LWF Consultation on Contemporary Mission in Global Christianity

Mission has been at the core of churches’ self-understanding and existence. Discussion on mission is becoming a main issue again in many churches due to changing contexts. There are many approaches to mission depending on history, social and religious contexts, as well as theological traditions. Since the common understanding of mission as Missio Dei some decades ago, churches have always wrestled with the question of what the holistic mission of the church is today. The Lutheran World Federation stands in a position to provide a platform for interaction and exchange between mission practitioners and experts, based on various experiences from local situations and global realities. What is contextual holistic mission?

One of priorities of LWF is to accompany member churches in growing in capacity for holistic mission and deepening relationships with each other and to meet the challenges they face in their context individually and together. Some years ago LWF published a significant document: “Mission In Context: Transformation, Reconciliation, Empowerment.” The WCC recently adopted the newest Mission Document: “Together towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes” But the context keeps changing; churches must keep on contemplating what the mission of the church is at every moment and in each place.

Examples abound.

• Some churches are surrounded by the neo Pentecostal model of mission, with proclamation as “the” mission. Their theology and practice is surrounded by neo-Pentecostal media and practice to which their members are more exposed than to their own churches.
• For some churches the goal of mission is numerical growth, but for others it is transformation of life. Are the two separable alternatives?
• Questions of mission in multi-religious realities beg for responses. Is the answer to stop mission? If not, how does it go?
• Christian majority churches are facing new challenges as secularism makes people have problems with God, religion or church; and congregations do not know how to deal with their new non-Christian neighbors who are actively practicing other faiths.
• What is contextual holistic mission of the church in countries where diakonia is done by the state?

Objective of the Consultation

At this moment when we are approaching the 500 years of reformation, it is crucial to once again look at the mission context of the now globalized reformation. The LWF Department for Mission and Development (DMD) will organize an “LWF Consultation on Contemporary Mission in Global Christianity.” One of the key insights that led to the reformation was Romans 1:16-17: “For I am not ashamed of the gospel; it is the power of God for salvation to
everyone who has faith…” With this conviction holistic mission has been done. It was the new discovery of the “gospel” that liberated Luther into reformation. We want to come together to share experiences, encourage each other and rediscover the calling to not be ashamed of the gospel because it is the power of God for salvation.

Goals:

- To explore the current mission contexts in different regions by way of exchange of experiences and stories and good practices (there will be one presentation per region)
- To enable exchange between mission practitioners in different regions in order to improve cooperation and for the sake of mission and unity.
- To contemplate on key challenges for mission work in different regions,
- To enable interaction and exchange among practitioners from different global contexts and possibilities of networking for future cooperation.

VENUE: Geneva, Ecumenical Center Main Hall.

We intend to bring together the following:

- Heads of Mission Agencies either belonging to or working with LWF member churches
- Heads of Departments of the LWF member churches responsible for holistic mission
- Other interested bodies supporting the work of LWF-DMD
- Youth and women participants in line with LWF policy of inclusion


PROGRAM

RESOURCE PERSONS: We are drawing resource persons from participants since they are all experienced experts in respective regions and fields.

LANGUAGE: Main language will be English; those who need other LWF languages (Spanish, French and German) will be assisted.

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