



Saksbehandler: Einar Tjelle

Referanser: MKR 03/11.6 (KM 12.1/11)

Saksdokumenter:

Dok.dato	Tittel	Dok.ID
16.02.2011	Innspill til LVF strategi 2012-2017.pdf	59663

Strategiplan for LVF 2012-2017

Sammendrag

Det lutherske verdensforbund (LVF) er inne i en prosess med å utvikle en global strategi for perioden 2012 til 2017. Gjennom en omfattende og deltakende prosess vil denne bli utviklet frem mot LVFs Rådsmøte i juni d.å., hvor strategien endelig skal vedtas.

Proessen har i korte trekk vært fra og med september 2010, og bestått i blant annet workshops og tilbakemeldinger fra medlemskirker, økumeniske partnerorganisasjoner og stab. Mellomkirkelig råd ved generalsekretær svarte i november på noen "Preliminary Questions", som et ledd i dette.

Vårens prosess vil for vår del gå ut på å respondere på denne "Directions Paper" (DP). Dermed vil det være regionale konsultasjoner for å bearbeide videre responsen så langt. For Europas del vil dette møtet være i London 9.-11. april, og saksbehandler vil være til stede der. Parallelt med dette vil det også være en onlinekonsultasjon med ungdomsrepresentanter, hvor også fire ungdommer fra Den norske kirke vil være representert. *Et utkast til strategi skal etter planen foreligge 1. april, med frist for respons 29. april.* Deretter vil det ferdigstilles primo mai for Rådsmøtet i juni.

Innbakt i saksorienteringen ligger noen spørsmålsstillinger som vi ber rådet om å gi tilbakemeldinger på, og som vil ligge til grunn for vår respons.

Vi har fått utsatt fristen for tilbakemeldinger til etter rådsmøtet vårt i mars. Mellomkirkelig råd inviteres med dette til å komme med kommentarer til problemstillingene vi har påpekt under, samt andre viktige innspill til vedlagte "Toward

an LWF Strategy 2012-17, Directions Paper". Blant annet kan det være viktig å lese denne saken i lys av Kirkemøtesak 12.1/11 (se MKR sak 03/11.6) *Den norske kirke som evangelisk-luthersk kirke i en økumenisk kontekst.*

Det understrekes at DP *ikke er et utkast til strategi* vi nå skal gi tilbakemeldinger på, men mer et retningsgivende dokument som forsøker å samle opp temaer og tilbakemeldinger fra konsultasjonene så langt.

Forslag til vedtak

Mellomkirkelig råd takker for mulighetene for innspill til den pågående strategiprosessen i LVF, og ber om at rådets innspill på "Directions Paper" tas med i tilbakemeldingen til LVF.

MKR ber også om at sekretariatet, i samarbeid med våre medlemmer i LVFs råd og MKRs leder, sørger for en samlet tilbakemelding på selve strategiutkastet innen fristen 29.4.

Saksorientering

Dokumentet som vi er bedt om å kommentere, spenner over store saksområder. Og det vil være naturlig å kunne gi noen tydelige signaler om hva vi mener er viktig å prioritere i en strategi.

En annet viktig spor er å tenke over hva Den norske kirke særlig kan bidra med inn i prosessen. Er det for eksempel ansatser fra ”Plan for samisk kirkeliv”, ”Skaperverk og bærekraft”/Climate Justice eller religionsdialogarbeidet som vi på en tydelig måte bør spille inn?

Noen spørsmålsstillinger som vi vil utfordre rådet om tilbakemelding på:

- a) Generelt:
 - **Går innholdet i DP i riktig retning?**
- b) Who we are as communion of Lutheran churches (kap 2) :
 - **Gir dokumentet klar nok retning i forhold til å tydeliggjøre en luthersk og økumenisk identitet, særlig med tanke på reformasjonsjubileet i 2017?**

Her kan det være lurt å lese DP i lys av KM-saken om Den norske kirke som evangelisk-luthersk kirke i en økumenisk kontekst. **Er det perspektiver i denne saken som vi bør bringe inn i vår respons på DP, og vice versa?**

- c) A vision for 2017 (kap 3)
 - **Gir ansatsene for visjon god mening?**
- d) Expressions of communion (Kap 4)
 - **Er den strategiske retningen god i forhold til ønsket innretning på ”communion office” og arbeidsmåter?**
- e) Emerging strategic directions and priorities (kap 5)
 - **I kapittel 5 summeres overordnede strategiske temaer opp samt ”cross-cutting thematic areas” (s 12-13), blant annet i kjølvannet av generalforsamlingen i 2010. Hvilke av disse temaene vil vi nedprioritere for å prioritere andre opp?**
 - **NB! Er det noen av de seks strategiske fokusområdene (s 13-23) som rådet vil at vi skal kommentere, nedprioritere eller vektlegge?**
- f) **Er det andre ting vi skal løfte fram nå, eller bekymringer vi har vedrørende DP?**

For en mer omfattende oversikt over prosessen rundt strategien, samt relevante bakgrunnsdokumenter, anbefaler vi denne lenken:

<http://www.lutheranworld.org/lwf/index.php/themes/lwf-strategic-planning-process>

Økonomiske/administrative konsekvenser

Ingen, bortsett fra oppfølging av prosessen fra sekretariatet og rådsmedlemmer.

Toward an LWF Strategy 2012-17

Directions Paper

14 January 2011

LWF Logo

14 January 2010

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) has embarked on a process to develop a new six-year strategy to be implemented from 2012 to 2017, the year we will commemorate the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation. This process will help to set the path for our future common journey as a communion of Lutheran churches.

The planning process arose out of the LWF renewal process undertaken between 2007 and 2009. It responds to the tasks and challenges identified under “issue 9” of the report of the LWF Renewal Committee to the LWF Council in October 2009. Because of their complexity, these matters could not be dealt with by the LWF Council at that time and were referred to the LWF communion office for further action.

The communion office developed a transition plan for moving forward on these issues, endorsed by the LWF Executive Committee in March 2010. Development of the LWF Strategy 2012–17 is considered one of the first steps in this transition process. The transition plan is based on a strong commitment to ensuring that decisions relating to financial sustainability, internal restructuring and strengthening organizational capacity are aligned with the LWF’s strategic directions.

The messages, resolutions and themes from the LWF Eleventh Assembly held in Stuttgart are also very important foundations for this planning process. The Assembly provided space for delegates of member churches, including youth representatives, men and women, to reflect on the major issues and challenges of the day from the perspectives of member churches in their different expressions and contexts around the world.

1.2 The wider context—the LWF’s ongoing spiritual journey

The title of the final report of the LWF Renewal Committee to the Council in 2009 was “Being and Living as a Communion of Churches: Taking the Next Steps.” This title helps us to see the broader context and purpose of the planning process. The image of a journey that the title invokes is a very important reminder of the fundamentally dynamic and evolving character of the LWF.

In the 1960s, during the so-called “ecclesiological debate” in the LWF, this dynamic character was expressed with the idea that the LWF is never “accomplished,” but needs to be lived and expressed every time anew.¹ This is well captured in the Reformation principle “*semper reformanda*” lived out through the hermeneutical spiral of “see – reflect – act.” This spiral, which emphasizes so strongly the contextuality of the church, and therefore also its partaking of God’s incarnational dynamic, is understood as an *ongoing* process in which the contextual analysis, the theological discernment and the action are interlinked and lead to a process evolving into new stages.

¹ “Being and Living as a Communion of Churches: Taking the Next Steps,” Exhibit 5.2 of the LWF Council 2009.

14 January 2010

The LWF aims to become the faithful response to God by Lutheran churches in their global expression, rooted in biblical and theological identity, taking place within very concrete contexts and the challenges that shape their response.

This characterization of the life of the LWF as dynamic, contextual and a journey is clearly evident if one looks back into the history of the LWF. In 1947, the LWF was established as a *Federation of Lutheran churches*. It has been underlined many times how much the foundation of the LWF was actually a response to a context that compelled Lutheran churches to come together and act together: huge streams of internally displaced people were calling for a diaconal response that was coordinated beyond national boundaries.

The context after the war, with memories of its atrocities and even its theological legitimation, required joint action to review and reflect anew about the understanding and the meaning of Lutheran theology and how Lutheran churches should act as citizens in their respective contexts. Churches realized a pastoral duty to stand with people in a world that was barely recognizable as a result of war. Back in 1947, *because of the context* in which they lived and *because of their self-understanding as Lutheran churches*, the step that churches needed to take was to found the LWF!

There are many other moments in the life of the LWF which show the importance of the hermeneutical spiral of *see – reflect – act*, and the dynamic and contextually responsive nature of the LWF.

The LWF Renewal Committee rightly pointed out the importance of the renewal process as a moment of conscious self-reflection on identity and practice as a communion of churches. Its report states that *“the need for renewal arises out of developments in a dramatically changed global landscape in which the LWF lives as a communion of churches.”* It explores and analyzes the current global realities impacting on the human landscape and the ecumenical landscape. But the report also underlines that *“the communion, through its own developmental process, has evolved at a rate with which its structures and work processes have been unable to keep pace.”*

The Renewal Committee was entrusted with the task to look beyond the present realities, to help think about the “next step” for the spiritual journey, which is leading the LWF communion of churches again into unknown territory, where no roads and paths are mapped out, and where models adopted by other global Christian communions are not automatically transferable to our own journey.

The directions paper, which represents a further important step in developing the LWF strategy 2012—2017 needs to be seen in this broader context of both the *identity* of our ongoing journey as the LWF, and the current *process* of renewal initiated under the previous the LWF Council. As the LWF approaches the 500-year anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation, this planning process aims to answer questions about the next steps in the LWF’s journey in a manner that is responsive to context, theological self-understanding and current organizational challenges.

1.3 What has happened so far

14 January 2010

The process to develop the strategy commenced in late September. Information on the process was circulated as a background briefing to member churches, staff, the LWF Council, ecumenical partners and related organizations in early October. Internally the process is being led by the general secretary Rev. Martin Junge, with assistance from a staff task force, an independent advisory committee and consultant Lyla Rogan. The strategy will be decided at the LWF Council meeting in June 2011.

We have now concluded the first major stage of consultation involving:

- staff workshops and meetings
- preliminary questions sent to member churches, ecumenical partners and related organizations
- meetings with the World Council of Churches (WCC), the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) and the ACT Alliance
- a teleconference with the advisory committee for the process
- the LWF Executive Committee workshop
- telephone interviews with Council members.

A second background briefing that sets out the next stages of the process is included with the directions paper. All key documents relating to the LWF planning process are available on the web site www.lutheranworld.org.

1.4 The LWF strategy—more than words on paper

Initial consultations indicate there is widespread support for the process and excitement and optimism for the contribution such a strategy can make to the ongoing life and journey of the LWF communion of churches. There has been particular appreciation of the inclusive and participatory approach that has been adopted. At the same time, there is awareness of the challenges associated with achieving broad-based support and ownership for the vision, goals and priorities that such a strategy will include.

From initial consultations some principles have emerged concerning what the strategy might deliver and how it is best presented. In broad terms, it is hoped the strategy will:

- further define the LWF's identity as a communion of Lutheran churches and establish a shared vision for the communion leading up to 2017;
- help to clarify what being in communion means for member churches—how they can give, receive and live faithfully in communion;
- contain clear priorities that can inform and guide the work of the communion office and identify areas for dialogue, engagement and collaboration among member churches at different levels;
- identify who will be the LWF's strategic partners, the focus for these partnerships in different aspects of the LWF's work and how they will work in the future.

Those contributing to the process want to have a strategy that is accessible and inspiring—but also one that can be readily actioned through more detailed operational plans.

1.5 Purpose of this paper

14 January 2010

The directions paper provides the platform for the next stage of consultation and engagement in the planning process. It attempts to do four things:

- outline the background to and context for the LWF strategy;
- reflect the themes and messages heard during the initial consultation phase;
- present the content and emerging directions that have wide support;
- identify the important issues on which further thinking and discussion is needed in order to establish clear directions.

The directions paper represents a structured compilation of voices that have been heard from different contexts and landscapes, be it through the renewal process, the LWF Eleventh Assembly, or the intense participatory process of the last months aimed at collecting insight, wisdom and hopes from across the different constituencies of the LWF.

During the consultation, staff, member churches, Council members, related organizations and ecumenical partners were asked for their views about the matters covered in this paper. While the specific wording of questions and mechanisms for input varied for different groups, generally the questions covered:

- Who we are as a communion of Lutheran Churches
- Hopes and expectations concerning what can be achieved over the next six years
- A future vision for the LWF
- How different expressions of the LWF could evolve and be strengthened
- The specific role and functions of the communion office
- The relationships and strategic partnerships that are important and how the LWF will be working with others
- Priorities that should be reflected in the strategy
- Ways to strengthen the effectiveness and sustainability of the communion office.

The directions paper is NOT yet written as a draft strategy. It does not represent agreed positions or proposed priorities. Rather, it reflects the common messages and issues that have been heard, summarized under headings that take us toward a possible structure for the draft strategy.

Throughout the paper, “The Lutheran World Federation” (LWF) refers to the communion as a whole and communion office refers to the secretariat in Geneva.

The next section of the directions paper discusses those matters relating to who we are as a communion—identity, purpose, values, characteristics, member expectations, expressions of the communion and a vision for 2017.

The messages on emerging directions are organized under six strategic focus areas:

- Living in a growing and united communion
- Theological reflection and study

14 January 2010

- Ecumenical and interfaith relationships
- Diakonia—humanitarian relief, development and advocacy
- Church accompaniment, relationships and development
- Organizational effectiveness

The next stage of the planning process will involve reaching agreement on core priorities and tasks for the period of the strategy and crafting goals, strategies and indicators to assess progress for each strategic focus area.

1.6 How to use the directions paper

We want to hear your views on the way the emerging content has been summarized and on the issues. The feedback we receive will be used directly to shape the draft strategy to be distributed by 1 April.

We invite your feedback on the emerging directions.

General questions

- Is the content of the directions paper going in the right direction?
- Are there areas where you have major concerns?

Questions to use in responding to each section

You may wish to comment on some or all sections of the directions paper. Use the following general questions to structure your responses.

- Do you support the aspirations and ideas that have emerged?
- What issues need more discussion or elaboration?
- Do you have additional suggestions that will help shape the directions?

There has been some discussion on what to call the strategy to lift up its importance. One suggestion has been to use *plan de vida* (life plan). We welcome suggestions on naming of the strategy in your response to the directions paper.

Send written responses to the directions paper to lylarogan@gmail.com by 4 March 2011

2 Who we are as a communion of Lutheran churches

2.1 Common messages on identity

The question of identity was seen to be highly important in all of the processes contributing to development of the strategy.

14 January 2010

The strategy should show for the future how being a communion shapes our life, witness and service. There is a strong desire from member churches to continue to live into and give expression to an evolving communion identity. Leading up to the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in 2017, a priority to be reflected in the strategy is ongoing theological reflection and discussion on what it means to be Lutheran and a communion of churches. Here there are currently different understandings among member churches, but a strong desire to build more common understanding. Key areas for further exploration are the way the LWF defines itself as both Lutheran and ecumenical, and expectations and mutual accountabilities that are associated with membership in the communion.

Another finding was that beyond church leaders, member churches have very limited awareness of, or connection to the LWF and therefore a limited understanding of what being a communion means. All are agreed that being in communion needs to extend beyond church leaders and those more directly involved in the LWF's governance processes to congregations and church members.

Embedded in the consultation workshops and responses were many common views concerning identity, purpose, values and characteristics. The sections following present the emerging thinking on these questions.

2.2 Emerging thinking on Lutheran identity

The Lutheran World Federation is a communion of churches bringing together 70 million Lutherans that worship in 145 churches in 79 countries around the world.

Within this communion of churches, Lutherans gather together for prayer and fellowship, to study together, to speak together, walk together and serve together.

The LWF is committed globally to the foundational confessions of the Lutheran tradition. The LWF member churches confess the Triune God, agree in the proclamation of the Word of God and are united in pulpit and altar fellowship.

With its confessional basis, the LWF is fully committed to life in the unity of the one, holy, catholic apostolic Church. It actively promotes and serves the purpose of Christian unity everywhere in a united witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

In the communion member churches are united in shared faith and heritage and by a mutual responsibility to care for God's creation, address human suffering in the world and promote peace, reconciliation and human rights.

Lutheran identity is the core foundation of the communion, and this identity is dynamic and evolving.

- Lutheran identity is biblically and historically rooted, is shaped by the multiple contexts in which it lives and has different expressions throughout the world.
- To be Lutheran is to be freed by grace to love and serve one's neighbor.

14 January 2010

- To be Lutheran is to be ecumenical—we work for unity among Christians through theological exploration and collaborative action as part of the ecumenical movement.
- Being Lutheran means reaching out to, engaging and working beside other faith communities to promote understanding and build relationships for a better world.

2.3 Our shared purpose

The current mandate of the LWF Constitution Article III sets out the mandate as follows.

The LWF:

- *furtheres the united witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and strengthens the member churches in carrying the missionary command and in their efforts towards Christian unity worldwide;*
- *furtheres 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;*
- *furtheres through cooperative study the self-understanding and the communion of member churches and helps them to act jointly in common tasks.*

At a fundamental level, there was convergence of thinking about our shared purpose as a communion. However in some workshops conducted for the planning process, there was also a desire to frame the shared purpose in a new way to give it some liveliness and synergy with the emerging directions and to use more accessible language. Another way to express the shared purpose is included here for consideration. It is consistent with the mandate and picks up some other important themes from the Stuttgart Assembly and planning consultation processes.

Together, the LWF and its member churches are united in their commitment to:

- witnessing to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and carrying out their mission in ways that build Christian unity worldwide;
- alleviating poverty and human suffering in the world and promoting social, economic and gender justice;
- protecting and caring for God's creation and living in an environmentally responsible and sustainable way;
- contributing to dialogue, peace and reconciliation among churches, between different faiths and in societies affected by violence and conflict;
- sharing gifts, understandings and resources and through this, strengthening individual churches and the communion in faith and action.

2.4 Our shared values

The values identified through consultation as important to the way the LWF lives, works and conducts relationships as a communion are identified below.

14 January 2010

Dignity and justice—Every human being is created in God’s image, and is thereby gifted with a rich variety of talents and capacities. All persons have a right to dignity irrespective of their social status, gender, ethnicity, age, ability or other differences. Our concern for justice means we work on the underlying causes of poverty, exclusion and discrimination and toward achieving a more equitable distribution of power, resources and opportunities.

Respect for diversity—Differences among us express the richness of God’s creation. As a global communion of churches we will value and seek to understand our differences with respect to culture, history and context and the way these have shaped our theological understandings, our stance on moral and ethical questions and our practice of ministry, mission and service.

Inclusion and participation—We are committed to being inclusive and enabling full and equal participation of men, women and youth in church life and society, and in the decision-making processes, activities and programs of the LWF. We understand that power dynamics, cultural norms, access to resources and other factors can create barriers to participation and will work to overcome these.

Compassion and commitment—Inspired by God’s love for humanity, we are caring and compassionate toward those who are poor and marginalized and give voice and support to minority populations and faiths that experience discrimination, violence and hardship in different contexts.

Transparency and accountability—the LWF will be a responsible steward of the resources and responsibilities which God has entrusted to us. We are committed to transparency in our aims, processes, decisions and use of resources and to being accountable to the people we serve, our member churches, partners and donors.

2.5 The characteristics that will define the LWF in 2017

The LWF’s progress will be marked in part by the way the LWF lives and conducts itself as a communion of churches. The themes below were heard during the Stuttgart Assembly and reflected in consultation responses. They relate also to the nature of the LWF’s journey as a communion and as such, are drawn from the report of the LWF renewal process as well. They are written here as an aspiration for 2017 and as part of the ongoing evolution of the LWF.

We are evangelical and dialogical—acting from the heart of the “good news,” we are truly evangelical, seeking to affirm the gospel anew in the different contexts of today’s world; engaging respectfully with different perspectives and other faiths.

14 January 2010

We are spiritual and sacramental—with worship shaping our lives, we deepen our encounter with the central themes. Our worship and dialogue reflect the regional diversity of the communion and our openness to contemporary expressions of traditional forms of worship.

We are contextual and trans-contextual—our communion has local, regional and global expressions; our rich diversity strengthens us and provides an opportunity for more trans-contextual reflection and action.

We are missional—holistic mission is at the core of who we are as a communion. Encompassing proclamation, service (*diakonia*) and advocacy, holistic mission is concerned with the whole person and all people.

We are relational—engaging in dialogue and collaboration with other parts of the ecumenical movement, other church communions and other faiths and building relationships with our strategic partners and decision makers.

We seek to be courageous—we are a critical voice on global issues, standing up for people experiencing pain and suffering; within the communion, we find ways to reconcile and manage our differences while maintaining unity.

As a communion, we are supported by a communion office that is **sustainable, professional and committed to learning and improvement**.

2.6 What being in communion means for member churches

Consultation for the planning found there is room to better understand the expectations of member churches and to explore the meaning they attach to communion membership. Notwithstanding this finding, member churches were asked about their expectations and the following themes emerged.

Member churches understand communion to be a gift and a task. Being part of the communion connects, inspires and strengthens member churches in their spiritual journey. It brings the Lutheran family of churches together to share the gospel in prayer, worship and service for the world. Participation in the communion enhances Lutheran self-understanding and supports and nurtures member churches in theological understanding, mission and service to the world.

Within the communion, member churches give and receive the many gifts, resources and understandings they have and through which they can contribute more effectively at local, regional and global levels. Each church is strengthened and inspired by the witness of other member churches and the wisdom, faith expressions and contextual experiences they bring.

Member churches are growing into a relationship characterized by mutual respect, mutual accountability, commitment and reciprocity. This journey will inevitably lead us to a point where we are confronted with questions of authority and accountability in new ways.

Within the LWF, there are spaces and arenas for member churches to meet, to learn together and to understand and face common challenges as churches and society. The LWF gives particular attention to

14 January 2010

the small and isolated member churches and those who are minority churches or faiths in their own contexts.

3 A vision for 2017

There was consensus among member churches, Council members, staff and partners that a shared vision is important to shaping who the LWF is as a communion and maintaining unity for the future.

Writing a vision statement can be one of the most challenging aspects of formulating a long-term strategy. The vision should represent an aspiration—the highest level end statement about what the LWF is aiming for as a communion of churches.

The elements of vision that emerged from the consultation varied in their focus, but all related to one or more of the following:

- a vision for a growing, strengthened and more unified communion confident in its ability to deal with differences;
- a vision for how the world will be different as a result of the LWF's contribution and work with others;
- a vision for the commemoration of the anniversary of the Reformation as a reflection of progress in the communion and the ongoing reformation of the Church.

One of the strongest messages or themes to come through all aspects of the initial consultation was **unity in diversity**. This could be captured as part of the vision. It is already part of the values and reflected in the emerging directions.

Common messages on vision

The statements below are offered as a starting point for further discussion of a vision the LWF might embrace for 2017. They are not mutually exclusive or necessarily different, and more work is needed in the next stage of the process to arrive at a vision statement that the LWF's constituencies can consider as part of the draft strategy. They all concern the LWF's progress by 2017.

- a strong witnessing communion of churches united in faith and action;
- a self-confident world communion true to its prophetic dimension;
- A communion united by its Lutheran faith and heritage, valuing its diversity and a sharing a commitment to justice, peace and reconciliation in the world;
- a vibrant growing communion, with greater clarity about what it means to be a communion and a reformed movement within the one apostolic catholic Church, engaged through relationship to address human suffering;
- a communion celebrating its unity, sharing worship and faith and continuing to reflect on its role in ongoing reformation of the church;

14 January 2010

- the LWF is a uniting force among people of different faiths, the ecumenical movement and civil society, and a prophetic voice for peace and justice in the world;
- a radical and inclusive communion committed to justice in the world and valuing different cultures and ways of expressing faith;
- the LWF is known to the world as a communion of churches united in faith and mission and as a faith-based humanitarian and development organization;
- a strengthened communion that is locally rooted and globally connected in mission and diakonia.

4 Expressions of the communion

The Eleventh Assembly in Stuttgart, the report of the LWF Renewal Committee and consultations on the strategy all reflect a growing commitment to more diverse expressions of communion. There is also support for strengthening regional and subregional expressions and further clarifying their roles and ways of relating.

An important message from the consultation was that member Churches want to be part of regional expressions and networks. They also want opportunities for cross regional or trans-contextual relationships. These aspirations are reflected in this paper under Focus Area 1—Living as a growing and united communion.

The LWF renewal process has led to a shift in how the LWF secretariat is thought of. As part of the global expression of the communion, it has a distinct role in furthering our self-understanding of being a communion, fulfilling our common commitments and furthering ecumenical relationships. There has also been a shift in language, from the LWF Geneva secretariat to the LWF communion office. This is consistent with a commitment to the communion office supporting and facilitating engagement with and between the many expressions of the communion.

The life and work of the communion happens within member churches, in countries (through, for example, national committees and ecumenical networks), through regional and subregional expressions of the communion and globally. Some work may be led by the communion office, in other cases the office will be playing a supportive or facilitative role, bringing others together and making available to the whole communion work that may be happening in specific regions or networks.

4.1 Common messages on the role of the communion office

The consultation found a general lack of knowledge among member churches and other stakeholders about what the communion office currently does. Clarifying and raising awareness of the role of the communion office is seen to be important.

The messages coming through reflect something of the way the LWF as a communion of churches needs to work in the future. They suggest a more collaborative approach to sharing, decision-making

14 January 2010

and getting things done. Certainly there was agreement that the LWF does not want to be a hierarchical organization with decisions and power situated in Geneva.

The consultation responses show broad consensus on the functions of the communion office as follows:

- enable and support communication, dialogue and mutual accompaniment among member churches and regional expressions of the communion;
- convene forums and events for exchange of perspectives in theology, mission and diakonia, and produce studies and resources in support of this;
- mediate and facilitate healing and reconciliation among member churches facing tensions or conflict;
- support member churches, share their resources and knowledge and provide assistance with institutional capacity development;
- conduct ecumenical and interfaith dialogue and relationships at an international level;
- respond to emergencies and disasters and implement humanitarian and development programs as a partner within the ACT Alliance;
- give voice to the needs and realities of poor and oppressed people and participate in global debates relevant to the LWF's concerns and priorities;
- disseminate knowledge drawn from the experience of ecumenical partners, related organizations and the LWF's programs and activities;
- build and manage strategic relationships with the LWF's global partners;
- raise the profile and visibility of the LWF within the communion and in the world.

5 Emerging strategic directions and priorities

5.1 Overarching strategic themes

In all of the processes shaping the LWF strategy so far there has been reaffirmation of some focus areas and commitments that have already been a significant part of the LWF's journey. There was strong affirmation for the following:

- the need for a strengthened communion, in all of its expressions;
- the crucial role that the LWF plays in promoting theological reflection;
- diakonia being at the core of the LWF's identity and purpose, with a stronger focus on advocacy
- the importance of church accompaniment;
- the need for ecumenical involvement and interfaith dialogue, and the potential for the LWF to play a stronger leadership role in these areas;
- the paramount importance of communication as a foundation for progress in the above areas.

5.2 Cross-cutting thematic areas

14 January 2010

There is much common thinking on the priority thematic issues to be reflected in the LWF strategy, as evident from the Assembly resolutions and issues identified through consultation. These are concerns of the communion in all of its expressions. They will also shape how the communion office organizes and prioritizes its work in the coming years. The thematic areas emerging as priorities are:

- Gender justice
- Food security and sustainable livelihoods
- Climate change and environmental sustainability
- Needs of people dislocated and affected by emergencies, conflict and disasters
- The needs of ethnic minorities and indigenous people
- Preventing the spread of HIV and AIDS and supporting affected people
- Illegitimate debt and impacts of the global financial crisis
- Human trafficking and migration.

A central message from the consultation was “do less more deeply”—take a small number of thematic issues and work on them well. The LWF strategy should ideally reflect some clear thematic priorities. Further discussion is needed to reach agreement on what these should be and what they mean for LWF’s work at a global level. Regional expressions and individual churches are likely to continue to prioritize issues based on the needs and realities of their context.

5.3 Emerging directions in key strategic focus areas

As a step toward shaping the priorities in the strategy, the following sections of the directions paper are organized under six **strategic focus areas**. Under each strategic focus areas the paper summarizes:

- **common messages about directions**—these are presented in order to test and invite feedback;
- **issues**—areas where there is more work to be done.

The following sections should be read as emerging directions and findings from processes that have informed the strategy so far. They are not yet formulated as the draft strategy. Nor do they reflect agreed or proposed priorities. The messages are written in the future sense as they reflect the answers to the questions asked of the LWF’s various constituencies and are therefore aspirational in their intent. They are numbered to assist people responding to the paper to refer to specific points.

The strategic focus areas are all of equal importance and need to be seen as interconnecting and overlapping, not as discrete or separate areas of work. Focus Area 6 deals with organizational effectiveness. Strategies for communication, fund-raising and resources, governance and management will ultimately be included in the strategy for two reasons. They have been identified as priorities through the LWF renewal process and consultation, and because investment in organizational capacity and effectiveness is a prerequisite for making progress in other strategic focus areas.

Focus Area 1: Living in a growing and united church communion

14 January 2010.

Common messages from the consultation

- 1) The LWF has a deeper and more uniform consciousness of what it means to be a communion of churches.
- 2) The LWF Assembly in 2017 is a time of joyful celebration, joint worship and prayer, an event which Lutherans share with other Protestants and the ecumenical family. The Assembly includes a commemorative action which reflects what it means to be the whole body of Christ.
- 3) The LWF is valuing the gifts and wisdom of member churches in all parts of the world. All churches see themselves as givers and receivers, while at the same time acknowledging the different resource capacities and contexts of churches.
- 4) The LWF's processes are more systematic, inclusive and polycentric. Member churches are coming together in more than one way—through regional expressions, through companion relationships and in networks reflecting on common challenges or working on strategies for development as churches.
- 5) There is greater trust and mutual accountability among member churches and between member churches and the communion office.
- 6) Member churches are discussing issues such as human sexuality, women's ordination and different interpretations of the scriptures in ways that do not threaten unity but at the same time achieve a more common understanding or clearer biblical interpretation.
- 7) The LWF has developed processes to mediate conflicts between churches or expressions of the communion where these may threaten unity.
- 8) Regional expressions of the LWF are strengthened and taking on more of the life of the communion.
- 9) The LWF has agreed strategies in place for leadership renewal and development that guarantee strong participation of women, men and youth at all levels of communion life. The LWF is facilitating and supporting access to education and training for lay church leaders.
- 10) Member churches feel a greater sense of pride and ownership in the work of the LWF and in the way it is forming as a communion. Congregations as well as church leaders are more aware of being part of the LWF and more connected to its achievements and activities.
- 11) The LWF is more visible in the world, both as a church communion and as an international humanitarian and development actor for the ecumenical movement.

Issues

A concern mentioned by almost all stakeholders was the risk that controversial issues would threaten the unity of the communion and undermine its capacity to achieve other goals. As the LWF grows into the gift of communion, challenges will be expressed and the goal of maintaining unity will be highlighted even more. As we deal with difficult questions, we have an opportunity to further grow and learn about living in communion and our common journey. There is a strong expectation from member churches

14 January 2010

that the communion office will facilitate and steer the process of growing into the gift of communion, including helping us to explore the issues that challenge us.

The potentially divisive issue most raised through consultations was human sexuality. Various proposals were put forward about how this issue should be dealt with (or not). Most felt the LWF needed to continue the dialogue on marriage, family and human sexuality—but some could not see major progress being made if this issue was confronted too directly or without reference to biblical interpretation.

While clarifying and strengthening the role of regional expressions was seen to be important, there was also concern that this could result in “regional blocks.” Member churches also want opportunities to come together cross-regionally. Work is needed to further clarify the roles and authority of regional expressions of the LWF and determine the way these structures are best supported and facilitated. There was support for decentralizing some functions to regions, but also recognition of the complexity involved in how this is best organized and supported. A related issue is the way regional expressions of the LWF interface with other regional ecumenical structures.

Focus Area 2: Theological reflection and study

Common messages from the consultation

- 1) The LWF is playing a crucial role in promoting theological reflection—articulating what it means to be Lutheran in today’s world, deepening understanding of the gospel and promoting understanding of the theological basis for mission and diakonia.
- 2) The LWF is helping to facilitate a deeper communication and understanding among theologians of different cultures, regions and churches.
- 3) The LWF is supporting member churches from different parts of the world come together to share their theological reflections and understanding, thereby contributing to the ongoing theological reformation. Theological study and reflection is an activity that involves all parts of the communion.
- 4) Looking toward 2017, the LWF is continually expressing anew a theological message that is grounded in the Lutheran traditions but relevant to the issues of the day and to trans-contextual interpretation and meaning. It identifies the theological dimensions of emerging issues and encourages reflection on these.
- 5) The communion office is playing a crucial role in theological formation. Through the LWF, member churches are connected to theological education and study happening in seminaries and other institutions.
- 6) Through theological reflection and education, member churches are better able to proclaim the gospel holistically in their context, and the communion to achieve more common understandings, confidence and shared purpose.

14 January 2010

Issues

There was affirmation of the role of the communion office in promoting and supporting theological reflection at all levels of the communion. Many respondents identified that the planning process provides a good opportunity to renew and refocus cooperation between the communion office and the Institute for Ecumenical Research in Strasbourg and to clarify roles.

There were some differing points of view about the way in which theology and ecumenical dialogue and relationships fit together for the purposes of the strategy.

Focus Area 3: Ecumenical and interfaith relationships

Common messages from the consultation

- 1) The LWF has negotiated more precise roles and working arrangements with the World Council of Churches, the World Communion of Reformed Churches and the ACT Alliance. In the future, the LWF is not doing things alone that are best done ecumenically (examples given include advocacy on some issues, interfaith dialogue and aspects of capacity development with churches).
- 2) The LWF is engaged in dialogue with other world communions and churches to build understanding and knowledge that contributes to the unity of the Christian church. The LWF will continue to explore and create expanded spaces for ecumenical dialogue and relationships.
- 3) At all levels, from global to local, ecumenical engagement with other Christian communities is nurtured. Member churches are encouraged and supported to establish ecumenical relationships and dialogue in their local and regional contexts. The communion office gathers information about these experiences and shares it across the communion.
- 4) The LWF is a leader within the ACT Alliance and encourages and supports engagement of member churches in ACT forums and networks around the world.
- 5) Interfaith relationships will be highly important at a local and regional level where the focus and concerns will be shaped by history and context. The LWF will support member churches in their efforts to engage with other faiths and communicate the learning and achievements across the communion.
- 6) At a global level, a primary focus for interfaith dialogues is achieving peace in troubled regions of the world and building bridges between faiths for the purpose of modeling better ways of sharing faith and together creating more harmonious and just societies. The LWF is promoting and working with diapraxis as a model for interfaith encounter.
- 7) Interfaith dialogue with Muslims was seen to be of high importance, but some felt this should be conducted ecumenically not just bilaterally with the LWF.

Issues

14 January 2010

An issue for further development of the strategy will be how to prioritize specific churches or church communions for dialogue.

The question of bilateral dialogue versus multilateral dialogue was also raised. Some ecumenical dialogue may be best conducted multilaterally and should then be facilitated by other ecumenical partners.

One area for greater ecumenical collaboration and joint effort was international advocacy. Some respondents argue there is scope to combine resources in this area or at least strategically focus the joint effort to avoid duplication. This is picked up under Focus Area 4—Diakonia.

The LWF Assembly in 2017 provides a very important opportunity for the LWF and ecumenical partners to engage in a joint action or event to symbolize the unity of the Christian Church. There are currently different views about the proposal to join the LWF Assembly to the WCC Assembly. This requires further discussion, as the strategy could reflect a specific commitment in this area.

Focus Area 4: Diakonia—humanitarian relief, development and advocacy

Common messages from the consultation

- 1) Diakonia belongs to the core identity of the communion and is part of communion life in all of its expressions. Diakonia was the vocation that brought the LWF together in 1947 in Lund, and its place in the future life of the communion has been affirmed through the LWF renewal process, the 2010 Assembly and consultations on the LWF strategy.
- 2) The goals for work in this area are to:
 - improve in sustainable ways the lives of poor and oppressed people and those affected by conflict, emergencies and natural disasters;
 - empower people and communities to achieve their universal rights and quality of life;
 - uphold human rights and draw attention to the underlying causes of poverty, conflict and human suffering;
 - influence change in global policies and systems to bring about economic and social justice and peace in the world.
- 3) The LWF is a leading actor within the ACT Alliance for response to emergencies and disasters and providing humanitarian and development assistance globally.
- 4) The LWF focuses on marginalized and vulnerable poor people whose livelihoods are threatened by the effects of natural and human-made disasters, with special regard to internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees, women and people affected by HIV and AIDS.
- 5) As part of its humanitarian and development work, the LWF is attentive to the increasing frequency and intensity of natural disasters caused by climate change and global warming and the devastating impacts these have for people in countries and regions already facing unacceptable poverty and hardship.

14 January 2010

- 6) The work in humanitarian relief and development will be upheld as important for the whole communion and the ecumenical movement. It will be widely understood across the communion that this work is motivated by faith, is ecumenical and relates to civil society. This means humanitarian relief and development programs are based on need and not used for proselytizing.
- 7) The LWF adheres to international human rights frameworks, codes and standards that define good practice, quality and accountability in delivery of humanitarian and development assistance.
- 8) There is adequate and appropriate operational space for the LWF's emergency response, humanitarian and development work, and it has the resources and competencies that enable it to meet external standards.
- 9) The LWF collaborates with church-related organizations involved in funding and implementing humanitarian and development programs and manages these relationships in a spirit of partnership, mutual accountability, shared learning and joint ownership of achievements.
- 10) The LWF is known as a reliable and effective global voice for justice, peace and human rights.
- 11) The LWF's international advocacy work focuses on issues where it has grassroots knowledge and competence, gained through church knowledge of community struggles and needs identified through program delivery. Priority areas proposed were refugees and IDPs, minority groups in countries affected by conflict, gender justice and economic justice, with a specific focus on illegitimate debt.
- 12) The LWF works with ecumenical partners to achieve global influence. The LWF will lead advocacy efforts in those areas where it is best positioned to do so. It will support and contribute to advocacy work of its ecumenical partners, where they have the expertise and are in a better position to take a leading or coordinating role. Some advocacy issues that may be better dealt with ecumenically include HIV and AIDS, human trafficking and migration and protection of the environment.
- 13) The LWF will maintain its visibility and relationships with the UN and other international agencies relevant to its humanitarian and advocacy work.

Issues

Some respondents called for further discussion about the boundaries of the LWF's role in long-term development. The issue is not so much humanitarian versus development, but rather the way in which the LWF manages the localization of programs that are transitioning to a long-term development focus and supports the capacity of other actors to play this role.

In consultations so far, all have urged that the LWF continue to be a prophetic voice for poor and marginalized people. Many felt more resources should be allocated within the LWF for this purpose. Others placed equal emphasis on this work as a priority but suggested there should be more collaboration and coordination of international advocacy functions and resources from the different ecumenical bodies working in Geneva.

Focus Area 5: Church accompaniment, relationships and development

14 January 2010

Common messages from the consultation

- 1) In the future, the LWF's work in mission and development is primarily focused on accompaniment, inter-church relationships and development of churches and the communion (Focus Area 1).
- 2) The LWF is helping churches meet in different forums, become acquainted and walk together more closely in their faith journeys. In support of this, the LWF is facilitating various networking hubs, providing written resources and keeping track of developments and emerging issues.
- 3) Member churches all have gifts and capacities and a need for ongoing development and learning. Capacity development initiatives recognize this and aim to facilitate sharing of the gifts and resources as well as supporting learning and institutional strengthening.
- 4) The LWF should encourage churches to be sharing the challenges they face and working jointly on solutions and responses to contemporary problems. Shrinking congregations and declining participation in churches, declining resources of some churches and growing congregations in churches with limited financial resources are examples of such challenges. Another is the challenge that new emerging churches face, particularly where they are small or minority churches in their context.
- 5) Through accompaniment and capacity development, more member churches are confident to speak out for victims of injustice in their societies and are encouraged to work ecumenically and with other faiths to bring about change. The LWF is linking member churches with experience in different issues, and disseminating information about these efforts.
- 6) Leadership renewal and development in churches will be a priority with emphasis on women, men and youth. A more intentional strategy is needed to encourage collaboration of churches in leadership development and supporting this from the communion office.
- 7) The LWF continues to develop and bring the gift of strong women's experience in leadership in the church to the Church universal.
- 8) The LWF has a proactive strategy for involving youth in its processes and supporting their participation in decision-making at all levels and in the Assembly. An important aspect of this strategy is facilitating education and development opportunities that connect different regions or churches.

Issues

A common theme in consultations was that mission needs to be more prominent in the work of the LWF.

Sometimes these concerns were expressed in terms drawn from LWF consultations on mission, which understand it holistically to include both proclamation and *diakonia*. Other respondents, perhaps reflecting usage which links mission more closely to conversion from unbelief to faith, called for mission and *diakonia* to be brought more closely together. Clearly there is a need for ongoing reflection on what mission means today to bring the communion into a more common understanding.

14 January 2010

Many respondents argue that in the future the LWF should focus its work on small, isolated or minority churches in difficult contexts, and helping churches work jointly on common challenges relating to their sustainability and development.

While there was support for the LWF's aim with respect to youth and gender representation, different views emerged on the use of quotas to achieve balance in the participation of women, men and youth. Some felt this system compromised competence in some cases and there was a concern that young men are excluded because being a young woman fulfills two aspects of the quota system. Some youth delegates felt there was a risk that they would not be taken seriously because they were in positions as a result of quota system.

Focus Area 6: Organizational effectiveness

The priorities that will be elaborated in the strategy for organizational effectiveness are important if the LWF is to make progress and achieve its aspirations over the coming six years. Organizational effectiveness needs to consider the LWF structure and processes as a whole. Understanding the LWF as a communion with different expressions means that not all tasks have to go to the communion office and that organizational effectiveness will require attention in the different expressions of the communion. For this reason, the strategy is likely to include goals relating to strengthening regional expressions.

While governance structures are decided by the Assembly, achieving good governance and making the agreed structures and processes work well is ongoing work. Therefore actions to continually improve governance should also be considered.

Given the emerging functions identified for the communion office (see page 12) the LWF strategy will address goals and commitments for its further development.

The initial consultation phase did not focus in detail on organizational issues because consideration of structures, resources and processes needs to follow clarity about overall directions and priorities. However, some very important themes have been identified through consultations that are similar to those discussed in the LWF renewal process, particularly the self-assessment by the Geneva office. The key messages are summarized below. More work will be done to develop strategies in response to these ideas in the next phase of the planning process.

Communication

- 1) More effective communication is seen to underpin progress in all aspects of the LWF's work, in internal and external relationships and in the LWF's visibility and influence locally, regionally and globally.
- 2) The consultation has affirmed the need for a clear communication strategy and for stronger investment in organizational capacity and expertise in this area.

14 January 2010

- 3) A further message from the consultation was that the LWF's systems and approaches to communication need to be more contemporary and better tailored to what the LWF is trying to achieve.

The following additional messages for improving communication were consistently mentioned:

- 4) The LWF is more visible and there is better information available on who it is and what it does. This was seen as an internal and external issue.
- 5) The communication strategy is a central foundation for all aspects of the LWF's work, and particularly fund-raising, advocacy and relationship management.
- 6) The LWF should develop communication strategies to make its theological understandings accessible and known to non-theologians.
- 7) Communication needs to be better targeted and designed around its purpose, the needs of different audiences and methods that ensure accessibility and comprehension by the intended audience.
- 8) The LWF needs to be able to communicate in a multilingual global environment in a way that is faster and more aligned to the different purposes of communication. Translation of written communication into major languages is important but not sufficient. More consideration needs to be given to how information reaches into member churches and the regional and subregional expressions of the communion.
- 9) The LWF is facilitating the sharing of experience and achievements within the communion—churches are helped to locate other experience that is relevant to them and to access stories and information from other churches. Communication is faster and more two-way within the communion.
- 10) There are mechanisms in place for sharing information between the LWF, related organizations and ecumenical partners and making this accessible to member churches.
- 11) Congregations feel connected to the LWF because information and communication is reaching beyond church leaders and those involved in the LWF's governance processes. They hear the stories about achievements and, as a result, feel greater pride in being part of the Lutheran family.
- 12) Responsibilities for communication within the communion office need to be clarified and given more prominence. Communication is a shared responsibility, but departments and those with responsibilities need to have the tools and resources needed for effective communication in a global context.

Relationship management

- 1) The LWF is relational both in its identity and in the way it works. Church, ecumenical and interfaith relationships have already been discussed directly under the strategic focus areas.
- 2) Many suggested there is room for the LWF to be strategic and improve the way it manages relationships with key partners identified within the LWF strategy. Relationships can become very

14 January 2010

demanding in time and resources, so having clarity about their purpose, being deliberate in the way relationships are best supported and assigning responsibility for managing key strategic partnerships is seen to be important.

- 3) In their responses, related organizations working closely with Department for World Service (DWS) have signaled their commitment to the LWF and identified shared goals and some challenges in these relationships. Some have encouraged the LWF to explore with them new models of partnership tailored more to the current realities and future aspirations. The planned round table with related organizations in January will explore this further.

A secure and sustainable resource base

- 1) The LWF needs a bold new strategy for securing resources in support of its strategic aims and work program. This should include consideration of what works well now, new models of partnership with related agencies, new funding partners and other new and innovative ways to raise funds.
- 2) A priority within this is to achieve more discretionary funding to support the core costs associated with developing a modern and efficient administration and strong communication.
- 3) A major challenge is the shrinking resource base available to many churches and agencies that have been supporters of the LWF in the past. The LWF needs to work at both ends of the problem, helping member churches themselves address the challenges they face, and exploring new models of funding.
- 4) Many feel the LWF needs to commit more resources and expertise to this task, as well as mapping out the strategy—that a dedicated unit responsible for resource mobilization and strategy is needed.

Effective governance and management

- 1) Many respondents in the consultation see that there is room to streamline the LWF's governance structures and processes for reasons of cost, efficiency and effectiveness. This stems from a concern that there are too many layers of governance—Council, Executive Committee, Program Committees, Standing and Project committees—and the fact that coordination and coherence between so many layers is difficult.
- 2) Reviewing the governance structures suggests that there is a need to reassess what governance and management functions are. The current committee structures are aligned to units and functions within the communion office and this is seen to confuse governance and management further. Appointment of staff is one area where some think the lines between governance and management are blurred.
- 3) Some Council members identified concerns about how the roles and responsibilities of the Executive Committee fit with those of Council, especially when Council meets once a year. Roles, authority and expectations of the different committee structures also need to be clearer.

14 January 2010

- 4) More could be done to induct new Council members in their responsibilities, governance processes, work of the communion office and roles of the various committees. Some form of mentoring could be introduced to support new and younger members of the Council.
- 5) The Council could also institute a process to review its performance as the governing body based on defined roles, authority and expectations and how well its processes are working.
- 6) While these concerns have been raised, transparent and accountable governance of the LWF and maintaining an appropriate balance in representation (geographic, gender and age) are shared goals.

A skilled and committed workforce

- 1) The LWF should approach workforce planning and development in a more strategic way to ensure the right mix level and mix of skills and competencies required and levels of staffing aligned with priorities in the strategy.
- 2) The LWF should attend to gender equality in its staffing structure as well as on its governing bodies. By 2017 there should be equal representation of women in management positions and among field directors. The age profile of the workforce has also been raised as an issue and some advocate more deliberate strategies for recruiting and training young people into roles within the organization.
- 3) There should be a more strategic and intentional approach to staff training and development linked to the future needs of the organization.

Other priority areas

Staff workshops in particular highlighted two other areas for priority in the strategy:

- **Information and knowledge sharing**—this is emphasized under almost all strategic focus areas.
- More systematic and efficient processes for **decision making**—both within the communion office and the way in which functions are assigned or delegated to regional and country offices.