



LWF Theology and Public Witness

Annual Report 2015



THE
LUTHERAN
WORLD
FEDERATION

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The Reformation—A Global Citizen

In 2015, the Lutheran World Federation entered into a three-year period marking the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. During this period, the high point of which is naturally the anniversary year 2017, major events and processes related to the anniversary have and will be taking place throughout the communion.

This year's annual report will draw attention to some of the 2015 Reformation anniversary highlights. These were planned bearing in mind three principles: (1) the Reformation is a global citizen; (2) needs to be marked with ecumenical accountability; and (3) is an ongoing process. The third principle calls Lutheran churches and theologians constantly to review how to proclaim and serve in the world today.

One of the major events organized by DTPW in preparation of the Reformation anniversary and the Twelfth Assembly was the international conference on "Global Perspectives on the Reformation. Interactions of Theology, Politics and Economics," Windhoek,



Rev. Dr. Kaisamari Hintikka. Photo: LWF/M. Renaux

Namibia, around Reformation day 2015. Reflections and insights from some seventy, mainly Lutheran theologians and experts in the fields of economics and politics helped to harvest and share the fruits of recent LWF theological study processes. The conference provided a fruitful and dynamic space to discuss the contemporary interaction between theology, economics and politics as well as an inspiring platform further to develop the LWF's understanding of its

public witness that is deeply rooted in the Lutheran theological tradition.

As preparations for the Twelfth Assembly in 2017 progress, the member churches are invited to reflect on their understanding of the LWF as a communion. DTPW staff facilitated and supported the work of a working group which, in 2015, after a two-year study process, submitted the study document *The Self-Understanding of the Lutheran Communion* to the Council for action. The document and an accompanying reader have proven to be a valuable resource as the member churches prepare for the Assembly.

For a number of decades, the LWF has been committed to work for gender justice and to empower women to grow in leadership in the church and society. As we move toward the Assembly, the women's regional networks of the Office for Women in Church and Society (WICAS) have lifted up the stories of our lesser known forebears. Within the framework of the initiative "Her-stories," names, gifts and stories of often for-

gotten women who have shaped the Reformation and the Lutheran tradition are collected and shared.

An important element of the LWF's commitment to gender justice is to advocate for women's rights. This is one dimension of the LWF's vocation to promote human rights and religious freedom, the two focal points of the LWF's advocacy work. DTPW has significantly expanded its capacity in the area of international affairs and human rights through a new staff position and increased cooperation with the departments for World Service (DWS) and Mission and Development (DMD) and the related agencies. An important area of developing our advocacy work has been the strengthening of the link between local and global processes.

The Reformation anniversary has given the LWF and its ecumenical partners the impetus to examine what has been achieved in the bilateral dialogue processes and how to continue the quest for the unity of the Church. In the 2013 report of the Lutheran–Roman Catholic Commission on Unity, *From Conflict to Communion, Lutheran-Catholic Common Commemoration of*

the Reformation 2017, Lutherans and Catholics for the first time tell the story of the Reformation and commit to a joint witness in the world. The report, translated into fifteen languages, is one of the most widely known LWF ecumenical study documents. It is studied together by Lutherans and Catholics and with their ecumenical partners in numerous local congregations, church study commissions and theological institutions.

On the basis of *From Conflict to Communion*, the LWF and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU) jointly published prayer material at the end of 2015. A *Common Prayer* invites Catholic and Lutheran communities to commemorate the Reformation anniversary.

The Anglican Communion has cooperated in the preparations for 2017 and will use the LWF Reformation booklets, *Liberated by God's Grace*, in their reflections on the Reformation tradition.

This year, a number of DTPW's programs have grown to full maturity and begun to bear fruit, such as the six books published in 2015.

While continuing to work and witness in the fields of Lutheran theology,

hermeneutics, interfaith and ecumenical relations, advocacy, gender justice and theological education, DTPW staff have increasingly been involved in discussing with other departments in the Communion Office how to put in place systems that will allow the LWF to make better use of its material, human and spiritual resources.

2015 was particularly challenging in terms of financial sustainability. The uncoupling of the CHF from the EURO, dramatic budget cuts affecting some of our major financial partners, as well as the ever-increasing need for churches and related agencies to respond to emergencies have led to a decrease in the funds made available. Nonetheless, the LWF has been able to carry out its ongoing programs, some of which have even grown as a result of new partnerships that have been forged due to increased attention having been paid to looking beyond traditional partnership and funding models.

Rev. Dr Kaisamari Hintikka
Assistant General Secretary for Ecumenical Affairs; Director, Department for Theology and Public Witness

Social Transformation Through Concrete and Contextual Theology

DTPW multi-disciplinary conference discusses the interaction between theology, politics and economics

Martin Luther's existential quest for God and his strong longing to experience God's grace triggered a movement that deeply transformed both the church and society. Contrary to the theological mainstream of his time, Luther and his fellow reformers understood God's relation to this world in a new way. In light of this new epistemology, Luther reconfigured Christian theology, turning the liberating concept of justification by grace through faith into a core axiom of theological reflection. Luther re-discovered the gospel's living voice by reading the Bible and engaging with the spiritual, social, political and economic challenges of his time. As Luther articulated the gospel's transformative power, he argued that Christians need to review how they order the church and society, espe-

cially the spheres of education and economics. Luther encouraged his fellow Christians to live out their faith as mature, faithful and active citizens who strive to create accountable and just structures that put the concern for people in need on center stage. One of the characteristics of Lutheran theology is that it introduces distinctions that dismantle traditional hegemonic power structures: the differentiation between the spiritual and the worldly realms liberates each of these realms from the domination of the other and clearly demonstrates each realm's distinct contribution.

How do such Lutheran perspectives help us to analyze the current state of the church and society? Around Reformation day 2015, DTPW organized a global conference bringing together some seventy

theologians and scholars from thirty-three countries in order jointly to explore this question. They gathered at Windhoek, Namibia, to discuss the theme "Global Perspectives on the Reformation. Interactions of Theology, Politics and Economics." In his keynote presentation, LWF General Secretary, Rev. Dr Martin Junge, encouraged participants clearly to articulate theological insights and to help churches to challenge contemporary issues in a world increasingly marked by merciless competition, the struggle for survival and exclusion. According to Junge, "A world that never hears of grace must by necessity be graceless and will only seek salvation in merciless competition." Preaching at the opening worship, Dr Zephania Kameeta, Bishop emeritus and Namibian Minister

of Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare, emphasized that faith that does not renew and liberate other people, is not faith. Furthermore, he stated that the church's diaconal calling and mutual encouragement on the journey of faith must be integral parts of commemorating the Lutheran Reformation.

Lutheran and ecumenical speakers, together with keynote speakers such as the renowned professor of economics Tomáš Sedláček (Czech Republic), addressed the conference. In his presentation, "Economics an Orchestrated Orchestrator. Economics as New Global Religion," Sedláček raised a number of pertinent questions and opened up new perspectives with regard to the significance and influence of the economic sphere. Jaana Hallamaa (professor of social ethics, Finland) delivered a paper entitled "The Apple Tree under the Rainbow," in which she demonstrated how in Christian discipleship the *imitatio* Christi becomes the "economics of faith."

Bernd Oberdorfer (professor of systematic theology and ecumenics,

Germany) discussed the topic "Law and Gospel, Two Realms: Lutheran Distinctions, Revisited," and reminded the audience of the theological treasure and tools that Lutherans can draw upon

In the session on politics, Professor John Roth (US), a Mennonite, gave a profound theological reflection on the credible witness of the historical peace churches that call for "Just Peacemaking: Christian Pacifism as a Form of Political Responsibility." Credible witness today also needs critical engagement with the church's past. This was one of the important insights gained from Bishop Dr Tamás Fabiny's (Hungary) presentation on "Confessing the Past—Attempts in the Evangelical—Lutheran Church in Hungary to Evaluate the Role of the Lutheran Church during Dictatorships." The complex relationship between theology, economics and politics was creatively explored by Assistant Professor Mary Joy Philip (India/Canada) in her paper entitled "The Three Sisters' Garden: Living Together for the Common Good."

Panels and workshops were organized in such a way that different regions, denominations and theological disciplines interacted with one another. Daily, in-depth Bible studies invited participants to take a closer look at a specific biblical text and to draw new insights from it, while moderated group conversations proved to be an important space where theological concerns could be articulated in a participatory way. Six workshops deepened issues of basic concern to the Lutheran communion: gender justice; theological education; communion and mutual accountability; religion and development; climate justice; interreligious relations and public space.

This conference was one of the major events in the lead-up to the Twelfth Assembly that will take place in Windhoek, in May 2017. It contributed to developing a strong vision of the church's role in contemporary societies 500 years after the Reformation and highlighted the vital role of theological articulation. In their final message, the scholars identified four important features—contextual,



(left to right) Marjaana Toivainen and Mary Joy Philip at the Global Perspectives on the Reformation conference, Windhoek. Photo: LWF/I. Benesch

creative, critical and concrete—in order for theology to contribute to social transformation. The contextual element of theology includes different ways of hearing God’s Word, relating to God’s presence, reflecting on and addressing the world’s diverse needs and various ways of engaging with other faiths.

It was affirmed that the critical aspect of theology involves questioning certainties and challenging centers of power that shut down public space or exclude people and emphasized that critical theology acknowledges its own limits, biases and self-interests. Creative theology

is marked by the courage to think anew, offering an enhanced understanding of God’s will and nurturing dynamic liturgical and biblical resources. It offers practical solutions and alternatives to bring theology, politics and economics together to transform society. Participants agreed that for theology to be concrete it must speak and act against economic, gender and climate injustice; reform structures, policies and practices that support injustice; and equip pastors and laity to engage in the political and economic realms.

The conference participants encouraged the Lutheran communion

of churches to participate in the ongoing journey of reformation and called on the Communion Office as well as the member churches “to build capacity of its members for bringing politics, economics, and theology together in service of social transformation according to God’s vision of abundant life for all.” Furthermore, they advocated for a communion where “member churches may share with each other how they understand and practice the public role of theology, and will provide ongoing guidance in the practice of public theology.”

The Gift and Task of Communion

In 2015, the LWF working group on the self-understanding of the communion completed its work and the statement was sent to the member churches for further discussion and reflection. The seven-member international working group, appointed by the Meeting of Officers following the 2013 Council decision, was mandated to produce a document to facilitate and deepen the understanding among the LWF member churches of what it means to be a communion of churches. The reason for initiating this process was the changing dynamics and relationships among the member churches due to disagreements on certain ethical issues. These changes had implications on how the communion talked about bilateral relationships between the members and the multilateral relationship among the whole membership.

Based on biblical texts, the Lutheran confessional tradition and in dialogue with contextual issues, the working group first presented



individual papers from which such key thematic aspects as autonomy and accountability were drawn to form the structure of the document. The question was how the communion can strengthen internal global cohesion while, at the same time, individual churches needed to remain responsive and relevant to their particular regional circumstances and customs. Taking into account the global and local nature of being

church, the working group drew wisdom from Lutheran ecclesiological insights in light of the Reformation. Moreover, it was important that the ecclesiological self-understanding did not undermine the achievements of the bilateral dialogues with other communions of churches.

Special attention was paid to the concept of reconciled diversity, especially there where churches have to deal with disagreements.



Working group on the self-understanding of the communion.
Photo: LWF/I. Benesch

The LWF member churches do not see themselves as an association of like-minded individuals “but as a deep fellowship of a variety of churches of the Lutheran confessional tradition seeking common witness to the world” and diversity is “not on the way towards uniformity but rested in the reality of recognition and reconciliation of differences that bring both joy and challenge to the communion” (www.lutheranworld.org).

While the above affirmations were presented as characteristics of the gift dimension of the communion, making such a self-understanding

of the communion a visible reality remains the task of the church. The overall aim of the project is to help churches find a shared language in terms of their self-understanding as a communion churches and to discover how this can be lived out at the local and global levels. Such an undertaking does not pit autonomy against accountability. On the one hand, it calls on the member churches to exercise their responsibility to serve in ways that are accountable to the gospel and respond to local needs. On the other, it challenges them to understand their call as one

that extends to all Christians to whom they are also accountable. Such a mutual relationship at the contextual and catholic levels is a dialectical relationship between autonomy and accountability. Churches in true communion with God, Father, Son and the Holy Spirit have a universal self-awareness while being locally accountable.

Such relationships, nourished by trust, should also create space for mutual admonishment, all with the aim “to confirm our commitment to each other and to the gift of communion we have already received.”

Celebrating the Leadership of Women in the Ongoing Reformation

The project “Women on the Move: From Wittenberg to Windhoek” (WMWW) celebrates the leadership and participation of women in the ongoing Reformation 1517–2017. At its meeting, 22–25 February 2015, in Wittenberg, Germany, the international LWF working group on the WMWW process started mapping out women’s journeys in commemorating the 2017 Reformation anniversary, and defined the following four priority areas:

- Empowering women in leadership and decision-making positions
- Focusing on women doing theology
- Telling and collecting “Her-stories” in the process of commemorating the Reformation
- Implementing the LWF Gender Justice Policy.

Women theologians are the main agents when discussing relevant contextual issues and producing cross-cultural theological reflection. There where culture, religion and faith-based perspectives are closely intertwined, influence perceptions, mold behavior and are used to exclude women, it is crucial that a relevant theological discourse is formulated in order to resist exclusion. This discourse should provide a prophetic voice that articulates the struggles for dignity and justice and promotes life in its fullness for all—women and men.

The WICAS regional women’s networks, comprised of women officially designated as contacts of the member churches, serves as a platform to discuss gender from the biblical and theological perspectives. In order to plan strategic actions and initiatives to be implemented in the women’s network, the global working

group accompanying the WMWW process, through the WICAS regional women’s network, actively leads global and regional initiatives.

The network collects “Her-stories” that seek to empower and encourage women in their struggle to achieve gender justice and advocate on behalf of women’s citizenship. Stories of women who played crucial roles during the Reformation or who have been agents in their communities are being uncovered and efforts are underway to make visible the active participation of women in LWF decision-making processes. Postcards of women reformers are available for use in the network (www.lutheranworld.org/content/resource-women-move-postcards).



de esta semana preguntado a
su día y cuántos lo que
quiere la familia

Ore por un amigo(a)
semana

Orar todos los días
despertarte, en el
la comida y antes

Joy, Repentance and Commitment Underpin Lutheran–Catholic Common Prayer

The Common Prayer, From Conflict to Communion, Lutheran-Catholic Common Commemoration of the Reformation in 2017, developed by the joint liturgical task force of the Lutheran–Catholic Study Commission on Unity of the Lutheran World Federation and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU), was finalized at the end of 2015. It is based on the report, *From Conflict to Communion: Lutheran-Catholic Common Commemoration of the Reformation in 2017*, and calls the Catholic and Lutheran communities to joint prayer on the occasion of the common commemoration of 500 years of Reformation. In the report, published in 2013, the two church bodies together describe for the first time the history and intentions of the sixteenth-century Reformation. The *Common Prayer* is a practical guide

for a common worship at the joint Catholic-Lutheran commemoration of 500 years of the Reformation. It is based on three main themes: (1) Catholics and Lutherans share in the joy over the positive elements of the Reformation, namely to live from the gospel of Jesus Christ in its freedom and certainty. (2) They are deeply grateful for the gifts they have received throughout the fifty years of joint dialogue, while confessing that their inability to solve theological disputes have over decades led to violence and human suffering as well as to the further division of the church. (3) Because of their shared history, Catholic and Lutherans commit themselves to joint witness and service in the world.

The *Common Prayer* offers suggestions as to how Catholic and Lutherans should preside and read

together at a common prayer service. Examples of hymns and songs from a variety of multicultural contexts are provided, as are biblical and confessional readings that reflect mutual joy and repentance, and the desire together to serve in and bear witness to the world. It includes materials that can be adapted to the local liturgical and musical traditions of the two Christian traditions. The *Common Prayer* can be celebrated at different levels, ranging from the global to regional and local. In October 2016, the global celebration of the *Common Prayer* will take place in Lund, Sweden, in the presence of the LWF leadership and Pope Francis.

The LWF and the PCPCU invite the Lutheran churches and Catholic bishops' conferences across the world to make use of the jointly-

Common Prayer

developed *Common Prayer* to prepare commemorations for the 500 years of the Reformation in 2017. In their joint letter presenting the *Common Prayer* to Lutheran and Catholic church leaders as well as local churches, Martin Junge, General Secretary of the LWF, and Kurt Cardinal Koch, president of PCPCU,

reminded church leaders of the fact that the year 2017 not only marks the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, but also fifty years of global ecumenical dialogue between Catholics and Lutherans. Being preceded by the *Joint Declaration of Doctrine of Justification* (JDDJ), both the document *From Conflict to Communion* as well

as the jointly developed *Common Prayer* are important outcomes of this ecumenical dialogue.

The Common Prayer is available online at www.lutheranworld.org/content/joint-common-prayer-lutheran-catholic-common-commemoration-reformation-2017.

Lutheran—Catholic Common Commemoration of the Reformation in 2017

Local to Global

Strengthening Advocacy Efforts for Human Rights and Promoting Gender Justice

The Office for International Affairs and Human Rights (OIAHR) represents the voice of the LWF member churches and country programs at the United Nations (UN) and other international forums in Geneva. With its Local-to-Global (L2G) advocacy the LWF seeks to effect change on the ground. In 2015, the LWF's significantly increased L2G engagement with the UN human rights system resulted in concrete outcomes for local communities affected by human rights violations. The reason for this success was that the LWF strategically targeted specific UN human rights mechanisms (Universal Periodic Review, UPR), produced reliable reports and brought local advocates to lobby at the UN in Geneva.

The LWF supported local representatives from Myanmar, Nepal and Mozambique in their submission of UPR reports and lobbying the UN member states to consider their recommendations. As a result,

LWF–Myanmar's recommendations on violence against women, land registration and birth registration were included in the final official UN UPR report for Myanmar. In the case of Nepal, the LWF's recommendations on caste-based discrimination, inclusive education and disaster risk reduction were included in the final official UN UPR report for Nepal. Similarly, in Mozambique, the LWF coordinated sixty civil society organizations to produce and submit a joint parallel UPR report. This report was cited forty-seven times in the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights' (OHCHR) summary NGOs report.

In addition to the engagement with the UPR mechanism, the LWF continued to amplify local voices at the UN Human Rights Council (HRC), either through organizing side events or by delivering oral statements during the HRC's sessions. In 2015, three side events were organized:

the first in collaboration with the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief; the second, "Harnessing Faith and Culture: Advancing Women's Rights and Responding to Violence" in cooperation with the Office for Women in Church and Society (WICAS); the third, "People of Faith for People in Need" in collaboration with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Islamic Relief Worldwide (IRW) and the International Council for Voluntary Agencies. Together with its ecumenical partners, the LWF organized an internal event on the impact of business activities on human rights and delivered several oral statements to the HRC such as on the "Right to Food," "Climate Change and Human Rights," and "Human Rights Situation of Roma Minorities Worldwide."

The LWF accompanies and supports its member churches, especially those suffering from human rights violations. OIAHR channels those



South Sudan CSOc UPR workshop.
LWF/O. Ojulu

grievances to relevant UN bodies for immediate action by the governments concerned. In 2015, OIAHR submitted urgent appeals to the UN Special Rapporteur (SR) on Human Rights Defenders and the SR on Freedom of Religion or Belief on behalf of and in solidarity with the churches in Colombia, Nepal and Indonesia.

As part the ACT Alliance Community of Practice on Human Rights in Development, the LWF continues to advocate for a vibrant, robust and independent civil society space as an essential element for the realization of sustainable development and respect for human rights and human dignity. In this respect, the LWF encourages its member churches to join hands with like-minded civil society organizations to create and protect civil society space.

2015 was also an important year for the LWF's climate change advocacy work in relation to the COP21 climate summit in Paris. Through the "Fast for the Climate" campaign, the LWF promoted greater ecumenical and interfaith cooperation, both within France and internationally.

The LWF helped influence both the top UN climate leadership and the French presidency. At the COP21 climate summit in Paris, the LWF was again represented by a youth delegation, underlining the generational justice aspects of climate change.

In terms of advocacy, gender justice, grounded in a faith-based perspective, needs to be reaffirmed in a specific way. In 2015, DTPW, through WICAS, focused on two main goals: (1) to build capacity among member churches and other FBOs to use the UN mechanisms at the local and global levels and, (2) to provide multiple spaces for reflection and action on women's human rights and the role of religious leaders and faith communities in this endeavor.

WICAS, in collaboration with the OIAHR, the Department for World Service (DWS) and ecumenical partners, conducted a training in women's human rights advocacy for FBOs in Geneva. Twenty-four participants from eighteen countries were trained in the effective use of such UN mechanisms as the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Dis-

crimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) and the UN Human Rights Council (HRC), in order to strengthen their efforts to promote gender justice.

In their feedback, several participants noted the concrete ways in which the training had enhanced and strengthened their commitment. In the DRC, a woman pastor from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Congo initiated a campaign to encourage women to vote in local and district elections in the Katanga region. Another woman joined an initiative targeting the National Assembly of Deputies that obtained 200,000 signatures to revise article 13 of the electoral law which discriminates against women.

One of the Nepalese participants reported that he was now better equipped to address the issue of equal property rights for women, land rights for landless tenants and women in his country, while a participant from Uganda shared that the training had enabled him to participate in the UPR process in 2015 on behalf of his organization.

“Women’s rights and the impact of religious beliefs on women’s lives, which we analyzed during the training, came true right in front of my eyes. In order to help you need first to understand!” This powerful testimony of a Finnish participant describes how the training had equipped her to play her part in the current migrant crisis.

In light of the positive and encouraging evaluation from participants and partners, DTPW will repeat the training in July 2016, in Geneva.

With regard to the the need to raise awareness about the role of faith

in the advancement of women’s human rights, WICAS is active in several ecumenical and interreligious platforms. During the 29th Human Rights Council, WICAS, in collaboration with OIAHR, UNAIDS, IRW, WCC and YWCA, drew attention to this concern. A side event, “Harnessing Faith and Culture: Advancing Women’s Rights and Responding to Violence,” was organized and an oral statement denouncing violence against women and the use of religious teachings to justify such delivered. The statement highlights faith as a powerful resource to address gender-based violence.

The campaign “Sixteen Days of Activism to Overcome Gender-based Violence” is another example of advocacy highlighting faith and gender justice. Under the slogan “Girls with Power and Dignity,” and with the support of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the participation of ecumenical and interreligious partners, WICAS led a campaign to end child marriage and to promote equal access to education for girls and women worldwide. Further information at **www.genderjustice-interfaith.net**

Publications

Religious Plurality and the Public Space. Joint Christian-Muslim Theological Reflections, LWF Studies 2015/1, edited by Simone Sinn, Mouhanad Khorchide and Dina El Omari

Religious plurality is a vital element of many societies across the globe. Different visions of life and religious commitment not only shape people's private lives but have an intrinsic public dimension. Societies need to find ways to acknowledge and deal with this diversity in the public space. Religious communities and theologians are challenged to interpret their own traditions in ways that enable the constructive engagement with religious plurality. In this volume, Christian and Muslim scholars from different parts of the world together explore the meaning of public space. In relation to their contexts, they examine how public space can be understood as a shared space and discuss the meaning of secularity in plural societies.

To All the Nations. Lutheran Hermeneutics and the Gospel of Matthew LWF Studies 2015/2, edited by Kenneth Mtata and Craig Koester

In his pastoral and theological reflections, Martin Luther always sought faithfully to discern the Word of God from the Scriptures. Luther drew on the Gospel of Matthew when developing edifying sermons as well as teasing out valuable ethical insights for the Christian engagement in society. While his immediate audience was in Wittenberg, the Gospel of Matthew has continued to be a resource for the church's mission. In this collection of essays, internationally renowned theologians reflect on the ongoing reception of the Gospel of Matthew from the Reformation until today, and how, in light of the Lutheran interpretive traditions, it remains a valuable resource for the church as it seeks to respond to contemporary concerns in its mission to the whole world.

The Self-Understanding of the Lutheran Communion. A Study Document

As the Lutheran communion journeys towards the Reformation anniversary in 2017, the LWF wants to attest to what it means to be an ecclesial communion from a Lutheran perspective. One of the phrases that has become a hallmark of Lutheran ecclesiology is "unity in reconciled diversity." At all times and in every place, churches discern how faithfully to live out the message of the gospel in their contexts. As part of this process, they are called to review and examine cultural and socio-ethical paradigms in light of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Careful responses to the particular contexts are an important aspect of credibly communicating the message of the gospel. At the same time, the mutual accountability of churches in different contexts is part of their commitment to the catholicity of the church of Jesus Christ.

As follow-up to the LWF Council Meeting in June 2015, the LWF General Secretary invites member churches to a study process on the significance of the Lutheran communion for the LWF member churches. The study document “The Self-Understanding of the Lutheran Communion” was elaborated by a working group, in collaboration with the LWF regions and approved by the LWF Council this year.

Embarking on the Journey of Interreligious Dialogue,
author, Jennifer Lewis

The Lutheran World Federation is firmly committed to promoting interreligious dialogue. In a world, marked by division and strife also among religious communities, the bringing together of people of different faiths to deepen the mutual understanding of and joint commitment to issues of shared concern constitutes a strong public witness. Over the last decades, the LWF has published a number of substantial theological studies in the area of interreligious relations. During the summer of 2015, Jennifer Lewis, a student of

theology at Princeton Theological Seminary, studied a number of these publications in order to gather insights that will be inspiring and thought-provoking for a wider audience. This booklet provides a taste of the wealth of expertise the LWF has gathered in this field.

Liberated by God's Grace. 2017—500 Years of Reformation,
edited by Anne Burghardt

In these four booklets, theologians from all parts of the world reflect on the main theme and three sub-themes (Liberated by God's Grace: Salvation—Not for Sale; Human Beings—Not for Sale; Creation—Not for Sale) of the Lutheran World Federation's commemoration of the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation. This collection of essays provides profound insights into the crucial issues and challenges daily faced by the members of the worldwide Lutheran communion in very diverse contexts. The theological concept of justification by God's grace and its consequences for different dimensions of life serve as the main guiding principles for the essays, each

one of which is accompanied by three questions that invite to further contextual reflection on the subject

Religious Identity and Renewal in the Twenty-first Century: Jewish, Christian and Muslim Explorations,
LW Documentation 60, edited by Simone Sinn and Michael Trice

Religions carry strong visions of renewal and thereby have the potential to trigger dynamics of change in all spheres of human life. Religions have contributed to societal transformation and processes of renewal spark intensive theological debates. The renewal of religious identity is informed by how religious communities interpret their traditions and past, present, and future challenges to themselves, society and the world at large. How do religious communities understand their own resources and criteria for renewal in the twenty-first century? In this publication, Jewish, Christian and Muslim scholars analyze and reflect on the meaning and dynamics of religious renewal and explore the meaning of religious renewal across religious traditions.

Finance and Administration

At the beginning of 2015, DTPW was staffed by thirteen dedicated team members. At the end of February, we said goodbye to Rev. Rebecca Ruggaber, Secretary for Liturgy and Worship, who had been seconded by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Wurttemberg for a period of one year. In August, Ms Marta Spangler, intern in the Office for International Affairs and Human Rights (OIAHR) completed her one-year assignment with the department.

Because of the budgetary implications of the strong Swiss Franc, the department was unable to hire a new intern, thereby breaking with a long tradition.

In September, the department welcomed Mr Emmanuel Gore as Advocacy Consultant Officer in OIAHR. His position is funded by Bread for the World, Church of Sweden and The Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission through the Department for World Service (DWS), but positioned in DTPW because of

DTPW
welcomes
three new
colleagues

(left to right)
Emmanuel Gore,
Martin Kopp,
Dirk Lange



the strong connection to the advocacy program of OIAHR.

The Union des Églises protestantes d'Alsace et de Lorraine seconded one of its members, Mr Martin Kopp, to work on a part-time basis with the LWF climate advocacy program. This arrangement will continue in the first part of 2016.

The LWF's two assistant general secretaries are located in the DTPW. Twenty-five percent of the Director's time is dedicated to her role as Assistant General Secretary for Ecumenical Relations and twenty-five percent of the Assistant General Secretary for International Affairs and Human

Right's time is allocated to matters directly related to the Office of the General Secretary.

DTPW has continued to work in close cooperation with the Institute for Ecumenical Research at Strasbourg (IER), notably with regard to ecumenical dialogues with the Mennonite, Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches. In 2015, the IER and DTPW organized a joint staff meeting to strengthen the cooperation between the two institutions. DTPW staff took part in the seminars organized by the Luther-Zentrum Wittenberg in cooperation with IER. The contribution of IER staff as

Our Donor Partners in 2015 (in Euro)

Member Churches and Related Agencies

Bread for the World (Brot für die Welt)	30,000	1.32%
Church of Sweden	392,926	17.34%
Church of Norway	21,467	0.95%
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria	60,000	2.65%
Canadian Lutheran World Relief	10,492	0.46%
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland	150,000	6.62%
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada	19,017	0.84%
Finn Church Aid	80,000	3.53%
Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission	45,000	1.99%
German National Committee Hauptausschuss	530,785	23.42%
Norwegian Church Aid	98,740	4.36%
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America	228,184	10.07%
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Wurttemberg	2,500	0.11%
Evangelisches Missionswerk	20,000	0.88%
Subtotal	1,689,111	74.53%

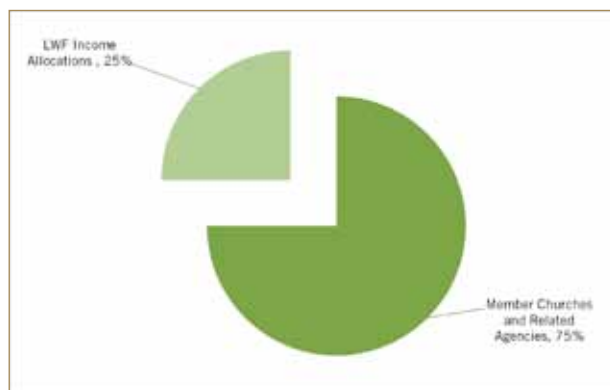
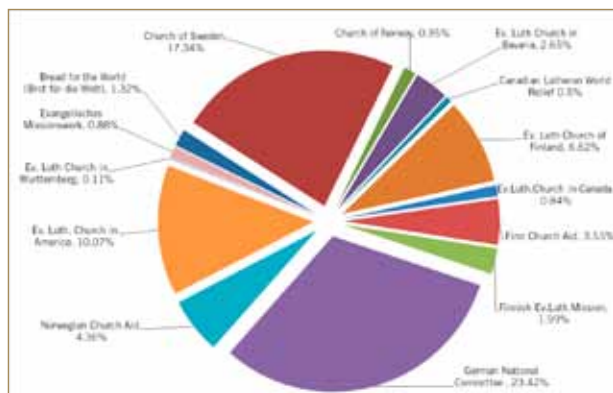
Balance from 2014	8,411	0.37%
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Other income

Other Income	13,818	0.61%
Web Donors		0.00%
LWF Employees	2,792	0.12%
Sub Total	16,610	0.73%

LWF Income Allocations

Membership Fees	310,625	13.71%
Investments and Exchange Gains	125,419	5.53%
LWF CO ₂ Fund	42,344	1.87%
LWS Endowment Fund	73,725	3.25%
Subtotal	552,113	24.36%
Total Income 2015	2,266,245	100.00%



consultants in the various dialogue commissions continues to result in a mutually beneficial and enriching working relationship.

In order to prepare for one of the major Reformation anniversary related events, the ecumenical commemoration event, which will take

place in Lund in October 2016, the LWF needed additional staff capacity. For this purpose, a contract was made in January 2015 with

Luther Seminary at St Paul, Min., for Professor Dirk Lange to work as the coordinator for this event on a part-time basis.

The department’s total income in 2015 was Euros 2,266,245 with the total expenditures amounting to Euros 2,229,896. This leaves DTPW with a surplus for the year of EUR 36,349. The overall funding from the member churches and related agencies increased by 18.27 percent over the previous year. One of the reasons for this increase was the conference on “Global Perspectives on the

Reformation. Interactions of Theology, Politics and Economics” that took place in Windhoek, Namibia. The conference was generously supported by old and new funding partners.

The German National Committee, Church of Sweden, ELCA Global Mission and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland continue to be the largest funding partners of the department.

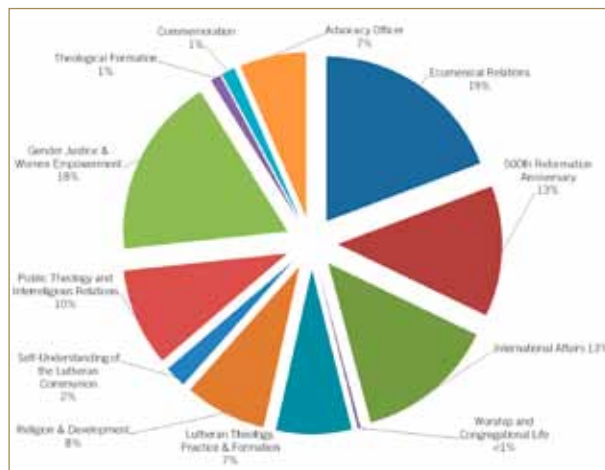
The position of Secretary for Ecumenical Relations continued to be co-financed by the Evangelical

Lutheran Church of Finland and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Bavaria and the position of Advocacy Officer continues to be funded by Church of Sweden and Canadian Lutheran World Relief.

Throughout 2015, DTPW has continued to nurture and solidify its relationship with its traditional funding partners as well to strengthen its capacity to identify new sources of funding. While discussions with the partners supporting the department’s programs have taken place with individual staff members, who

Our Programs 2015 (in Euro)

Ecumenical Relations	429,724	19%
500 th Reformation Anniversary	286,550	13%
International Affairs and Human Rights	306,225	14%
Worship and Congregational Life	5,380	0%
Lutheran Theology, Practice & Formation	165,241	7%
Religion & Development	179,918	8%
Self-Understanding of the Lutheran Communion	48,032	2%
Public Theology and Interreligious Relations	214,233	10%
Gender Justice & Women Empowerment	395,704	18%
Theological Formation	23,179	1%
Commemoration	30,000	1%
Advocacy Officer	145,710	7%
Total Program Expenditure 2015	2,229,896	100%



are best placed to discuss matters pertaining to program content, DTPW has been more strategic and intentional in approaching the partners at the departmental and organizational levels. One of the models of funding which has proved to be highly rewarding and successful is to partner with universities and theological institutions as well as other funding partners to cohost specific

events and contribute both in terms of finances and in kind.

In 2015, the University Aarhus, Denmark was a major sponsoring partner for the international hermeneutics conference and the Hong Kong interfaith event was supported by Areopagos, based in Oslo, Norway.

This form of cooperation has not only enhanced the public profile

of certain DTPW events but also enabled us significantly to reduce costs and to economize on staff time needed to prepare for international events. We hope, in the future, to explore other forms of cooperation in order to continue this promising development and further to strengthen our financial position.

Funding Partners 2015

Without you, we would not be operational. We would like to thank the member churches and our funding partners for their continued support and encouragement

and look forward to continuing our cooperation with you in the coming years.



Private donors

A Communion Strengthened in Worship and Ongoing Theological Discernment, Ecumenical Dialogue and Interfaith Collaboration



THE
LUTHERAN
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