

CONSTITUTION OF THE LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION

(as adopted by the LWF Eighth Assembly, Curitiba, Brazil, 1990, including amendments adopted by the LWF Ninth Assembly, Hong Kong, 1997)

I. NAME

The name of the body organized under this Constitution shall be The Lutheran World Federation.

II. DOCTRINAL BASIS

The Lutheran World Federation confesses the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the only source and norm of its doctrine, life and service. It sees in the three Ecumenical Creeds and in the Confessions of the Lutheran Church, especially in the unaltered Augsburg Confession and the Small Catechism of Martin Luther, a pure exposition of the Word of God.

III. NATURE AND FUNCTIONS

The Lutheran World Federation is a communion of churches which confess the triune God, agree in the proclamation of the Word of God and are united in pulpit and altar fellowship.

The Lutheran World Federation confesses the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church and is resolved to serve Christian unity throughout the world.

The Lutheran World Federation:

- furthers the united witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and strengthens the member churches in carrying out the missionary command and in their efforts towards Christian

unity worldwide;

- furthers worldwide among the member churches diaconic action, alleviation of human need, promotion of peace and human rights, social and economic justice, care for God's creation and sharing of resources;
- furthers through cooperative study the self-understanding and the communion of member churches and helps them to act jointly in common tasks.

IV. SCOPE OF AUTHORITY

As instrument of its autonomous member churches the Lutheran World Federation may take action in matters committed to it by the member churches. It may act on behalf of one or more churches in such specific tasks as they commit to it. It may request individual member churches to assume tasks on behalf of the entire Communion.

V. MEMBERSHIP AND OTHER FORMS OF AFFILIATION

1. Member Churches

The Lutheran World Federation consists of churches which accept the doctrinal basis set forth in Article II of this Constitution.

Each church which applies for membership in the Federation shall declare its acceptance of this Constitution. Reception into membership shall be decided by the Federation in the Assembly, or in the interim, by the Council.

Membership in the Federation may be terminated by withdrawal. Upon recommendation of the Council, the Assembly may suspend or terminate the membership by a two-thirds vote of the delegates.

Procedures relating to membership shall be governed by the Bylaws.

2. Recognized Churches, Councils and Congregations

The Lutheran World Federation may recognize as eligible to participate in the work of the Federation non-member churches, councils or congregations which accept the doctrinal basis set forth in Article II of this Constitution (Associate Membership).

The granting, conditions and continuation of such recognition shall be governed by the Bylaws.

VI. ORGANIZATION

The Lutheran World Federation shall exercise its functions through the Assembly, the Council, the Secretariat and appropriate instrumentalities of the member churches. In all these functions of the Federation, ordained and lay persons, men, women and youth shall be eligible to participate.

VII. ASSEMBLY

1. The Assembly shall consist of representatives of the member churches of the Federation. As the principal

authority of the Lutheran World Federation, the Assembly shall:

- be responsible for the Constitution;
- give general direction to the work of the Federation;
- elect the President and the members of the Council;
- act on the reports of the President, the General Secretary and the Treasurer.

2. The Assembly shall normally be held every six years with the time, place and program to be determined by the Council.

Extraordinary Assemblies may be called by the Council and shall be called at the request of one-fifth of the member churches.

3. The number of representatives to the Assembly and their distribution among the member churches shall be determined by the Council.

Each member church shall have the right to have at least one representative in the Assembly.

Due regard shall be given to the numerical size of member churches and their distributions by continents and countries.

4. The Council may invite representatives of the Lutheran congregations in union church bodies or of Lutheran associations and organizations to the Assembly in a consultative capacity if these are not represented by member churches.

The number of these representatives shall be determined by the Council.

VIII. COUNCIL

1. The Council shall be composed of the President, the Treasurer, and 48 persons to be elected by the Assembly.

Upon nomination by the churches, 48 members of the Council shall be elected by the Assembly by a majority of the votes cast.

The Assembly shall have the right to elect persons other than those nominated by member churches and other than

those who are delegates to the Assembly provided the consent of the relevant member churches is given.

Election procedure and distribution of seats to the continents and countries shall be governed in the Bylaws. A due representation of ordained and lay persons, women, men and youth shall be observed.

The term of office of the Council shall end at the close of the next ordinary Assembly. Members of the Council shall be eligible for one reelection.

2. The Council is responsible for the business of the Federation in the interim between ordinary Assemblies.
3. The Council shall elect the General Secretary (*Article XII*) and the Treasurer (*Article X*) and prescribe their duties.

The term of office of persons elected by the Council may be terminated before expiration by a two-thirds vote of the members of the Council.

The Council shall decide on the structure of the Secretariat and present an annual report to the member churches.

4. Upon death or incapacity of the President, the Council shall elect a president within three months.

If a member of the Council can no longer be present for his/her term of office, the Council elects in consultation with the member church a deputy for the remaining term of service.

5. The Council shall decide on the budgets of the Federation. It shall receive the audited accounts and approve them.
6. The Council shall elect the Vice-Presidents from among its members taking into consideration the seven geographical areas.

The Council shall elect from among its members an Executive Committee and Program Committees as required and appoint their chairpersons.

The Executive Committee shall be composed of the following persons: The President, the Vice-Presidents, the Treasurer and the chairpersons of the Program Committees.

For the Program Committees the Council elects for its term of office up to 30 advisers with voting rights in the committees.

The Council may appoint Standing Committees or *ad hoc* sub-committees as required.

The Executive Committee shall pursue the duties assigned to it by the Council to ensure the proper functioning of the Federation.

Among other things, it determines who is entitled to sign on behalf of the Lutheran World Federation within the Council or the administration.

The Executive Committee shall serve as the Personnel Committee. It shall also serve as the LWF Board of Trustees.

IX. NATIONAL COMMITTEES

The member churches in each country may constitute a National Committee to coordinate the relationships to the Federation. The right of direct communication between the member churches and the LWF shall be retained. Each National Committee shall present to the Council an annual report on its activities.

X. OFFICERS

1. President

The election of the President by the Assembly shall be by a majority of the votes cast in a written ballot.

The President shall assume office immediately after the close of the Assembly at which the election was held. He/she shall hold office until the close of the following ordinary Assembly and shall not be eligible for a second term.

The President shall be the chief official representative and spokesperson of the Federation. He/she shall be the presiding officer of the Assembly, the Council and the Executive Committee.

The President shall oversee the life and work of the Federation, in consultation with the Treasurer and General Secretary.

2. Treasurer

The Treasurer shall be elected by the Council at its constituting meeting and shall hold office until the close of the following ordinary Assembly.

The Treasurer shall oversee the financial activities and shall counsel the President and the General Secretary in this respect.

XI. SECRETARIAT

The Federation shall have a Secretariat adequate to carry out its tasks.

The Council shall authorize the structure and the Terms of Reference of the Secretariat.

XII. GENERAL SECRETARY

The General Secretary shall be responsible to the Council for his/her work. He/she shall conduct the business of the

Federation and carry out the decisions of the Assembly and the Council.

The General Secretary shall report to the Assembly and the Council.

XIII. FINANCES

The Council shall authorize the Statement of Needs for transmission to the member churches, National Committees and other agencies, commending it for support through designated and undesignated contributions.

The Council shall allocate membership fees to be paid by member churches. The Council shall receive the auditor's report and adopt the annual financial report. The member churches shall receive an annual financial report.

XIV. AMENDMENTS AND BYLAWS

1. Amendments

Amendments to this Constitution may be made by a two-thirds majority of the votes cast at any ordinary Assembly, provided notice of intention to amend shall have been submitted through the General Secretary to the member churches, three months before the Assembly.

Amendments shall become effective one year after their adoption by the Assembly unless objection has been filed with the Council by at least one-third of the member churches.

2. Bylaws

The Council shall adopt Bylaws to this Constitution. Such Bylaws adopted or amended by the Council shall become effective one year after their adoption unless objection has been filed with the Council by at least one-third of the member churches.

The Assembly may adopt, amend or rescind Bylaws by a

majority of the votes cast. Such decisions shall become effective after one year unless objection has been filed with the Council by at least one-third of the member churches.