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Saksdokumenter:

Conference on World Mission and Evangelism Report *Moving in the Spirit: Called to transforming Discipleship* Arusha, Tanzania, 8-13 March 2018, International Review of Mission No. 2. December 2018

WCC: *Call from Arusha*

LWF Strategy 2019 - 2024: *With Passion for Christ and the Church*

CEC Message: *You shall be my Witnesses*

Oppfølging av Arusha: Misjon på Kirkemøtet i 2020

Sammendrag

Mellomkirkelig råd (MKR) har ved flere anledninger drøftet oppfølgingen av misjonskonferansen i Arusha og vurdert om rådet burde fremme en sak om misjon til Kirkemøtet i 2020.

Saken ble sist drøftet på møte i MKR/AU 21. januar 2019 (MKR/AU 06/09), som konkluderte med at MKR ikke fremmer en ordinær sak om misjon til Kirkemøtet i 2020, men at det heller planlegges at Kirkemøtet får preg av misjon og en samtale om Den norske kirkes oppdrag som en «bekjennende, misjonerende, tjenende og åpen folkekirke». Dette er i tråd med signaler fra Kirkerådets ledergruppe.

Teologisk nemnd vil drøfte saken på sitt møte 28. februar og 1. mars, og innspill herfra vil bli lagt fram muntlig i MKRs møte.

MKR utfordres til å komme med innspill til tema, innfallsvinkler, problemstillinger og metodikk som kan gjøre Kirkemøtet i 2020 til et møte hvor vi får ny innsikt, inspirasjon og engasjement til å være en misjonerende folkekirke i årene fram mot 2030.

Forslag til vedtak

Mellomkirkelig råd har følgende innspill til sekretariatets forberedelse av Kirkemøtet i 2020:

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Saksorientering

Bakgrunn

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Kirkerådet har vedtatt to hovedsatsinger for 2019 (som trolig vil strekke seg inn i 2020 og lenger); dåp og digital satsing. Det er enkelt å knytte kirkens oppdrag og tilstedeværelse i det norske samfunnet til disse to satsingene. Dåp, trosopplæring, etterfølgelse, disippelskap, evangelisering, diakoni og samfunnsoppdrag henger uløselig sammen.

Dåpen knytter oss til både den lokale og verdensvide kirke. Identitet og tilhørighet samt forventning om hvordan den dømte lever et kristent liv i dagens Norge, er spennende tema som Kirkemøtet kan løfte fram. Vi må snakke om bønn, bibellesning, gudstjenestefeiring, nattverd, fellesskap, diakoni, dialog m.m. som konkrete «redskaper» som kan støtte den døptes kristenliv. Vi må synliggjøre at dåp og kirkemedlemskap innebærer, ikke bare en tro og et verdisett, men gir praktisk støtte til å meste sitt eget liv og til å være et godt familiemedlem og en aktiv samfunnsborger. Det å være kristen skal gjøre en forskjell.

I 2020 har vi et nyvalgt kirkemøte som kan rette blikket fram mot 2030. Dette året skal vi se tilbake på tusen års historie med kristendom i Norge, men det er også slutt punktet for FNs bærekraftsmål og Paris-avtalen. Det kan bli spennende om Kirkemøtet får preg av en samtale om hva folkekirken er og skal gjøre i årene framover.

Det er mulig at Kirkemøtet i 2020 vil få en mer spisset sak om oppfølging av evalueringen av Samarbeidet menighet og misjon, men det vil ikke være en sak om misjon mer generelt.

MKR's oppgave er å tilføre Kirkemøtet den nyeste økumeniske forståelse og innsikt om kirkens oppdrag i vår tid.

I denne sammenheng er **Kirkenes verdensråds** misjonskonferansen i Arusha og «Kallet fra Arusha» en viktig ressurs. Vedlagt finnes en rapport om Arusha-konferansen fra *International Review of Mission*. Fra Arusha kan vi hente problemstillinger som:

- Forståelsen av «disippelskap» i Den norske kirke.
- Disippelskap: et inkluderende eller ekskluderende begrep i folkekirken
- Sammenhengen mellom dåp, opplæring og etterfølgelse i folkekirken, «skapt – døpt – sendt»
- Hva innebærer det å være en kristen i Norge i 2020? (Merker man forskjell på kristne og andre troende/ikke-troende?)
- «Språket imellom» teologi (tro og etikk) og politisk handlingsspråk. Metodikken i «Kallet fra Arusha» hvor setningene begynner med kirkens språk, og ender i samfunnsengasjement.
- Identifisere våre utfordringer – konkretisere/overføre «Kallet fra Arusha» til norsk kontekst.
- Hvordan være en «profetisk røst» i en åpen og inkluderende folkekirke hvor alle mennesker – men ikke alle meninger – er godtatt?
- Hvordan kan menighetenes misjonsprosjekter (SMM) skape engasjement?

Fra arbeidet i **Det lutherske verdensforbund** kan vi hente inspirasjon fra den nye Strategiplanen 2019-2024 «With Passion for the Church and the World». Se særlig på s. 6-7.

- Hvordan håndterer våre menigheter, teologisk og i praksis, sammenhengen mellom proklamasjon, diakoni og politisk engasjement?
- Hvordan uttrykker folkekirken sin tilhørighet til det verdensvide lutherske fellesskapet, og hvordan ser vi våre søsterkirker som en støtte og ressurs for Den norske kirkes arbeid?

Det lutherske verdensforbunds generalforsamling i 2017 gav oss en utfordring

«As churches in ongoing reformation we call on each member church of the LWF to rethink its being church in its context and its role in God´s mission. (...)
Each church has responsibility to equip each of its members to fulfill the expectation of the Lord: “Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect“. (1 Pet 3:16)”

(Resolution on Being Church in Context and its Role in Mission)

Å gjennomtenke vår kirkes rolle i en ny kontekst er avgjørende for om vi fortsatt vil være en folkekirke med stor oppslutning som bidrar til å gi håp og livstolkning for den enkelte og for samfunnet. Skal vi få til dette, må kirkens medlemmer utrustes til tro og tjeneste, og her er trosopplæring, ikke bare for 0-18 år, men også for voksne viktig. Vi trenger også dyktige ansatte og ledere i Den norske kirke på alle nivåer.

Det finnes mye materiell fra generalforsamlingen og 500-årsmarkeringen av reformasjonen som vi kan hente fram igjen.

Prosjektet *European Churches in times of Change - Secularization, Revival and Mission of the Church* som Den norske kirke under LVFs generalforsamling i Windhoek var med å lansere sammen med bl.a. Folkekirken i Danmark, og som handler om misjon/fornyelse i dagens sekulariserte Europa, kan på sikt bidra inn i vår egen prosess. Men foreløpig finnes det knapt noen dokumenter. Prosessen bærer ennå litt preg av å famle litt om hva man skal vektlegge, og hvilke begreper som bør brukes. Men kanskje er det bra at ikke prosessen «låses» for tidlig. Det kan på mange måter være sunt med et slikt *kontekstuelet misjonalt samarbeid*, som gradvis utvides fra den nordiske sammenhengen til den globale LVF-arenaen. TN og MKR skal holdes oppdatert på dette arbeidet.

Både **Konferansen av europeiske kirker** og **Community of Protestant Churches in Europe** hadde sine generalforsamlinger i 2018, og dokumenter herfra er relevante for Den norske kirkes forståelse av sitt oppdrag som en tradisjonell og etablert kirke i et Europa i rask kulturell og religiøs endring. Den norske kirke vil ha stor nytte av å dra vekslers på andre etablerte kirkers endringsprosesser.

Noen eksempler:

- KEK-dokumentet: *What Future for Europe?*
Den Norske kirkes selvforståelse som folkekirke i et flerkulturelt Norge og Europa?
- KEK: *Assembly Message “You shall be my witnesses”*
Dokumentet er et felleskristent europeisk uttrykk for kirkens oppdrag i Europa. Er Den norske kirke oppdatert på andre europeiske kirkers forståelse av hvordan misjonsoppdraget kan konkretiseres i dagens Europa?
- CPCE-dokumentet: *Religious Plurality* oppfordrer til videre refleksjoner og studier om religionsdialog i et pluralistisk samfunn. Den norske kirke har nok noen læremessige utfordringer i møte med andre kirker forståelse av religionsmøter og dialog. Konkret påvirker dette saker som fellesreligiøse bygg, kirkelige handlinger med flerreligiøse familier o.l. Det er behov for oppdatering av Bispemøtet veiledning. Dette utfordrer Den norske kirkes misjonsforståelse.

Boka **Global kristendom** som ble presentert på MKRs møte i november, inneholder mange tema og problemstillinger som er relevante for Kirkemøtet i 2020.

Det som her er nevnt, er bare noen få aktuelle bidrag fra økumenisk samarbeid som det kan være relevant å se på, dersom Kirkemøtet i 2020 skal få preg av misjon. Mange flere dokumenter og saker kunne selvsagt vært nevnt. Det er en utfordring å ikke gå seg bort i alt som kan være relevant, og det kan være lurt ta å utgangspunkt i noen av de nyeste og mest sentrale økumeniske dokumentene om misjon fra organisasjonene Den norske kirke er medlem av.

Økonomiske/administrative konsekvenser

Det vil en måtte komme tilbake til å forbindelse med forberedelsene til Kirkemøtet i 2020.

must be willing to learn from those on the margins who follow the Liberating Lord.

We can and do believe that we are called into the life-giving mission of the Triune God. By the Spirit we discern and participate in God's mission. As we move in the Spirit we become pilgrims, journeying together and celebrating life in great diversity.

The Christian call to discipleship invites people to worship the God of grace who promises fullness of life for all, to follow in the way of Jesus who said, "I came so that everyone would have life, and have it in its fullest" (John 10:10 CEV), and to be empowered and transformed by the movement of the Spirit.

Jesus prayed that his followers would reflect the unity of the Triune God, commanded them to do the liberating work of restoring holistic relationships within all creation, and gave to his followers the gift of the Holy Spirit to empower them for this work. We claim this as our hope and our calling.

This act of discipleship leads us to live out God's love in Jesus Christ by inspiring justice and peace in ways that are different from the world (John 14:27). It is the Holy Spirit who accompanies us on the journey of faith, teaching us the way of Christ and empowering us to resist and reject powers of domination that would demand our allegiance, and refreshes us for the mission to which we have been called.

We can and do receive and share this faith, both as a personal calling and as a community of followers of Jesus moving toward a life of fullness, giving witness to the ultimate reign of God and God's intention of a world marked by justice and love. This is a transforming calling and mission. We are transformed personally and collectively and are agents of God's transforming love in a broken world. We hear this call, which unites us in our hopes and our prayers.

Documentation

Conference on World Mission and Evangelism Report

"Moving in the Spirit: Called to Transforming Discipleship" Arusha, Tanzania, 8–13 March 2018

The central committee is requested to receive the report of the Conference on World Mission and Evangelism.

Moved by the Spirit

The theme of the Conference "Moving in the Spirit: Called to Transforming Discipleship" suggests a movement of God's people on a Spirit-led pilgrimage that is both ecumenical and transformative in character and purpose. With its broad participation from Protestant, Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Evangelical, Pentecostal, and African Instituted Churches, the Conference showed that the nature and character of mission and evangelism is truly multi-directional and multi-faceted. It indicated that there is not one centre but many centres impacting, shaping, and informing the understanding and practice of mission and evangelism in our time. Those present in Arusha were people from many parts of the world and of different ages, cultures, experiences, perspectives and

orientations, each with stories of suffering and struggle as well as of hope and determination, celebrating the richness of the diversity of God's creation. Together we were able to adopt and issue the "Arusha Call to Discipleship" as an expression of our unity in the transforming mission of God in the world.

The Conference offered multiple spaces for joyful celebrations, mutual sharing and learning, and theological reflection. It offered rich opportunities to be in God's presence, rejoicing and lamenting before the Triune God. The participants met for daily prayers – in the morning, at noon, and in the evening – which proved to be a well from which we drank deeply, finding unity and inspiration. Together with the daily Bible studies our shared experience of worship became key when discerning what Christian discipleship involves today. Sharing our stories together was significant, both in the plenary sessions, the table talks and during the *Warshas* (workshops – a Kiswahili term that conveys the idea of discerning together on critical and cutting-edge issues through sharing of experiences and knowledge). Guided and empowered by the Word of God, enriched by powerful musical and artistic performances, and encouraged by the multitude of songs and prayers from all over the

world, the Conference affirmed its commitment to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ in life, word and deed.

The Conference was deeply moved by the hospitality and generosity shown by the local host committee and the welcome extended by the All Africa Conference of Churches. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, in close cooperation with churches of various denominational affiliation in the region, worked tirelessly with the practical arrangements throughout the week to make all the participants feel comfortable and at home. Not least the ambitious programme on the Sunday morning when all the participants were offered rich opportunities to worship in local congregations in the region.

Besides the thematic plenaries and the ensuing collective reflections – on the Theme, Evangelism, Mission from the Margins, Missional Formation and Embracing the Cross, the conference was also greatly enriched by Warshas. These brought people together in small groups around specific issues and challenges through sharing of experiences of struggle and opportunities for change. Nearly 60 of such Warshas were organised under the broad categories of Migration, Evangelism, Life in all its fullness, Diversity, and Formation.

There were also three sessions of Sokoni (a Kiswahili term which means a market place for exchange) to share ideas, experiences, skills and celebrate. These sessions were around the dreams and

visions of young people, women, and the movements of the marginalised communities.

In an effort to enrich the on-going reflections on Mission from the Margins, the conferences of Indigenous Young People, People with Disabilities, and Women, preceded the main conference. These groups have often been objects and victims of certain expressions of mission and evangelism. These gatherings provided a rich array of experiences and opportunities to imagine more authentic forms of mission and evangelism in an increasingly exclusionary world.

Inspired by Africa

The Conference drew inspiration from the African context in which it met. In the sequence of World Mission Conferences that began in Edinburgh in 1910 this was only the second to be held in Africa, sixty years after meeting at Achimota in Ghana in 1958. Tanzania with its religious plurality, pursuit of social justice, commitment to peace and unity, and ethic of hospitality provided a congenial context in which to hold the Conference. Besides its natural beauty Arusha has been distinguished as a centre within the continent for the resolution of disputes, the administration of justice, advocacy of human rights and promotion of economic development. It is also an area where church life has been shaped by the East African Revival and finds vibrant expression today. The Conference was greatly enlivened by

young people from local churches who memorably contributed to its worship and deliberations.

Exposure to African spirituality and storytelling was both challenging and refreshing for the Conference. The “thirst for God” that is found at the core of African life reminded the Conference that faith is a matter of the heart, that *orthodoxy* and *orthopraxis* need to be complemented by *orthokardia* (spirituality). While the joy of the gospel was abundantly evident, the Conference was also made aware of the struggles of African communities with forms of Christianity that were complicit in colonialism or culturally alienating. Hearing from participants from the African Instituted Churches and the Pentecostal Churches allowed the Conference to appreciate their contribution to reshaping African spirituality. The numerical growth of African Christianity is impressive on any reckoning yet the churches remain challenged by the extent of the poverty, disease and conflict that inflict suffering on many. More positively, Africans’ deep awareness of the relational dimension of life and the importance of community helped the Conference to recover life-giving biblical values.

Informed by Together Towards Life

This was the first World Mission Conference to be held since the WCC’s adoption of the new mission affirmation *Together Towards Life* in 2012. It was evident from the discussions at the Conference there is a faith that we can and do hold.

that TTL has redrawn the landscape so far as mission and evangelism is concerned and has provided a new conceptual framework for missiological thinking.

Leading themes of TTL carried forward strongly into the Conference. The pneumatological turn taken by TTL in regard to the mission of God was reflected in the first part of the Conference title: “Moving in the Spirit”. TTL’s call for “transformative spirituality” was echoed in the second part of the Conference title: “Called to Transforming Discipleship”.

Other distinctive notes of TTL that resonated in the Conference include: the new landscape of world Christianity, a Trinitarian understanding of mission, fullness of life as missiological criterion, the flourishing of creation, God’s economy of life, mission from the margins, healing and wholeness, unity and community, humble yet affirmative evangelism, interfaith dialogue and cultural sensitivity. At the same time, by turning attention to discipleship, a theme that is little developed in TTL, the Conference found a fresh focus for a vision of mission that draws deeply from TTL.

The Conference was conscious that to be a disciple of Christ is a matter of faith and that it is from the affirmation of our faith that we discern the path of discipleship in our time. Therefore in face of today’s challenges the Conference affirmed that there is a faith that we can and do hold.

Challenged by our Global Crisis

Taking account of our global situation the Conference recognized that we are living in times when our shared life is volatile, uncertain, fragile and fragmented. In some ways the issues that trouble us are not new but there is a sense that matters are escalating and there is need for new urgency in addressing them.

The Conference lamented the ascendancy of death-defying forces: the nationalism and fundamentalism that foment hatred, the militarism that stokes conflict, the greed that concentrates resources in the hands of the few at the expense of the many, and a new type of colonialism associated with the despotic reach of the culture of money.

As the Conference heard from CWME Moderator Geervarghese Coorilos:

There are new incarnations of Caesar. There are new avatars of Herod. There are new emperors. This is a new imperial era where numerous "little empires" are being created within the orbit of a "mega empire" that is working in hegemonic ways.

In Arusha, we heard about issues such as forced migration, disease and its effects on the population, ecological degradation, war and conflict, gender inequalities, exclusion and marginalization, appropriation of land, poverty and unemployment, and a reduction of social welfare and security. These issues are reflected and replicated in all regions of the globe and they are escalating.

When we analyse the causes of these injustices, we see one economic system producing the gross accumulation of wealth for 1% of the world's population. This global imperial system has made the financial market one of the idols of our time and it has strengthened cultures of domination and discrimination that continue to marginalize and exclude millions, forcing them into conditions of vulnerability and exploitation. Continual exploitation of God's creation to obtain and maintain this economic system is creating conditions of ecological degradation.

Today's world – where so many face the ravages of climate change, fear of the other, uncontrolled conflicts, hatred and discrimination, violence and displacement, unrelenting poverty and the merciless domination of market forces – is a world that cries out for transformation. There is a need for the kind of authentic discipleship that will offer, and live out, convincing answers to this cry.

Expressing hope that the Conference would open new possibilities for the ecumenical community for a creative engagement with the world, Jooseop Keum, Director of CWME, said,

The missionary movement has both inspired and given birth to the modern ecumenical movement during the last century as the churches have sought to respond to the challenges of history and to be witnesses to the good news of Jesus Christ for the world through visible unity... The world is broken. Therefore, it is imperative for the ecumenical

movement to boldly witness the unity in the Triune God and to live it out for the unity of humanity. The world is yearning for a Christian discipleship which reconciles the broken and troubled world. In order to do so, unity of the church and mission is not an optional agenda.

Jin S. Kim, pastor of All Nations Church in Minneapolis, USA, charted a pathway for those seeking to follow Christ in this contemporary context, calling for a collective Christian response that proposes alternatives to an unjust world:

Christians are to be called out of a sick society built on the evils of racism, sexism, militarism, exploitation, ecocide and destructive competition. We are to create a new community of love... We will have to participate in the broader economic system, but we will not allow capitalist dogma to influence our internal economics. We will draw people from our immediate context of great brokenness, but our mission will include the casting out of imperial demons and the healing of bodies and souls so that we can relate rightly to our God, our neighbours (human and non-human), and God's good green earth.

Called to Deepen our Discipleship

Discipleship is not something that begins with ourselves: "You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you" (John 15:16). It begins with a call that comes from beyond ourselves, the call that comes from our Lord Jesus Christ: "Come, follow me" (Matthew 4:19). One of the best-known features of Jesus' ministry is that he called certain individuals to follow him, to be his disciples.

Therefore, discipleship is an invitation both to a relationship and to a vocation. A relationship that is humble, vulnerable and mutual, and finds itself growing in following Christ, in Christ's own ways, and in finding God at work in situations of strife and struggle, and in empowering people to resist and transform structures and cultures in the name of the Triune God. It is, therefore, a vocation of collaborating with God for the transformation of the world.

The Conference sought to hear this call afresh, to deepen our understanding of what it means in today's context, and to engage ourselves more whole-heartedly and more comprehensively in the life of discipleship. Instead of being preoccupied with institutional conformity or with securing power and wealth for ourselves, we heard anew Christ's call to take the risky path of following him. We have been stirred both to deepen our inward spiritual life and to express our discipleship in ongoing engagement with the world around us.

The Conference asserted that discipleship is a vocation of transformation. It has the missionary character in that it is led by the Spirit to find God at work in contexts of time and space that are in need of transformation. First, the very idea of discipleship needs to be transformed. Discipleship is often understood merely in the sense of being a church member or practising personal piety. The Conference sought to go further by thinking of discipleship as a matter of being actively

engaged in continuing Jesus' mission in the world. In Pope Francis' phrase we are called to be "missionary disciples". This will involve us, in our local contexts, in stepping outside the walls of the church and living out our faith in the spaces of everyday life.

Secondly, we are called to be disciples who are constantly open to being transformed, individually and communally, in our following of Jesus. Discipleship commits us to embark on a spiritual journey and to adopt a way of life that reflects the Lord Jesus in our actions, words, and attitudes. As the Lausanne Movement's Cape Town Commitment stated in 2010:

We need intensive efforts to train all God's people in whole-life discipleship, which means to live, think, work, and speak from a biblical worldview and with missional effectiveness in every place or circumstance of daily life and work.

The Conference was conscious that in many contexts "discipleship" is not a term in everyday use and therefore sought language that might help to explain what it involves. Being "Christ-connected" was a phrase that found resonance – living the whole of our lives in close connection with Jesus Christ. It is not shared ideals that unite us but rather our connectedness to Christ, our living Saviour and Lord.

Third, we are called to be disciples who have transforming effect, and as such we are privileged to join in the mission of the triune God, to move in the Spirit, to work

together towards life, to live out the values of the kingdom of God, to engage in mission from the margins and to humbly bear witness to Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord. True discipleship creates a movement of resistance and hope, countering the death-dealing forces of our time and discovering fullness of life.

Dhiloraj Ranjit Canagasabay, Anglican Bishop of Colombo, offered the Conference a vision of the life of discipleship:

The discipleship which is cast on us at our baptism has both an internal and external dimension. Our inner, personal discipleship arises through our prayer life, our study of and reflection on the scriptures, through the sacraments and worship and through our sharing with fellow believers. We are additionally strengthened through our discipleship within our families and in our worshipping communities. This results in our discipleship in the footsteps of Jesus, bearing witness to the values of His kingdom in our communities, wider society and in our nation.

Disciples Caring for Creation

To be worthy missionary disciples we need to be open to the wonder and mystery of creation, transformed by its beauty and called to action by its suffering. God has given us the responsibility to care for the earth, its natural resources and our environment. We have much to learn from Indigenous people who have demonstrated a greater level of respect for our Mother Earth, recognizing that pollution from the use of fossil fuels and other mineral extractions does not bring honour

and is not beneficial to nature and the long-term survival of the inhabitants of the earth. If evangelism is to bring good news today, it needs to entail the *koinosis* that puts the long-term sustainability of the earth ahead of our own short-term comfort and convenience. As TTL states: "Humanity cannot be saved alone while the rest of the created world perishes. Eco-justice cannot be separated from salvation, and salvation cannot come without a new humility that respects the needs of all life on earth." (§23)

A significant gesture was made by participants in GETI (Global Ecumenical Theological Institute), who made an important contribution to the Conference. During their pre-Conference programme they planted twelve Mringaranga Trees on the campus of the Tumaini University, Makumira, an activity dedicated to the 70th anniversary of the World Council of Churches. Another meaningful gesture was the re-usable water bottles that were issued to Conference participants, without which thousands of empty plastic bottles would have been left in Tanzania.

Disciples at the Margins

"Mission from the Margins" was a key affirmation that was constantly heard and asserted right through the conference. It indicated a new paradigm shift in missiological discourse. "Mission from the Margins" implies affirming the agency of those marginalized, participating in their struggles and sharing their hopes,

overcoming the marginalizing tendencies, and resisting and confronting the forces of marginalization and exclusion in our specific contexts of the world. "Mission from the Margins" can remain rhetoric, if conscious attempts are not made to avoid patronizing the marginalized, imposing solutions from positions of privilege, power and safety without entering into their life-worlds of suffering and struggle. Based on this premise, the idea of "transforming discipleship" inspired many creative articulations.

In an unjust and exclusionary world, the gospel of Christ continues to rise from the margins and challenge the mighty to lay down their power and make way for the coming of justice. The gospel of Christ breaks out from communities that are despised but that turn out to be the most important of all. To that extent, "Mission from the margins" is not a mere option but an essential way of collaborating with God in today's world. As TTL explains, those at the margins testify to the sinfulness of the world. Confronting and transforming the forces that marginalize and exclude people is an important aspect of Christian discipleship.

Indigenous peoples continue to suffer discrimination and exploitation at the hands of the powerful, yet their wisdom may hold the key to the future. Despite advances in gender awareness worldwide, women continue to be treated unequally and to suffer painfully at the hands of male power. Minority groups in many contexts experience discrimination, their

culture and their very humanity treated with scant respect.

Through a message from the Women's Pre-Conference event the Conference was made aware of how much remains to be done to achieve gender justice. In this regard churches and mission agencies have often been culpits as they have omitted to recognise the huge contribution made by women in mission over many years.

The Indigenous Youth held a pre-Conference meeting that passionately called for the agency of marginalized people to be recognised. They also made the point that the oppression they experience has been highlighted many times before. Now it is time for the churches to act!

As the main speaker in the Mission from the Margins plenary, an Indigenous young woman, asserted on behalf of all the Indigenous peoples:

I am Adi Mariana Waqa, I am poor, I am bound, I am unfavoured, I am oppressed!
But I am a precious child made in the Image of God. I have agency, I am worthy, I have a voice, and I am free! I am free because I live and walk in the Spirit! I am free and I joyfully bear God's Good News and hope as Christ's disciple from the margins transforming the world. Thanks be to God!

Disciples Committed to Evangelism

Christ's call to discipleship has been distorted when responsibility for Christian witness has been delegated to professionalists; baptism is a call to discipleship and we

are all called to follow the way of Christ in every dimension of our lives.

Across the world church we are living through a rediscovery of the reality that the mandate for evangelism is not restricted to any select group, but is given to all disciples of Jesus Christ. Evangelism is from everyone to everyone, extending to all the invitation to personal conversion to a new life in Christ.

When evangelism seeks conversion it means change in the evangelist as well as the evangelized. It is not to be understood as manipulating someone else into my own likeness. Rather together we are called toward new life in Christ, calling the whole creation to abundant life in inclusive community.

If we wish evangelism to be convincing today, the first thing we must do is to be disciples. Humility and sacrifice are urgently needed to liberate the gospel from captivity to projects of self-aggrandizement. The more we are true disciples of Christ, the more effective our evangelism will be.

Disciples Reaching Across Religious Boundaries

The Conference was impressed by the mutual respect and ease of interaction between different religious communities that prevails in many parts of Africa (and beyond). With sharp challenges to face at personal, communal and national levels, in many contexts Christians have been

creative in finding ways to work together across religious boundaries.

It is time to disown the model of evangelism as conquest and instead promote partnership, dialogue and collaboration with believers of other religious traditions. It is time to redraw the boundary lines of religious differences, so that they become way markers to peace, not battle lines for violence. "Come, Holy Spirit, heal and reconcile" – the prayer of the Athens World Mission Conference in 2005 is now more relevant than ever.

A comprehensive orientation to the mission of God calls for a welcoming and hospitable way of life that is affirmative and bridge-building. People of other faiths are to be welcomed in the process of learning and formation. Inter-religious encounters and the mutual learning they offer need to be a part of missional formation. Therefore, theological education and congregational learning processes need to be implemented in a manner that enables an integrated inter-religious participation without compromising Christian identity.

Disciples Sensitive to the Trends of Secularisation

Secularisation is not a rejection of faith or being religious; rather, it should be regarded as a characteristic of the context in which both Christians and others view certain expressions of religious beliefs and practice. This has implications for the way in which mission is pursued today. Mission in secularized contexts requires sustained

dialogue between Christian beliefs (gospel values) and the common convictions about life and the world. It also implies finding life-affirming allies, partnering for the sake of the common pilgrimage for justice and peace. In doing so, we celebrate and share the joy of Christ's gospel in an invitational and respectful manner. Proclamation and discernment are inter-related and mutually dependent as a dual dimension of discipleship in such contexts.

On the other hand, in contexts where secular politics of public life are threatened by certain dominant religious beliefs and traditions that marginalize and violate the dignity and rights of religious minorities, transforming discipleship asserts freedom of religion or belief. It nurtures and supports ideological struggles that promote just and inclusive expressions of common life. It does not call for de-secularization in order to become Christians. Rather it seeks to identify the contours of salvation that have already been created by the Spirit, while also discerning life-denying forces and idols in every sphere of life.

Disciples Committing to Community

In a world that prizes individuality, at a time when society is increasingly atomized, and in a context where people are polarized by identity politics, Christ calls his disciples to community. Following him means moving away from a self-centred life to find fulfilment in generous self-giving – the way of Christ. The journey is

one that transforms and shapes the lives of others; a journey not to be made alone, but together. Discipleship is not only vertical but also horizontal in its scope and expression.

In individualized societies, the perception of what is important and what is true is being shaped increasingly by personal experience instead of a transfer of tradition, knowledge and facts. Therefore, the church must find ways to let people experience the importance and meaning of being disciples together. Of great importance are baptism and Eucharist, both reminding people that they are part of the movement of God's Spirit in this world. Elites, distances and divisions based on social constructs of power and privilege have no place in the community that God wants to create.

The Ecumenical Disability Advocates Network (EDAN) played an important role at the Conference, bringing from their pre-Conference meeting a deep concern for inclusion and an understanding that moving in the Spirit involves sensitivity to those who are not yet included. Overcoming cultures and practices of discrimination and exclusion that deny the dignity and rights of others, was held forth as an important indicator of the work of the Spirit.

Too often churches have been comfortable clubs for "people like us" and have been easily abused to assert the interests of one identity set against others. Today we urgently need churches that break down the dividing walls of hostility and

practise radical hospitality, living out the reconciliation and unity promised by Christ and forged by the Spirit. Too often churches have been inward-looking and preoccupied with their own internal concerns. Today we urgently need churches that are mainly and foremost churches in mission – agents of the Spirit in the transformation of the world. All of this calls for formation, an intentional journey of becoming disciples together.

Disciples Modelling Leadership

Alongside the need to denounce the greed for power, wealth and privilege in the life of our churches, the Conference also pointed out the ways in which leadership is understood and exercised in our communities, churches, and Christian organizations. Unfortunately, some in our leadership structures today seem more preoccupied with privilege and power that come with their positions rather than with their calling to responsible stewardship. The Conference asserted, "We are called to be formed as servant leaders who demonstrate the way of Christ in a world that privileges power, wealth, and the culture of money".

Too often the church has been moulded by prevailing patterns of the surrounding world, its leaders seeking power and wealth for themselves rather than modelling the sacrificial service seen in Christ. Today we urgently need church leaders who are, first and foremost, disciples, walking in the Spirit, forming and guiding communities that take the way of Jesus.

Youth delegates reminded the Conference of the importance of discipleship being worked out in real life contexts.

Transforming discipleship in the spirit of Mission from the Margins creates for us a possibility to reset the ways in which we exercise power, share leadership and organize our partnerships in mission. As leaders, it is important for us to grasp that we must disciple in the context of relationship. One reason Jesus had such a lasting impact on his disciples is that he lived his message before them daily. He was both message and method. By walking with Jesus, they saw how he lived his faith in the real world. He prayed before them. He fed the poor. He had compassion on the multitudes. He healed the sick. In other words, he lived the life that he wanted to reproduce in his disciples.

This vision of discipleship is geared to the formation of leaders who are equipped not only intellectually, but particularly at the level of spiritual discernment and personal transformation. It fosters a radical openness to the Spirit of God that finds expression in leadership marked by mutuality, reciprocity, humility and interdependence. It provokes a radical openness to others that is life-affirming and profound in its integrity. This openness and humility have clear implications: respect, rights and dignity are not denied on the bases of the cultures of domination, discrimination and exclusion.

In today's global context, there is a formation that presents a sharp challenge

to Christian discipleship. The culture of money seeks to define and dominate every aspect of human activity and every creature of God's world. It forms consumer-consumers to be compliant constituents of an economically constructed world. This formation influences both thought and behaviour. Capturing individuals and communities, it aspires to draw a comprehensive map of our human and ecological future. The human soul and human community are stunted by the institutionalization and amplification of greed in an unrestrained market society. The integrity and well-being of creation is directly and dangerously threatened. We must engage in a determined attempt to present, for this generation, a faithful alternative to the spiritual formation offered by the culture of money. This calls not only for prophetic critique but for practical, local action to build an alternative economy, one that is just and sustainable.

A spirituality of resilience is at the centre of the theological and missional formation for discipleship. It requires the formation of communities of Christians that are resilient in the face of injustice, that are humble and courageous in persistently challenging the unjust system.

As the Conference heard from Mutale Mulenga-Kaunda in its opening plenary:

The kind of resistance needed in the struggle against the life denying forces requires that the followers of Jesus Christ are filled with the life giving Spirit of God that alone can equip people with the necessary resources

for transformative discipleship.... Disciples are formed through a process of belonging, believing, becoming and participating in order to live out the mission of God as demonstrated through Christ's mission in the church.

Disciples Taking up the Cross

Discipleship is a costly vocation. It is a matter of being broken and poured out for others in the service of mission. Where our ministries have become self-seeking, consumerist and prosperity-oriented, we need to hear anew Christ's call to take up our cross and follow him (Luke 9:23). We have far too often presented Christian vocation in ways that avoided disturbing the status quo and interpreted it as good behaviour of humility, resilience, servanthood, sacrifice, gentleness, cordial interpersonal relationships, etc. Furthermore, it is risky because it involves confronting, exposing and resisting such hostile forces as the rise of populist politics, the revival of racism and xenophobia, corporate greed, inequality and injustice in the global economy, renewed danger of nuclear warfare and threats to the integrity of the earth itself. Behind all of these forces are powerful vested interests that will not take kindly to being challenged. Transforming discipleship is not going to be cheap. It requires us to step out of our comfort zones.

The Conference was reminded of the definition of missionary discipleship given by *Mission and Evangelism: An Ecumenical Affirmation* in 1982:

The self-emptying of the servant who lived among the people, sharing in their hopes and sufferings, giving his life on the cross for all humanity – this was Christ's way of proclaiming the good news, and as disciples we are summoned to follow the same way.

Today, empires are striking back in new forms, with their own dictatorial requirements of allegiance to mammon, market, consumerism, militarism, sexism, racism, fascism and fundamentalism. Bearing the cross implies a willingness to confront the logic of the empire and to lay down our lives for the sake of Christ and the gospel. As Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote: "when Christ calls a man (or woman) he bids him/her to come and die".

On its final day the Conference was reminded by His Holiness Mor Ignatius Aphrem II, Patriarch of Antioch and All the East and Supreme Head of the Universal Syrian Orthodox Church, that this martyr path is a reality for many disciples today:

Christians face rejection in their societies. Severe forms of rejection lead to persecution where hatred is expressed in the forms of violence and the desire to exterminate. Christians throughout the world are victims of persecution; large numbers of Christian communities in all continents face persecution on a daily basis. It comes in different forms and varies greatly: it can be the lack of freedom of religious beliefs, or actively killing innocent children or families while they are peacefully praying or worshipping the Lord.

In our neighbourhoods and globally, there are examples of peaceful co-existence but also of inter-religious intolerance, bigotry, violence, and persecution. God has given us the ministry of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18). The last thematic plenary, entitled "Embracing the Cross", drew attention to the role of the Christian churches as peace builders in the midst of persecution and violence. Bringing hope might imply relief efforts, involvement in advocacy and development work, and actively supporting various forms of inter-religious encounters particularly among younger generations. Moreover, the Conference sought answers to the question of what is a faithful response when our neighbours of another religion become targets of hatred and violence? How are we called, as disciples of Christ, to embrace the cross for their sake?

As stated by Lutheran theologian from the USA, Rev. Kathryn Mary Lohre:

There is a unique role...for the churches to play. We are just beginning to understand that equipping disciples for mission and evangelism today must include not only religious literacy and interreligious competencies but also the courage and humility to embrace the cross for the sake of our neighbours of other religions and worldviews, and to defend them against discrimination, bigotry, racism, and violence, regardless of its source.

Moving in the Spirit as Pilgrims of Justice and Peace

We are led by the Holy Spirit to become pilgrims, journeying together, guided by the vision of God's reign of justice and peace. Through spiritual renewal in Christ, we are called and led to be agents of transformation. As we heard in the sermon preached by Collin Cowan at the Sending Service:

Jesus' calling of his first disciples was set in the context of the forces of empire that tempted him with popularity and pleasure over the principles of obedience and faithfulness to God. Jesus having resisted the temptations, presented himself to the community as one not easily sold to the scandal of seduction. His call "Come, follow me" is a statement of rejection of the status quo, and a declaration of an alternative. It is an invitation to defy the established order, divesting oneself of all that is known and held dear, to participate in God's work of transformation... being ready to go against the grain of culture, to confront power, challenge status quo and exemplify a lifestyle marked by courage to stand up for what is right and commitment to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God (Micah 6:8).

In its final Plenary, after full discussion and debate, the Conference adopted and issued the Arusha Call to Discipleship (see Appendix 2).

The Next Agenda

Through its diverse inputs from all across the globe – in the Plenary sessions, the table talks, the Warshas, and the Sokonis

– the Conference offered an excellent opportunity to reflect on the meaning and implications of mission and evangelism today and to engage in these in ways that are relevant and credible. It clearly showed that the churches' engagements in mission are truly an ecumenical enterprise when calling the Christian communities to adequately address, respond and act together.

In the light of what has been heard, said, and expressed during the Conference, the Harvesting Committee suggests the following as issues calling for sustained attention from the CWME in the coming years:

- Mission as transforming discipleship in light of the reception of *The Arusha Call to Discipleship* 2018.
- Mission from the margins as a paradigm for our time.
- Mission and evangelism in a multi-religious world.
- The relationship of mission, evangelism, and development work.
- The relationship of costly discipleship and Christian unity.

"If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit" (Galatians 5:25).

Book Reviews

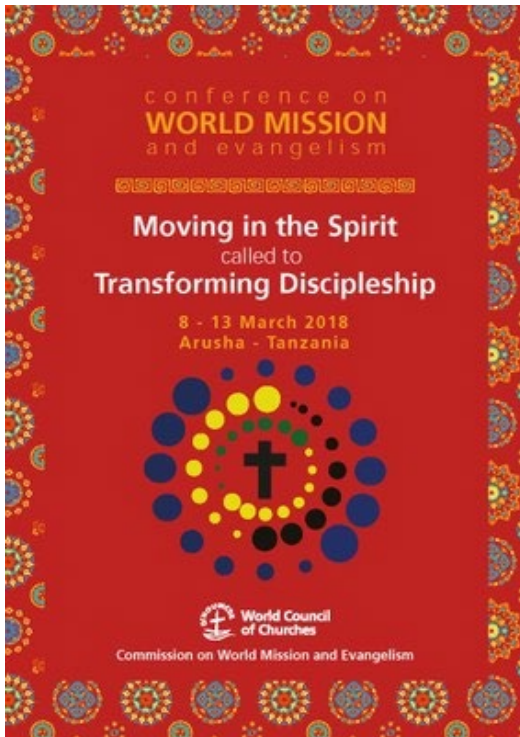
Joel Cabrita, David Maxwell, and Emma Wild-Wood, eds, *Relocating World Christianity: Interdisciplinary Studies in Universal and Local Expressions of the Christian Faith*. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2017. xiii + 347 pp.

This edited volume appears in Brill's *Theology and Mission in World Christianity* series. Comprising 12 chapters, as well as a robust introduction and afterword, the book not only critically re-evaluates World Christianity scholarship, but it also sets out an ambitious research agenda for the coming years. The title of the book, *Relocating World Christianity*, exemplifies this aim. The introduction alone makes the book deserving of attention. It starts with a helpful background of the term "World Christianity," locating its origins in missiological and theological circles, and tracing its rise through various research centres, book series, journals, and academic job posts. With their historiographical eyes, Joel Cabrita and David Maxwell contend that the term has typically been used to recalibrate the analytical framework – whereby Western Christianity is deliberately decentred from the purview and non-Western Christianity is given the (sole) focus.

This shift in focus, however, has not merely been about describing the empirical

demographical changes of Christianity as a worldwide religion. As Cabrita and Maxwell argue, the postcolonial and ecumenical milieu of the 20th century provided the self-reflexive impetus and tools for scholars to critique the ambiguous (or at times not so ambiguous) relationship between Christian missions and Euro-American imperialism, while also advancing a normative agenda replete with "a moral commentary on the shape and future of contemporary Christendom" (p. 4). In combination with broader scholarly trends such as the cultural turn and a related new theology of culture, they rightly assert that World Christianity scholarship has tended to be dominated by studies of the non-Western world and that these have typically been "self-contained local studies that lack synthetic perspectives and comparative investigation" (p. 24). As a result, Cabrita and Maxwell make a strong case for turning attention to transregional networks and exchanges among all groups of Christians worldwide. What follows in the body of the book are four sections of chapters that deal directly with what this new research agenda looks like in practice.

The first section of chapters, titled "Connections and Comparisons," supplies the pivotal footing for shifting attention to transregional connections.



Moving in the Spirit: Called to Transforming Discipleship

var tema for Kirkenes Verdensråd (KV) sin store **misjonskonferanse** i mars 2018. Både evangelikale, katolikker og medlemskirker i KV deltok på konferansen.

1000 kirkeledere fra hele verden deltok. 14 deltakere sørget for bred representasjon fra norsk kirke og misjon.

Hvordan kan vi ta dette videre sammen?

Kall til disippelskap

Kirkenes Verdensråd – Verdenskonferanse om misjon og evangelisering

Kirkenes Verdensråds konferanse om misjon og evangelisering ble holdt i Arusha, Tanzania, 8.-13. mars 2018. Mer enn 1000 deltagere var samlet: mennesker som er engasjerte i misjon og evangelisering, fra forskjellige kristne tradisjoner og fra alle kanter av verden.

Med glede feiret vi Guds Hellige ånds livgivende virke i vår tid, og hentet særlig inspirasjon fra den afrikanske konteksten og spiritualiteten. Gjennom Bibellesning, bønn og gudstjeneste, og ved å dele våre historier med hverandre, fant vi oppmuntring til å vitne om Guds rike som har kommet til oss gjennom vår Herre Jesu Kristi liv, korsfestelse og oppstandelse.

Til tross for noen glimt av håp, måtte vi ta inn over oss de dødbringende kreftene som rokker ved verdensordenen og som påfører lidelse på mange. Vi bet oss merke i den sjokkerende konsentrasjonen av rikdom forårsaket av det globale økonomiske systemet, som gjør at noen få blir rikere mens mange blir fattigere. Dette er roten til mange av dagens kriger, konflikter, økologisk ødeleggelse, og lidelse. Vi vet at marginaliserte mennesker og grupper bærer de tyngste byrdene. Dette globale, imperialistiske systemet har gjort finansmarkedet til en av vår tids avguder, og har styrket kulturer av dominans og diskriminering som fortsetter å marginalisere og ekskludere millioner av mennesker som ikke unnslipper sårbarhet og utnyttelse.

Dette er ikke nye problemer for 2018, men Den hellige ånd er virksom også i vår tid, og kaller oss innstendig som kristne fellesskap til å svare med personlig og felles omvendelse og forvandlende disippelskap.

Disippelskap er både en gave og et kall – et kall til å være aktive samarbeidspartnere med Gud i verdens forvandling. Vi deler Guds nåde ved å dele Guds misjon, i det kirkens tidlige teologer kalte «theosis» eller guddommeliggjøring. Veien vår som disipler leder oss til å dele og leve ut Guds kjærlighet i Jesus Kristus ved å søke rettferdighet og fred på måter som ikke er av verden (Joh 14, 27). Slik svarer vi på Jesu kall om å følge ham fra verdens marginaliserte utkanter.

Som disipler av Jesus Kristus, både hver for oss og sammen, slår vi fast at:

Vi er kalt gjennom vår dåp til forvandlende disippelskap: en Kristus-nær livsstil i en verden der mange står overfor fortvilelse, avvisning, ensomhet og opplevelse av verdiløshet.

Vi er kalt til å tilbe den ene, treenige Gud, rettferdighetens, kjærlighetens og nådens Gud, i en tid hvor mange tilber den falske markedsguden.

Vi er kalt til å forkynne de gode nyhetene om Jesus Kristus – livets fylde, omvendelse og tilgivelse for syndene, og løftet om evig liv – i ord og gjerning, i en voldelig verden hvor mange blir ofret til dødens avguder og ennå ikke har hørt evangeliet.

Vi er kalt til med glede å ta del i Den hellige ånds virke: å myndiggjøre de marginaliserte i søken etter rettferdighet og verdighet.

Vi er kalt til å skjelne Guds ord i en verden som brer om seg med motstridende, falske og forvirrende budskap.

Vi er kalt til å ta vare på Guds skaperverk og å stå i solidaritet med nasjoner som er hardt rammet av klimaendringer, i møte med hensynsløs, menneskesentrert utnyttelse av miljøet for grådighet og forbrukets skyld.

Vi er kalt som disipler til å høre sammen i et rettferdig og inkluderende fellesskap, i søken etter enhet og på vår økumeniske reise, i en verden som er bygget på marginalisering og utestengning.

Vi er kalt til å være trofaste vitner om Guds forvandlende kjærlighet i dialog med mennesker av andre trosretninger, i en verden hvor politisering av religiøse identiteter ofte forårsaker konflikt.

Vi er kalt til å formes som tjenende ledere som viser Kristi vei i en verden som forfordeler makt, rikdom og pengekultur.

Vi er kalt til å bryte ned murer og søke rettferdighet sammen med mennesker som er fordrevet og fortrent fra landet sitt, inkludert innvandrere, flyktninger og asylsøkere. Vi er kalt til å stå imot nye grenser som skaper skiller og dreper.

Vi er kalt til å følge korsets vei, som utfordrer elitisme, privilegium, personlig og strukturell makt.

Vi er kalt til å leve i oppstandelsens lys, som åpner opp for håp om forvandling.

Dette er kallet til forvandlende disippelskap.

Dette er ikke et kall som vi kan svare på med egen kraft, så kallet blir, til slutt, et kall til bønn:

Kjærlige Gud, vi takker deg for livets gave i all dets mangfold og skjønnhet.

Herre Jesus Kristus, korsfestet og oppstått, vi priser deg for at du kom for å finne de bortkomne, frigjøre de undertrykte, helbrede de syke og omvende de selvsentrerte.

Hellige ånd, vi gleder oss over at du ånder inn verdens liv og utøses i hjertene våre. Slik vi lever i Ånden, må vi også vandre i Ånden.

Gi oss tro og mot til å ta vårt kors og følge Jesus – som pilegrimer for rettferdighet og fred i vår tid.

Til ditt folks velsignelse, jordens opprettholdelse og ditt navns ære. Gjennom Kristus vår Herre, amen.



THE
LUTHERAN
WORLD
FEDERATION



With Passion for the Church and for the World

LWF Strategy 2019-2024



THE
LUTHERAN
WORLD
FEDERATION

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*Liberated by God's grace,
a communion in Christ
living and working together
for a just, peaceful, and
reconciled world.*

1

INTRODUCTION

For all of you are one in Christ Jesus (Gal 3:28)

“With passion for the church and for the world” is the title of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) strategy 2019-2024, adopted by the LWF Council in July 2018. The strategy will guide the work of the communion of churches in its global witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ. It outlines the journey we are undertaking together as a communion of 148 churches in 99 countries.

The title, *With passion for the church and for the world*, is a reminder that we are passionate about the presence and witness of the churches and about working together for justice, peace, and reconciliation in the world.

The strategy builds on the previous one, balancing continuity with innovation. It looks to the foundational commitments of the LWF: supporting refugees and internally displaced people, working for unity, developing theology, and strengthening churches in mission.

It also builds on the outcomes of the Twelfth Assembly, its message, resolutions, and public statements. The strategy affirms the vision and values of the LWF, offering an analysis of the global context in which we live and identifying what is necessary to bring us closer to our vision and goals.

When you read “we” in the strategy it always refers to the communion of churches. The strategy helps us articulate our common purpose and direction and guides the focus of what we will be doing “together” as a communion of vibrant churches, promoting human dignity, justice, and peace.

I commend this strategy to the 148 member churches of the LWF. These are our joint commitments. It is my hope and expectation that the member churches will use the strategy in their own context, holding fast to the core commitments of the communion of churches, applying it in the local context and contributing to the global work—to what we want to be and do together in this world.

May the strategy be an inspiration for the work of the communion of churches and bring us closer to realizing our vision of being “liberated by God’s grace, a communion in Christ, living and working together for a just, peaceful, and reconciled world.”



Archbishop Dr Panti Filibus Musa,
LWF President

2

WHO WE ARE

Established in 1947, we are a global communion of 148 member churches with 75 million members in 99 countries. We share a common Lutheran heritage, shaped by the diverse contexts in which we experience and witness to God's liberating grace. Our constitution outlines the following foundational commitments.

The Lutheran World Federation:

Furthers the united witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and strengthens the member churches in carrying out the missionary command and in their efforts toward Christian unity worldwide;

Furthers worldwide among the member churches diaconic action, alleviation of human need, promotion of peace and human rights, social and economic justice, care for God's creation, and sharing of resources;

Furthers through cooperative study the self-understanding and the communion of member churches and helps them to act jointly in common tasks.

From the LWF Constitution

Being churches in communion is a gift. We are united in the proclamation of God's Word and in pulpit and altar fellowship.

Our engagement in the world grows from the action of the Triune God who calls, transforms, and equips us to participate in God's mission of justice, peace, and reconciliation.

We understand God's mission to be holistic, which includes proclaiming the Gospel, diakonia (serving the neighbor), and advocating for human dignity, justice, and peace.

We describe our relationships with the theological concept of "communion." They are a response to God's call that brings churches together.

- Being churches in communion is a gift. We are united in the proclamation of God's Word and in pulpit and altar fellowship. We are called to gather in worship of the Triune God, to share the Word and sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion. Together we hear and share the good news of Christ's life, death, and resurrection as witnessed through the Holy Scriptures and expressed by the ecumenical creeds and Lutheran confessions (the Augsburg Confession and the Small Catechism).

- Being churches in communion is also a task and a responsibility. As we share the gift of communion, we are drawn into a spiritual journey, which invites us to listen to one another, share our joys and sufferings, grow in practices of mutual care, and deepen our understanding of the need for one another as members of the one Body of Christ. We seek to engage constructively in the world, based on our theological identity and for the sake of our common faithfulness to the Gospel. We are ready to work in ecumenical and interfaith partnerships, and with governmental and non-governmental organizations.

We are committed to Christian unity, based on the self-understanding of being part of the one Body of Christ. This is lived out in theological dialogues and joint service with ecumenical partners.

We are an internationally recognized faith-based actor, expressing faith through advocacy, development, and humanitarian engagement. We are partners with the United Nations, through many of its agencies. We are accredited by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (UN ECOSOC).

God calls us into a prophetic witness, to uphold diversity, live with difference, respect human dignity, and serve the suffering neighbor. Therefore, based on what faith teaches us, our approach to the world is one of hope.

We understand God's mission to be holistic, which includes proclaiming the Gospel, diakonia (serving the neighbor), and advocating for human dignity, justice, and peace.



3

VISION AND VALUES

We express our self-understanding and calling in this world with the following vision statement:

Liberated by God's grace, a communion in Christ, living and working together for a just, peaceful, and reconciled world.

Our values derive from our faith. They are informed by biblical texts that are central to Lutheran churches and have continuously shaped our theological identity.

Dignity and justice

But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream (Am 5:24).

Each and every person is created in God's image, is gifted with talents and capacities, and has dignity, irrespective of social status, gender, ethnicity, age, ability, or other differences. Our commitment to human rights and justice means that we work on the underlying causes of poverty and exclusion and for a more equitable distribution of power, resources, and opportunities.

Compassion and commitment

But a Samaritan while traveling came near him, and when he saw him, he was moved with pity (Lk 10:33).

Inspired by God's love for humanity, we are compassionate about standing with and caring for people who are suffering—the poor, the vulnerable and marginalized, and minority populations and faiths who experience discrimination, violence, and hardship in different contexts.

Respect for diversity

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ (1 Cor 12:12).

Differences among us express the richness of God's creation. As a global communion of churches, we value and seek to understand our differences in culture, history, and context, and the way in which these have shaped our theological understandings, our perspectives on moral and ethical questions, and our participation in God's mission.

Inclusion and participation

"Go therefore into the main streets, and invite everyone you find to the wedding banquet" (Mt 22:9).

We are committed to being inclusive and enabling the full and equitable participation of women, men, people of all ages and ethnicities, as well as people with disabilities, in church life and society and in decision-making processes, activities, and programs of the LWF. We understand that power dynamics, cultural norms, access to resources, and other factors create barriers to participation and we work to overcome these.

Transparency and accountability

"...Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me" (Mt 25:40).

We are a responsible steward of the resources and responsibilities that 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.



This process attested to what it means to be an ecclesial communion from a Lutheran perspective and how the communion lives not only for itself but to serve and witness in the world.

4

OUR JOURNEY AS A COMMUNION

In recent years, our journey and witness have been informed by the commemoration of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation under the theme “Liberated by God’s Grace” and the three sub-themes “Salvation—not for sale,” “Human beings—not for sale,” and “Creation—not for sale.” These themes have significantly shaped programmatic engagement.

The Reformation anniversary became a catalyst for ecumenical development, with significant milestones, such as the Joint Catholic–Lutheran Commemoration in Lund, Sweden, and the expansion of the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification from a bilateral to a multilateral declaration. It provided the opportunity for shared engagement with biblical hermeneutics and for commitment to jointly discern the public role of theology and the church.

The Reformation anniversary provided a sense of unity that allowed us to witness together, while dealing with differences in the communion.

We engaged in a process to discern the self-understanding of the Lutheran Communion. This process attested to what it means to be an ecclesial communion from a Lutheran perspective and how the communion lives not only for itself but to serve and witness in the world.

We continued to grow together as a communion of churches with increased interaction and cooperation at a regional and global level.

We placed greater emphasis on connecting across contexts and held fast to each other even when faced with challenging differences.

In the context of an unprecedented surge in migration and forced displacement of refugees, we were able to significantly scale up our response, currently reaching some three million people. In doing so, we expanded our partnerships, including new ecumenical and interfaith actors.

We consolidated our work with youth, who led us into a strengthened commitment to address climate change and helped us understand it as a matter of intergenerational justice.

We adopted a Gender Justice Policy that provided the basis for contextual implementation within the member churches.

At the Twelfth Assembly (Windhoek, Namibia, 2017), the LWF member churches came together to discern their future journey. The Assembly message, resolutions, and public statements offer the collective thinking of the global communion of churches for this journey. They affirm the following themes as important for their joint witness in the world: communion building, churches and their role in mission, theological education, ecumenical commitments, interfaith relations, advocacy, climate justice, Lutheran identity, youth and women's participation and leadership, gender justice, humanitarian response and development work, and support to refugees, internally displaced people, and migrants.

5

OUR GLOBAL CONTEXT

Our journey as a communion of churches takes place within a global context that is constantly evolving. Below are some trends that shape the world today. Awareness and analysis of these trends informs our engagement as a communion of churches.

Global, external

- While important progress has been made to eradicate poverty, the levels of **inequality** at national and global levels continue to grow.
- There is a prevailing **logic of the market** that takes precedence in societal discourse on social and ecological matters.
- The solid achievement of the **human rights framework** is increasingly under pressure. There is growing contempt for and violations of human rights, international humanitarian law, and religious freedom. The rights of children, women, and indigenous people are undermined.
- Growing **violence** and increased **conflicts** and instability are resulting in more displaced people, refugees, and migrants.
- There is rising **nationalism**, fundamentalism, xenophobia, extremism, racism, and populism, which uses fear to manipulate people and escalate tension.
- **Climate change** is accelerating, with vulnerable populations taking a particular burden.

- **Civil society space** continues to shrink, with the legitimacy and relevance of civil society's actors being questioned, increased national government control, and growing influence of the private sector.
- **Weakened funding commitments** are affecting humanitarian and development work.
- **Religious teachings and constituencies** are being **manipulated** for political purposes.
- **Digitalization** is changing the way people communicate and relate to each other, organizations work, information is exchanged, news is shared, and how this influences public opinion, policy making, and society in general.
- **New global frameworks** have been developed, which address some of these realities: Sustainable Development Goals 2030 (SDGs), the Grand Bargain and Localization Agenda, Paris Climate Agreement, Global Compact on Refugees.
- **Faith-based organizations** are **increasingly recognized** as vital partners in building sustainable societies and working for justice and peace, particularly by the United Nations; at the same time, there are tendencies to exclude religion from the public sphere.
- Growing recognition of the **value of interfaith dialogue** and cooperation and how it contributes to peace.
- **Changes in global Christianity**: churches in the Global South are growing and churches in the Global North decreasing; these changes are also reflected in the life of the LWF.
- **Changing religious landscape**: charismatic and evangelical churches and new forms of spirituality are gaining momentum; societies are becoming more religiously diverse.
- **Convergence is growing** between different confessional families with major ecumenical milestones, **while new rifts around ethical issues** are appearing among and within churches, at times realigning ecumenical and interreligious relationships.
- **Hostility has increased** between religious communities, often aligned to identity politics with severe effects on religious communities in minority situations.
- **New religious actors** are influencing discourse and policy making in the public space.

These developments and trends affect the church globally, influencing the LWF and its member churches as part of the Body of Christ.

We live and work together, as we continue responding to God's call and partake in God's mission in the world.



6

OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The overarching framework for our ongoing witness is provided by the calling of LWF member churches to live and work together as a communion of churches in ongoing need of reformation.

This calling, grounded in worship and prayer, is both the basis of our joint witness in the world and the reality that we continue growing into. It is of deep spiritual and theological significance. It constitutes the basis and the context out of which we are active in the world.

Building on our ongoing journey and based on the outcomes of the Assembly and the context within which we live, we identify two strategic priorities for the period ahead:

- Supporting churches' presence and vibrant witness in the world.
- Promoting human dignity, justice, and peace.

This framework and the two strategic priorities unfolding from it is illustrated on the following page.

At the core of our work is our vocation to live and work together as a communion of churches in ongoing reformation. This is not a static reality, nor is it an end in itself: We live and work together, as we continue responding to God's call and partake in God's mission in the world. In doing so, we focus on supporting each other to witness vibrantly in our diverse contexts and promoting human dignity, justice, and peace.

The lines in the illustration demarcating the spheres are dotted to illustrate the interaction between the two strategic priorities and their relation to the core reality of being a communion of churches.

An illustration of the strategic priorities and their basis



6.1 Supporting Churches' Presence and Vibrant Witness in the World

We are passionate about the churches holistically witnessing to Christ in their contexts. We seek to equip and resource each other to witness to the liberating grace of God. The challenges that churches face are of a varying nature, given their specific contexts. By engaging in dialogue and collaboration, we strengthen and nurture each other.

As a communion of churches, we continue working together to:

Jointly develop theological reflection that articulates our understanding of being Lutheran churches in communion

- We will further develop a shared understanding of the theological identity of LWF member churches through which they will continue recognizing each other, belonging to the communion, while witnessing in their diverse contexts.
- We will work together to discern and address issues that represent theological challenges to the churches today.
- We will develop the theological basis and narratives to strengthen the churches' and the communion's engagement in the public space.

Live out the communion relationships among member churches

- We will further clarify and define our common understanding, structures, and the praxis supporting churches as they express their call to live in communion.
- We will provide accompaniment and support encounter and theological discernment to understand and address differences and conflict in the communion.



Work together to further God's holistic mission

- We will support capacity building of member churches for proclamation, diakonia, and advocacy.
- We will develop processes and structures to enhance theological education and formation.
- We will address the challenges and opportunities resulting from both growth and decrease of church membership.
- We will promote the development of accountable lay and ordained leadership in the churches.

Ensure promotion of gender justice at every level

- We will support the implementation of the Gender Justice Policy in the member churches.
- We will work toward just relationships between women and men, creating spaces for conversation about gender roles and education about masculinities.
- We will promote women's leadership in church and society and gender equal involvement in discussion and decision-making processes.
- We will promote the full inclusion of women in the ordained ministry.
- We will ensure and develop space and structures for gender just participation in the life of the global communion.



We will support capacity building of member churches for proclamation, diakonia, and advocacy.

Ensure the meaningful participation of youth in church and society

- We will ensure and develop space and structures for ongoing participation of youth in the life of the global communion.
- We will promote intergenerational engagement on topical issues for church and society.
- We will support each other to ensure youth participation in the member churches' decision-making processes.

Engage ecumenical partners and build relationships to respond to the call to unity and joint witness

- We will move forward in our commitment to seeking the unity of the Body of Christ with all our ecumenical partners.
- We will, together with our ecumenical partners, strengthen the interaction between theological study processes, shared prayer, and joint service (diakonia).
- We will uphold a pastoral responsibility in our theological dialogues and seek to respond to the ecumenical challenges of local communities.

Engage in interfaith dialogue and cooperation to build mutual understanding and promote collaboration

- We will contribute Lutheran theological perspectives into interfaith conversations.
- We will foster interfaith learning and interreligious literacy among communities and religious leaders.
- We will equip member churches to engage in interreligious relations in their own context.
- We will support interfaith initiatives on advocacy and diakonia, to make an impact and build bridges between faith communities.

6.2 Promoting Human Dignity, Justice, and Peace

Out of faith convictions and theological reflections, we are committed to uphold human dignity and work for justice and peace. This encompasses upholding the integrity of creation and affirming the human rights of every individual person. Building on the local witness of LWF member churches, we aspire to express these commitments as a global communion of churches. In doing so we seek to respond to suffering and address its root causes.

As a communion of churches, we will work together to:

Respond to people in emergency situations, with a focus on refugees, returnees, internally displaced people, their host communities, and communities at risk

- We will operate as a global communion emphasizing human rights and protection, with access to livelihoods and services.
- We will work in an integrated and complementary way at individual, community, and institutional levels.
- We will link emergency responses to recovery and long-term development work.

Support local communities in sustainable development efforts to achieve life with dignity and full enjoyment of their rights.

- We will focus on the most vulnerable and marginalized people and promote a rights-based approach in all we do.
- We will ensure our work is consistent with the values of global targets, including the Sustainable Development Goals and the Grand Bargain.
- We will be flexible enough to adapt to changing contexts to ensure social and environmental sustainability.



We will encourage and equip member churches to engage effectively with the Sustainable Development Goals.

Equip member churches to engage in diaconal action

- We will build the capacity of member churches to address challenges sustainably in their contexts through diakonia.
- We will support member churches to address local diaconal needs through specific projects.
- We will encourage and equip member churches to engage effectively with the Sustainable Development Goals.

Collaborate with ecumenical partners, interfaith actors, and religious leaders on issues of human dignity, justice, and peace

- We will work together, wherever possible and at all levels, to contribute to collective action, holding governments accountable and mobilizing people to uphold human dignity and advocate for the integrity of creation.
- We will foster our commitment at all levels and expand partnerships to support sustainable development cooperatively.



Strengthen efforts for climate justice

- We will support member churches in their climate change education and action.
- We will contribute directly to climate mitigation and adaptation among the most vulnerable.
- We will strengthen advocacy for adequate climate action at all levels.

Strengthen local and global advocacy to promote human rights and protect the rights of marginalized communities

- We will build on grassroots experience and knowledge to bring local human rights issues and realities to the global arena.
- We will be proactive on issues of justice, addressing economic inequality.
- We will encourage member churches and country programs to advocate locally and to build local coalitions with faith-based actors and civil society groups.
- We will hold UN member states accountable to the international norms, instruments, and agreements to safeguard human dignity and the integrity of God's creation.

We will build on grassroots experience and knowledge to bring local human rights issues and realities to the global arena.



7

OUR WAYS OF WORKING

In all of our work, we strive to be innovative and creative, using methods that are dynamic and take into account content, context, needs, efficiency, and accountability.

The LWF Assembly and the Council, as expressions of the communion, give direction to our work. The LWF communion office acts on behalf of the communion, accompanying member churches in their contexts and coordinating and implementing joint actions. In carrying out its work, the communion office applies the following working methods and approaches.

Theological reflection and discernment

- Bringing together theological perspectives for regional and global trans-contextual and intercultural reflection
- Learning from each other in a spirit of mutuality
- Fostering theological education
- Strengthen interdisciplinary and theological work on an academic level

Accompaniment with member churches

- Walking with each other in mutuality and solidarity, and supporting each other to participate in God's holistic mission
- Working together as regional expressions of the communion
- Engaging in spontaneous alliances and networks to work on common themes
- Standing in solidarity with each other while facing challenges and seeking to overcome them
- Communicating the life and work of the member churches and the communion to strengthen awareness, knowledge, and relations

Convening and facilitation

- Calling churches and organizations together to work on issues they face locally and as part of the global communion
- Developing knowledge and good practices through joint learning and interaction

Direct implementation

- Being operational in humanitarian and development work, responding to emergencies, and addressing the root causes of suffering and injustice
- Engaging globally in ecumenical relations
- Speaking publicly at a global level

Advocacy

- Advocating through and with member churches and country programs and supporting their local advocacy work
- Advocating for the role of the churches as part of civil society in the public sphere
- Advocating for freedom of religion, gender justice, rights of refugees, climate justice

Connecting local to global

- Bringing together voices from the regions and member churches to root global work in local realities
- Amplifying local voices at a global level; holding national governments accountable to their international commitments
- Bringing experiences from local communities to influence global policy decisions and monitor their implementation

Working with others

- Working with partners for mutual value and synergy to achieve common goals.

8

PARTNERSHIPS

Strategic relationships are important to us. They take many forms and serve different purposes within and outside the communion. We engage strategically with partners to exchange knowledge and share resources, to collaborate, take action, and improve coordination, and to jointly plan and implement programs.

We identify the following partnerships as fundamental in the years ahead:

- member churches and related organizations, including theological institutions and networks
- ecumenical partners and partners from other faiths
- local communities, civil society, development and humanitarian organizations, and state actors
- the UN system with their specialized agencies.

9

ORGANIZATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY AND EFFECTIVENESS

To reach the goals of this strategy and to be a sustainable and effective organization, we will continue to invest in organizational development in the following areas.

Strategic leadership at all levels

Leadership in the LWF takes place at different levels. Leadership reflects the rich diversity of the communion, maintains gender balance, and ensures youth representation.

The Council and communion office need to be well equipped and supported to enable them to lead the organization in implementing the strategy. For that purpose, we will clarify and sharpen the understanding of the leadership roles and responsibilities of the Council and communion office.

Strong financial management and resource mobilization

In a changing financial landscape, we will be responsive to new opportunities and funding challenges. This will require strengthened capacities and expertise among the staff. Strong internal collaboration in resource mobilization is essential to the financial sustainability of the LWF.

As responsible stewards, we will continue to develop and improve our financial management. The communion office commits to transparent processes and will produce accurate and timely financial reports. Effective reporting mechanisms will help to build strong donor confidence with current and new funding partners.

Alignment of structures and systems

We want to increase efficiency and quality in our structures and processes. We will ensure coherence in the programmatic work of the communion office.

We need to invest in systems that are cost effective and support LWF in becoming a global, networked organization, ensuring access to information, timely communication, and online collaboration. Digital infrastructure and interface will enable access to systems and structures.

Investment in people

We will develop a strategic approach to our staff to maintain a highly competent workforce. This will include investment in recruitment, staff development, and leadership and management skills. We will improve human resource systems to support staff in their roles. We will focus on staff well-being and safeguard their safety and security.

We will nurture a work culture that supports innovation, continuous learning, and improvement. Special attention will be given to further develop gender and regional balance, in particular the representation of women in leadership roles.

Effective internal and external communication

Communication is a key tool for communion building and for fostering external relationships. Through good communication we want to tell our story in a way that informs, educates, and moves our audience to action.

We will continue to engage in a timely manner, adapting relevant tools and platforms for each theme and audience, according to our goals. We will continue developing communications tools and methods. We will ensure that those involved in communications are well trained and our work is well-resourced.

This strategy was developed through a joint process, to which many contributed. Thanks be to all who participated in its development: members of the LWF Council and Executive Committee, representatives of member churches, related agencies, ecumenical partners, and staff.

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THE
LUTHERAN
WORLD
FEDERATION

*Liberated by God's grace,
a communion in Christ
living and working together
for a just, peaceful, and
reconciled world.*

LWF Strategy 2019-2024

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From the Assembly of the Conference of European Churches to the churches and peoples of Europe

You shall be my witnesses: Acts 1:8

From east, west, north and south the member churches of the Conference of European Churches travelled to the crossroads of Europe. We came with vision and hope for the future of Europe.¹

We came together in Serbia, thankful for and blessed with the hospitality of our host churches and acknowledging their challenges. We gathered at a time of uncertainty for Europe where many experience a loss of dignity, exploitation, destitution and the abuse of power.

By the banks of the Danube in Novi Sad, where bridges were destroyed in conflict and rebuilt in peace, we united in prayer. We brought our thirst for justice; our deep concern for people, our continent and our world. We came to share the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ the bringer of healing and peace.

We affirm that we have heard Christ's command to be His witnesses and we choose to live in hope. Following Christ Himself, we pledge to be bridge builders through the transformational power of faith. As a living testimony of faith, we respond to Christ's call and declare:

We shall witness to Christ

- by proclaiming Christ's offer of saving love and grace to the world;
- By coming together to enjoy our ecumenical fellowship and to receive its richness as God's gift to us.
- By affirming that each person is created in the image and likeness of God and has inherent dignity as a result.
- By being an inclusive community, committed to the flourishing of women and men and welcoming people and protecting the human dignity of all.
- By being an intergenerational community, valuing the voices of young people who are our present and not only our future.
- By practising solidarity with our brothers and sisters in Christ in Europe and beyond.

We shall serve Christ by seeking and practising justice

- By urging individuals, institutions and churches to work for the end of violence, persecution and discrimination, upholding freedom of religion or belief.
- By seeking reconciliation and the peaceful resolution of conflicts.

¹ Choosing Hope at the Crossroads of Europe – Conference of European Churches 2018

- By standing with, empowering and listening to those who find themselves silenced or in the margins of our churches, our communities and our world.
- By caring for God's creation and working for ecological and climate justice and a sustainable future for our planet.

We shall serve Christ by offering and accepting hospitality

- By offering a generous welcome to refugees and strangers of all faiths or beliefs.
- By engaging in dialogue, sharing our Christian faith and learning from each other.
- By raising our voices to overcome division, exclusion and marginalisation and advocating human rights and socio-economic justice for all.
- By recognising the hospitality given to us by God in the created world and by working towards the integrity of creation.

We call on our member churches and all people to join us in shaping a Europe where we build bridges for the good of all in our continent and world.

Let us proclaim together **'we shall be your witnesses'**