

MESSAGE FROM THE LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE OF THE LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION MEMBER CHURCHES IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN & NORTH AMERICA

LIMA, PERU, 10 TO 14 MAY 2019

The Leadership Conference (COL) of the LWF member churches in Latin America and the Caribbean & North America took place from 10 to 14 May in Lima, Peru, focusing on the theme: “You send your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the earth” Psalm 104:30.

Participants listened to the diverse contexts of different churches and reaffirmed the varying ways I which they work to confront crisis situations in their countries.

Each church shared experiences that have helped to revitalize their work, highlighting themes such as Migration, Theological Formation, Public Witness, Youth Action, Climate Justice and Gender Justice. They agreed that all ministerial work should be inspired by their faith as followers of Jesus.

The churches committed to continue strengthening each other through their local and regional COL networks in order to enhance greater collaboration and accompaniment as relevant resources for their mission.

Leaders of the Youth network affirmed the importance of visibility, inclusion and listening to the way churches at regional and at global level deal with their many common challenges. Through a self-critical analysis of their work, the youth leaders pledged (1) to communicate more regularly with each other, (2) to closely monitor experiences and feedback, and (3) to jointly prepare and train representatives to take part in the COP 25 meeting.

Members of the Women and Gender Justice network noted that their relationships have been enriched by regular communication and through the production of theological resources. They pledged to continue the task of mutual empowerment in order to improve and multiply local capacities, beginning by mapping human resources in the churches and the work that has already been done. They also emphasized the importance of ongoing training, both within and outside of the church. As a sustainability mechanism, they agreed to engage or strengthen existing support from civil and state organizations, from local communities, from the LWF and its networks, as well as offering their support to such organizations.

Participants proposed that continuous theological and ministerial training, making use of the existing resources in the region, could be further developed through networks at regional level, with the bishops and pastor presidents agreeing to pursue this work as a regional project. It was also agreed that the two churches of the North America region will participate in COL as member churches. This agreement will be implemented during the annual Conferences of both regions under the name: Leadership Conference of the Americas, witnessing to the fact that they belong to the one body.

In relation to the LWF 2019 – 2024 Strategy, the regions agreed to define Migration and Climate Justice as themes for the coming years, with Gender Justice and theological formation becoming transversal themes.

As member churches of the LWF, COL agreed to request that the Lutheran World Federation Council make a statement in regard to the socio-political situation in Venezuela and Nicaragua, as well as to the peace process in Colombia, and to the protection of human rights defenders in Guatemala. We expressed our solidarity with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Venezuela, the Nicaraguan Lutheran Church of Faith and Hope, and the Guatemalan Lutheran Church. At the same time, COL expressed solidarity and concern about the situation of the Evangelical United Church of Cuba and the Cuban people in relation to the blockade of United States government.

COL expressed gratitude to the Lutheran Church of Peru (IL-P) for hosting the event, with particular appreciation for those who worked to provide such a pleasant and fruitful space. We prayed that God would continue to accompany and unite the churches to carry out his mission.

Lima, 14 May, 2019