



LWF ELEVENTH ASSEMBLY

The Report of the General Secretary
on behalf of the Council

From Winnipeg to Stuttgart

2003–2010



The Lutheran World Federation
– A Communion of Churches



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THE REPORT OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY ON BEHALF OF THE COUNCIL



THE LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION – A COMMUNION OF CHURCHES

Published by
The Lutheran World Federation
Office for Communication Services
P.O. Box 2100
CH-1211 Geneva 2
Switzerland
E-mail: info@lutheranworld.org
www.lutheranworld.org

Concept, editing, translation, revision, layout and photo research: LWF Office for Communication Services together with Leonor Alonso, John P. Asling, Dorothea Beck, Hilde Benz-Werner, Eva Garcia Fernandez, Michel Hourst, Angelika Joachim, Kathy Magnus, Françoise Nagy, Miriam Reidy-Prost, Elizabeth Visinand

Former LWF Assembly coordinator Rev. Arthur Lechnitz (1949-2009) was instrumental in formulating the concept of this report.

Special thanks to members of the LWF Staff Working Teams for providing the original content.

Editorial Board: The LWF Executive Committee

Cover photos: *The 2009 Württemberg Protestant youth day at Stuttgart's market square; in the background is the "Stiftskirche."* © Eberhard Fuhr ejw-agentur

Background: *Tenth Assembly participants at the Oodena Circle of The Forks in Winnipeg, protest the Canadian government's refusal to grant visas to some delegates from developing nations.* © LWF/D. Zimmermann

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Printed in Switzerland by SRO-Kundig on paper certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (www.fsc.org)

ISBN 978-3-905676-74-7

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Foreword

The Closing Eucharist of the Tenth Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) in Winnipeg, Canada, on 31 July 2003 was simultaneously an opening service for the period chronicled in these pages.

At that service, Rev. Tore Johnsen of the Church of Norway preached on Revelation 21:1-6, reminding us that the new Jerusalem of the text is a symbol of a new, reconciled and healed humanity.

“This city shall not be a city of destruction,” he said. “It will be God’s city, a city of healing for the creation; a city whose name Jerusalem will be reconciled as a city of peace and healing wholeness.”

This healing is brought to the world through Jesus Christ, he added: “By receiving the broken body of Christ, we may be healed.”

Those are important words to remember as we read the pages in this report. *From Winnipeg to Stuttgart – The Report of the General Secretary on Behalf of the Council*, illustrates the collective witness of this global communion of churches as we have sought to bring healing and wholeness to a hurting world in the name of Jesus Christ.

As stated in the title, it is presented to the Assembly by the General Secretary on behalf of the Council. It is not so much an exhaustive account as a representative sampling and highlighting of the most important events, occasions, publications, programmatic actions and projects undertaken during this time.

In Winnipeg, the newly elected LWF President Mark S. Hanson, Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,

and the new Council were duly installed by the outgoing President Bishop Dr Christian Krause, assisted by the General Secretary.

Following the installation service, the Council met to elect Vice Presidents and chairpersons of the various committees and fulfilled other constitutional requirements. However, one of the most daunting tasks that faced the Council at this first meeting was the processing of more than 100 Assembly commitments.

In order to accomplish this task, it initiated a strategic planning process which resulted in the identification of the following four **Priority Areas**:

1. Strengthen Lutheran identity as a communion of churches in mission
2. Deepen ecumenical commitment and foster interfaith relations
3. Bear witness in church and society to God's healing, reconciliation and justice
4. Enhance communication, mutual accountability and sharing

The consultations related to the development of the Strategic Plan for the LWF Secretariat 2007-2011 as a management tool took four years. This was longer than originally envisaged but was nevertheless a process from which the Council, especially the Executive Committee and the staff, learned a great deal. It gradually became clear that this work was indeed an investment in the laying of a strong foundation for the benefit of the next planning cycle after the Eleventh Assembly in Stuttgart, Germany, in 2010.

An additional learning in the course of this exercise was the rediscovery of how complex the LWF is as a multicultural organization. It holds together many ecclesial and spiritual realities nurtured in different contexts.

In addition, we were reminded that life in communion is both a gift and a task. In the face of limited financial and human resources, a new way of working was needed in order to ensure good results from the Strategic Plan. Staff Working Teams (SWTs) were formed

around the four priority areas to ensure co-ordination and unity of purpose in program development, financial and human resource planning, as well as in other areas of work.

The Executive Committee itself was involved on behalf of the Council in between meetings of the Council. Members were very much involved in the editing of this report.

The significant achievement emerging out of this intensive collaboration at staff level and with the participation of the Executive Committee, was synergy to the LWF's priorities mentioned throughout this report. Three cross-cutting themes emanating directly from actions taken during the past years are highlighted as **Focus** areas:

1. Deepening our life in communion
2. Reconciling in the midst of diversity and conflict
3. Developing capacity and sustainability

Such an approach has also added to the self-understanding of the LWF as an interdependent communion of churches.

The individual department and office reports supplement the documentation according to priority areas, while the **Chronology** offers a complementary overview of major events in the LWF's life and work between assemblies.

This report pays tribute to the fact that the Council approved the Strategic Plan in 2006—three years after the Tenth Assembly. Therefore department and office reports provide supplementary information and mark the transition process. The editorial process also took into account the regular reporting to the LWF constituency through the LWF Annual Report since 2005.

These are some of the reasons why this Report of the General Secretary to the Assembly on behalf of the Council is qualitatively different from the previous ones. It presents a more unified LWF, not only visually, but in terms of substance as well. Therefore the vision and mission of the LWF as articulated in the Constitution and other official documents or actions is upheld in the manner in which this report is presented.