



THE LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION

A COMMUNION OF CHURCHES – EINE KIRCHENGEMEINSCHAFT – UNA COMUNIÓN DE IGLESIAS – UNE COMMUNION D'ÉGLISES

LUTHERISCHER WELTBUND – FEDERACIÓN LUTERANA MUNDIAL – FÉDÉRATION LUTHÉRIENNE MONDIALE

Office of the General Secretary

LWF Executive Committee

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Pastoral Message concerning the Global Financial Crisis

We the members of the LWF Executive Committee, comprising Lutheran church leaders from all regions of the world, are deeply disturbed and moved by the suffering, fear and helplessness experienced by people and communities caused by the current global financial crisis – in our respective contexts throughout the world.

Many voices are analyzing the causes and consequences of this crisis, and we join those denouncing the collective failure of responsibility and accountability on the part of governments, banks and financial institutions, business leaders and investors.

Scripture repeatedly speaks out against the idolatry of riches, and against unconstrained greed and its consequences. Scripture also reminds us that God is the one true God in whom we can trust when all else falls and fails.

In this context, we call upon our member churches to stand and engage with the people most affected, in faith, solidarity and care. As people of faith, we are called to discern what God is saying to us in the midst of this crisis, to denounce injustice and irresponsibility, to proclaim God's intentions for life in community, and to respond compassionately to people's deep anxiety for their lives and future.

As always, it is the poor and vulnerable who will bear the greatest burden. While banks and financial institutions benefit from unprecedented rescue packages, humanitarian aid and development budgets are likely to be placed under greater pressure. We find it painful to note how quickly massive financial resources could be mobilized to prop up the financial markets and institutions in this moment of crisis, when in much better economic times a fraction of those resources could not be found to eliminate extreme poverty around the world. As churches, we are challenged to maintain our commitment to support and give hope to the poorest and most vulnerable, in our communities and throughout the world.

The path we had been following has not been sustainable – economically, socially and environmentally. We now see that the consequences are catastrophic. Our communities of faith can be places in which we struggle together to name the truth of our situation and what needs to be changed, to be converted and to act faithfully. We are also called to join with others in rebuilding trust in community, and in creating new economic institutions and forms of governance that are more responsive to the claims of justice and thus worthy of trust.

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The Executive Committee conveys to all member churches the LWF leadership's pastoral concern and accompaniment, and invites member churches to share their experiences of their challenges and their responses - in relation to counseling, mission and diakonia, and in relation to global economic governance - and to care for and support each other in the midst of this crisis.