



**LIVING GOD
RENEW AND
TRANSFORM US**

World Communion of Reformed Churches

Called to communion, committed to justice

***Greetings to 12th Assembly of Lutheran World Federation meeting in Windhoek, Namibia
From World Communion of Reformed Churches
Rev. Dr. Christopher Ferguson, General Secretary***

It is a great honour and a special privilege for me to bring greetings to this dynamic, prophetic and vibrant meeting of our beloved sister Communion on behalf of myself and our president, the Rev. Dr. Jerry Pillay. These greetings come from the over 230 member churches in 109 countries that include Presbyterian, Reformed, Congregational, Waldensian, Czech Brethren and other first Reformation churches as well as a significant number of United and Uniting Churches. Some of our United Churches are of LWF as well, testifying to yet another strong link in our shared identity and vocation as ecumenical churches of the Protestant Reformation.

As you know the WCRC is young as a Communion of churches in its present form. In 2010 the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the Reformed Ecumenical Council joined to form the WCRC. In the last seven years we have faced significant challenges and yet have advanced in our understanding of being “called to communion and committed to justice.”

Soon after 2010 we entered into a significant financial crisis that led us to make the very painful and difficult decision to move out of the Ecumenical Centre and relocate our offices to Hannover, Germany. Thanks to the support, generosity and hospitality of our German churches we have achieved a degree of relative stability but still face challenges. It is clear that we have had to make extra efforts to find ways to maintain and even deepen ecumenical collaboration now that we are no longer in Geneva. Since I began my time as general secretary, the LWF has been especially open and constructive in ensuring the special and important relationship between our two Communions flourishes. I give thanks to Martin Junge, your general secretary, and to your President Munib Younan for profound ecumenical collegiality and solidarity in overcoming distances and ensuring effective collaboration.

I give thanks to God for the ecumenical vision and vocation for reconciliation, Christian unity and prophetic diaconal service of LWF. You have inspired us and provided bold yet humble leadership in the deep and transformative process with the Roman Catholic Church moving from “conflict to communion” that found such a powerful worldwide witness in Lund last October.

I am extremely happy to share with you that, thanks to your encouragement and faithful persistence, the WCRC re-activated our engagement with the process of association with the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification. After consultations and dialogue within our Communion we have decided to associate with the JDDJ in the spirit of “differentiating consensus” and have prepared an associating statement lifting up the Reformed understanding of the inseparable relation of justice and justification. We will formally sign our association in a special service of worship and witness to Christian unity in the context of the 500-year Reformation(s) commemoration to be held in Wittenberg during the course of our General Council meeting.



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In addition to the JDDJ association we will add to our ecumenical witness with LWF by signing together the "Wittenberg Witness," where the LWF and WCRC as churches of the Reformation make public and visible our commitment to Christian unity by pledging concrete steps to deepen the reception and put into practice the results of our Reformed-Lutheran dialogue, *On Being the Church*, so that the unity of the church for the transformation of the world becomes a reality in these time of peril for the people and planet.

There are many things that we can and should do together! I give thanks that God has given us the gift of partnership in mission, witness and diakonia with LWF. I hope that in six or seven years we will be able to celebrate our general assemblies in the same time and place. Separate meetings, yes, but joined for common worship, reflection and witness together. Can you imagine that! Let's think about it!

We are celebrating our General Council meeting in Leipzig, Germany, from June 29 to July 7. Our theme, "Living God, renew and transform us," speaks to the urgency of turning to the God of Life in the midst of a world viciously dominated by the idols of death and destruction.

I end my greetings by lifting a theme text for our General Council, Romans 12:2: "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God."

In seeking to discern God's will in these troubled and turbulent times we have been strengthened and uplifted by your life and witness. Your theme for this assembly has deepened our own reflections and has modelled for us how to bring the Good News of God's grace into a world fallen among thieves: we seek together transformation declaring with you: Salvation not for sale, human beings not for sale, and creation not for sale.

Thanks be to God.

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More information on the WCRC's association to the JDDJ can be found at: wrc.ch/jddj

Communion: On Being the Church can be found at: wrc.ch/theology/dialogues