

On Reformation and Transformation



God calls us to be community in the world. As the world God made changes, so our reformation continues. God calls us to a life of change, reformation, and transformation. Nurtured by God's grace, we are empowered to advocate for justice; fed by God's Word, we are empowered to share the bread of life with others.

God empowers us to make change, particularly when we are dismayed by the chaos and evil in the world around us. To share the bread of justice is our sacred call. As participants of the LWF Women's Pre-Assembly, we cry for justice in the world. We yearn for cultural transformation because we are shocked that human lives, particularly women and children, are seen as expendable; we see ourselves, the LWF, as less than a full communion when women are barred from leadership; we grieve that people around the world have less than what they need. What can we do?

We call on the LWF to be an inclusive communion: to act with others to end human trafficking; to witness the transformative power of the Gospel and fully embrace women's perspectives and gifts; to insist within our societies that all peoples have a basic right to food.

The need is immediate and we urge the LWF in Assembly to set right actions in motion—"to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor," (Luke 4:18b-19).

The following are our joys and struggles, hopes and dreams. The tree signifies the ongoing growth, life, and energy in the communion on the topic of gender justice with deep roots anchoring the structure. Throughout the brochure, the leaves denote our budding recommendations to the Lutheran community.



Our offerings at the table.



God our Creator, you knitted us together in our mothers' wombs. You call us by name, and ask us to follow you. We pray that all people will be able to fulfil the potential you have placed in us for discipleship, unhindered by the prejudices and fears of others. Amen.



©LWF/T.Rakoto

Prepared and proclaimed by the
LWF Women's Pre-Assembly,
Bossey, Switzerland, 27-31 October 2009.

For more information please contact the Women in Church and Society (WICAS) desk at:

The Lutheran World Federation
Department for Mission and Development
Women in Church and Society
150 Route de Ferney
P.O. Box 2100
CH-1211 Geneva 2
Switzerland

or visit:

www.lutheranworld.org/what_we_do/dmd/DMD-WICAS.htm

Special thanks to M. McCracken, L. Post Bushkofsky, and M. Sadler for additional photos.

Women on the way to the Eleventh LWF Assembly



"When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them, Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him," (Luke 24: 30-31)

Human Trafficking

"For freedom Christ has set us free, stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery" (Galatians 5:1). "The King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you did it to me'" (Matthew 25:40).

The Covenanted Community: God calls us as a community gathered around the promise of a new covenant to care for all, the orphans, widows, poor and marginalized; we are to see Christ in our neighbor.

The Two Kingdoms: Creation is God's Kingdom. God uses the Law to ensure peace and good government, to punish evil and promote good. God uses the Gospel through Word and Sacrament to forgive sins, comfort the weary and build up the Church and her people.

- **Public rejection of human trafficking.** We join with the LWF Council in absolutely rejecting "the turning of human beings into commodities, especially for the purposes of forced or exploitative labor, sexual exploitation, forced marriage, armed conflict or 'organ harvesting,'" (2009).
- **Create resources, especially theological reflection, to help churches speak about human trafficking. The resources must challenge the view that trafficking happens elsewhere, as well as contextualize the reality.**
- **Fund a summit involving theologians, pastors, service providers, and those who have been trafficked to develop strategies, sharing best practices and experiences.**
- **Wholeness for victims.** We express our deepest compassion and sorrow for all those who have been victims of trafficking and call for them to be as honored and respected as ourselves.
- **Facilitate the construction of partnerships and cooperation between church and society, which both play roles in bringing about cultural transformation and the elimination of trafficking, through Law and Gospel.**
- **Commodification as sin.** We believe that the commodification of human beings is sinful. In some places women sell themselves to put food on the table for their families. The Church must combat the sale of women's and children's bodies, particularly at this time of global financial crisis.
- **Combat consumerism and commodification that encourages the perception that women and children are dispensable and saleable.**
- **Counter the negative valuation of female bodies by strengthening our understanding that female bodies belong to the body of Christ and encouraging rites and liturgies for female bodies and lives, which need to be written in local languages and local paradigms.**

Women in Leadership

"There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female, for all of you are one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28).

Vocation: The call to lead, serve, and teach is a manifestation of the vocation that God has named for us. In considering women's ministry, we think anew about leadership and partnership, service and diakonia.

Image of God: Men and women are made in God's image. The wholeness of the Church requires both men and women to be included. To denigrate women is to leave a wound on the Body of Christ.

- **Ordination.** We strongly affirm the LWF commitment to the ordination of women made first by the 1984 assembly.
- **Encourage member churches to set up appropriate legislation and regulations that enable women to take positions of leadership—ordained and lay—and to pursue theological education.**
- **Vocational gifts.** We believe that women bring an essential perspective to all types of ministry—ordained and lay—in an increasingly fractured and fractious world.
- **Vocational leadership.** We deplore the existence of the "stained glass ceiling," which ensures that women—who can see the heights of their vocation—cannot ascend to the higher leadership levels to which they may know themselves to be making called.
- **Identify a process for naming female candidates to LWF President, LWF Council, and other LWF positions.**
- **Modeling.** We recognize the importance of modeling and encourage churches worldwide to experience women in the pulpit, at the altar, and in decision-making bodies.
- **Create opportunities for member churches to see visible change in the Lutheran family, for instance through church-to-church visits.**
- **Theology.** We uplift women's contributions to theology—including feminist, womanist, *mujerista*—and advocate for their inclusion in all normative, Lutheran, theological discourse.
- **Create an LWF task force to organize theological discussion and look for guiding gender justice principles so that member churches can contextualize and promote gender policies.**
- **Teach theology from women's perspectives to students, pastors, and church leaders, through regional consultations and feminist theology courses at seminaries.**

Food Justice

"[A capable wife] considers a field and buys it, with the fruit of her hands she plants a vineyard, She girds herself with strength and makes her arms strong, She perceives that her merchandise is profitable, She opens her hand to the poor and reaches out her hands to the needy" (Proverbs 31: 16-18a, 20).

Faith and Works: In faith, and through the grace of God, we receive the good news of salvation and the Kingdom of God. Knowing ourselves loved and saved by God turns us back to this world, and to service of our neighbor. We hear the call of Christ in the call of our neighbor.

The Call to Serve: The Christian Church has, since its very beginnings, placed diakonia alongside the ministry of Word and Sacrament as fundamental to our shared life. 'Waiting at tables' includes ensuring that the tables are spread with food for all.

- **Right to land and food.** We deplore the fact that many women suffer from lack of access to land, especially where laws forbid women to inherit property. We affirm their right to safe nutritious food and clean water. Everyone should be free from hunger, eating food that is available, accessible, affordable and acceptable.
- **Encourage churches to engage in campaigns to insist upon their governments' actions, commitments, and attitudes to food justice, especially as they relate to women and children, to gain information and formulate targeted action.**
- **Naming the disparity.** We acknowledge the chasm that separates those who suffer from famine and deprivation, and those who consume too much. When we pray, we acknowledge that food is a gift from God, and ask that it continues to sustain our daily life.
- **For a worldwide increase in food sovereignty, our transformation needs to contribute to gender justice. We in the LWF need to connect the churches and the world in our acts of transformation for long-term, sustainable change.**
- **Food production, distribution, and consumption.** We lament that while women worldwide remain the major producers of food, they are often the last to receive what they have produced. Food justice demands just production, distribution, and consumption.
- **Encourage active member church participation in the fight for food justice, for instance through ecumenical campaigns such as Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance "Churches' Week of Action on Food" with focus on gender disparities.**