

The World Communion of Reformed Churches

Called to Communion, committed to Justice

Bishop Munib Younan, President of the Lutheran World Federation

Dear Sisters and Brothers of the LWF Council

General Secretary, Rev. Dr. Martin Junge

Friends All!

It is with great joy and with thanks giving to God of Life that I come to extend the deepest and warmest greetings on behalf of the World Communion of Reformed Churches and our President the Rev. Dr Jerry Pillay on the occasion of your Council meeting here in Wittenberg, Germany as you gather around the theme: "Grounded in God's Love – discerning God's future". Count on our prayers, presence and Christian solidarity as your Council seeks to Gods will to guide you in the important life, service and witness of your communion as you prepare for your upcoming General Assembly and as you engage all of us in the commemoration of the 500 years celebration of the Reformation.

Our greetings are joyful, our appreciation for long and deepening relationship is deep but we also bring a shared sense of growing urgency. We together filled by the reality that as we meet our defining context is that of God's Creation groaning in bondage and yearning for it's Liberation.(Rom 8:22). In 2004 in our Accra Confession we spoke of the scandalous situation of systemic and structural sin ecological, economic ,social, political, and gender injustices generating and fuelled by spirally militarized violence. That situation has only gotten worse as God's oikoumene ,peoples and planet, faces a massive threat to life. This reality compels together to seek even greater unity in the Spirit, in prayer and transformative action.(Micah 6:8, Eph 4:3).This imperative comes in obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ who came and comes again so that " All may have Life Abundant". (John 10:10)

For this reason we are especially grateful to the LWF for your inspirational ,scripture rooted reflections on Reformation, proclaiming clearly that " We are Liberated by God's Grace" and so, that in this world fallen among thieves: Salvation is Not for Sale, Creation is Not for Sale and Human Being are not for Sale. Your reflections have stimulated us to clearly move our theological reflection about the Reformation into the Present Tense. And in the spirit of your meeting today guided by scripture and prayer to discern God's future.

This imperative of unity in response to God's gift and call builds upon LWF significant and historic ecumenical contributions. We give thanks to God to you and to the Roman

Catholic Church for the profound and transformative contribution of the JDDJ and the process of moving from Conflict to Communion which sustained it. Thanks to and our common dialogue Partner we all approach the 500 years in humble repentance and well able to affirm the ever widening road to the visible unity which we seek, God commands and the world needs as we show that divisions can and must be overcome. You also gave a great gift to us in your fraternal ecumenical invitation to take up again the process of the Reformed Family associating with the JDDJ. I am very happy to report that that process has been embraced and we are vigorously working towards association as we add from the Reformed perspective a special emphasis on the inseparability of Justification and Justice.

We are also excited that the occasion of the 500 years Reformation celebration and the holding of our upcoming General Council provides us with a special opportunity to lift up and build upon the very positive results of our most recent Lutheran Reformed Dialogue in some renewed form of public witness, proclamation and statement of intention to not rest until the full communion which God calls us to is fully achieved. We are all learning that we need find ways to lift up our bi-lateral relationships and accomplishments in ways that strengthen our other bi-lateral relationships and so strengthen the unity of the church universal. Thanks to you the celebration in Lund 2016 and the year 2017 gives of several powerful opportunities to do just that.

Our General Council in Leipzig in June 2017 under the theme “ Living God, Renew and Transform us” is another opportunity offered to contribution to enormous challenge for us to each add our gift to the common task of unity and transformation in service of the God of Life.

We wish your meeting every success and again give thanks to God for your inspiring ecumenical leadership, your impressive and life saving diaconal service and your deep love and accompaniment to us your brothers and sisters in Christ.

So that all may have Life....to God alone the glory.

Chris Ferguson

General Secretary

