



World Methodist Council

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The President and General Secretary of the World Lutheran Federation
Members of Council
Ecumenical Guests
Sisters and Brothers

It is a singular honour, joy and privilege to greet you in the name of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

I bring greetings and best wishes to you on behalf of the Global Methodist/Wesleyan family as you gather under a timely and challenging theme, “Like a Tree Planted by Streams of Water.” Like you, Methodists are passionately committed to eco-justice and the care of creation. We warmly embrace your theme and look forward to work together with you and other agencies in preserving our fragile planetary home, earth.

The canon of Scripture begins with a tree (Genesis 2:9) and concludes with a tree “whose leaves are for the healing of nations” (Revelation 22:2). Let us not forget the tree that stands at the centre of our faith and the Christ which we preach crucified that is “a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Gentiles” (I Corinthians 1:23).

It is our prayer that as you drink from the calabash of collective wisdom at this Council meeting, the dreams that you shared at the 11th General Assembly in Stuttgart will be incubated and that you will cast fresh vision for the future. In the same way that trees are the lungs of the earth and hold up the sky, may the work of this Council oxygenate the Lutheran Federation so that you may continue to be a cornucopia of blessing to the ecumenical movement and the world that God so loves.

As you gather in Medan, may you, through the worship, devotions, presentations, reports, debates and fellowship, be inspired by the gentle breeze of the Spirit which will help you to bend the moral arc of history to greater justice and peace for all of God’s created order.

It is further our fervent hope and prayer that when Council concludes its work here, you will know that God has spoken and directed you so that you, with the same conviction of the apostles at the first Christian Conference in Rome, can say; “we and the Holy Spirit have agreed....” (Acts 15:28)

The “trees” planted in this Council by your forbears allow you to see beyond the present. Subsequently, the “trees” you plant by streams of water, will be for the generations yet to be born who will enjoy their shade and fruits. Therefore, sow and nurture wisely - build upon the great theological contribution, prophetic witness and moral legacy you have inherited. You stand on the shoulders of giants, and after all, you are only here because of the vision they birthed at Lund in 1947 for greater cooperation within the Lutheran family.

This year we celebrate the 15th Anniversary of the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification signed by the Lutherans, Methodists and Catholics. I live in the hope that we will go beyond declarations to concrete expressions of common witness and visible unity of the Church.

I am confident that you don't just have a story to tell to the nations about what God has done in the past, but you also have a story to tell about the new things God is doing in your midst. The golden age of the Lutheran Church does not lie behind you, but ahead, as you tackle the challenges of the 21st Century.

God has brought you to this place and moment in history.

As you march toward tomorrow's world, we pray that you will move forward with unmatched boldness and commitment, drawing new energy from the same transcendent God who cared for and guided your ancestors.

May God bless the fruits of your deliberations.

Yours in Christian love and service,

Ivan M Abrahams

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