



Saksbehandler: Sven Oppegaard

Saksdokumenter:
Report of the Renewal Committee

Saker i de økumeniske organisasjonene

Det lutherske verdensforbund (LVF)

Sammendrag

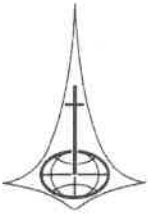
Som en del av forberedelsene mot LVFs generalforsamling i Stuttgart i 2010 nedsatte Eksekutivkomiteen på vegne av Rådsmøtet i 2005 en komité til å vurdere behovet for, og komme med forslag til, forandringer i LVFs profil og struktur. Komiteen er blitt ledet av biskop em. Raymond Schultz (Canada). Fra norsk side deltok generalsekretær Atle Sommerfeldt som representant for de kirkelige bistands- og nødhjelpsorganisasjonene.

Med dette følger komiteens rapport m/oversendelsesbrevet fra komiteens leder, etterfulgt av et svarskjema – "Issues for Consideration" - som sammenfatter de hovedspørsmålene som er reist i teksten.

Forslag til vedtak

1. MKR vurderer denne saken som viktig, både for LVFs fremtid og dets medlemskirker og partnere, så vel som for den videre utvikling av den økumeniske bevegelse.
2. MKR oppnevner en komité som bes sende inn svar på de oppgitte spørsmål, samt eventuelle andre kommentarer, bl.a. i lys av samtalen i rådet. Til komiteen oppnevnes følgende personer:

MKR 27/09(LVF)



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

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Grace and peace to you from God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

On behalf of the Renewal Committee, I am delighted to present this, our second-last report, and commend it to your attention.

The report is in the four official languages of the Communion and is being distributed simultaneously to all member churches and church related organizations for mission and diakonia.

Please give this document your careful consideration and **return your responses to the Office of the LWF General Secretary by 15 July 2009.**

This document constitutes the last major research initiative of the Renewal Committee. Your responses to this report will be considered in depth at the Committee's August meeting and will inform significantly the shape of the final report submitted to Council in October 2009.

We continue to hold the life and mission of each one of you in our prayers and await with anticipation the responses that you will return to us.

With hope in the future, I remain,

Yours truly,

+ 

Bishop em. Ray Schultz
Chairperson of the Renewal Committee

Cc: LWF President Bishop Mark Hanson

P.O. Box 2100, Route de Ferney 150,
CH-1211 Geneva 2, Switzerland
Tel +41/22-791 61 11, Direct +41/22-7916361
Fax +41/22-791 6630, E-mail in@lutheranworld.org

GIVE US TODAY OUR DAILY BREAD

LWF Eleventh Assembly
Stuttgart, Germany
20-27 July 2010

REPORT OF THE RENEWAL COMMITTEE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. **Introduction: The Renewal Process**
 - 1.1 *Renewed Structures*
 - 1.2 *Organizing Principles for Renewal*

2. **Current Global Realities**
 - 2.1 *The Human Landscape*
 - 2.2 *The Ecumenical Landscape*

3. **Nature and Development of the Lutheran Communion**
 - 3.1 *The Church - Universal and Local*
 - 3.2 *Koinonia, Church Unity and Diakonia*
 - 3.3 *Diakonia as integral to the nature of the church*
 - 3.4 *Networking among churches and church organizations for diakonia and mission*
 - 3.5 *Regional expressions*
 - a. *Historical Summary*
 - b. *The Current Shape of Regional Expressions*
 - c. *Continued development of Regional Expressions*
 - 3.6 *Mutual recognition and exchangeability of ordained ministers*

4. **Organs for Governance and Policy**
 - 4.1 *The Assembly*
 - 4.2 *The President*
 - 4.3 *The Vice Presidents*
 - 4.4 *The Chairperson of the Finance Committee (Treasurer)*
 - 4.5 *The Council*
 - 4.6 *The Meeting of Officers (Executive Committee)*
 - 4.7 *The General Secretary*
 - 4.8 *The Communion Office*

1. Introduction: The Renewal Process

In his report to the Council in 2005 the General Secretary reflected on the role of the LWF within the present global context and in the ecumenical movement as it continues to live through significant changes. *He called on the Council to consider a renewal of the LWF to be presented to the next LWF Assembly in 2010.* He pointed to the fact that by that time, twenty years will have passed since the LWF established its current structure. This current structure has served the member churches and the ecumenical movement well. However, changes that have occurred since 1990, assessed on the basis of theological reflection, call for another renewal of the LWF.

Acting on behalf of the Council, the Executive Committee at its subsequent meeting appointed the Renewal Committee, composed of a chairperson and ten members, representing the seven LWF regions, including Council members, representatives from member churches, national committees, theological institutes, and organizations for mission and diakonia.

The Renewal Committee presents this Draft Report to all member churches, national committees and related organizations for response by 15 July 2009.

Following reception of the responses from member churches, the Committee will meet in August 2009 to complete its Final Report to the Council, which is scheduled to meet in October 2009. The report will contain a number of recommendations for action by the Council. In the same report, the Committee will indicate priority areas around which the Council will determine appropriate program units and administrative structures.

The present Draft should be read as a *preview of the Final Report* to be presented by the Renewal Committee to the Council. It is important to note, however, that the responses received from the LWF constituency will have a significant impact on what the Renewal Committee will, in the end, offer to the Council, particularly in terms of its recommendations.

The Renewal Committee has recognized that the need for renewal arises out of developments in the dramatically changed global landscape in which the LWF lives as a Communion of Churches. Furthermore, the Communion, through its own developmental process, has evolved faster than its structures and work processes have been able to keep pace with.

With the imagery of new wine in old wineskins (Matthew 9:17) Jesus referred to the fact that new wine is volatile and requires the kind of adaptation that only new and flexible skins can accommodate. Similarly, the renewal of the LWF is about accommodating and caring for its dynamic life in the face of present and future expectations.

Hence, the Renewal Committee has probed carefully into both the present and the future. It has examined the external and internal setting of the Communion; it has assessed resources; and it has drawn on the experience of its members; so as to guide

the Communion in a process of deepening and broadening self-understanding, leading to substantial accommodation and revitalization.

The Renewal Committee gratefully acknowledges the responses received to its January 2008 report, which had contributed significantly to the basis upon which this report is built.

1.1 Renewed Structures to Serve the LWF as a Communion of Churches

The Renewal Committee has been guided throughout its work by a basic, shared understanding of the development of the LWF since its inception, and in particular the significance of its growth over the years as a spiritual and ecclesial world communion for mutual support and for partnership in proclamation and service. This ecclesial consciousness and acceptance of communion ecclesiology is demonstrated clearly in and through the LWF Constitution and official documents and actions of the LWF adopted at various stages of the Federation's history. In addition to these official documents and actions a wealth of relevant study material is also available.

At this point in history the Lutheran churches recognize that they are not only a confessional, but an ecclesial communion. It was natural, therefore, that the LWF history book, published for the 50th anniversary celebrated in Hong Kong in 1997, was named "From Federation to Communion."¹ The Renewal Committee has acknowledged the process it calls for: to renew in substance and in practice the commitments to the LWF as a Communion of Churches and to its structures, accordingly reshaped to serve the Federation in its ecclesial nature and mission.

Article III of the Constitution, on the "Nature and Functions" of the LWF, indicates the priority of mission and diakonia, joint theological study and reflection, ecumenical efforts to further Christian unity, and attention to global concerns through advocacy and seeking peace and justice. The proposed renewal process aims to develop ways to organize the life and work of the Communion so that all member churches and church organizations for mission and diakonia may take shared responsibility for the different functions of the Communion under given new circumstances.

Clearly, this responsibility applies not least to the ways in which the instruments of the Communion take shape in the different regions of the world. These instruments are appropriately deemed "regional expressions" and the Renewal Committee expects to see their role increased and expanded in the future. This perspective plays an important part in the present Draft Report.

As far back as 1990, the Assembly acknowledged that regional expressions are an important structural element in the life and work of the Communion. Assembly participants understood the potential of regional church cooperation in the areas of mission, diakonia, theological reflection, ecumenical engagement and advocacy. The regions were, therefore, encouraged to express their being in communion through an

¹ *From Federation to Communion: The History of the Lutheran World Federation*. Edited By: Jens Holger Schjring, Prasanna Kumari and Norman A. Hjelm. Augsburg Fortress 1997.

intensified use of given structures and programs, and to develop additional structures at their own pace, in consultation with the churches within their specific regions.

There are clear signals today from the churches in the Global South, of the need for pursuing the task of LWF renewal in such a way that churches in the regions may play a more clearly defined and responsible role in initiatives of mission and diakonia; and that new structures and designs for coordination and unity of purpose be developed to better ensure capacity building and optimal use of resources. In Europe, current challenges to Lutheran identity call for a specific identification with the ecumenical purpose of the Lutheran Communion in order for the churches to further strengthen inter-confessional collaboration.

1.2 Organizing Principles for Renewal

While one cannot proceed directly from theological and ecclesial perspectives to a specific type of structure, nonetheless it has been important for the Renewal Committee to keep in focus that *the renewed structures required are not merely external forms towards greater coherence. What are called for are structures that are interconnected with the quality and depth of the life of the churches themselves.*

It is in this context that the vision of communion which the Committee seeks to propose indicates a renewal of the LWF leading to a more strongly church-based witness and service in the world today. The renewal of the LWF is indeed *a process*, requiring continuous communication of all parties involved. The following are organizing principles, which both presuppose, and seek to strengthen, such communication.

- A. Mutual accountability and empowerment through participatory working methods.
- B. Inclusiveness of gender and age groups, and others who are excluded due to various cultural aversions.
- C. Widely accessible official communication.
- D. Fair access to decision-making and integrity of process.
- E. An appropriate balance of authority and accountability in governance.
- F. Sustainability of the Communion Office (the Secretariat) and the economy of the communion governance structures.
- G. Interdependence and mutuality among the member churches so that domination is overcome, whether of language, economic resource, culture, ordination, sex, age, or theological and liturgical expression.
- H. An affirmation that all member churches share fully in the whole life of all the people of God.

2. Current Global Realities

2.1 The Human Landscape

Communicating and interpreting God's blessing and inspiration for people under all circumstances requires the churches to discern the context in which they carry out the central task of proclaiming the gospel. This task goes hand in hand, however, with understanding and providing whatever support possible in areas where human beings are afflicted by forces of history or deliberate human action. Diminishing financial resources available to the member churches, and hence to the LWF, have made it necessary to rethink the sustainability of ecumenical structures and programs. The recent collapse of global economic institutions and their theoretical architecture is evidence that the dream of unlimited expansion is flawed. The general public has lost its trust in financial institutions. The extent to which greed and corruption have subverted prudence and fiscal responsibility has impacted every economy on the planet.

A seemingly endless list of issues and concerns impacts the human landscape. Among them, the increasing migration of people from one country to another has resulted in the debate on immigration becoming ever more heated. In many countries, the local population fears that their nation is being swamped by an influx of immigrants from poorer countries.

The HIV/AIDS pandemic is expanding globally at an alarming rate. Its center of gravity is located in the poorer countries of the South, where the majority of the residents have inadequate access to medicine and proper medical care. The pandemic has given rise to many issues of economic, social, cultural, gender and ecological justice that challenge all aspects of human life. The churches are therefore called into new frontiers of missiological and theological response. Furthermore, they struggle to do so in the unity and mutuality that characterizes life in communion.

2.2 The Ecumenical Landscape

The ecumenical landscape has changed significantly over the last decades, especially since 1990. Although the fruits of ecumenical engagement have been given limited public attention, they have in significant ways changed the face of Christianity on the globe and, hence, the frameworks for church cooperation. Judging from the number and depth of ongoing ecumenical endeavors there is little basis for characterizing the present time as an "ecumenical winter".

The 1990 restructuring of the LWF, defining it as a communion of churches, has undoubtedly contributed to its present role as a strong partner with high credibility in the ecumenical movement. And within the Communion, individual churches have found, and still find today, different entry points into the ecumenical landscape in the search for visible unity. In different settings, the entry point can vary between bilateral theological dialogues, participation in ecumenical councils, cooperative church efforts in diakonia and advocacy, or joint church agreements with governments on common concerns.

In addition to the many theological dialogues and agreements, increased high-level collaboration within the ecumenical movement has been seen in coordinated and joint

efforts for diakonia and advocacy. These efforts have focused attention and resources on such critical issues as the HIV/AIDS pandemic and responding to humanitarian emergencies. The question has changed from “do we cooperate?” to “how do we cooperate?” and the response has gained momentum from ecumenical theological achievements, and continues to expand. In Latin America, churches have worked ecumenically to address illegitimate debt, with concrete positive results.

The LWF is also seeking to strengthen ecumenical partnership and cooperation within the framework of the emerging *ACT Alliance*, providing a common instrumentality where churches, CWCs and church organizations for diakonia can advance a common agenda.

A new climate prevails in global Christian relations also beyond the established ecumenical movement. An outstanding example of these new initiatives, and one whose lasting significance is yet to emerge, is the *Global Christian Forum (GCF)*, for which the LWF has been a significant and reliable supporter. This Forum seeks to bring together churches long committed to ecumenism with the burgeoning Pentecostal and Evangelical communities – groups which have been apprehensive toward the established ecumenical movement. The success of the first full meeting of the GCF in Kenya in November 2007 underlines the timeliness of new efforts to develop understanding and relationships with the new bodies which are changing the face of Christianity in the settings in which many of our members live.

In this wide and complex picture, a central element is the LWF’s continued support for the World Council of Churches (WCC) as a uniquely privileged ecumenical instrument. The LWF has encouraged the WCC in its recognition that it cannot stay the same, but must adapt to a changing environment. The LWF sees in the WCC focus on *Ecumenism in the 21st Century* ways in which the wide array of its ecumenical partners, and in particular churches and church organizations for mission and diakonia, are called to close cooperation and to committed ways of working together as they serve to alleviate the needs of the human family.²

Support for the special role of the WCC contrasts in no way to the serious recognition by Lutherans of other global expressions of unity, which also include the major expressions represented by the Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern and Oriental Orthodox Churches.

In keeping with the achievements of bilateral and multilateral ecumenical dialogues, and the development of the Lutheran communion as an effective ecumenical instrument, the Renewal Committee believes strongly that a new symbol of Christian unity is required. A new form of assemblies sharing space with the WCC in which the Christian world communions and others would be able to hold their own global gatherings, could be a promising element on the current ecumenical agenda. There are compelling reasons for

² The WCC articulated its ecumenical vision with the major policy statement, *Towards a Common Understanding and Vision of the WCC*, in the 1990s, and released a study paper, *The Nature and Mission of the Church*, in 2005. The WCC has initiated a process on *Ecumenism in the 21st Century*, with attention to ecumenical reconfiguration and the vision to include churches and families of churches that presently are not members of ecumenical organizations.

defining the role of LWF assemblies in terms of space made available – by common agreement – on the occasion of the WCC assemblies.

For such a new model to succeed, a more systematic preparatory process is needed for LWF Assembly delegates from the member churches, in advance of assemblies, in order to prepare them for discussion and action on behalf of their churches and regions. Regional pre-assembly processes are also needed in the Member Churches themselves, to enable consultation and preparation on matters of common concern that will come – or in the mind of the churches ought to come – to the Assembly for deliberation and action.

3. The Nature and Development of the Lutheran Communion

We give witness to and affirm the communion in which the Lutheran churches of the whole world are bound together.

The Lutheran communion of churches finds its visible expression in pulpit and altar fellowship, in common witness and service, in the joint fulfilment of the missionary task, and in openness to ecumenical cooperation, dialogue and community.

[The LWF becomes] more and more a conciliar, mutually committed communion by furthering consultation and exchange among its member churches. . . as well as by furthering mutual participation in each other's joys, sufferings and struggles.

[The] LWF also strengthens the one ecumenical movement of which it considers itself to be a part, and to which it contributes through its own ecumenical efforts as well as through relationships and cooperation with other Christian world communions and the World Council of Churches.

The kind of authority the LWF possesses is a delegated authority entrusted by its member churches for particular purposes. It is also a moral authority, which is lodged in the inner persuasive power of decisions that are submitted to the member churches for their reception.

--Budapest, 1984: The Self-Understanding and Task of The LWF

It is a communion where diversities contribute to fullness and are no longer barriers to unity. It is a committed fellowship, able to make common decisions and act in common.

In recognizing these diversities as expressions of the one apostolic faith and the one catholic church, traditions are changed, antagonisms overcome, and mutual condemnations lifted. The diversities are reconciled and transformed into a legitimate and indispensable multiformity within the one body of Christ.

This communion lives out its unity in confessing the one apostolic faith. It assembles in worship and in intercession for all people. It is active in common

witness to Jesus Christ; in advocacy for the weak, poor and oppressed; and in striving for peace, justice and freedom. It is ordered in all its components in conciliar structures and actions. It is in need of constant renewal. . . .
--Budapest 1984: *The Unity We Seek*

3.1 The Church – Universal and Local

The Lutheran tradition has a particular way in which it outlines its ecclesiology in the Augsburg Confession. Refreshing the ecclesiological understanding of the Reformers throws light upon relevant developments in the ecumenical movement up until the present day. There are good reasons for the renewal process to be rooted in the tradition of this confessional writing, and in particular its articles 4-8.

The Augsburg Confession provides significant insight in the comprehension of the nature unity of the LWF as a communion. But it is an insight that reaches beyond the Lutheran context. In 1963 the LWF Commission on Theology presented a document in preparation for the 4th Assembly in Helsinki that same year, which states regarding article 7:

What is said in Augustana VII on “the true unity of the church” concerns not only the unity of the Lutheran church, but points out to all of Christendom its real ecumenical goal; and the Lutheran church should not be as much concerned about itself and its own prestige as about that which it is duty bound to represent from the point of view of the center of the one church of Jesus Christ on behalf of the whole body of Christendom... In this concentration on the heart of the church lies, according to Lutheran conviction, the promising way to the manifestation of its unity.

It is appropriate to make reference here also to the statement by the LWF 7th Assembly in Budapest 1984, where the decision was taken that all members of the LWF would declare altar and pulpit fellowship with each other. The 7th Assembly saw the Lutheran communion within the context of “the one universal church” and that it is called to witness to its unity together with all Christians. As an “expression of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church the Lutheran communion of churches is committed to work for the manifestation of the unity of the church given in Jesus Christ.”

In many ways, the ecclesiology of the Augsburg Confession is reflected in the well known Statement on Unity by the Third Assembly of the World Council of Churches in New Delhi, 1961 and its vision of local church unity, constituted by, and extending from, the fellowship in the gospel and the sacraments (I. The Church’s Unity, paragraph 2):

We believe that the unity which is both God’s will and his gift to his Church is being made visible as all in each place who are baptized into Jesus Christ and confess him as Lord and Savior are brought by the Holy Spirit into one fully committed fellowship, holding the one apostolic faith preaching the one Gospel, breaking the one bread, joining in common prayer, and having a corporate life reaching out in witness and service to all and who at the same time are united with the whole Christian fellowship in all places and all ages in such ways that

ministry and members are accepted by all, and that all can act and speak together as occasion requires for the tasks to which God calls his people. It is for such unity that we believe we must pray and work.

The important recognition, characteristic of the ecumenical movement, that the church of Christ is simultaneously universal and local, has direct consequences for the theological understanding of the interrelationship of unity and diakonia in the church.

3.2 Koinonia, Church Unity and Diakonia

Koinonia is the soil out of which communion grows. The primary nature of Christian unity is, according to John 17:20-24, the spiritual relationship of the believers in and with the Triune God. This spiritual unity is not isolated from human life in its individual and social dimensions. Christian unity is therefore well expressed in the terminology of *koinonia*. This concept is helpful also in expressing the nature and structural character of the LWF.

An LWF study program, conducted in the first half of the 1990s, produced the book *The Church as a Communion* (LWF Documentation 42/1997) and, together with the 1996 statement by the working group, "Toward a Lutheran understanding of Communion," presents a comprehensive and integrated expression of *koinonia* in the Lutheran perspective, carefully outlining in its paragraphs 9, 10 and 12 the interrelatedness of unity in faith, common life and mission:

9. Our koinonia with God through Christ in the Holy Spirit constitutes our "koinonia with one another" (1 Jn 1:3,7). Just as Jesus' radically inclusive fellowship embraced even the outcast, the sick, and the poor, so too the church is called into koinonia with all those excluded from society.

10. Koinonia is furthermore a proclamation of unity among churches and believers which must be expressed in tangible spiritual and economic ways. This is most striking in Acts 2, and in Paul's appeals to the Gentile churches to share their financial resources. [...] (Rom 15:26-27).

[...]

12. In faith we are called to shape our life together as an expression of the communion we receive. We invite our churches to reflect on the foundations of their lives as communities in the life of the triune God. Since we share the gifts of communion in Word and sacraments we are challenged to find forms of communion which reflect the glory of these gifts.

The study raises significant questions that are relevant both for all Christian communions as well as for Lutheran communion, focusing concretely on the life of the churches and in the churches. As the LWF has continued its growth and cooperation in being a communion of churches, questions remaining at the center of common reflection need to be addressed.

3.3 Diakonia as integral to the nature of the church

In order to communicate and interpret God's blessing and calling contextually, the church is required to carefully discern the settings in which it carries out its central

tasks. This is a prerequisite for providing appropriate support in areas where human beings are afflicted by forces of history or deliberate human action.

Diakonia, is an integral part of the church's identity and life, and has a meaning different from the activity of individual persons or specific institutions. Diaconal action cannot be conditioned by sociopolitical and economic contexts alone. Diakonia is directly related to what the church is, and to what is celebrated in its worship and announced in its preaching. At the same time, diakonia is not to be regarded by the church, or understood by others, as coercing conversion by means of humanitarian action. While diakonia is firmly rooted in the faith of the church, its practices carry their meaning inherently as unconditional acts of service.

The concept of "development" may be seen to reflect a certain secular understanding of economic growth, which is modeled by the rich countries in the North, and does not take into consideration the root causes for the divisions between North and South, such as classical and recent forms of colonialism. Even more problematic is the fact that development concepts commonly build on a Western secular worldview and its relation to existing power structures.

The notion of diakonia is therefore preferred over the more recent, secular use of the term development. It is important, however, to recall that etymologically the word *development* implies the opposite of *en-velopment*, i.e. to close in. In its historical meaning development reflects a process of emerging out of envelopment; a process of *liberation*. In the spirit of that original meaning of the concept of development, diakonia points to a process of authenticating the gifts and aspirations of those we are called to serve.

The LWF mission document *Mission in Context* (p. 49-50) observes that:

The understanding of the meaning and aim of development, however, has changed drastically. Development has been refocused to aim at the emancipation of the individual and the transformation and liberation of society, encompassing the social, cultural, and spiritual well being of people. It is no longer focused solely on economic and material wealth. In this understanding, development work, as part of the process of transformation and empowerment, is an integral part of the mission of the church.

Compared with development, the concept of diakonia is clearly rooted in the very nature of being the church. Diakonia implies presence in the world, sensitivity regarding what is seen and heard, ability to act according to needs that are identified and sustained by a spirituality, all of which are critical (also self-critical) and formed and shaped by Christian hope.

It is now clear that within the LWF there is no longer disagreement regarding the centrality of both witness and diakonia in the life of the church and the Lutheran communion. It is understood that the exercise of the ministry of the means of grace remains inseparably linked with the church's diaconal ministry. For that reason, neither the sacramental nor the diaconal ministry can be outsourced.

3.4 Networking among churches and church organizations for diakonia and mission

While the 1990 renewal did not specifically address the role of organizations for mission and diakonia in the Lutheran communion, the history of the LWF clearly indicates that these organizations have relationships, by mutual choice, with the LWF and with individual member churches. For many years, these organizations have taken the initiative and shown leadership for effective mission and diakonia on behalf of the churches, including when the churches themselves have been unable to take such action. They are acknowledged as effective instruments of the member churches and of the Lutheran communion.

There is much diversity in these relationships, ranging from weak to strong, with varying degrees of autonomy and integration. Among organizations for diakonia, some exist as organs entirely within member churches; others, while being autonomous, serve on behalf of Lutheran churches only; and some serve ecumenically on behalf of many churches, while having strong or primary links with LWF member churches. Among mission organizations, some exist fully within churches; These factors became clear in Sigtuna, March 2-5, 2009, during a consultation with the leadership of these various church organizations for mission and diakonia.

In the period since 1990, representatives of these organizations have participated actively in LWF processes for governance, consultation and joint action. They serve as advisers and consultants to the Council, and are regularly included in LWF consultations, for example the 1998 Global Consultation on Mission and the 2002 and 2008 Global Consultations on Diakonia. Mission organizations joined with member churches in an extensive consultation process that resulted in the LWF mission document, *Mission in Context*, which seeks to deepen the common understanding and practices of holistic mission. Organizations for diakonia participated in shaping the Global Strategic Plan 2007-2012 for World Service.

These examples of consultation, joint action and mutual commitment demonstrate that these organizations are deeply rooted in the life of the member churches and the Lutheran Communion, and also in the life of ecumenical partners. These church organizations are more than ordinary instrumentalities; more than just funding agencies; they have become essential participants in the common life of the communion. They are by nature organs for mission and diakonia of the same churches in communion. In this regard, they also embody the character of the Communion.

How might these church related organizations be positioned in relation to the Council in order that they may truly serve as instruments or, better yet, as organs of the Communion? Should the categories of LWF membership specified in the Constitution be put to use and adjusted so as to accommodate for membership of such organizations in the Communion? These questions reflect the fact that the infrastructure of relationships has not kept pace or developed in response to the changing needs in the interrelated human, ecumenical and Lutheran landscapes.

ISSUE 1 FOR CONSIDERATION:

LWF MEMBERSHIP OF ORGANIZATIONS FOR MISSION AND DIAKONIA

The Committee recommends that constitutional provisions be developed for appropriate forms of LWF membership of organizations for mission and diakonia.

The member churches are asked to respond to whether they can affirm such a development and, if they cannot, to explain their objections.

3.5 Regional Expressions

a. Historical Summary

The LWF 8th Assembly (1990) in Curitiba adopted the view that the presence of the LWF as a communion in the regions would be expressed through intensified use of existing structures and programs in the Federation and among the member churches. The Assembly was clear in its mind when it authorized the configuration of the worldwide constituency into seven regions. This was *not* meant to “regionalize” the communion. The term “regionalization” was avoided, because it could be understood to imply a process of setting apart, disconnecting and fragmenting the constituency. It was therefore not congenial to the notion of communion. The Assembly chose, therefore, to use the language of “regional expressions of communion” rather than that of “regionalization of the communion.”

Seven regions were identified: Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean region, North America, Nordic, Central Western Europe and Central Eastern Europe. They were encouraged to develop each at their own pace, with a minimal emphasis on anything structural.

The aims of communication and interpretation, as well as developing channels for advice and consultation, have been achieved by the regional expressions to a high degree since 1990. Regional communication networks have emerged to enhance the identity, visibility and sustainability of communion in the regions, and to encourage mutual support in mission and diakonia. Especially for small and minority churches, these networks ease experiences of isolation in an environment of large or majority churches and other faith communities.

Regional conferences of bishops/presidents and other church leaders (including women, youth and laity) have strengthened forms of fellowship, communication, trust and understanding in the regions. They have also strengthened bonds of unity in common purpose and action in peace building, advocacy, and combating HIV/AIDS. A sense of unity is evident among the churches when they share intimately spiritual and ecclesial journeys despite diversities of culture, language and social contexts.

Council members from the regions regularly participate in LWF consultations, studies and regional gatherings. This has provided a strong link of communication and mutual learning between church representatives on the Council and church participants in the regions. However, the lack of a formal role for Council members within their regions limits their ability to facilitate formal channels of consultation, and also limits their accountability. Regional expressions are, therefore, encouraged to actively involve members of Council in their gatherings and church assemblies.

The participation of women and youth in the LWF has been strengthened through activities within the regions. For example, the network of Women in Church and Society (WICAS) regional coordinators work jointly to further the Communion's gender work with a regional sensitivity. Youth have participated in regional workshops and developed a global youth vision for the LWF, highlighting both the shortcomings of and the potential for the LWF as it seeks to become "a communicating communion."

The challenge for the Renewal process is to discern how the churches in these regions can be involved in the re-organization of programs of mission and diakonia, and in ecumenical engagement, in a way that reflects this theological and ecclesial understanding of communion. The churches in the regions where the implementation of programs of mission and diakonia is concentrated must be given the opportunity and the task to propose an effective way of arranging such organization.

b. The Current Shape of Regional Expressions

Even with the minimal structures encouraged in the 1990 renewal, the regions have each developed forms of organization and expression that suit their settings.

In Africa, three sub-regional expressions of communion are cooperating and collaborating more closely on matters of common concern. The Lutheran Council in Africa was established to strengthen communion, joint decisions and mutual accountability. There is also consideration of a commission to advise the region on doctrinal issues and differences.

In Asia, a regional office has existed since 2000. The Lutheran Council in Asia was established in 2007, with aims to strengthen communion formation and to coordinate regional efforts in wholistic mission, diakonia and education. It will also focus on research in ecumenical theology and inter-faith relations for the Asian context.

In Europe, church leadership conferences engage European and global church issues with increased mutual understanding and common concern. Partnership is based on equality and spiritual communion, and nurtures solidarity among larger churches and smaller minority churches. A regional office (2003-2006) helped develop an integrated approach to international issues.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, the annual church leadership meetings express and celebrate communion in practical terms. Mutual knowledge and trust have grown significantly, strengthening efforts for pastoral accompaniment, conflict mediation, advocacy, church-to-church cooperation and sharing, and joint decision-making.

In North America, a regional expression office has existed since 1998. It serves to enhance Lutheran communion and visible solidarity in the region, and to facilitate participation and cooperation with the Communion Office in Geneva. Regional consultations have addressed how local, regional and global issues intersect within the Communion. There is an ongoing discussion within the LWF about the possibility of including some of the member churches in the Caribbean region. Language is one among a number of factors pointing to this possibility. Churches under consideration are Suriname and Guyana.

c. Continued development of Regional Expressions

Although recommendations and concerns that emerge from regional gatherings sometimes find their way to decision-making bodies, there are no clear mechanisms for follow-up and accountability. What is lacking is a constitutional mandate of regional decisions and formal participation within the Communion. This makes their role tenuous and limits their further development.

The various activities and initiatives in the regions give expression to living out the dynamic reality of being communion within the regions. There is a need to formalize the status of regional expressions as *organs* rather than instruments of the global Communion.

Responses from members to the January 2008 report affirmed the suggestions that are being made in this report.

ISSUE 2 FOR CONSIDERATION:

REGIONAL EXPRESSIONS IN GOVERNANCE OF LWF

The Committee recommends that a constitutional provision be made for the participation of regional expressions in the governance of the communion.

The member churches are asked to respond to whether they can affirm such a development and, if they cannot, to explain their objections.

3.6 Mutual recognition and exchangeability of ordained ministers

The ministry of the ordained provides a concrete example of the challenges arising out of life in communion. Pulpit and altar fellowship has been declared among the full members of the communion, yet that fellowship is limited in the way it is shared.

Although some member churches have entered into bi-lateral agreements with other member churches for the exchange of ministers, no comprehensive agreement or mechanism exists at present. In the absence of such a comprehensive mechanism, member churches may have bi-lateral agreements with several other member churches, perhaps even identical from one situation to the next, but each negotiated separately.

Different member churches have different standards and procedures by which suitability for ministry is determined. Levels of education vary widely from one member church to the next. Facility in language is necessary if ministers are to communicate effectively. Cultural factors can render an otherwise qualified candidate ineffective in a given situation. Therefore, even though an individual's ordination is recognized as universally valid, the local standards to exercise that ministry in a given context may not be. There is, therefore, a strong need to study and overcome factors inhibiting pastoral exchanges among the LWF member churches. In all regular cases, the validity of the ordination itself should be recognized.

ISSUE 3 FOR CONSIDERATION:

EXCHANGEABILITY OF ORDAINED MINISTERS

In the view of the Committee, the acceptance of communion ecclesiology requires that member churches put in place governing and administrative regulations for the exchangeability of ministers .

The member churches are asked to respond to whether they can affirm the value of putting in place such regulations and, if they cannot, to explain their objections.

This recommendation reflects responses to the January 2008 report.

4. Organs for Governance and Policy

The Committee has heard a concern expressed that addressing issues of power, authority, balances and lines of accountability is necessary. Members want a structure that clearly differentiates functions, maximizes participation and strives for responsiveness of the organization.

The Lutheran communion expresses itself in many ways, beginning with the member churches which, together, are a Communion of Churches. Each congregation is fully the church, gathered around Word and Sacrament, but is not the whole church. Within the Lutheran communion, the member churches are fully the local presence of the Communion, and are called individually to express this communion. At the same time, a member church by itself is not the entire global Communion.

In quite significant ways, the Lutheran communion is also expressed by the Assembly, the Council, and by the regional expressions. Congregations too are fully church and therefore a communion of believers, thus they also are called to express the wider communion of which they are an integral part.

The LWF Assembly and Council are places where experiences and visions are shared and integrated as a global whole; they are gatherings to experience the catholicity of the Lutheran family.

When we consider the specific functions of Assembly and Council, an important question arises: What implications does our communion identity have for their formation, role and function.

Taken together, the Assembly actions (in 1984, 1990 and 2003) incorporating communion language in the LWF Constitution raise questions about the profile of the assembly delegates from the member churches who, in that role, serve as representatives of the Lutheran communion and not of a federation or free association of churches. How do such delegates understand their role in the Assembly? What is the meaning of decisions made at such an Assembly for the Lutheran communion as a whole, and, reciprocally, for the member churches that constitute the Communion?

Since the Council also has an ecclesial profile that derives from the communion identity of the membership, it is evident that the governing role of the Council (between Assemblies) should derive from this ecclesial definition and understanding. Council members are not merely representatives of the churches and regions from which they come, but representatives of the entire Communion. They are elected by the Assembly to serve the needs and interests of the entire Communion.

Bearing this in mind, one may ask how the Council might be constituted and organized to serve the Communion more appropriately as an organ rather than an instrument of the communion. What are the implications for governance and structure, including consideration of related organizations? How might the agenda of the Council meetings in the future be developed in consultation and cooperation with member churches and church-related organizations? What kind of activities should demand its attention?

The Renewal Committee has responded to these questions with recommendations for constitutional and bylaw amendments. The Council will be requested to engage a legal consultant to coordinate the proposed amendment of the constitution and bylaws changes.

4.1 The Assembly

The Assembly is constituted of representatives from every member church in the Communion. The Assembly is the constitutional authority of the Communion, and has primary responsibility for interpreting the vision for and ensuing mission of, the LWF. It is, in this way, the primary legislative and policy-making body of the Federation.

Assemblies give general direction for the life and work of the Communion. They initiate a six-year-long process, in which the member churches celebrate the shared gifts of the Communion, seek inspiration, and discuss issues confronting them according to their calling in their local and regional contexts. As they offer theological interpretation and provide legal arrangements for the LWF as a communion, decisions taken by the Assembly are binding for the organization which is the LWF. Beyond constitutional matters, the member churches shall appropriate Assembly actions according to their needs and possibilities.

Delegates to LWF Assemblies shall be considered Assembly *members* for the entire period from one Assembly to the next. Their responsibilities and manners of communication in the LWF are outlined in the Bylaws.

LWF Assemblies may be held in conjunction with other global church assemblies, participating in celebration and deliberation jointly with other Christian world communions and the World Council of Churches. On such occasions, space shall be provided for the LWF to meet separately, in order to celebrate as an LWF Assembly, hold deliberation on matters on its own agenda, and discern its vision for the coming six years.

ISSUE 4.1 FOR CONSIDERATION:

THE ASSEMBLY

The committee recommends constitutional/bylaw amendments to be formulated in order to accommodate for the development of the Assembly as described.

The member churches are asked to respond to whether they can affirm such a development and, if they cannot, to explain their objections.

4.2 The President

The President is elected by the Assembly from the general membership of the member churches. The mode of election is described in the bylaws.

The President, an ordained leader in her or his own church, represents the LWF in its entirety. The LWF President does not represent a particular region. Presidents should be elected successively from the different regions of the Communion taking into account a need for rotation.

The primary role of the President is to chair the Assembly, the meetings of the Council and of the Officers. The President, as the elected representative of the Assembly, provides the leadership under which the Council carries out its mandate. The President is the chief spokesperson of the Assembly and the Council.

ISSUE 4.2 FOR CONSIDERATION:

THE PRESIDENT

The committee recommends constitutional/bylaw amendments to be formulated in order to accommodate for the role of the President as described.

The member churches are asked to respond to whether they can affirm such a development and, if they cannot, to explain their objections.

4.3 The Vice Presidents

The Vice Presidents, members of the Council, are elected by the Council upon recommendation of the relevant Pre-Assemblies. The Vice Presidents, lay or ordained leaders in their own churches, represent the LWF in the region to which their churches belong.

The Vice Presidents may preside over regional meetings and, among other things, report on each of their regional expressions to each Council meeting.

ISSUE 4.3 FOR CONSIDERATION:

THE VICE PRESIDENTS

The committee recommends constitutional/bylaw amendments to be formulated in order to accommodate for the role of the Vice Presidents as described.

The member churches are asked to respond to whether they can affirm such a development and, if they cannot, to explain their objections.

4.4 The Chairperson (Treasurer) of the Finance Committee

The Chairperson of the Finance Committee (the Treasurer) shall be elected by the Council. She or he shall chair the Finance Committee, interpret reports to the Council on financial matters, maintain such policies and limitations as pertain to financial operations, and assist Council in setting policies for financial support from the member churches.

It is the task of the Finance Committee to monitor the competence and accuracy of financial transactions and to recommend financial policies to Council.

The Chairperson of the Finance Committee shall be a member of the Meeting of Officers.

ISSUE 4.4 FOR CONSIDERATION:

THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE (THE TREASURER)

The committee recommends constitutional/bylaw amendments to be formulated in order to accommodate for the role of the Chairperson of the Finance Committee (the Treasurer) as described.

The member churches are asked to respond to whether they can affirm such a development and, if they cannot, to explain their objections.

4.5 The Council

The purpose of the Council is to ensure that the continuous interpretation of the Communion's mission is maintained from one Assembly to the end of the next, and that it is communicated and implemented throughout the membership.

The role of the Council involves articulating, and taking action on, strategy and policy, and monitoring the overall work of the Communion Office through the General Secretary. The Council must survey and assess the global environment in which it is called to mission, to set priorities, and to ensure that all aspects of its work receive appropriate attention.

The Council is to ensure clear communication of its priorities and a regular schedule of review and consultation with the General Secretary through the Meeting of Officers. It is the task of the Council to make its vision and expectations clear for the General Secretary, so that the accountability of the Council and the General Secretary is unambiguous and mutual.

The Council is further responsible for the approval of governance documents such as By-laws, Rules of Procedure and other policy enactments. These documents establish the authority and limitations within which the General Secretary functions, and ensure legal compliances on behalf of the LWF.

The Council shall consist of 48 *members* nominated by the regions and elected by the Assembly. The Council may appoint up to 12 *advisors*.

The Council shall elect from within itself, with gender balance, seven Vice-Presidents on a regional basis, and the Chair of the Finance Committee (Treasurer.) It shall elect the General Secretary and make Cabinet appointments upon the General Secretary's nomination. It shall also approve the annual statement of needs (SON) and budgets, appoint Council committees, and make all the necessary decisions regarding the LWF between Assemblies as outlined in the Constitution, Bylaws and other governing documents of the LWF.

ISSUE 4.5 FOR CONSIDERATION:

THE COUNCIL

The committee recommends constitutional/bylaw amendments to be formulated in order to accommodate for the development of the Council as described.

The member churches are asked to respond to whether they can affirm such a development and, if they cannot, to explain their objections.

4.6 The Meeting of Officers (Executive Committee)

The Meeting of Officers (Executive Committee) shall consist of the President, the Vice-Presidents, the Chairperson of the Finance Committee and the Chairperson(s) of the Program and Project Committee(s). It serves as the Board of Trustees for the LWF and as a Personnel Committee in approving executive level staff appointments. The Meeting of Officers shall review the recommendations from the Program/Project committees for the Council's action, and otherwise receive and act upon reports as may be assigned by the Council.

The role and function of the Meeting of Officers (Executive Committee) is described in the Terms of Reference.

ISSUE 4.6 FOR CONSIDERATION:

THE MEETING OF OFFICERS (EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE)

The committee recommends constitutional/bylaw amendments to be formulated in order to accommodate for the development of the Meeting of Officers as described.

The member churches are asked to respond to whether they can affirm such a development and, if they cannot, to explain their objections.

4.7 The General Secretary

The General Secretary is elected by the Council. The General Secretary is the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), and together with the President, a public representative and chief spokesperson for the Lutheran World Federation.

It is the General Secretary's responsibility to implement the visions and execute the decisions of the Assembly and the Council. The General Secretary shall maintain close connections with the Member Churches and church organizations for mission and diakonia, and implement strategic choices based on the Strategic Plan.

As the Chief Executive Officer, the General Secretary is responsible for reporting to the Council and Assembly on all activities of the Communion Office. The General Secretary is accountable to the strategic priorities established by the Council and accountable for strategic plans and management structures that will lead the Communion toward its vision.

The office and functions of the General Secretary are described in the Terms of Reference.

ISSUE 4.7 FOR CONSIDERATION:

THE GENERAL SECRETARY

The committee recommends constitutional/bylaw amendments to be formulated in order to accommodate for the role of the General Secretary as described.

The member churches are asked to respond to whether they can affirm such a development and, if they cannot, to explain their objections.

4.8 The Communion Office

The Communion Office will function under the overall leadership of the General Secretary and the Cabinet. Proposals for the exact numbers of staff and the configuration of Departments/Units and other related questions will be addressed at the August meeting of the Renewal Committee and by the Council in October this year.

The total income of the 2009 Geneva Coordination budget amounts to CHF 12.4 million. Due to the current financial crisis it is very difficult to forecast what the financial situation of the LWF will be in 2011. Based on what we hear from the member churches and agencies, we expect that the Geneva Coordination budget income will be around 15% less than in 2009, namely CHF 10.5 million (around USD 9.2 million using the USD/CHF rate of 1.15). This coordination budget covers the expense for the Communion Office and those of the Governing bodies of the Federation.

ISSUE 4.8 FOR CONSIDERATION:

THE COMMUNION OFFICE

The Committee recommends that member churches commit themselves to support and maintain financially a sustainable Communion Office.

Member Churches are asked to affirm such a commitment.

LWF RENEWAL: ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

The following issues are identified by the Renewal Committee as items on which the LWF member churches are asked to comment.

The member churches are asked to respond to each issue, whether they can affirm the developments envisaged OR, if they cannot, to explain their objections.

ISSUE 1: LWF MEMBERSHIP OF ORGANIZATIONS FOR MISSION AND DIAKONIA

The Committee recommends that constitutional provisions be developed for appropriate forms of LWF membership of organizations for mission and diakonia.

The member churches are asked to respond to whether they can affirm such a development and, if they cannot, to explain their objections.

RESPONSE:

ISSUE 2: REGIONAL EXPRESSIONS IN GOVERNANCE OF LWF

The Committee recommends that a constitutional provision be made for the participation of regional expressions in the governance of the communion.

The member churches are asked to respond to whether they can affirm such a development and, if they cannot, to explain their objections.

RESPONSE:

**ISSUE 3:
EXCHANGEABILITY OF ORDAINED MINISTERS**

In the view of the Committee, the acceptance of communion ecclesiology requires that member churches put in place governing and administrative regulations for the exchangeability of ministers.

The member churches are asked to respond to whether they can affirm the value of putting in place such regulations and, if they cannot, to explain their objections.

RESPONSE:

**ISSUE 4.1:
THE ASSEMBLY**

The committee recommends constitutional/bylaw amendments to be formulated in order to accommodate for the development of the Assembly as described.

The member churches are asked to respond to whether they can affirm such a development and, if they cannot, to explain their objections.

RESPONSE:

**ISSUE 4.2:
THE PRESIDENT**

The committee recommends constitutional/bylaw amendments to be formulated in order to accommodate for the role of the President as described.

The member churches are asked to respond to whether they can affirm such a development and, if they cannot, to explain their objections.

RESPONSE:

**ISSUE 4.3:
THE VICE PRESIDENTS**

The committee recommends constitutional/bylaw amendments to be formulated in order to accommodate for the role of the Vice Presidents as described.

The member churches are asked to respond to whether they can affirm such a development and, if they cannot, to explain their objections.

RESPONSE:

**ISSUE 4.4:
THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE
(THE TREASURER)**

The committee recommends constitutional/bylaw amendments to be formulated in order to accommodate for the role of the Chairperson of the Finance Committee (the Treasurer) as described.

The member churches are asked to respond to whether they can affirm such a development and, if they cannot, to explain their objections.

RESPONSE:

**ISSUE 4.5:
THE COUNCIL**

The committee recommends constitutional/bylaw amendments to be formulated in order to accommodate for the development of the Council as described.

The member churches are asked to respond to whether they can affirm such a development and, if they cannot, to explain their objections.

RESPONSE:

**ISSUE 4.6:
THE MEETING OF OFFICERS (THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE)**

The committee recommends constitutional/bylaw amendments to be formulated in order to accommodate for the development of the Meeting of Officers as described.

The member churches are asked to respond to whether they can affirm such a development and, if they cannot, to explain their objections.

RESPONSE:

**ISSUE 4.7:
THE GENERAL SECRETARY**

The committee recommends constitutional/bylaw amendments to be formulated in order to accommodate for the role of the General Secretary as described.

The member churches are asked to respond to whether they can affirm such a development and, if they cannot, to explain their objections.

RESPONSE:

**ISSUE 4.8:
THE COMMUNION OFFICE**

The committee recommends that member churches commit themselves to support and maintain financially a sustainable Communion Office.

Member Churches and are asked to affirm such a commitment.

RESPONSE:
