

Message of the Pre-Assembly Youth Conference Executive Summary

Introduction

From July 11th to the 20th 2003, delegates and stewards to the 2003 Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation, along with ecumenical guests and advisors, met at the University of Guelph as the Pre-Assembly Youth Conference (PAYC). The theme of the gathering was “For the Healing of the World,” a theme shared with the Tenth LWF Assembly, for which this meeting was, in part, a preparation. Much of the primary work of the participants centered around the work of the village groups. These groups were the same as those at the Tenth Assembly, although the first and second groups were combined.

One of the problems of our common time together, is that many youth delegates and stewards were denied visas, and could not take part. It is unfortunate that people were prevented from participating due to being young and not as wealthy as some.

After hearing reports from the village groups, the PAYC acted on the following issues:

God’s Healing Gifts of Justification and Communion

- Encouragement to the churches to promote a wider understanding of justification by grace.
- Affirmation of Ecumenical Dialog to further strengthen the communion, especially dialog with the Roman Catholic Church following the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification.

Healing Divisions Within the One Church

- That it is important that the LWF’s study of church authority also include attention to teaching authority.
- To call the LWF to begin a study of the history of the Lutheran churches, prompting to promote understanding between churches.
- Also a common history of the Lutheran Reformation with the Roman Catholic Church to promote common understanding, continuing the work of the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*. This aims at less biased understanding of our shared past to be used in teaching the new generations of the Church.

The Mission of the Church in Multi-Faith Contexts

- Encourage the LWF to continue in inter-faith dialog, on its own, and through the WCC.
- Affirming to continue witness in words and deeds (diakonia) to work for peace, justice and healing as an essential part of the mission of our church in multi-faith contexts.

Removing Barriers that Exclude

- Reaffirmation of the Church's calling to include those excluded by society through concrete action plans, especially highlighting exclusion by stigmatization.
- To work for the inclusion of those for whom language is a barrier to participation in LWF events.

The Church's Ministry of Healing

- That the LWF promote training of people in medical-pastoral care and holistic concepts of healing.

Justice and Healing in Families

- Challenged the member churches to focus on prevention of HIV/AIDS, including advocacy for treatment of sexually transmitted diseases, including advocating for the treatment of STDs, against harmful cultural practices, such as dry sex, and for the use of condoms. Also to promote women's sexual self-determination, and the protection of children.
- Challenged the LWF to encourage discussion of sexuality, particularly regarding same-sex relationships.

Overcoming Violence

- Called for wider discussion and study of violence against children, especially child labor.
- Called for global action against sexual violence against children and youth.

Transforming Economic Globalization

- Called for an international campaign to promote on every level the right to access basic goods and services.

Healing Creation

- Called upon the US Government to sign the Kyoto Protocol.
- That the LWF and member churches take concrete action to work against climate change.

In addition, the PAYC acted concerning the place of youth in the Church

- Asked the LWF Assembly to rebuke the US and Canadian Governments for denying visas to youth for participation in the assembly.
- Asked LWF to extend the term of the YICAS secretary from four to six years, which would begin half-way between two Assemblies, and to make having a YICAS secretary a financial priority.

- Urged member churches in Asia, and other regions, to encourage participation of youth in decision making processes.
- Strongly urged the Assembly to reaffirm the 8th Assembly's commitment to 20% youth participation, and asked member churches to ensure gender balance among youth.

Finally, the PAYC set the following priorities for the Youth in Church and Society Desk for the next six years:

Programmatic Priorities

- Promote wider knowledge of YICAS work and programs
- Education and prevention of HIV/AIDS
- Economic Globalization and Environmental Advocacy
- Countering violence against children and youth
- Ecumenical and inter-religious dialog
- Youth participation in decision making bodies and processes.

Methodological Priorities

- Creation of YICAS database of young leaders in the Church
- Seeking further transparency in delegate selection and strengthening role of youth
- Use of multiple languages where appropriate
- Seeking to include youth more in the churches' life and work especially on the national and local level.

The Pre-Assembly hopes that the LWF village groups will take the young people's reports and recommendations for actions into consideration, and that the LWF Assembly will consider the motions concerning youth. A complete PAYC report, containing summary of the village groups discussion and the complete text of motions is also available at the Department for Mission and Development Display table and at the Youth Room – Wuasi de Huaynas, Room 13.