original German text.)

trust and overwhelming hospitality reaching out to us like brothers and sisters because of this communion. I then had the strength to persevere even when the strain was great. That gave me the resolve to also stand up for our cause before governments and the powerful of this world. In short, right at the beginning, my cordial thanks!

Another word of thanks, which I absolutely must express at the start, is addressed to all those who have prepared for this Assembly and made it possible. I thank our host church, its national bishop, Raymond Schultz, the church leadership, the congregations and the many preparatory groups of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada; I thank the staff in Geneva with the general secretary, Ishmael Noko; I thank our member churches and the many individuals who have contributed to preparing the content and, not least, to financing this enterprise which is so important for us.

... to make a tangible contribution to the *healing of the world*

When the LWF and, shortly afterward, the World Council of Churches (WCC) were founded in the middle of the twentieth century following the inferno of the Second World War, there was a great yearning for a new beginning in an atmosphere of peace and reconciliation. Even the enemies of yesterday were included in the new ecumenical fellowship that was evolving, when they opened their hearts, confessed their abysmal sin and asked their sisters and brothers for forgiveness. In the words of the Stuttgart confession of guilt, at the end of the Second World War the German Protestant churches faced up to their share of responsibility for dictatorship, war and the holocaust: “We accuse ourselves for not witnessing more courageously, for not praying more faithfully, for not believing more joyously and for not loving more ardently.” That was the start of a new ecumenical dawn in the middle of the twentieth century.

I was five years old at that time and experienced the consequences of capitulation in a refugee family, as did hundreds of thousands of other German, Russian, Polish, Czech and Jewish children. We received the famous “Care” parcels from North America. The LWF, which was just coming into existence, saw it as one of its most important tasks to alleviate the suffering of refugees in Europe. At the time, one in seven members of the Lutheran community was a refugee.

That is an indelible part of our founding history and for many of us it became the stimulus and leitmotif for an international church commitment to refugees and the poor—everywhere, in our member churches and beyond, in regions of crisis, hunger and war worldwide. I have the impression that in all these decades the real concern has always been to be able, out of fervent concern and desire, to make a tangible contribution to the *healing of the world*. And a lot has been achieved. Year in, year out, thousands of our sisters and brothers work in the crisis regions of the world, often at risk of their own lives, building huts and digging wells, caring for the starving and sick, and demonstrating that they are mediators and peacemakers: help where help is needed irrespective of the victim’s background. Thus, today, the LWF has become one of the major partners of the UN’s refugee agency, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

There are so many stories I could tell about my visits to our member churches: stories of healing, stories of reconciliation, stories of people who had reached rock bottom but were helped back onto their feet by the solidarity of sisters and brothers. There are so many signs of hope among us, lesser and greater miracles resulting from trust in God’s mercy. And I am profoundly grateful to be able to pass on the stories, to be an ambassador of the reconciliation that we experience in Christ. At this point, I am happy to express my respect and appreciation to our more than 5,000 field staff of LWF World Service.

Yet here we are today, bewildered, helpless, shocked, and we cannot believe our eyes: the world is falling apart. In the aftermath of the revolution of 1989/90, we have been incapable of taking advantage of the new freedoms that accompanied the liberation from the all-pervasive East-West conflict, so as to enable justice, peace and the integrity of creation to become the global criteria for action in a global community. On the contrary, from the very beginning of the new millennium there has been evidence that humankind is afraid of itself, is not sure of itself and is prepared to inflict violence upon itself at any moment.

“Are not all our conferences perhaps really born of an abysmal anxiety that it is in fact already too late to make good from the despair what can no longer be made good? Does not each of us who is a serious member of this conference live through hours in which a feeling comes over him and will not leave him, that it is too late, that it is all up with the church of Christ...? ...my friends, in all honesty, which of you has not known that anxiety that everything which we undertake here as church action could be too late, superfluous, even trivial?”¹

On 29 August 1932, Dietrich Bonhoeffer asked these self-critical, penetrating questions as youth secretary at a conference of the World Alliance for Promoting International Friendship Through the Churches, gathered at Gland near the lake of Geneva in Switzerland.

I believe we cannot avoid asking the same questions; we cannot and must not just get on with our agenda without first facing up to our own real situation in an equally self-critical way. It is impossible to ignore that we, as part of worldwide Christianity, are caught up in profound contradictions: military and economic power, affluence and civil liberties, have accumulated to an unprecedented degree in the one third of humankind which has been marked by the

Christian tradition. Hunger, poverty, disease, underdevelopment, political dependency and refugee movements are primarily characteristics of the part of the world in which other religions and cultures predominate, or where Christian inculturation has been experienced relatively late and not infrequently only as a consequence of an imperialist policy of expansion. However well meaning we may be, as Christians we have no solutions and are first and foremost part of the problem.

In 1932, Dietrich Bonhoeffer gave an answer which I wish to recall today because it points us to the heart of our being church and to the place where conversion begins. He said, “What are all so-called attempts at international reconciliation, all the attempts at mutual understanding, all so-called international friendships—necessary as they are in themselves—in the light of this reality? Such organizations are nothing, nothing, blown down like a house of cards...”

“...Christ must become present to us in preaching and in the sacraments just as in being the crucified one he has made peace with God and with men. The crucified Christ is our peace. He alone exorcises the idols and the demons. The world trembles only before the cross, not before us.

“And now the cross enters this world out of joint. Christ is not far from the world...his cross is in the midst of the world. And this cross of Christ now calls wrath and judgment over the world of hate and proclaims peace. Today there must be no more war—the cross will not have it.”²

Set up the cross in a world that is falling apart? If we take that seriously, it means that we ourselves will be standing beneath the cross with our own lives that are falling apart, with our own unwillingness to be reconciled, and all the petty disputes which rob us of the energy for common witness and action. The cross is the place

of transformation from which we go through death to life and see life through death. This glimpse which hope has of life, this glimpse of “the dawn from on high,” opens our eyes to reality as it really is. “The believer sees reality not in a certain light, but he sees it as it is and believes *only in God* and his power towards all and over all that he sees.”³

What has that to do with our Assembly? We are not here as individuals interested in this or that problem, nor to represent the interests of our churches and countries; not to promote what we believe to be best for the world and also not as a church organization with an international purpose. Rather we have gathered as the worldwide church of Jesus Christ responding to his call. We come together to hear Christ. And we have gathered in the confidence that in the voices of brothers and sisters we can hear the voice of Christ himself, that we shall not escape this voice but take it most seriously, listen to it and love others precisely in their otherness. *Solus christus*, Christ alone, as we confessed together with the Roman Catholic Church in the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification (JDDJ), is the only reliable source from which healing flows to us, and which first enables us to experience salvation ourselves in the midst of our contradictions.

***Solus christus*, Christ alone ... is the only reliable source from which healing flows to us**

In light of these fundamental reflections, I shall again review some of my experiences during the six years of our time together. In so doing, I shall limit myself, above all, to the main themes of our annual Council meetings.

In 1997 in Hong Kong—immediately following the return of the former crown

colony to the People’s Republic of China—when we set out on a new stage as a Federation, we did so with the relatively certain conviction that the revolution of 1989/90, with the collapse of the vast Soviet empire, had substantially changed the international system of coordinates and would continue to do so. In the accelerating processes of economic interchange with the related crises and crashes in South East Asia and Argentina, we recognized new threats to political stability. Our member churches in the southern hemisphere spoke very critically about neoliberalism.

Against that background, my first address to the Council as president in 1998 in Geneva was titled “Life Is More – Concerning God’s Justice amidst Humankind.” My concern was to identify the social and political implications of the doctrine of justification as they had become clear to me especially during my first continental journey visiting our Lutheran churches in Central and Latin America. There can be no peace without justice. And there can be no justice as long as human life is reduced to food and clothing, the market, business, achievement and success. Therefore, “...strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well” (Mt 6:33).

In order for this “added value,” to which the gospel points, to go on influencing the shaping of human life, we shall have to continue the battle resolutely in the future as well. We have been pursuing this theological and—inseparably from it—this socio-ethical line in the past years, and the JDDJ was also able to demonstrate its relevance precisely in this connection.

After nearly 500 years of bitter conflict which divided Europe and caused wars, persecution and displacement, Lutherans and Roman Catholics have been able to state together that the doctrine of justification by grace alone through faith is the central Christian message also for the twenty-first century. It is a great joy for me that we were able to reach this understanding; it is also the most significant

theological outcome of the years during which I was allowed to lead the LWF.

The doctrine of justification is certainly not some distant theological dispute, far removed from the reality of our lives; it concerns the decisive experience of faith. Whatever we do as Christians and churches, and wherever we may do it in this shrinking world, the salvation of the world, like the salvation of our own lives, does not depend on us. It is the result of God's grace alone. Without God's grace there can be no justice. That is true for all of us: for the affluent societies of the North as well as for the poor in the South.

At the 1999 meeting of the LWF Council in Bratislava, Slovak Republic, we discussed the right to cultural identity and integrity. For me, the starting point for the question of culture was the experience following 1989/90 that, even for the post-communist societies of Central and Eastern Europe in which, with the exception of Poland, Christians had normally become minorities, the Bible had nevertheless remained or was again to become the key to understanding their own culture and values. So I was able to observe on many visits to our churches in Central and Eastern Europe how strongly the churches had been involved in the process of European re-cultivation and that they serve as pillars on which bridges could be laid to a new, united Europe.

As Europe comes closer together after all the years of profound political and ideological division, it remains a key question how, in view of the challenges we face in our time, a community of values and action can develop which has roots in the Christian tradition and is open at the same time to other religious cultures. In this context, the statement of a leading representative of the Hungarian government during a conversation when I was visiting Budapest is of relevance: "One cannot be a European without knowing the Bible."

We welcomed the new millennium in January 2000 in Rome with an ecumenical worship service to which the Pope had

invited leading representatives of the Orthodox churches, the WCC and many Christian world communions including the Anglicans and Lutherans. That was a hopeful ecumenical beginning.

A few months later, at the 2000 Council meeting in Turku, Finland, we analyzed and acknowledged the new quality of relations between Lutherans and Roman Catholics. Even the appearance of the declaration *Dominus Iesus* did not change that. *Dominus Iesus* was not intended as a document against the Lutheran churches but, rather, defines for the Roman Catholic Church internally the Roman Catholic understanding of the Church which it feels must essentially be maintained. Indeed, we have all become somewhat more sensitive when core areas of our faith are concerned.

So, at what point do we say, "That is something we cannot give up." For us as Lutherans it is the "fourfold *solus*": Christ alone, the Holy Scriptures alone, by grace alone, through faith alone. That alone is what we cannot renounce because it is the foundation of our church. Concentrating on this core gives us the freedom to believe that unity is still possible even where others close doors for the sake of traditions. That is the reason why we can talk with everyone. Therefore we know we are called to the table of the Lord with all the baptized in the worldwide "community of communities," to celebrate Holy Communion where he is the host for us all. He alone! We also wish that our Roman Catholic sisters and brothers will be able to keep this invitation open ecumenically, and we go on repeating this wish for the sake of communion in Christ.

It is important for us to preserve this openness and commitment which has a theological basis—and to do so both internally and outwardly. Confessional ignorance or relativization leads to arbitrariness. Ecumenism is not a question of shades of gray. On the other hand, confessionalist exclusiveness, which is primarily interested in drawing moral or

other kinds of lines against others, leads us into an anti-ecumenical ghetto. In fact, openness **and** binding commitment are equally constitutive for the ecumenical dimension of the Lutheran confession and the clear stand of the *communio lutherana*.

The next two meetings of the Council, 2001 and 2002, had each been planned for Jerusalem but were held in Geneva, the city of Calvin, and in Wittenberg, the city of Luther, because the unending spiral of violence made it inadvisable to hold an international meeting in the Holy Land. But we took up the theme of our Palestinian sister church and it became one of our central concerns: “The Church – Called to a Ministry of Reconciliation.” We have invested much time and effort and money in the ministry in the Holy Land. For this I should like to thank all those who have been prepared to postpone their requests for support so that, for example, the Augusta Victoria Hospital, the schools, educational institutions and, above all, the congregations have been able to continue their vitally important ministry. I shall be coming back to this later, but at this juncture I wish to express my great respect for our church there under the committed leadership of our brother, Bishop Munib Younan, and to assure him and his church of our unfailing solidarity.

These few comments on the Council meetings during our period in office must suffice as “spotlights” for now. The whole breadth of the programs and plans will be spelled out further in the general secretary’s report later on.

To get an impression of where we stand today and of the decisive prospects for tomorrow, allow me now to broaden our discussion still further and take a look at the condition and development processes of Christianity on a global scale.

If I start by looking at our Lutheran communion, there have been major, far-reaching changes. When the LWF was established in 1947, it had forty-seven member churches almost exclusively from countries of the North Atlantic region. Today,

the figure has almost tripled with 136 member churches from seventy-six countries. And we can observe that this considerable extension of the global network of the LWF essentially comprises churches and countries in the southern hemisphere. This tendency is growing year by year. Behind these bare figures, there is a shift in emphasis from the North to the South which has considerable consequences theologically, ecclesiological and substantially that go far beyond size as such.

I should like to try and illustrate that briefly on two levels.

In the North Atlantic region, there is growing interest in strengthening the Christian world communions and in developing forms of ecumenical cooperation and community between them. With the exception of the JDDJ between the worldwide Roman Catholic Church and the LWF, the most important agreements along these lines have been based exclusively in the North Atlantic area and their validity is limited to that region—be it Leuenberg, Porvoo or Meissen for Europe, or the developments in Canada and the USA. Naturally, we must welcome the fact that the churches of the Reformation have found the way to new forms of communion among themselves and with the Anglican Church and others. But all of that seems only marginally to affect the reality and life of the churches in the South. It rather seems to mean dealing with the European history of theology and the church in order to improve and extend the ecumenical capacity of the North. The same applies to the often painstaking struggle to find forms of spiritual communion with the Orthodox churches. It is hard to tell at present what consequences these ecumenical processes will have at the North Atlantic level for the historical churches and confessional families. Will there be a missionary upsurge? The massive effects of secularization and of the religious and ideological vacuums left after the political changes of 1989/90 call urgently for a reshaping of the church at all levels. But some

of the old churches have become tired and are revolving around their shrinking size.

The developments at present in our member churches and among Christians in general in the southern part of the world are totally different. Instead of shrinking membership like in many parts of the North, here we can often observe considerable growth. The explosion of numbers relates first and foremost to charismatic, spirit-filled congregations and communities. In the place of a parochial focus with its institutions and organizational structures, they comprise very diverse expressions of spiritual movements. Whether it be in the *favelas* of Latin America or the townships of South Africa, among the nearly 200 million Dalits, those without caste or rights throughout India, or among the so-called “shepherds” in the impoverished urban and rural areas of Madagascar—everywhere, and usually in situations of abject poverty, people are celebrating their communion in Christ, allowing themselves to be carried by the power of God’s spirit into dimensions of hope and salvation in places where otherwise hopelessness and brokenness set the tone.

Expressions of spirituality lived out in this way have long since also reached the historical churches in the regions of the South. That also applies to the Lutherans. The tremendous growth of the Lutheran church in Madagascar would be unthinkable without its considerable success in integrating the “shepherds,” the popular charismatic movement.

My last visit abroad before this Assembly was to the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY). I have had close contacts with this church since the early 1970s. At that time, it had about 700,000 members and was thus approximately as big as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Brunswick where I was bishop until recently. Whereas the latter now has close to 420,000 members, meaning it has shrunk by about 40 percent, since that time the EECMY has just topped four million. When I emphasized that full of admiration, and praised the

church leadership for their great missionary success, I also found myself looking into worried faces among my Ethiopian brothers and sisters. “We are growing beyond control.” Things are getting out of hand. Normal administrative structures are not sufficient to manage, and funds are running out on all fronts, while they are badly needed to create an organizational structure that reaches everyone, and to have enough theologically trained workers.

Whether it be in the *favelas* of Latin America or the townships of South Africa ... people are celebrating their communion in Christ...

One thing seems clear to me: the future of the Christian community in the world and its effect on the destiny of humankind will mainly depend on whether and how the historical confessional churches can be successfully integrated with the diverse charismatic congregations and movements, or if it is at least possible to hold them together in an ecumenical alliance. In this, the WCC, above all, will have a key role. Do we already know how and whether we are able to pray and work together at all? Shall we stand up together for common concerns? And who will integrate whom? Finally, what does charismatic expression here and well-ordered establishment there imply for the cohesion of a Christian world communion which believes itself on the way to a *communio*, to a committed global communion? Will the theological heart in the proclamation of the gospel dry up here in the face of indifference and individual arbitrariness or a non-committal discourse about general values, and will it be swept away there by speaking in tongues, spirit-filled healing worship and ecstasy?

These questions are still absolutely open. They are extremely serious because, at the same time, they raise the question of how the Christians in the world, and with them the

international Lutheran community, will be able to meet the special challenges of the twenty-first century. In what follows, I should like in all brevity to try and take this up in order, as I hope also to contribute a few ideas to the discussions of the next few days on the future shape of the LWF and its programs.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, the world's appearance has changed dramatically. For almost half a century it was divided into two major power blocs: the West and the East, NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] and the Warsaw Pact. Each had an enormous arsenal of nuclear armaments at its disposal. This mutual, mortal deterrent for decades safeguarded a peace which was in fact always threatened. Under the surface, innumerable "proxy wars" were taking place.

Beneath this East-West conflict there was a new, constantly growing conflict, namely, that between the North and South, between the rich and poor parts of the world. Anyone who knew not only the North (as was always the case in the LWF) was aware that the North-South conflict was certainly less dangerous in a military sense (simply because the South never was capable of posing a military threat to the North) but seen in the long term, knew that politically it was more important for the survival of humankind.

Poverty and AIDS are the first great challenge for the international community in the twenty-first century.

That is exactly how it turned out. The East-West conflict is now history. The Soviet Union has disappeared. Europe has surmounted its division. The USA and Russia are no longer enemies but partners.

But the North-South conflict is still going on or, rather, it is becoming more acute each year. The gap between rich and poor countries is getting wider and wider. In the poor

parts of the world, the population is growing more quickly than the economy, and environmental resources are becoming scarcer. In many countries, political instability predominates and can even lead to anarchy and civil war, and sometimes—like at present in northeast Congo—even to genocide.

And then, in addition to all this suffering, there is also AIDS, the modern scourge of humanity. More than 40 million people worldwide have been infected with the HIV virus and more than 20 million have already died of AIDS—most of them in the poor countries of the world. In those countries—according to UN predictions—half of today's 15-year-olds will finally die of this disease, even if the rate of infection decreases in the next few years. If it does not, then two thirds of the young people will die of AIDS.

Those are unbelievable, shocking figures. We can hardly imagine the human catastrophes hidden behind the figures. At the same time, this disease implies a terrible economic disaster for these countries. Indeed, very often the developmental successes achieved with great difficulty again will be destroyed by the consequences of AIDS.

Poverty and AIDS are the first great challenge for the international community in the twenty-first century. The second challenge is peace. When the Soviet Union vanished from the face of the earth, and with it the East-West conflict, many political prophets thought this was the start of an age of eternal peace. They were mistaken.

I do not know how many wars are being fought in the world at present. Each one is one too many. We all remember one war which has only just come to an end—the war in Iraq. It has taught us three things:

- The only remaining superpower, the USA, is now militarily so superior that it does not need to fear any military opponent in the world. And it has resolved to use war as a political means when that serves its own interests.

- The UN did reject this war by a majority in the Security Council but were too weak to prevent it. And the protests by millions of people right around the globe had no effect.
- International law cannot safeguard peace if the USA do not respect this international law and prefer to replace it by the right of the mighty one.

But in the twenty-first century peace is not only threatened by wars which states wage against one another. That danger, in my view, will probably decline. Instead, there is a new threat to world peace. Namely, private violence unrelated to the state. It occurs in two forms: where national order disintegrates it takes the form of anarchy and “warlords” take control (often engaging child soldiers to fight for them, as presently in Liberia). The other form of privatized violence is terrorism. As a rule, it is not the product of mere delight in violence. It is used rather as a last weapon by people who feel humiliated and express their hopeless inferiority by hatred and destruction.

That does not make this violence more attractive because its victims are almost always innocent civilians, whether on Bali or in Jerusalem, in Nairobi or Dar es Salaam, in Washington or New York. For the twenty-first century, it is no longer sufficient for states to commit themselves to resolve their mutual conflicts by peaceful means. They need to form global alliances to combat terrorism together and to guarantee their citizens civilized life in society. But it has also become clear that the fight against terrorism cannot be separated from the struggle for justice and human dignity.

In the process, a major new challenge has arisen, namely, the question of how the world community deals with religious communities and their radical fringes. Unfortunately, this question is closely related to the fight against terrorism. There is no doubt that the most dangerous expressions

of international terrorism in recent times have had a primarily Islamic background. The assassins of 11 September 2001 were all fanatical Muslims. Osama bin Laden’s al Qaeda proclaims its “Holy War” in the name of Allah. That was behind the terror attacks in various parts of the world.

But, precisely because this is the case, what really matters is that we should not equate Islam or any other religion per se with terrorism. Some 1.2 billion people in the world are Muslims. Only a minute number of them sympathize with terrorism. Fundamentalism can be found equally in other religions, including Christianity and Judaism. All three Abrahamic religions have the potential on the one hand, for violent fanaticism and, on the other, for enlightenment and tolerance or, politically speaking, for the rule of law and separation between church and state. The struggle against terrorism must embrace all countries of the world as far as possible, also and especially those with a predominantly Muslim population. But it must never become a clash of civilizations or even of religions. What is imperative for the twenty-first century is not a crusade against Islam but peace among religions and a common struggle of the religions against terrorism and its contempt for human beings.

What is imperative for the twenty-first century is not a crusade against Islam but peace among religions...

In these major challenges of the twenty-first century, what is the role of Christians and especially of Lutherans? Are we still needed at all? Did the Christian voice play an important part in the major disagreements that preceded the Iraq war? Of course, Pope John Paul II spoke out with unusual intensity. That was also registered worldwide. And the LWF took a clear stand in statements by the Council and Executive Committee. In this connection, I want

to express my respect and thanks especially to the representatives of our member church in the USA which emphatically supported our appeals. But at the same time we must ask self-critically: What were we really able to achieve?

Or we can look at the Palestinian conflict where there is a life-threatening confrontation between Judaism and Islam. Are there any expectations toward Christians in view of this conflict? Does anyone believe they can work convincingly for a de-escalation of violence and to restart the peace process, or are they perceived like the rival confessions in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem: noisy, divided, incapable of peace among themselves and therefore completely incapable of serving as peacemakers between Jews and Palestinians?

The conceptions of a “just war” are just as ineffective today as those of radical pacifism.

I believe we Christians have grounds for modesty when we reflect on our role in the conflicts of this world. But we should also not exaggerate this modesty. In certain areas we, the Christian churches, have genuine, long-established competence. Probably first and foremost in relation to the issue of poverty. This competence comes from the center of our faith. The gospel is a gospel of the poor and for the poor. God’s justice does not capitulate when faced with the injustice of the world.

We stand on firm ground not only in the theological context. We also have a lot of experience from five decades of church cooperation in development. However, we also often have had to correct our views. Today we recognize that, behind all the idealism with which we initially entered into this cooperation, there was quite an amount of false superiority on the European side. We did say at the time that we

did not want to prescribe things for the churches in the South but rather to listen when they said what they needed. But behind this there was the hidden assumption: You will tell us the problem and we will tell you the solution. Today we are aware, not only that we frequently did not know the solution, but also that we ourselves have been part of the problem which needs solving. Indeed, our wealth would be unthinkable without the poverty of the poor.

We Christians also have experience with peace. In the course of decades of ecumenical community, we have learnt to stand up for peace on a global scale. We have banned war as a means for states to deal with their conflicts. We do not believe that security can be guaranteed by military threats.

But we also have to admit two things. Firstly, we do not agree among ourselves. And the US government which engaged in the war against Iraq was also supported in that by millions of pious US Christians. Secondly, in our theology of peace one big problem still remains unsolved: The conceptions of a “just war” are just as ineffective today as those of radical pacifism. This becomes particularly obvious when we look at the threats to the world from privatized violence unrelated to the state. Naturally, on the part of the church there can be nothing other than a resolute “No” to terrorism with its horrifying toll of civilian lives. But are we prepared on the other hand, where terrorism is the despairing though misguided response to humiliation and poverty, to join actively in working to change the situation?

Finally, the encounter between Christianity and Islam: This problem is especially dear to my heart because it is so new for most of us. There has been intensive dialogue between Christians and Jews at many levels in the past decades—also within the framework of the LWF. Both sides have benefited from that. But the massive, unavoidable compulsion to dialogue has often only become so intense as a result of the experience of the Holocaust.

Must there first be a similar catastrophe before Christians and Muslims begin a dialogue with one another?

At present, we know far too little about one another. The world of Islam with its strong religiosity, fidelity to tradition and its apportionment of roles for women, which we find unacceptable, is foreign to most of us and makes many feel uneasy. Foreignness and fear give rise to prejudices and prejudices between religions can become dangerous—church history is full of examples.

So we have to begin to get to know one another, to become curious about one another and to invite one another. That is easier said than done. But how would it be if the leadership of Christian churches tried to enter into dialogue with leading representatives of Islam; if theological faculties were to start a dialogue with Islamic scholars (which would presuppose that the former begin to read the Koran); and, above all, if structures could be set up so that young people from both sides could meet and learn from one another?

Here we must be clear about one thing, in Islam as a whole, and not just on its terrorist fringes, a tremendous amount of anger and often also of hatred has accumulated against the West and its way of life. In the eyes of most Muslims, we Christians are part of the West—and therefore part of the problem. The fact that the president of the USA expressly cited Christian convictions in favor of the Iraq war was the best confirmation of such Muslim prejudices. As long as we go on deceiving ourselves about this, the dialogue cannot succeed.

Thus, there must be no crusade against Islam. What we need instead is dialogue with a will for peace and which therefore tries to strengthen the potential within Islam which is geared to non-violence, tolerance and human rights. So it is a matter of attempting to find common ground, very much as we have done in the internal Christian ecumenical dialogue. For the relations between the Christian churches, after many years of effort we have adopted

the formula “reconciled diversity.” Should we not work for the same goal of “reconciled diversity” in the relations between Christianity and Islam?

At Beit Jala in the Holy Land, our Lutheran member church there is working on a beautiful project, “Abraham’s House,” in which many churches and congregations from all over the world are involved. This is a place where the children of Abraham, namely, Jews, Muslims and Christians, are to enter into conversation with one another in the quest for peace that we wish for, invoking the one God. We need to build many such “Abraham’s Houses” in this world. I would wish that Lutherans and Lutheran churches devote plenty of energy and enthusiasm to this construction work for peace!

Where is the LWF Going?

The motto chosen to guide this Assembly has been taken from a visionary text of the Bible. In the imagery of the Book of Revelation, two women are contrasted: the whore, Babylon, (Rev 17:1) and the bride of the Lamb (Rev 21:9). On the one hand, the threat to the world, the one world power, Rome, dominating everything and trampling everything under its feet, a real and painful experience for all those who crossed its path. On the other, the Heavenly Jerusalem visible only to the Seer, the great vision of the new heaven and the new earth, of a new creation: living water and the tree of life with leaves that serve as therapy for the nations (Rev. 22:1-2), in other words, “for the healing of the world.”

The heavenly Jerusalem is not built by human beings. The forces for healing the broken and wounded come “from the throne of God and of the Lamb” (Rev 22:1), not from the weapons manufacturers and power centers of this world and also not from our own ability and action. *Sola gratia* still applies; we can hope for healing only from the fullness of God’s gifts of grace; *sola fide*, on that alone can we set our trust.

That is the last and perhaps the only hope of the poor. This is where you can

understand the power of the cross. This is where God's closeness is celebrated, which promises healing in the midst of the slums of this world. This is where frontiers are transcended and bridges come into existence spanning the yawning gaps between North and South, poor and rich; and this is where we can dare to speak hopefully about a *communio*, a new communion in Christ. Can we really do so?

Would it be possible, at least within the limited framework of a confessional but nonetheless also worldwide communion, to commit to each other in this way? The call for *communio*, which has been discussed among us with growing intensity in recent years, is not primarily a call for humanitarian aid in view of poverty and AIDS—however important that may still be, but a call to a worldwide community of trust and hope in discipleship of Jesus Christ. Are we ready for this—the rich with the poor?

For the future work of the LWF, I consider it more important to link and coordinate the relevant local or regional initiatives and information on a global scale, rather than devoting much effort to distributing the constantly decreasing funds for individual inter-church projects after appropriate examination by the Geneva staff. The *communio* does not need administrative centralism! The special character of the LWF structure must be used better in view of the new challenges, namely, so that the regional or national member churches, which commit themselves to a binding *communio*, are brought out of their provincialism or individualism into a global dimension of prayer and action, into a community of sharing: the gospel—the good news of the Savior for the poor.

The Christians in the South, and thus especially among the poor and those who are in so many ways underprivileged and deprived of their rights, are growing in numbers with a great wealth of forms of spirituality, and their charismatic movements are increasingly changing the historical churches and their Christian world com-

munions as well. Here, too, high priority must be given to using the global instrument of the LWF so that we do not witness new splits, breaks and alienations instead of a consolidation of the *communio*. Years ago, I proposed a conference on the subject of the charismatic movements, which was then held in Arusha, Tanzania. But that is not sufficient because there are hardly any tangible results available. There is also an essential issue for theology. Can we formulate a common conception of the church—and even of a confessional church—and live it out? However much progress may have been made by the ecumenical dialogue between the historical churches themselves in many places, the challenge to dialogue and to common witness to the faith is still just as real between these churches and the charismatic movements. It is a major concern of mine in this context to mention a third group of Christian churches and communities which must also be included in the common search for a common path of discipleship of Jesus Christ. I am referring to the more conservative evangelical churches and congregational groups, especially in North America, which, at present at least, have a lasting and—as I have tried to show—extremely problematic influence on US foreign policy and thus on prevailing world politics. We need to talk about this together and must not just go our separate ways.

Anyone who wants to contribute to overcoming religious fundamentalism with all its dangers including terrorism and, at the same time, to preventing neo-liberal arbitrariness and lack of commitment, must start by putting their own worldwide Christian house in order. We need new ecumenical models in order to meet one another, also across our internal barriers, to deal constructively with existing controversies and to be able to celebrate worship together. I suspect that models of this kind will take more the form of movements of faith than of institutional church structures. We shall need to try things out with plenty of imagination and commitment.

Once again, I wish to emphasize for the LWF that theological work is also required here. I remember how in 1970, when I was a staff member of the LWF, the decision was taken to change the “Theology” department into a department of “Studies.” Whether because of a bad conscience or general uncertainty, theology was later added to studies again in the name of the corresponding LWF department. The LWF general secretariat has had a separate office for ecumenical relations. The Strasbourg Institute for Ecumenical Research, France, often only has a loose link with all of this. That is not a convincing approach and does not promise the drive required for our contribution to the ecumenical theology and ecclesiology so urgently needed.

Let us expand our view even further to include interreligious dialogue, in this case above all between the children of Abraham. There, too, both things are needed: openness and respect for others, inquisitiveness to learn something new and the wish and will to find and to follow common paths to peace. That again requires major involvement of the LWF as an international coordinating and supporting instrument in the ecumenical concert. Otherwise the distortion and perversion of the struggle for oil and water into a religious war can scarcely be excluded.

The demand for dialogue with the world religions and especially with Islam includes the demand that we clarify our own position and express it distinctly. If you do not show your colors, your color cannot be recognized. At this point the LWF has wavered uncertainly in recent decades, changing its “Department of World Mission” into one of “Church Cooperation” with much feeling at the Assembly in 1970, and finally adopting the usual addition process to call it “Mission and Development.” One can debate the name but the mandate must have clear content. The basic stand of faith in the Savior Jesus Christ and the core message of Holy Scripture must be distinct, constantly brought up to date, audible and acceptable to others. If one has

nothing more than arbitrariness to offer or a retreat into the private sphere, one is not fit for dialogue beyond one’s own realm, nor for proclamation in the congregation. “A city built on a hill cannot be hid” (Mt 5:14). The clear, public confession of Jesus Christ remains the mission of all Christians in the twenty-first century as well.

There are enormous tasks ahead of us. Under the cloak of poverty and AIDS lies a seemingly boundless amount of injustice, hunger, sickness, refugee movement, oppression and humiliation at all levels of human existence. In the next few days, that will be spelled out further in the Village Groups. The task will be to mark out paths to justice and to preserving the dignity of God’s creation and to identify such paths for the future work of the LWF. The same applies to drawing up models of unity, global understanding and reconciliation to bridge the painful rifts that threaten peace in this world of ours.

Under such a heavy burden of unavoidable tasks, we could only break down or at least become resigned if there were no hopeful perspectives and no clear indications of the goal. However true it may be that we cannot build the heavenly Jerusalem in our own strength, it is equally true that, when we trust in the grace and mercy of God, God’s power grows within us like within the leaves on the tree of life—so that we can serve for the healing of the world.

... when we trust in the grace and mercy of God, God’s power grows within us like within the leaves on the tree of life...

So we take up the call to plant the cross of Jesus Christ in the midst of this world which is falling apart: God with humanity in the very depths of poverty, suffering and fear. “...he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away.

And the one who was seated on the throne said, 'See, I am making all things new'.¹ (Rev 21:4-5). May this dimension of faith which emanates from the theme of the Assembly inform our work here and in the years ahead of us in an encouraging way.

May God bless you and all of us—that we may discuss with commitment, joyfully celebrate our communion in Christ, take wise decisions and in everything follow Jesus as true disciples. God be with you!

Notes

¹ *No Rusty Swords*. Letters, Lectures and Notes 1928–1936 from the Collected Works of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Vol I. New York and Evanston: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1965, p. 183.

² Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *ibid.*, p. 187.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 183.

LWF General Secretary
Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko



Address of the General Secretary

Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko

Introduction

I greet you delegates, representatives of member churches, official and ecumenical guests, visitors, colleagues and friends. Finally, we are here. Canada was once described by a leading historian as a land of incredible possibilities, and the prairie provinces as the “home” of Canadian hospitality. This is truly confirmed by the way we have been received by the host church. In this connection, let me express gratitude to the Evangelical

Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) through its National Bishop Raymond L. Schultz, the synod bishops, retired bishops and members of the church council. We are aware that countless hours of dedicated work have been invested beyond the call of duty by the Assembly Local Committee, the staff of Canadian Lutheran World Relief, pastors, students, and numerous volunteers.

We are grateful to them and the many others who assisted in relating to the political authorities in relation to the denial of visas to some Assembly participants. With gratitude, I acknowledge the role played by the various provincial and federal parliamentarians who supported our request, and by the media in drawing the

attention of the Canadian churches, the public and international community to this issue. We deeply regret that, despite these efforts, some representatives of our global communion have been prevented from joining us here in this Assembly.

I wish to recognize the presence of Bishop Dr Margot Kässmann of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hanover who will deliver the keynote address tomorrow morning, as well as the responders to her address, Bishop Dr Wesley Kigasung of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea and Ms Virginia Ivañez de Neyeloff of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Venezuela. I also recognize and welcome, among our numerous distinguished guests, Dr André Appel, former general secretary of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF). I am asked to convey to the Assembly the greetings of former LWF Presidents Dr Gottfried Brakemeier and Dr Mikko Juva, as well as former General Secretary Bishop Dr Gunnar Stålsett, who regret they are unable to be with us.

Six years have passed since we gathered in Hong Kong, China, for the Ninth Assembly. We were inspired and moved by the mission-centered theme: “In Christ—Called to Witness.” We adopted commitments intended to give strength to our resolve to be witnesses to God’s love for the world and to work together in the Lord’s Vineyard.

This Assembly has the responsibility of reviewing the work of the Federation since 1997 described in the printed six-year report, *From Hong Kong to Winnipeg 1997-2003*,¹ and submitted to the Assembly by the General Secretary on behalf of the Council. Though the six-year report already was made available on the LWF Web site some weeks ago, the printed version could not be mailed out in advance due to circumstances beyond our control; so delegates received the report only upon arrival. This report will be highlighted tomorrow in the sessions devoted to “The LWF Presents Itself.”

In my remarks to you today, I wish to draw your attention to some selected aspects of our work and purpose as a communion.

We Live in a Wounded World

The church is called to witness its faith in Christ as savior and healer. In this task, it is continuously challenged by the ever-changing contexts of a world broken by sin. But this world is God’s world. And as church we must in faith do our utmost to consider the world and live in it with what we believe is God’s own love and concern.

Two years ago when the theme of this Assembly was chosen, we were mindful of the fact that the world is a wounded world. Since that time developments around the globe have confirmed the significance and timeliness of this theme. In Trondheim, Norway, the Conference of European Churches recently held its assembly around a similar theme, “Jesus Christ Heals and Reconciles – Our Witness in Europe.” Next year, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) will hold its general council in Accra, Ghana, under the theme, “That All May Have Life in Fullness.”

War and violence have continued to beset communities, people and nations throughout the world. The war against Iraq is only one illustration of how political leaders resort to violence to further their national interests. Other civil conflicts of different intensities also have taken place or are taking place in countries such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Colombia, Israel/Palestine, Zimbabwe, and again Liberia, in which LWF member churches strive to be faithful witnesses to the gospel in the midst of bloodshed. In a number of conflicts, particularly in Sudan, Nigeria, Indonesia, Israel/Palestine, and in the confrontation between India and Pakistan, religious intolerance and extremism have fueled the tensions.

As a result of the events of 11 September 2001, fear of terrorism has imprinted itself on the consciousness of the global community. The international environment we face today, as churches seeking to respond to Christ’s call, has been fundamentally reshaped by those events, and especially by the political and military reac-

tions to them. In addition, the war against Iraq presented the world community with a stark and unappealing choice between impunity for dictators on the one hand, and submission to a unipolar hegemony on the other. The implications of this choice, and the consequences of the actions ultimately taken, will confront the international community—and the churches—for years to come.

The last few years also have been a time of continuing injustice, suffering and escalating violence in Israel/Palestine. Very recently, fragile signs of hope have begun to reemerge. We pray for the realization of that hope—for the sake of the Palestinians who have been subjected to occupation, domination and daily humiliation, and for the sake of the Israelis who have lived in permanent fear of suicide bombers. Our prayers also must accompany the churches of the Holy Land as they continue, in the midst of violence and hatred, to preach the healing word of the gospel and contribute whatever they can to the promotion of peace.

Since our last Assembly, we have witnessed further intensification of the process of globalization and its effects on all spheres of human life, including the life of the churches. Globalization has contributed to the undermining of oppressive political systems. New mechanisms for globalized justice and against impunity, such as the International Criminal Court, have come into existence. Human rights have attained increasing prominence in international affairs. These aspects of globalization are cause for hope.

Yet on the other hand, we are aware of the ambiguity of globalization. The unifying trends have also been accompanied by worsening fragmentation, marginalization and division. In a world of instantaneous electronic communication, an estimated 80 percent of people worldwide have never heard a dial tone, let alone sent an e-mail or surfed the Web. Economically, inequality of wealth and well-being and the tragic conditions of the poor have never been more

evident. Socially, though trends differ from place to place, deprivation and dislocation seem visibly to be on the rise in many societies. An estimated 2.8 billion people, close to half the population of the planet and almost all of them in developing countries, live on less than USD 2 a day. According to a recent United Nations survey, the quality of life has actually declined in a significant number of countries over the last decade. The gap between rich and poor has never been wider. The devastation resulting from poverty is much more than the absence of material goods. It also inflicts spiritual wounds that undermine self-esteem, self-worth and self-confidence. It attacks the God-given dignity and equal value of every human being and, therefore, undermines any notion of community and communion.

The gap between rich and poor has never been wider.

Some churches, particularly in the Latin American region, have called for an ethical examination of the legitimacy of the crushing debt burdens of many developing countries. They see the need to confront a situation in which the demands of international creditors continue to be given priority over the basic needs of citizens and their right to self-determination. It is our conviction that globalization can be reshaped by policies that are formulated through institutions with proper international accountability, rather than by the global presumptions of the G8 leaders.

Efforts of the strong to push their own way forward, disregarding the needs and pleas of others, can only be detrimental to the healing processes that the world is yearning for. The main instrument for the common life of the international community is and must be the UN. Strong and coordinated efforts must be made to further develop the abilities of the UN to fill all the functions attributed to it by its member states.

Churches for the Healing of the World's Wounds

Our Christian faith is grounded in a paradox: the image and reality of the crucified Messiah. The divine healing power of the almighty God is expressed in suffering, sacrifice, woundedness and vulnerability. Through baptism and the Eucharist we are united with Christ, and as the body of Christ in the world the church must bear the marks of Christ's healing sacrifice. Its life must show forth Christ's devotion to the other, even unto death. The church must be ready to confront the powers and principalities in our global village that deny human dignity.

Within the complexity of this world, the church is gathered to be a communion (*koinonia*): a dynamic reality, a fellowship of God's people from every tribe, tongue and nation, marked by a life of unity in diversity, sharing in the apostolic faith.

This Assembly is itself one visible representation of the church. We who are here, from seventy-three countries, have been called together in the unity we share in our faith, despite many differences of culture, tradition and spirituality. We have come together as we are, carrying the wounds of our people and churches, as well as our own personal wounds. Our differences and woundedness are not to be covered up. We are here to listen and be open to the cries of one another, to say: "Your cry is my cry. Your joy is my joy."

In gathering the communion, God rejects the forces of alienation, fragmentation and divisions based on race, color, gender, age, culture, descent, social or economic status. As part of its contribution to the struggle against the many forms of social exclusion, the LWF has continued to advocate against racism, notably at the World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance; and, it has helped to place on the international agenda the special category of dehumanizing discrimination faced by the Dalits of South Asia.

In this world, we increasingly experience the politics of brute force and naked self-interest, yet the healing power of God is not the power of dominance. Communion with the Triune God and with each other determines a new relationship among the faithful. It is a divine gift, the meaning of which goes far beyond what we normally understand by the term "partnership." This term is often used in the commercial environment, where the quality of partnership depends on the contribution one is able to bring into the relationship. You are either a senior or junior partner. If the relationship breaks down, one is free to walk away from the agreement. However, the notion of communion from a theological/biblical perspective describes an entirely different type of relationship: mutual participation in common faith and life among members of a body. Life in communion is not based on a partial commitment of Christ but on the total emptying of Christ for our sake.

Applied to the LWF, the concept of communion designates the common life of member churches as a confessional community placed organically within the universal church. Built on our declared altar and pulpit fellowship, the communion of the LWF is an *ecclesial* fellowship and as such is operative as an instrument for common witness and service.

The member churches of the LWF are institutionally and legally autonomous with their own structures of ministry and governing bodies. The nature of the LWF as a communion is characterized by the interaction of the autonomous member churches in view of the common good, both within the Lutheran communion and ecumenically.

Baptism with water in the name of the Triune God is recognized ecumenically, and calls us to seek comprehensive eucharistic fellowship and mutual recognition of ministries. Ordination to the ministry, in the Lutheran understanding, is not carried out simply for the particular church in which it takes place. Ordination is, in principle, an ecumenical act, since it is an authorization to preach the gospel and administer the sacraments, which are

gifts given to the universal church. From this perspective, no church is autonomous in the sense of being independent from other churches. As churches confessing the one apostolic church, we belong together. We are interdependent ecumenically, and the members of the Lutheran communion express and serve this interdependence in concrete and committed ways.

The Instrument and Ligaments of the Lutheran Communion

Our altar and pulpit fellowship expresses our spiritual interconnectedness by which we are also united with the church universal. Without the binding power of the gospel, baptism and the Eucharist, the LWF could be like a civil agency but would not be a communion of churches. The LWF in its organizational form is an instrument of the Lutheran communion. It is through this instrument that the member churches witness together to God's love for the world.

Like a living body made up of diverse organs, the Lutheran communion requires "connective tissue," or "ligaments" to make the life of the communion possible and meaningful. The LWF has various institutional ligaments which serve the life of the communion:

⇒ *The Assembly* is the highest and most comprehensive expression of the Lutheran communion. It provides space for representatives from all the LWF member churches to confer together.

⇒ *The Council (with its various committees)* is also a vital ligament for the communion. It exercises its governing authority according to the LWF Constitution. The members of the Council represent the churches of the regions from which they come. This is the reason why the process of electing Council members by the Assembly involves a process of nomination by the member churches and consultation at the level of the LWF regions.

⇒ *The Secretariat* consists of the administration in Geneva, Switzerland, the field and regional offices. It prepares the work of the Assembly and Council and facilitates the implementation of their decisions. Executive staff members are appointed to the Secretariat by formally established procedures, following endorsement by their respective churches.

⇒ *The LWF National Committees* are responsible for the coordination and interpretation of the life and work of the LWF at the national level. In the nations where such committees have been established, their offices are the coordinating contact points between the Secretariat and member churches.

In addition to the institutional ligaments of the communion, communication among the Lutheran churches also is maintained through consultations and gatherings, and through conferences of bishops/presidents, women and youth, and other church representatives.

As another form of connection within the communion, there have been many visits and exchanges among member churches themselves, visits by the President, Vice-Presidents and other elected officials of the Federation as well as by representatives of the Secretariat. Associated with this Assembly, the program of pre- and post-Assembly visitations provides further opportunity for mutual encounter. All of these "journeys" are much more than mere travel. I see them as being very much in the apostolic tradition. In the apostolic tradition of the New Testament, guests from Burma [Myanmar], Sierra Leone, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo have visited sister churches in the northern hemisphere. These visits are of great importance. They help us to learn from each other about the life of the churches, their spirituality and the missionary tasks they face.

All these ligaments are not themselves the communion but are integral to its life. They enable it to function properly and

meaningfully as an international body and a spiritual fellowship. It is important, therefore, to strengthen these ligaments for the sake of our inner Lutheran unity and ecumenical cooperation.

In a real sense, theologically as well as practically, communion is *communication*. This is true in regard to sacramental theology and the understanding of salvation, as well as to the way we interact as individuals and as an organization within the “information society.”

Few things are changing as rapidly in our world as the means of communication. The LWF Secretariat is seeking to respond to the current challenges in this area by engaging member churches and partner organizations more actively in the development of communication strategies. Efforts also are being made to promote information exchange within the LWF constituency and between the LWF and ecumenical and secular media organs.

The LWF news service, *Lutheran World Information*, serves to maintain broad coverage of developments related to the life of the Lutheran churches globally, also paying attention to ecumenical developments. The LWF is a partner in Ecumenical News International (ENI) as well, which provides media around the world with important news related to the activities of churches and church-related organizations.

The Name of the LWF: Possible Change

The reports of successive Assemblies show how the LWF has matured theologically in its self-understanding. The 1984 Seventh Assembly in Budapest, Hungary, represents the most far-reaching change so far in the ecclesial character of the Federation, establishing altar and pulpit fellowship between all the LWF member churches. This development was affirmed by the LWF Constitution adopted by the 1990 Eighth Assembly in Curitiba, Brazil.

At the 1997 Ninth Assembly in Hong Kong, China, I raised the question of a pos-

sible name change given that the federal concept no longer adequately expresses the ecclesial nature of the fellowship that exists between the member churches. Last year, I presented to the Council a detailed report on “The Nature and Future of the LWF as a Communion of Churches.”² I presented four alternative names:

- The Communion of Lutheran Churches (CLC)
- The Lutheran World Communion (LWC)
- The Lutheran Communion (LC)
- The Lutheran World Federation – A Communion of Churches (LWF)

The Council voted to endorse the fourth proposal—“The Lutheran World Federation – A Communion of Churches”—with the understanding that when, for practical reasons, the full name was too long the present name would also remain valid, and that “LWF” would remain the normal acronym. The Council asked the General Secretary to check whether there were any legal implications that would require constitutional changes. This has been done and the LWF’s legal advisers have confirmed that such a name change would be consistent with the existing constitutional description of the Federation. It is, therefore, up to this Assembly to consider such a step.

Toward a More Inclusive Communion

Inclusion and acceptance, rather than exclusion and discrimination, is the hallmark of communion in Christ. The vision of an inclusive communion of women and men still lies before us unfulfilled. While acknowledging that policies have been put in place at the level of the LWF governing bodies and LWF Secretariat; for various reasons, these policies are far from being actualized in some of the member churches.

More than two thirds of the LWF member churches by now have adopted procedures that allow for the ordination of men and women. Churches that have taken this decision have found their witness enhanced by new gifts brought into the ordained ministry. This is an experience that the LWF continues to commend to its members. Through scholarship programs and other means, women have increasingly qualified themselves for leadership and positions of responsibility in church and society. However, there is a pressing need for many member churches to take further measures allowing and encouraging women to assume roles of leadership. Synods and other decision-making bodies should take bold steps, where still required, to move out of inherited patterns of male dominance. We should actively seek, through our theology, to overcome traditional and cultural mechanisms whereby women are denied such positions on the grounds they are women.

Violence against women is a radical form of exclusion that denigrates the image of God in the victim as well as the perpetrator. It represents a fundamental challenge, having an impact on the inner life of the church and that of the wider community in which it witnesses. The LWF has taken a strong stand against this social evil through the widespread distribution of its publication *Churches Say "NO" to Violence against Women*,³ produced by the desk for Women in Church and Society of the Department for Mission and Development (DMD). We must commit together as a communion to apply the document to our local contexts as we observe the World Council of Churches (WCC) ecumenical "Decade to Overcome Violence (2001–2010) Churches Seeking Reconciliation and Peace."

We have committed ourselves to an inclusive communion, in which *younger generations* will be more and more included in the life of the churches. Young people, who represent both the future of the church and an important part of its present life, provide significant contributions to the under-

standing of the gospel and its proclamation. Increased participation of young people is happening in some churches, but not in others. The Bible is full of stories of young people who influence the life of the church. Let us not be afraid of the creativity of young people in our midst.

The LWF has established policies to ensure youth participation and contribution. In particular, we have committed ourselves to achieving 20 percent youth participation in our major decision-making bodies. As we prepared for this Assembly, we were informed by several churches that they were not able to include youth representatives as asked for by our guidelines. I appeal to the LWF member churches to reflect on the importance of this commitment, and to honor it.

Intra-Lutheran Relations

Since the inception of the LWF in 1947, its member churches have prayed for a fellowship that is inclusive of all Lutherans in the world. However, over three million Lutherans remain outside the fellowship of the LWF, even while sharing in the Lutheran confession and our spiritual fellowship in Christ. In several areas in the world, the LWF and its member churches collaborate with the Lutheran communities outside the LWF in diaconal activities. But the yearning for a fully inclusive Lutheran communion remains unfulfilled.

Lack of a united Lutheran witness undermines the integrity of our mission and reduces the vitality of our ecumenical engagement. Shouldn't the common affirmation of the Lutheran confessional writings be sufficient for church fellowship among the Lutheran churches? What are the real reasons that keep Lutherans apart?

I am pleased to inform the Assembly that a process of consultation is in place between representatives of the International Lutheran Council (ILC), which represents most of the Lutherans still outside our fellowship, and the LWF. Common ground as well as differences are being identified in the area of theology, with particular refer-

ence to confessional and ecumenical issues. The importance of enhanced coordination, communication, and theological discussion has been emphasized.

It is my hope that the conversation the LWF and ILC are currently engaged in will bring us forward substantially in this area.

I also am happy to report that since the Ninth Assembly we have maintained close relations with the three associate member churches—the Lutheran Church of Australia, Japan Lutheran Church, and Evangelical Lutheran Free Church of Norway. All are represented at this Assembly. In Norway, the Church of Norway and Evangelical Lutheran Free Church of Norway constitute the LWF national committee. The associate member churches in Australia and Japan are both active participants in the regional programs of the Asian Lutheran churches. This is of great value to the life of the LWF, and one day will hopefully lead to full membership of these churches.

Commitment to Global Ecumenism

From the beginning, the LWF has seen itself as related to the ecumenical movement. All steps it takes in the direction of its own unity and coherence also are seen as contributions to the unity of the one, universal church of Christ. And the ecumenical movement remains, at this present time in history, a deeply significant healing process.

Bilateral relations between the Christian world communions are a vital part of the ecumenical movement. They require appropriate instruments of accountability, providing a basis for trusted global relations. The *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*,⁴ signed and celebrated in 1999, represents a major bilateral achievement at the international level. It could not have been achieved without the instrumentality of the LWF.

The international dialogue commissions with the Orthodox churches and Ro-

man Catholic Church continue their solid work. Conversations between the LWF and Seventh-day Adventists have been carried out and the report and recommendations from this process are being studied by the member churches. Two international working groups—with the Anglican Communion, and World Alliance of Reformed Churches—have submitted their reports. The LWF Council has received these reports and upon its request, they have been sent to the member churches for study and response. I strongly urge that providing such responses be given high priority.

In the ecumenical area, there continues to be substantial reciprocal interaction between national and regional developments on the one hand and the international dialogues on the other. I commend the agreements of church fellowship negotiated and entered into at the national and regional level by LWF member churches since the Ninth Assembly with churches of the Anglican, Methodist, Moravian and Reformed traditions. The vast majority of all bilateral communion agreements that have been established around the world involve Lutheran churches. Such developments contribute in a real way to the visible unity of the church. But in the period before us, we must make strong new efforts to ensure that these developments also take place to a greater degree in the southern hemisphere.

Bilateral dialogues and relations are not, however, the only instruments of ecumenism. The ecumenical commitment of the LWF is also, by its nature, multilateral. The WCC was deliberately formed as a fellowship of individual churches, without a specific role for the Christian world communions (CWCs) such as the LWF. However, in light of the increasing ecumenical importance of CWCs, it was significant that the 1998 WCC Eighth Assembly in Harare, Zimbabwe, adopted a resolution calling for closer cooperation between the WCC and CWCs. This resolution has been followed up by the LWF Council and WCC Central Committee.

We must explore how our practical cooperation with the WCC might grow and

develop further. Our common emergency agency, Action by Churches Together (ACT) International, is one example of good cooperation. The news agency ENI, mentioned above, is another.

The WCC provides a unique framework for deliberation on fundamental ecumenical issues. The LWF and its member churches should play an active and supportive part in the current discussions on the nature and purpose of the WCC and the need for new configurations in the ecumenical movement in future. Some form of representation in the WCC of CWCs as communions will be important for continued development of the ecumenical movement. The Conference of Secretaries of Christian World Communions (CS/CWCs) is an important forum that also contributes to this discussion.

The Episcopal Ministry in the Church

The role of the episcopal ministry (ministry of oversight) is an issue under discussion ecumenically, and among the Lutheran churches, in regard to the apostolicity of the church. Different views and practices have been maintained by the LWF member churches within the space of the communion.

The communion agreements that some of our member churches have entered into with Anglican churches, or Reformed churches, or both simultaneously, have raised questions about the coherence of the Lutheran understanding of the episcopal ministry. I am pleased that a study process has taken place leading to a statement by the Lutheran dialogue members on the issue of “The Episcopal Ministry within the Apostolicity of the Church.”⁵ This study process included five regional meetings with representatives of member churches. The statement builds on the texts of ecumenical agreements to which Lutheran churches have been a party. I believe this statement provides a differentiated yet coherent and healing ap-

proach to this issue. The LWF Executive Committee has received the statement and upon request of the committee, it has been sent to the member churches for study and response.

Unity, Mission and Diaconia

From the beginning of the life of the church, its unity, mission and diaconia have been basic to its self-understanding and purpose. As instruments to help serve these life functions of the church, organizations with special foci have been instituted: missionary societies, ecumenical organizations, and diaconal/humanitarian agencies. These instruments provide competence and capacity for fulfillment of these functions. It is clear however, that the service of unity, mission and diaconia is inseparable in the witness of the church. Most organizations for inner and foreign mission have had significant diaconal service integrated into their work. These functions are rooted in the nature of the worshipping community. Every church, at every level, must be “marked” by these essential features if it is to be recognizable as church at all. And the LWF as a communion of churches must bear the same traits as the member churches themselves. It cannot be a true communion without the “marks” of commitment to unity and engagement in mission and diaconia.⁶

In the area of diaconia, there has been a tendency over some decades for large diaconal institutions to become institutionally independent of the churches with the main point of contact with governing bodies of churches being limited to information sharing. In some cases, efforts have been made to make newly established Lutheran development services, operated by churches in the South, independent of these churches. However, in today’s stage of history, we also have seen a reversal of this development in some countries, such as in Sweden, Finland and Germany, where the responsibility and accountability of the churches have become decisive for the

structures of the agencies. This new trend is very important for the life of the churches and the nature of the service they provide.

To help clarify basic aspects of diaconia, a major consultation was held in Johannesburg, South Africa, in November 2002, with the Department for World Service (DWS) taking the lead in an inter-departmental preparatory process. The consultation report “Prophetic Diakonia: ‘For the Healing of the World’”⁷ raises fundamental questions about the centrality of mission and diaconia in the life of the church, and deserves careful study in our member churches and related agencies.

As an LWF contribution to the ongoing discussion on missiology, and a resource for the member churches, a draft document has been developed by DMD called “MISSION: Transformation, Reconciliation, Empowerment”—An LWF Contribution to the Understanding of Mission.⁸ I also warmly recommend this document for further study and comment.

These issues should be considered further in a broad international consultation, which hopefully could take place in the near future. The LWF, serving as a bridge between many partners committed to serving the needs—spiritual and material—of humanity, stands in an excellent position to promote this discussion.

Approaching Complex Social and Ethical Issues

The churches have sometimes had considerable difficulty in addressing certain complex social and ethical issues. One such issue is the question of globalization. Churches themselves are deeply involved in this process, for good and ill. The LWF, through materials prepared by its Department for Theology and Studies (DTS), has challenged member churches to approach this question from the perspective of communion, and has invited member churches to participate in transforming economic globalization.

Another issue that has generated a lot of controversy in some societies and in

some churches is the issue of homosexuality, and attitudes to homosexual persons. This is an issue that has been with humankind since time immemorial, and will continue to be so in future. It will not go away. It is a complex matter with ethical dimensions related to culture, anthropology and spirituality.

There are some churches in which this issue has not been raised for discussion, others in which it has become a discussion of great controversy, and still others where it has been addressed with little or no difficulty. Since we are a communion of interdependent churches, no member church can ignore the issue, or consider it closed one way or the other while sister churches are still struggling with it.

An issue of this kind requires patient discussion and prayerful reflection. This Assembly should take steps to ensure careful preparation for such discussion and reflection. I therefore propose a process of consultation, exchange, discussion and prayer, as a communion, to seek the guiding wisdom of the Holy Spirit. The new Council could be asked to bear responsibility for such a process, mandated by the Assembly, to examine this issue in a proper consultative way, utilizing the space we have for differences in viewpoint and open deliberation within our communion.

Interfaith Aspects of Current Tensions in the World

Around the world today, there is obvious and urgent need for processes of reconciliation between nations, cultures and religions. One of the strongest negative forces in this situation is prejudice. Enemy images that have built up over generations, and the habit of discrimination ingrained for centuries, are not easy to erase at a stroke. Indeed, ancient prejudices continue to be manipulated for political purposes and given fresh vitality in many modern contexts. It is my strong belief that for the sake of peace and the future of humanity—which is God’s family—the Christian churches are called

urgently to do what they can in their own contexts to build understanding instead of confrontation.

One of the very greatest challenges before us, particularly in light of recent world events, is the healing of relations between the three great monotheistic religions—Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The LWF and its member churches have a strong focus on relations with the other “Abrahamic” religions as indicated by the range of initiatives that have been undertaken, engaging Muslims and Jews in dialogue and cooperation, in a number of contexts. The LWF, through DTS, has produced a series of publications in this area intended as a contribution and resource material for member churches in their interfaith relations.

The LWF seeks to promote interfaith dialogue not as an academic exercise but to address the pressing issues of the contexts in which our communities live. The LWF has facilitated a process engaging religious leaders from across the geographical and faith spectra of Africa in interfaith dialogue and practical cooperation to address conflicts and promote peace in Africa. Meeting in October 2002 under the theme “Embracing the Gift of Peace,” approximately 120 religious leaders committed themselves to an ongoing process of cooperation to help reduce tensions and conflicts on that continent. This was the first time such a gathering had taken place at a pan-African level. The LWF and its partners continue to support this vital process.

HIV/AIDS

During the period under review the LWF, in collaboration with the member churches, agencies, ecumenical partners, and Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, has sought to give stronger focus to its efforts concerning the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The focus has been on the disease itself as well as on the stigmatization and exclusion of people living with HIV/AIDS in our communities and

churches. In May 2002, the LWF launched a communion-wide HIV/AIDS campaign in Nairobi, Kenya. It has organized several consultations in the various regions, and financially supports many programs and projects in different aspects of the HIV/AIDS crisis through DMD and DWS. In all these programs, the LWF seeks to involve people living with HIV/AIDS in its work.

Conditions of Work in the Churches

Church work is a vocation, not mere employment. But it should not be less than human dignity requires. “Decent” work within the church is a matter not only of stewardship but also of witness. Churches proclaim human dignity and human rights but the conditions in which many workers in the church must fulfil their calling fall short of those standards. This problem is neither limited to developing countries nor countries in which public finances and legislation on labor standards are inadequate. In my travels, I am often confronted with very unfortunate working conditions in the churches. Perceptions of the nature of work in the church and a lack of financial resources have sometimes led to conditions of work in the church that are undignified and even exploitative.

I am well aware of the dilemmas involved, often having to face them myself in the management of LWF staff. Nevertheless as a communion, together we must face up to the challenges that exist in this area. We must encourage each other to live up to relevant national standards and International Labour Organization conventions.

In this context, let me also draw attention to the important issue of dignified working conditions for persons with disabilities. This is an area where the ethical standards of a society are put to the test and where churches have the responsibility to speak out clearly. It also is an area where the churches themselves must keenly be aware of their own practices and priorities.

Indigenous Issues

Meeting here in Winnipeg sets us in a context in which the voices of Indigenous people—the First Nations of this land—can and should be heard. The period between the Hong Kong and Winnipeg Assemblies coincided with the UN “International Decade of the World’s Indigenous people 1995–2004.” The concrete outcome of this observance, however, in terms of improvement for the lives of Indigenous peoples around the world is hard to discern. Several international instruments have been adopted in this area, but ratification and implementation by individual countries have not been sufficiently followed up. We must put pressure on governments to ensure such ratification and implementation. Several member churches have taken significant initiatives in this area leading to strong associations with Indigenous communities in their countries. The LWF as a whole could take a stronger lead. In the next period, I hope this can be achieved.

Continuing Our Walk Together

As I have said before, the strength and unity of our communion is for the sake of the unity of the one church of Christ. For this reason, we must continue to strengthen our communion and deepen the experience of that communion in all member churches.

As we walk together into the future, we must explore how we can develop our representative structures so that the official leadership of all our member churches can work together in ways that commit us and engage us as a global communion within the ecumenical movement. We must enhance our common efforts and mutual accountability without undermining the autonomy of each member church. One specific measure I wish to propose is the institution of a regular cycle of consultations, in which the LWF Council meets with leading representatives of all the member churches in the communion, following the model of one such meeting that took place in 1994.

Some member churches, through ecumenical agreements, have achieved close forms of church fellowship with churches of other CWCs. We welcome this unconditionally. At the same time, the question arises whether the LWF member churches can generally achieve similar closeness among themselves. Can the LWF move beyond altar and pulpit fellowship to even more substantial forms of mutual recognition and cooperation, for instance, in the area of exchangeability of pastors and bishops? Some member churches, such as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, explicitly have declared their openness to exchangeability of ordained ministers from all other LWF member churches. Such declarations are of great significance for further development of the communion.

As we are confronted with a growing range of difficult doctrinal/ethical issues, the LWF needs an expert advisory commission, drawn from all parts of the communion, to discuss fundamental presuppositions and outline possible main lines of consideration. Such a commission would seek to clarify what the LWF member churches can say together on important matters of teaching. It would not be a program or standing committee. It would have no authority to make decisions that would bind the LWF or the member churches, but would play an advisory role. In interaction with the teaching ministry of the member churches and various theological instruments of the LWF, such a commission could play an important role in the development of the LWF as a communion in faith.

Pastoral leadership formation must become of greater priority in our churches, and in the life of our Lutheran communion, so that well-prepared leaders can equip our members and churches to become more active agents of God’s work of reconciliation in the world. We need socially engaged teaching and preaching in our churches that will form and empower members confronting the forces of division and domination in our societies. In this area, the LWF can con-

tribute guidance and resources through the programs and projects of DTS, DMD and DWS, as well as in cooperation with the Institute for Ecumenical Research, in Strasbourg, France.

There is a stated wish among LWF member churches to move toward a simpler, more integrated pattern for the various global church assemblies. We must seriously explore how we might move in this direction. I therefore welcome the decision of our Council to take up this task together with our ecumenical partners. In this process, we must also give due attention to the question of what it means to be a delegate at an assembly. What authority is given by churches to the delegates that represent them? By what processes are the results of the assembly received by the churches? And, how seriously is the outcome taken?

Our experiences with visa difficulties leading up to this Assembly highlight a growing challenge, especially in the current period of heightened security. Every country has a sovereign right to regulate entry to its territory. But the nature of our communion, and the apostolic tradition, call us to share in each others' lives—both the joy and pain. Undertaking travel and providing hospitality afford an important personal experience of communion. However, the current international environment of increased security and tighter immigration controls in some countries has a chilling effect on this form of communion experience. The increasing role of prejudice and stereotypes in this process is obvious to all. These developments confront us afresh with the dilemma of the church—which is not *of* the world but is *in* the world—and its relation to the state (or rather, to individual states).

For the same financial reasons that are having an impact on churches and many other communities around the world, the LWF Secretariat is a much leaner organization now than it was some years ago. This means we will depend even more in the years ahead on member churches shar-

ing the burden, and on closer coordination of our efforts within the communion. The commitments of the communion must be implemented within a broad partnership,

We need socially engaged teaching and preaching in our churches...

involving the member churches even more directly in carrying responsibility for common programs and activities. Thanks must be expressed to the member churches for all they have contributed in the period since our last Assembly to support the many LWF programs and projects. Insofar as the financial stability of the LWF itself is concerned, the establishment of the LWF Foundation – Endowment Fund, which currently stands at CHF 6.2 million, is that of an important instrument that requires further support from the communion. Likewise, the commitment to pay a fair rate of membership fees calls for response from all member churches. The Treasurer will deal further with these matters in her report. I thank the member churches for standing with the LWF at a challenging time, demonstrating their commitment to this instrument of the communion and ecumenical movement.

Conclusion

We gather in the midst of a broken world in need of healing. The brokenness of the world, the division between rich and poor, North and South, is painfully obvious as we gather without our sisters and brothers who have not been granted visas to enter this country. We gather for the sake of the healing of the world, but we know that such healing is not in our power. At the very core of the Christian faith, as Lutherans understand it, is the insistence that in our deepest need we do not look to ourselves or to our own resources, but to Christ and the healing power of his Spirit. We cannot heal the world, but we know that Christ and the Spirit

can, and have, and will. That is the basis upon which we gather for this Assembly.

I take this opportunity to express my thanks to the member churches of the LWF, which are the life and soul of this communion, and to the President and members of the Council who have guided our common work over these last six years so faithfully and well. I thank my colleagues, in the LWF Secretariat in Geneva and the field and regional offices around the world, who have worked with commitment and professionalism for the realization of the communion's

common objectives. And once again, on behalf of the whole LWF, I give special thanks to the host church of this Assembly, the ELCIC, and the many dedicated volunteers who have made this vision their own. Your planning and work is now bearing its long-awaited fruit, for you have made for us in this place a space in which we can meet each other as sisters and brothers in Christ, to share our joy, pain and concerns without reservation, and rediscover what it is to be a communion.

Notes

¹ Geneva: LWF, 2003.

² LWF Council Agenda, Wittenberg, Germany, 2002. Exhibit 18.2.

³ Geneva: LWF, 2002.

⁴ *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*. The Lutheran World Federation and The Roman Catholic Church. English-Language Edition. Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2000.

⁵ *The Episcopal Ministry within the Apostolicity of the Church*. A Lutheran Statement 2002. Geneva, LWF Office for Ecumenical Affairs, 2003. ISBN 3-905676-26-5.

⁶ cf. *LWF Constitution*, Article III

⁷ Report from the consultation in Johannesburg, South Africa, November 2002. Geneva: LWF Department for Theology and Studies, 2003

⁸ Draft B, February 2003.

LWF Treasurer
Ms Inger Johanne Wremer



Report of the Treasurer

Ms Inger J. Wremer

Introductory Remarks

This report refers to the years from the previous Assembly in 1997 until the first months of 2003. Besides describing the financial situation and development of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), the report presents concerns and policy comments for consideration in regard to the future of the Federation.

The Budget, Concerns and Challenges

The LWF always has relied on, and is dependent on, member churches and church-

related organizations as the main financial support for its activities. I have been impressed by the loyalty and trust of so many member churches and related agencies toward the Federation, and to know of their sincere wish to contribute to their utmost capacity.

Money and administrative activities are tools which must be used in pursuit of the aims and goals of any dynamic organization for it to be able to live up to its vision. The years since the Assembly in Hong Kong have been rewarding for the LWF. But they have also been tough and challenging from a financial viewpoint.

The income of the A-Budget decreased by 10 percent between 1998 and 2002. The sustainable level of the A-Budget, based on current funding, is now about USD 9.5 million. For most years since the Assembly in

Hong Kong, fluctuations in exchange rates have been to the disadvantage of the LWF. The A-Budget, in particular, suffered much under these conditions. The exchange rate between the US dollar and Swiss franc started to decrease during the summer of 2001, and came down from 1.68 to 1.32 this year. This 20 percent depreciation of the US dollar against the Swiss Franc makes Geneva costs more expensive, thereby hampering balancing of the budget.

While these factors are beyond LWF control, they nevertheless have considerable consequences for the overall financial situation. We therefore have had difficulties in balancing the A-Budget in recent years. Last September, the Council approved a resolution calling for balanced budgets in 2004 and 2005. The number of staff members in Geneva decreased from 92 in 1997 to 86 in April 2003. The decrease in income may result in further reduction of the Geneva staff.

Decreases in income have to be dealt with in a very careful way, by reducing staff costs and expenditure in general as well as keeping staff positions vacant for some time. The decrease in income also reflects the strained economic situation of some member churches. Nevertheless, it should be underlined that most member churches contribute to the budget as much as they possibly can. This also is true for many related agencies, which is highly appreciated.

Income for the LWF comes from the following sources:

- Annual membership fees from the churches, used to cover administrative costs of the Geneva Secretariat and governing bodies. This is the main source of income for the LWF A-Budget.
- Contributions from churches for the programs, projects, and Coordination Budget.
- Contributions from church-related organizations mainly earmarked for purposes of development, relief work

and emergencies, as well as human rights work, and more.

- Contributions from governmental organizations to specific programs. Such contributions come from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, European Union (EU) and UN Relief and Works Agency. These organizations also pay service fees that provide income for the Geneva Coordination Budget.

The General Secretary's report on behalf of the Council, *From Hong Kong to Winnipeg 1997-2003*, contains an overview of the Federation's finances from the previous Assembly until 2001. Since the figures for 2002 have been audited, we are able to give you an overview of the last six years. Between the previous and present Assembly, the LWF recorded an overall income of USD 580 million, of which USD 524 million were granted for programs, projects and emergencies.

Some member churches were able to increase support, while others had to cut back. Church-related organizations also contribute within Action by Churches Together (ACT) International, for which I am truly grateful. Still, while we realize what financial means the LWF has available, of major concern is that the needs of the member churches remain greater than the available resources to meet them. Even though certain areas of work are considered a priority, funding is not necessarily available. This is a reality we have to face. Nevertheless, I am impressed by what has been done with the available money. Many churches have expressed their gratitude toward the LWF for being able to meet their needs and, in deploying the limited means available, bringing optimism and encouragement into their church life.

The majority of funding is earmarked for specific programs and projects, leaving little room for flexibility. My hope for the future is that more unearmarked funding will be made available so the LWF can

work in an even more flexible way for our members, quickly responding to new and challenging situations.

While the general reserves in 1998 stood at USD 6.7 million, by the end of 2002 they were down to USD 4.9 million. Thanks to ongoing tough efforts to keep expenditure as low as possible, and due to rather strict financial controls, the situation is manageable but also calls for soberness and very strict setting of priorities within the LWF. My concern about the future of the Federation is that we may see a further general decrease in income, a factor that has to be taken into account when the LWF discusses its aims and goals, and sets priorities. I hope the incoming Council will have serious priority-setting discussion on what the core functions of the LWF will be in the years to come. A cut in activities would have to be made if the financial situation does not improve.

For the past two years the total income from membership fees has remained fairly stable, for which I am very grateful. Annual membership fees are an important source of income for the LWF and an expression of commitment to the communion. At the 1999 Resource Consultation in Geneva, it was decided that membership fees should be calculated on the basis of the number of individual church members and the gross national product of the respective country, resulting in a so-called fair membership fee. Most member churches have already adjusted their membership fees to the new fair level, while others are still striving to reach it.

My hope for the future is that the income from membership fees will not only remain stable, but also will increase again over the coming years to reach the level of fair membership fees for all member churches. When this goal is reached, the situation of the Geneva Coordination Budget will ease considerably and make the LWF even more able to provide member churches with the services they need. I therefore strongly recommend that all members of the LWF pay the amount of

their fair membership fee. In the current situation, expectations have to be adjusted to the financial realities, while the LWF at the same time must seek new funding sources. (*See also Special Efforts Made*).

Projects and Programs

The various LWF departments presented themselves and their work during the presentation of the General Secretary's report; so, let me just highlight some special programs and projects that may make a difference for the people and regions involved:

Inter-Faith Action for Peace in Africa

The objective of this three-year program is to deepen interfaith commitments to dialogue and cooperation for promoting peace in Africa, to equip African interfaith partners and encourage the implementation of concrete interfaith responses to existing conflict situations.

Empowerment

In India, the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in India has succeeded, through its Integrated Rural Development of Weaker Sections in India (WIDA) project, in making the tribal populations aware of their political and social rights. Through many years of faithful cooperation, WIDA has gained the trust of the tribal communities and now guides them on their way to socioeconomic self-reliance and full political participation and representation. This work, through DMD, is supported by Canada, Germany and Sweden.

Basic Needs (Water, Healthy Food)

In Indonesia, the Simalungun Protestant Christian Church [Gereja Kristen Protestan Simalungun] (GKPS) has over the years gained considerable experience in providing remote villages with access to clean drinking water. In these villages, the GKPS has now engaged in processes

of enabling and empowerment. The project trains women and men in sustainable agriculture, using organic fertilizers and less harmful pesticides. It also endeavors to improve marketing opportunities for these healthy products. The DMD project is supported by France, Germany and Sweden, as well as a considerable contribution from the village communities themselves.

Reconciliation

In Brazil, COMIN [Conselho de Missão entre Índios], a local non-governmental organization, does important work with Indigenous people. In addition to legal aid and other project components (health, agriculture, land and resettlement), the Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil, congregations and the wider community, are made aware of the history and present unjust situation of Indigenous people. This includes rectification of the biased “historical” account. A culturally sensitive environment promotes solidarity, and thereby fosters reconciliation of broken relationships and peace building. The DMD project receives support from Finland, Norway, Sweden and the United States of America.

Guaranteeing Basic Rights

Through DMD, the work of the Bolivian Evangelical Lutheran Church among the Aymara Indigenous people in the Bolivian highlands, ensures that formal and non-formal education is provided in remote areas often neglected by central government. The church’s commitment to this work is an expression of the call to guarantee basic rights for the education of these people.

Addressing People’s Impoverishment in Argentina

Through a DMD project, the United Evangelical Lutheran Church [in Argentina] equips people for self-organization and active civic participation in order to alleviate the deadly spiral of increasing im-

poverishment caused by a hostile socio-economic environment. Groups of people and congregations are trained to respond to their situation in pro-active ways: strengthening of networking, setting up of small-scale self-help projects, and more.

Compassion, Conversion, Care: Responding as Churches to the HIV/AIDS Pandemic

The objective of this program is to engage the LWF member churches in open discussion about HIV/AIDS, and in so doing promote their active and courageous response.

Relief and Rehabilitation Project in Ethiopia

Last year, the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus and LWF assisted 114,620 people across four areas with 2,691 metric tons of food donated by the EU.

In January 2002, an LWF consultancy office for the regional expression of communion was set up for one year in Warsaw, Poland. A year later, an LWF Regional Office in Central and Eastern Europe (ROCEE) was opened in Bratislava, capital of the Slovak Republic. There are great expectations about the office’s contribution to the life and work of the member churches in Central Eastern Europe.

The LWF also has given priority to strengthening the organizational and institutional capacities of smaller churches, especially in the South. My hope for the future is that cooperation will be broadened and the concrete signs of solidarity with smaller churches in difficult financial situations even clearer, and stronger.

Many sponsored projects, especially those of DMD, have strong components to strengthen institutions. In Asia, mission programs and projects are geared toward increased participation of smaller churches.

The need to also support smaller churches in theological matters has been underlined by many member churches. To

develop this further will require new funding, but it is important because it helps churches strengthen each other. There already is bilateral cooperation on this matter between member churches, such as that between the Nordic region and Latin America.

It is also my hope that a communion fund will be set up for the purpose of strengthening the organizational and financial capacities of smaller churches in the South and East. Being a supportive communion, we will act with a sense of relatedness, responsibility and accountability, so strengthening the fellowship within the Federation. Such an act would show we also care for one another in very practical ways, and really are a mutually supportive communion of churches.

A Standing Committee for World Service [which reports to the Council through the Program Committee for World Service] was set up after the 2000 Council meeting in Turku, Finland, to guide DWS in dealing with the many challenges that lie ahead. New demands and changes in the international environment call for constant readiness to consider strategies and solutions, such as in economic matters and setting of priorities within the Federation's project portfolio. The good and encouraging work of the committee is highly appreciated.

As awareness of, and funding for, humanitarian crises become increasingly dependent on coverage by global mainstream media, it is my hope that the LWF, through the Office for Communication Services, will continue to provide alternative perspectives and raise awareness about so-called forgotten crisis situations. I also hope that some financial support is provided to enable communicators from all regions to take part in such experiences and report on what they have seen and heard.

The LWF Foundation – Endowment Fund

One of the most positive aspects in the financial development of the LWF is the LWF Foundation – Endowment Fund. Having

been endorsed in 1997 on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Federation, the fund has progressed very well since it was set up in 1999. This is thanks to the hard-working and enthusiastic members of the board and the member churches willing to contribute. Worldwide economic problems, recessions and exchange-rate variations in contributions from member churches may threaten LWF activities.

This fund provides the member churches with an important instrument for securing the financial viability of LWF operations, especially those in the field. It helps the LWF carry out necessary operations that otherwise would be difficult to finance. The capital of the Endowment Fund now stands at more than USD 4.2 million and is growing steadily. Fundraising activities have achieved good results and may serve as examples when seeking new ways of fundraising for the LWF in the years to come.

The long-range target of the Endowment Fund is USD 10 million. We would be very grateful for more donors to share the financial responsibility so that this goal can be reached as soon as possible.

Although it may be difficult for some member churches to contribute to the Endowment Fund, and at the same time increase their membership contributions to the level of a fair membership fee, I do hope that in due time both membership fees and grants for this fund will reach a level at which the services of the Secretariat, as well as to the member churches, can be secured in a most satisfactory way.

Special Efforts Made

The present difficult economic situation calls for creativity and hard work to find ways and means to acquire additional support for the LWF. Some special efforts have already been made.

A task force was set up in 2001 to develop a new budget structure aimed at improving transparency of the budget and broadening the basis of unearmarked funding, while taking into account the

Federation's aims and goals. The new budget structure presents the work of the LWF in a more integrated way and should enable partners to be more involved in agreeing on a realistic Coordination Budget. This structure is now in place and comes into operation as this Assembly gathers. I hope the new structure will be further developed by the incoming Council.

Special efforts to improve the LWF's financial situation also include prioritizing fundraising and streamlining. A task force was set up by the Council in 2002 to develop a plan of action on how to improve fundraising in the different regions. General reserves need to be built up again. Commitment and solidarity are expressions of communion. It is my sincere hope that member churches will commit themselves during the coming years to contribute to the funding of the LWF.

At the start of this year, the Office for Finance and Administration (OFA) introduced CODA, a new and comprehensive accounting package. It will improve considerably the financial reporting services provided by OFA.

Ecumenical work is very important to the LWF and its member churches.

In the period since Hong Kong the most important activities have been:

- the signing of the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification (1999)
- the report of the Lutheran-Reformed Joint Working Group (2002)¹
- the report of the Anglican-Lutheran International Working Group (2002)²
- the statement on "The Episcopal Ministry within the Apostolicity of the Church"
- involvement in multilateral ecumenical relations, particularly with the World Council of Churches (WCC) and Conference of Secretaries of Christian World Communions.

The Executive Committee decided in March 2003 to set up a small group with the mandate to carry out a strategic planning process for theology and ecumenism in the LWF, taking into consideration DTS, the Office for Ecumenical Affairs (OEA) and Institute for Ecumenical Research in Strasbourg, France. Results from this work were reported to the Executive Committee on July 19. The work should be taken forward by the incoming Executive Committee.

The Augusta Victoria Hospital

The Augusta Victoria Hospital in Jerusalem has been working under difficult political and financial conditions. Despite this, the management was able to balance the annual operating budgets, thanks to grants from some governments and strict setting of financial priorities. The debt, however, remains considerable, since there are old liabilities burdening the hospital's balance sheet. Considerable work on policy and negotiations have been carried out over the years to save the hospital's economy, and I want to thank every government, church and related agency that has contributed. Of course, the prevailing and constantly deteriorating political situation influences work at the hospital in a complicated way, and increases the need for emergency support. The recent war in Iraq made this need even more visible and urgent.

The difficult tax issue, with the Israeli tax authority's insistence that the hospital pay employer's tax, casts a shadow over the running of the hospital in the years to come. In December 2002, the Jerusalem district court ruled that the LWF should pay employer's tax, including backdated payments for the last two years. The LWF has submitted an appeal to a higher court and at the same time, together with member churches, we are pushing for political action from various governments.

It is very important to secure and preserve the property on the Mount of Olives against pressure from creditors, parties to the political conflict in the region, or to any

other activity that may put the property in danger. It is my hope that we can maintain a strong international and ecumenical presence there. To strengthen the signs of hope for the member church in the area as well as for Palestinians, I want to encourage the member churches to pray for the hospital and also contribute to its financial security, for instance, by holding special collections.

For the time being, plans are in progress for further development of the property on the Mount of Olives. The realization of these projects depends on political developments and financial possibilities.

Overall Observations

International society has changed considerably over the past few years. We see rapid changes, increased commercialization and new demands. The LWF has to meet these challenges in a way that ensures humanitarian and Christian principles and values continue to defy the forces of neoliberalism.

As a Lutheran family, we exist, witness and work within complex and diverse contexts around the globe. There are considerable differences in the financial situation and economic ability of churches to contribute to the fellowship. Of the 136 member churches in 76 countries, some do not have the economic strength to fully participate in the LWF or to meet the ambition of a fair membership fee. Others are in a stressful local situation and for that reason cannot fully participate.

Fair sharing of resources is, nevertheless, considered essential in our communion of churches, and we must hold on to the fact that we are part of a worldwide family which calls for actions of solidarity, such as when contributing money and sharing stewardship within our common resources. These are very practical ways of bringing blessings from region to region.

My concern for some smaller, minority churches within the LWF family is about how they will cope in the years ahead with the likelihood of being in a strained eco-

nomical situation. To ensure that economic difficulties will not undermine the partnerships we enjoy is our common and mutual responsibility as a Lutheran family. This will also help to build trust through mutual accountability and help churches to live through difficult times. This is an important task for the whole communion. Richer churches could help by working together with related agencies in overcoming concentration policies. It is an important task to strengthen the financial and organizational capacities of smaller churches.

The LWF should continue to broaden its cooperation with the WCC in exploring, for instance, the possibility of holding coordinated assemblies. Closer cooperation with the WCC should explore what might be the LWF's tasks in ecumenical dialogue. Such close cooperation is necessary to avoid duplication of effort and expense.

As a Lutheran family, we are also moving forward in studying, exploring and creating dialogues with other church families and organizations. Ecumenical space is required so that the various Christian traditions and church families will be afforded opportunities to articulate their concerns and express their self-understanding and readiness to see themselves as part of a broader ecumenical movement. Listening, reaching out and learning from the experiences of others may give us new hope and new experiences. We all have something to learn from each other in new efforts to engage in ecumenical dialogue according to the prayer of Christ: "...that they may all be one" (Jn 17:21). In developing our Lutheran profile we will contribute to, and participate, in a constructive way, in the ecumenical dialogues by pursuing possibilities for bilateral dialogues, involvement in multilateral ecumenical developments and networking in ecumenical relations.

My concern for the future is that this development might progress more slowly than until now, due to budgetary reasons. But my hope lies in the fact that this part of the LWF's work is understood by the

member churches to be so important that it must be of priority, and continue to be a crucial part of the LWF's identity. Building Christian unity for our common witness is a path we must follow, while acknowledging that it needs time and commitment.

Quo Vadis, LWF?

In the present situation, we need to have a matter-of-fact attitude on financial policy and practice. But the LWF must never stop looking for ways and means to realize its vision of supporting churches in their task to tell the world about the love and glory of God. This can be told through witness in service, meeting the practical needs of people, doing our part to lower the thresholds between Lutherans and other church families, and through interfaith dialogues; wherever these are possible, we will be witnesses of God's mercy and love.

It can also be told through diaconal service in cases of humanitarian need. Diaconia belongs to the very heartbeat of any Lutheran community. Effective development of diaconia that responds to the needs of sustainable communities, fights for human rights, and fosters socio-ethical attitudes and actions, should always be a priority for the LWF.

Strengthening interdependence in mutual accountability by sharing resources

and experiences, and promoting programs of joint mission ventures, should be the path to follow. Being a supportive communion of churches, this also will be our task for the future. Based on the shared values of faith, fellowship, relationship, inclusiveness, solidarity and mutual respect, we are called to set our priorities for the future use of our financial resources.

I want to express my appreciation for the good collaboration and fellowship within the LWF, with member churches, church-related organizations and agencies. I also wish to express my appreciation to the LWF President, General Secretary and several department directors within the Federation. I have a great deal of respect and appreciation for the way the staff in Geneva and the field are able to keep their motivation for the work and vision alive in a challenging economic situation. The LWF is lucky to have such devoted staff members able to adjust and adapt to constant exercises in strict setting of priorities without enough human and financial resources available.

I wish God's rich blessings may stay with everybody who, in the years to come, devotes time and work to bringing the LWF forward in being a witness to the world through its important work.

Notes

¹ *Called to Communion and Common Witness*. Report of the Joint Working Group between the Lutheran World Federation and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (1999–2001). Geneva: LWF/WARC, 2002.

² *Growth in Communion*. Report of the Anglican-Lutheran International Working Group 2000–2002. Geneva: LWF, 2003.

Letter to the Member Churches

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

We, the delegates of the churches of the Lutheran World Federation, the officers of the LWF, and many other participants, have gathered here in Winnipeg, in the heart of Canada, for the Tenth Assembly of the Federation. We have gathered under the theme: “For the Healing of the World.” In the vision of the New Jerusalem that ends the Revelation to John, the leaves of the tree of life “are for the healing of the world” (Rev 22:2). This Assembly has rejoiced in the healing presence of the Risen Lamb in our midst, even while we yearn for the day when we will gather with all the saints in the New Jerusalem.

We have been surrounded here by the warm hospitality of our Canadian hosts. Canada’s increasing ethnic diversity, along with its French, British, and Indigenous heritages, make it a striking example of the joys and difficulties of our world. The wounds of the world have not been hidden from us during the Assembly. Among us have been sisters and brothers from lands ravaged by war, afflicted by the HIV/AIDS pandemic and drug abuse, crushed by the underside of economic globalization. We heard about the devastation caused by the civil war in Liberia directly from Liberian church leaders. That the world needs healing has been painfully evident. Particularly painful for us has been the absence of more than fifty sisters and brothers denied the visas needed to attend the Assembly. Behind these denials lies a world changed by terrorism, a world ever more closely united by technology but increasingly divided between rich and poor, North

and South, those integrated into the new global system and those left out.

We have learned anew, however, that our faith triumphs over division. Christ has come to break down the walls that divide us. The communion in Christ that binds us is stronger than any power that keeps us physically apart. The absence of those denied entry has been for this Assembly like the thorn in Paul’s side, a reminder that God’s power is made perfect in weakness (2 Cor 12:7). Our communion is founded on our common participation in Christ and that means a common participation in his cross. Healing and participation in Christ’s sufferings are inseparable, for only by Christ’s wounds are we healed.

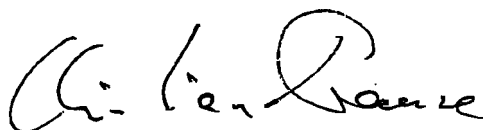
We have experienced under the broad Canadian sky an intense communion. Our days have begun with the Eucharist and been punctuated by prayer and Bible study. The wide range of the Lutheran communion has been represented among us, from Finland to South Africa, from Japan to Argentina. Our delegations have been made up of youth and adults, men and women. Present with us also have been representatives of other churches: Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Reformed, Anglican, and many others. We have welcomed the ecumenical steps forward of the last decade, especially the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* with the Roman Catholic Church, but also sensed our need of the Spirit to overcome the significant divisions that remain. The experience of a communion so diverse yet united in the gospel is always a highlight of an LWF Assembly, and we hope that you will have some contact with those who have been here and get a fuller sense of what we have experienced.

A major task of every Assembly is to review the work of the Federation since the previous Assembly and to prepare the LWF for its next period. The six-year report of LWF activities, *From Hong Kong to Winnipeg 1997-2003*, was reviewed in ten small groups called "Village Groups," organized around individual topics. Elections were held for a new LWF Council and Mark Hanson, presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, was elected LWF President. The Village Groups also developed commitments for the future work of the Federation, which were reviewed and adopted by the Assembly. These commitments are gathered together in the Assembly Message. This message, together with the Assembly's resolutions, will be distributed to you in the near future. In them, the Assembly:

- committed the LWF to closer work with Indigenous peoples
- called for a coordinated study on the role of *diakonia* as an integral part of the Lutheran communion
- invited the member churches to support fair international trade policies and the cancellation of illegitimate international debt
- expressed its concern about the increasing unilateralism of the United States of America in foreign affairs
- changed the full name of the LWF to "The Lutheran World Federation—A Communion of Churches"
- expressed its solidarity with the churches of Iraq and affirmed the right of the Iraqi people to a democratic government
- affirmed efforts for peace in Israel-Palestine based on liberation for Palestine and security for Israel
- committed the LWF to continue to explore what it means to be a communion.

The Assembly confronted the diversity within the Lutheran communion on questions of family and human sexuality. We found in the course of an engaged but mutually respectful dialogue that our communion in Christ is stronger than our differences on these issues; here also, we must bear each others' burdens. The Assembly Message calls on the churches to support one another in continued dialogue on these topics and in advocacy for the human rights of all persons.

We leave Winnipeg with a sense of gratitude for what God has done through the Federation in the past and with prayers for its work in the future. We are all united in the one Christ and the one Spirit. Every time we gather around Word and Sacrament, our local communion is one with the communion that includes all times and places. The Lutheran communion realized in the LWF is one expression of that unity. Our communion needs healing; the wider church needs healing; the world needs healing. The LWF exists to serve the work of God "for the healing of the world." May God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, bless and sustain our communion in this work.

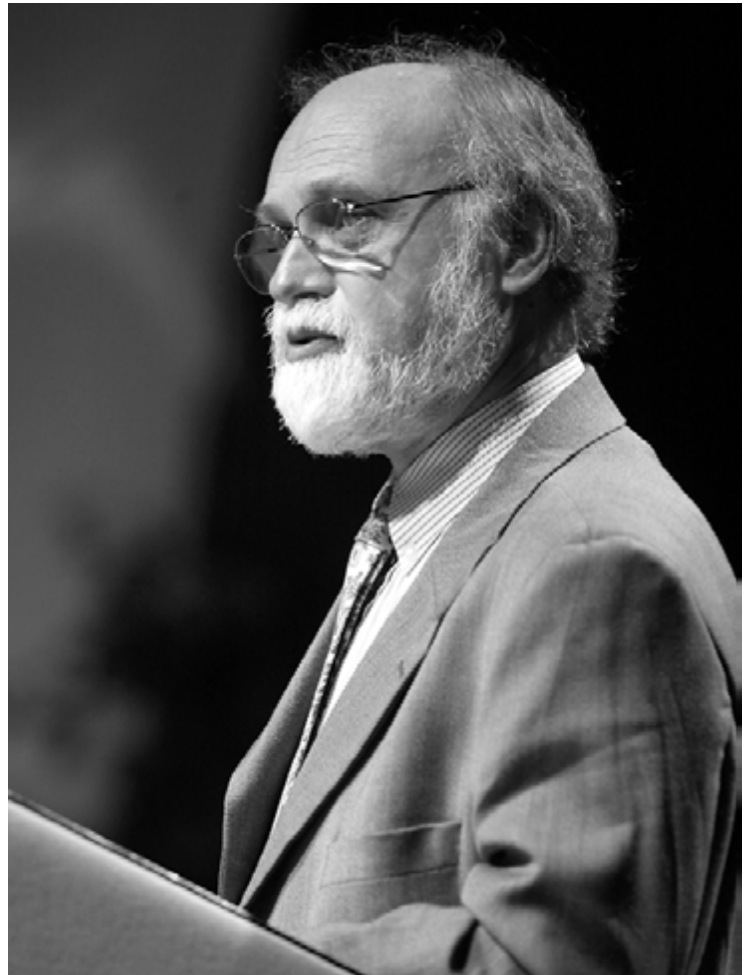


Bishop emeritus Dr Christian Krause
Outgoing President
Winnipeg, July 2003



Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko
General Secretary

Rev. Dr Walter Altmann,
president, Evangelical
Church of the Lutheran
Confession in Brazil,
chairperson of the Editorial
Committee that prepared the
Assembly Message.



Message from the Tenth Assembly

Introduction: The World in Need of Healing

We have come to this Tenth Assembly in Winnipeg, Canada, from many parts of the world God has created as good. It is also a crying, wounded world, in which devastation, suffering and violence are pervasive, along with denial, mistrust and blinding affluence. Our world is split asunder by forces we often do not understand, but that result in stark contrasts between those who benefit and those who are harmed, especially under forces of globalization. Today, there is also a desperate need for healing from

“terrorism,” its causes and fearful reactions to it. Relationships in this world continue to be ruptured due to greed, injustices and various forms of violence. People continue to be abused and excluded by other persons, institutions and practices. Those viewed as being of an “other” religion, race, caste, ethnicity or life condition are often still kept at a distance and rejected.

This was poignantly demonstrated by the fact that over fifty participants—from poor countries in Asia and Africa—were denied entry into Canada and thus were unable to participate in this Assembly. We were painfully aware of their absence,

which was a concrete example of how exclusion occurs through mechanisms at work in today's fearful, globalized world.

The world's multiple ills are evident around and within us; as Lutheran Christians we profess that in this world we cannot escape from these ever-present manifestations of sin and evil. We may yearn for definitive solutions to sin and evil, but are left with partial glimpses of what God, the ultimate healer, promises us. God promises "a new heaven and earth" (Isa 65:17ff.) in which suffering, sickness and dying are no more. Living in light of that promise we realize that amid the brokenness and suffering, God *is* effecting healing in our lives and our world, in mysterious and unexpected ways, using human beings as his healing agents. God's abiding commitment to the world—to be with us—gives us the courage to name and seek healing for the wounds, scars and diseases, and to bear witness to the healing that is occurring. We have done so in this Assembly with a deepening sense of communion with one another, and in the confident hope that God's promises as revealed through Scripture *will* be fulfilled!

Through daily celebrations of Holy Communion and in Bible studies, we have glimpsed these promises, and shared and celebrated our faith in the God who heals. Our sense of belonging to the one body of Christ, with its many ecumenical dimensions, has been renewed. We have been touched by the healing power of God's Holy Spirit, and strengthened in our commitment to participate in God's transformative mission for the healing of the world.

And so we cry out, "Lord, heal our wounded world, heal our wounds and those ways we inflict wounds on others! O God, comfort, save and stir us to be about your healing work in our world today."

I. The Healing Gift of Justification

We are convinced that the message of God's healing gift of justification is rich in

meaning for people in the third millennium. In our broken world, people experience so much evil in personal, social and global dimensions. We have to face our sinful thoughts, words, actions and omissions against God, human beings and the whole of creation. Sin is a power, manifested in acts, from which human beings cannot escape by their own means. In the midst of this, we yearn for liberation and healing.

Our hope in the midst of sin and suffering is that God heals us. The message of justification is the word of hope, which offers us the good news of God's love and acceptance. Jesus Christ came into this world and lived among us. He took the sufferings of the whole world onto himself. He humbled himself unto death, but in his death and resurrection we were given a new hope and future. Jesus Christ himself is the precious gift and promise for all humankind. The Holy Spirit makes this gift present in us by calling us to faith and renewal, and to life in the community of the justified. In this community we are included and strengthened by the healing power of the Triune God, who creates in us a new life through the proclamation of the gospel and the celebration of the holy sacraments. Even though our healing here is incomplete we trust in the sufficiency of God's grace (2 Cor 12:9).

We, as Lutherans, assert that the doctrine of justification is the article by which the Church stands or falls. We rejoice that, with the signing in 1999 of the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* by the LWF and the Roman Catholic Church, a chasm has been bridged; the mutual condemnations regarding justification do not apply. But, continuing challenges remain to address the theological questions still at stake, the reception and implications of this agreement in local settings, and probing what justification means for the world today.

We share the concern of many people who are not familiar with the language by which the common faith is traditionally expressed. There is a need for the theo-

logical content of the doctrine of justification to be interpreted in different contexts. We challenge ourselves to talk about God's gift of justification in words which are understandable, relevant and meaningful for contemporary people. We encourage member churches to promote a deeper and wider understanding of justification.

We as human beings loved by God have a deep need for belonging together. We suffer from feelings of being excluded in ways that contradict community. It is therefore a big challenge to live truly as a community of justified, inviting and including everyone.

Justification is a personal encounter with God that challenges our communities and all humanity. We are called into the healing body of Jesus Christ. The deepest meaning of justification is experienced in our relationships with God and one another in our daily lives of worship, witness and mutual caring and sharing. In baptism, we are accepted, and included, into the communion of God's children. Through the Word of God and through the Eucharist our sins are forgiven, and we are strengthened by the presence of our Lord. We express our deep desire to come to the Lord's table together with our sisters and brothers in other Christian communities.

We are convinced that God's healing gifts have to be shared with all people. We are called to participate in the sufferings of our sisters and brothers and so to carry out our common responsibility of working for justice at all levels in our world today. Although we are justified by faith alone, that faith can never be alone. It compels us to good works and love for all people. The justifying gift of God transforms us in faith, and gives hope and healing for the whole world.

Therefore, we commit ourselves and call on member churches to

- bear witness with our ecumenical partners to the message of justification in ways and languages that are understandable, meaningful and relevant for people living in specific

contexts, especially where human beings are vulnerable and urgently need healing because of exploitation, oppression and alienation

- explore and pursue further—together with other churches—the relation between justification and ecclesiology, justification and the sacraments, justification and ethics, with special attention to the connection between justification and justice for the sake of a more credible public witness of the church in the world.

II. The Healing Gift of Communion

As the justified people of God, we are a communion in Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, we are called to share our resources and perspectives with each other, as well as to challenge and provoke one another to new horizons of faithfulness that go beyond what we can see or do as individual member churches. Because communion involves a commitment to the sharing of power, we must ask, as did the Curitiba Assembly, "How various groups within the church exercise power over others to exclude them from full participation in the Body of Christ."¹ Misuse of institutional power is evident in our churches, as well as in societies, legal and economic systems, political and international organizations.

Many churches still do not ordain women and/or keep women from participating fully in decision-making processes. Often patriarchy plays a dominant role, legitimized by culture and religion.

Young people are a gift of God and bring many unique experiences and insights which they are willing to share. However, youth often are marginalized in and excluded from the life of our churches. They often are not included fully in their congregations and even more frequently are blocked from decision-making processes.

Our mutual participation in Christ leads us to challenge all those cultural, economic and political forces that define and tend to divide us. Communion can make us uncomfortable as assumptions and practices that we take for granted are challenged, and we are pushed to consider questions that we would not, as separate churches, on our own. These tensions, which can at times be threatening, are also a sign of vitality; they can deepen the realization of what it means to be a communion. We give thanks to God that our communion is blessed with diversity.

Communion means more than having nice feelings about one another; it involves calling one another into account for the effects that our actions have, or can have, on others.

Our understandings of communion are richly diverse and are grounded in the New Testament understandings of *koinonia*, with several dimensions: the believers' communion and participation in Christ, communion with the Holy Spirit, the communion shared in the Eucharist, the communion in apostolic teaching, sharing in each others' suffering and economic sharing.

Therefore, we commit ourselves and call on member churches to

- continue exploring what it means to live in the communion that God gives, to receive one another's differences as gifts and necessary complements for building up the body, and to learn from each other how communion as Eucharist creates and nurtures communion in the rest of our shared life
- continue studying the theological grounds for and implications of what it means to be a Lutheran communion, seeking to make it as inclusive as possible
- respond to situations of injustice in other parts of the communion from a *communio* perspective that moves beyond solidarity and accompaniment

- give attention to and develop policies for addressing situations of conflict within and between churches
- facilitate cross-cultural communication that enables us to listen sensitively and to respond authentically and gracefully, with an awareness of the prevailing unequal power dynamics; monitor and improve internal and public communication, according to the LWF Guiding Principles for Comprehensive Communication "A Communicative Communion"²
- invite the participation of Lutherans who currently are not a part of this communion
- facilitate dialogue within the communion on areas of disagreement, such as understandings and practices of the ministry, involving both men and women, both ordained and lay, in a spirit of mutual respect and in quest of common understandings
- challenge sexual stereotypes and raise gender issues early in life and seek to build a just community of women and men
- promote the full inclusion of women and youth in all aspects of our life and work as churches and in our societies
- make the church's institutional power more transparent and accountable, with a deepened commitment to sharing resources and developing inclusive styles of leadership.

III. Healing Divisions within the One Church

Ecumenical dialogues are one of the important ways through which the healing and fulfilling gift of the Spirit is received. Through them, we are able to see with different eyes

the many barriers of separation that exist between our churches and traditions. Yet we also realize how much we share on account of our faith in Christ and the communion in the Holy Spirit. The ecumenical dialogues are not only institutional endeavors, but real developments in our commitment to witness in the Spirit sent by the Father through the Son for the healing of the whole world. Reaching formal agreements on doctrinal matters and establishing official forms of intercommunion with other churches contribute to the healing of divisions within the one Church and therefore to the unity of humanity. The mission of the Church is strengthened through unity; through this unity we bear a deeper witness to God's love for humanity and creation.

With previous assemblies, we reaffirm

- the conviction that ecumenical commitment is integral to Lutheran confessional identity
- the importance of official dialogues with other churches
- the need to explore possibilities for new ecumenical involvements, methods and instruments, and better ecumenical coordination of programs and assemblies, and
- the importance of encouraging, equipping and assisting our member churches in their regional ecumenical dialogues, agreements and mission.

We support the process initiated internationally to examine whether the condemnations of Anabaptists in the Augsburg Confession apply to Mennonites today, and we encourage the development of Lutheran-Mennonite relations locally. We also encourage relations between Lutheran and Oriental Orthodox churches at various levels.

As we serve the world with words and deeds, our Lord's mandate and the healing gift of the Holy Spirit inspire our ongoing search for the visible unity of the Church

centered in the proclamation of the Word, Holy Baptism, the sharing of the Eucharist and the apostolicity of the whole Church sent in mission.

Therefore, we commit ourselves and call on member churches to

- continue the international bilateral dialogues with the Anglican, Orthodox, Reformed and Roman Catholic churches, searching for new ways of improving the reception of dialogue results in member churches by means of accessible methods, study documents and catechetical materials, and to foster the initiation and/or the strengthening of regional dialogues and local ecumenical endeavors, in ways that are sensitive to local church realities, priorities, mission concerns, and pastoral issues (e.g., mixed marriages)
- welcome the agreements with churches of the Anglican, Methodist, Moravian and Reformed traditions that member churches have entered into since the last Assembly, and to study and appropriately implement the recommendations of the working groups with the Anglican Communion and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC). We also commit ourselves to explore the possibilities for deepened relationships with these communions at the global level for the sake of our common mission in the world
- give priority to the regular meetings with the International Lutheran Council (ILC), and support member churches of the ILC and the LWF to develop and further their relationships locally
- support the study processes related to the coherence of the Lutheran ecumenical involvement, such as on the episcopal ministry within the aposto-

licity of the church and on the diaconal ministry, paying special attention to different and sometimes controversial aspects and interpretations

- incorporate new voices, disciplines, methodologies and partners in ecumenical dialogues and encounters, giving greater attention to ecumenical pursuits in and with Africa, Asia, Central Eastern Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean
- actively participate in discussions of a new configuration of the ecumenical movement, while also encouraging Lutheran member churches in the World Council of Churches (WCC) to uphold the WCC as key in the ecumenical movement, and working toward the realization of a truly universal Christian council taking practical steps toward coordinated assemblies
- find ways of engaging in dialogue with Pentecostal churches and to study and relate to charismatic movements within our own churches.

IV. The Mission of the Church in Multifaith Contexts

God's mission is wider than the bounds of the church. The church participates in God's mission through witness in word and deed to the coming of God's reign in diverse, multifaith contexts. Our participation in the mission of the Triune God involves three interrelated dimensions, *diakonia*, proclamation and dialogue, which are integral parts of the mission of the church. We call attention to the great diversity of contexts in which mission is carried out and the variety of forms of Christian witness that are appropriate and possible in different contexts, and the need for churches to learn from one another.

Mission as transformation challenges churches to be themselves transformed in order to become God's instruments of transformation in multifaith contexts; the faith we confess is by nature dialogical. With the Curitiba Assembly, we: "...commend dialogue as a legitimate form of ministry and witness in a religiously diverse world..."³ "...by listening to the faith and convictions of others, we have the opportunity to deepen our own commitments and to define our identity in relation to others and not over against them."⁴ With the world mission conferences in San Antonio (USA) and Salvador (Brazil), we affirm that "we cannot point to any other way of salvation than Jesus Christ; at the same time we cannot set limits to the saving power of God."⁵ In light of this, we must continue to

- affirm religious freedom
- explore with people of other faiths ways in which we may undertake common endeavors which promote justice, peace and the integrity of creation
- study our Christian faith in depth and others' faiths sympathetically, in order better to understand the relationships between them and the challenges that interfaith dialogue poses to Christian, specifically Lutheran, theology
- accelerate our efforts to equip people for witness and dialogue through education, encounters, one-on-one relationships and the contributions of persons who have crossed religious or cultural boundaries, and
- hold before our Christian brothers and sisters the interrelationship of witness and dialogue as integral to Christian mission and self-understanding.

In our world today, where too often religions are used by political forces to divide people and fuel conflict, it is crucial that we pursue justice and reconciliation with those of

other faiths. Reconciliation is central in the gospel we proclaim: In Christ, God has reconciled the whole creation. In this sense, dialogue that furthers such reconciliation is one of the important ways of carrying out God's mission. Christians are called to live in peace with all and to promote reconciliation with people of different faiths, without surrendering their call to be witnesses for Christ. The relation between interfaith dialogue and proclamation requires ongoing study and discussion in our churches.

Therefore, we commit ourselves and call on member churches to

• ***Listen***

- o ensure that Christians from minority contexts are heard so that Christians in majority contexts might learn from them
- o create forums where churches can openly present their predicaments and needs, and thus inspire and invigorate us to advocate for each other
- o listen to people of other faiths with a willingness to learn and recognize signs of God's presence among them.

• ***Repent***

- o of the church's failure to see the good gifts of God in cultures
- o of how the church has supported oppression and exploitation of people and seek to rectify these injustices
- o of how churches and individuals have exploited creation.

• ***Pray***

- o for God's mission in the world, the mission of our own church, and for openness to the gospel
- o call upon the Holy Spirit to renew individuals and congregations for the sake of mission.

• ***Learn***

- o promote catechesis and biblical learning in our churches; we need to know our own Christian tradition well in order to enter into responsible dialogue with others
- o read the Bible in ways that enable us to discover how God meets people in different cultural contexts
- o explore in new and creative ways what it means to be church in multifaith/multicultural contexts with regard to the nature of the church, structures, theology and theological education, spirituality, ministry and the priesthood of all believers
- o encourage ongoing renewal of our worship practices in ways that are culturally and contextually appropriate

- o prepare pastoral guidelines for multifaith gatherings and the effects of interfaith marriages.

• ***Witness***

- o empower God's people for witness to the gospel in word and deed in daily life and society
- o develop and disseminate practical ways of holding together interfaith dialogue and witness
- o invite others to faith in Jesus Christ.

- **Dialogue**

- o actively pursue the dialogue of living and growing together in mutual respect and understanding, striving with people of other faiths for the healing of the world (“diap Praxis”) through reconciliation, peace, justice and better living conditions for all God’s children.

V. Removing Barriers That Exclude

At this Assembly, we were reminded that we live in a world where fear and suspicion of other people are rampant, due to differences in gender, race, ethnicity, class, nationality, caste, sexual orientation, age, or physical/mental condition. We all are created in God’s image. Even though diversity is part of God’s creation, differences often become the basis on which barriers are built that exclude persons and communities from participating fully in the life that God envisions for all.

We recall and affirm those many ways the LWF has spoken out repeatedly in opposition to discrimination and exclusion of many kinds. Rights of refugees, displaced persons and migrants, have long been at the forefront of LWF work. Working to end gender-based discrimination and to empower women in both society and the church has been a programmatic aspect of LWF work since the early 1970s, and later with regard to youth. In both cases, many resolutions and commitments have been made in the past. Discrimination based on “caste” (especially of Dalits) and against Indigenous peoples in many lands has received attention in more recent years.

For the first time in the history of the LWF, meetings of representatives of Indigenous peoples were held during this Assembly. In many countries, Indigenous people are discriminated against, in terms of land rights, ethnic background, lan-

guage and/or culture. Ethnicity is seen both as an asset and a danger. Frequently, Indigenous people feel powerless and voiceless regarding self-determination and access to education, health care and job opportunities.

We also were challenged by those among us at this Assembly who are differently-abled [people with disabilities] for whom life in its fullness is hindered due to inaccessibility to institutions, education, employment and social life. In some countries disabilities and diseases are still considered the result of sin, or a cause of shame in families.

The current pandemic of HIV/AIDS has moved us as churches to confess how we have sinned against those infected and affected by this disease, by stigmatizing and discriminating against them, particularly based on assumptions regarding their sexual practices. We are reminded of God’s healing power of inclusion into the community, as well as the many ways that we, as Lutheran Christians, could promote healing through social justice advocacy.

We acknowledge the diversity within the communion on matters of human sexuality. At the same time, we believe it is important to enter into dialogue to clarify our understandings and learn from the Scriptures, contemporary knowledge and our different experiences. In approaching such dialogue we seek to preserve the human rights and dignity of all people.

Naming and speaking out against discrimination of all kinds and defending human rights have and continue to be key. Yet even more crucial is to take the next steps of empowering and working with others to effectively *remove* the systemic barriers. It is not enough if some individuals are themselves able to overcome such barriers, while the patterns of discrimination and exclusion remain in place.

Therefore, we commit ourselves and call on member churches to

- continue to recognize and support the basic human rights of Indigenous

peoples according to international laws and standards; land rights are fundamental to the survival of Indigenous peoples and their cultures

- acknowledge and seek the presence of Indigenous peoples within our churches; take steps to challenge paternalistic patterns and affirm Indigenous peoples as equal partners
- continue standing in solidarity with those in India, especially the Lutheran churches which are helping to empower the Dalits as they struggle for human dignity and rights
- make our churches accessible so as to include differently-abled people in the full life of, and decision making, in our churches; in word and deed, unconditionally support differently-abled people in their struggles to overcome all forms of discrimination; seek compliance with the United Nations' standards that secure equal opportunities for differently-abled people.

VI. The Church's Ministry of Healing

We are embodied beings. As the Incarnation of Christ makes clear, our bodies are important. God became embodied in a human being and addresses us as embodied persons—as we are—rather than according to human standards of what are “perfect” or “normal” bodies. Sometimes our bodies are broken and in need of healing.

As a Christian communion we are called to participate in God's healing work, which promotes the wholeness of life. Physical, mental and spiritual healing of persons is not a new activity. This has been important in the life and ministry of the church from its beginning, and continues to be in the church's ministry today. Jesus healed and called his followers to do likewise: “...to proclaim the kingdom of God

and to heal” (Lk 9:1-2). The ministry of healing, which has an eschatological dimension, belongs to the whole church. It continues Jesus' ministry of healing, building and edifying a new community. It includes the ministry of service—*diakonia*—through medical, educational and social services for those in need. All are called to promote healing, nurture and preservation of life.

We testify to a rich variety of applications and understandings of healing in our churches, affected by local situations and cultures. As a Lutheran communion, we see the importance of sharing experiences and developing our understanding of the Church's healing ministry. We need the gifts of the Holy Spirit to discern the spirits and to provide our communities with sound criteria in the exercise of the healing ministry.

In our globalized world we cannot limit the task of healing to the individual or intimate sphere. A wider perspective is necessary, including social, political and ecological dimensions. The prophetic dimension must not be ignored in the healing ministry of the church. Where healing takes place, justice is restored.

It is of fundamental importance to relate the healing ministry to the ministry of proclaiming the gospel and administering the sacraments. Healing is grounded in the Word of the cross, which basically is a word of powerlessness. This clarifies that the source of healing is God. This is expressed in the Lutheran doctrine of justification by grace through faith alone, as celebrated in Baptism and Eucharist. Both are sacraments of healing. From this basis the church is given its ministry of healing as a transformative action, empowered by the Holy Spirit.

As Lutheran Christians, many of us have kept our distance or been suspicious of healing movements in the church. Yet, all of us yearn for healing of body, mind and spirit. With regard to faith-healing movements, we affirm that human beings cannot guarantee, promise or control the outcome. Healing is not synonymous with

salvation, nor is faith necessarily a precondition for healing.

Healing is not limited to curing in the scientific sense. The essence of healing is to alleviate suffering, give hope and enable people to live and die with dignity. Disabling conditions may persist in healing, but persons are restored to life in community, for the sake of abundant life. Pastoral care and liturgical acts of anointing and healing are further expressions of this reality.

These affirmations help us to see that the ministry of healing belongs to the whole church. Both ordained and lay members are called to heal as partners in God's healing work for the wholeness of life.

Therefore, we commit ourselves and call on member churches to

- continue to develop our understanding of the church's ministry of healing, in relation to
 - o the richness of cultural expressions, with a special focus on marginalized and Indigenous cultures
 - o our socio-political and environmental contexts, permeated by concerns such as poverty, HIV/AIDS, violence and destructive lifestyles
 - o everyday life, giving value to daily work as vocation and the opportunity to be partners in God's healing ministry in the public arena
 - o charismatic movements
 - o the spiritual life of the church, and especially how this can be expressed in liturgies for healing, drawn from the wealth of cultures within the Lutheran communion.

- broaden the understanding of *diakonia*, as a fundamental dimension of the church's nature and life, and especially diaconal ministry as a part of the holistic ministry of the church.

VII. Justice and Healing in Families

God has created us and redeemed us in Christ for fullness of life in community, marked by love and sharing. Families are a primary expression of that divinely ordained community. Here, human beings are nurtured, raised and supported to participate in society. Within our global communion, there are widely divergent understandings and compositions of families, with different cultural practices and taboos. The challenge is to pursue justice and healing in many different kinds of families.

In a changing world, the integrity of family as a place of love, nurture and safety is continually challenged and often broken by violence, disease, the impact of poverty, alcohol and drug abuse, and changing patterns for our life in community. Families in all parts of the world experience massive changes and tensions, especially in times of war, economic upheaval and devastating pandemics such as HIV/AIDS.

Because of the need to "break the silence" regarding domestic violence, we affirm how the LWF resource, *Churches Say "No" to Violence Against Women*, has been used in many of our churches, and among our ecumenical partners, and encourage that effective follow-up continue in churches throughout the communion. In addition, attention needs to be given to violence against men, children, the elderly and the differently-abled.

An essential part of our pastoral and prophetic ministry in solidarity with those who suffer is continually to lift up God's gracious intentions for life in community,

through care, for justice, peace and healing in families.

Therefore, we commit ourselves and call on member churches to

- encourage and support one another in
 - a) study and respectful dialogue on issues of marriage, family and human sexuality, in a manner appropriate to the needs of each member church, and
 - b) advocacy for the human rights and the dignity of all persons regardless of gender or sexual orientation
- increase awareness regarding prevention of the HIV/AIDS pandemic through education and information, including speaking-out against harmful, abusive and exploitative sexual practices, treating sexually transmitted diseases, promoting faithfulness in marriage and advocating effective means of prevention (e.g., abstinence, use of condoms, sterilized needles, clean blood supplies)
- encourage and support one another in overcoming violence in families, particularly violent practices against women and children (including harmful cultural practices such as female genital mutilation and forced marriage) and to create processes of healing and reconciliation within families
- encourage and support one another in counteracting alcohol and drug abuse
- be mindful of how families experience spiritual poverty and encourage the development of liturgies and worship resources that reflect their needs and realities.

VIII. Overcoming Violence

Violence in our world today takes many forms—some of them overt and personal but many of them covert, embedded in dehumanizing structural and institutional forms. In situations where one group holds the power and others are left dependent, injustices fester and often are reinforced and perpetuated through violence. The church must also be aware of the possibility that it may misuse its power, especially through traditions and practices that exclude and oppress.

We deplore, as did the Curitiba Assembly, the huge expenditures that go into military budgets, often at the cost of meeting the basic needs of people, and that lead instead to further oppression, denial of human rights and an escalation of violence. Following the Hong Kong Assembly, we affirm the role of the LWF “...to facilitate dialogue, peace and reconciliation at all stages of the evolution of conflict.” And “...to support and accompany local initiatives in pursuit of sustainable peace, justice, genuine reconciliation and the reconstruction of civil society, and the establishment of trust among peoples and nations.”⁶ We affirm the continuing exploration of the ethical dilemmas this poses, such as those discussed in the LWF paper, “Armed Intervention to Defend Human rights.”⁷

We note the alarming evidence of religious and other forms of fundamentalism that contribute to suspicion, hatred and conflict. We challenge all those ways religion is misused to legitimize or rationalize the use of violence—in families, communities, nations and internationally. We join with the Hong Kong Assembly in declaring that “‘Fundamentalism,’ whether political or religious, is contrary to the basic values of human dignity and freedom....”⁸

Our faith is in a God who through justice, forgiveness and reconciliation, rather than through vengeance, breaks cycles of violence. Nonviolent resistance to conditions that lead to and are themselves violent is a form of discipleship.

Therefore, we commit ourselves and call on member churches to

- participate fully in the WCC ecumenical “Decade to Overcome Violence (2001–2010) Churches Seeking Reconciliation and Peace.”
- become agents for overcoming violence and for promoting reconciliation. Our theologies should help break the barriers that prevent us from expressing repentance and receiving absolution, and support advocacy for the oppressed and liberation of both oppressors and the oppressed. The gospel of liberation must be applied in practical contexts of oppression and marginalization within the church as well as in society
- encourage and support one another and act to overcome sexual violence against children and youth including within our churches
- affirm and use the power of non-violence, educating and training for non-violent actions to transform situations of violence and injustice
- pursue dialogue, encounter and practical cooperation as a means of reducing prejudice and enemy images and overcoming violence, stigmatization and victimization
- actively confront expressions of religious and political fundamentalism, including Christian fundamentalism; search for common values of justice, peace and reconciliation in all religious traditions, and undertake joint interfaith actions
- recognize and support the essential role and initiatives of women in negotiations and peace-building processes, and encourage men to be more active in opposing violence
- confront increasing militarism, the manufacture and proliferation of weapons, arms spending at the expense of social spending (including health and education) and military, political and all other forms of imperialism
- support efforts to strengthen the United Nations, international institutions and international law as instruments of peace, especially in the current context of isolationism, unilateralism and xenophobia
- advocate against violence in the media and in popular forms of entertainment, especially those affecting children and youth; encourage journalists to provide authentic communication and objective non-sensationalist reporting on world events
- confront those who profit from the trafficking of women and children.

IX. Transforming Economic Globalization

Economic globalization is reshaping our world. We have heard of the impact on our communities around the world, and have focused on key economic policies that abdicate all decisions to the market without considering the human, social, ecological, and spiritual consequences.

Economic globalization has brought a profound sense of hopelessness to so many. Instead of the promised prosperity, many aspects of economic globalization continue to bring suffering, misery and death to millions. In spite of the increase in food production, the unequal distribution of wealth and goods leaves more than one billion people under the spell of endemic hunger. Many nations of the South find themselves under the unbearable burden of economic debt. The historical reasons for the debt are deeply connected to colonialism and the unfair de-

velopment of the modern system of trade and finance. The harsh burden of globalization falls in greater measure upon women; they not only suffer its direct effects but also are called upon to care for others abandoned due to the consequences of globalization.

Through our diverse experiences, we are facing the same negative consequences of neoliberal economic policies (i.e., the Washington Consensus) that are leading to increased hardship, suffering and injustice in our communities. As a communion, we must engage the false ideology of neoliberal economic globalization by confronting, converting and changing this reality and its effects. This false ideology is grounded in the assumption that the market, built on private property, unrestrained competition and the centrality of contracts, is the absolute law governing human life, society and the natural environment. This is idolatry and leads to the systematic exclusion of those who own no property, the destruction of cultural diversity, the dismantling of fragile democracies and the destruction of the earth.

We find negative global effects of economic globalization within all parts of our communion, but particularly in the South and in Central Eastern Europe. Economic globalization has resulted in the following:

- a growing gap between the very rich and the poor that particularly adversely affects women, youth and children
- increased marginalization of Indigenous peoples, excluding them from their right to their land, self-governance, resources, Indigenous knowledge and their culture
- the international debt has become an instrument of domination; the rates of interest charged amount to usury; many of the debts are illegitimate (including “odious debts”); the efforts undertaken by governments and international financial institutions so far have failed
- the globalization of information that connects people in many parts of the world is denied to the majority who lack access to it
- churches have shrinking resources as support decreases because more people are struggling to survive
- unemployment and underemployment are reducing the ability of people to earn a living and are forcing many into dehumanizing activities (e.g., trafficking in women and children, prostitution, criminal activity)
- while capital and goods are freely traded across borders, people left desperate by weakened local economies are often prevented from migrating
- governments are becoming powerless and less willing to safeguard the well-being of their people.

As a Lutheran communion we call for the development of an economy that serves life. We affirm the LWF document, “A Call to Participate in Transforming Economic Globalization,” upon which we commit ourselves to work, based theologically on what it means to be a communion. We also emphasize, with Martin Luther, that economic practices that undermine the well-being of the neighbor (especially the most vulnerable) must be rejected and replaced with alternatives. Luther also reminds pastors that they are obliged to unmask hidden injustices of economic practices that exploit the vulnerable.

We recognize that this vision of an economy that serves life will need to be pursued ecumenically. We join with the World Council of Churches, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and other church families in a continuing ecumenical process focused on how economic and ecological injustice challenges us as churches.

Therefore, we commit ourselves and call on member churches to

- participate in transforming economic globalization and to engage in partnerships with civil society, particularly in efforts that recognize the churches' prophetic role in promoting justice and human rights
- help empower members by raising awareness of the issues of economic globalization and equipping them to take concrete actions
- address issues of economic globalization that include trade, debt, militarization, corruption, corporate social responsibility, gender equality and migration
- build and strengthen ecumenical partnerships, multifaith cooperation, and participate in civil society alliances (i.e., the World Social Forum)
- create opportunities and arenas for dialogue, discussion and moral deliberation between various economic actors, policy makers, citizens, stakeholders and communities.

X. Healing Creation

The wounded creation also is in desperate need of healing. The earth continues to be polluted due to human greed, ignorance, overpopulation and wars, as well as a consequence of consumerism. This has fatal consequences such as drought, desertification, extinction of species, poverty and starvation. We confess that we play a part in the exploitation and destruction of nature. Too often, we treat the creation as an object for our use and inflict wounds upon it, rather than seeing ourselves as part of God's precious gift of creation. Contributing to this reality have been misleading theological attitudes: that it is

heaven not earth that matters; that humans are to exploit and subjugate all creation, including human and ecological relationships; and, that the scope of God's redemption is limited to human beings alone.

As a Lutheran communion, we affirm instead that

- God is present not only in and with human beings but in and with all creation; Christ suffers with creation when it is abused, wounded, violated; the Holy Spirit cries with the wounded creation
- through Christ, God reconciles, transforms and heals **all** of creation
- human beings are to be God's creating, restoring, sustaining hands on this earth
- reconciled to our Creator through Christ, we have the opportunity to repent; justified by faith we can act accordingly. In so doing we acknowledge our place in creation and accept our responsibility toward creation.

The 1990 LWF Eighth Assembly in Curitiba, Brazil, made the commitment to form "one global lifeline of churches supporting each other in confronting threats to God's creation."⁹ Here we raise up the importance of

- challenging, on personal, corporate and international levels, specific practices that violate and wound the creation
- working for policies and practices that respect all of life, and opposing the patenting of life forms or processes that produce them, especially at the expense of everyone who depends on them
- promoting sustainable agriculture, based on a holistic ecological approach, that is ecologically sound,

economically viable, socially just, culturally appropriate and humane and learning from the insights and experiences of minority cultures and Indigenous peoples

- opposing consumer and profit-driven models of economic development and industry which ignore equity and justice for all creation
- reflecting on ethical and justice issues related to modern biotechnology, whose social and medical consequences are yet to be seen
- lifting up and promoting alternative ways that guarantee equitable trade and fair wages.

Therefore, we commit ourselves and call on member churches to

- challenge practices where the gifts of God for all are made into commodities in unjust and unnecessary ways, which especially impact the poor. This includes the privatization of water and all other natural resources that are basic for human life and the patenting of seeds for crops and of other living organisms
- become more eco-centric in order to live more in harmony with nature. We have much to learn from Indigenous peoples and other traditions and what they have to teach us about our participation in and preservation of nature
- work for a more just sharing of the goods of creation, mindful that for many people, how they relate to nature is a matter of daily survival, and that some of us consume far more than others. Together we must work against climate change and the greenhouse effect, by acting to decrease the consumption of fossil fuel and use renewable energy resources

- evaluate new biotechnological developments and advocate against those that violate the dignity and integrity of human beings as created in the image of God
- support international agreements (e.g., the Kyoto Protocol) that seek to preserve the environment and the integrity of creation
- include study of the theology of creation as an established part of the curriculum of institutions of higher learning of the LWF member churches, and educate our communities on the theology of creation
- respect Sunday as a day of rest in order that all creation can be restored and renewed.

Conclusion

In light of the many challenges we face in today's world, we have reaffirmed past commitments of the LWF, and assumed new ones. We pledge to devote ourselves and our best efforts to them. And yet, we know all too well the limitations of our capacities and recognize the tragic effects of our sinfulness, which also pervades our churches and our communion.

More than ever, our deeply wounded world needs a testimony of hope, a hope that arises out of God's promise alone. In Christ, we have come to recognize that God heals the world and us. Jesus Christ came into this world and lived among us, like one of us. He took the sufferings of the whole world on himself. In his death and resurrection we were given a new hope and new future. Jesus Christ himself is the precious gift and promise for all humankind, for all creation.

And therefore, we confess the God as God of Life, and see healing as promoting the wholeness of life. In the midst of all suffering and injustice, God is continuously

at work, healing our world. In Christ, God makes us whole, receives us anew as God's children, restores all broken relations, and calls us into the pathways of discipleship.

Thus, as justified sinners, we are all called to participate in God's work of healing our world. We are not yet in the fulfilled reign of God. Our discipleship calls us to follow Jesus on the way of the cross. God's Word and sacraments lead us on our

way from the cross to resurrection. The Holy Spirit guides the church on this journey of faith and hope, and reminds us to carry each others' burdens in prayer and solidarity. And thus, "let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith" (Heb 12:1b-2a). O God, guide us to do so, "for the healing of the world."

Notes

¹ *LWF Report No. 28/29 "I Have Heard the Cry of My People."* Curitiba 1990. Proceedings of the Eighth Assembly. Geneva: LWF 1990, p. 82.

² LWF Council Agenda, Wittenberg, Germany, 2002. Exhibit 16.1

³ *LWF Report No. 28/29 "I Have Heard the Cry of My People."* Curitiba 1990. Proceedings of the Eighth Assembly. Geneva: LWF 1990, p. 84.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ *The San Antonio Report "Your Will Be Done: Mission in Christ's Way."* Ed. Frederick R. Wilson. Geneva: WCC Publications 1990, p. 32, par. 26. *Called to One Hope.* Ed. Christopher Duraisingh. Geneva: WCC Publications, 1998, p. 33.

⁶ *Official Report of the Ninth Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation.* Hong Kong 1997. Geneva: LWF, pp. 59-60.

⁷ LWF Council Agenda, Turku, Finland, 2000. Exhibit 17.3.

⁸ *Official Report of the Ninth Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation.* Hong Kong 1997. Geneva: LWF, p. 72.

⁹ *LWF Report No. 28/29 "I Have Heard the Cry of My People."* Curitiba 1990. Proceedings of the Eighth Assembly. Geneva: LWF 1990, p. 89.

Adopted Resolutions



Delegates take decisions.

The Assembly

VOTED: to adopt the resolution regarding conflict in Liberia.

Text of the resolution as adopted:

The Tenth Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), meeting in Winnipeg, Canada, has been deeply moved by accounts of the conflict in Liberia, the suffering of its people, the witness of the Lutheran Church in Liberia (LCL) and its ecumenical and interfaith partners in the midst of the violence, and the failure to date of the international community to respond in an adequate and meaningful way.

Bishop Sumoward Harris and Ms Comfort Freeman of the LCL have been witnesses among us, and have powerfully conveyed the cries of their community and church.

Having heard these cries, and inspired by the Assembly theme "For the Healing of the World":

The Assembly

- *declares its profound sense of communion in Christ with the leadership and members of the Lutheran Church in Liberia, and its support for the LCL, as it seeks to be a faithful witness to the healing word of the gospel in the midst of violence, bloodshed and international indifference to terrible human suffering, and requests the General Secretary to convey the Assembly's sentiments to the LCL by letter.*
- *expresses its concern for the suffering people of Liberia, and especially for the most vulnerable and unprotected, through the LCL.*

- *acknowledges and strongly endorses the lead taken by Liberian women in seeking peace through the Women in Peace-building Network (WIPNET).*
- *encourages all LWF member churches to uphold the people and churches of Liberia in their prayers.*
- *appeals to all the parties to the conflict to cease armed violence, to protect civilians, to stop recruiting and deploying child soldiers, and to negotiate for a peaceful resolution of the conflict.*
- *urges the United Nations Security Council to immediately mandate the deployment of a multilateral stabilization force to separate the warring sides, to protect civilians, and to disarm and demobilize all fighting forces.*
- *calls upon UN Member States that have the capacity to do so to commit adequate troops and equipment to this stabilization force.*
- *affirms the efforts of the staff of the Lutheran World Federation in Liberia, who continue to try to find ways of alleviating human suffering in the most difficult and dangerous of contexts.*
- *urges the international community to support and contribute to efforts for humanitarian relief and reconstruction in Liberia, including a longer-term perspective on promoting democratization, peace and nation-building in Liberia, and*
- *requests the General Secretary to undertake all appropriate actions to express and implement the concern of the Assembly for the people of Liberia.*

The Assembly

VOTED: to adopt the resolution calling on the member churches of the LWF to engage in a process of healing by taking all the necessary measures at the international level to develop research for the prevention and treatment of malaria.

Text of the resolution as adopted:

Great sums of money—though not enough—are devoted by laboratories to research on HIV/AIDS, a disease which touches women and men in both the South and the North. The Assembly supports endeavors to fight this devastating disease.

However, the number one cause of mortality in the world—with even greater consequences—is malaria. No one talks about it because it kills children, women and men only in the South.

The Assembly

calls on the member churches of the LWF to engage in a process of healing by taking the necessary measures at the international level to develop research for the prevention and treatment of malaria.

The Assembly

VOTED: to adopt the resolution on ministry training.

Text of the resolution as adopted:

The Assembly requests that the LWF, as part of its efforts for human resources development, initiate

- formal and informal training programs in medical-pastoral care in seminaries and church-run institutions, and*
- opportunities to understand the holistic concept of healing for health care professionals and others who work with healing.*

The Assembly

VOTED: to adopt the resolution on exclusion issues.

Text of the resolution as adopted:

The Assembly, aware of God's calling to the church to include all people, recommends that the LWF examine and create an action plan to address the stigmatization and exclusion of specific groups of people, including women, youth, those who are physically and/or mentally challenged, those infected with HIV/AIDS, those who lack financial resources, and those who are discriminated against based on ethnicity or caste.

The Assembly

VOTED: to adopt the resolution on Indigenous peoples as amended.

Text of the resolution as adopted:

The Assembly asks the LWF, for the next period, to initiate a specific program for Indigenous Peoples facilitating networking through regional and international consultations and exchange programs, as well as initiate theological study processes related to gospel and culture and Indigenous spiritualities, as far as possible in cooperation with other world confessional bodies and with the World Council of Churches. The LWF and its member churches are also asked to support a process at the national, regional and international levels of protecting human rights of Indigenous peoples, including land rights.

The Assembly

VOTED: to adopt the resolution on gender mainstreaming and women's ordination.

Text of the resolution as adopted:

The Assembly requests the LWF and its member churches to undertake a theologi-

cal study on how to overcome the barriers that hinder gender mainstreaming (gender equity) and women's ordination (in churches where women are not ordained).

The Assembly

VOTED: to adopt the resolution on sister church relationships.

Text of the resolution as adopted:

The Assembly requests the LWF communion to support "sister church" relationships between regions to promote mutual support through the provision of both material and human resources.

The Assembly

VOTED: to adopt the resolution on "Churches Say 'No' to Violence against Women."

Text of the resolution as adopted:

The Assembly recognizes with gratitude the resource "Churches Say 'No' to Violence against Women," and urges the LWF to continue to

- a) promote this resource.*
- b) encourage the member churches to work with this resource, and*
- c) encourage that this resource be made available to all local churches in their respective languages.*

The Assembly

VOTED: to adopt the resolution on trade and development policies/ international debt/corporate social responsibility, as amended.

Text of the resolution as adopted:

The Assembly invites the LWF and the member churches to undertake the following priority issues:

Assembly delegates in the plenary hall



TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

Advocate for trade and development policies which uphold the objective of enhancing human well-being to which the international human rights instruments give legal expression. This may involve the following:

The LWF initiating an international campaign, involving member churches, communities and individuals, to promote access to Global Public Goods (e.g. basic goods and services). In particular the LWF should promote trade and development policies with regard to the World Trade Organization which secure access for all to safe water, adequate nutrition, shelter, health care including medications and primary education. The LWF should encourage the churches to hold international financial institutions, governments and corporations accountable to respect these fundamental human rights.

The LWF working to prevent the commercialization and commodification of water and other basic necessities for life;

The LWF encouraging governments and financial institutions to support

more just-trade rules and movements working for fair trade;

The LWF addressing the impact of liberalized capital and currency flows, recognizing the need for regulations and controls including the issue of a tax on currency transactions; and

The LWF continuing its campaign, in conjunction with the World Council of Churches and the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance, to support actions and advocate with governments to ensure access to treatment, medicines and public-health programs for people living with HIV/AIDS and other diseases, specifically as they relate to Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS), trade rules, and the responsibility of governments to ensure these are provided.

INTERNATIONAL DEBT

Continue to call for the cancellation of the debt of Severely Indebted Poor Countries.

Raise the question which portion is illegitimate/odious debt, support those victims and their lawyers who are filing court cases for reparation in national courts and the International Court of Justice, and challenge the governments

to cancel the illegitimate debt both bilateral and multilateral.

Support the development of an independent arbitration mechanism for middle-income countries.

Monitor the debt crisis in countries and globally, encourage networking and the sharing of resources.

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Strengthen and expand their advocacy for greater accountability by corporations and more corporate social responsibility.

Support efforts to eliminate corruption and ensure greater transparency.

The Assembly

VOTED: to adopt the resolution on prioritizing the issue of diakonia within the LWF as it elaborates more specifically a number of the concepts in the first draft of the Message (paragraphs 25 and 45).

Text of the resolution as adopted:

PRIORITIZING THE ISSUE OF DIAKONIA WITHIN THE LWF

The theme of the LWF Tenth Assembly in Winnipeg 2003, “For the Healing of the World,” constitutes a suitable starting point for sustained reflections on the role of diakonia within the Lutheran communion of churches. This move is already prepared

- by the global consultation on “Prophetic Diakonia” (Johannesburg, November 2002), and
- by an upcoming study project on the diaconal ministry within the Department for Theology and Studies.

Against this background, the Assembly requests that the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) initiate a coordinated study program on “The Role of Diakonia as an Integral Part of the Lutheran Communion.”

This study should include reflections on the diaconal work of laypeople inside and outside organized church structures.

Contextually, the Lutheran churches should be churches of presence for and with marginalized individuals and groups. In view of the persistence of material poverty in major parts of the world, and in the light of the spiritual poverty related to excessive individualism in other parts of the world, the diaconal tasks of the churches are today many and multifaceted.

Theologically, we need to reconsider the Lutheran commitment to the priesthood of all believers. What is the relation between mission and diakonia? What does the message of God’s unconditional justification of sinners mean to those who are ashamed as poor, powerless or contagious, or branded as those who do not measure up to modern standards of efficiency and success?

Ecclesiologically, we should give voice and recognition to those lay members of the church, who contribute to the life of the church through hospitality and visitation, hearing and helping, or contribute to the beauty of the world through music and art. A failing theological reflection on the works of the love and beauty may reflect an ecclesial situation where sometimes only the ordination of church officers is regarded as important to church formation.

The Assembly

VOTED: to adopt the resolution on observance of LWF guidelines and principles.

Text of the resolution as adopted:

The Assembly insists that all LWF supported projects and programs observe and adhere to the “Environmental Guidelines for Program Implementation” and “Guiding Principles for Sustainable Development.”

The Assembly

VOTED: to amend the resolution on “Environmental Guidelines

**for Program Implementation”
and “Guiding Principles for
Sustainable development.”**

Text of the amended resolution as adopted:

The Assembly insists that all LWF-supported projects and programs observe and adhere to the “Environmental Guidelines for Program Implementation” and “Guiding Principles for Sustainable development.”

To request the LWF to respond to global ecological suffering by supporting institutions which fight to stop environmental damage.

The Assembly

VOTED: to adopt the resolution on the development of an action plan on water.

Text of the resolution as adopted:

The Assembly calls for the development of an LWF action plan on water, including resource mobilization, as a way of highlighting

- a) *how essential water is for every person and all of creation, and*
- b) *the dilemmas of just, affordable distribution and the privatization of water which increasingly is occurring under economic globalization.*

requests that the LWF provide exegetical and theological materials to facilitate discussion in order to move the member churches, congregations and communities from an anthropocentric/ego-centric approach to a holistic eco-centric model of understanding creation, including all people, as part of creation.

The Assembly

VOTED: to adopt the resolution concerning an expansion of the name of the LWF.

Text of the resolution:

The Assembly adopts, in line with the recommendation of the Council in September 2002, an expansion of the name of the LWF, so that the full name will be “The Lutheran World Federation – A Communion of Churches,” with the understanding that when, for practical reasons the full name is too long, the present name without the addition also remains valid, and “LWF” remains the normal acronym.

The Assembly

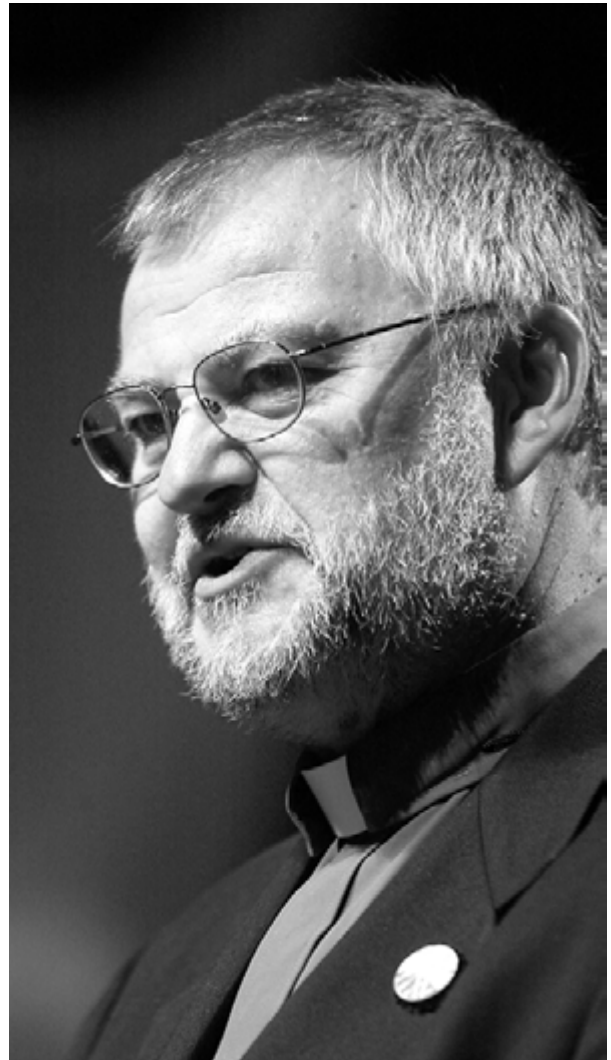
VOTED: to adopt the resolution concerning issues facing the Middle East region, as amended.

Text of the resolution as adopted:

The Assembly

- *expresses its solidarity with the churches and people of Iraq.*
- *reaffirms the internationally recognized right of self-determination of nations and the right of the Iraqi people to a democratic government.*
- *affirms the role of the churches to be bridge-builders at the local level and initiators of interfaith dialogue.*
- *declares that the war in Iraq has demonstrated yet again that the Middle East is not in need of more weapons—whether developed locally or obtained through arms sales, whether conventional or non-conventional—but rather is in need of justice, and*
- *affirms the need for the international community to address the dreadful proliferation of arms throughout the region and calls upon the member churches and the Council to work for their elimination.*

National Bishop Raymond L. Schultz, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, chairperson of the Policy and Reference Committee, introduces a recommendation.



Statements

The Assembly

VOTED: to adopt the Public Statement on Illegitimate Debt and send it to the LWF member churches and the international financial institutions.

Text of the public statement as adopted:

*PUBLIC STATEMENT
ON ILLEGITIMATE DEBT*

When the Lutheran communion gathered in Curitiba thirteen years ago, it stated that the churches should “search for solutions to the debt crisis which is bring-

ing such devastation to the underprivileged part of the world.”

Now, as representatives from the global Lutheran community are meeting in Winnipeg, the debt burden has increased and is today a major barrier against eradication of poverty and fulfillment of basic human rights for all.

Since Curitiba, the international community has accepted, among others, as a result of the global mobilization in the Jubilee 2000/Jubilee South campaign, the need to reduce the debt burden. But the measures taken are insufficient in financial terms.

In our assessment, the present financial external debt can only be understood if seen in relationship to the historic exploitation of colonialism. External debt has in fact become a modern tool for domination.

Moreover, research has shown that substantial parts of the external debts of countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean are illegitimate. Loans were freely offered to illegitimate and undemocratic governments which then contracted these loans. In many cases, the contracted debt was misused or diverted, both by illegitimate and legitimate governments. Only a minor part has been actually used for social development.

International financial institutions (IFIs), which are ruled by the dominant nations in the world, knowingly and even actively promoted this irresponsible lending to illegitimate and/or corrupt governments. Even when the financial resources were used properly the supported projects and programs often did not meet the need for social development. The IFIs and the dominant nations in the world have to accept their responsibility for the bad policies, decisions and practices, which led to the current debt crisis.

In line with this assessment the LWF calls upon:

- *the IFIs to accept that part of the debt is illegitimate or odious. This debt is the responsibility of the creditors and has to be cancelled.*
- *the member churches in the industrialized countries to challenge their governments to advocate for the cancellation of illegitimate or odious debts.*
- *the member churches in the indebted countries to actively participate in social auditing of the debt and in budget monitoring by utilizing mechanisms developed by civil society.*
- *the member churches to support initiatives which are filing court cases*

in national and/or international courts suing people and institutions involved in criminal or illegal acts related to debt contract and use.

- *the member churches to challenge commercial banks, which are or have been involved in illegitimate lending to take their responsibility and cancel their claims.*

The Assembly further recognizes that there is an urgent need to develop mechanisms at an international level in order to find ways of a justice-oriented debt management. This mechanism should ensure full and active participation of indebted countries, securing that the lenders take their responsibility.

The Assembly

VOTED: to adopt the Public Statement of Concern on Unilateralism in the International Policies of the United States of America.

Text of the Public Statement as adopted:

**PUBLIC STATEMENT OF CONCERN
ON UNILATERALISM
IN THE INTERNATIONAL POLICIES
OF THE UNITED STATES
OF AMERICA**

Conscious of the importance of international law and the United Nations in the healing of the world, the Assembly expresses its deep concern about the direction of a number of US government policies.

It notes a trend away from multilateral discussions and responsible engagement within the framework of international law toward one of unilateralism. Among the recent examples of this pattern are

- *the refusal to ratify the Kyoto Protocol to The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.*
- *the refusal to ratify the (Oslo) Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and*



Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction.

- *the refusal to ratify the Rome Statute, establishing the International Criminal Court.*
- *the refusal to ratify the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women.*
- *the refusal to ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child.*
- *the conditioning of support for HIV/AIDS programs in severely affected countries on their acceptance of genetically modified organisms.*
- *the detention of prisoners in Guantanamo in defiance of international law; and not least*
- *the adoption of a “pre-emptive war” doctrine.*

The Assembly asks the US to respect internationally recognized human rights and international law. Aware of the threats posed by terrorist acts, the Assembly affirms international policies which seek

human security through international cooperation and common security.

The Assembly in particular asks the Government of the United States of America to truly recognize international law and the United Nations as the legitimate international framework and forum for encountering the threats to peace, security and survival of the entire human family.

The Assembly therefore urges the Government of the United States of America to embrace international law and to ratify the above-mentioned conventions and international agreements.

The Assembly

VOTED: to adopt the Public Statement concerning the United States of America and the Kyoto Protocol.

Text of the Public Statement as adopted:

**PUBLIC STATEMENT CONCERNING
THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
AND THE KYOTO PROTOCOL**

Throughout the world human beings are suffering from dried-out land, storms and floods, etc., as a result of climate change. Also, eco-systems with their species are threatened because of these changes. These

effects are increasing and need to be dealt with very seriously and instantly.

The Lutheran World Federation cares for God's creation and alleviates human need.¹ Climate change is an issue of respect and integrity for the creation and global justice and solidarity.

The Kyoto Protocol is a document that has been made by the United Nations and its Member States. In 1997 more than 160 nations met in Kyoto to continue the work with the Framework Convention on Climate Change from 1992. The Kyoto Protocol was an outcome of this meeting and was a commitment to decrease the levels of greenhouse gas emissions.

Carbon dioxide is one of the most common greenhouse gases. The greenhouse gases act as a greenhouse around the planet and are resulting in increasing the temperature on earth. Further, this will have the effects of increasing and decreasing the amount of rainfall in different areas, heavy storms will be more common and there will be a risk of changes in the ocean currents. These effects are of course affecting nature, including humankind.

The United States of America is one of the largest contributors of carbon dioxide emission in the world.

The Assembly, therefore, calls on the Government of the United States of America to ratify the Kyoto Protocol and to seriously work toward decreasing carbon dioxide emissions.

The Assembly

VOTED: to adopt the Public Statement on Israel-Palestine as amended.

Text of the Public Statement as adopted:

*PUBLIC STATEMENT
ON ISRAEL-PALESTINE*

The Tenth Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation notes that the LWF has spoken and acted on many occasions with regard to the situation in Israel-Palestine. It expresses appreciation for the resolutions adopted by the Council since the Ninth Assembly.

The Assembly affirms the efforts of the churches, the international community and all persons of goodwill in their quest for peace with justice in Palestine and Israel. It denounces the occupation, violence, political and religious extremism, and any violation of human rights as antithetical to this vision.

During plenary sessions, delegates are seated at round tables.



The Assembly notes that the Quartet of the United Nations, the European Union, the United States and the Russian Federation have placed before the international community “A Performance-Based Roadmap to a Permanent Two-State Solution to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict,” thus providing international legitimacy to this effort. The Assembly considers this proposal as a golden opportunity to find ways to resolve the many differences which exist between Israelis and Palestinians because the proposal is designed to end the military occupation of the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem, end the spiral of violence, implement a two-state solution, and establish a State of Palestine by 2005. The Assembly affirms efforts, such as these, to establish two viable, independent, contiguous states—living side by side, justly, peacefully, equally and equitably—with a shared Jerusalem. The Assembly calls upon the parties to address these issues as well as those of Israeli settlements on Palestinian land, the Palestinian refugees’ right of return, a fair distribution of water resources and religious freedom for all. The Assembly calls for the halt on construction of the separation wall being built to divide the two states, but which, in fact, will be dividing the Palestinian cities from each other and confining people to their towns and villages. The Assembly affirms that the solution to the root cause of this problem will result in liberation for Palestine and security for Israel. It calls upon Israel, Palestine, the Quartet and the international community to implement the Road Map with clear benchmarks.

The Assembly wishes to thank all those in the member churches who have supported the ministries and institutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan (ELCJ), e.g. its schools, other educational and social institutions, its congregations, and its work for reconciliation, so that they have been able to continue their vitally important work. The Assembly calls upon the member churches to actively support the ELCJ’s efforts in inter-

religious dialogue which is indispensable for building a just peace and for healing of the conflict. Aware of the emigration of Palestinian Christians due to the unstable political and economic situation, the Assembly commends the ELCJ’s work in providing community-based education and housing to enable Palestinian Christians to remain in their country.

The Assembly also expresses appreciation for the worldwide support of the Augusta Victoria Hospital and endorses the efforts by the Council and the member churches to resolve favorably the present legal dispute between the Lutheran World Federation and the Government of Israel with regard to the tax status of the LWF in East Jerusalem. At issue is a threat to the very witness of all of the churches in Jerusalem. The Assembly endorses comprehensive negotiations between the LWF and the State of Israel and between the LWF and the State of Palestine respectively, in order to secure rights for Lutherans (and thereby other Christians as well), in Israel and in Palestine.

The Assembly affirms the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI) and other efforts by the member churches to stand in solidarity with Palestinians and Israelis working for peace and an end to the illegal occupation. The Assembly encourages the member churches to support the EAPPI by building awareness about the program, recruiting people to serve as Ecumenical Accompaniers, and remembering in prayer all those who participate in the program.

The Assembly

VOTED: to adopt the Public Statement on Exclusion of Assembly Participants.

Text of the Public Statement as adopted:

PUBLIC STATEMENT ON EXCLUSION OF ASSEMBLY PARTICIPANTS

The participants in the Tenth Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation, held in

Winnipeg, Canada, 21-31 July 2003, have enjoyed the warm welcome and hospitality of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, the authorities of this city and province, and many individual Canadians. We deeply regret that so many expected participants in this gathering of the global Lutheran family have been excluded from this welcome and hospitality as a result of the lack of visas.

An unprecedented number of participants—approximately fifty persons from thirteen different countries (all African or Asian)—were either denied, or did not receive, Canadian visas. Women, youth, and Indian Dalits and Tribals were disproportionately represented among those who could not attend for this reason. We have not only missed the faces and voices of these sisters and brothers in Christ; they have been prevented from fulfilling their appointed role of representing their churches in the process of establishing directions for the work of the LWF for the next six-year period.

In addition, a number of participants who were expected to participate in pre- or post-Assembly visitation programs in the United States of America did not receive visas to enable them to visit sister churches in the US.

These circumstances, while not diminishing the strength of our communion in Christ, have impeded our attempts to demonstrate and experience that communion in an Assembly meeting under the theme “For the Healing of the World.” That theme has proved to be a prophetic choice for this Assembly. The experience of exclusion that some of our delegates have faced in trying to obtain visas on

this occasion is but a small symptom of one facet of the growing trend toward exclusion and isolationism in our world today. It has helped us to understand this reality and to respond to it as a communion of churches.

It especially grieves us that those excluded from this gathering are exclusively from the countries of the South—including some of the poorest countries—and comprise in particular women, youth and members of Indigenous and marginalized communities. This is a parable of the continuing and often increasing exclusion of these same sectors of humanity from the global community and “marketplace.”

We are outraged by the statements attributed to the Canadian federal authorities suggesting that those denied visas include “alleged murderers, embezzlers of church funds and other criminals.” Such statements defame all those not granted visas—including a number of bishops and other church leaders—and are typical of the enemy images often manufactured to exclude the “other” in our societies and in our world.

We seek a dialogue with the Government of Canada, and with all our governments and other authorities, about these wider issues. Through such a dialogue, we pray that we can be instruments of Christ, “For the Healing of the World.”

(Note: A letter was sent by the National Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada on 25 July 2003 to the Canadian Minister of Citizenship and Immigration on the visa situation.)

Note

¹ Cf. LWF Constitution, Article III. Nature and Functions

Action Referred to the Council

The Assembly

VOTED: to refer to the Council the recommendation from the Pre-Assembly Youth Conference that the Secretary for Youth in Church and Society be hired “regardless of the financial situation, making cuts where necessary, and that the person should generally begin his or her term halfway between two assemblies and serve a six-year term” and encourage the Secretariat to view it in a positive way.

The Assembly

VOTED: to refer to the Council the resolution that the Lutheran World Federation coordinate a program on the history of the individual churches both in and outside of the Lutheran World Federation.

Text of the resolution as referred:

That the Lutheran World Federation coordinate a program on the history of the individual churches both in and outside of the Lutheran World Federation. The goal of such a program would be the writing of a simple historical study book of the Lutheran churches from their respective self-understandings in order to present the ethos¹ of each and to strengthen a common understanding of Lutheranism in its various forms.

The Assembly

VOTED: to refer the resolution on a history of the sixteenth cen-

tury reformations in Europe, as amended, to the Council for consideration.

Text of the resolution as referred:

That the Lutheran World Federation begin a program for writing a history of the sixteenth century reformations in Europe with the Roman Catholic Church. The goal of such a program would be to provide the churches with a view of our past as a basis for creating new interactions based on accepted facts, rather than on old prejudices and false assumptions. Such a project applies the notion of the communion of saints to our efforts at explaining our past, and continues the work of the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification by seeking a less biased understanding of our shared past to be used in teaching the new generations of the Church.

The Assembly

VOTED: to refer the resolution on violence against children to the Council for action.

Text of the resolution as referred:

That the topic of violence against children and especially violence in the form of child labor be discussed and studied more closely, and that this be communicated to the member churches, emphasizing that this is a pressing problem in our society and that it is unacceptable that children’s rights are being violated. The LWF member churches should work in close cooperation with the World Council of Churches to eliminate abusive child labor.

Latin American delegates at work



The Assembly

VOTED: to refer the resolution on family violence to the Council for implementation.

Text of the resolution as referred:

The Assembly asks the LWF and its member churches to study and discuss the various issues relating to violence such as selective abortion, forced underage marriage, child labor and exploitation of children, economic violence, care for the older generation, and care for differently-abled persons. It also encourages the LWF and its member churches to work on these issues as appropriate in their specific settings and contexts.

The Assembly

VOTED: to refer the resolution on HIV/AIDS, as amended, to the Council for consideration.

Text of the resolution as referred:

Requests that the LWF establish, in cooperation with the World Council of

Churches and other organizations, a global HIV/AIDS fund to create a network of prevention through education and information, and to allocate resources for families who are affected and/or infected by HIV/AIDS.

The Assembly

VOTED: to refer the resolution on overcoming violence to the Council for its consideration.

Text of the resolution as referred:

The Assembly

- *urges active participation by LWF member churches in the ecumenical Decade to Overcome Violence, and in the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World (2001–2010).*
- *requests the LWF and its member churches to provide theological training and the production of Bible study materials focusing on overcoming violence.*

- asks the LWF, through its Council and member churches, to focus during each of the following years until the next Assembly on a specific situation or aspect of violence, and to inform and educate the member churches about it.
- requests the LWF to help equip member churches for non-violent action to address situations of injustice, including training for conflict resolution and mediation in congregations and communities. The Assembly asks the member churches to focus especially on planting the seed of peace in young children. Churches and church-run schools should teach a culture of peace and non-violence, and practical conflict resolution skills.
- asks the LWF to consider the establishment of a peace and reconciliation center in Africa, and/or support for existing centers of this type in Africa and elsewhere.
- requests the LWF to develop a discussion/study, followed by appropriate action, on violence against children, especially child labor, the training and use of child soldiers, child prostitution and trafficking, and sexual violence against children, and
- asks the member churches to confront situations of violence within our churches. The Assembly urges the establishment of a common policy of zero tolerance of abuse by clergy. It also calls for the violence of exclusion from fellowship in the church to be addressed and for a re-examination of policies and practices on excommunication/expulsion based upon social, cultural or moral transgressions.

The Assembly

VOTED: to refer recommendations 9, 14, 30 and 36 to the Council for consideration.

Text of the recommendations as referred:

Recommendation 9: Episcopé and Teaching Authority

Because there is great disagreement on the understanding of teaching authority among our churches (magisterium), and because the LWF has begun a study of oversight within the Church (episcopé), the LWF should also investigate the relationship between teaching authority and authority in general. Such a study should give attention to biblical witness, the traditional teachings of the whole Church, and Lutheran confessional theology, in conversation with the practices of our contemporary churches. Such a study would not be a movement toward a particular form of church governance, but rather an aid to understanding between member churches.

Recommendation 14: Language Barriers

We recognize that many cannot fully participate in important conversations within the LWF because of language barriers. Particularly, we note the limitations of participation placed on those who are not fluent in English. We recommend that documents in interregional activities be translated into appropriate languages, and that we work together to provide clarification and translation for those who may not understand.

Recommendation 30: Literacy

Asks the LWF communion to place more emphasis on literacy as a basic human right and as a means toward the reduction of poverty.

Recommendation 36: Re-examination of “Just War” Doctrine

Requests the LWF to undertake an in-depth study to re-examine the justice of

“just war” doctrine in the current context of globalization and increasing militarism in a unipolar world.

The Assembly

VOTED: to refer all pending matters to the Council.²

The Assembly

VOTED: to refer the resolution concerning homosexuality to the Council.

Notes

¹ The ethos of a group is that which makes it distinctive: its generally accepted tradition and historical identity.

² Cf. LWF Council Minutes, Winnipeg, Canada, 31 July–2 August 2003. Exhibit 10.4. Recommendations 45, 46, 49, 58, 61.

Other Action

The Assembly

VOTED: to receive the Message from Indigenous peoples.

Text of the Message from Indigenous peoples (forwarded by the group meeting of representatives of Indigenous peoples):

During this Tenth Assembly, we as representatives of Indigenous peoples, including tribal peoples and Dalits, for the first time in the history of the LWF had meetings. In solidarity with each other and with all Indigenous peoples of this world, we shared our concerns and our need to stand together in addressing common issues.

We honor the fact that we have been gathered at the traditional lands of the Cree, Ojibway and Assiniboine, and we wish to express our solidarity with them, as with all the First Nations and the Inuit peoples of Canada. We realize that many of the basic human rights of Indigenous peoples in Canada—as in other parts of the world—are still not implemented into the national policy.

According to the 1996 Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, the physical and spiritual decline of Aboriginal communities in Canada is the result of a federal Aboriginal policy that denies Aboriginal rights, and that deprives Aboriginal peoples of their traditional lands.

Aboriginal Peoples in Canada are facing a social, economic and cultural crisis. Aboriginal Peoples are suffering from poverty, a shortage of adequate housing, homelessness, and lack of access to clean water and nutritious food. Aboriginal peoples also experience more family violence, disproportionate rates of illness and distress, higher rates of alcoholism and drug

abuse, and loss of identity and traditional values. Aboriginal peoples are overrepresented in the prisons. Although they comprise only 4 percent of the population, Aboriginal peoples in Canada represent 17 percent of the inmates in federal institutions. Suicide rates for Aboriginal youth are six times the national average and among the highest in the world. Unemployment rates are two to three times the average for non-Aboriginal Canadians. Overcrowding in homes that are often inadequate is sixteen times worse than in other Canadian homes.

The solution to many of the problems faced by Aboriginal peoples requires compromises from non-Aboriginal members of society that would return land and resources to them.

Indigenous peoples worldwide are not a small group. We count for over 300,000,000 people and represent 4,000-5,000 languages of the about 6,000 languages of the world.¹ We as Indigenous peoples therefore represent an essential part of the cultural diversity of the human family. At the same time, we represent the most threatened cultures of the world, and in most cases the poorest, most marginalized and most discriminated-against populations.

It is therefore urgent to recognize, and support the basic human rights of Indigenous peoples according to international law and standards. Land rights are fundamental to the survival of Indigenous peoples and their cultures and essential for their right to self-determination.

We believe that our peoples had a history with the Creator prior to the coming of the missionaries. The Fourth Commandment tells us to honor our fathers and mothers, and we believe that we do

so by honoring our cultural heritage and not by rejecting it. We therefore claim the right to embrace all that is good and blessed in our cultures and spiritualities, and we admit to you the same privilege.

Even though Indigenous peoples in many places already are a part of the member churches of the LWF, they have historically been excluded from our churches in terms of theology, cultural awareness and access to decision-making processes. We invite the LWF and all its member churches to join us in a common journey on the path of healing. We ask you to listen to our stories with respect, and treat us as equal partners in our member churches.

We strongly recommend the Assembly to support the comments and recommendations concerning Indigenous peoples as it is suggested in the Message and the Resolutions of the Assembly.

— Group of Indigenous peoples' representatives, LWF Assembly, Winnipeg, 29.07.03

On the recommendation of the Nominations Committee, the Assembly

VOTED: to request the new Council to clearly define the policy on gender balance in order to secure a common understanding in all regions for future assemblies.

The Assembly

VOTED: to request the Council to review the existing regional sub-division of Europe.

Bearing in mind the recommendation adopted at the Eighth Assembly, the Tenth Assembly

VOTED: to urge strongly the member churches to reaffirm their

commitment to ensure and implement 20 percent youth participation at future assemblies, and to urge the member churches to ensure no less than 40 percent male and no less than 40 percent female youth representation among the delegations within their region at future assemblies.

The Assembly

VOTED: to urge all member churches to encourage the participation of youth in the worship and decision-making processes at all levels.

The Assembly

VOTED: to request the General Secretary to make available in writing the full text of the Village Group reports to the members of the incoming Council.

The Assembly

VOTED: to request the Council to set priorities as soon as possible.

The Assembly

VOTED: to request the Council or the Executive Committee to ensure that the next Assembly be organized in such a way to allow it to set priorities for the content of the future work of the LWF.

The Assembly

VOTED: to adopt the Message and Commitments of the Tenth Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation.

Note

¹ According to Chairperson of The Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UN), Ole Henrik Magga: *Indigenous peoples' Needs – Challenges for the Church*. Address at the Assembly of Conference of European Churches, Trondheim, Norway, June 2003.



Dr Dr h.c. Margot Kässmann, bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hanover, Germany

For the Healing of the World

Keynote Address

Bishop Dr Dr h.c. Margot Kässmann

1. Eli, Eli lema sabachthani (Mt 27:46) – The Cry of the Wounds of the World

We see the wounds of the children injured in the wars on our planet.

We see the suffering of the starving victims of injustice.

We see the hurt of women who are victims of rape.

We see the plight of the homeless people living in the streets.

We see the hurt of lonely individuals who long to be loved and cared for.

We see the wounds of tormented creation, longing for redemption.

We hear the cry of Jesus: Eli, Eli lema sabachthani? (My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?)

Our world is wounded and cries out. Even God is vulnerable and cries. God has exposed the divine self to wounds.

(Translated from the original German text.)

2. O land, land, land, hear the word of the Lord! (Jer 22:29) – Seeing Contexts

I learned in the ecumenical movement that our context influences our theology. I live in central Europe and come from the country of the Reformation. A beautiful country, a fascinating continent full of culture and history. Above all, I love the varying scenery—France with its beautiful beaches, Ireland with its rough seas, Poland with its large fields, Hungary with its splendid horses, my regional church with its north German expanses. We see and feel the parts of Europe merging together. There have been no more border checks for many years when I drive to the Netherlands or Italy. Even the roads to eastern Germany, where the Berlin Wall defined everything during my youth, are all accessible now. We can hardly imagine further wars within Europe. This is why we are so shocked by what happened in Yugoslavia and is occurring in Northern Ireland. Even Germany, that has so often inflicted war and suffering on the world, finally seems to be fed up with wars—as shown by the mass protests against the Iraq war. However, the experts say, it is primarily the economic relations that link European countries together, that will prevent the outbreak of wars. The people in central Europe have enough to eat, there are schools for our children, and medical care for those who fall ill. A happy continent, a fortunate country, very true indeed.

Yet this is not entirely true. There are many happy people in my country, many who are committed to justice and peace, but also many who have lost their inner glow. Luther's question: "How can I find a gracious God?" is one that only few people still understand. Life for the successful often consists of attempting to get as much out of it as possible: you have to have the latest car, the right house and plenty of money, and be at the right parties! As a woman, you have to have the right figure and be good looking. Many feel they have to have botox poison injected under their wrinkles, pad their breasts with silicon,

and have surplus fat suctioned out—there is a great fear of getting old. If as a man you do not earn enough, are unemployed, ill or disabled, you stand by the wayside and in a sense just watch the world go by. The real meaning of life is hardly queried. Meanwhile, the annual advertising budget of the German economy stands at around six billion Euros, with the suggestion "I consume, therefore I am" instead of "I think, therefore I am" (Descartes). As stated by one commercial: "We believe in safe cars."

But woe betide anyone who does not live within the walls of this continent. We have been hearing reports of refugee-laden boats sinking in the Mediterranean—right in front of the islands on which many of us spend our holidays. Cars are discovered in which the people smuggled in from Afghanistan or Iraq have suffocated. And more money is earned with trafficking in women than with the arms trade. Every year, entire gangs force up to 500,000 young girls, mainly from eastern Europe, into prostitution in western Europe.

Many in our part of the world ask: "Who needs God?" People want to be free of all rules and duties. The birthrate is constantly falling in Germany, and currently stands at around 1.4 children per woman. Children are considered as a potential poverty trap with the result that our society is gradually aging. While life expectancy was age forty-six at the beginning of the twentieth century, half our society is currently older than forty. The divorce rate is high, and commitment is not highly valued in a society that allocates so much importance to mobility and individuality. However, things get difficult when the fundamental questions about life rise to the surface—where do I originally come from, and what is my ultimate destiny? Eleven thousand one hundred and fifty-six people took their own lives last year, a higher number than those who died in traffic accidents. Statistically speaking, one person commits suicide in my wonderful country every forty-seven minutes.

And our Lutheran Church in this context? We proclaim Jesus Christ, the Son of God,

who died on the cross and rose from the dead. We baptize children, and marry couples; we console the bereaved and bury their loved ones. In the midst of a performance-driven society we convey the message of justification by faith alone, the understanding of human beings as *simul iustus et peccator*. Our diaconal services care for the ill, the elderly, and the disabled. A large-scale hospice movement has emerged over the past few years that seeks to help people to die in dignity. There are many achievements, many new ideas, and society is in fact open to what the church has to say.

I know that there is some prejudice regarding the German churches, which are said to have “empty pews!” However, this is oversimplified. In some localities, more than 90 percent of the population, particularly in the rural areas of my church, are members of our Lutheran Church, and as Christians shape the places where they live. To others, however, the church seems boring with its old stories about the Good Samaritan, Jesus, and Moses. They leave the church and its community, a painful reality with financial consequences. It is therefore getting more difficult to fill pastoral vacancies, to pay salaries, and keep up the buildings—particularly in eastern Germany, where decades of what was called “real existing socialism” dechristianized entire districts. However, we are striving with courage and commitment to make the church credible at the beginning of the twenty-first century, in its witness, service, and preaching. In these times of change, Martin Luther’s words show us the way forward. He said that: “For after all, we are not the ones who can preserve the church, nor were our [forebears] able to do so. Nor will our successors have this power. No, it was, is, and will be he who says, ‘I am with you always, to the close of the age.’”¹

Fortunate Germany—unfortunate Germany, happy Europe—poor Europe. What does healing mean in this context? For me, it is important to take a closer look, to see people through the eyes of God, to look at them with their strengths and weaknesses

and to recognize the image of God in each and every one of us. So many people long for a fulfilled life, but are too busy to achieve that ideal. So many long for a purpose and remain lonely. Health is certainly an important issue, but healing the soul and ensuring good relationships is a priority. Restoring social relationships, between the younger and older generations, between strangers and local residents, between the rich and the poor in our country, and throughout the world are examples of this. It really is all about learning or regaining social skills that many have lost. Educational efforts need to teach communication skills to all those who have lost these—and Internet access is no substitute. Furthermore, it must be pointed out that for many people in former East Germany, the breaches of trust from the past that were disclosed by the “Stasi” files, the State Security records of the German Democratic Republic, are still an issue.

Let us bear in mind that although Europe possesses great wealth there are still many wounds and much that is broken that needs healing. There is a yearning for salvation. As Christians, we can communicate God’s Word of healing in this context. We can look at the world as it really is, and do not need to run from the reality or close our eyes.

⇒ Those who seek to heal must first look at their own context, and learn to view the world with an open attitude and from the perspective of the love of God.

3. By his wounds we are healed (Isa 53:5) – God’s Wounding

Those who want to speak of healing must first look at the wounds, like any doctor. There are small injuries such as lack of esteem because I look different from others. There are those offending comments that hurt so much that I simply cannot forget them, or my trust that was so utterly abused. There are the horrific injuries, such

as those witnessed in Germany as well: A young man who ran amok in a school last year and shot sixteen people. Two men who strangled an eleven-year-old boy and repeatedly raped his nine-year-old sister before murdering her as well. A college student who suffocated an eleven-year-old boy out of greed. A car accident in which five young people lost their lives. Then there are the immense wounds of our world such as the wars in which people are torn apart by bombs. The refugees driven back and forth by marauding gangs. The debt crisis that gives so many countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America no chance of developing. The child soldiers that are brutally forced to take up arms. The starvation that thousands fall victim to every day. The injustice that deprives so many of their opportunities in life.

Wounds of humanity, that probably are also wounds of God, and cries of despair that echo throughout the world, followed by the call for God: My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? A cry still heard today: Where were you, God? The lament: How can God let all this happen? What does healing, or becoming whole mean in such cases? Can such wounds ever be healed?

First of all, such injuries probably call for silence. The horror that overcomes us when we look at the victims of our world cannot easily be expressed in words. Such words must sound trivial. Such silence, this lament, such cries, the hours between Good Friday and Easter Sunday, all have their reason for being. Silence and lament, the Saturday between crucifixion and resurrection.

It is important to understand that the destruction caused by people, and what we do to one another also wounds God directly. In the Book of Job we read about the limits of an explanatory pattern that interprets suffering as a punishment. Job, the righteous man, has to suffer. And Job's traditional answers are inadequate, given the fact that Job has not sinned and therefore cannot explain his misfortune. Job tries to understand the mind of God, even

if this contradicts all previous attempts of interpretation. God's reply to Job is to point to the creative power without actually explaining the suffering. The message to Job is that suffering is also part of faith in God.

In the Book of Jonah there is a clear shift away from the logic of retribution (the "*Tun-Ergehens-Zusammenhang*", i.e., the perspective of causal relationship between action and personal well being). Nineveh is not destroyed, as it would have deserved, in view of its evil doings. Instead, Nineveh is given an opportunity to repent through the appearance of Jonah. God's wrath is overcome by the city's repentance (*niham*). God does not punish but shows mercy and kindness. God is shown as not being rigid and being open to change: there is a historical relationship between God and humankind, whom God turns to ever anew and does not give up. It reveals God's mercy and patience. The motif of punishment recedes into the background in the overall witness of the Hebrew Scriptures.

The witness of the New Testament clearly rejects an interpretation of suffering and evil as punishment (e.g. Lk 13:1-5). Through Jesus Christ, God is revealed once and for all as a loving God, who opens the way to community among people while renouncing human power and force. This is always hard to understand. What a provocation: God, who comes into the world as a child. God, who dies after suffering terribly on the cross! Should God not be a strong, all-conquering hero? Or someone who stands above it all? Can we believe in a powerless God, is this not ridiculous?

The story of Jesus Christ challenges us to link the omnipotence and the powerlessness of God in our minds. Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote: "God allows himself to be edged out of the world and on to the cross. God is weak and powerless in the world, and that is exactly the way, and the only way, in which God can be with us and help us."² And the resurrection says: God seeks to overcome the suffering in this world with the power of love alone. Love is vulnerable but is also stronger than

death! It is this promise of God's new world that enables us to live. In this God, made manifest in this way, we can trust, believe, and entrust him with all our wounds and injuries. This is what Jesus Christ proclaimed, this is what he lived and died for, and what was confirmed by his resurrection. We find reassurance in this God, this is our savior. By the way, Luther always spoke of God being hidden, in order to express this experience of God's becoming a stranger and yet to witness to the faith that all things are in God's hand. Indeed, Luther warned against wanting to penetrate and interpret the "*deus absconditus*" and thereby wanting to take control of God.

The question regarding God's omnipotence and God's allowing suffering to occur therefore remains a matter of reflection and intensive debate. No, we have no better answers than the generations before us. My concern is that we have the courage to trust in God knowing that God wants life and not death, instead of trying to find precise or logical answers. It is about the trust Jesus had, as testified to by Luke: "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit" (Lk 23:46). After crying out that God had forsaken him, Jesus found his way back to trusting in God. Indeed, this is not achieved easily or quickly, it is a path leading to the cross and into death. Jesus clearly carries his wounds when entering God's kingdom. He does not show Thomas an unharmed body, and indeed it is by seeing his wounds that the disciples recognize the risen Christ. This is probably the same for us as well. Even when our wounds, our injuries, the brokenness in our lives heal, they remain part of our personal history. They can be healed, but cannot be forgotten. Adversity and bruises are simply part of life, and will leave scars.

The disciples regain their trust in God when Jesus breaks through the locked doors. This trust is facilitated by God's spirit which God promises them and which we can experience when we open our hearts. This trust enables wounds to heal, even if scars remain, and allows us to pro-

ceed on our way undeterred as a community of hope that believes that the love of God is stronger than hatred, violence, horror, or death.

Let us bear in mind that, as Christians, we have the courage to look at the wounds and can keep God's weakness and omnipotence in mind as parallel thoughts. Indeed, we have to put up with the inconsistencies of life and accept the experience of the cross as a part of our lives.

⇒ Those who seek to heal can trust in God's commitment to those who suffer.

4. Honor physicians for their services (Sir 38:1) – Holistic Medicine

Years ago, I held the hand of a dying man and heard him say in great distress: "Is that all life was about? I actually never thought about it. It all went so quickly!" Yes, the words of the psalm, "So teach us to count our days so that we may gain a wise heart." (Ps 90:12) contain a profound truth. Only if we recognize the finitude of life will we understand life as a gift, and see and perceive it as limited time, for which we will be accountable to God one day.

In the western world there are two extremes: First, the total belief in modern medicine that overestimates medicine as a science as though it knew no limits and were not subject to the power of death. Then there is the total fixation on the so-called alternatives: Aren't Chinese medicine and homeopathy of higher value, both scientific in their own way although often regarded skeptically by conventional medicine in our countries? And what about spiritual forces, new age spirituality, and the cult of physical well being? The first view understands the body like a machine: if anything is broken it has to be replaced. The second view believes that all scientific knowledge is unhelpful and sometimes falls prey to the power of suggestion.

To begin with, it should be pointed out that we as Christians should not despise

medicine. Luther saw it both as a science and as a gift of God.³ He also respected doctors, as “experience teaches clearly that we cannot do without them.”⁴ This principle still applies today. We can be grateful that it is possible to be vaccinated against measles. Making this vaccination available at last to people all around the world has to be a priority. In Africa, 500,000 children currently die of measles every year, mostly due to malnutrition.

Another example: the SARS virus, which also threatened the holding of our Assembly, has been contained by medical expertise. Many people in the rich industrialized nations now survive cancer thanks to medical progress. Even HIV infection is no

but that the soul also has to be healed is something that is often underestimated.

As Christians let us not despise the psyche either, the inner life, the interplay of body and soul.⁵ Luther also knew that it is important whether someone with an illness likes and trusts their doctor, and often referred to that in his *Table Talk*.⁶ No, we cannot explain everything. Indeed, faith, prayer, and trust in God can positively influence sickness, and can heal. Yet, medicine is not to be neglected. I agree with Wilfried Härle, who stated “that the influence of the Holy Spirit not only determines the spirit or soul of a person, but also their body as a result. The idea that this can have a healing effect is something that is once again becoming understood in our age, despite opposition to an insight that for a long time was either not taken seriously and ignored, or plainly disregarded.”⁷

Within the church we should come back to understanding the mission of healing as part of the great commission and not as diaconal charity, which is somehow relegated to secondary importance. “Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons” (Mt 10:8)—that is indeed included in the great commission! The churches have a therapeutic ministry, there are healing charisms among us. And pastoral care—this actually implies caring for the soul that is wounded within so many people, the healing of psychological suffering. Making the connection between medicine and the charism of healing, is an important task for our Lutheran church. God’s healing power can clearly be experienced. So we should not scoff at people with special gifts, such as those known as the “bone-breakers” in East Friesland (northern Germany), or the “bone-setters” in Africa. Could we not indeed contribute to bringing together conventional medicine and traditional healers for dialogue, as is already happening in Ghana, Peru, and Switzerland?⁸

I am aware that many churches are currently wondering how they should handle healing, such as that occurring in the char-

Within the church we should come back to understanding the mission of healing as part of the great commission...

longer a death sentence if the right medicines are administered. Rather, the problem is that this medication is so expensive that people in South Africa or Kenya cannot afford it. True enough, there is a two-class system when it comes to medical care. Nevertheless, let us not disregard medical knowledge and its potential!

However, progress in medicine has led to a growing feeling that health is controllable and that it must be possible to cure every ill. Human beings frequently no longer understand themselves as created in the image of God but want to create humans in their own image: Can’t disabled children be avoided? Such conditions can be diagnosed during pregnancy and the woman can have an abortion. Or what about pre-implantation diagnostics? Trying to clone humans is a modern form of temptation. Christians can only say: Hands off! Health and healing can become an ideology when it seems that we can achieve the perfect body. The fact that healing is not simply a technical process

ismatic movements. It is important to develop criteria derived from Jesus himself. When Jesus healed, he did two things: he spoke and he touched, God's Word became audible and tangible. When Jesus healed, he looked at a person's faith and trust in God. When Jesus healed, his healing became a sign of the inbreaking of the reign of God (Mt 12:28; Jn 2:11). When Christians heal in the name of Jesus, God's spirit is at work today. Yes, we may indeed be open to charismatic elements. But healing in the spirit of Jesus is not a matter of performing miracles for show, as these criteria indicate. Healing in Jesus' name does not focus attention on the healer but on God's loving care for the whole person. Health is not a proof of God's presence, and is misused when people think they can raise themselves above the rest of us as particularly gifted. Healing in God's name has nothing to do with self glorification ! Healing is about trust in God and faith. Being healed or being healthy is not the same as truly having faith. We can show our trust in God by learning to live with an illness. This is a gift of God, God's grace. By trusting in God, we can understand death as being part of the way to God, as an intermediate passage—instead of as a final curtain.

Moreover, we have criteria to discern: Was that God at work, or were forces with other intentions involved? Is it about God or the exaltation of a human being? Is the objective to build up the community, the *οικοδομη*? Is it a matter of humility or of exalting oneself? Whether anyone is ever perfectly whole must be seriously questioned. We live in the age between paradise and the perfection of the reign of God, and *theologia crucis* has its place here. Wounds are always part of our life, we are not perfect, and we cannot blow our own trumpets without being dishonest. The brokenness of life must be accepted. This is not easy and not conceivable without the cross, without this divine foolishness (I Cor 1:18).

Doctors who only see their own skill, the art of application, have a limited perspective. Healers who praise their own

gifts are not humble. Indeed, scientific knowledge is a gift of God, but it is subject to the criterion of being used to "build up." Simultaneously: "denying a reality that we cannot explain is unscientific. There are things that we simply do not (yet) understand."⁹ This is in fact now being reflected even in the field of reproductive medicine.¹⁰ So, let us open ourselves up to the potential of God's spirit, but let us judge clearly whether what happens actually "promotes Christ" (Luther: "Christum treibet"), or whether someone wants to glorify themselves. Are we talking about a *theologia gloriae*, seeking to show how powerful *our* God is, who is thus used to show how good *we* are? Or do we struggle for healing as disciples of Christ?

Let us bear in mind that healing is a holistic process in which we should disregard neither the achievements of medicine, nor the soul, nor the gift of God's spirit. Perhaps the churches themselves can, in fact, help people to see the different charisms as not being in competition but complementary, enabling them to learn from one other.

⇒ Those who seek to heal must be open for body and soul, for old and new insights, for differing experiences of God and for a holistic approach.

5. They devoted themselves to the fellowship (Acts 2:42) – *Communio Sanctorum*

The theme of our Assembly is "For the Healing of the World." Do we have anything to offer? Does our faith or our theology contribute anything that the world itself cannot produce?

Life in community is part of our faith. Since Jesus traveled through Palestine with the first disciples, and shared bread and wine, community has been part of the definition of discipleship. The Book of Acts paints a special picture of it—a kind of glossy photograph that we look at in our album and say: "Those were the days!" But

we hardly ever match that picture now. Nevertheless, community and sharing, and supporting one another remain the sign and symbol of the church.

God calls upon each one of us, and baptism is a symbol of that: I have called you by name (Isa 43:1). Luther made that very clear to us: You stand before God (*coram deo*), and freedom and responsibility belong together. At the same time we are a community, and every church in its own place is a province of world Christendom (Ernst Lange). We are a learning community with all our different contexts. Those of us in the industrialized countries are learning, for example, what Indigenous peoples have to say about land that belongs to God as not being for sale, and about the creation being a gift. We listen and we learn. This is the great opportunity for our community—being open for new perspectives on things.

I think that it is indeed Holy Communion that shows our specific contribution to the healing of the world. When we share bread and wine with one another, then all squabbling, all arguments, all burdens and all hierarchy could and should recede into the background—because we experience anew that we belong together. The many are one Body, as Paul said. *Communio sanctorum*—the communion of saints. No one should be against their neighbor. We all hear these words often enough, and often enough we do not live up to them. Because we are human, far from being as generous as we would like to be, often bearing grudges, being envious and skeptical—confession and repentance are continually necessary so that we can come to the Lord's Table openly and freely.

We are called to one table, but are warned against coming while unworthy. This idea of being “unworthy” has caused many to be afraid of actions that might bring guilt. “Showing a lack of solidarity” might be a better translation of *anaxios*. After all, it is supposed to be a common meal. That is what Paul criticizes in Corinth—the fact that everyone just eats their own food and that there is no growth in community. It is

supposed to be a common feast that can include laughter and tears, gaiety, festiveness, and spirituality with the heart and the senses—that is something we Lutherans often lack! We come together, the poor and rich, those from the highways and byways, the estranged, the disappointed, the lovers, the sick, those from the North and those from the South—a healing community around the whole globe and through the ages.

The Lord's Supper is characterized by a human and social challenge.

We share bread and wine, and are thereby in communion with those who celebrate the Lord's Supper at all times and in all places. We enter into the history of all those who have met in remembrance of Jesus Christ for over 2000 years. Remembering is part of the Lord's Supper, and we know we are in communion with all those who are sharing bread and wine in many places. In the slums of Rio de Janeiro. In refugee camps in Palestine. In the bombed-out buildings of Grozny. In the suburbs of Washington. Sisters and brothers—the Lord's Supper reminds us that we belong together across borders as the people of God.

The Lord's Supper is a strong reminder to seek peace and justice.

We hope for a future in which all sit together at the Lord's Table. It remains a thorn in the flesh, a stumbling block that we cannot celebrate the Eucharist together. Even if we Protestants in Germany grant all others who have been baptized eucharistic hospitality on the basis of the Leuenberg Agreement of 1973, this cannot allow us just to sit back. It is certainly not a question of denying our own profile. Nevertheless, despite recognizing all denominational differences we confess each Sunday in the Apostle's Creed that we believe in *one* church. We read in John's Gospel of how Jesus prayed that his own should all be one. Healing divisions in the church must be a key issue for us! This was actively manifested during The Ecumenical *Kirchentag* (church convention)

held in Berlin in May, attended by over 200,000 people. Encyclicals cannot restrain something that is growing together! Indeed, the church must also cope with its own wounds if it is to face up to the wounds of the world.

The Lord's Supper is a challenge to ecumenical commitment.

We share bread and wine, the fruits of the earth. We are often estranged from the source—farming has become an industry in many places. A bishop from the Pacific once said at an ecumenical conference: "Jesus saw grain and grapes around him, so he talked about them at the Last Supper. Our staple food is coconut. Why shouldn't we use that in Holy Communion?"—you can well imagine the heated discussion sparked off by that suggestion! Indeed, the key issue is about staple food. All our senses are in play, not just our minds. Tasting. Seeing. Perceiving. Give us today our daily bread—the real bread, that the rich on this planet often hardly appreciate. Bread, for which millions still hunger every day. Bread that tastes good, not a genetically modified industrial product! Baked bread. Bread from the earth. The earth that belongs to God. From the soil that is to be protected for future generations.

The Lord's Supper challenges us to till the earth and keep it for coming generations.

Communio sanctorum—sharing in what is holy. We say: The Body of Christ, given for you. The Blood of Christ, shed for you. Christ, really present among us here and now. An impenetrable mystery! Jesus' death—a sacrifice of atonement? The body of Christ, given for you, the blood of Christ, shed for you—some find that off-putting. Died for us—did God want this sacrifice, or did Jesus give himself for his own? For love?

The Lord's Supper remains a theological challenge.

That is how it should be: no misery, no crying. No child that dies an early death. People building houses in which they live, harvest-

ing fruit to eat. Communion with one another and communion with God. In hope we come together "until he comes." A hope that breaks through and transcends our age and world. We will share bread and wine in remembrance of him until he comes.

The Lord's Supper has an eschatological dimension.

Let us bear in mind that altar fellowship is healing fellowship, is a visible sign of healing, and is God's call to the healing of the world.

If our church wants to contribute to the healing of the world it can offer the sacrament of communion as the central event between God and humankind, and between us as persons.

6. It is the spirit that gives life (Jn 6:63) – An Alternative Society

The World Health Organization defines health as a state of complete physical, psychological and social well being. Hence it is not just a matter of the absence of illness, but also of social conditions. Where God's spirit is at work we will be moved to do our part in such comprehensive healing.

In January 2003, the Third World Social Forum met in Porto Alegre, during which the Lutheran Church in Brazil played an active part. Is this not the place for our Lutheran Church as a whole? With those who gather to shape globalization, starting at the grassroots? A globalization process whose goal is not profit for a few but social justice for all? Could the LWF not speak and act for us all at the global level? After all, as Lutheran churches, we are both "local actors" and "global players" at the same time. In my country there is anxiety about the objectives outlined by the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992 that involve changing consumption and production patterns. However, could a positive attitude not take the place of fear? Could a sustainable lifestyle not be an opportunity, a benefit of a quite different kind? Could there not be open borders for people instead of goods?

As Lutheran Christians, a family with a common confession in a globalized world, we come together from many small places, from North and South and East and West, in order to see and hear. We look at one another as sisters and brothers. We do not hear stereotypes but share the experience of people on the ground. We hear true stories. Truth—a rare commodity today! However, among the people of God, there is true communication that is not distorted by images drawn by the media. We encounter one another, person to person, across all borders of nation, race, and gender. As Christians, we are the people of God from all peoples—this is the biblical vision. This is why we can give hope for the world in our discipleship. We hope for a new heaven and a new earth—we have a hope beyond this world. From this eschatological hope we will struggle to trace the contours of an alternative society in the here and now, a society that does not follow the law of the strongest, of power and assertiveness, but practices solidarity, loves justice, makes peace, and safeguards creation. In this alternative society:

We will heal memories. Germans and Poles, Hutu and Tutsi, Protestants and Catholics, Jews and Christians, the battle of Kosovo (1389, when the Serbs were defeated by the Turks), crusades, colonialism, the burning of witches—memories that are not healed will destroy us. Yet it must never be a matter of explaining away injustice suffered. Reconciliation is only possible if the victims are heard and the perpetrators confess their guilt. Anything else would be cheap reconciliation that cannot lead to healing.

We will rise above the ideology of weapons and allow peace to grow without violence. We do not believe in empires and superpowers but in the power of the meek and the perseverance of the peaceable.

Righteousness and peace will kiss each other and there will be a jubilee year that will see debts as guilt and will liberate people and nations from bondage. There will certainly be disagreement

about the best way to proceed (arbitration or compensation?), and questions (debt cancellation or reparation?), but people will sit down and try to map out a common future together in a spirit of solidarity.

Those with HIV/AIDS will not be stigmatized and discriminated against, and help will be possible within the community, e.g. through access to anti-retroviral medication for all. Our churches will stand united with others to lower the rate of infection through education, including the use of condoms. People will receive information to protect themselves from infection, whereas those already infected will receive information about treatment and support to avoid them losing all hope.

Refugees will find a home, for example, those who are torn between Bhutan and Nepal. There is an entire generation that has grown up in camps. How are they to find a home? This is not an issue we can leave to others to deal with. God places these refugees in our path for us to provide help, as in the case of the Samaritan.

We will pursue a dialogue between the religions, so that religion can finally become a factor in defusing conflicts and can no longer be misused to fan the flames of political conflicts.

Future generations, children and young people, will learn the notion of hope; they will learn to understand the earth as God's Creation—their living space for them to till and keep.

Let us bear in mind that healing also means acting as stewards in this wounded world, leaving traces of the kingdom of God, in which one day all tears will be wiped away and death will be no more. The globalization of goods and corporations and markets that shows no respect for differing cultures will not bring healing for our world. It is through a globalization of the message of God's love, a globalization of justice, peace and the integrity of creation that healing will come.

If Christians want to contribute to the healing of the world, they will have to take part actively in the affairs of the world,

imbued with the hope that we can all live together in justice and peace.

7. Rejoice in hope (Rom 12:12) – Final Litany

Perhaps the language of theology in our time should really be poetry, since in the Bible, too, the language of hope is poetic.

We will keep alive the hope for a transformed world—Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth (Mt 5:5).

We will not tire of loving the Holy Land, of praying for peace between Muslims, Christians and Jews, and between Israelis and Palestinians—for it is the land flowing with milk and honey for those who live there (Ex 3:8).

We will not give up hoping for a community of humankind—I will pour

out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams (Joel 2:28).

We will make hope visible and tangible—As a mother comforts her child so I will comfort you (Isa 66:13).

We will courageously take the path of discipleship—For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways (Ps 91:11).

We will keep alive the hope for a world that can overcome violence—Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God (Mt 5:9).

We will speak of hope for healing—The Lord lifts up the downtrodden (Ps 147:6).

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus! (Rev 22:20)

Notes

¹“Against the Antinomians,” 1539, in *Luther’s Works*, vol. 47. F. Sherman (ed.). Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971, p. 118.

² Dietrich Bonhoeffer. *Letters and Papers from Prison*, letter of 16.7.44., Eberhard Bethge (ed.). London: SCM Press, 1953, p. 164.

³ *Luther’s Works*, vol. 54. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967, p. 266.

⁴ *Luther's Works*, vol. 46. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967, p. 253.

⁵ Walter Hollenweger's thinking on this and the following was extremely helpful, e.g. *Das Kirchenjahr inszenieren*. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2002, pp. 219ff.

⁶ *Luther's Works*, vol. 54. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967, p. 266.

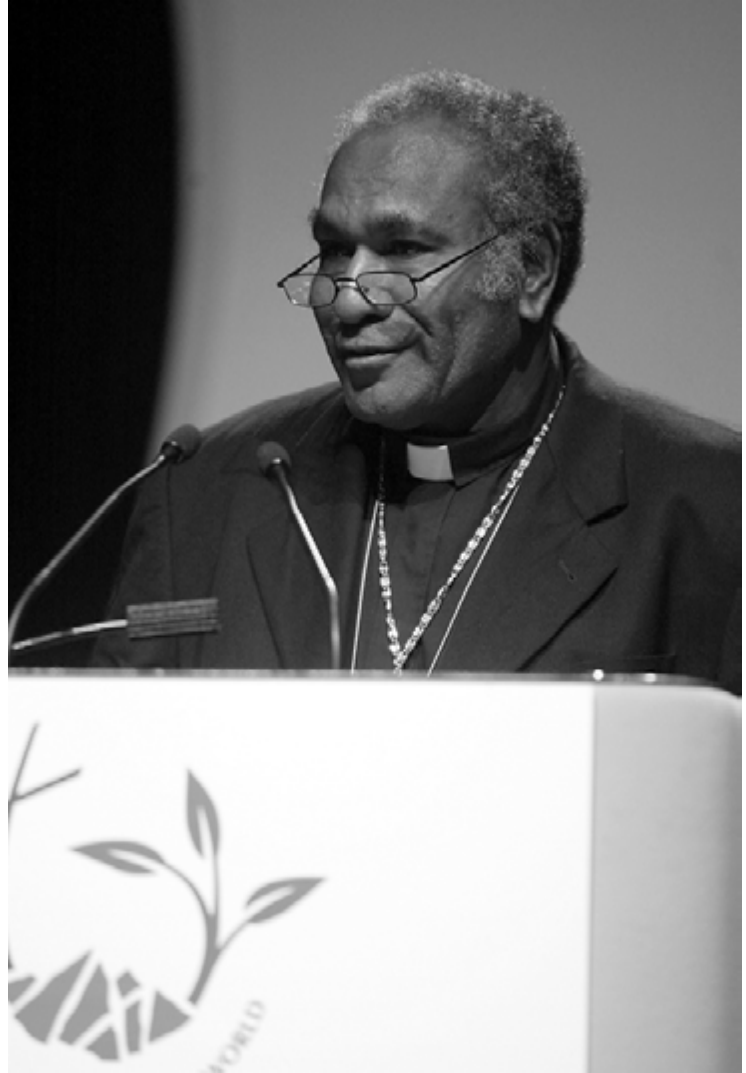
⁷ Wilfried Härle. *Dogmatik*. Berlin: Gruyter, 2000 (2), p. 370.

⁸ Hollenweger, op. cit. (note 5), p. 225.

⁹ Hollenweger, *ibid.*, p. 222.

¹⁰ See Kwang Y Cha. "Does Prayer Influence the Success of *in Vitro* Fertilization-Embryo Transfer?", *JRM*, vol. 46, no. 9. Sept. 2001, pp. 781ff.

Bishop Dr Wesley W. Kigasung,
delegate from the Evangelical
Lutheran Church of Papua
New Guinea



A Response to the Keynote Address: For the Healing of the World

*Bishop Dr Wesley W. Kigasung, Evangelical Lutheran Church
of Papua New Guinea*

Introduction

It is appropriate to begin this response with first, a word of thanks, and sincere appreciation to Bishop Dr Margot Kässmann for giving us the keynote address on this significant theme: “For the Healing of the World.”

We sincerely thank our speaker for the address and for the challenge she presents

to the Assembly to take up the theme of “healing” with a strong sense of Christian commitment, Christian responsibility, and Christian stewardship.

In her keynote address she brings our attention first to the need to listen to “the cry of the wounds of the world.” Then she draws our attention to the importance of “viewing the world with an open attitude

and from the perspective of the love of God” if we want to engage in the process of healing. Next she reminds us to look at the wonder of “God’s wounding.” “...by his wounds we are healed” (Isa 53:5). Challenging us to understand the interrelatedness of the language that speaks of the suffering and crucified God and the significance of that message for the healing of the world.

Then she takes us through the human experiences of healing processes that involve medical knowledge and praxis and our Christian challenge to participate in that healing as “part of the call to the great commission.” I quote: “The churches have a therapeutic ministry, there are healing charisms among us.... God’s healing power can clearly be experienced.”

Next, the discussion of the “sacramental healing” through the *communio sanctorum* and through sharing and participating in the Lord’s Supper. The significance of the Lord’s Supper and its meaning for those who receive it.

The Experience of Hope and the Spirit of Renewal into a New Life

The emphasis or central issue of the paper, I believe, is to draw our attention as Lutheran Christians to the wounds and cries of pain in the world. That the world must be brought to consciousness about the need for healing and reconciliation and instill new life giving Spirit and new hope.

Let me now turn to my personal response to this keynote address and mention three major points, which I feel are important to note in light of what this theme means for us.

Response 1

The speaker emphasized the point that “those who seek to heal must first look at their own context, and learn to view the world with an open attitude and from the perspective of the love of God.”

I would like to take that further in suggesting that we must look at the beginning

of human creation when God created everything good. God’s original intention was goodness and not evil. Everything was created and was good in God’s sight. God even created humanity in God’s own likeness, meaning good and holy.

Then came the fall of humanity and destruction of what was intended to be good. But human disobedience did not destroy God’s love, and God’s love continued to be experienced in the process of healing. That process of healing required experience of pain. When God came to visit humanity in the cool of the evening, he had to have Adam take responsibility for what happened. God approached Adam in the form of a question: “Adam, where are you?” Then what happened after that is an interesting experience that continues even today. “It is not me, it is her. The woman you gave me!”

Immediately following the exchange of questions and answers between God and humanity, we find the word of promise for “healing for humanity.”

After this particular story we have another interesting story where we find the two brothers Cain and Abel and their experience of life in relationship to God. Then the unfortunate event in which Cain killed his brother Abel. God questioned Cain on the whereabouts of his brother Abel. “Where is your brother Abel?” Cain replies: “I don’t know! Am I supposed to keep track of him wherever he goes?” Then came the hard fact of Cain’s action when God questioned him: “What have you done? Listen—your brother’s blood cries out to me from the ground!”

Healing begins when we listen again to these early experiences between God and humanity, and the whole Scripture is full of them. Anyone who wants to heal must listen again to these searching and challenging questions posed by the Creator God Almighty: “Adam, where are you?” “Cain, where is your brother Abel?” “What have you done? Listen—your brother’s blood cries out to me from the ground!”

Yes, in listening again to God, then we can look at our own context, “and learn to

see the world with eyes wide open, with the eyes of God's love."

Response 2

The witness of the New Testament is a witness of great hope. It is the witness of a fulfillment of the promise and brings great assurance and hope for the world. "For God so loved the world that He sent His only son so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life (Jn 3:16).

Jesus is the hope for all who experience pain and are suffering and need healing. He extends the invitation: "Come to me all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest" (Mt 11:28).

The New Testament provides us with the experience of God's love and grace. The love exemplified on the cross so that we can be able to say in the words of our speaker: "As Christians we have the courage to look at the wounds and can keep God's powerlessness and all-powerfulness in mind at the same time. Indeed, we have to put up with the inconsistencies of life and accept the experience of the cross as part of our lives."

But accepting the experience of the cross is not enough. That experience must give us the courage and the desire to live it out in the world that is full of "the cry of the wounds."

Response 3

Christians are challenged to live out their faith in this world that is full of all kinds of

cries coming from our injured children, hungry people, victims of rape and domestic violence, homeless people, lonely individuals, creation being tormented, and many, many more.

Many of these wounds and "cries of the wounds of the world" are caused by Christians and Christian countries. Yes, to be engaged in the healing for the world and of the world Christians need to "hear the Word of the Lord." Christians need to be challenged to be faithful to the Word and, in that faithfulness to the Word, Christians are challenged further to maintain the true relationship to God and to the world.

Concluding Comment

"For the Healing of the World" Christians are brought to task to review and renew their commitment and their faithfulness to God and to the Word. In that commitment and faithfulness we are challenged to participate in the healing of our broken relationships to God, to one another and thus the healing for the world.

Only by doing so can we find meaning and significance in our contributions toward the healing process in the world. Hence we could emphasize again the concluding words of our speaker: "If Christians want to contribute to the healing of the world, they will have to take part actively in the affairs of the world imbued with the hope that we can all live together in justice and peace."

Thank you for the privilege to make this response to the keynote speaker.





Ms Virginia Ivañez de Neyeloff, delegate from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Venezuela

A Response to the Keynote Address: For the Healing of the World – A Challenge for Latin America and the Caribbean

Ms Virginia Ivañez de Neyeloff

I was asked to speak to you about the wounds of this continent, and my voice today is the voice of women and men who are subject to frustrations and conflicts, of human beings who feel the pain of injustice, corruption and unnecessary deaths, and who are crying out for change. For this reason, I shall speak to you about some of the problems affecting Latin America and the Caribbean.

Historical Profile

At the time of the arrival of the colonizers, what we today call the American continent

was populated by Aboriginal tribes, some of whom had highly developed social organizations, as was the case with the Aztec, Mayan and Incan empires which had developed close ties with nature. But the Europeans confronted with this reality were people organized according to military logic and with the intent to conquer.

Central and South America were colonized by Spain and Portugal, two Catholic countries where the Inquisition exercised rigorous control over matters of faith. Spain was impregnated with a feudal logic which found expression in the deployment of thousands of the Indigenous population

(Translated from the original Spanish text.)

to forced labor in the gold and silver mines and in large-scale cattle farming and agriculture. They were evangelized for the purpose of enslavement and converted to Christianity for Spain's own benefit. The mercantile approach of Portugal allowed for a less rigid style of evangelization.

Due to the inhumane treatment received at the hands of the colonizers, the Indigenous population began to cut themselves off and die in large groups; this is what caused the rapid development of the slave trade from Africa. For dominant elites, there is no room for the growth of an autonomous, well-trained middle class, nor is there any interest in improving the quality of life of the population. Even today, the fragility of the middle class constitutes a key factor in the vulnerability of the socio-economic organization of Latin America.

By the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, we see that the dominant elite, which had adopted an agro-export economic model, assumed that in order to harvest coffee or cotton, cultivate the land or cut down trees, it was not necessary to learn how to read or write or even to be well fed. This produced high levels of human exploitation and exclusion, mainly of Indigenous people, as well as a huge waste of natural resources, which continue to this day in the majority of the countries of this region.

Our Reality

A quick overview of Latin America shows that, even when you interchange the names of countries or actors, the problems remain similar and have the same names. Although I shall present them individually today, they are closely interrelated.

Family violence is the most brutal manifestation of **gender violence** against women and children; it gives rise to terror, resentment and humiliation. It must be recognized that this is not only a consequence of poverty or of the politics of the government in power, but is also derived from our cultural and religious roots. We also feel

this violence of exclusion in our churches. Some of them do not ordain women, others turn a deaf ear to the complaints of women, and still others refuse to use gender-neutral language in their liturgies, alleging that it is too cumbersome or that the time has not come to change a habit so deeply engrained among the parishioners. And there are still some men who, in a mocking tone, pretend to console us by repeating the biblical phrase "the last will be first." The struggle for equality and recognition is long and the burden of resistance heavy. We have to recognize that, while half of society is immersed in inertia and prejudice, the other half undoubtedly finds that the road is rough and that it has to carry this enormous burden on its own.

The negative aspects of **globalization** which can be observed in the region are so overwhelming that, whatever the accompanying positive aspects may be, they go practically unnoticed. The basic idea of free trade, be it economic, cultural, political or technological, is only fair when both sides can benefit. In order for the North to obtain manufactured products at low cost, the South has to pay starvation wages to the producers. For our region, globalization means poverty, marginalization and exclusion, all related to gender, ethnicity and illiteracy. The Indigenous people and those of African descent continue today to be the poorest and most discriminated against. These three factors generate resentment, and the population becomes easy prey for leaders with totalitarian ideals who promote violence. This misery gives rise to the migration of men and women to richer nations, and to the disintegration of the family. If we look at the case of El Salvador, where the numbers leaving the country have reached dramatically high levels, more than a quarter of the population lives in the United States, and their remittances of the "dollars of the poor" amount to two billion dollars per year, more than 15 percent of the GDP and almost 90 percent of El Salvador's national budget. We cannot fail to mention the FTAA in this discussion, the agreement on the Free Trade

Area of the Americas. If the United States succeed in getting the governments in this region to put this agreement into effect irrespective of social, labor and environmental concerns, the only beneficiaries will be the developed countries of the North. We must not forget that industrial development in one part of the world cannot eradicate poverty and unemployment in any other part of the world.

The burden of the **external debt** and its related costs deprive a large sector of our region of any kind of noticeable economic development, while facilitating the deterioration of the quality of life. Debt payments have been and still are a mechanism for transferring the nation's wealth produced by the people to its creditors. As Eduardo Galeano said, "The more we pay, the more we owe and the less we have." Because the social costs are extremely high, due to the adjustments imposed by the IMF [International Monetary Fund], the World Bank and other financial institutions, public spending on health and education, which should be a priority for governments, is drastically reduced.

If we examine **corruption** from an economic perspective, we shall notice that it is closely related to a marked framework of unemployment, poverty and violence. Corruption reduces the rate of economic growth while also diminishing investment incentives, and the overall damage is considerably greater than the actual cost of the bribery.

It is also obvious that, in the absence of respect for human beings, there will be still less respect for the **environment**. In Amazonia, to mention only one case, there is increasing, indiscriminate deforestation caused by large companies, the majority of them transnationals, who put their own interests before Creation as a whole.

Possible Alternatives for Healing

It is essential that we recognize that violence against women exists in different

forms and that we must ask forgiveness whether we helped produce these voluntarily or involuntarily, because there is no way to achieve the well being of this world unless the conditions for women are improved.

The use of the handbook "Churches Say 'No' to Violence against Women" must be encouraged at all levels in the churches, and it must be made available to the local communities. We must promote integrated training workshops for women in leadership positions in the churches.

Gender training must be offered in the churches from the tenderest age, and this training should be viewed and implemented with an inter-generational approach, without neglecting projects aimed at strengthening a "new masculinity."

We must search for new forms of understanding with the churches, so that women will be accepted with the same degree of equity and visibility accorded to men, and the ordination of women must be understood as one way of doing them justice.

As a church we also must give an ecumenical response to globalization, focusing our efforts on the human being prior to the consumer market. From the vantage point of our theological and ecclesial identity, we must present clear options and alternatives for life for the poorest and most marginalized in our society, in accordance with the demands of the Scriptures. We are the people of God, united by the Holy Spirit, who is perceived as an enormous yet subtle power and, with this as our basis, we can develop a rational philosophy to deal with the problems of our people.

We must encourage education at all stages of life; making human beings aware of their rights will lead to an expansion of knowledge, and to recognizing the inferiority and racism which make us forget that the human race is one. Both governments and NGOs as well as the churches must promote free education for the masses, and avoid encouraging sectarian approaches which distort their thinking.

As far as possible, we must promote a policy of decentralization in the administration of industry. The development of cooperative structures in the regions will create employment opportunities for the people, relieving the congestion in the large cities and humanizing the quality of life of their inhabitants.

To improve our relationship with the environment, we must keep in mind that our nations are creditors of a tremendous social and ecological debt which has steadily kept growing over past decades as a product of the neo-liberal taxation policies stemming from our external debt. To demand the payment of this debt is a matter related to being true to our confessional identity and our obedience to the

Scriptures, because it is a question of sinning or serving God. To follow through, we must clearly establish the basis for a just struggle working with more than one proposal and supporting peaceful acts of civil resistance, led by honest women and men who can serve as examples for other peoples immersed in the same wretched situation.

Finally, I wish to say that we can help to alleviate the pain of the wounds in several ways, but the real healing will only come about when the Day of the Lord arrives. The only thing we can achieve here is to live in anticipation of that day when "...everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Joel 2:32). Yes, that is our commitment as a church!

Open Hearing on Indigenous Issues 29 July 2003

Introductory Remarks

*Rev. Dr David Pfrimmer,
Lutheran Office for Public Policy,
Waterloo Lutheran Seminary*

It's my pleasure to be able to welcome you this afternoon on behalf of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada to this open hearing. Many of you are aware of some of the tragic history that characterized the relationship between Aboriginal peoples in Canada and the non-Aboriginal community.

Our Anglican partners earlier this week shared with you some of the legacy of residential schools and the painful history that that has left with us. While Lutherans did not have residential schools, along with other Canadians we share responsibility for the grossly unjust social consequences of efforts to assimilate native peoples, forcing them to surrender their culture, their land, their language and their resources. Along with other ecumenical partners, though, churches have also been active advocates and solidarity partners with the First Nations of this country. In 1974, when an oil pipeline was proposed for the McKenzie delta, in the far north on Aboriginal lands, churches established Project North as a coalition of churches that supported the demands of Aboriginal peoples and succeeded in ensuring that there would be no resource extraction on unseeded lands until land rights were justly settled, or we had from native peoples their full and informed consent.

In 1981 and 1982, churches supported Aboriginal efforts in ensuring that the newly repatriated Canadian Constitution included the recognition of the inherent rights of Aboriginal peoples: Section 35 of that Con-

stitution—in Section 35 those rights were included in the Constitution of Canada. In 1990, Canadian churches opposed the Meech Lake Accord, which would have weakened the rights of Aboriginal peoples and nations in this country. During the time of the Jubilee Debt Campaign, in which many of you were involved and many of you participated, Canadian churches also had another Jubilee Campaign in support of First Nations in this country, gathering 50,000 signatures on a petition that called upon the Federal Government to establish an independent commission to resolve outstanding Aboriginal land and treaty rights. After repeated requests, I am sad to say, over the last three years, the Minister of Indian Affairs, Robert Nolt, has not even agreed to have a meeting with church leaders to receive these petitions or discuss these important issues.

Between 1991 and 1996, churches actively participated in the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, one of the largest and most comprehensive commissions in Canadian history. The commission made over 400 recommendations and called for increased investment—financial investment—in order to, I quote “renew the relationship with Aboriginal peoples.” Churches were particularly cited for their important role in helping to raise awareness about the needs and the rights of Aboriginal peoples and to build support among the wider Canadian population for renewing this vital relationship. Sadly again, the Federal Government of Canada's response to this monumental work of this important commission has not been to act on these recommendations. Instead, it has introduced its own First Nations governance legislation that will be implemented against the

The following statements were tape-recorded at the time of the Assembly. The transcriptions appear here with the authorization of the speakers.

wishes of the Aboriginal leadership. Canadian churches have called for this legislation not to proceed unless it has the full consent of the First Nations. This legislation needs to be withdrawn and negotiations need to begin again, based on the report of the Royal Commission and their recommendations.

ELCIC Bishop Raymond Schultz, on the occasion of a visit to Canada by the general secretary of the Lutheran World Federation, Dr Ishmael Noko, convened a meeting in March 2003 that brought together church leaders for a historic meeting with the National Chief and the Assembly of First Nations in Ottawa, and the Grand Chief at the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs here in Winnipeg.

It is from this history of solidarity that we come to this particular moment, and the guests that we have invited to join us this afternoon for this Assembly. I must say that I regret that Chief Dennis White Bird, who was to be here today, unfortunately was called away in an emergency to a community in the north, and he is represented instead by Mr Jim Bear, who is representing the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs. This is a provincial organization of chiefs from the First Nations across the Province of Manitoba. We are indeed pleased that he could be here on such short notice. We are also pleased to welcome Ms Marie Frawley Henry, who is the director of international affairs with the Assembly of First Nations in Ottawa. The AFN is the largest Aboriginal political organization in Canada and represents all the First Nations across this country. Thirdly, we are pleased to have with us and to recognize the Very Rev. Stan McKay, who is a former moderator of the United Church of Canada,

national communities and within the non-Aboriginal community. We are delighted they could be here this afternoon.

Statements

*Ms Marie Frawley Henry,
director of international affairs,
Assembly of First Nations
in Ottawa*

Boozhoo! Greetings! I am very pleased to be here today. I would like to acknowledge the traditional lands that we are meeting on, the lands of the Anishinabe peoples, the Treaty One area. I would also like to give thanks, great thanks to the organizers here today, the Lutheran World Federation Tenth Assembly, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, and to KAIROS, the Inter-Church Social Justice Coalition.

My name is Marie Frawley Henry. I work with the Assembly of First Nations. My community is Nipissing First Nation, which is approximately four hours from Ottawa, Ontario. Nipissing First Nation has approximately 2,000 members, residing on and off reserve—it's a reasonable size of a community.

I would like to begin this story in keeping with your theme of a healing journey. It is important for me to begin at a time when I was searching for my Anishinabe traditional name, clan and colors. Not the English name I was given but a name that is sometimes called by the Anishinabe peoples a "medicine name." It tells me who I am and provides me with a sense of direction and identity and fits nicely into the topic of today, that of a healing journey.

This is the journey that I personally began a number of years ago in order to understand that we do have a purpose in life, that it is important to understand who you are and what gifts you need to develop to contribute to the betterment of society. A part of what the healing journey is all about is also associated with our "identity." It's about knowing who we are, where we came from and where we are going. I

Part of what the healing journey is all about is also associated with our "identity."

the first Aboriginal moderator in that church, and is well known across this country for his healing ministry in working within Aborigi-



From left to right: Very Rev. Stan McKay, former moderator, United Church of Canada; Honorable Jim Bear [on behalf of Grand Chief Dennis White Bird], Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, and Ms Marie Frawley Henry, director of international affairs, Assembly of First Nations in Ottawa, at the open hearing on Indigenous issues.

have worked with young people in the past because I really feel that a sense of individual identity is important when you are starting out on your path in life. Once you know who you are, you know you have a place and can positively contribute to the human family. A sense of identity and history is also important for the whole of the human family to know who we are, where we came from and where we are going.

This is a wonderful opportunity to be able to share a small part of this healing journey with you, a journey that was inspired by my grandmother and my mother, Jane. My mother spoke Ojibway or the language of our Anishinabe people. My grandmother and grandfather also spoke their language. They shared stories and prophecies with us when we were children. There were stories of the Anishinabe people and the medicine societies which my grandmother called “Mide.” She said they did not call this a religion but “a way of life.” I was

encouraged by my mother to travel to ceremonies and name-giving ceremonies in order to find my “traditional name” or medicine name which is important in knowing your spiritual path, or your “healing journey.” The name that was given to me by my namesake in the language of the Anishinabe people is, *Mide Waaboo Kwe*. This medicine name is associated with the life-giving properties of “water” and all that it entails, it is also connected to the role and responsibilities of women.

There was one very important message my mother had for me before she passed away, she told me, “You must speak your language.” Like many of our old people, she proceeded to speak only her native language in the weeks before her passing. Language is also connected to our identity and who we are, learning our language is also a part of the healing journey for our First Nations.

Along with receiving my medicine name, I also received the gift of the sacred

colors which also indicates the work I may one day be associated with. The colors I was gifted with are those colors of the four

There are more than fifty First Nations in Canada. Each nation has its own unique laws, languages, customs, traditions and territories.

directions, yellow, black, white and red as well as green and blue. Today, I find myself working in the international arena, working with Indigenous peoples, and brothers and sisters from the four directions. I began the journey to find my name, my clan and my colors in order to better understand my direction in life and what I had to learn and to offer. I found this in the culture and teachings of my mother's people, the Anishinabe. All races of the world have many similar original teachings. It is a rich and healing journey to learn and re-discover these teachings.

With the Assembly of First Nations, at present, I work on the international file as well as the gender equality/women's file and the fund-raising file. I would like to share with you first some background information on the Assembly of First Nations, so that you have some understanding of the organization, how it began and where it is going.

The Assembly of First Nations is the national organization representing the First Nation citizens of Turtle Island, which we call Canada. The First Nations peoples live in all areas of the country, on reserves, in cities, in rural areas and in the north. First Nations peoples are recognized as Indians in Canada's Constitution, which recognizes and protects Aboriginal treaty rights. Historically, First Nations have a unique and special relationship with the Crown and the people of Canada, as manifested in our treaties and other historical agreements. In essence, the special relationship is a nation-to-nation partnership with a view toward

peaceful coexistence based on equitable sharing of lands and resources. Ultimately, the relationship is founded on respect, equality and recognition of our mutual right to govern ourselves. The Assembly of First Nations, AFN for short, exists to promote the restoration and enhancement of this relationship, and to ensure that it is mutually beneficial for First Nations and Canadians. There are more than fifty First Nations in Canada. Each nation has its own unique laws, languages, customs, traditions and territories. Currently, there are 633 First Nations communities in Canada. About half of the First Nations populations reside on reserved territories, and others live off-reserve in urban centers and rural areas. The AFN acts as an advocate of First Nations on many issues, including Aboriginal and treaty rights, economic development, education, languages, literacy, health, housing, social development, justice, taxation, land claims and the environment, to name a few. Our issues are as diverse as the nations themselves. First Nations peoples have a right to self-determination and self-government, and guided by this principle we can work together to build a healthy and vibrant country that is home to all of us. We must restore the original spirit of partnership in order to move forward together.

The Assembly of First Nations also works closely with the churches. For example, a petition with the churches was circulated calling on the government to establish an independent commission to implement Aboriginal rights. Therefore, we have had about 50,000 signatures on that petition and the AFN worked closely with a number of churches, not only in drafting the wording of this petition but also in getting signatures. In June of 2001, over 400 people gathered in Ottawa to meet trains that came from all corners of Canada. These trains were bringing blankets—yes, I do say blankets—from Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal supporters across the country. Over 1,000 blankets were unfolded on the lawn of the Supreme Court of Canada building—symbolizing the return of our land to the First

Nations. The AFN and the churches worked closely together to make sure this would be one of the greatest and most important demonstrations of Aboriginal solidarity in recent history.

Following the release of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples' final report in 1996, the churches worked together to create an education resource kit which summarizes the major themes of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples' report, which includes educational exercises to help people understand these issues better. I have a copy of that report here.

Today, I would like to provide a short history of how the AFN came about, so that you can understand why the treaties are important. The AFN, the Assembly of First Nations, actually came about at a time when First Nations peoples feared that developments would undermine the treaties and the Federal Government's fiduciary responsibility for First Nations peoples. The first move by the Federal Government to end our special status with our treaties in Canada took place in June 1969 under the then Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau who issued an Indian policy called the White Paper. Not until 1970 did First Nations have options to the idea of inherent right, coming from the agreements made between the First peoples and the Federal Government of Canada. The Federal Government holds a fiduciary responsibility with the First Nations.

In terms of the Assembly of First Nations, treaty policy secretariat: First Nations today continue to view the treaties that were signed by their ancestors as living treaties and lasting covenants. Treaty-making did not begin with the arrival of Europeans. It was a process that was developed long before the arrival. First Nations negotiated with each other to establish peace, to regulate trade, to share the use of lands and resources, and arrange mutual alliances. These agreements were sealed according to Nations' specific customs, which may have included sacred pipe-smoking and other ceremonies. By this process they gave the agreements

the stature of sacred oaths. By the 1500s, European and First Nations contact began to increase in number and complexity. Caution, cooperation, not conflict, was the theme of this period that lasted into the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. First Nations and Europeans viewed themselves as separate distinct peoples with responsibilities over their own affairs. This cooperation was formalized in two very important ways.

Number one—the process was set down in writing by the British, French and other European negotiators and solemnized by the First Nations in oral, visual records, including the Wampum belts. Number two—in part, the Royal Proclamation of 1763 stated, “whereas it is just and reasonable, and essential to our interest and the security of our colonies, that the several Nations or tribes of Indians with whom we are connected and who live under our protection, should not be molested or disturbed in the possession of such parts of our dominions and territories as, not having been ceded to or purchased by us, are reserved to them, or any of them as their hunting grounds.” The British colonial government's approach was vastly different. By signing treaties largely to acquire land, the government appeared to recognize the nationhood of First Nations peoples, and their equality as nations. The First Nations, which were not accustomed to the written word, believed that whatever the treaty commissioners told them on behalf of the

The First Nations, which were not accustomed to the written word, believed that whatever the treaty commissioners told them ... would be accurately recorded in the treaty and would be honored for all future generations to come.

Crown during their talks would be accurately recorded in the treaty and would be honored for all future generations to come. Often dur-

ing the treaty-making process, the treaty commissioners and the First Nations came together with vastly different perspectives and expectations. The First Nations sought protection from invading land-hungry settlers and the disruptions they sensed would follow. First Nations sought large areas of land that would allow them to continue to live as their ancestors had. The treaty commissioners, on the other hand, sought Indian reserves as places where Indians could learn to be settlers and farmers and abandon their old ways. For this and other reasons, the treaties were left hanging with many questions that are yet to be resolved by government and First Nations. Each treaty contained different promises and provisions for the First Nations signatories in general in exchange for large areas of land, First Nations were promised certain benefits, such as annual treaty payments (approximately 3 to 5 dollars), continued rights to hunt and fish, provisions of schooling, medical care, farm equipment and ammunition. This is an example of some of the work that we continue to do, and the continuing story in the work of the treaty area.

Some of the other work we attempt to address at the AFN is the gender/women's issues. In a recent report the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) cited serious concerns, that Canada has been remiss in dealing with Aboriginal women. From the CEDAW report I quote, "...the Committee is seriously concerned about the persistent systemic discrimination faced by Aboriginal women in all aspects of their lives.... The Committee is further concerned that the First Nations Governance Act currently under discussion does not address remaining discriminatory legal provisions under other Acts, including matrimonial property rights, status and band membership questions which are incompatible with the Convention....

...It urges the State party to take effective and proactive measures including awareness-raising programs, to sensitize Aboriginal communities about women's

human rights and to combat patriarchal attitudes, practices and stereotyping roles. It recommends to the State party to ensure that Aboriginal women receive sufficient funding in order to be able to participate in the necessary governance and legislative processes that address issues which impede their legal and substantive equality. It also requests the State party to provide comprehensive information on the situation of Aboriginal women in its next report." The report goes on to state, "The Committee is also concerned that the State party's measures are mostly directed towards children and not towards women."

There are a number of issues and concerns that threaten the future survival of our First Nations such as certain sections of the Indian Act, namely Bill C-31, which was passed in 1985 to amend sections of the Indian Act for the purpose of eliminating the discriminatory provisions against disenfranchised First Nations. Under the Indian Act before 1985 if a First Nation woman married a man who did not have First Nation status she lost her First Nation status or Indian status. The amendment to section 6-(1) and 6-(2) of the Indian Act has impacted adversely on First Nations families and communities by diminishing the treaty status population. We will only begin to see the impacts of this legislation over the next few years in the dwindling of our status population.

Finally, we also attempt to address issues related to violence and the discrimination against Aboriginal women which is a great concern for our communities in Canada and for Indigenous women around the world. For these reasons and more we work together as Indigenous peoples to address a number of these human rights issues at the United Nations and the UN Permanent Forum and the Organization of American States.

In closing, I would like to say thank you very much for taking the time to come together. I wish you continued success in your conference.

*Very Rev. Stan McKay,
former moderator,
United Church of Canada*

President Krause, General Secretary Noko, it has been an honor to sit with you this week. Friends who are delegates at this great meeting, I know your energy is beginning to decline after so many days of sitting. I too have sat for many of the days and I must say it is the first time in my many meetings of the church that I have been awake for the Treasurer's report—thank you for the Treasurer's report. Much more exciting than all the figures and the details of the monies themselves, but the purpose of gathering was very much highlighted in that report. The Tenth Assembly theme "For the Healing of the World" is very much about Indigenous peoples and so it is an honor to be with you as you work with that theme.

I wanted now just to begin by saying I was here at the opening of your Assembly when there was an honor song by three Anishinabe people and a prayer by an elder. The honor song was to welcome you to this land. That wasn't explained in the opening—it was a welcoming song, an honoring song, with the hand drums. And then the elder, as you might have been watching, prayed in the four directions, because your gathering, your Federation, this Assembly is a gathering from the four corners of the world, and in our philosophy we understand that to be God's purpose, the Creator's purpose to bring us together, so in many ways this Assembly for me has been a representation of a prophetic gathering of peoples of diversity and of purpose for the healing of the world. Welcome to Canada! Many of you will know that this is a name from the Aboriginal community, but there are many theories. In the Cree language, the visitors came to us and said, "What is this place?"—most of them from Europe and they didn't know where they were. Not surprising! No, it is surprising—that they got here at all! But they came here and they said, "What is this place?", and the people responded "*Ka-na-tun-usk*, this is

sacred land." Canada—in our language *Ka-na-tun*—is sacred, so they acknowledged, the first visitors, that this is sacred land. You have already heard Manitoba, some people say Manitoba, *Manitou* is the Creator God for us, in our language, *Manitou pa* may be God's resting place, here. Not so romantic is Winnipeg. They asked us, "What is this river?" Winnipeg—it means dirty water! So it is not quite as romantic, but when you go to the Forks this evening, those of us who walk to the Forks, will again go to the sacred gathering place of many nations from this territory, a ceremonial place which is now given over largely to economic development and hardly has any space for Indigenous peoples in that location any more. So welcome to Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

You would be interested to know that 500 years ago we did not have an immigration department, we didn't grant visas, we welcomed visitors (*applause*). Four hundred years ago, 300 years ago we welcomed visitors, and were determined to share the riches of the Creator with whomever came to us. People who were hungry and lost, in need of a place to live, were granted welcome in this land. Now we experience the embarrassment of a Canadian government that will not acknowledge that the gathering for sacred purpose is not worthy of a visa. So I too am embarrassed to be in this land and so I will go home tonight and read Psalm 107 which speaks of the four winds and the in-gathering of the people by the Creator from the four directions, because I think the purpose of gathering in diversity is very important. I describe myself within my denomination as an Aboriginal Christian. Our denomination still struggles with the understanding of what it means to be an Indigenous person seeking to understand the Christian faith, and I gather in this Assembly your Message is going to include something on Indigenous people in an effort to change that relationship within the global work of the Lutheran World Federation. It is also necessary in this land within my denomination. It's very difficult, out of dogmatic, colonial processes to change the understanding of the diversity of the gifts of

the Creator to all the peoples. The concept of communion, *koinonia*, the concept of respectful relationships on the land, I think is about the healing of the world—the balance, respectful balance between peoples and the creation, the wholeness of the creation.

The concept of communion, *koinonia*, the concept of respectful relationships on the land, I think is about the healing of the world...

I was a visitor in Vancouver in 1983, when the World Council of Churches met there, and during that meeting the concept of justice and peace was discussed and a phrase was added on to that statement, which said "...and the integrity of creation." We often read, "...for God so loved the world," and then talk only about human beings. It is very difficult to move to be inclusive, and I think in this Assembly you are doing some very creative things around expanding the healing of the world beyond the human condition. It's an honor to be with you in this gathering, the gathering place of our ancestors in this area of *Manito apâ*—this sacred land, Canada—*Ka-na-tun*. After five years in a residential school managed by the churches, I have been able to maintain my language and I am striving to understand my culture, because I believe globally in Indigenous communities there were teachings about community, about love and sharing that are very important in the globalization process: the philosophy of my father and my mother on the land, and we lived on the land from what the Creator, God provided for us; my father's philosophy as he hunted and trapped and fished was, you only take what you need. That's not what globalization is about, I'm afraid, it's not what it's about, so I believe the lessons of conversations with Indigenous peoples globally has begun to happen here. I sat very respectfully this morning with a group of Indigenous people from this gath-

ering, from this Assembly—it was a great honor for me, and I thank all of you for making that possible. *Kisey Manitou ka sawantum oma mowachetowin* (asking of God to bless the Assembly, in the Cree language) the Creator, God, will bless you in your Assembly. *Kinanaskomitin Katipayischikayun kaishis minosick kamamowiyak* (thanksgiving for the Creator bringing us all together in a good way).

Honorable Jim Bear on behalf of Grand Chief Dennis White Bird, Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs

Good afternoon, Brothers and Sisters! I guess you all didn't know you had an Ojibway brother in Winnipeg. It's good to see that not everyone is a snowball Christian. Usually Christians melt away in the summer, eh? On behalf of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs—residents in Manitoba are the Cree, the Ojibway Cree, the Dene, the Dakota and the Ojibway—that's who the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs represents, and Dennis Whitebird is the Grand Chief elected by the Chiefs of Manitoba. We have a saying, "I am Ojibway, Denis is Ojibway, if you can't find any other way to heal, do it the Ojibway." So to let you know, I see a lot of nationalities out there, different races, I just want to let you know that Jesus was Indian. He was! Who knows their Bible here, who reads their Bible? Put up your hand. O.K. most of you. If you read Ephesians, Ephesians says: Jesus Christ himself being chief cornerstone! (Eph 2:20)

The speaker just before me talked about the different places named after our people, like *Manito ba*—where the spirit sits; Winnipeg—muddy waters; Saskatchewan—fast-flowing waters; vegetarian—a very poor hunter! (*laughter*) Laughter is good. We use a lot of that in our healing, and I think we need more of that in our churches, I mean Jesus was full of humor and if you don't know that he was full of humor, you better read your Bible again. I mean, who else would spit in somebody's eye to heal him? He actually didn't do that, but you can interpret it as such.

First Nations have much to share for the healing of the world. Our traditions, teachings and homelands are Creator-given gifts to be shared, including our traditional medicines, and ours is an oral tradition and that's why we have such a respect for our elders' importance. Canada has shown its respect for Aboriginal languages, traditions and rights by failing to share equably and through imposition of reservations, residential schools, relocations, environmental damage, prisons, child and family, welfare agencies, the Indian Act, and lately, the First Nations Governance Bill.

Some of our people were taken from their family at a very young age, and taken hundreds of miles away. Some were only taken one hour away. I was one such person, but when you are very young one hour seems like thousands of miles away. Some were taken within their own community, maybe five minutes from their home but could not see their family, except through the window. You all know that as a child and as a teen, those are your learning years, and that is why a lot of us are so messed up, even at my age, and we need help, and we need that healing within and that healing without. We must also address our own healing needs by exercising our rights and restoring our economies, institutions, languages, cultures, traditions and the physical, mental and spiritual health of our peoples. I work for a tribal council—there are nine of us, nine First Nations, and we have got tremendous economic development, we've got our own education and a lot of things that are happening now. You might read a lot of negative things, but if you visit our tribal council you will see the many, many positive things that are happening. Just recently, because we have an investment group, we were given CAD 100,000 by our tribal council investment group to be shared among our First Nations—that's just one example.

Healing is a huge undertaking, and for the healing of the world we are for the traditional teaching of the respect to be felt, earned and given in all relations, and we

need your help. Third World conditions exist right here in Manitoba, and exist right in your own backyard, and your congregations are made up of many individuals who have many different skills that can be utilized in the First Nations communities. We are not necessarily after your preaching, we are not necessarily after your money, even though we don't preclude those! But we need your help, we want to start a new relationship with you. We want you to be zealous as in the past, but in a different way. We still need you to be zealous. We need you to help get our message to the government and to the citizens of this province and country, so that they understand our dreams, our goals, our aspirations. We know where we want to go, but we need your help. The Bible just doesn't say, "What do you learn in Sunday School?" "What is that song?" "Red and yellow, black and white, all are precious in his sight." It doesn't say, "except Aboriginals." It doesn't say that. The First Nations of this country have always had a close walk with the great spirit, and I think there's a lot that we can offer you, but we need you to walk with us, to walk hand in hand with us, not in front of us, not behind us, but with us. And I think that's the only way we are going to be able to heal.

We must also address our own healing needs by exercising our rights and restoring our economies, institutions, languages, cultures, traditions and the physical, mental and spiritual health of our peoples.

Right now we are working, we are trying to work with the schools, the justice system, the child and family, and health. Those are just four areas we are presently working with through the residential committee, the residential school committee at the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs. We are looking to the churches to help us make

approaches to the schools, to the frontline workers and to make some kind of checklist, or whatever it may be, as to how they have been residential-school impacted, so that those individuals working in those systems will understand and know how to deal with our people, who have been impacted by ways that are foreign to us. Again, just on behalf of Grand Chief White

Bird, I'd just like to thank you for giving us the time to give a very short message. We didn't want to get into what the Assembly of First Nations already told you about us. We have got a lot more, but I understand that you have limited time, but certainly I personally would like to attend a future gathering and also give my viewpoints. So with that, *meegwetch*.



Assembly youth participants symbolically illustrate the need for open dialogue on HIV/AIDS during the open hearing.

Message of the Pre-Assembly Youth Conference

Executive Summary

Introduction

From 11 to 20 July 2003, delegates and stewards to the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Tenth Assembly, gathered with ecumenical guests and advisers at the University of Guelph for the Pre-Assembly Youth Conference (PAYC).¹ The conference served partly as preparation for and had the same theme, “For the Healing of the World,” as the Assembly.

Much of the participants’ primary work centered around the work of the Village Groups, which were the same as those or-

ganized for the Assembly, except that the first and second groups were combined.

One problem encountered was that many youth delegates and stewards were denied visas, simply because of their young age or financial situation and, therefore, could not participate.

Based on the reports of the Village Groups, the PAYC proposed the following for action:

God’s Healing Gifts of Justification and Communion

- To encourage the churches to promote a wider understanding of justification by grace.

- To affirm ecumenical dialogue as a way to further strengthen the worldwide communion of churches, especially dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church following the signing of the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*.

Healing Divisions within the One Church

- To underline the importance of the LWF study on church authority including attention to teaching authority.
- To request the LWF to undertake a study of the history of Lutheran churches in order to promote greater understanding between churches.
- To request the LWF to initiate a program on the history of the Reformation with the Roman Catholic Church, building on the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* and aiming at a less biased view of the shared past in order to promote mutual understanding and to teach future generations of the Church.

The Mission of the Church in Multi-Faith Contexts

- To encourage the LWF to continue in inter-faith dialogue, both independently and through the WCC.
- To affirm the need for continued witness in word and deed (*diakonia*) to work for peace, justice and healing as an essential part of the mission of the church in multi-faith contexts.

Removing Barriers That Exclude

- To reaffirm the church's calling to include the excluded through concrete action plans, highlighting especially exclusion by stigmatization.

- To work for the inclusion of those for whom language is a barrier to participation in LWF events.

The Church's Ministry of Healing

- To request the LWF to promote training of people in medical-pastoral care and in holistic concepts of healing.

Justice and Healing in Families

- To challenge the member churches to focus on the prevention of HIV/AIDS, and to advocate for the treatment of sexually transmitted diseases, against harmful cultural practices, such as dry sex, and for the use of condoms; to promote women's sexual self-determination; and to promote protection of children.
- To challenge the LWF to encourage discussion of sexuality, particularly with regard to same-sex relationships.

Overcoming Violence

- To call for wider discussion and study of violence against children, especially child labor.
- To call for global action on sexual violence against children and youth.

Transforming Economic Globalization

- To call for an international campaign to promote, at every level, the right to access basic goods and services.

Healing Creation

- To call upon the US Government to sign the Kyoto Protocol.
- To request the LWF and its member churches to take concrete action against climate change.

In addition, the PAYC proposed action concerning the place of youth in the church:

- To ask the LWF Assembly to rebuke the US and Canadian governments for denying visas to youth wishing to participate in the Assembly.
- To ask the LWF to extend the term of the Secretary for Youth in Church and Society from four to six years, to begin half-way between two Assemblies, and to ensure the position receives financial priority.
- To urge member churches in Asia and other regions to encourage participation of youth in decision-making processes.
- To strongly urge the Assembly to reaffirm the LWF Eighth Assembly commitment to 20 percent youth participation in LWF Assemblies, and to ask member churches to ensure gender balance among youth.

Finally, the PAYC set the following priorities for the Desk for Youth in Church and Society (YICAS) during the next six years:

Programmatic Priorities

- Promotion of a wider knowledge of the YICAS Desk's work and programs

- Education and prevention of HIV/AIDS
- Economic globalization and environmental advocacy
- Countering violence against children and youth
- Ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue
- Youth participation in decision-making bodies and processes.

Methodological Priorities

- Creation of a YICAS database of young leaders in the church
- Seeking of further transparency in delegate selection and strengthening of the role of youth
- Use of multiple languages where appropriate
- Seeking greater inclusion of youth in the churches' life and work, especially at the national and local levels.

The PAYC hoped that the LWF Village Groups would take its reports and recommendations for action into consideration, and that the Assembly would take seriously the motions concerning youth.

Note

¹ Cf. Report of the "Pre-Assembly Youth Conference – For the Healing of the World," Toronto, Canada, 11–20 July 2003.





At the extraordinary plenary session on the denial of visas where unoccupied chairs revealed missing delegates.

Report on Status of Visa Difficulties for LWF Tenth Assembly Participants, and Remarks

Report by Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko, 22 July 2003

The following report is delivered at the request of the LWF Council.

Given the nature of the circumstances, the lack of confirmed or any information from some member churches, and the fluidity of the situation, it is difficult to give a precise account of numbers and details. However, the following report is based on the

Secretariat's best endeavors to gather the latest and most comprehensive information.

As of this morning, 694 out of an expected 888 participants had arrived (including 357 out of an expected 412 delegates).

Of those not yet arrived, at least fifty-two expected Assembly participants are presently known to have either been denied visas for entry to Canada, or to still be

awaiting the outcome of their visa applications. All of the affected individuals are from the Asian and African regions (nine African countries and four Asian countries).

The Indian participants have been among the worst affected. Fifteen Indian participants (including twelve delegates) are believed to have had their visa applications rejected or to have been told not to apply, or to have had existing visas cancelled. The applications of another twelve Indian participants (including eight delegates) are believed to be still pending. The Indian situation is particularly saddening, since all of the affected persons are Dalits or Tribals (among the most marginalized communities in Indian society).

In addition to India, expected participants from the following countries also are affected: Bangladesh (one delegate, one steward), Cameroon (one delegate, two stewards), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (one delegate, one adviser), Ethiopia (five delegates), Indonesia (three delegates), Liberia (one steward), Madagascar (two delegates, one journalist), Philippines (one steward), Rwanda (one delegate), Senegal (two delegates), Sierra Leone (one delegate), and South Africa (one delegate).

Approximately thirty-eight delegates are among those presently known to be affected. Women and, in particular, youth are disproportionately represented among those whose visas have not been granted. Twelve of the affected persons are youth.

At an early stage of planning for the LWF Tenth Assembly, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) as host church entered into communication with the relevant government department, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), to apprise them of the nature of the Assembly and the countries from which member church representatives were expected. The ELCIC was given assurance that none of the countries of origin of the LWF member churches were on the CIC prohibited list. In other words, it was possible for all participants to make an application for a visa to enter into Canada.

Throughout the preparation period, the ELCIC has kept the Canadian authorities updated on the numbers and names of the anticipated Assembly participants. The church was given to understand that information concerning the LWF Assembly (including the assurances of the LWF regarding its financial responsibility for all delegates to the Assembly) had been distributed to all relevant embassies and high commissions in order to facilitate the visa applications. In addition, participants were urged during the regional pre-Assembly consultations, from late January 2003 onward, to begin the visa application process as soon as possible.

The first indication of visa difficulties was received on 8 May 2003 when the LWF in Geneva was informed of visa rejections for two participants from Colombia. This matter was addressed by the LWF general secretary during his visit with the ELCIC in late May, but concerted efforts to secure a meeting with the government Minister for Citizenship and Immigration were not successful. (The visas for the two Colombian participants were subsequently granted on review.)

When word was received that participants from Bangladesh had also been denied visas, the general secretary addressed an urgent letter to the Minister for Citizenship and Immigration. A copy of the letter, dated 28 May 2003, is attached. Though the letter was never acknowledged and no response has ever been received, a Member of Parliament delivered the letter personally into the hands of the Minister in the Canadian House of Commons. A subsequent letter dated 27 June 2003, a copy of which is also attached, was handed to the minister personally as well.

With an increasing number of visa rejections, and no response from the Canadian government, a press release was issued on 24 June 2003 and shared with the member churches. There was enormous media and public response to news of this situation, all supporting the granting of visas to Assembly participants. Subsequent press releases

were issued on 4 and 15 July, and were shared with the member churches. As a consequence, numerous media interviews were given by the LWF and ELCIC.

Jointly with the ELCIC, the LWF has repeatedly assured the Canadian government that the LWF is fully responsible for all costs for the delegates affected, and has guaranteed that the participants will return home after conclusion of the Assembly. LWF staff have assisted participants to provide additional supporting documentation and have made repeated interventions with Canadian embassies and high commissions, while ELCIC staff have worked diligently to communicate with the CIC to assist with certain individual cases. These efforts have resulted in the granting of over seventeen visas that were initially denied.

In a few cases, it has become apparent that the visa difficulties were associated with failure to complete visa applications correctly and/or to lodge them in good time.

On 20 July 2003, the LWF Council meeting in Winnipeg issued a statement and appeal concerning this matter, which was forwarded to the Canadian government, as well as being issued as a press release. A copy of the statement/appeal is attached.

In my view, this situation is a symptom of a wider global problem that is not limited to Canada, or even to North-South relations, but also increasingly affects movement between countries in the South. One member of the Council described it as the “flipside of globalization.” It represents an increasingly common “fortress mentality” and isolationism based on insecurity.

The countries of origin of the affected persons are all in the South, and predominantly African. They include some of the poorest countries in the world, and particularly in the case of the communities the Indian participants represent, some of the poorest communities in those countries.

I believe that the holding of this Assembly, despite this painful situation, is itself a witness against the “flipside of globalization,” and gives a united voice to our opposition to exclusion. It is a test of our communion.

Summary

52 participants (38 delegates and 14 other participants) affected (including 12 youth):

- 27 from India
(20 delegates, 7 others)
- 5 from Ethiopia (all delegates)
- 3 from Indonesia (all delegates)
- 3 from Madagascar
(2 delegates, 1 journalist)
- 3 from Cameroon
(1 delegate, 2 stewards)
- 2 from Bangladesh
(1 delegate, 1 steward)
- 2 from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (1 delegate, 1 adviser)
- 2 from Senegal (both delegates)
- 1 from Liberia (steward)
- 1 from the Philippines (steward)
- 1 from Rwanda (delegate)
- 1 from Sierra Leone (delegate)
- 1 from South Africa (delegate)

Statement by the Council of the Lutheran World Federation

Winnipeg, 20 July 2003

On the eve of the opening of the Tenth Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) in Winnipeg, the leadership of this global church family expresses its deepest concern and outrage that over sixty delegates and official participants from around the world have not received visas

from the Government of Canada to enable them to attend this meeting.

The LWF is a federation of 136 member churches of the Lutheran communion in seventy-six countries, representing approximately 62 million people. In addition to serving as a forum for the worldwide Lutheran community, the LWF is also a major institution for mission, theological reflection, ecumenical dialogue, development cooperation and humanitarian assistance. The Assembly is the highest decision-making body of the LWF, in which representatives of all member churches are entitled to participate. The Assembly takes place only once every six years, and sets the direction for the LWF's work for the coming period. Comprehensive participation is therefore essential.

It is the first time that the LWF has held its Assembly in Canada, and we have been warmly and enthusiastically received by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) as host church. The joy of this celebration of global Christian fellowship is dimmed by visa difficulties of a magnitude completely unprecedented in the more than fifty-year history of the LWF.

We are very grateful for the untiring efforts of the ELCIC and the LWF's Secretariat in Geneva to secure the favorable consideration of these outstanding visa applications.

However, the response thus far of the Canadian authorities has been in effect to deny entry to participants exclusively from among the poorest nations of the world. This situation reflects one of the most deplorable aspects of globalization, namely the exclusion of the South, the poor and the marginalized from the global community. It illustrates very concretely and painfully the brokenness of human relationships that the theme of the Assembly, "For the Healing of the World," seeks to address.

The situation is also a poor reflection of Canada's traditional policies of openness, internationalism and support for the developing world. The lack of recognition and responsiveness to the concerns already repeatedly raised by the ELCIC with Citizenship and Immigration Canada manifests a very saddening disregard for the church's role in this society.

If immediate action is taken, it still might not be too late for the Canadian government to rectify this matter, and to facilitate the fulfillment of the Assembly's primary purpose as a truly global gathering of the Lutheran church family. We appeal to the Canadian government to be a force "For the Healing of the World," to avoid promoting division and marginalization, and to issue these visas now.



ELCIC National Bishop Raymond Schultz flanked by youth participants, addresses the extraordinary plenary session on the visa issue.

Extraordinary Plenary Session 22 July 2003

At an “extraordinary plenary session,” delegates to the LWF Tenth Assembly indicated their intention to participate in a public demonstration on Tuesday, 29 July 2003, to protest the Canadian government’s failure to grant visas to fifty-one delegates and other Assembly participants.¹

Statements

National Bishop Raymond L. Schultz, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada²

Our church is one of displaced people forced to flee their own countries because of war, poverty, and repressive governments: people who feared for the lives and future of those they loved. Many among our congregations have neither forgotten the life and death importance of a place of refuge and sanctuary nor their welcome in Canada. I myself am a first-generation Russian Ger-

man born here. My parents and grandparents lived in an area of eastern Europe, now part of Ukraine, from where our own people were forced to flee. My parents came to North America with my grandparents as babies. The family settled in a homestead in Alberta, farmed with oxen, and blew up stumps in the ground with black powder to create enough soil to till in order to survive this country’s hard winters. That’s my own history. We were welcome in Canada.

Each successive generation of immigrants found its place in this new country, and made its own contribution to building our diverse, multicultural and multifaith commu-

The following statements were tape-recorded at the time of the extraordinary plenary session. The transcriptions appear here with the authorization of the speakers.

nity. Canadians have sought to create a community that would be a meeting place for the world's nations, faiths and cultures that might offer the global family another path to follow for its future. When we were living in Edmonton, our son used to talk with us about one of his friends. We said, "Describe him to us," to which he replied, "Well, he's the best math student in our class." He described many other aspects about him, and then one day his friend came over to our house. He was a Jamaican, the only dark-skinned person at their school. It had never occurred to our children that that might be distinctive.

So I do realize this is a complex issue, and that the recent denial of visas is about much more than just exclusion of individuals from attendance at a meeting. For Canadians, it calls into question the very nature of how we, most of us as ordinary Canadians, want to be present in the world. I have received expressions from all across the country on this issue. We want to be a welcoming compassionate community that responsibly seeks justice within the community of nations. Until very recent times, this has been our legacy. We were proud of the leadership of this country that led us in that direction.

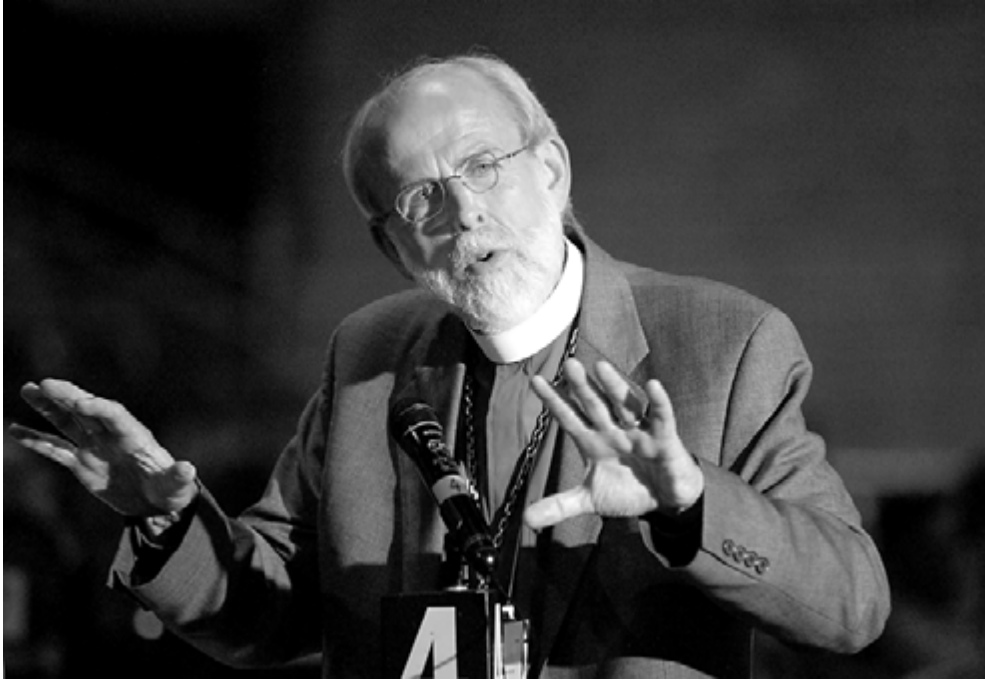
On behalf of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, therefore, I want to express appreciation for your understanding of the profound disappointment and shame that we in the church feel over our government's insensitivity and inaction toward what this Assembly symbolizes, and the implication of the exclusion of so many delegates from this gathering. I would like to accentuate the remarks of my brother and friend, Archbishop Michael Peers, who as we introduced ourselves yesterday evening said, our nation is fast becoming a very different place: one made unrecognizable by the turbulent forces that are reshaping our world and country. Ours is a world where money moves freely, but where people cannot. I appreciated as well what our General Secretary said, that this is a global problem, not just Canada's, in a world which is locking people out. The new security agenda that

relies on military force, seeking to keep people away from our islands of affluence, will not bring true human security. We know this; but our governments do not. This is a false god. Not what we pray for as a church when we pray that the world might be one. Our communion must say "no" to this false god of exclusion.

Many have worked hard to address this problem—our church staff, the Geneva staff, many members of parliament in Canada, many in the media, most of the people of Canada, and many of you. I have received letters and e-mails, and read letters in the newspaper. A reader of the Winnipeg Free Press writes, "I don't go to church but I don't understand why the government is keeping this church from allowing its delegates to be here." Through these words, I want to express our sincere apologies to all of you, and to those who cannot be here.

There are some actions I suggest this Assembly can take. One is that we should not forget: we need to be reminded of the absent delegates among us. I have asked that the flags we use in the ELCIC to symbolize our mission partnerships at our own gatherings—unfortunately, we don't have them for all the countries concerned, not for Ethiopia, India, Liberia or Cameroon—be placed in this hall as a visual aid to remind us of their presence in our family.

I know many of you wanted to publicly express solidarity with those who were denied visas, and I am aware that some of you do not want to embarrass our church by any public display against the Canadian government. But I believe the people beyond this room, the members of our churches, citizens of this country and political leaders accountable for these matters do need to know these decisions are an affront to the Church, and more than that, to the dignity of all those who have been treated so badly. So I invite you to join with me in a solidarity vigil of remembrance, which we hope to hold outside the Federal Immigration offices in Winnipeg, next Tuesday afternoon. More details will be made available as we make arrangements. To remain silent would be a double



Extraordinary plenary session on the denial of visas: LWF Vice-President (North America) Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson

injustice. Responsible citizenship requires that our voices be heard.

Third and last, this sad experience reminds us that this is neither the kind of world we want, nor the kind of world God intends. The principalities and powers of globalization have created a world where capital moves freely but people cannot; and that seeks to tame the Church and discredit its gospel call for justice and peace. We will support efforts to make the Lutheran World Federation better able to understand and address the dynamics of globalization, and the advocacy required for that; and so we regret that our brothers and sisters cannot be here. You have no idea how much we regret that. But their absence reminds us of the crucial witness we all must make: for their experience is the experience of not only millions but probably a billion people every day, whose cry is never heard. Thank you for giving me this opportunity to address you.

*Presiding Bishop Mark S Hanson,
Evangelical Lutheran Church
in America*

If I were wise, I would simply say “Amen” to my colleague bishop, because that’s princi-

pally why I am here. I want to support him in calling us to remember that if we don’t acknowledge the complexity of this visa issue our response will lack integrity. But I am mostly here tonight to appeal to us to not singularly focus upon the Canadian government, because we must also acknowledge that the Government of the United States has led the way in responding to the horrific acts of violence in the world, first by exerting its military and economic power, most often punishing the victims of violence by closing its borders to all but the powerful. I believe it’s important for us, as delegates to this Assembly, to remember that this visa episode reminds us that we are a communion of the powerless but we are not a powerless communion. We have the power to act, and it’s my prayer, following and endorsing the suggestions of Bishop Schultz, that our public actions give clear witness to the promise of God, the presence of the risen Christ, the power of the Holy Spirit. So let us publicly engage in what we do in the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, renouncing the forces of evil, the devil and the devil’s empty promises, but let not our renouncing of evil turn into what the Government of the United States has too often done, and that’s a denouncing of those

Extraordinary plenary
session: Palestinian
Lutheran Bishop
Munib A. Younan

in poverty, who are most often the victims of the violence of poverty rather than the perpetrators of violence. Let our public witness be one of interceding, standing before the throne of God's grace in Christ, pleading on behalf of the whole creation for God's mercy. Let our public act of witness be one of lamenting, lamenting a world that responds to horrific acts of violence by closing borders of nations rather than by resolve to build communities of justice and peace. Let our public act of witness be one of embodying the risen Christ, who is present in the poor, who welcomes the stranger, who accompanies the sojourner, and let our public witness be one of announcing good news to the poor, because if the gospel we announce at this Assembly is not heard as good news to the poor, then maybe it's not the Good News of Jesus Christ. Let our public witness be

one of announcing the in-breaking of God's reign, for the healing of the nations, a reign that excludes no one. Thank you.

*Bishop Dr Munib A. Younan,
The Evangelical Lutheran Church
in Jordan*

It is not easy for me to speak after Bishop Schultz and Bishop Hanson because many of the ideas that we have in Asia are similar to what they have presented. We are very thankful for their points of view; but not only thankful. We also want to say that our communion, with these statements, is consolidated and fuller than ever, with such prophetic attitudes from the national bishop from Canada and presiding bishop from the United States. It is very sensitive for us in the South, Asia, Africa or Latin America, when we are living under oppression, when we see that our resources, commodities, money and oil can move but human beings cannot. Thank God the communion of churches does not need a visa, and we don't need a visa for a communion of churches. Our visa is our Lord Jesus Christ who gathers us in this house with all the Christians in the world. For this reason, by these acts that Bishop Schultz has asked of us, we as Asians will be the first to join in on Tuesday in a peaceful demonstration, to be with him, raise our voice and at the same time pray. It's not enough to write statements; we make statements to ourselves. But when we show visible unity of communion in the streets of Winnipeg, that in itself is a statement of the communion. For this reason, we welcome this peaceful demonstration to protest against harassment of anybody in the world, especially for us people in the South. As the President said, it's more bitter when these people come from poor countries, not only from countries in the North.

At the same time, we have nine churches from India that cannot be present with us. We also have delegates from Indonesia and Africa—it's not enough to say there is a quorum. We must find every means and way that these delegates who





Extraordinary plenary session: Brazilian Lutheran church President Rev. Dr. Walter Altmann

could not come, are represented or their voices heard in this Assembly, or even their vote given and cast, and not denied. If the world and governments deny us, the Church and communion should allow them, challenging the law and having the gospel. For this reason, I ask this house to think seriously of ways and means by which those delegates who cannot be here, could vote. Please, this matter is serious.

I myself am stateless, although I call myself Palestinian. Many of my sisters and brothers in India, South Africa, Nigeria, Liberia, wherever you go...in Indonesia, are always denied a visa and we need to bring pressure to bear. I believe the time has come when our prophetic role will not only be to write statements, but act in order that our communion really will be a communion for mission, speaking against the violation of human rights and giving the Word of the Good News for our communion.

Rev. Dr. Walter Altmann, president, Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil

The delegates from Latin America gathered informally during the past hour, and

we also discussed the visa issue. After listening to the prophetic words of the national bishop of the church in Canada, and also of the presiding bishop of the church from the United States, as well as those of our brother Younan, the bishop from the Holy Land, I should also like to say that we, for our part, think that the suffering we are undergoing is a time for strengthening the bonds of communion, which we have as a Lutheran family. We were not aware of the proposal for a demonstration next Tuesday, but I am sure that everyone of us will want to participate in it with our heart and soul. There is also something else that we could perhaps contribute from our experience in Latin America. Under the military dictatorships, thousands of people in various countries of Latin America had disappeared. This was brought to attention by their relatives, mothers, grandmothers, and by social movements, when they marched in the streets carrying the names and pictures with the faces of people that had disappeared. Our brothers and sisters, who have not been able to attend this Assembly in Canada, are not in such a desperate situation, but have been refused visas because of the policies which gov-

ern our world at the present time. They are therefore unable to be with us in person. We believe it necessary to visualize their presence as much as possible during this event. Our suggestion is that the name of each person who is unable to be present, and their photos if possible, be put on placards to be placed here in this hall so that they will be present among us symbolically as we deliberate on the life and future of the Lutheran World Federation. Another idea that occurred to us is to put

the name and photo of a person from Africa on one of the placards, and a photo of a person from Asia on another, where the banner with the logo of the Lutheran World Federation is placed. Next Tuesday, we can carry these names with us during the demonstration so that they can be among us at that time. This is a contribution we want to make from the experience suffered by the peoples of Latin America. Thank you.

(Translated from Dr Altmann's original Spanish text.)

Notes

¹ On Tuesday, 29 July 2003, to protest the Canadian government's refusal to grant visas to over fifty of their fellow delegates from developing nations, delegates and other participants in the Tenth Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation walked in silent and solemn procession from the Winnipeg Convention Centre through the city's streets to the Oodena Circle at "The Forks." This junction of the Red and Assiniboine rivers has been a "meeting place" for thousands of years to which Aboriginal peoples from across the North American plains and eastern forests came to trade, hunt, fish, and celebrate. The Assembly host church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, organized the procession.



THE LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION

LUTHERISCHER WELTBUND – FEDERACIÓN LUTERANA MUNDIAL – FÉDÉRATION LUTHÉRIENNE MONDIALE

Office of the General Secretary

URGENT

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28 May 2003

Dear Minister Coderre,

I write to you with greetings – but also with serious concern – on behalf of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), in relation to the granting of visas for invited participants in the LWF's 10th Assembly due to take place in Winnipeg on 21-31 July 2003. This matter was already raised with you by representatives of Canadian Lutheran World Relief in a meeting on 18 May 2003. I regret, however, that my own efforts to discuss the matter with you and with Mr. Marc Khouri of your office by telephone have been, quite frankly, obstructed.

The LWF is a federation of 136 member churches in 76 countries around the world, and represents over 63 million people – the vast majority of the world's approximately 65 million Lutherans. The Assembly, which is convened only once every six years and in which representatives of all the LWF's member churches are entitled to take part, is the peak governing body of the LWF. The previous LWF Assembly was held in Hong Kong in July 1997, a matter of days after the return of the territory to Chinese rule.

Approximately 800 participants are expected at the Assembly in Winnipeg, including approximately 400 delegates from the LWF member churches. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, an LWF member church, invited the LWF to hold its 10th Assembly in Canada and is hosting this important event with the support and assistance of its ecumenical partners in the country. The Government of Canada has decided to issue a commemorative stamp in recognition of the occasion and of the theme chosen for the Assembly – 'For the healing of the world'.

However, I have recently received reports that visa applications by delegates from the LWF's member churches in Colombia and Bangladesh have been rejected, with only a generic list of reasons given for the rejections. Consequently, it is feared that the visa applications of participants from a number of other countries may suffer the same fate. This would naturally have very grave implications for the success of the Assembly and for the life and work of the LWF for the next six years.

I assume that, of the generic list of reasons given for the rejections already received, the most salient reason is fear on the part of the Canadian authorities that the applicant might not "be likely to leave Canada at the end of his/her authorized stay". I understand that recent events surrounding a Catholic youth assembly in Toronto may have heightened this fear.

The Canadian authorities have been kept informed from a very early date about the plans for the LWF Assembly. The local organizing committee has been in touch with CIC Ottawa for over a year in order

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LWF Tenth Assembly
Winnipeg, Canada
21-31 July 2003



to familiarize your department with this event. Updated lists of names of the expected participants have been provided periodically by the local organizing committee.

Assurances have also been given of the LWF's financial and practical responsibility for the participants attending the Assembly, and for their return home at its conclusion. I take this opportunity to renew those assurances. The LWF will be responsible for those attending this important international church gathering. It accepts all financial responsibility for them during their stay in your country, as well as for their departure at the end of their authorized stay.

I am confident in giving these assurances, backed by the world-wide family of LWF member churches and based upon the experience of the LWF's prior Assemblies since its founding in 1947. LWF Assemblies have been held in Lund, Sweden (in 1947), Hannover, Germany (in 1952), Minneapolis (in 1957), Helsinki, Finland (in 1963), Evian, France (in 1970), Dar es Salaam, Tanzania (in 1977), Budapest, Hungary (in 1984), Curitiba, Brazil (in 1990) and, as mentioned above, Hong Kong (in 1997). Mr. Minister, I wish to inform you that on none of these occasions has there been a single incident of an Assembly delegate failing to abide by entry conditions with regard to length of authorized stay.

Moreover, the individuals who have already had their visa applications rejected include one member of the LWF Council, which is elected by the Assembly and which meets annually to provide oversight of the activities of the LWF between Assemblies. During the period since the last Assembly, such Council meetings have been held in countries such as Finland and Germany without ever encountering difficulties in relation to Council members abiding by any relevant entry conditions.

The Lutheran World Federation understands itself as not just a federation but a *communion* of churches – transcending national, political, cultural, ethnic, linguistic and other human boundaries. I refer again to the theme chosen for the 10th Assembly: 'For the healing of the world'. In today's world – with the bitter divisions and conflicts brought to the fore in the context of the military campaign in Iraq, by the increasing inequality in this allegedly globalized world, and by the social and economic consequences of diseases such as HIV/AIDS and SARS – that theme seems particularly apt. We believe that the Government of Canada shares our vision of unity and healing in the world. It would be deeply painful if that vision were to be obscured, and our progress towards the realization of closer communion as a global church family, were to be obstructed by the administrative refusal of visas.

I therefore appeal to you to exercise your authority to remove these obstacles, to reverse the negative decisions already received, and to ensure that delegates and invited participants to the LWF Assembly are given the opportunity to come to Canada in order to work together in pursuit of that vision.

Yours faithfully,



Rev. Dr. Ishmael Noko
General Secretary

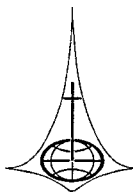
cc: H.E. Ambassador Sergio Marchi
Permanent Representative of Canada
to the UN in Geneva

Bishop Raymond Schultz
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

Bishop Christian Krause
LWF President

LWF Council members

LWF cabinet



THE LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION

LUTHERISCHER WELTBUND – FEDERACIÓN LUTERANA MUNDIAL – FÉDÉRATION LUTHÉRIENNE MONDIALE

Office of the General Secretary

URGENT

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27 June 2003

Dear Minister Coderre:

I refer to my letter to you dated May 28, 2003, in which I alerted you to the crisis the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) is facing relative to securing visas for delegates registered to attend the LWF Assembly in Winnipeg, from July 21-31, 2003.

I regret to inform you that the number of delegates whose visa requests have been denied has grown to 26. Attached is a list of the individuals and countries for your information. Needless to say, the trend which is emerging is extremely troubling to us.

As you know from my previous letter, the denial of participation to so many delegates from the south severely impacts the effectiveness and credibility of our gathering. As we meet under the theme, "For the Healing of the World," it is inconceivable that Canada should be seen to limit the people and voices who have been invited to participate.

I am encouraged to read in the media that your spokesman, Mr. Mark Dunn, has indicated that you are intervening personally to ensure that the cases are reviewed. However, we have received word today that another nine visas have been denied. We are certainly eager to cooperate in the resolution of this issue, but we are waiting for specific indications of the action that you are taking to deal with these cases, and also the larger issue of the applications which are still in process.

We are greatly concerned that important information about the Lutheran World Federation, and our guarantees for full financial responsibility and for the return home of each participant, have not been taken into account by individual embassies when considering these applications. We had understood that the formal relationship established between your department and our Canadian hosts would provide a reliable basis for communicating such information to Canadian embassies, but this seems not to be the case. To help resolve the matter, we request you to send such additional information concerning our guarantees to the Canadian embassies in the attached list of countries, as an urgent communication.

We are using every means possible to communicate with the delegates and churches affected, to ask them to prepare additional supporting documentation as requested. We now need an indication from you as to when, and in what form, they should present their requests for reconsideration of their applications.

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LWF Tenth Assembly
Winnipeg, Canada
21-31 July 2003



Despite the fact that the planned starting date for the Assembly is fast approaching, we seek your assurances and cooperation by addressing the questions noted above and your commitment to work with the LWF to ensure the full participation of delegates to our Assembly.

Sincerely,



Rev. Dr. Ishmael Noko
General Secretary

cc: H.E. Ambassador Sergio Marchi
Permanent Representative of Canada
to the UN in Geneva

Bishop Raymond Schultz
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

Bishop Christian Krause
LWF President

***Editor's note:** the list of individuals and countries referred to in the above reflected the situation at that time. It has not been included here.*



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25 July 2003

Dear Minister Coderre,

I refer to your letter of 7 July 2003, received in my office in Geneva on 24 July 2003, responding to my letter of 28 May 2003. I will reply to you on some of the matters contained in that letter at a later date.

In the meantime, I am writing to you urgently on another related matter that has recently arisen. Over the last two days reports have been published in the press, and read by participants attending the LWF Tenth Assembly in Winnipeg, which have caused us extreme concern.

As you are no doubt aware, 50 expected Assembly participants have been unable to attend due to the lack of visas. Of these, 26 are participants from India. In the press reports to which I refer above, 'federal sources' are cited as having indicated that those denied visas include "alleged murderers, embezzlers of church funds and other criminals". Naturally, we take these allegations with the utmost seriousness. The participants whose visas have been denied include leaders of a number of the LWF's member churches; the Indian delegation includes, for example, 6 bishops.

I ask you to urgently inform me if these reported allegations are indeed emanating from Citizenship and Immigration Canada, and if they correctly represent the position of your Ministry. If so, I ask you to provide full particulars of the allegations and the individuals concerned, so that they may have the opportunity of responding and so that those whose reputations have been damaged by association may take the appropriate action.

Yours faithfully,
Rev. Dr. Ishmael Noko
General Secretary

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LWF Tenth Assembly
Winnipeg, Canada
21-31 July 2003





The Assembly opening eucharistic service was preceded by an affirmation of baptism ceremony led by Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada National Bishop Raymond L. Schultz on the banks of the Red River.



Sermons

Opening Eucharistic Service

Bishop Raymond L. Schultz

*O Christ, the healer, we have come to pray for health, to plead for friends.
How can we fail to be restored when reached by love that never ends?
Grant that we all, made one in faith, in your community may find
the wholeness that, enriching us, shall reach and prosper humankind.*

F. Pratt Green in *Lutheran Book of Worship* 360

Amen.

Dear friends in Christ, welcome to this Tenth Assembly
of our worldwide communion of churches.

Welcome, also, to the home of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada,
your hosts for this Assembly.

The joy of meeting our sisters and brothers from around the world
is almost overwhelming.

God has indeed blessed the Lutheran World Federation
with this great gift of community in Christ.

God has blessed us with the privilege of receiving your visitation.

Grace and peace to you from the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.
For the healing of the world.

There is great joy in this gathering itself,
but we are called together for another purpose.

We live in a broken world,
on the surface of a broken planet,
in community with broken people.

Nevertheless, we hold onto the promise that one day
all God's dreams for creation will be fulfilled.

We are here to worship the Father,
who created nature and called it good.

We are here to follow Jesus the Healer,
the source of our hope in a broken world.

We are here to be open to the Spirit,
giver of vision in a blinded world.

We have been called, gathered and enlightened by the Holy Spirit
to bring to each other the gifts that the Spirit has given us:

- Compassion and mercy for the suffering
- Peace and reconciliation for the conflicted
- Stewardship and Sabbath for the land
- Justice and equity for the oppressed
- Shelter and hospitality for the homeless
- Leadership and direction for the misled
- Hope for those who no longer expect anything to change.

The reading from Revelation promises that
there will be a peaceful outcome to this world's toil and trouble.

The chaos created by human politics and industry
will be transformed into a peaceful and ordered realm
where the gentle are the rulers
and wholeness is the norm.

These are the images described in the closing chapters of Revelation;
a book of images so tempestuous and fierce
that the makers of violent video games have borrowed liberally from it
in the creation of their sadistic toys.

It was written against the historical background of imperial Rome,
with its program of economic and military globalization.

St John warned the church that holding on to its integrity
would bring dire consequences.

A church of Laodiceans doing successful business with Rome
would have to come to terms with
the price this business would demand of their souls.

They could not avoid the cross.

To remain faithful to Christ,
they would eventually bring chaos and destruction down upon themselves.

The unleashed anger of the mighty empire
is depicted in images of disease, warfare, fire and rampaging plague.

The business those church members were doing was not evil in itself.

The evil was in the compromise of the soul
that was demanded by those who controlled access to it.

And so John's people were called
to defy the empire's promises of peace, order and good government
in order to follow the Lamb who gave his life for the world.

The stories in the book of Revelation
retell Jesus' temptation in the wilderness.

There are many good and wonderful opportunities open to us in this world,
but the one who offers them is not God,
nor loves what God has created,
so we must, therefore, refuse them.

The cost to us is the inheritance of a world
of disorder, suffering, oppression and insecurity.

The hymn I used as my opening prayer contains another stanza that reads:

*In conflicts that destroy our health we recognize the world's disease;
Our common life declares our ills. Is there no cure, O Christ, for these?*

John's promise is that those powers of dominion and control
shall not have the last word.

The last word belongs to the Lamb
whose life was not given in vain;
rather, the Lamb is now the central symbol of the New Jerusalem.

We, as a church, can respond to many of these crises
with health, education and development programs.

Jesus, too, came healing and curing.

But that was not enough.

Only one of ten lepers came back to say, "Thank you;"
nine did not.

However, to the one who was able to be thankful, he said,
"Your faith has saved you."

That is the key,
to come to faith in Jesus Christ.

A psychologist friend of mine spoke to me
about the work he does with young people suffering from a lack of self-esteem.

He went on to talk about the high incidence
of emotional disease,
anxiety,
depression and
suicide in North American society.

There is more to healing than curing disease.

The disease we cannot cure
is the hunger to know that one is loved and valued
no matter what.

Faith is what is called for.

Before Jesus did anything to become famous or notorious,
he heard, in his baptism, that he was God's beloved Son,
and that with him God was well pleased.



Worshippers process to St. Boniface (Roman Catholic) Cathedral in Winnipeg for the opening eucharistic service.

That promise took flesh in him
and the passionate love that God holds for all the children of humanity, Christian or not,
was made to dwell among us.

The youth of the LWF
have expressed their urgent desire
to be more central to the church's planning and discourse
about ministry for the future.

They raise the issue of HIV/AIDS as a huge issue for them.

Church people have been more judgmental about sexuality
than practically any other aspect of human behavior,

yet, it is in sexual seeking that humans act out their deepest longings
for love, belonging and identity.

To have such a powerful aspect of human experience
tied to such a terrible disease
is an enormous challenge,
but also an enormous opportunity.

Here is where unconditional acceptance of sufferers

and compassion of the highest order
can touch people where their self-esteem is most threatened and
their spiritual health is most eroded

by the disapproval and censure of their society.

In a world of global economics,
how one is valued comes under other attack as well.

Human beings can become commodities
and the old demon of salvation by works assumes a new, secular identity.

One is worth what one can earn
and the place one can win in corporate board rooms.

To proclaim the victory of the Lamb,
who was slain for our salvation,
is the healing action that overcomes the world's deepest need.

As Isaiah wrote:

*Ho, everyone who thirsts,
come to the waters;
and you that have no money,
come, buy and eat!
Come, buy wine and milk
without money and without price.*

Isaiah 55:1

What a beautiful city awaits us on the other side of the river,
but what a terrible swim to get to it!

The human waters of this earth are home to predators
and the waters themselves are poisonous.

Can we of the LWF build this beautiful city?

No, we cannot.

The city is the City of God whose renewal is accomplished
through the victory of the Lamb.

But when those who hunger for justice ask us
whether we are the promised ones or should they seek another,
we can proclaim a word of expectation.

We can say that they should give attention to what they have seen and heard:
the blind receive their sight,
the lame walk,
the lepers are cleansed,
the deaf hear,
the dead are raised,
the poor have good news brought to them.



Worship assistants at the opening eucharistic service

We know that we cannot, by these efforts,
build the new Jerusalem.

Rather, we do these things in order to provide the world with a foretaste
of what we believe has already been accomplished for the world's healing.

We proclaim the great mystery of faith:
Jesus Christ crucified and risen.

By his victory all creation is made new.

By his bruises we are healed.

*Let the vineyards be fruitful, Lord,
and fill to the brim our cup of blessing.*

*Gather a harvest from the seeds that were sown,
that we may be fed with the bread of life.*

*Gather the hopes and the dreams of all;
unite them with the prayers we offer.*

*Grace our table with your presence,
and give us a foretaste of the feast to come.*

Lutheran Book of Worship Communion Liturgy

Amen!





Rev. Tore Johnsen, Church of Norway, at the closing eucharistic service

Closing Eucharistic Service

Rev. Tore Johnsen

Reading: Rev 21:1-6

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ!

We have just listened to one of the most wonderful texts in the Scriptures. It is a text that fills us with faith, hope and love, that gives alleviation to our suffering and hope to our yearnings for the world. It does so by letting us know that God has not left us to our own brokenness. There *is* hope for healing of this world!

We all read the Bible from our own perspective. None of us has seen the fullness of the mystery of God. But the Holy Spirit, who every moment breathes life into us, lets us catch glimpses of the glory of God.

And the same Spirit tells us to share what we have seen with one another as a community of faith in Christ.

As I share with you my reflections related to this text, I do so as a representative of one of the many Indigenous peoples of the world. This sermon reflects some of the history of my people, the Sami people. I will share with you some of our yearnings that reflect not only our wounds and pains, but also our experiences of wholeness and healing. I hope I manage to do this in an inclusive way, because we all share in the same humanity, and the same yearning for wholeness and community.

As we approach this text I invite you to embark on a common pilgrimage, but from a Sami perspective.

The last two chapters of Revelation give us a fantastic vision of a new heaven and a new earth. It is as if the biblical story makes a full circle and returns to its point of departure. We recognize the tree of life and the stream of living water flowing from the center of Eden. But not everything is the same as in the beginning. Much is new and different. And of course it cannot be the same because the story returns with our history as symbolized in this text by the vision of the city. And Jerusalem, as the city of God, underscores that this is essentially a history in relation to God, our Creator.

The city is still an ambiguous symbol. At best it represents the community, the place where human beings gather and share their existence with one another. But to millions of people the city is a symbol of destruction. This applies especially to Indigenous peoples. To them the city represents a hostile environment. It represents the colonizing power that oppresses them. Life in the city is a life that alienates from relatives, native language and culture. More than that, it represents the alienation from native homelands and the destruction of the spiritual relationship to

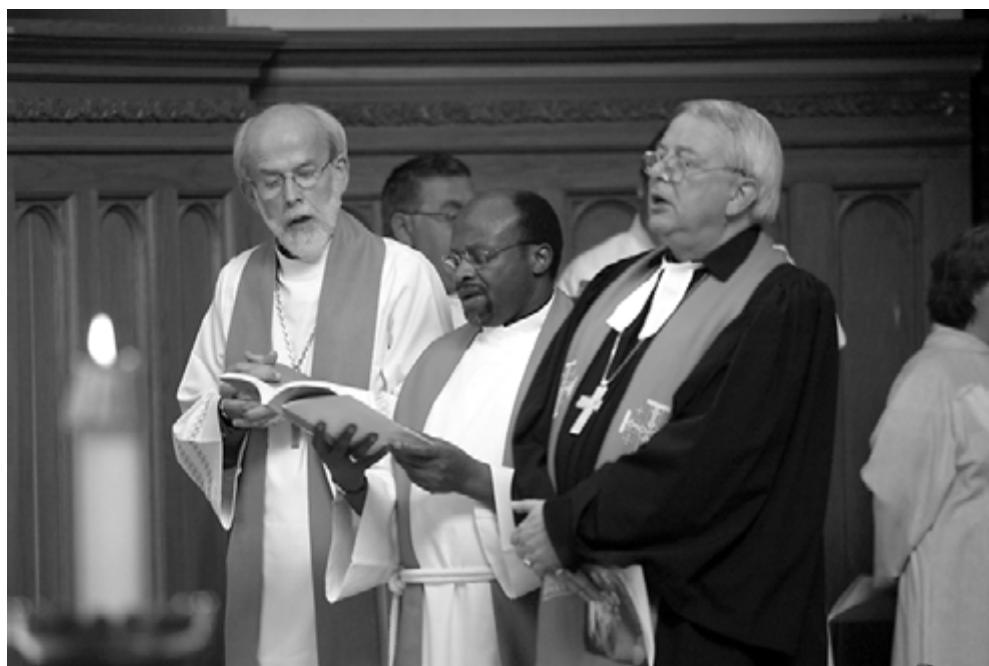
creation. It even represents the destruction of their own lands by the pollution of the air and the poisoning of the rivers.

This city, the venue of our Assembly, bears witness to what I am reflecting upon now. While the Indigenous people constitute 10-20 percent of the population, it accounts for 70 percent of its prisoners. This is not because native peoples are more destructive than others, but it bears witness to how destructive the communities represented by the cities have been to their lives, communities and cultures. Therefore, it is very difficult through the symbolism of the city to communicate a message of healing to Indigenous peoples.

So what can we as Indigenous peoples identify with in the last two chapters of Revelation? In fact a lot! We can identify with the river of living waters. We have tasted its life-sustaining water in our rivers. We can identify with the tree of life, because we can feel its presence in our forests. We can even identify with the holy mountain of Zion, because in our sacred mountains our ancestors have been worshipping the Great Mystery, the Creator of heaven and earth from time immemorial. For us, there are powerful symbols of healing in Revelation 21 and 22.

At the beginning of June, I was invited by a group of Southern Sami church people to

With One Voice: (from right) outgoing LWF President Bishop em. Dr Christian Krause; LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko; and incoming LWF President Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson sing during the closing eucharistic service in St. Mary's (Roman Catholic) Cathedral, Winnipeg.



join them on a visit to an old Sami sacrificial site at the sacred mountain Tsjuokkere, the God Mountain Island. This was really a pilgrimage of healing and reconciliation related to the religious history of our people.

This island is a mountain peak rising almost 500 meters (1,600 feet) out of a lake. The mountain of this island is higher than almost every other mountain in the surrounding area. That is in itself an astonishing feature. At the top there are mostly cliffs, but at one end a small meadow stretches toward the edge of the mountain cliff. When you walk into that meadow, you get a feeling of stepping into a new space. But there is more. By that meadow the mountain itself opens up into a long, narrow rift. And exactly at the end of that rift there is a huge stone, which by nature is cracked in two. That is the sacred stone, the sacrificial site, of God Mountain Island, Tsjuokkere.

What an extraordinary experience to be there! There is no other place in nature where I ever have had such a feeling of being there where heaven and earth embrace. When our Southern Sami ancestors gathered at that place, they could see their settlements, their burial grounds, the mountains and hills where their reindeer herds were grazing. This was a natural cathedral in the very center of their world. And I wonder, do I dare to call this the Zion of the Southern Sami people? The place where the new Jerusalem descends from heaven, reconciled with God and reconciled with the earth? To me that is an image of healing.

In Revelation 21 the new Jerusalem is not a city as such. It is a symbol of the new, reconciled and healed humanity. John describes it as a bride adorned for her husband. And from that perspective the words

about streets of gold and the jewelry of the city—words that until now have been cold and dead to me—suddenly get a new meaning. As a Sami bride is carrying the gold and silver of her clan on her chest, the new humanity, the new Jerusalem, on that day, shall carry its finery, its dignity, as a precious gift from God. And as a whole and healed community it will enter into the covenant of love with its Creator in Christ. It will be a city indwelt by the Spirit of God. It will be the residence of God. And God will be its Light.

This city, shall not be a city of destruction. It will not be like the cities we know from this world. It will not force the Garden of Eden to flee. This city will not cut down the trees of life, pollute the air and poison the streams of living waters. This is the city of God, the city of healing for creation. It is a nurturing city, and the tree of life is blossoming in its center. Adam and Eve may again eat freely of its fruit. And its leaves give healing and reconciliation for the nations. It is a city finally according to its name, Jerusalem, the city of shalom, of peace, of healing wholeness.

This is the healing, which Christ brings to the world! We are not left to our own brokenness. By receiving the broken body of Christ, we may be healed! There *is* hope for the healing of the world!

May the message of this text give alleviation to our wounds and hope to our yearnings! May this gospel of Christ fill us with faith, hope and love, and encourage us to bring healing to this world! May the Spirit of God, heal and renew our churches, our communities and our world! May God Almighty listen to our prayers—for the healing of the world!

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit for all eternity. Amen.



Over 35 stewards from all over the world gave valuable help.



Expression of Gratitude

Text of the expression of gratitude as adopted by the Assembly:

This Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation, convened in Winnipeg, expresses its gratitude to the following persons and organizations for their part in making this Assembly a meaningful and important event in the life of the LWF and the lives of those who participated in the Assembly.

To His Worship the Mayor of the City of Winnipeg, Mr Glen Murray, who brought greetings to the Assembly, to Deputy Mayor Lillian Thomas, who presided over the rais-

ing of the Assembly flag at the Convention Centre, and to the officials and their co-workers who welcomed the Assembly participants and extended the hospitality of the city.

To the Premier of the Province of Manitoba, the Honorable Gary Doer, who also brought greetings to the Assembly.

To federal Members of Parliament, the Honorable Rey Pagtakhan, the Honorable Bill Blaikie, the Honorable Reg Alcock,

and the Honorable Judy Wasylycia-Leis, who appealed on behalf of the Assembly participants with the Canadian government concerning their visa applications.

To the management and staff of the Winnipeg Convention Centre and AVW-TELAV Audio Visual Solutions for providing meeting and technical facilities. In addition, we note the comfortable accommo-

bishop, Rev. Raymond Schultz, and the congregations of the ELCIC for their warm hospitality and hard work.

To the churches in Winnipeg who welcomed the participants to attend worship services in their congregations and to share a meal with them.

To the chairperson of the Assembly Local Committee, Ms Rhonda Lorch, the Assembly Logistics Coordinator, Ms Heidi Wilker, as well as the hard-working and efficient staff of the local committee and more than 600 volunteers, “the Yellow Angels,” and also the participation of the Anglican Church of Canada. A special word of appreciation to all those who made Miriam’s Well a place of true encounter and respite.

To the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of St Boniface for welcoming the Assembly to hold its opening worship service at the St Boniface Cathedral, the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Winnipeg for welcoming the Assembly for morning Eucharists and the closing Eucharist at St Mary’s Cathedral, and the Holy Trinity Anglican Church for hosting the Assembly healing services, all in a moving spirit of ecumenical cooperation.

To the designers of the Assembly logo, Mr Erik Norbraten and Mr Richard Nostbakken, for providing an expression of the Assembly theme that served ideally to provide identity and encourage reflection.

To Canada Post, for the issuance of a special postage stamp on the occasion of the Assembly.

To the Luther Center in Lutherstadt Wittenberg for the exhibition “Martin Luther: The Reformer,” in particular Ms Katja Köhler, Dr Cornelia Dömer, and Bishop Christoph Kähler, who brought greetings from Lutherland, as well as Ms Sabine Sparwasser, charg e d’affaires of the German Embassy in Ottawa and our President Dr Christian Krause, who helped arrange for the exhibition at this



Assembly steward Noriko Sakomoto shows an origami crane (a Japanese peace symbol) that she folded herself.

dations provided to the participants at the Delta, Sheraton and Radisson hotels. We also thank Derksen Printers of Steinbach, Manitoba, for providing extraordinary service in printing Assembly materials.

To our generous hosts, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, its national

Assembly. We also express our thanks to others who held exhibitions and displays for our benefit and enrichment, including the LWF Foundation – Endowment Fund, Augsburg Fortress Publishers, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Wittenberg Center, and Canadian Lutheran World Relief.

To the member churches, national committees, related agencies and mission societies for contributing to the Assembly budget, and to Lutheran Life (Canada), Thrivent Financial for Lutherans (USA), and Raptim Voyages (Geneva).

To the member churches in North America which prepared the visitation programs before and after the Assembly, as well as those who made the travel arrangements.

To the Assembly Planning Committee and its chairperson, Rev. Susan Nagle, for their capable leadership in guiding Assembly preparations.

To Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko, general secretary of the LWF, particular appreciation is expressed for his warmth toward the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada and the climate he created as Assembly preparations progressed. We also thank the Assembly Coordinator, Rev. Arthur Leichnetz, for the able guidance and direction he provided, and the staff of the Assembly Office.

To the Assembly Coordinators for Worship, Content, Communication, Logistics, Finance, “LWF Presents Itself” and the pre-Assembly consultations as well as the staff, co-opted staff and many others from the member churches who have unselfishly given their time and efforts to the Assembly. Many persons have worked long and hard, but always cheerfully, to assist in making the Assembly function efficiently. A special word of thanks goes to the stewards for their great service. Particular gratitude is expressed to the language service, the interpreters, the translators, the editor and staff of *The Source* (the Assem-



by newspaper) and the technical service for their continuous efforts to enable communication among the Assembly participants, the editors and staff of the Assembly Web site and *Lutheran World Information* for informing the world and the audio and video news teams.

The Assembly wishes to thank the international worship planning group, the local worship implementation group, the music directors and liturgical leaders and assistants who planned and carried out the spirit-filled worship services.

The gathering of people from all over the world in the opening service in the dramatic setting of St Boniface Cathedral made a lasting impression of our unity. We also thank the preachers: Bishop Raymond Schultz at the opening service, and Rev. Tore Johnsen at the closing service.

The Assembly expressed its deep gratitude to Bishop Dr Margot Kässmann, the keynote speaker, as well as those who offered responses, Bishop Dr Wesley Kigasung and Ms Virginia Ivañez de Neyeloff, and those who made contributions through the panel on Indigenous issues.

This Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation, convened in Winnipeg, expresses its profound appreciation and thanks to

Documents were prepared in the LWF's four working languages: English, German, French and Spanish.

God for the service and presence of Bishop emeritus Dr Christian Krause, president of the Lutheran World Federation. Bishop Krause's leadership and witness during the past six years have affirmed our global solidarity within the Lutheran communion. His competence, experience and insight have guided the LWF as it has discussed and explored the practical implications of this global solidarity within diversity.

This Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation, convened in Winnipeg, expresses its gratitude for the work of the LWF Executive Committee, the Council, and its various committees since the Ninth Assembly. The Assembly in Hong Kong took many actions that required the attention and action of the Council. The Council has faithfully carried out those resolutions and statements. The members of the Council and its committees have diligently executed their tasks, including providing helpful resources and assistance to the member churches. Our profound appreciation is extended to all these persons who have served during the past six years.

This Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation, convened in Winnipeg, expresses its appreciation for the many greetings extended to the Assembly by representatives of other religious communities. We note those provided by Archbishop Michael Peers and the Anglican Church of Canada, the World Council of Churches, the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity,

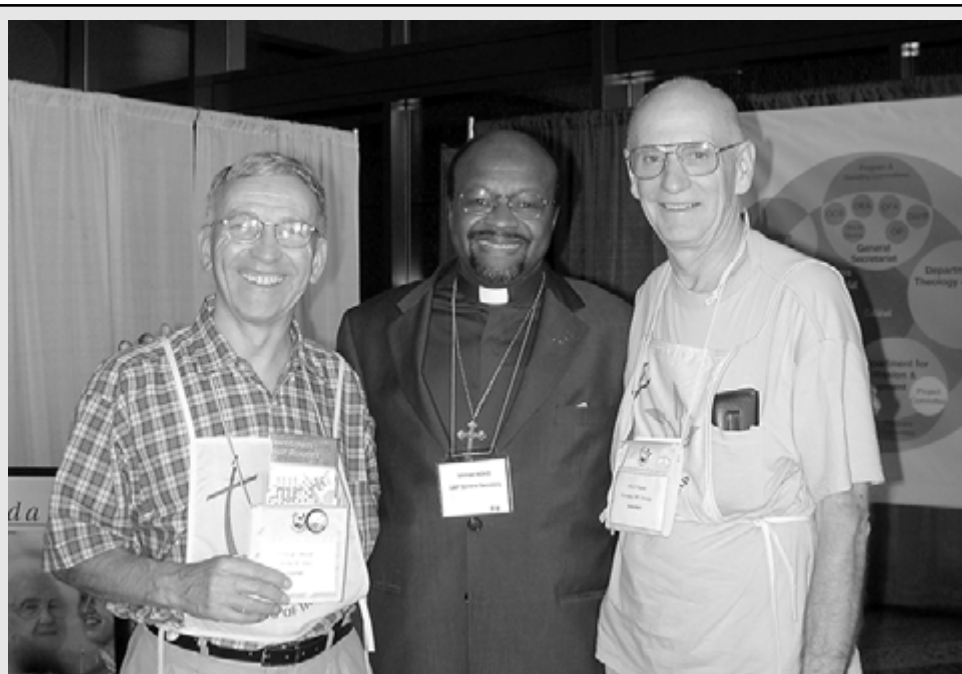
the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the Anglican Consultative Council, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, the World Methodist Council, the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, the Lutheran Church – Canada, the International Lutheran Council, the Leuenberg Fellowship, the Mennonite World Conference, and the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago.

This Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation, convened in Winnipeg, expresses its thanks to the large number of representatives of the press, radio and television who have extensively covered and reported on the activities of this Assembly. These representatives have assisted in communicating to the world the role of the Lutheran World Federation in the affairs of churches and nations.

This Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation, convened in Winnipeg, recognizes that there are many other persons and organizations who have been involved in the preparation, planning and functioning of this Assembly. Although unnamed, their contributions are not unnoticed, and our hearty thanks are extended to them.

This Assembly rejoices in having former General Secretary André Appel among us.

Beyond this expression, we thank God for the many blessings bestowed upon this Assembly.



Safe in the Hands of the Assembly Volunteers

How seriously was security undertaken during the Assembly? LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko was deeply impressed by the untiring efforts of the almost 700 volunteers at the event. Even he was sent back to his hotel for his official badge when he arrived at the Winnipeg Convention Centre (WCC) without it!

One morning, a volunteer guarding the entrance to the Assembly meeting area in the WCC would not let Dr Noko in, no matter which explanation he gave. The general secretary had left his name tag in his hotel room.

“I had forgotten my badge,” Dr Noko recalls. “An elderly gentleman stopped me and asked, ‘Where is your badge?’ ‘Who are you?’” So the only way to the plenary was via his hotel room. After he had fetched his name tag, Dr Noko thanked the volunteer profusely, and added “I know I’m safe in your hands.” Later on at a press conference, he acknowledged, “Such a sense of duty makes me feel very safe.”

Based on an article in the Assembly newspaper The Source no. 3, 27 July 2003. Photo © LWF/N. Thure Krarup



Governing Bodies of the Lutheran World Federation

The Assembly

The highest decision-making body of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) is an Assembly, normally held every six years. Representatives from each member church participate. Between Assemblies the LWF is governed by a Council, which meets annually, and by its Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee

The Executive Committee is the appointing authority of staff with programmatic and supervisory responsibilities, with the exception of Cabinet members, who are appointed by the Council. The Executive Committee serves as the LWF Personnel Committee and Board of Trustees.

The committee includes the President, five Vice-Presidents, the Treasurer, and the chairpersons of the seven Program Committees of the LWF Council.

The President, Vice-Presidents and Treasurer represent the seven LWF geographical

regions defined as: Africa, Asia, Central Eastern Europe, Central Western Europe, Nordic Countries, Latin America and the Caribbean, and North America.

President

Presiding Bishop Mark S. HANSON, USA
[North America]

Vice-Presidents

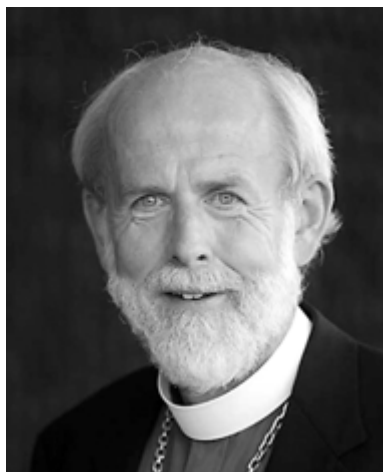
Bishop Dr Zephania KAMEETA, Namibia
[Africa]

Bishop Dr Munib A. YOUNAN, Jerusalem
[Asia]

Bishop Dr Christoph KLEIN, Romania
[Central Eastern Europe]

Rev. Victoria CORTEZ RODRÍGUEZ, Nicaragua
[Latin America and the Caribbean]

Bishop Dr Eero HUOVINEN, Finland [Nordic Countries]



LWF President, Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



Oberkirchenrat Peter Stoll, LWF Treasurer, Evangelical Church in Württemberg, Germany

Stewards distribute election ballots to delegates.



Treasurer

Mr Peter STOLL, Germany [Central Western Europe]

Chairpersons of Program Committees

Rev. Kristín T. TÓMASDÓTTIR, Iceland (Communication Services)

Rev. Dr Joachim TRACK, Germany (Ecumenical Affairs)

Mr Peter STOLL, Germany (Finance & Administration)

Ms Diadem DEPAYSO, Philippines (International Affairs & Human Rights)

Rev. Dr Walter ALTMANN, Brazil (Mission and Development)

Rev. Dr Barbara ROSSING, USA (Theology and Studies)

Rev. Marie J. BARNETT, Sierra Leone (World Service)

The Council

The Council is composed of the President, the Treasurer who can be elected from

among the membership or from outside, and forty-eight persons elected by the Assembly. It also includes up to thirty advisers with vote on the committees but only voice and no vote in Council sessions. The Council establishes seven Program Committees and the Standing Committees.

Program Committee for Communication Services

Members of the Council

Ms Klára BALICZA, Hungary

Mr Jhon KUNDWE MULANDA, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Rev. Chandran P. MARTIN, India

Ms Sindisiwe NDELU, South Africa

Rev. Kristín T. TÓMASDÓTTIR, Iceland (chair)

Advisers to the Council

Rev. Gabriele ARNDT-SANDROCK, Germany

Rev. Heitor J. MEURER, Brazil

Superintendent Rev. Paul WEILAND, Austria

Program Committee for Ecumenical Affairs

Members of the Council

Archbishop Nemuel A. BABBA, Nigeria
Ms Selma (Shu-Chen) CHEN, Taiwan
Bishop Dr Eero HUOVINEN, Finland
Bishop Walter A. JAGUCKI, United Kingdom
Dr Mariette RAZIVELO, Madagascar
National Bishop Raymond L. SCHULTZ,
Canada
Rev. Dr Joachim TRACK, Germany (chair)

Advisers to the Council

Bishop Péter GÁNCZ, Hungary
Bishop Dr Wesley KIGASUNG, Papua New
Guinea
Rev. Roy K. THAKURDYAL, Guyana

Program Committee for Finance & Administration

Members of the Council

Ms Sophia J. HUTAGALUNG, Indonesia
Ms Doris S. KITUTU, Tanzania
Rev. Alexander PRILOUTSKI, Russian
Federation

Mr Peter STOLL, Germany (chair)

Advisers to the Council

Rev. Dezső Z. ADORJÁNI, Romania
Ms Linda BROWN, USA
Ms Yoke Kiew LAI, Malaysia

Program Committee for International Affairs & Human rights

Members of the Council

Mr Helge AARSETH, Norway
Ms Diadem DEPAYSO, Philippines (chair)
General Bishop Dr Július FILO, Slovak Re-
public
Ms Virginia IVAÑEZ DE NEYELOFF, Ven-
ezuela
Mr Thomas JENSCH, Germany
Bishop Dr Zephania KAMEETA, Namibia

Ms Riikka E. MYLLYS, Finland

Rev. Dr David PFRIMMER, Canada

Ms Nakei SILOI, Papua New Guinea



Advisers to the Council

Rev. Ángel F. FURLAN, Argentina
Ms Margareta GRAPE, Sweden

The delegates
represented 136 LWF
member churches from
76 countries worldwide.

**Program Committee
for Mission & Development**

Members of the Council

Rev. Dr Walter ALTMANN, Brazil (chair)

Bishop Maria JEPSEN, Germany

Ms Subhashini LALL, India

Ms Milita POŠKIENE, Lithuania

Ms Angelene SWART, South Africa

Bishop Anders H. WEJRYD, Sweden

Bishop Dr Munib A. YOUNAN, Jerusalem

Ms Abigail ZANG, USA

Advisers to the Council

Mr Alfonso CORZO GARCIA, Colombia

Ms Yeonli KIM, South Korea

Rev. Dr Rafael MALPICA-PADILLA, USA

Rev. Dr Mogens S. MOGENSEN, Denmark

Deaconess Esther MUSAH, Liberia

**Program Committee
for Theology & Studies**

Members of the Council

Dr Niels H. GREGERSEN, Denmark

Bishop Dr Jubil R. HUTAURUK, Indonesia

Bishop Dr Christoph KLEIN, Romania

Rev. Dr Thomas NYIWE, Cameroon

Rev. Dr Barbara ROSSING, USA (chair)

Rev. Claudia SCHREIBER, Germany

Ms Sonia A. SKUPCH, Argentina

Advisers to the Council

Rev. Susan JOHNSON, Canada

Bishop Walter OBARE OMWANZA, Kenya

Dr Risto SAARINEN, Finland

Members of the LWF Executive Committee at their 21–23 February 2004 meeting in Geneva: Front row, left to right, Rev. Victoria Cortez Rodríguez (Nicaragua); Rev. Marie J. Barnett (Sierra Leone); LWF President, Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson (USA); Mr Peter Stoll (Germany); Bishop Dr Zephania Kameeta (Namibia); and Ms Diadem Depayso (Philippines). Back row: Rev. Dr Joachim Track (Germany); Rev. Dr. Barbara Rossing (USA); Bishop Dr Munib A. Younan (Jerusalem); Bishop Dr Eero Huovinen (Finland); Bishop Dr Christoph Klein (Romania); Rev. Kristín Tómasdóttir (Iceland); and Rev. Dr Walter Altmann (Brazil). © LWF/H. Putsman



Program Committee for World Service

Members of the Council

Rev. Marie J. BARNETT, Sierra Leone (chair)

Rev. Victoria CORTEZ RODRÍGUEZ, Nicaragua

Rev. Iteffa GOBENA, Ethiopia

Rev. Dr Emmanuel F. GRANTSON, USA

Rev. Hedwig PARTAJ, Austria

Bishop Julius D. PAUL, Malaysia

Mr Kazuhiro SEKINO, Japan

Sister Esther SELLE, Germany

Advisers to the Council

Bishop Dr Joseph P. BVUMBWE, Malawi

Propst Hartwig LIEBICH, Germany

Bishop Dr Edmund RATZ, Ukraine

Standing Committee for Membership

Members of the Council

Rev. Iteffa GOBENA, Ethiopia

Ms Virginia IVAÑEZ DE NEYELOFF, Venezuela



Rev. Claudia SCHREIBER, Germany (chair)

Mr Kazuhiro SEKINO, Japan

With prolonged applause and a standing ovation, Assembly participants bid farewell to Bishop em. Dr Christian Krause (right), whose six-year term as LWF President officially ended 31 July 2003.

Standing Committee for Constitution

Members of the Council

Mr Helge AARSETH, Norway (chair)

Ms Selma (Shu-Chen) CHEN, Taiwan

Ms Milita POŠKIENE, Lithuania

National Bishop Raymond L. SCHULTZ, Canada

Honorary Members of the Council

Dr Gottfried BRAKEMEIER, Brazil

Bishop emeritus Dr Christian KRAUSE, Germany

Project Committee

The Project Committee reports to the Council through the Program Committee for Mission & Development. It oversees project criteria, reviews project screening and approves projects. Its eight members represent the seven LWF geographical regions.

Members

Ms Ruth E. JENSEN, Canada

Ms Yeonli KIM, South Korea

Deaconess Esther MUSAH, Liberia

Rev. Dr Kjell NORDSTOKKE, Norway

Mr Martin SCHINDEHÜTTE, Germany

Rev. Ilo UTECH, Nicaragua

Archbishop Janis VANAGS, Latvia

Bishop Anders H. WEJRYD, Sweden (chair)

Standing Committee for World Service

The Standing Committee for World Service reports to the Council through the Program Committee for World Service. Its ten members represent the seven LWF geographical regions.

Members

Dr Konrad von BONIN, Germany

Dr Belletech DERESSA, USA

Ms Carin GARDBRING, Sweden

Ms Elsebeth KROGH, Denmark

Bishop Dr Ambrose MOYO, Zimbabwe

Bishop Julius D. PAUL, Malaysia (chair)

Mr Peter SCHIRMER, Australia

Rev. Silvio SCHNEIDER, Brazil

Mr Leo SILLÄMAA, Finland

Ecumenical Greetings

The following original texts appear in chronological order:

Greeting from The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod

President Krause, General Secretary Noko,
Distinguished Guests, Friends in Christ,

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Savior and Healer of the World, it is an honor for me to bring greetings to this distinguished gathering on behalf of the 2.5 million members of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod. Though our synod is not a member of the Lutheran World Federation, we are appreciative of the opportunity to be present at this Assembly as you meet together under the theme, “For The Healing of the World.”

The Evangelist Mark tells us in the sixth chapter of his Gospel that

“³⁴Jesus...saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them, because they were like sheep not having a shepherd. So He began to teach them many things. ³⁵When the day was now far spent, His disciples came to Him and said, “This is a deserted place, and already the hour is late. ³⁶Send them away, that they may go into the surrounding country and villages and buy themselves bread, for they have nothing to eat.” ³⁷But He answered and said to them, “You give them something to eat”... ⁴¹ [Then] when He had taken five loaves and two fish, He looked up to heaven, blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to His disciples to set before them; and the two fish He divided among them all. ⁴²So they all ate and were filled” (Mk 6:34-37, 41-42; NKJV).

Here we see the compassionate Christ who brings a multifaceted healing to the world. Foremost among the “many things”

Jesus taught was the human need for the healing of the schism that exists between God and people, which results from sin. As the Augsburg Confession teaches us, “without the grace, help, and activity of the Holy Spirit, man is not capable of making himself acceptable to God.”¹ This healing was accomplished when God in Christ reconciled the world to Himself through His suffering, death and resurrection.

Through His Word and Sacraments, our Lord, by the power of the Spirit, continues to bring healing to this world. We Lutherans are especially mindful of the imperative to maintain a solid, faithful, uncompromised, confessional, evangelical teaching and witness of the pure Gospel and administration of the Holy Sacraments “for the purpose of awakening and strengthening our faith. For...they are rightly used when they are received in faith and for the purpose of strengthening faith.”²

Divisions and schisms also, sadly, continue to impede our witness to this Gospel message we are committed to bring to the world. We must therefore also give heed to the words of the Apostle in 1 Corinthians, “Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.” By His grace, we in the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod remain committed to work toward healing these divisions through an uncompromising commitment to the truth of God’s Word, and we have a sincere desire to work together with our brothers and sisters in Christ to resolve these differences. It is our prayer that God will bring healing

to our brokenness according to Christ's bidding.

It is also God's will that we bring this healing word to the world, accompanied by deeds of kindness. As we confess in the Augsburg Confession, "It is also taught among us that good works should and must be done...that we may do God's will and glorify him."³ Saint Augustine said, "We do the works, but God works in us the doing of the works." God is working in us to *do*—to respond to the varied and widespread needs for healing in our world, ranging from *illness and disease* to *human suffering and violence* to *hunger and poverty*. As we cooperatively pursue this undertaking, which we do through such agencies as Lutheran World Relief, may God cause us to see the pain and fear in the eyes of those whom we serve, so that we see the crowds as Jesus did and are "moved with compassion for them." In service to Christ, we distribute with our hands the provisions He has granted, so that all "may be filled" by the One who "opens His hand to satisfy the de-

sires of every living thing (Ps 145:16)." In this manner, "Give them something to eat."

May the Almighty God continue to have compassion on us through Christ our Lord and cause us, as His hands and feet and eyes, to be compassionate "Healers of the World." For what better healing can we share with the world than that the lives of many are transformed, through Christ's love, in time...for eternity!

Thank you and God bless you, in the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

**Rev. Dr Gerald B. Kieschnick,
president**

¹Tappert, T. G. (2000, c1959). *The Book of Concord : The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (The Confession of Faith: AC, XVIII, 2). Philadelphia: Fortress Press.

²*Ibid.*, (The Confession of Faith: AC, XIII, 1-2).

³*Ibid.*, (The Confession of Faith: AC, XX, 27).

Greeting from the Mennonite World Conference

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

I bring you warm greetings from the Mennonite World Conference on behalf of Larry Miller, executive director.

At a time like this, when people from around the world assemble, I am reminded of Psalm 133 which says:

¹ *How good and pleasant it is
when brothers and sisters live together
in peace!*

² *It is as beautiful as olive oil poured on
Aaron's head,
and running down his beard and the
collar of his robe.*

³ *It is like the dew from Mount Hermon
falling on Zion's mountains where the*

*LORD has promised to bless his people
with life for evermore.*

I want to offer a blessing to the Lutheran World Federation: may you experience the goodness and pleasing favor of the Lord through unity. May you find God's unifying presence as you meet together here in Winnipeg.

I also want to offer thanks from the Mennonite World Conference to the Lutheran World Federation for its gracious initiative and desire to study with Mennonites the question of the condemnations of the Anabaptists in the Augsburg Confession of Faith. We are glad to engage in this study in the name of better understanding within the body of Christ worldwide.

In three weeks the Mennonite World Conference will gather in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, Africa. At that time, we also hope

to experience the Lord's unifying presence under the theme *Woza!* God has something here for you!

Thank you for this moment of sharing and connection. Welcome—all of you—to my home city of Winnipeg. God bless you.

Rev. David Wiebe, executive director of the Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches

on behalf of Rev. Larry Miller, executive director, Mennonite World Conference

Greeting from the World Methodist Council

Mr President, Mr General Secretary, Members of the Assembly,

I bring you greetings from the 39 million Methodists in the world from the seventy-seven member churches in 132 countries.

We Methodists treasure our relationships with the Lutherans after our recent agreements with this communion.

We thank you all for extending your invitation to the General Secretary and me to attend this very important conference and Assembly.

The World Methodist Council congratulates you on the historic Joint Declaration between you and the Catholic Church on the important doctrine of justification. The World Methodist Council, after her Assembly in Seoul, South Korea, in 2006, will join you, we hope, in appending her signature to this very important historic document.

It is timely and I believe that you were directed by God, to choose the theme "For the Healing of the World" at a time when our world is in her worst brokenness. The picture of our world today is not only that of hopelessness, despair, confusion, uncertainty, and full of anxiety, but also tragic because of conflict, war, distrust, hatred, poverty, terrorism, violence, disease and the abuse and exercise of power everywhere. Jesus brought peace (Shalom!) into the world. He gave this peace, wholeness, healing, and well-being to his followers and

into his world. This was the world God had created and saw that it was good. The peace brought by Jesus which was all-embracing was different from world peace.

God in this mysterious way has brought us together here to receive this healing. First from Him in order to enable us to radiate to the people of the world and the earth this healing. In the words of the prophet, "Not by our own power and not by our own might but by His Spirit," we shall be instruments for His healing of the world.

All of us Christians must avail ourselves to God for this difficult and delicate task of confronting our communities and our local churches, our people and the world with this healing message.

We must be willing to answer the call and be enlisted into His army of volunteers. Fear and disbelief must be put aside for the battle is the Lord's.

The World Methodist Assembly taking place in Seoul, South Korea, in 2006 with a theme "God in Christ Reconciling" will join you together with other willing Christians everywhere in this crusade and campaign to bring this, His healing, to our broken world. With Christ in the boat, there is hope for our world.

Let me wish all of you God's led deliberations.

Thank you.

His Eminence Sunday Mbang, chairperson

Greeting from the Ecumenical Patriarch, His All Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew I

Mr President, Mr General Secretary, Dear
Friends in our Lord Jesus Christ,

On behalf of His All Holiness
Bartholomew, Ecumenical Patriarch of
Constantinople, and His Beatitude Metro-
politan Basili, Primate of the Ukrainian
Orthodox Church of Canada, one of the sis-
ter churches of the Ecumenical Patriarch-
ate, I greet you today with the traditional
Orthodox liturgical greeting in Greek,
Ukrainian and English:

Ὁ Χριστός ἐν τῷ μέσῳ ἡμῶν

Christos poseded nas.

Christ is in our midst.

The Lutheran-Orthodox Joint Commission of
ecumenical dialogue is the largest interfaith
commission in which the Lutheran World
Federation participates. It is a very impor-
tant and fruitful dialogue for both the East-
ern Orthodox and the Lutheran participants.
And over coffee this morning I was speak-
ing with one of the Lutheran participants and
we were talking about the various mutual
gifts that each of our faith traditions offers to
the other. So it is a real joy then to be with
you today, fellow companions on the jour-
ney of mutual understanding, affirmation,
seeking the common ground of faith upon
which we may stand side by side.

In the opening Eucharist yesterday,
there were several references made to the
biblical teaching, that humankind is made
in the image of God. This idea of the im-
age, in Greek the “ikona,” the icon, is at
the heart of Orthodox Christian spiritual-
ity. Human destiny, we believe is, by the
grace of God and with the human will par-
ticipating with the divine will, to grow and

to realize in ever-increasing ways this di-
vine image within us. In the words of the
great theologians of the first millennium,
our destiny is to become what we already
are. St Paul says in Ephesians, Chapter 4,
that “Christ has given us the many voca-
tions of the Church, equipping the Saints
for the work of ministry, for the edifying of
the body of Christ, till we all come to the
unity of the faith and of the knowledge of
the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the
measure of the stature of the fullness of
Christ,” and in 2 Corinthians, he says that
“we are all being transformed into the im-
age of the Lord, from glory to glory.”

This growth in the image, this transfor-
mation, from glory to glory, is possible only
as we are liberated from the tyranny of
death, and of sin in all of its forms, both
personal and systemic. The liberation from
sin and death is the ultimate healing of-
fered to us by God. It is the foundation of
all other forms of healing ministered by
God’s people. As men and women of faith
themselves experience inner healing in
their lives, they become agents of God’s
healing grace for others.

May your deliberations, your fellow-
ship, and your worship over the next days,
bear much fruit: the fruits of healing. Fruits
of continued growth as living images, liv-
ing icons, of the living God.

I welcome you all to my home city of
Winnipeg, and thank you for this wonder-
ful opportunity to be with you today.

Christ is in our midst. He is, and always
shall be. Thank you.

*Father Andrew Jarmus
of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church
in Canada*

Message from the World Council of Churches

Through our two representatives, Rev. Hector Mendez and Ms Teny Pirri-Simonian, I send to all of you, participants in the Tenth Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation, warm Christian greetings in the name of our common Lord Jesus Christ. Shortly after your Assembly in Winnipeg the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches will be meeting in Geneva. We shall be united in the same Spirit and in prayerful reflection, searching together for the common witness that as Christian people and as churches we are called to render in our world today.

Our two meetings are also closely linked to one another through their thematic foci: While you have gathered under the theme: “For the Healing of the World,” our Central Committee will focus attention on the mandate of “Caring for Life,” which has been one of the four overarching themes in the work of the WCC since the last assembly in Harare. A major study document, entitled “A Church of All and for All” which was prepared by members of the Ecumenical Disabilities Advocacy Network, will lead us to reflect, among other issues, on the relationship between disabilities and healing.

The healing narratives of the New Testament can cause pain and serious questions for people with disabilities. What does healing mean in the face of a permanent, severe disability? The document invites us to place our understanding of healing into the comprehensive horizon of God’s promise of salvation. “Healing...is an act, event, system, and structure which encourages, facilitates God’s empowering, renewing, reconciling, and liberating processes in order to reverse the negation of God’s intended good for God’s creation. Therefore, the overall theological contribution of the healing narratives in the New Testament is to demonstrate or serve as signs of God’s salvation history. God wills the acceptance and inclusion of each in a community of

interdependence where each supports and builds up the other, and where each lives life to the full according to their circumstances and to the glory of God.”

This is only one among the many instances where a convergence has emerged between the work of the Lutheran World Federation and that of the World Council of Churches. Most of the themes that you will discuss in your Village Groups have their correspondence in the present agenda of the WCC. Thus, we look with expectation to the results of your reflections on the mission of the church in multifaith contexts, on the barriers that exclude, like the stigma of HIV/AIDS, on family life and human sexuality, on overcoming violence, on transforming economic globalization, and on healing creation. This convergence of agendas, which has been promoted through the work of a joint staff group that has been in place for the past three years, manifests that we are sharing in one and the same ecumenical movement, contributing the insights and riches of our different traditions and contexts.

It is also significant that three ecumenical assemblies in the course of this year, that is, apart from your own, those of the Conference of European Churches and of the All Africa Conference of Churches, have chosen themes that focus on healing, reconciliation and rebuilding. At a time when in all parts of the world people experience fear, brokenness, exclusion and violence, the churches are beginning to understand that it is their missionary vocation to be “healing and reconciling communities” in Christ—thus, the theme of the World Mission Conference in 2005. We begin to recognize that we have one common message in and for the world. In fact, caring for life, healing and reconciliation are central to what it means to be church. Over this past year, the conviction has been growing in the World Council of Churches that we should seize this moment of conver-

gence to draw closer to each other and thus to strengthen our ability to render a common witness. The organizational expressions of the ecumenical movement bear the marks of historic conditions as they have prevailed during the major part of the twentieth century. Over these last fifteen years our world has changed radically. New challenges have emerged which call for our common response. The World Council of Churches has, therefore, taken the initiative to invite its ecumenical partner organizations to reconsider the organizational configuration that we have inherited from

the twentieth century and to seek ways of strengthening the coherence of the ecumenical movement for the sake of our common mission. The Lutheran World Federation is an important partner in this process and we count on your continued participation in this process of reflection.

May your meeting in Winnipeg be richly blessed so that you return inspired and encouraged to your home countries and places of ministry.

*Rev. Dr Konrad Raiser,
general secretary*

Greeting from the World Alliance of Reformed Churches

Rev. Dr Christian Krause, President, Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko, General Secretary, Sisters and Brothers in our Lord Jesus Christ,

It gives me great pleasure to bring greetings on behalf of your sisters and brothers in the World Alliance of Reformed Churches family. Dr Paul Fries and I are here as a sign of the value the Reformed family places on Lutheran-Reformed relationships. We are grateful for the work we have done together in recent years through the Lutheran Reformed Working Group, some programmatic collaboration especially on justice issues and the regular senior staff meetings we have been having in the last few years. The building of our relationship is not superficial or only at the global level. It is inspired and strengthened by various regional and national initiatives, notably the Leuenberg agreement and the formula of agreement in North America. We celebrate these ways in which together we engage in responding to our Lord's desire expressed in the high priestly prayer "That we may be one."

Your theme "For the Healing of the World" is timely in our world today where so many millions of people hurt—from the diseases that have befallen the world—Humanity, especially those with power

have chosen to use it to further injustice, poverty, war and suffering rather than obey God. As the world's powers relying on their military might put in place policies that lead to more brokenness, violence and exclusion, millions of people are dying from conflicts, diseases and unjust economic structures. The world—both humanity and the environment—is in a state of illness. It is our hope that this Assembly will identify some of the steps we can commit to in our work as God's instruments for the healing of the world and bringing fullness of life to all—our own General Council theme.

Our work of healing for the world will be even more meaningful, if we continue with the work of healing within the church. This is why I celebrate the steps the Lutheran World Federation has taken in your ecumenical engagements with a number of confessional families including the Reformed family. We are currently discussing the possibility of our governing bodies meeting together in the near future. We look forward to the time when the Council to be elected in this Assembly will meet with our Executive Committee to be elected next year. In 1997, we called for the possibility of the LWF and the WARC having a common Assembly together. I hope in your Assembly this year, you will

be able to echo that same call. In these ways and other ways of living above our differences, we can set a real example to the world—demonstrating that we are serious about working for the healing of the world. This will give increased credibility to our work in God’s mission of bringing healing to a broken, wounded world.

Together, women and men, young and old, can in our churches proclaim and live out the gospel in all the different parts of the

world in which faithful Christians are found. On behalf of our President, Professor C. S. Song, our Executive Committee, our Area Councils, all colleagues in Geneva and the 76 million members of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, we wish you all the best of God’s blessings in your deliberations in this Assembly for the healing of the world.

*Rev. Dr Setri Nyomi,
general secretary*

Address of Walter Cardinal Kasper to the Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation¹

July 21-31, 2003, Winnipeg, Canada

Brothers and sisters in our common Lord Jesus Christ! Dear friends!

It is my privilege as President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity to greet this tenth Plenary of the Lutheran World Federation, and this means to me: to greet so many good friends.

I. When we met last time in Hong Kong, it was prior to the Joint Declaration on Justification. Problems, doubts and critics foreshadowed difficulties, but a clear decision was made. And so we signed the Joint Declaration in Augsburg, and we not only signed it, we rejoiced and celebrated, because, thanks be to God, we could reach—not the final goal—but an important milestone in the pilgrimage to full unity. The stumbling block, the doctrine with which the Church stands and falls—as Luther wrote—was removed.

Though open questions remain, our relations since Augsburg have found a new quality and have reached a new intensity. As a Catholic, I can affirm: We did not only sign, we now stand behind this signature, we take it as a starting point from which we want to go ahead towards a common future. We extended our hands to each other and we are not willing to let go again. Thank you Bishop Krause, thank you

Ishmael Noko, thank you Sven Oppegaard for this fellowship and friendship.

II. This time we meet after the Joint Declaration. So it is time to look forward and ask ourselves: Where we are going now? What are the next steps? And what is the final goal after all?

I think the theme of this 10th Plenary, “For the healing of the World”, gives a hint for the answer. There is no doubt, our world needs healing, healing from the wounds of injustice, of war and terrorism, of divisions, of lies, lack of truth and confidence, loneliness, a sense of meaninglessness, hopelessness, and all together: wounds of sinfulness and godlessness. To all these bleeding wounds the Christians’ answer is nothing other than the message of justification.

Since the Joint Declaration we were often confronted with the objection: Who still understands your message on justification? Who still cares about these old controversies? Are they not irrelevant? And we have to admit: The question how I can find a merciful God, is for most of our fellow human beings no longer the question. But this does not mean that justification has become meaningless. What justification means is exactly what is asked for in the aforementioned questions, anxieties, desires and hopes. Justification is God’s answer to it. But it is now up to us to translate this an-

swer in the language, in the context and in the dealing with the problems of today.

The Joint Declaration is not a text which we have written and published once for all, such that we could now be happy to have got rid of the problem and simply store the text on a bookshelf. The Joint Declaration must not remain a dead letter and must not become the secret of specialists and experts; it must come to life in our respective communities and over all, in our hearts. This message is needed even more now than during the 16th century. So, after Augsburg, this message should and can become our common message and our common witness to the hope which is within us.

What we have reached must bear fruits in joint co-operation. For ecumenism is not an end in itself. Our Joint Declaration too is not an end in itself. Together we have to heal the wounds of our world and—not the least—of our own divisions in order to be more able to heal the wounds of humankind.

III. How can this happen? Since Augsburg we were not lazy. Several steps were taken. Many others are still necessary. One touches the core and the heart of the ecumenical movement: Spiritual ecumenism. Without spirituality the ecumenical movement becomes merely an academic affair, where “normal” Christians cannot follow, where they feel excluded and finally frustrated; or it becomes a soulless activism, the business of an endless series of conferences, symposiums, gatherings, meetings and ever new documents which nobody can read. We need a spirituality of unity and communion, which is also a spirituality of prayer, of forgiveness, of reconciliation and mutual acceptance of each other. If this is to be more than indifference about our differences, then it requires conversion and the opening of our hearts. There is no ecumenism without such conversion and renewal.

To the measure that we are living and working together, growing in communion in one faith and one spirit, to the measure that we are able to heal the wounds of our own divisions, to that degree we will be more

convincing and credible witnesses of reconciliation. Otherwise we will be told: “Doctor heal yourself!” As long the Church of Christ bleeds out of the wounds of our divisions our service to the world cannot be fully convincing and effective. There cannot be a choice between spiritual and secular ecumenism. Jesus prayed on the eve of his death “that all be one that the world may believe”.

IV. Spiritual ecumenism is not a substitute for concrete ecumenism. On the contrary. The healing of the wounds of our still remaining division arises with still greater urgency as we face the 500th anniversary of the beginning of the Reformation in 2017. This may seem to be still a long time away. But if it is to be an anniversary where we can give account on our unfortunately separated history and speak of our hopefully common future, then we must prepare ourselves in time.

What will we tell the world on that occasion, what will we say then to our young people about the meaning of the Reformation in the 16th century, and what about its meaning for our time and for the future? Will this anniversary only look back and become an occasion for a new confessionalism—unfortunately a temptation we have too much today—or will it not also and even more look to the future and be an ecumenical impulse, what so many urgently expect?

With these questions we touch on a fundamental problem: What is our ecumenical goal? What is the unity of the Church all about?

As I understand it, the Reformers did not want to build a new Church; they wanted to preserve the continuity of the Church of all centuries, they wanted to renew the one universal, the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. But the communion was broken in the 16th century for many reasons, reasons both theological and non theological, with fault on both sides and to the detriment of both sides. In different ways, we are both wounded by our divisions. But could not what failed in the 16th century be healed today, under totally new constellations and in view of new common challenges?

I was extremely happy when I listened to what Bishop Krause and Dr. Ishmael Noko had to say on communion. Indeed, the understanding of the Church and the unity of the Church as *communio/com-munion* indicates the direction we should go and should now be the ecumenical idea. There is a common basis, a chance, but a need for further serious theological and ecclesiological clarification as well. Therefore, for us the theological dialogue is fundamental in order to reach full communion and eucharistic sharing.

No blueprint for the future is possible. We are not the masters of history, neither of our own history nor of that of the Church.

This is alone in the hands of God's Spirit, and he is always good for a surprise. I am convinced: the Holy Spirit who initiated the ecumenical process will bring it to a conclusion, in spite of all difficulties and all obstacles. Probably the way will be longer than we expected. But God's Spirit is faithful; in him we can trust. So let's move ahead, with patience and with courage as well, with faith, with love and with hope. May God bless us and make us a blessing for one another and a blessing for the healing of the world.

¹ This greeting was published in The Pontifical Council For Promoting Christian Unity Information Service, N. 113 (2003/II/III)

Greeting from the International Lutheran Council

President Krause, General Secretary Noko, Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

It is a privilege and an honor for me to be with you at this Tenth Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation, and to have the pleasure of bringing greetings to you from the International Lutheran Council in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The International Lutheran Council is a worldwide association of twenty-nine church bodies having a combined baptized membership of 3.3 million people. Organized in 1993 the ILC has as its purpose "to share information, study theological questions and concerns together." It meets in conference together every two years in order to "discuss effective and coordinated means of carrying out the mission and ministry of the church, nurture and strengthen their relationships with each other, and work toward the closest possible joint expression of their faith and confession."¹ The ILC's next conference will be held next month in Iguaçu Falls, Brazil under the theme "Ministering to the Pastor's Family."

The ILC and LWF have much in common with each other. Together, both of these organizations profess their commitment in their respective constitutions to the Holy

Scriptures as "the only source and norm of its doctrine, life and service" (LWF Constitution), as "the inspired and infallible Word of God" (ILC Constitution). Both confess their conviction that the writings contained in the *Book of Concord* are "a pure exposition of the Word of God" (LWF Constitution), a "true and faithful exposition of the Word of God" (ILC Constitution). Not only do we have the name Lutheran in common, but nine of the member churches of the ILC are also either full or associate members of the LWF.

And yet, as is well known, we have our differences, primarily in the area of what commitment to the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions means regarding important and sensitive issues such as abortion, homosexuality, the ordination of women to the pastoral office, how much confessional agreement is necessary for celebrating our unity in Christ at the altar and in the pulpit in church fellowship, and, above all, in our understanding of the authority of Scripture as the Word of God in the words of human beings.

Because of what we together hold in common, and also because of these areas of disagreement, we in the ILC believe that it is critically important that the lines of communication between us be kept open,

and that every effort be made to find a way to resolve these issues which impede us in accomplishing the work Christ has given us to do in bringing healing to our broken world. It is for this reason that the ILC eagerly accepted the invitation extended through General Secretary Noko in 2000 to resume the conversations held in 1987–1988 between the LWF and those church bodies which now make up the ILC. The first of these conversations was held last summer in Geneva, where three profitable days were spent in sharing information about our respective organizations, and in identifying common ground and differences. We in the ILC look forward to continuing these discussions this coming November in Helsinki, and we pray for God's blessings on these talks together.

You have chosen as the theme for this Assembly "For the Healing of the World," words inspired by St John's apocalyptic vision in Revelation 22:2. Its intriguing

logo shows a cross on one side and three green leaves on the other arching over the broken terrain of cracks which mar the planet earth on which we live. What a beautiful depiction of the hope we have in the cross of Jesus Christ and the healing which His suffering, death and resurrection brings to our brokenness.

The members of the International Lutheran Council join you in praying that our Lord Jesus Christ will bless this Assembly mightily, and that He will make it to be an instrument in His hands to bring the true and lasting healing to our world which only His Gospel can bring.

Thank you and blessings to you in Christ's name.

Rev. Dr Samuel Nafzger, executive secretary

¹ *ILC Constitution*. Article III, "Statement of Purpose."

Greeting from the Anglican Communion

I am very pleased to be able to offer the greetings of the Anglican Communion to this Tenth Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation. I bring heartfelt and warm greetings from all thirty-eight provinces of the Anglican Communion, together with our prayers and hopes that you will know the presence and the guidance of the Holy Spirit in all your deliberations.

To be a Lutheran has always been an important part of my life for the last forty some years. Having done my first degree at Concordia College, Moorhead, I married a Minnesota Lutheran pastor's daughter who has insisted on remaining a Lutheran "until the Episcopalians have as good a confirmation preparation as we Lutherans do."

In this Assembly, you will have received copies of "Growth in Communion," the report of the Anglican Lutheran International Working Group. This demonstrates how our two Communions are working ever more closely, which is a source of great joy to us

in the Anglican Communion. Indeed, our fellowship and shared Christian discipleship has become so close in an increasing number of places around the world, that Anglicans and Lutherans have made covenantal commitments to share a common life and mission, and in some places have been able to declare themselves in "full communion." These are significant and welcome steps on the path of the ecumenical endeavor that we all share.

It is sometimes said that the Anglican Communion is in the process of becoming a "federation," while the Lutheran World Federation is turning into a "Communion." Let us talk together about our experience of living as global families of churches. I believe, however, that there is a real possibility that we may be able to look beyond the present situation to a day when there may be only one united communion between our two venerable families. To this extent, I look forward to the possible estab-

lishment of a new Anglican Lutheran International Commission next year, which may be able to lead us into an ever-closer relationship on many levels, including concrete expressions of working together in our broken world. Let me be specific. It is a scandal that we are not working more closely together in Africa and in other parts of our global communion on HIV/AIDS. As Lutherans, as Episcopalians and Anglicans, we should always be asking the question, “What can we do together?”

As the Secretary General of the Anglican Communion, I want to take this opportunity to recognize and to pay tribute to Ishmael Noko for his friendship and support, for his outstanding leadership, not only in the LWF, but in our global family of churches as well. Last September, when the Anglican Consultative Council met in Hong Kong, China, the council chose Ishmael to be its keynote speaker. We wanted someone who would challenge us, we wanted someone who understood the global scene. Ishmael profoundly affected all of our deliberations as a result of his thoughtful and prophetic presentation. Our two great churches are indeed

growing closer in fellowship and cooperation because of Ishmael’s vision.

At the time of the Reformation, the Anglican Church and the Lutheran churches of continental Europe saw themselves as natural allies and partners in the proclamation of the Gospel. As the Anglicans here at the Assembly share in your gracious hospitality and warm welcome, I know that this is but a foretaste of good things which are to come for all who proclaim a gospel of hope and redemption in these days of so much turmoil, war, poverty and ignorance. Martin Luther’s words, “Here I stand, I can do no other” can be the basis on which we, as two global churches can with him and others, say “Here we stand, we can do no other,” if we truly believe in the One who has called us out of darkness into His own marvelous light. We need each other. May God bless you and us in the days ahead.

Our greetings, salutations and love to you!

*Rev. Canon John L. Peterson,
secretary general*

Greeting from the Lutheran Church – Canada

President Krause, General Secretary Noko, Delegates and Friends to this Tenth Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation.

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ who gave himself for our sins in order to rescue us from the present evil age according to the will of our God and Father to whom be glory for ever and ever.

It is with these words of the Apostle Paul that I bring greetings to you from the congregations, pastors and deacons of Lutheran Church—Canada. We represent some of those other Lutherans in Canada who are not members of the LWF. Our church body is made up of some 325 congregations spread across this great land of ours. A daughter of

the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, we were organized as an independent church body in 1989. Our vision as an association of congregations is to be faithful to the Holy Scriptures and Lutheran Confessions, to boldly reach out with the Gospel of Jesus Christ to those who have not heard or come to believe in Him and to grow in our love for one another and for the world that the message of Christ might be confirmed in our life and action for it is only in that message of Jesus Christ and the Good News of forgiveness and life that we, indeed that all people, are rescued from this evil age, healed through His precious name.

Such love also reaches out to meet the needs of a wounded world that struggles with poverty and injustice and all the other

ills that come in a sin-filled world. Through our association with Canadian Lutheran World Relief, we are pleased to join with you and Lutheran World Service in reaching out to meet that human need in whatever way possible and so bring healing into the lives of those who suffer. I had the opportunity this past January to travel to Ethiopia with the CLWR and there personally see the work of Lutheran World Service in concert with the poor of that country. We praise God for the work being done and for the healing that is coming to so many.

In bringing greetings to you, I want to take this opportunity to express publicly my thanks to Dr Noko and the LWF Council for their decision to resume conversations with the International Lutheran Council, an association of Lutheran church bodies of which we are a member. Serving as chairman of the International Lutheran Council, I was pleased to be a part of the first meeting held

in Geneva last summer. It is important for us as it is for you to keep the lines of communication open, to be able to discuss those issues that separate us and seek to find resolution to anything that impedes the free course of the proclamation of the Gospel in our world. We look forward to a continuation of those meetings in Helsinki this fall.

As a Canadian church, my welcome to Canada is belated—but nevertheless—WELCOME! It is our prayer that you have and will continue to enjoy your stay in this beautiful city and country. But more important, it is our prayer that God's blessing would continue upon your gathering as you are encouraged and strengthened for the work that Christ has given to His whole church—to bring healing to the inhabitants of this world through the proclamation of the Gospel.

Rev. Ralph Mayan, president

Greeting from the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

Mr President, General Secretary, Delegates and Guests,

It is a privilege and an honor to bring greetings from our world headquarters of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and from our President Dr Jan Paulsen to the Tenth Assembly of our Lutheran brothers and sisters.

You may not know this but Luther is a great figure among Seventh-day Adventists. In 2000, our communication department conducted a survey among Adventists to find out who the number one person for the second millennium was. Instead of choosing one of our Adventist pioneers, the congregation answered Martin Luther!

I would like also to underline our excellent relations with your headquarters in Geneva, especially General Secretary Noko and Rev. Sven Oppegaard. Our positive relations go back to the days of André Appél and his successor Carl H. Mau Jr.

The conversations we had several years ago continue to produce positive effects in our world church.

They are an encouragement for those in our midst who want to have not only good relations with other Christians but who believe that we are all Jesus' disciples and should work together every time it is possible.

The Conference of Secretaries of Christian World Communions gives us many opportunities. Yet there are other fields for more cooperation. For example, humanitarian assistance, education and religious freedom and the battle against HIV/AIDS. I would like to say how I appreciated the excellent program of the young people concerning this issue. These are areas where Adventists and Lutherans may develop strong partnerships for the healing of the world.

We also continue to work in close cooperation with Bishop Gunnar Stålsett who

is a vice-president of the International Religious Liberty Association in which I serve as secretary general.

Thank you very much for inviting me. And now I want to invite you to our next World General Conference Session in St Louis, USA, June 29–July 9, 2005. A few days before, we will have an international conference on HIV/AIDS.

President Hanson, General Secretary Noko, Dear Participants,

May God bless your work, may the Holy Spirit inspire your decisions, may our Lord Jesus help all of us, where we are, to accomplish our mission, which is a mission of hope and salvation!

Dr John Graz, director

Greeting from the Anglican Church of Canada

We, myself and our ecumenical officer, the Rev. Canon Alyson Barnett-Cowan, are honored to address you.

History

Our first parish was founded in 1699 in St John's Newfoundland as a congregation in a military settlement.

In the eighteenth century our population expanded with British settlers after the conquest of Québec in 1759, and through the arrival of many political refugees (both British and Mohawk) from the United States of America (Americans call them Tories; we call them Loyalists).

In the nineteenth century we grew as two sorts of church. The "settler" church, the church of immigrants, continued to grow, but there was also the arrival of the "mission" church, those who came to open the gospel to people who had never met it, the indigenous people.

Winnipeg is a good example. In 1820 the first missionary to this area, John West, came to minister to the British fur trading settlement here, but also opened a school for the indigenous community. And it was in this Province of Manitoba (meaning "place of the Spirit" in Cree, for "Manito" means Spirit; our Cree and Ojibway people pray to "Gi-zhe-manito", the Great Spirit) that 150 years ago, in 1853, Henry Budd, or Sakachewescam, the first indigenous priest, was ordained.

The "settler" and "mission" churches came together in Winnipeg in 1893 to form the Anglican Church of Canada.

Present Reality

Some statistics

We are a church of thirty dioceses (forty bishops), 3,000 congregations (2,000 active clergy) and about 2 million members (according to the census), with 800,000 on our parish lists and 200,000 in church each Sunday.

Ethnically, we remain predominantly British in origin, but in urban Canada much more mixed, with strong Caribbean membership, fifteen Chinese-speaking parishes, as well as French, Spanish, Japanese, Tamil, Tagalog and Korean-speaking parishes.

Women have been ordained as deaconesses since the nineteenth century, deacons since 1969, priests since 1976, and bishops since 1994. About 22 percent of our clergy are women. In this, we are closely parallel to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada.

The legacy of the "mission" church is with us in both positive and negative ways.

On the one hand, 85 percent of the Inuit (Arctic) population of Canada is Anglican. While the indigenous peoples of Canada make up 1.5 percent of the total population, the indigenous population of our church is 5 percent of our membership (with several dioceses having a majority of members being indigenous), and in the House of Bishops, 10 percent of the bishops are indigenous.

On the negative side, in the nineteenth century and up to 1969 we worked together

with government residential schools providing education, but in a climate of assimilation.

The most painful moment of my time as primate occurred ten years ago this week, when, after listening to days of story-telling by victims of abuse in residential schools, I issued a public and formal apology on behalf of our church. Those painful stories and the painful apology have been the beginning of healing and acceptance of responsibility. Last year our General Synod and *all* our dioceses accepted the responsibility of a CAD 25 million settlement with victims. But we are still at the beginning.

Ecumenical

Our ecumenical instincts are deep-rooted.

During the 1960s and 1970s we worked toward organic union with the United Church of Canada. The plan, largely because of lack of grassroots Anglican support, was defeated at our General Synod. Nevertheless, a number of shared ministries, joint Anglican United Church congregations mostly in more isolated parts of the country, continue to this day.

After Vatican II, we established not only theological dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church, but also an annual dialogue between bishops of each church. Both continue: the dialogue between bishops is the longest standing of such national dialogues in the world. Then, in the 1980s appeared on our horizon the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada. Born of inter-Lutheran ecumenical work, this church was searching for a broader ecumenical field.

The 1980s (and 1990s) were called, by the Archbishop of Canterbury Robert Runcie, the “winter of ecumenism.” If there is anything Canadians understand, it is winter. Winter does not mean death. True, it demonstrates the harshness, potentially death-dealing realities of nature, but it also gives life. It kills bacteria and germs, the insects that so often plague us, and so gives life. It is a time of

rest—trees drop their leaves, animals hibernate. It is a time of hiddenness when many realities, the beautiful and the ugly, are hidden under snowbanks.

But together with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, we used the time between 1989 (“interim eucharistic sharing”) to 2001 (“full communion”) to open doors toward each other and toward a richer experience of life in Christ.

The LWF

In Turku in 2000, at the LWF Council meeting, we shared with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada delegation in the invitation to come to Winnipeg. We offered you the openness of the churches, the city, the province, and the country. Who could have imagined what terrible events would intervene to create a worldwide climate, and a mindset of the Government of Canada, of xenophobia—not just fear of a stranger, but suspicion and hatred.

The churches are with you, the government has failed you. And Canadians here know that it has failed us, and I give you a commitment that our challenge to the government will be strong and consistent. If your delegates have been rejected, think of the prospect of refugees looking to a country which less than two decades ago received (and deserved) the Nansen Award for support of refugees. No longer!

But we Anglicans stand in *eucharistic* fellowship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada. So what is our last word? Any Greek could tell you—the Greek word for “thank you” is first of all a thanksgiving.

At the end of my time as Primate, I am deeply thankful that I am able to express on behalf of my church our gratitude for the blessing of your presence in our midst.

Thanks be to God.

Thank *you*.

**Most Rev. Michael G. Peers,
Primate, Anglican Church
of Canada**

Greeting from the Leuenberg Church Fellowship

President Krause, General Secretary Noko,
Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

It is my honor and joy to greet you on behalf of one of the oldest European church fellowships: The Leuenberg Church Fellowship. Leuenberg is a fellowship of more than 100 Protestant churches from all parts of Europe, mainly Reformed and Lutheran. The fellowship has existed for more than thirty years and is still growing and developing.

We in Europe have again during this Assembly learned how the churches in other regions, Asia, Africa, and Latin America, are overcoming confessional barriers and differences by working together in mission and dialogue—in serving the people and struggling for justice. This is a gift you bring to the whole fellowship and the whole church.

We in Europe have to admit that many—most, to be honest—of the divisions and splits in the church have begun in Europe, based on different teachings, definitions and understandings of the Christian faith. Therefore, it is necessary for us that we work on overcoming the differences also where the splits have happened. It is therefore an essential part of

the Leuenberg Church Fellowship that churches which have agreed to pulpit and altar fellowship continue the theological dialogues on issues which are still dividing, for example, the relation to Judaism and the Old Testament or our understanding of the ordained ministry. But, more and more, the fellowship is developing into a living partnership and working together also in congregational life, in sharing of information and resources. The Leuenberg Church Fellowship is one of the ways in which we from our region hope to contribute to the unity of the church and to receive the gift of the unity in Christ.

Therefore, it is my pleasure to bring greetings from this European church fellowship in assuring you that we are together in the struggle for and reception of Christian unity, although we may sometimes have different ways of doing it.

May God bless the LWF and this Assembly and all the churches together in bringing God's will of hope and love, of justice and peace to our world.

*Rev. Ane Hjerrild, general
secretary of the Evangelical
Lutheran Church in Denmark*

Greeting from the United Church of Canada

To the President and General Secretary of the Tenth Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation

To the People of God gathered at the Tenth Assembly, grace to you and peace from God, Creator and Source of life,

As moderator and acting general secretary it is our honor to send greetings to you from sisters and brothers in Christ in The United Church of Canada. We are delighted that, in addition to our greetings, former Moderator, Rev. Dr Stan McKay, is representing The United Church of Canada at your gathering.

We share with you our historic and contemporary commitment and vision to being a united and uniting church, our doctrinal beliefs in a Triune God who wills peace and justice and our faith claim of the Bible as foundational authority for the life and work of the church. Within this faith, we also share with you the joy and cost of discerning God's will as we seek to profess our contemporary faith in ways that honor God's peace, love and justice for all people and for the whole of creation.

We commend you for your courageous leadership in proclaiming unity as God's gift, and boldly recognizing that God's healing is

needed for the divisions in our Church and in the brokenness in our world. Our prayers are with you as you engage in the discipline and discipleship of decision making, as you celebrate through worship, and as you are nurtured through education.

May God's life-sustaining Spirit fill you with deep joy on this special occasion; may the Grace of Christ keep you strong; may

you live with vision until God's will for fullness of life and unity in the midst of diversity is "done on earth as it is in heaven."

In thanksgiving, faith and hope.

*Rt Rev. Dr Marion Pardy,
moderator, and
Rev. Dr Jim Sinclair,
acting general secretary*

Greeting from the Union of Utrecht of the Old Catholic Churches

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

It is a pleasure to greet the Tenth Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation in Winnipeg, Canada, on behalf of the Union of Utrecht of the Old Catholic Churches.

The theme of your encounter, "For the Healing of the World," expresses your commitment to a proclamation of the gospel that will be effective in the struggle against all kinds of injustice and human suffering. I am sure you will develop creative ideas and will take concrete initiatives in order to strengthen the Christian witness in our world, and I look forward to hear about those results from your Assembly.

Lutherans and Old Catholics have much in common. Therefore, I am very glad that an Old Catholic observer is taking part in the Anglican-Lutheran dialogue. It gives us the opportunity to get to know each other better. It is the generous hospitality of the Anglican Communion that not only offers us this possibility but also, without doubt, is creating the right

frame in which more cooperation between our churches will be possible in the future.

We thank the Rt Rev. David B. Joslin, assisting bishop of New Jersey, for his readiness to represent the Union of Utrecht at your Assembly. Together with Father Cwieka, priest of the Old Catholic (Polish-National) parish of Winnipeg, he will be able to give the right expression of our friendship toward Lutheran fellow Christians.

May the Lord bless your Assembly and the Lutheran World Federation and keep us all in friendly and constructive relationship with one another so that our common witness of the liberating force of the Gospel of our Lord may be seen in our lives, churches and societies.

The peace of the Lord remain with you all!

*Archbishop of Utrecht, Dr Joris
A. O. L. Vercammen, president*

*on behalf of the International Old Catholic
Bishop's Conference*

Assembly Day-by-Day



Opening Day

July 21

A flag displaying the Assembly logo hoisted against the backdrop of a bright and sunny mid-morning sky marked the start of the opening day of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Tenth Assembly.

In raising the flag, Winnipeg Deputy Mayor Lillian Thomas (right) paid tribute to Lutherans for their efforts to ensure social justice, peace and charity as tenets of their faith.



Mayor of Winnipeg Glen Murray unveiled a Canadian postage stamp that depicted the Assembly logo. The stamp was issued to mark the Assembly. Chairperson of the Canadian Postal Corporation Vivian Albo (left) remarked, "This is an important event that will strengthen and enrich the Lutheran church and our society. It is a wonderful stamp and a unique memento of this important spiritual gathering."



Ceremony and color marked the Assembly's opening eucharistic service. The Lutheran service, held in the Roman Catholic St Boniface Cathedral, began with a dramatic procession from the banks of the Red River, where almost 700 Assembly participants had gathered for a ceremony of affirmation of baptism.





Ecumenical quartet: Church leaders at the opening eucharistic service in St Boniface Cathedral. From left: Walter Cardinal Kasper, president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU); Anglican Church of Canada Primate Most Rev. Michael G. Peers; LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko and LWF President Bishop em. Dr Christian Krause.



Worshippers received communion from a Canadian Lutheran bishop, Cynthia Halmarson (right), and Liberian Lutheran Bishop Sumoward Harris (center right).



A Canadian Aboriginal elder bestowed a blessing on the Assembly during “The Host Church Presents Itself” evening. Music, drama, comedy and special effects were combined to impart highlights in a presentation by the host church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC). The presentation was designed to give Assembly participants an impression of the role played by this small Lutheran church in Canada’s vast and diverse nation.





LWF President, Bishop em. Dr Christian Krause, in his address to the Assembly, said that peace between the world's religions and a common front against terrorism are among the top challenges facing Christians in the 21st century.



In his address, LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko highlighted significant steps taken by the LWF and its member churches since the 1997 Ninth Assembly in Hong Kong, China, as well as the challenges posed by ongoing and emerging concerns.



In her report, LWF Treasurer Ms Inger Johanne Wremer paid tribute to the LWF member churches and partners for their unwavering solidarity and financial commitment over the past six years, but also called for a "matter-of-fact attitude on financial policy and practice," in view of decreasing income.

Day 1

July 22



Press conference following the president's address. From left: LWF President Bishop em. Dr Christian Krause, LWF Office for Communication Services Director Ms Karin Achtelstetter.



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson addressed the Assembly during the extraordinary plenary session on the denial of visas.

Palestinian Lutheran Bishop Munib A. Younan also addressed the Assembly during the extraordinary plenary session.

At this session, delegates to the LWF Tenth Assembly indicated their intention to participate in a public demonstration on July 29, to protest the Canadian government's failure to grant visas to 51 delegates and other Assembly participants.



Upon entering a remarkable traveling exhibition of Martin Luther memorabilia, titled, "Martin Luther: The Reformer," which was unveiled at the Assembly, participants could step back 500 years in time from the modern halls of the Winnipeg Convention Centre into the German Reformation world of Martin and Catherine Luther.



Day 2

July 23

The 90-minute presentation “LWF Presents Itself,” featured dancers from many nations, live music, narration in 12 languages, video and audio tape clips and group singing, to outline what the LWF had accomplished during the six years since the 1997 Ninth Assembly in Hong Kong, China.



“I grew up in the faith of my mother and my grandmother, who told me, ‘When God calls you, you’d better go.’” With these words, Dr Dr h.c. Margot Kässmann, bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hanover, Germany, introduced her keynote address to the Assembly.



Mr Gary Doer, premier (government leader) of Manitoba, the province which hosted the Assembly, vowed to get to the bottom of the controversy surrounding the denial of visas to so many of the international invitees.



Day 3

July 24

Walter Cardinal Kasper (1), PCPCU President, in his address to the Assembly, told participants that spiritual ecumenism is the answer to healing the wounds of the world.

Bishop Dr Wesley Kigasung (2), delegate from the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea, reinforced keynote speaker Bishop Kässmann's theme of the authority of scripture, *sola scriptura*. He said that human avoidance of responsibility did not change God's "good and holy intent" for creation. Echoing Kässmann's words, he said that these stories challenged us to respond to our brothers and sisters "with eyes wide open" to the call to accountability implicit in God's questions.

Ms Virginia Ivañez de Neyeloff (3), delegate from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Venezuela, reacted to Kässmann's address from the actual regional context of Latin America, where men and especially women feel "the pain of injustice, corruption and unnecessary death." She reviewed the historical perspective in which Indigenous cultures that once had their own sophisticated links to nature were later enslaved and exploited by European conquerors, and force-fed a new religion.



In the day's Bible study presentation under the theme "Forgive and Heal," Assembly participants from the LWF region of Central Western Europe acted out in silence the story of Jesus and the woman "who was a sinner" (Lk 7:36–50). The dramatic sketch represented the meeting between Jesus and the woman who, with her own tears, washed Jesus' feet and anointed them.

“Village Groups” were a central feature of the Assembly. This was where Bible study discussions took place, and where important implications of the Assembly theme were pursued. Work in the groups developed the substance of the Assembly Message and commitments, through exploration of ten topics based on the Assembly’s overall theme, “For the Healing of the World.” Delegates indicated their preference for a group in advance. The groups delved into such issues as “God’s Healing Gift of Justification,” “The Mission of the Church in Multi-Faith Contexts,” “Justice and Healing in Families” and “Transforming Economic Globalization.”



Day 4

July 25



Youth delegates and stewards used the story of Ruth (Ruth 4:13–17) as a metaphor for this day’s theme, “Reorder Power.” In a breathtakingly relevant dramatization, they portrayed the exclusion that Ruth might have felt by holding up a sign that read “VISA,” in reference to the 51 people who had been denied visas by the Canadian government. They also portrayed other groups whom society and the church often reject: those with HIV/AIDS, the poor, the disabled, gay and lesbian persons, and others who experience the pain of exclusion. They concluded with the message of “God’s radical inclusion” that embraces the whole world.

At a special press conference, LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko made public a letter he had faxed to the Hon. Denis Coderre, minister for citizenship and immigration in the Canadian government, requesting answers to why 51 people had been denied visas to enter Canada to attend the Assembly. Noko specifically asked the minister to respond to allegations reported in the press as supposedly stemming from “federal sources,” that those denied visas include “alleged murderers, embezzlers of church funds and other criminals.” Noko wrote, “I ask you to urgently inform me if these reported allegations are indeed emanating from Citizenship and Immigration Canada, and if they correctly represent the position of your Ministry.”



Day 5

July 26

“Heal our Divisions” was the theme of this day’s Bible study taken from St Paul’s Letter to the Ephesians 2:13–22 and presented by the churches of the LWF region of Central Eastern Europe. In a moving portrayal of humanity’s deep divisions, they used the metaphor of their own divisions before the collapse of communist rule. A videotape showed eastern European churches pockmarked by weapon fire and abandoned. Then, stacking up cardboard boxes to represent walls of division—so familiar to citizens of this region—the members read out a list of opposites representing current divisions: East and West, rich and poor, victim and perpetrator, Lutheran and non-Lutheran.



With the theme “For the Healing of the Earth,” an Aboriginal healing liturgy took place in the evening at Holy Trinity Anglican Church. Sweetgrass, sage, cedar and tobacco were burnt for the traditional cleansing ceremony. The liturgy accommodated both traditional and modern elements.

In an Assembly resolution, the LWF “urges the United Nations Security Council to immediately mandate the deployment of a multilateral stabilization force to separate the warring sides, to protect civilians, and to disarm and demobilize all fighting forces.” The resolution came after a heart-rending briefing on the current situation in Liberia by Bishop Sumoward Harris and Ms Comfort Freeman, delegates from the Lutheran Church in Liberia.





3 The Rev. Mark S. Hanson (1), ELCA Presiding Bishop, was elected as LWF President on the first round of a secret-ballot vote. He received a majority of 267 votes to 111 votes for the other candidate, Rev. Susan C. Johnson (2), ELCIC Vice-President. Outgoing LWF President Bishop em. Dr Christian Krause (3, left) congratulates LWF President-elect Mark S. Hanson.

On this day, 48 nominees representing the seven LWF regions were elected to the Council, which is responsible for the business of the Federation between Assemblies. The Council elects and directs the work of the general secretary, decides the structure of the LWF secretariat and sets the budget of the Federation.



Day 6

July 27

Approximately 1,500 people from all over the world gathered at The Forks* despite the broiling summer sun and little shade. Assembly participants collected with people from the local community in front of a giant stage to sing, dance, clap, pray and praise the Lord along with Jon Buller and the band “Freeman,” the Christian rock band “Krystaal” and a lively Worship Theatre experience entitled “Heal the Land.”



* “The Forks” is a national historic site of Canada. A traditional Aboriginal stopping place, with a strategic location at the junction of the Red and Assiniboine rivers that were part of a vast continental network of water routes, it was continuously used over the centuries for transportation, trade and settlement. The site is now Winnipeg’s “meeting place” where festivals and special events take place.





Some people welcomed the beating sun after a week of meetings in air-conditioned rooms. Others protected themselves with umbrellas, visors and even hats fashioned out of the day's edition of the Assembly newspaper, *The Source*. But no one left. The entertainment and worship presentations held everyone's attention and, with the sun, warmed hearts and souls.



Day 7

July 28



Mr Peter Prove (left), assistant to the LWF general secretary for international affairs and human rights, responded to journalists at a press conference on the LWF Augusta Victoria Hospital in Jerusalem. Also shown (from right) are Mr Robert Granke, director of the LWF Department for World Service and Ms Pauline Mumia, *Lutheran World Information* (LWI) English-language editor.



Delegates from the LWF region of Latin America and the Caribbean during their Bible study presentation.



A dramatic presentation focusing mainly on the issues of HIV/AIDS and human sexuality was a highlight of the youth open hearing at the Assembly. Graphically illustrating their point, youth delegates and stewards, wearing black T-shirts, stood silently on stage with their mouths crisscrossed with sticking tape. Around their necks hung signs with the birth and death dates of unnamed people. Written on the lower edge of the signs, in capital letters, was the phrase: "Stop HIV/AIDS." To conclude, on cue the youth members removed the tape to symbolize open communication about the dreaded disease sweeping across many countries.

Delegates and other participants responded to the appeal, made at the youth open hearing, for churches to join together in the fight against the HIV/AIDS pandemic.





Day 8

July 29

In silent and solemn procession, delegates and other participants in the Assembly walked from the Winnipeg Convention Centre (WCC), through the streets of Winnipeg, to the Oodena Circle at The Forks to protest the Canadian government's refusal to grant visas to 53 fellow delegates from developing nations.

Healing, Word and Sacrament, and Scripture study—among the essentials of Christian life—were enlivened by the delegates from African churches at the healing service and this day's eucharistic service and Bible study.



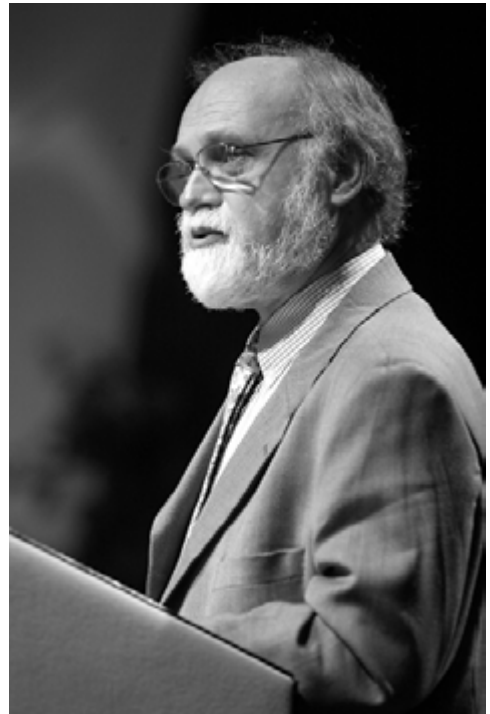
LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko (left) unveiled the WCC "Ambassador Plaque" to commemorate the Assembly. ELCIC Vice-President Susan Johnson and WCC General Manager Klaus Lahr accompanied him.

Day 9

July 30



The Assembly concluded with a “Message” in many parts, all of which relate to the gathering’s theme “For the Healing of the World.” On the final full day of the Assembly, delegates worked into the evening hours to approve the Message that summarizes major areas of concern and provides direction for LWF activities for the next six years until the next Assembly. Rev. Dr Walter Altmann, president of the Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil, presented the Message, which acknowledges a “world in need of healing,” and identifies areas of special significance for member churches in the worldwide communion of almost 62 million Lutherans.



Bishop of Greenland Sofie Peterson, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark, during the Bible study presentation by delegates from the LWF region of the Nordic Countries.



At the final press conference of his six-year term as LWF President, Bishop em. Dr Christian Krause reflected on the highlights of his years in office. First and foremost had been his pastoral visits to the LWF member churches worldwide, in particular to the churches of eastern Europe and the Russian Federation, which were in the early stages of transition from communist rule and moving back into the fellowship of the global communion.



Day 10

July 31

With prolonged applause and a standing ovation, the Assembly participants bid farewell to Bishop em. Dr Christian Krause, whose six-year term as LWF President officially ended on this day. Dr Krause was elected to the LWF leading position at the 1997 Ninth Assembly in Hong Kong, China. He was bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Brunswick, Germany, from 1994 until January 2002.



The LWF region of North America Bible study presentation included a dramatic sequence to illustrate the biblical promise of a new heaven and a new earth. This included throwing of maple leaves, Canada's national symbol.



In Abundance: the last Bible study presentation of the Assembly, on the theme "Fulfill your promises, O God."



Participants in the Assembly celebrated the end of the 11-day gathering in a closing eucharistic service at St. Mary's (Roman Catholic) Cathedral.



Installation of the incoming Council took place during the service.

Go Forth: the new LWF President, Bishop Mark S. Hanson, bestowed the blessing at the service.





Assembly Participants

By categories

Accompanying Persons

include spouses, children, and others, who accompany persons accredited in other categories.

They have neither the right to speak nor to vote.

BESTE, Ingeborg
Germany

HAUSKELLER, Juergen
Democratic Republic of the Congo

KRAUSE, Gertrud
Germany

LANDGRAF, Katharina
Germany

NOKO, Gladys
Switzerland

SHAFER, Kris
USA

STREHLOW, William
Switzerland

TIMM, Dorothea
Germany

UMOFFIA, Ekaete
Nigeria

Accredited Press

include media persons invited from the member churches and secular press to cover the Assembly.

They are accredited through the Office for Communication Services. They have neither the right to speak nor to vote.

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Canada

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ARNDT-SANDROCK, Gabriele
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BELL, Jason
Winnipeg Free Press
Canada

BELOW, Jerzy
Zwiastun Ewangelicki
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BRINE, Trevor
A Channel/camera operator
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CHELL, Dave
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COREY, Whitford
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Duna TV
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GABUNA, ROBERT
The Filipino Journal
Canada

GAJDA, Bogumil
CZAS-Polish Press
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CZAS-Polish Press
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Duna TV
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GIGLIOTTI, Ken
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"SAAT"- Evangelische Kirchenzeitung
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Radio Canada International
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CKJS Radio 810 AM Winnipeg
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Global News Winnipeg
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The Southern Cross/Catholic newspaper
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Kotimaa
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Rupert's Land News
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JOHANNESSON, Gayle
Esprit, Magazine of Evangelical Lutheran
Women
Canada

KENNY, Peter
Ecumenical News International
Switzerland

KOOP, Doug
Christian Week
Canada

KRISTENSEN, Vidar
Church of Norway
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Rupert's Land News
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LAMBERT, Steve
Canadian Press
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Episcopal Life
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CJOB
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They have the right to speak, but not to vote.

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provided for in the LWF Constitution.

Delegates have the right to speak and
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are persons other than paid staff who are invited to render certain specific staff tasks at the Assembly.

In some cases, the right to speak is granted, but not to vote.

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Ecumenical Representatives

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They have the right to speak, but not to vote at the Assembly.

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Lutheran Church of the Central African
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Guests

are persons invited by the LWF to participate in the Assembly part of the time or full time, i.e. former LWF presidents, general secretaries, representatives from other faith communities, host church guests, officials of the government in the host country or international organizations (e.g. United Nations). Normally,

they have neither the right to speak nor to vote, except if requested to address the Assembly with a greeting or such. Former LWF presidents and general secretaries may be granted the right to speak during the entire Assembly.

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SMITH, Paul
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Interpreters / Translators

are persons invited by the LWF to facilitate discussion at the Assembly through interpretation and translation.

They have neither the right to speak nor to vote.

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In some cases the right to speak is granted, but not to vote.

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In some cases the right to speak is granted, but not to vote.

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They have neither the right to speak nor
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but not to vote at the Assembly, and
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