

The Lutheran World Federation – A Communion of Churches

**North American Pre-Assembly Consultation
Kitchener, Ontario, Canada
31 January 2010**

Greetings to our brothers and sisters throughout the communion in the name of our crucified and risen Lord, Jesus Christ, from your brothers and sisters in the North America region of Lutheran World Federation.

We—the North American delegates, stewards, and advisors—gathered from 28 to 31 January 2010 in Kitchener, Ontario, to prepare for the 11th Assembly of the LWF, through worship and Bible study related to our Assembly theme, “Give Us Today Our Daily Bread”. As North Americans, we live out of diverse backgrounds and contextual experiences and are living into what that means for us as a region and as part of the LWF communion. We recognize our radical dependence on the body of Christ broken for us to give us life. We realize that in the midst of our own brokenness, as baptized children of God, we are called to be the bread of life for the world.

This calling is lived out in the layers of relationship that bind us together. This calling is lived out through diaconal actions, including in times of crises such as the devastating earthquake two weeks ago in our neighbor Haiti. We shared our stories of those among us whose local communities lost loved ones. We prayed for those who are grieving and displaced. We gave thanks for how the gift of communion through the LWF makes possible the mobilization of human and financial resources necessary for immediate response and long-term rebuilding of communities.

We give thanks to God for the faithful witness to Christ that is reported to us from other parts of the communion and rejoice when people are brought to Christ through baptism.

We give thanks for being able to participate as members of the one body of Christ in a communion that is spiritual, sacramental, confessional, in order to witness to the unending love of God through Christ Jesus. We have experienced these marks of communion during our time with one another, through meaningful Bible study, insightful presenters, and honest sharing. Sisters and brothers at St. Peter’s Lutheran Church in Kitchener graciously hosted us, providing our meeting space and feeding us with homemade meals. As we gathered for worship with our host congregation on Sunday morning, we experienced the one who calls us into relationship beyond ourselves and gave thanks once again for the gift of being in communion.

At the same time, we recognize there are many ways, known and unknown, in which we disappoint and break relationships with our brothers and sisters in our own communities and around the world. We recognize our own complicity in perpetuating systems that compound injustices and contribute to many of the crises in the world: lack of access to nourishing food and clean water; climate change and its consequences for food security and sustainable livelihoods and communities; illegitimate debt and our societies’ roles in enabling this system of bondage; investing in and perpetuating economic assumptions and practices (even after the 2008 financial crisis) that lead toward greater inequities and impoverishment; the continuing scourge of HIV & AIDS in some of our cities as well as throughout the world; the oppression under which the First Nations of North America have suffered for so long; and the expanding gap between rich and poor worldwide and within our own region. We recognize our participation in systems and forces that lead us to tear one another down rather than build up according to the ways of love, justice, and peace.

In these ways and more, we recognize that we do not live in isolation. We recognize that we are not whole without deepening our relationships with one another. We look with hope to the one who raises us to life and fills us with the gifts of the Spirit for the sake of the unity of the church and our witness to this hurting world. We recognize that we cannot be the body of Christ for the world by ourselves. We need each other to be fully who God is calling us to be. We say to others within the whole body of Christ that we are less than whole apart from you.

Hope-filled, we anticipate gathering in Stuttgart 2010 as a visible witness to the communion we share. We look forward to listening and learning more deeply from one another. We expect to be transformed, encouraged, and challenged through our encounters and deepened relationship. We look forward to a renewed Lutheran communion where the gifts of all – young and old, women and men, clergy and lay – are fully present in the life, work, and leadership of our communion. As we continue to prepare for our time together, we pray with thanksgiving for the unity we share in Christ Jesus our Lord and trust in the God who continues to challenge us beyond ourselves in ways that we cannot yet imagine.

In faithful fellowship,

North American Pre-Assembly Consultation

