



Students water seedlings at the Tombontsoa Farm School near Antsirabe, an agricultural training institution of the Malagasy Lutheran Church.
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Department for Mission and Development (DMD)

DMD has four area desks with special responsibility for Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean. There are four desks dealing with global issues: Women in Church and Society (WICAS), Youth in Church and Society (YICAS), Christian Education/Communication Consultancy and Human Resources Development (scholarship and leadership training). There are two project-related administra-

tive desks (for coordination, implementation, and monitoring), three regional expression offices and the Office of the Director.

Together in God's Mission

DMD has endeavored to accompany LWF member churches in their effort to partici-

pate in God's mission in the world. It has also attempted to change the understanding and practice of mission: there has been a paradigm shift from the view of mission as "mission of the church" to mission of God—being called and sent by God to participate in God's mission in the world. DMD programs and projects aim to build capacity and competence, deepen and broaden understanding of mission, and provide financial, material and human resources.

Responding to the commitment of the Ninth Assembly to "strengthen our missiological and missionary efforts," DMD has continued efforts to deepen and expand missiological studies and reflection. The challenges of the 21st century (e.g., cyberspace, the "virtual church," glo-

At its meeting in 1999, the Council discussed the findings and recommendations of the consultation and forwarded them to member churches for further study. It also asked the General Secretary to facilitate implementation of the recommendations.

From 1999 to 2003, various mission consultations, workshops and seminars were held which followed up on the recommendations of the Nairobi mission consultation. In October 1999, DMD sponsored a strategic planning workshop in Addis Ababa on urban ministries. The workshop attested to a real need for the LWF and its member churches to find a new paradigm for holistic urban ministries. Urban mission contexts across all continents share several common features, such as migration, unemployment, poverty, violence and increased cultural and religious diversity. The 40 participants from 27 countries shared experiences and working models that have proved beneficial in urban settings. Strategic planning for the year 2000 and beyond was developed in small groups for the seven LWF regions.



Mission outreach in Pare Mountains, Tanzania.
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balization) call for creative thinking and new partnerships.

Global Mission Consultations

In October 1998, DMD sponsored a consultation in Nairobi on churches in mission with the theme "Into the Third Millennium: Together in God's Mission." Among many other crucial issues, the consultation emphasized the importance of a holistic understanding of mission and its transformational and dialogical character.

Regional Mission Consultations

The Nairobi mission consultation recommended that DMD "facilitate discussion and study to assist mission partners in facing new contexts for mission". In response, mission consultations were held in Asia, North America, Latin America and Europe.

A consultation was held in October 2000 in Bangkok for mission partners in the Mekong region. It had three objectives: to share information about mission activities among partners, to look critically at the mission challenges and opportunities in the region by learning more about each country, and to plan for joint mission ventures. A continuation committee was established to follow up on recommendations and assess the possibility of establishing an ecumenical mission research center to accompany mission work in the Mekong area. Such a center was deemed necessary, given the cultural and religious

background of the region. A second consultation was held in June 2002.

A mission seminar for member churches in Asia took place in October 2000 in Kota Kinabalu with the theme “Mission in the Asian Context for the Third Millennium.” The seminar expanded on the findings of the Nairobi mission consultation and identified instances of shifts in people’s understanding and practice of mission. It called on churches to engage in transformation as a mission imperative, to deepen their commitment to a communion in mission, and to broaden their understanding and practice of diaconia to meet the needs of mission in their diverse contexts.

A regional consultation held in November 2000 in Winnipeg began a conversation about Lutheran communion and mission in North America. The consultation identified trust and relationships as the fundamental issues facing churches and congregations in their mission efforts.

In October 2001, DMD sponsored a mission consultation in Bogotá with the theme “That they may have life in abundance.” The consultation discussed the findings of the Nairobi mission consultation and reflected on issues pertinent to the region, such as violence, emerging groups, ecumenical dialogue, diaconia and spirituality. It reaffirmed the holistic approach to mission and identified migration and migrant communities as a major challenge for the holistic mission of the churches in Latin America.

“Being a Communion in Mission” was the theme of the mission consultation for member churches in Europe held in November 2002 in Riga. The theme was discussed in relation to the church as a community, to society at large and to the ecumenical community of churches.

Training in Mission

The Nairobi mission consultation recommended that training in mission be provided to member churches in established theological seminaries. Asian Lutheran



Candidates for training in mission gather in Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia.
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churches have identified mission outreach as a high priority activity. At the Asia Church Leadership Conference in 1999 in India, the Gurukul Lutheran Theological College in Chennai and the Sabah Theological Seminary in Kota Kinabalu were selected as pioneering centers for mission training in Asia. The program plan and curriculum for the training were developed during the mission seminar held in October 2000 in Kota Kinabalu. Programs took place in 2001 and 2002. The training courses will be continued until 2005 to cover all 46 member churches in Asia.

The objectives of the program are to deepen and strengthen the understanding and practice of mission in Asian Lutheran member churches and to assist them and their theological seminaries in developing regional centers for mission training. The program is for clergy and laity, men and women, enabling them to identify and take up the mission challenges of the churches in their contexts. This residential training is accompanied by a practical outreach program.

LWF Mission Document

A further recommendation of the Nairobi mission consultation was the review of the LWF mission document “Together in God’s Mission: An LWF Contribution to the Understanding of Mission” (November 1988). This formal document should respond to the challenges presented by the tremendous global changes and reflect on the new



understanding and practice of mission. Its purpose is to

- Help deepen the awareness of Lutheran churches of God's mission and the role of the church as the body of Christ
- Serve as a resource for Lutheran churches in their self-analysis and reaffirmation of mission
- Increase cooperation within the Lutheran communion and promote joint ventures with other churches for the sake of a united witness
- Further clarify the meaning of mission and dialogue and their relationship.

Following the Council decision to review "Together in God's Mission", the General Secretary established an ad hoc team in 2000 to undertake the revision. The team organized a mission encounter in Berlin in April 2001, the discussions of which focused on the content of the document: the contexts, theology and practice of mission. A draft of the revised document was shared with LWF member churches, theo-

logical institutions, related agencies, and mission organizations. An advanced draft was shared with participants at the regional pre-assembly consultations and will be discussed at an open hearing and in the Village Group on the Mission of the Church in multifaith Contexts at the Tenth Assembly in Winnipeg. The final draft will be submitted to the Council in 2004 for approval.

Capacity Building for Sustainable Development

The church at the grassroots has proven to be a very effective agent of social transformation and community development. For decades, LWF member churches have endeavored to empower women and men, youth and children to build just, inclusive, participatory and self-sustaining communities. In accompanying the churches, DMD saw its role as strengthening their capacity for development by means of consultative services to individual churches and through workshops and training seminars.

DMD sponsored a capacity-building workshop in 1998 in Geneva. Future DMD development programs will focus on the nature, meaning and impact of development in a debt-ridden country of the South.

What kind of development is possible, viable, and sustainable? Can development programs undo the adverse effects of a globalized regressive economy on impoverished countries?

Enhancement of Church Capacity

Regional workshops on capacity building for sustainable development were held in 1999 as follow up to the global workshop held in Geneva in 1998. Most of the persons trained in the Geneva workshop served as resource persons during the regional workshops, which were held in Santiago de Chile in April 1999, Moshi in August 1999 and in Manila in September 1999. The workshops reflected on such topics as why the church is involved in development, strategic planning, organizational development, sustainable development, community participation and monitoring and evaluation.

The discussions, group work and case studies undertaken by participants in all these workshops demonstrated the wealth of capacity and expertise among member churches and their commitment to transformational mission at the grassroots. Exchange and sharing of knowledge and experience continued among participants after the workshops. Some resource persons were called upon by other churches in their region to provide training in capacity building.

Mainstreaming for an Inclusive Communion

Churches say “No” to Violence Against Women

In 1999, the Council voted to “encourage all member churches to face the painful issue of violence against women in all its manifestations particular to their context” and asked WICAS to “propose ways to accompany the churches in their efforts to address

the issue”. In response, the desk compiled a first draft of “Churches say ‘No’ to Violence Against Women” that was shared with and shaped by diverse groups of men and women from member churches. In 2000, the Council recommended that the draft be circulated immediately to member churches, seminaries, special interest groups and ecumenical organizations. They were requested to respond to the draft, offer additional material, cite local manifestations of the issue and share positive action plans to reduce violence.

Some churches delegated the task of providing a response to their women’s group. A few appointed special committees or persons to look at the document; others translated it for greater impact, and a few national and regional church leadership meetings took the time to respond. There was an overwhelming demand, both from within the Lutheran communion and from ecumenical circles, for wider distribution of the document. Some women’s groups adopted it as their main agenda in their programs and seminars. Responses included affirmations of the document and commendations for the concerted way in which the LWF had worked on the process. General and specific theological, psychological and cultural input, as well as descriptions of positive



action already taken by the churches, were sent to WICAS. Some churches have already formulated programs and projects in response to the document. One or two churches asserted that some of the global aspects of this urgent issue cited in the document might not be pertinent in their context. One church even made the effort to rewrite the document to adapt it to its context.

Regional coordinators in Europe and North America held an international consultation on “Breaking the Silence of Violence against Women and Children.” Women’s groups in Slovakia, Jordan, India, Indonesia, Brazil, Germany and Argentina organized extensive seminars on the issue and requested the LWF “to use its skills in further addressing this issue with other agencies and organizations and to allocate ample resources for both immediate response and long-term prevention”.

In 2001, all Council Program and Standing Committees discussed the draft document. The Council voted “to receive the document with the provision that the responses and additional input received from the Program/Standing Committees and the LWF member churches be incorporated wherever possible”. It appointed a special committee, comprised of five Council members, to examine the changes made in light of the churches’ response and to approve the document for publication. It further resolved that the LWF should “accompany member churches which want to translate the document into local languages, and facilitate distribution to all heads of churches, lay leaders, pastors in congregations in all member churches, seminaries and to women leaders as a matter of urgency”.

The same year, the Project Committee recommended that “violence against women be given priority concern in all projects”. In line with this recommendation, DMD’s revised project application form states specifically that priority will be given to applications that discuss issues of violence against women and measures to reduce it.

The document has been shared with the general secretaries of and women’s leader-

ship in all the global Christian communions, thereby mobilizing a global movement. It will also be shared with the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women to show how religion can be a tool for liberation: church networks can participate seriously, proactively and strategically in reducing all forms of violence against women.

While the churches reflect on the issue, WICAS continues to increase the capacities of special groups and organizations to counter particular local forms of violence, such as female genital mutilation, trafficking of women and children and domestic violence. WICAS will also respond to requests from churches for assistance to translate the document into major local languages. In cooperation with area desks and other departments, it will promote its local distribution.

Gender Mainstreaming

Gender mainstreaming is intended to help build a healed and healing, inclusive and holistic faith community, which brings together women and men to tackle the constrictions of gender that impose limits, roles and responsibilities on everyone, male and female. A gender training manual would enable congregations to reexamine cultures and social structures that limit women to traditional spheres, as well as accompany women and men as they analyze the context in which they live and witness.

In 2000, WICAS initiated a workshop to design a gender training manual. The findings were shared with WARC, with the hope that a common, simple, brief and interactive module on gender training, suitable for congregations, would be produced jointly in the near future.

Engendering Theological Education

A global consultation with the theme “Engendering Theological Education for Transformation” was held in November 2001 in Montreux. This followed up the

global consultation on theological education held in August 1999 in Rome. The aim of the consultation was to gender mainstream in curriculum formation and theological education as a whole. The past two decades have seen feminist theologians at their most prolific and proficient. Their enormous contributions need to be integrated into theological disciplines to make them dynamic and transforming. The consultation attempted to compile guidelines for this integration into biblical, practical, and systematic theology, as well as explore new approaches. A core group will continue the work of formulating guidelines for a curriculum that will be offered to churches and seminaries for their consideration. It is hoped that their collective energy will lead to a revisioning and reformulation of theological education that is both relevant and life affirming.

Gender Mainstreaming in Scholarship Policy

Recruitment and development of human resources has to take into account gender balance. For this reason, the LWF encourages churches to present women candidates for scholarships. However, due to the lack of women candidates for theological scholarships for many years, a change in policy was considered necessary. The scholarship guidelines now state that at least 40 percent of scholarship funds should be earmarked for female students. If this percentage is not attained in any given year, the remaining money is placed in a Women's Fund for scholarships in future years.

This policy has led to positive results. While a recent survey shows that from 1965 onwards only 26 percent of funds for theological scholarships went to women, in the last six years, the percentage has risen to an average of 46, and in some years 50. There has also been an increase in the number of women seeking scholarships for postgraduate programs in theology. In time, many of these women will teach at theological training institutions and, thus,

contribute to gender mainstreaming in theological education and the life of the church as a whole.

People with Disabilities: Resources for the Churches

According to the World Health Organization, approximately 10 percent of the population in any country suffer from one of the five broad categories of disability: physical disability, blindness, deafness, intellectual impairment and mental illness. A small Disability Ministry Fund has enabled DMD to promote the participation of disabled people in LWF- or church-related events. In identifying resources for the work of the church, people with disabilities are often excluded. There is need for a change in attitude towards inclusive ministry for them to be regarded as valuable resources and, thus, participate fully in the life and work of the church. Although



disabilities were not addressed explicitly at the Ninth Assembly, parts of the report address the witness of inclusiveness in the communion and the need to advocate for human rights for all.

A Staff Working Team on Disability, on which all departments are represented, was established in 1996. Its objective is to

Visually-impaired child learns Braille at the Lutheran school in Antsirabe, Madagascar.
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promote the issue of people with disabilities in all the Federation's work, to build awareness, promote involvement of persons with disabilities in LWF events and advise the General Secretary on matters of disability. In 1998, the SWT and WICAS organized a strategic planning meeting of women with disabilities. The recommendations arising from the meeting were approved by the Council in 1999 and form an integral part of the Federation's work for inclusive ministries. One of the recommendations concerned the designation of at least 10 percent of LWF scholarship funds for people with disabilities. While the approved annual budget has not been funded fully, nonetheless, applications for both theological and non-theological scholarships have been supported.

Over the past decade, the Project Committee has approved specific projects for the benefit of people with disabilities in places such as the Lebanon, India, Brazil, Ethiopia and Eritrea.

The Ninth Assembly reaffirmed ecumenical commitment as an integral part of Lutheran confessional identity and re-committed the churches to participate fully in the ecumenical movement. The SWT on Disability has worked in close

cooperation with the WCC to highlight the issue of people with disabilities. The Ecumenical Disability Advocates Network was established at the WCC's Assembly in 1998 in Harare. It has participants from all regions and a coordination office in Nairobi. Members of the LWF's SWT on Disability have been invited to participate in the network's meetings and conferences and in the planning process. They have also presented theological papers at these conferences.

International Youth Program

In 2001, YICAS launched the "International Youth Program: Transformation through Participation", a three-year leadership formation program and global youth network addressing the negative effects of globalization. It was established in response to the Ninth Assembly resolution on leadership training for youth and in follow up to the successful LWF leadership training program for young women (1993-6). The 22 young people participating in this program will launch their own projects in 2003.

The aim of the program is to inspire and mobilize youth to participate fully and

Participants in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Thailand and Lutheran Church in Singapore, October 2001 Youth Exchange Program, Singapore.
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actively in the process of transformation of church and society. It has three components: a week-long orientation conference in Geneva, a 15-month internship and an international event planned for 2003. Participants will meet again to harvest the results of their internship and plan for future networking. It is hoped that after a thorough assessment this kind of program will be continued.

HIV/AIDS

In 2001, the Council initiated a campaign to fight the HIV/AIDS pandemic, especially in Africa where the disease is most devastating. The role of DMD has been to gather church leaders, assess the problem and develop a pastoral approach. In 2002, it sponsored a consultation in Nairobi that brought together church leaders, women leaders, youth leaders and coordinators of church HIV/AIDS centers. A workshop held in December 2001 in Bulawayo planned the structure of the consultation. Participants committed themselves to “break the silence” about HIV/AIDS and remove the attached stigma, to discuss in their churches ways to affirm life and fight HIV/AIDS by providing education on different preventive measures. They also committed themselves to support the efforts of project coordinators in church HIV/AIDS centers who take care of HIV-positive and AIDS patients and provide support for their families, especially orphans.

It is estimated that in Asia and the Pacific 7.1 million people live with HIV/AIDS. DMD is organizing a consultation on the challenges of HIV/AIDS in October 2003 in Asia to address contextual theological, ethical and gender issues as they relate to the pandemic. Participants will take active and guiding roles in initiating and supporting programs related to prevention.

Such consultations help strengthen individual churches that have endeavored for over a decade to fight the ravages of HIV/AIDS. Additionally, DMD has provided many churches and youth organizations



in Africa, Asia and Latin America with finance, technical advice and assistance with monitoring of projects in the field of HIV/AIDS.

At the closing worship service of the African Youth Consultation in Nairobi, Kenya, 2002.
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Strengthening the Witnessing Communion

Africa

Lutheran churches in Africa have grown considerably in recent years, with an annual increase of 885,000; there are now 10.5 million Lutherans on the continent. Church growth, though sought and prayed for by most, creates significant challenges for the churches. The increase in the number of congregations adds to the demand for more pastors and theological educators that the churches cannot afford.

A church leadership conference in 1998 in Nairobi called on LWF to strengthen lay training as a way to meet the challenge. Workshops on leadership development and lay ministry were held in 1999 and seminars on self-reliance and stewardship in 1999 and 2000. Annual meetings of the Advisory Committee for Theological Education in Africa planned the implementation of lay training insti-

tutes in the various subregions from 2000 to 2002. These training sessions and their multiplier effects have strengthened the already powerful lay movements in African churches. Renewal movements in Lutheran churches (Ethiopia, Tanzania, Madagascar, Zimbabwe, South Africa) and



Self-reliance is achieved through income-generating activities in Ethiopia.

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their commitment to holistic mission point to a sustainable and participatory approach to ministry.

After the Ninth Assembly, the Project Committee approved an average of 30 projects per year for Africa in the fields of agriculture, health, education, mission outreach, communication, women's and youth

work, as well as various income-generating projects. Many DMD-sponsored projects, together with the DWS country programs, have made a tremendous impact in alleviating poverty and the crippling effects of bad governance and state corruption.

Theological education is important in the ministry of African churches. DMD has accompanied member churches in relocating their seminaries close to university facilities (Windhoek, Pietermaritzburg) and has sponsored professorial posts at schools of theology, e.g., at the University of Natal in South Africa and at the University of Zimbabwe. It has also offered infrastructure strengthening to seminaries in Tanzania, Madagascar and Ethiopia. The vision for the near future is that African centers of higher theological learning will attract students from different parts of the communion.

The LWF Regional Office in Africa (ROA) was established in 1996 in Nairobi to coordinate activities in the three subregions (Lutheran Communion in Central and Eastern Africa – LUCCEA, Lutheran Communion in Western Africa – LUCWA and Lutheran Communion in Southern Africa – LUCSA) and to strengthen relationships within the communion in Africa. Between 1998 and 2000, ROA organized the above-mentioned lay training workshops and leadership development seminars. Outstanding among these were the workshops on leadership held for LUCSA, in cooperation with the Christian Organizations Research and Advisory Trust of Africa, and the workshop on self-reliance for LUCCEA, facilitated by Maarifa, an NGO. They dealt with pertinent topics such as development perspectives and poverty alleviation, dependency and the challenges of self-reliance, strategic planning, project management and organizational sustainability.

ROA officers assisted the Africa desk with project write-ups and monitoring and, where necessary, represented the LWF to governments and ecumenical partners. They also helped with logistical matters for LWF meetings and visitors to Nairobi.

Despite ROA's positive contributions, it was recognized that a sustainable, local model that would strengthen churches would be preferable. The program was decentralized and LUCCEA and LUCWA were strengthened with additional secretarial assistance. This move is seen as enabling the subregions to take responsibility for their own initiatives. ROA ceased to operate from Nairobi at the end of December 2002.

Asia

One of the most serious challenges in Asia is the increase of religious clashes in and between communities due to the extreme fundamentalism that breeds arrogance, intolerance and discrimination. The church in India, for instance, has been challenged violently to rethink fundamentally its "mission" in the midst of its own communities. Tension has risen between fundamentalist Hindu and non-Hindu groups, including the Christian minority. Officially, freedom of religion is guaranteed in India, but there is discrimination against minorities. Marginalized sections of society are attacked, murdered and raped by those privileged by the state-backed religion. Dalits and Tribals and other marginalized and minority groups in society were the targeted victims of the Hindutva movement, frustrating their emerging self-identity, independent of caste Hinduism.

In Indonesia, and in countries such as Malaysia and Bangladesh, fundamentalist Muslims have promoted Islam as the state religion, establishing powerful theocratic Islamic republics, often with the help of fundamentalist leaders from other countries, like Pakistan and Afghanistan. Religious conflicts due to the adoption of the Islamic shariah law in state constitutions have caused diverse social problems and poverty in Asia.

In the wake of violent attacks by fundamentalist Hindus on Christian churches and missionaries, the seminar on mission, held in October 2000 in Kota Kinabalu,

reminded participants that Asia was the cradle of many world religions. It called for a genuine effort to comprehend the history, culture and religion of other people as neighbors. Earlier, in a symposium held in September 1998 in Bangkok, the Advisory Committee on Theological Education in Asia stressed the central role of dialogue in the mission of the church.

Asian Lutheran churches, large and small, are involved in holistic mission, translated practically into projects for development, outreach and communication. On average, 30 projects were presented to the Project Committee each year. Churches working at the grassroots in considerable difficulty have gained the trust and respect of the people they serve. It has been a priority for most member churches to bring the good news where "no one has gone before". They have implemented innovative communication projects, including radio broadcasts, television programs and Internet.

The Regional Office in Asia was established finally in July 2000 in Bangkok at the premises of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Thailand. The Asia Regional Coordination Committee, established at the Church Leaders' Conference in 1999 to coordinate joint programs and activities, has worked closely with the Asia desk in accompanying the regional coordinator. She has assisted the Asia Secretary in coordinating all LWF-sponsored events and programs in the region and in the preparation of project write-ups for presentation to the Project Committee. Following a recommendation of the Church Leaders' Conference, the regional coordinator took charge of the Asia Newsletter, replacing the defunct Asia Lutheran Press Service.

Europe

In 1999, 10 years after the fall of the Iron Curtain, a church leaders' conference for LWF member churches in Europe, held in Meissen, discussed the challenges for and role of the church in the emerging "new" Europe. Identified among the challenges for

the mission of the church were the economic disparities between European countries, as highlighted by the opening of the EU to Eastern European countries. Seen as challenges also were the massive displacement of people across Europe, due to political and social turmoil in the Balkans, and increasing immigration that transforms Europe into a multireligious region.



'Restoring buildings—restoring hope':
Reconstruction of the Sfântu George Church in Romania, 1998.
© Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Augsburg Confession in Romania

As faith and church life are no longer taken as self-evident in Europe, churches need to strengthen their own identity in order to be able to impact secularizing societal life. The final statement of the conference welcomed the signing of the JDDJ, which had created media and public interest in the church and its role in society. In many places, Lutheran churches were approached by the media and identified as institutions within society for the first time. The JDDJ also fostered among churches renewed interest in understanding and articulating their Lutheran identity.

Redefining Lutheran identity in the context of the Lutheran communion has been a constant challenge for Lutheran churches in Europe. Every church needs to find its own answer to the ecclesiological challenge of identity, communion and unity. In the Netherlands, for example, LWF accompanied the process of unification of the Lutheran Church with churches of reformed tradition, a process that challenges the church to reformulate its self-understand-

ing as a Lutheran church in a very special, ecumenical perspective. At the same time, bilateral relationships between Lutheran churches—often initiated by LWF suggestions during church visits—have increased, and the reciprocity of relationships has been on the agenda of bilateral and multilateral consultations, thus giving expression to a visible communion.

In Central and Eastern Europe, the building projects supported by the LWF are of great symbolic importance. The restoration of church buildings is the physical expression of renewed hope for a visible church after long years of existing as an underground church. LWF-supported institutes of theological education will contribute increasingly to that same hope.

In some places, the missionary approach of member churches has been hampered by outside mission campaigns, which created extra tensions and even schismatic movements. The LWF mediated in some of these situations and arranged consultations and fact-finding meetings.

The LWF continues to sponsor communication events and projects, such as joint communication services for the Lutheran churches in Russia (ELCROS and ELCIR). The project upgrades church workers' media skills and strengthens unity of purpose among the scattered parishes of Russia. Techniques include radio mission work, establishing e-mail links to dispatch and receive news releases and distributing Christian education material.

The LWF has stimulated the regional expression of the communion through frequent church visits, interchurch exchanges and partnerships. A decision was taken recently to deploy a regional officer for Central Eastern Europe, based in Bratislava from January 2003.

Latin America and the Caribbean

Churches in Latin America and the Caribbean have faced the challenges emerging from a persistent and general deterioration

in the social and economic situations of all countries in the region. The constantly increasing gap in income distribution, the negative trade balance in almost all countries, and the privatization of former state services (education, health, water, electricity, pensions) have led to impoverishment and loss of quality of life for a large section of the population in each country. This general deterioration affects not only the financial maintenance of the churches, but especially also their mission, both proclamation and service (diaconia).

What does it mean theologically for the church that the economic system—now globalized—builds upon the logic framework of exclusion? What implications does this have for the churches' social work? How do churches respond strategically to the challenges of economic backwardness and impoverishment?

The climate of violence and armed conflict within countries, causing massive displacement of people in the region, also constitutes a challenge for the holistic mission of the church. Lutheran churches, accompanied by the LWF, have acted against exclusion by working towards strengthening civil society. They have also faced the increase of violence and suffering among people. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Colombia, for in-

stance, received LWF (DMD-DWS) support in its efforts to respond to the dramatic situation of displaced people. This was also the case in Central America, where churches in Honduras, El Salvador and Nicaragua were deeply involved in relief work following the different emergencies caused by natural phenomena (earthquakes, Hurricane Mitch, etc.).

Churches in the region possess a strong resolve to be churches in mission. Impressive training programs for lay and pastoral leadership have been launched (e.g., in Chile and Venezuela), and organizational structures reshaped to respond more effectively to current challenges and conditions (e.g., in El Salvador, Brazil and Argentina). Some churches have started to identify the ethnic, theological, racial and social ties that have hampered their active participation in mission. These different steps were discussed at the LWF mission consultation held in Colombia in 2001.

Regional and subregional cooperation among member churches has been strengthened. Thus, the Communion of Lutheran Churches in Central America has its own training program. The member churches of the Southern Cone and Brazil exchange church workers; those in the Andean Region have expressed commitment to working together to assist refugees



Local women at the "Jesus of Nazareth" carpentry workshop, run by the Bolivian Evangelical Lutheran Church.
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Participants in the closing celebration of a capacity training workshop for women organized by the Christian Lutheran Church of Honduras in La Ceiba, Honduras.
© LWF/M. Junge

and migrants fleeing Colombia; and annual leadership conferences have led to more sustainable dialogue and reflection.

Several projects have been implemented in the region with LWF support. The holistic design of some of these projects has rendered the customary distinction between development and mission less distinct. Development projects have been wide-ranging: agricultural projects, human rights promotion, work with indigenous communities, work with people living with HIV/AIDS, etc. Communication projects have helped churches use different media more effectively, and mission projects related to outreach work and financial support for administration.

The churches in the region agreed to express their life in communion through

networking, rather than through the establishment of a regional office. This approach has enabled them to use funds for meetings and networking structures more effectively, and to involve more people at different levels. The women's network dealt with the issue of violence against women, facilitating and encouraging local reflection and action, while the education network assisted Lutheran schools to reflect on their specific identity and contribution. Curricula were changed to include human rights, and work in education was designed to develop active and conscious citizenship. The communication network's general assembly in November 2000 discussed the issue of communication in relation to Lutheran theology. The church leaders' network of bishops and presidents dealt with various issues of regional concern, e.g., ministries, the situation in Colombia, HIV/AIDS, partnership. The establishment of the diaconia and the youth networks will increase contacts and foster communion.

North America

The Regional Office for North America opened in 1998 with one full-time staff person located in the offices of the ELCA in Chicago. Funding is provided by the LWF. The four LWF member churches in North America are the ELCA, the ELCIC, the Lithuanian Evangelical Lutheran Church in Diaspora, and the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church Abroad.

With the assistance of the North America Regional Committee, the regional officers, through church visits and participation in such things as the ELCA Global Mission events, have enhanced interpretation and education about the LWF within member churches in the region. They also facilitated church-initiated and LWF-sponsored activities, served as LWF liaison for information gathering/sharing and fundraising strategies, and on occasions, were asked to represent the LWF.

The consultation with the theme "Fully the Church in North America: What Does

this Mean?”(Winnipeg, November 2000), was the first in a series of consultations that dealt with communion and mission. It recommended that

- A Lutheran Cycle of Prayer be developed by member churches to reference their common witness and service through the LWF
- Member churches, together with ecumenical partners, explore the meanings of “being church” and “being confessional” in North America
- Member churches consult within the region and share with the LWF their understanding of the definition and characteristics of full communion
- The LWF be urged to recommend principles and guidelines to assist member churches in developing protocols for the exchangeability of ordained ministers between churches
- Member churches support and advocate for the just participation of North America’s indigenous peoples (the First Nations) within North American society and request the LWF Council to include the issue of indigenous peoples everywhere at the Tenth Assembly.

The churches of North America plan to emphasize their understanding of themselves as members of a global communion. It will be important for churches to deepen mutuality and accountability within the North American and global context. Because the ELCA is in the United States—the only remaining superpower—there is a unique opportunity to make a substantial impact on global dialogue.

Global Challenge

One common challenge facing the member churches in the different regions is the rise

of charismatic renewal movements within Lutheran churches as Pentecostalism sweeps across the continents. The experience of member churches in this respect has been diverse. While some Lutheran churches express strong reservations regarding renewal movements, others have embraced these movements into their life and work. As a response to the need to address this challenge, DMD held a global consultation on “Renewal/charismatic movements in Lutheran churches in North and South” in June 2002 in Moshi, Tanzania. The need to continue reflecting on this challenge at the regional level was expressed.

Women in Church and Society

The WICAS 14 regional coordinators network and act locally through programs, visits, representations and lobbying in and through churches and regional networks. Together, they are living proof that connections can be made between people and issues—local and global—and that from these connections, policies and strategies can be formulated. For greater effectiveness, WICAS regional coordination has been streamlined to harmonize with the regional coordination of the area desks.

The Ecumenical Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women (1988–98) not only created a global movement, but also emphasized the need to continue to pool resources for greater effectiveness. WICAS, together with the WCC and the World Young Women’s Christian Association, planned solidarity team visits to Liberia and Sierra Leone in 2000 to share their pain and understand their coping mechanisms, as listeners, reconcilers and spokespersons to the rest of the world, seeking, in turn, global solidarity with them.

The UN Commission on the Status of Women is an important forum, but sees religion increasingly as divisive and leading to conflict at its meetings. WICAS, in and through ecumenical women’s networks, focuses on affirming the positive contributions of religions and religious communities. This

provides opportunities to show proactively how women of faith can diffuse tensions and work together for transformation. WICAS continued its programmatic cooperation with ecumenical women in thematic workshops, International Women's Day celebrations and Doctor of Ministry programs.

WICAS accompanies churches that wish to explore possibilities for women's ordination. Encouragement and opportunities for the theological training of women to utilize fully their creative capacities are offered through yearly global and regional consultations. Assisting students in a particular field of research and its publication has been a regular part of WICAS's work.

WICAS facilitated women's active involvement in the Jubilee 2000 campaign and, programmatically, greater sharing between women from North and South. Economic globalization and its challenges have become part of the discussions.

Youth in Church and Society

The LWF has followed two major issues relating to international initiatives concerning young people: involvement of children in armed conflict, and sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. In January 2000, a significant step was taken to stop the use of children as soldiers. The international community finally agreed to raise the age limit, both for compulsory recruitment and participation in combat, from 15 to 18. However, there is still a threat to children, especially in war-torn countries like Colombia, Angola and Afghanistan. The Second World Congress Against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in 2001, hosted by the government of Japan, reinforced commitments to eliminate the commercial sexual exploitation of children through networking and adequate resource allocation.

The HIV/AIDS pandemic and its effects on children have been discussed in youth consultations. Participants committed themselves to action, and many member churches implemented projects to care for children and their basic health needs, such as sufficient food and clean water. Projects for children's education were supported and implemented in Argentina, Jordan, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay and El Salvador. In Colombia, Congo, Madagascar, the Philippines and Thailand, projects aimed at street children, missing children and sexually exploited children were also supported.

In 1998 and 1999, two regional workshops on HIV/AIDS were held in India and Nicaragua. As a follow-up to the 1996 workshop in Zimbabwe, various national and subregional youth visits and workshops were held in Zambia, Malawi, and Botswana, focusing on awareness, prevention and pastoral care. African youth networks have given particular attention to the basic rights of people living with HIV/AIDS. Another timely response is the identification of grassroots community leadership.

Nine youths were elected to the LWF Council by the Assembly in Hong Kong. At

A group of young people at the "Turning Point 2000" international Lutheran youth evangelism conference near Sydney, Australia. © LWF/T. Valeriano



18 percent of the Council's total membership of 49, this was a pinnacle of youth representation. To achieve greater participation, an annual pre-Council workshop offers the youth members of the Council an opportunity to meet with other youth serving as stewards during Council meetings. They discuss a theme or issue often related to the Council agenda. In 2000 and 2001, messages from these workshops contributed significantly to the Council's deliberations and resolutions. In order to encourage young people's active involvement with the youth desk, the Council resolved to ask each member church to designate a youth liaison person to ensure communication with, and not on behalf of, youth. Mutual partnership in decision making continues to be a need.

Six regional youth consultations have been held since 1998. As the young people developed a stronger sense of being in a communion of churches, these issues were translated into common action plans by sub-regional and regional networks. Church leaders' support for this youth endeavor is still very important. Further strengthening will be helpful at the local level in particular.

"Vision Beyond 2000" was implemented to harvest youth's visions and devise specific action. In various international, ecumenical events young people told stories that redefined hope for the future. It is their earnest hope that these visions will become the task of the whole communion.

Between 1998 and 2002, eight young people from member churches (four women and four men) served as interns. In addition, a young woman from Brazil served as an intern for four months in a rural development program in Ethiopia.

Communication Consultancy

The Ninth Assembly made the commitment to ensure that all member churches were connected to the Internet and had the capacity for e-mail. A survey conducted in 1999 revealed that about 60 percent of member churches could be reached by e-



mail. By 2001, this had increased to 80 percent. In Europe, North America and Latin America all member churches can be reached by e-mail, whereas in Africa the headquarters of 89 percent of member churches have an e-mail address. In Asia the average is only 59 percent, primarily because of the lack of e-mail connections in member churches in India and Indonesia. The Project Committee approved a project for 2001 aimed at equipping the 11 member churches of the UELCI with e-mail and Internet access.

These modern communication tools have increased efficiency and strengthened cooperation between member churches and their bilateral partners abroad. DMD has started a process of dialogue with member churches on the need to discuss the ethical challenges of the Internet. Based on assessments and evaluations conducted in collaboration with DMD, the department has assisted member churches to develop their own communication policies, setting strategies and priorities within their cultural, social and economic context. It has also provided support for church workers for training in media skills. The regional ecumenical and Lutheran communication networks have implemented several communication workshops, seminars, and training, and Lutheran Communication in Asia (LUCIA) produced a communication manual for the churches in Asia.

Communicating the joy of the gospel. A radio studio of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, Moshi, March 2001. © LWF/T.Reuhkala



Access to e-mail has enabled the DMD-supported ecumenical and Lutheran news agency networks in Latin America and Africa to be an important source of information for *LWI* and their respective regions. *FLM Information* continues to provide news from *LWI* and *ENI* in French to francophone member churches. The All Africa News Agency (AANA) merged the French news service from Togo with the English service in Nairobi, located at the AACC. AANA's services were evaluated in December 2001. Structural administrative changes were recommended to improve effectiveness.

Several technical consultants have traveled in the regions and organized consultations and workshops.

Christian Education

Following a workshop on Strategic Planning for Christian Education, held in April 1999 in Geneva, a new structure for the implementation of Christian education programs, based on interregional networking of Christian educators, was proposed. In June 2000, the first International Christian Education Network (ICENET)

meeting took place in Geneva. Five regional networks were established: Latin America/Caribbean, Eastern Europe and Europe/North America had their first meetings in 2001, followed by Africa and Asia in 2002. The whole network includes 50 people from different regions. ICENET plans to meet every year and the regional networks will meet every other year.

In 2001, ICENET adopted the research theme "Nurturing the Culture of Peace." It will analyze member churches' teaching on the theme. The ICENET web site (www.lwf-ice.net) provides information to the public about the network and about the LWF's Christian education work. Two web site databases will include data about all Christian education institutes in member churches and Christian education material. The web site also includes a sophisticated discussion forum.

Human Resources Development (HRD)

Over the last six years, the International Scholarship Program has provided scholarships for nearly 500 people, approximately 50 percent of whom have been trained in theological disciplines. Most of the candidates for theological education

are trained for pastoral service in member churches. However, each year the scholarship committee approves scholarships for training at higher levels, such as doctoral programs. The recipients will go on to serve in theological training institutions in the South.

The scholarship program is not meant to reward individuals, but to respond to specific needs for trained staff in the member churches. Therefore, the scholarship committee pays particular attention to the churches' plans for the future service of each candidate. Every year, the HRD desk receives 200–300 applications. Funds available allow the LWF to provide 70–85 scholarships. Most of them are individual scholarships, but group scholarships are also approved. Many people are trained in areas related to community development, and applications for study in communication and computer technology are increasing. Scholarships for training in administration are also approved every year.

In 2000, the HRD desk began to assess the impact of the scholarship program. A questionnaire was sent to 107 LWF member churches, listing the scholarship recipients from each church. They were asked to provide information about the service of the recipients on completion of their studies. The information received from the 81 churches that responded shows that the total return rate is relatively high, 82 percent of former scholarship holders having returned to salaried positions in their churches. Many former students had served their churches throughout the whole of their professional career. In addition, of course, there are those who are not formally employed by their churches, but who serve as resource persons. The overall results of the survey are, therefore, encouraging. Many churches attested to the importance of the program for their human resources development.

Requests from member churches for financial support to participate in short-term, international training programs, consultations, workshops and seminars have in-

creased. In order to meet this need, a new program was approved by the Council in 1999. The Short Term Study and Research Program aims at providing a quick, flexible response and has supported individuals' participation in a wide range of events. Since the approval of the program, 10–15 programs have been financed annually.

Within the communion of member churches there is an enormous wealth of skills, experience and knowledge. Exchange programs of different types have been developed in order to bring churches closer together and share their resources. Many requests come from theological professors on sabbatical who are called to be guest lecturers in another country. Recently, requests for group programs have been received.

The Language Training Program has supported approximately 300 persons for language training during this period, more than 50 percent of whom were women.



Andean woman collects honey.
© LWF/M.Egli

Workshops on human resources development aim at strengthening human resources and helping church leaders plan staff training. A global workshop on “Iden-

tifying Resources for the Work of the Church and Community” was held in 1998 in Nairobi. People from all the LWF regions participated in the four-day event. For churches in Asia and Latin America, short workshops were held in connection with church leaders’ meetings. In 2000, a one-day workshop was held in connection with the Ninth Regional Meeting of the LWF for Lutheran Churches in the Baltic States and in Russia. In September 2001, a three-day workshop was held in Senegal for general secretaries and women leaders from 12 churches in French- and English-speaking Africa. Those church leaders who participated in the workshops discussed the role they wanted their church to play in years to come, nationally and regionally. They tried to identify the human resources needed and

explored ways to involve persons for service in the church. They were challenged to treat planning for human resources development as an integral part of strategic planning for church work as a whole.

Project Work

From 1998 to 2003, the Project Committee dealt with a total of 514 applications: 192 from Africa, 147 from Asia, 49 from Europe, and 124 from Latin America. Of these, 139 projects were approved by staff based on delegated authority for projects with a total budget ceiling of USD 30,000.

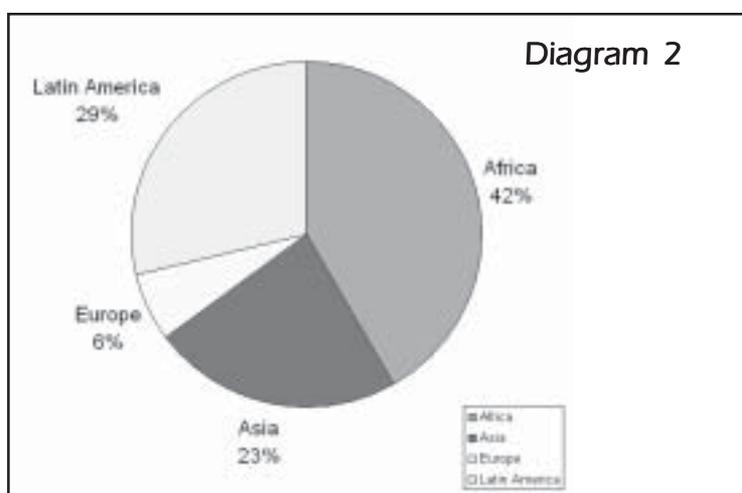
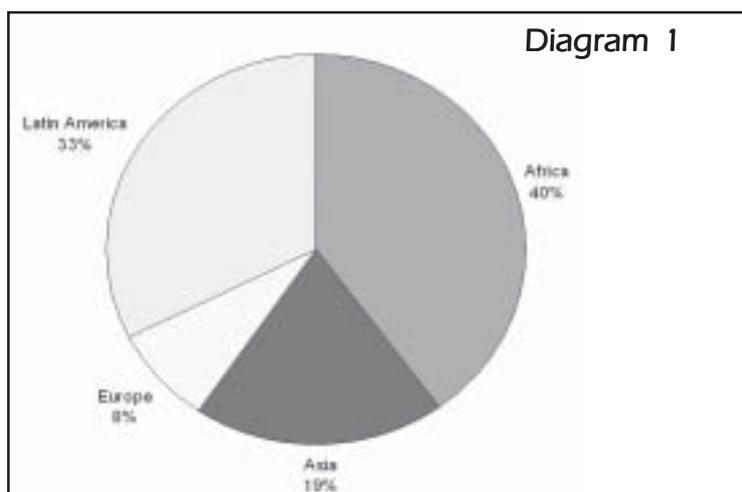
The total volume approved was USD 69,590,128 and USD 7,288,400—for so-called special projects, funds for which have to be secured over and above regular support.

The geographical distribution per continent on a percentage basis is as seen on diagram 1.

The total volume of funds secured was about USD 44,540,224, excluding special projects primarily concerned with major building work, most of which were approved in 1999. Several of these projects remain on the active project list for funding. In a few cases, it has become clear that it will not be possible to raise funds and, therefore, these projects have been removed from the list. Among the regular projects approved, several could not be funded due to the prevailing political circumstances and/or the reduction of funds available through the LWF supporting network. Some were cancelled because funding became available from other sources.

The geographical distribution of the funds secured per continent on a percentage basis is as seen on diagram 2.

Based on previous LWF structures, projects continued to be categorized as communication, development and mission. It was argued that this distinction was necessary for funding purposes, particularly with regard to the so-called development agencies. However, experience has





shown that this distinction is no longer necessary.

Among the policy and procedural items on the Committee's agenda were the change of deadline for project applications from December 1 to October 1 of any given year, the approval of a revised project request form and revised guidelines for reporting and accepting guidelines for sustainable development. These changes aimed at improving the quality of applications and the screening process.

The Committee decided to have presentations on different thematic issues each year. Successively, the Committee reflected on models of alternative sustainable development, on the pros and cons of income-generating projects for churches and on gender balance as a prerequisite for development. Given the complexity of the issues, no conclusive decision was taken by the Committee on how to deal with future applications for income-generating activities. The Council approved the Committee's recommendation that education and promotion of a gender perspective be a priority in all member churches, and be included in DMD capacity building programs and in

the screening, implementation and evaluation of all development projects.

The Project Committee addressed the problem of the length of the project processes. Member churches had indicated that the time between project application and implementation should be shortened in order to allow for more timely and, thus, effective projects. A seminar held during the Project Committee meeting in May 2002 highlighted the fact that the lengthy project implementation process was due to the LWF system of project funding. A consultation between the Project Committee, member churches and related agencies is scheduled for April 2003 to consider ways to address the situation.

Development as a Challenge

For more than 40 years, the LWF has used an atomistic project approach in dealing with development issues. The effectiveness of this approach has been questioned in recent years. The same atomistic approach is reflected in the funding system. With so-called mission and communication projects, DMD can participate at an early stage in

Women benefit from LWF community-based rehabilitation project, Saya Kalan, India.
© LWF/M.Stasius

member churches' visioning and conceptualizing of projects. With the devastating effect of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, for example, it became clear that the absence of a DMD health policy, as well as a corresponding global program fund, prevented DMD from responding swiftly by promoting AIDS projects in member churches.

Against this background, in 2001, the Project Committee recommended:

- The development of global and regional programs to encourage member churches to devise programs for development (e.g., health, education, rural development)
- That the Project Committee discuss and approve the framework and establish policies and guidelines for such programs
- To initiate consultation with sponsoring partner networks regarding the necessary accompaniment and funding of programs (e.g., establishing local credit schemes, development of local resources, provision of block grants).

Initial proposals were submitted to the Project Committee meeting in 2002.

The introduction of new project and audit agreements in 1998—applicable to all project categories—resulted in a substantial improvement in monitoring and reporting by project holders. The principles of accountability are more readily accepted; auditing of financial reports is no longer seen as an expression of distrust. DMD also sees the institutional audit (as distinct from a project audit) as a very useful tool for churches to become aware of their financial situation and their management of financial resources in general.

In the area of planning, monitoring and evaluation, many Lutheran churches and related development organizations have participated in training exercises, organized by DMD (1998–9) or the supporting

partner network to improve the capacity of project holders and to streamline reporting requirements. On average, four major DMD evaluation exercises were conducted each year, plus an equal number of smaller, mainly internal evaluations.

The need for monitoring and reporting for large-scale development projects is well accepted by LWF member churches, but less so for small-scale development and mission-related activities. DMD has begun a process to review the cost–benefit ratio of communication projects, many of which have a high cost component for short wave airtime. Therefore, DMD will continue to strengthen the churches' capacity, stressing the need to reflect critically on progress made and upgrade planning techniques and instruments.

The total amount of funds transferred to churches and their related organizations has decreased gradually in recent years in the context of reduced overall support through the multilateral system. On average, 90–5 new projects are approved each year, the average running period being slightly over three years. Consequently, DMD is accompanying some 300–400 projects in various stages (initial measures, full implementation, reviews and evaluation processes, final accounting and administrative procedures and impact assessments). This work is done in consultation with the area desks.

Towards a Healing Communion

Ethnic and historical differences, ideological and theological differences and, on occasion, personal ambitions and interests are among the causes of church conflict. DMD has engaged in mediation and conflict management in an effort to maintain church unity for the sake of the gospel, as well as for the communion itself. Pastoral visits, fact-finding missions, mediation, and unity talks have all been undertaken. The LWF Executive Committee is involved in

this work of conflict resolution. Conflicts in Croatia, Yugoslavia, Belarus, Ethiopia, Mozambique and Nigeria have all been discussed. Keeping the churches together in a spirit of “unity in diversity” can be a daunting task. In some cases, the Executive Committee deemed it wiser to allow unresolved differences to continue, rather than insist on reunion or reconciliation.

Many uneasy discussions during consultations have revealed that memories of the colonial past still haunt and cripple present relationships. There is a vision of new models of cooperation based on partnership, accompaniment and companion synods, yet there is also a deep paternalistic attitude between colonizer and colonized, mother and daughter church. What is needed in many cases is a “healing of memories” to free the churches from past burdens and concentrate on participation as equal partners.

Healing through the Communion

DMD has assisted LWF member churches in their effort to alleviate suffering in a violent world and to bring reconciliation to societies. Churches have advocated and worked for food security, health, education and justice for all, especially for vulnerable groups. DMD programs have enabled churches to experience the healing effect of cooperation, partnership and accompaniment. They have found in the communion a source of support.

The healing work of the LWF points toward that eschatological hope of fullness of life for all. In many DMD regional consultations, Lutherans have voiced their hope and expectation of a “haven of hope,” a “safe community” and a “hospitable communion.”

Neoliberal economics and globalization have brought hopelessness to vulnerable communities and nations throughout the world. Nations, families and individuals have found themselves poorer every year. For many, the church has seemed the only source of hope. Churches in the South have called for churches and related agencies to challenge globalization and align themselves with the weak and vulnerable. The Lutheran communion should be a place where people are given the chance and the capacity to control their own lives and destiny.

Lutheran church leadership in every region has voiced support for the Ecumenical Decade to Overcome Violence. All congregations, national churches and the communion as a whole are called to be a safe place for women, to protect and advocate for children, especially those who are abused or orphaned by HIV/AIDS. The communion has also been called to witness to the plight of the excluded (such as internally displaced people and refugees) and stigmatized groups (such as people with HIV/AIDS and those of different sexual orientation). The church is called to advocate for the acceptance, safety, and wellbeing of all these vulnerable people.

The communion should also be a place where all generations feel at home and help one another “belong.” DMD’s regional programs have advocated for the mainstreaming of youth participation at all levels of church life and promoted interaction between youth and church leadership.

For the communion to experience wholeness and healing, the stranger and those who are “different” must be welcomed. There must be reaching out to those who do not—or who no longer—have faith in Christ. Witness is one-sided, incomplete, if the stranger is not accepted and embraced.



**From Hong Kong
to Winnipeg**

