

Message of the Pre-Assembly
The Lutheran World Federation Member Churches in
Latin America and the Caribbean
Bogotá, Colombia, 12 – 16 April 2010
“Give Us Today Our Daily Bread”



The representatives of the churches from Latin America and the Caribbean to the Eleventh Assembly of The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) met from 12 to 16 April 2010 in Colombia, a country suffering from war and exclusion.

Recognizing that the text and theme of the gathering, “Give Us Today Our Daily Bread,” is not an intercessory prayer taught by Jesus to his disciples, but a prayer that requires reflection and solidarity with the community, we declare:

The reality of Latin American and the Caribbean today is closely linked with the people’s history that has been marked by colonization, slavery, dependency, dictatorship and weak economies. By the grace of God, this history has also been marked by resistance struggles and affirmation of the people’s own identity. There are therefore many challenges with which the countries are now confronted. Among these many challenges, the Pre-Assembly voiced deep concern about the scourge of illegitimate external debt that deprives millions of people around the world of their daily bread, about armed conflict, gender inequity, the lack of visibility given to youth in society, food injustice and its implications, the destruction of the environment, climate change, and the epidemic of HIV and AIDS. We commit ourselves to increasing our efforts and our resistance, together with all the churches of the Lutheran communion, to respond to these cries. And, although the abundance of human and natural resources in our countries is obvious, there is suffering because of the unequal distribution of wealth, and the human injustice caused by war and internal conflicts continues. In this situation, the Lutheran communion has taken practical steps through its diaconal actions and programs, generating processes of empowerment among the most marginalized sectors. These actions make it possible to take a few steps in the search for equal access to daily bread for everyone.

Give us today our daily bread is the cry of the earth in Latin America and the Caribbean, an impoverished earth, violated and hungry for food justice, ecological justice and gender justice. In this situation, bread can be translated into inclusion and hospitality in communities that pray and denounce the way in which access to dignified and just bread is threatened by the inequalities in our context.

To pray the Lord’s Prayer is to seek justice and reconciliation for the whole creation, praying for bread that becomes incarnate and gives dignity to life.

In this spirit, and examining the history of the actions of Lutheran churches in the world, we consider it necessary to publicly ask for forgiveness for the events that affected Mennonite brothers and sisters in this world. This action is an acknowledgment of God’s compassion on our own lives. Asking God and our brothers and sisters for forgiveness is also a first step that

can make the journey of trust and communion possible. This step must be taken by the worldwide Lutheran communion.

Resistance to a globalization determined by neo-liberal models can become a reality by globalizing initiatives for peace and non-violence. During the Latin American and Caribbean Pre-Assembly we experienced the celebration of reconciliation and, although we admit differences in doctrine, we call upon the worldwide Lutheran communion to promote actions to enable us to recognize one another as sisters and brothers, as daughters and sons of God.

We reaffirm the centrality of the global Lutheran communion in the life of our churches in Latin America and the Caribbean. We acknowledge that there are methodological challenges concerning the reception, distribution and implementation of global programs in our region. We therefore underline the need of reinforcing regional strategic plans in dialogue and communion with all sister churches of the LWF, thus making these activities viable and visible in our continent.

The churches from Latin America and the Caribbean declare that the document “Marriage, Family and Human Sexuality” produced by the LWF has been a working tool of great doctrinal value for tackling these issues, which are important in society and in the church. The deliberation, reflection and taking of a stand on the above issues should not be a reason for disunion in the global Lutheran communion; on the contrary, recognizing that our unity is in Christ, decision-making on these questions should take account, with respect, goodwill and due time, in view of the social and cultural contexts in which our churches live. At the same time, we call upon our churches to consider the global context with its rich diversity, and to grow in communion.

With gratitude to God we celebrate the process that Latin American churches have undergone in recognizing the gifts of women who have taken on leadership responsibilities and been ordained to the pastoral ministry. However, we see that there are still big challenges ahead. As men and women, delegates and leaders of the church, we make a prophetic commitment to establish processes and practices of gender justice.

We also celebrate that significant steps have been taken with regard to the participation of Latin American and Caribbean youth in our churches. Opportunities for training and participation have been provided but still need to be strengthened regarding education, identity and gender violence. We propose the creation of a Latin American and Caribbean network of youth in order to strengthen alliances, exchange information and experiences and promote meetings and regional capacity training. Reaffirming that we are all one body and that each member of the body is important in the life of the church regardless of age, we commit ourselves to continue promoting the leadership of young people.

The Latin American and Caribbean member churches urge the LWF to maintain the communion and to express itself prophetically when intolerance attacks human rights and therefore life as well.