



GLOBAL MISSION

BY THE END OF THIS WORKSHOP YOU WILL HAVE:

- Described key characteristics of the global church today.
- Examined the difference between engaging in mission to and mission with and among — and practically applied this model to a well-known ministry present in nearly every congregation.
- Named the value of “seeing” from an asset-based, accompaniment perspective, and living out that world view in our relationships.
- Given examples of some gifts and assets of your own.
- Compared the difference between telling respectful stories about mission companions, and poor storytelling.
- Created a list of questions to ask about any story.



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.



MISSION
GATHERING

How does the accompaniment theology of mission impact the way we create and support glocal ministries? If you are curious about how global mission is changing, and what new “lenses” on mission might enhance our ability to serve, this workshop is for you.

We will explore and practice three “lenses” that widen our view of mission in all contexts. You will leave with a new “prescription” as well as techniques to help others in your congregation engage in mission through these lenses.

OUR FOUNDING HISTORY: TO SERVE OTHERS

In 2007, The Lutheran World Federation celebrated its 60th anniversary in Lund, Sweden, the same place where we held our first Assembly after World War II. Just like the effort of many countries worldwide, especially those involved in the war, churches also came together in order to address challenges facing a chaotic world devastated by war, violence and conflict. Forty seven Lutheran churches, mostly from the Northern Hemisphere, saw the need to help the war refugees. North American Lutherans, whose relatives and partner faith communities (from their country of origin after migration) were heavily affected by the war, partnered with their European counterparts to organize relief and rehabilitation efforts. Relocation, hospitality, and rehabilitation were central in their work. Therefore, **serving those in need** is at the heart of our identity then as a “free association” of autonomous member churches that established the LWF as an agent to work on certain joint undertakings.

Lutheran **solidarity in mission** was another reason for the formation of the federation. The mostly trans-Atlantic Lutherans that established The LWF made the assistance to younger churches and orphaned missions a priority, whose normal support had been interrupted by the war. Though the decision in Lund aimed to revert control of missions back to the “sending” church when normalcy was achieved, some major churches continued the shared international effort to assist these young churches, which were mostly in the Global south. Therefore, with the establishment of a Commission on World Missions in its inauguration, LWF member churches sought to provide an instrument for cooperation in common missionary responsibility, which would give a strong witness to the unique message of Lutheranism amidst a chaotic and wounded world, and would further the worldwide Lutheran relationship at the global level.

Confessional strength was also seen to be very important, as the Lutheran contribution to the ecumenical dialogue. The World Council of Churches

was established a year later than The LWF, in 1948. Many of our founding member churches were also involved in the foundation of the ecumenical body, WCC.

Therefore, establishing relationship to **serve the needy**, witness to **unity in mission**, **strengthen the confessional relation** as a contribution to the ecumenical movement were key factors in the understanding of the LWF identity in its foundation, **seeking healing and reconciliation**.

FROM FEDERATION TO COMMUNION: RECONCILED DIVERSITY AND A COMMUNION OF EQUALS

Ecclesiological questions have always been a part of the discussion in the LWF. In the 70s and 80s, the issue of apartheid raised a confessional challenge, the LWF started to rethink the basis of relationship among member churches that were maturing. Many churches in the South were finding their identity stronger as their ministries grew, especially those churches with a long history like the churches in India and South Africa, Ethiopia, and Indonesia. At the 1984 Assembly, member churches made a decision to define their relationship as a Communion. The meaning of communion was expressed in pulpit and altar relationship, eliminating divisions that defined churches previously, such as rich and poor churches, “sending” and “receiving” churches, missionary and mission field churches. Thus, the transition to a **communion of equals** recognizing that our relationship is a gift and not a choice. In 1990, a new constitution and a new structure was approved and accepted for implementation.

Reconciled diversity, a Protestant model in church fellowship discussed in the 1974 meeting of the World Communion, helped in defining and shaping this relationship. Even though communion relation had been expressed, it was not until 1990 that constitutional changes were made to reflect the emerging understanding of what it means to be a communion of churches. These prompted structural changes:



- **Inclusivity** in gender, age, and geography in all decision making bodies (50% women and 20% youth; 50% from the global south). This inclusion policy also has been implemented in the representation of leadership in the General Secretariat (GS), more leadership from the Global South have been serving both in elected and hired positions.
- **Regional Expressions**—LWF has seven regions: Africa, Asia, Central West Europe, Central East Europe, Nordic, Latin America, and North America. Regional events for churches to address regional issues became an instrument to deepen relationships among churches who are from neighboring countries, but who had closer relationships with their “sending” church in the North. Regions started to assess and address challenges and issues with their own resources and leadership, but of course, with continued financial support from their partners from the North. Currently there five regional desks in the GS and three sub-regional offices in Africa, a extension regional office in Asia and lastly, the Regional Office of North America hosted by the ELCA. Regional Church leaders meet regularly.
- **Diakonia.** In a deepening understanding of diakonia, or service, some of the World Service programs were turned over to churches or communities whose capacity to undertake professionalized development work had been established. However, member churches are also initiating and implementing their diakonia ministry in the local community. This is not only a recognition of the need they see and experience but a response to God’s call as a church doing prophetic diakonia, as an essential part of our Christian discipleship.

In this growing relationship, the LWF makes decisions on behalf of the member churches and we continue to find ways to express being in a communion with each other and the reality that our member churches are autonomous.

LWF IN THE 21ST CENTURY: BEING AND BECOMING OF LUTHERAN CHURCHES IN A GLOBALIZING WORLD

Currently, The LWF has grown to 140 member churches in 79 countries representing over 70 million Lutherans. The LWF continues to be an instrument of the Lutheran communion, acting on behalf of its member churches in areas of common interest, such as ecumenical and interfaith relations, human rights, humanitarian assistance and community development, theology, communication, and the various aspects of mission (proclamation, diakonia/service and advocacy). Its World Services has 36 regional, county and associate programs all over the world with a budget of up to \$112 million, and facilitated by over 40 International staff and 5,000 local staff supported by various national staff like the ELCA GM IDDR and World Hunger.

At the 60th anniversary, LWF formally decided to go through a renewal process in response to the changing world of the 21st century. As we look forward to the Eleventh LWF Assembly in July 2010 in Stuttgart, Germany, we ask the questions: Where are we going? Who are we becoming? We are facing lots of changes in the 21st century: challenges to the ecumenical landscape, human landscape, financial global economy landscape, mission landscape.

Ecumenical Landscape. This year, the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (5.0 million) took the second largest church position away from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (4.7 million) [it is not a competition, but showing some results of the changes since the 1980s]. Out of 22 churches (including the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod) whose membership is over half a million, 10 member churches are from the Global South. There are more LWF members now in Asia, the origin of major religions in the world, than in North America.

Three and half million Lutherans are not members of the communion, and almost three million of them are from North America. The Lutheran Church Missouri Synod is the largest church that does not belong to the communion and leads their worldwide



fellowship of churches called International Lutheran Council. There is a regular dialogue between ILC and LWF. Fourteen churches belong to both groups.

The World council of Churches is also on the cross-road of its existence. The recent worldwide gathering of WCC with churches who are not members of it members like the Pentecostals, the voices of the Orthodox now heard more strongly after the cold war, the question of duplication or work in mission and the complications of professionalism in relief and development are some of the few challenges of WCC and LWF.

Mission Landscape. In 2005, the new LWF document was accepted as the official Mission Statement of the LWF. Although the communion has faced many changes since its first Mission Statement in 1988, this document brought together the trends, changes and visions of our mission together. In this document, entitled “Mission in Context: Transforming, Reconciling and Empowering,” LWF highlighted the accompaniment model of mission, based on the Emmaus story and its holistic approach of proclamation, service (diakonia) and advocacy. This accompaniment approach of mission begins with knowing your own context, not only the context where the ministry is happening and the work is assessed: Is it transforming, reconciling and empowering? Accompaniment defines mission as God’s, thus no one “owns” a mission, no “sender” and “receiver.” It is a calling of the whole church and not only as individuals. It is expressed not in isolation nor competition and duplication but in solidarity and partnership. A follow up to this resource is “Diakonia in Context: Transforming, Reconciling and Empowering” which was approved by the Council. The English version will be published in spring 2010.

Social and Economic Landscape. Globalization, climate change, HIV and AIDS, indigenous and caste people, gender and power, violence and financial crisis are all issues which the church faces as part of the human community in the 21st century.

COMMUNION IS A GIFT AND A TASK

Understanding the core basis of our relationship is vital in our participation in God’s mission through this communion. We will come together in Stuttgart, Germany in 2010 for the Eleventh LWF Assembly for many reasons, but also to receive the report of a renewal process. That year will be exactly twenty years since we declared that we are a communion. Who are we becoming? What are our priorities as a community? How is the shaping of communion through the member churches experiences changes our member churches? Transformed, reconciled and empowered, we are a communion of churches, growing in relationship with God and with one another.

Questions for reflection:

1. Does it matter to me if I know I belong to a wider church and a global communion? Why?
2. Is it important for my congregation to understand the communion relationship that binds us? How can this be visually and practically obvious in our local context?
3. How would this relationship (our communion) matter in my identity as a Christian and in my faith expressions (doing mission and ministry) in North America? If I know what we do together at the global level, would it mean something in our daily faith expression?
4. If mission is part of my identity belonging to a church/congregation or faith community, how does it relate to my faith expressions in my locality? Do I know what my context is and how it is relevant to the ministry we do “out there” in the world?

Resources:

- Mission and Unity in Lutheranism, by James Scherer
- Toward a Lutheran communion: Pulpit and Altar Fellowship, by Eugene L. Brand
- Communion, Community, Society, edited by Wolfgang Grieve



- Mission in Context: Transforming, Reconciling and Empowering, edited by Peri Rasolondraibe. Prepared by Rev. Teresita Valeriano, former LWF Regional Officer for North America

COMMUNION AND ACCOMPANIMENT STRUCTURAL TOOLS TO DO MISSION TOGETHER

In the latest LWF Mission Document, entitled “Mission in Context: Transformation, Reconciliation, Empowerment”, the communion identified the biblical story of the Emmaus Road encounter (Luke 24:13- 49) as the model of mission. This story highlights an approach they called the “hermeneutical spiral,” which shows the interaction between contexts, theology and practice. There are other models of mission in the Bible, but this story conveys a clear understanding of mission as accompaniment of mission as *accompaniment*.

The Lutheran World Federation and member churches, including the ELCA, need **institutional structure** to meet the goals of our mission together, from which we organize our work together according to the common interests identified at the regional and global level. We can understand the multi-faceted relationship between ELCA and the LWF through identifying the various functions of these offices and departments and how they relate and cooperate within the ELCA structure. **This structure serves us in living out our mission in the communion.**

Governing Bodies

- A. The LWF Assembly**, the highest decision making body of the LWF, meets every six years, bringing together all delegations from member churches. The ELCA will send 15 delegates to the Assembly in 2010. The current LWF president, who is also the ELCA Presiding Bishop, The Rev. Mark Hanson, was elected at the last Assembly in 2003 in Winnipeg, Canada. The LWF Assembly sets the direction for the life and work of the communion for the next six/seven years by setting priorities and passing resolutions.
- B.** In order to assist the General Secretary with the Global staff in carrying out the directions set by the Assembly, the Assembly elects an **LWF Council** of 48 members with the President and Treasurer. The ELCA has four representatives among the LWF council members including the Bishop Mark Hanson. The Council is the second highest decision making body of the LWF, which meets every 12 to 18 months to assess and direct the life and work of the communion. **The ELCA Office of the Presiding Bishop, Ecumenical and Inter-religious Relations, and Global Mission** assist the LWF Office of the General Secretary by selecting delegates for the Assembly and Council, and providing resources.

Projects and Programs

Programs are planned and implemented regionally and globally as mandated by the highest decision bodies of the LWF (Assembly and Council) while projects are initiated, supported and implemented by individual member churches in their respective community but facilitated and assisted by the LWF Department for Mission and Development.

Various programs at the LWF

- A. Department for Theology and Studies.** This office brings together theologians and lay people to reflect upon emerging issues in our times. Recent publications have dealt with interfaith dialogue, illegitimate debt, creation and climate change, poverty and mission, and Lutheran responses to Pentecostalism. Theology and Studies relates to all Lutheran seminaries in the world.
- To learn about **Lutheran theology, worship, Biblical studies, and congregational life all over the world**, visit http://lutheranworld.org/What_We_Do/Dts/DTS-Welcome.html.
 - The seminaries and units like Vocation and Education and individual theologians participate or related to DTS.
- B. Department for Mission and Development.** This department fosters and facilitates relationship among member churches through about



100 regional and global programs for, with and supported by member churches, like the Diakonia Consultation and the Church Leadership Conference. There are also global desks for Youth and Women. Every year more than 50 projects from member churches for mission and development/ diakonia are approved for implementation. The project budgets vary from USD 3,000 to 3,000,000 depending on the capacity of the church. They are assisted by the LWF and ELCA staff in planning, monitoring and evaluation. There are also numerous regional and global programs that are implemented. Focus on youth and women are also programs that implemented regionally and globally.

- You can learn about **Lutheran member churches' work in proclamation, theological education, capacity building, social justice, transformation, and development and projects for youth and women supported by the LWF** by visiting http://lutheranworld.org/What_We_Do/DMD/DMD-Welcome.html.
- In the ELCA, the Office of the Presiding Bishop, Global Mission and Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations relate to LWF Mission and Development.

C. Department for World Service. This department is the humanitarian arm of the communion. Using the rights based approach; we work throughout the world, serving all people irrespective of ethnicity, gender, religion, race or political conviction. There are currently 36 regional, country and associate field programs operated or assisted by the DWS with over 5,000 staff. We are trusted partners of the United Nations High Commissioned on Refugees. We also work ecumenically through Action of Churches Together (ACT). This work is supported by the ELCA Global Mission International Relief and Disaster Response, and Approximately one-third of World Hunger Appeal funds are the ELCA contribution to the World Service and mission and development work.

- To learn about the **humanitarian challenges** we are addressing, you may visit http://lutheranworld.org/What_We_Do/DWS/DWS-Welcome.html.

- You can also visit the GM and World Hunger Appeal to learn more about our engagement to the World Service.

Offices

A. Ecumenical Affairs. To be Lutheran is to be ecumenical. This office maintains relationships with other world communions and leads and supports in bilateral dialogues prioritized and approved by the LWF Council. One of the most historic works of this office was the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification between the Roman Catholic and Lutheran Churches. The ecumenical work of the ELCA contributes to the international dialogue by providing leadership and support. Today, the Lutherans and Mennonites are involved in an important dialogue.

- To learn about the **dialogue between Lutherans and other churches**, you may visit http://lutheran-world.org/What_We_Do/OEA/OEA-Welcome.html.
- The ELCA EIR contributed strongly in the celebration of the 10th Anniversary of JDDJ in 2009.

B. Human Rights. Through this office, registered as a non-governmental organization, we lobby and advocate both in Geneva and New York United Nations offices on Human Rights, Refugees, Indigenous people, and issues of women's status. The Lutheran Office for World Community, supported by the ELCA, represents the ELCA and The LWF to the United Nations New York.

- To learn about **Lutheran peacemaking and advocacy for global human rights**, visit http://lutheranworld.org/What_We_Do/OIAHR/OIAHR-Welcome.html.
- The ELCA Church and Society program unit relates to the IAHR.

Three important LWF Service Units serve and receive participation from the ELCA and other member churches.

1. General Secretariat (ELCA EIR and Office of the Bishop)



2. Communication (ELCA Office of Communications)
3. Finance (ELCA Global Mission, Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, ELCA Foundation for LWF Endowment Fund)

Questions for Reflections:

1. Using the metaphor of the body of Christ, what do you see as the congregations' role in our mission together locally, churchwide and globally?
2. What are the benefits of working together in various levels: locally, churchwide and globally?
3. What are the challenges of working together in various levels? Assessing our contexts and understanding how we understand mission (not isolated, it is God's mission, no duplication or waste of resources, etc.), what can be improved in these relationships?

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