International Lutheran-Pentecostal
2016–2022 Dialogue Statement:

“The Spirit of the Lord Is Upon Me”

The Lutheran World Federation
and Pentecostal World Fellowship

International Lutheran-Pentecostal
2016–2022 Dialogue Statement:

"The Spirit of the Lord Is Upon Me"

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me to bring good news
to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

Luke 4:18–19

Christian Unity
Commission

THE
LUTHERAN
WORLD
FEDERATION

A Communion
of Churches

Editors: Dirk G. Lange, Pauline Mumia, Jean-Daniel Plüss, Sarah Hinlicky Wilson

Design and Layout: The Lutheran World Federation

Cover photo: LWF/Jotham Lee

Published by: The Lutheran World Federation
– A Communion of Churches
Route de Ferney 150
PO Box 2100
1211 Geneva 2
Switzerland

ISBN 978-2-940642-61-8

Contents

Part I: Identity

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me..."

Introduction

(1) At first glance, one might wonder why The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and the Pentecostal World Fellowship (PWF) would engage in ecumenical dialogue. On the surface, they appear to be so different that they would have little in common. Lutheran churches are confessional; Pentecostal churches are not. Generally speaking, Pentecostal worship is exuberant while Lutheran worship is more subdued. When we look more closely, however, we can find Lutheran churches such as the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus that are largely charismatic in practice, and we can find Pentecostal churches with a rich liturgical life, an episcopal structure, and a high view of the ordinances, such as the Church of God in Christ.

(2) Lutherans and Pentecostals share the same world, which means that they share many of the same problems and opportunities. Ours is a world facing changes and challenges of all kinds: millions migrating from one place to another; the global pandemic of COVID-19 and its aftermath; environmental issues; secularism, religious plurality, and in some places the abandonment of religion altogether; poverty and broken economic and governmental systems.

(3) As Pentecostals and Lutherans, together we confess Jesus Christ and his work as his Father's gracious and generous response to our sinfulness. Together we recognize the holy Scripture as the source of gospel, which we proclaim through word and deed in a compassionate manner by the power of the Holy Spirit.

(4) Therefore, recognizing this commonality, we also recognize that greater unity between our Christian families could provide strong hope for a world in crisis. Since both of our church families are concerned for the poor, greater unity could lead to increased cooperation in meeting their needs. Above all, disunity contradicts the desire that Jesus expressed in his prayer in John 17. So it is that we have committed ourselves to this quest to sustained dialogue by exploring together issues that may lead us to deeper unity in Christ.

(5) To guide us in this task, we listened together to Luke 4:18–19. When Jesus spoke in the synagogue in Nazareth, he began his sermon with words from the prophet Isaiah (Is. 61:1–2, Lk. 4:18–19). After rolling up the scroll and handing it back to the attendant, Jesus sat down. The people of Jesus' hometown waited expectantly to hear what he might have to say about it. He startled the congregation by announcing, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." During this first official round of the international dialogue between members of the Lutheran World Federation and the Pentecostal World Fellowship, these words spoken by Isaiah and Jesus have shaped our conversations and defined the scope of this dialogue.

(6) The foundation for this dialogue began in 1996 when Rev. Dr Gunnar Stålsett, who had just completed his tenure as LWF General Secretary, invited Dr Cecil M. Robeck to consider initiating a dialogue between Lutherans and Pentecostals. Due to transitions in leadership and pre-existing commitments, such as the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification, fulfillment of that dream had to wait. In the interim, Rev. Dr Sven Oppegaard, then Assistant General Secretary for Ecumenical Affairs at the LWF, kept the dream alive. In 2004, Rev. Dr Theodor Dieter and Rev. Dr Kenneth Appold of the Institute for Ecumenical Research in Strasbourg, France, invited a group of Pentecostals to explore the prospect of dialogue. Meeting in December 2004, this group proposed a five-year preliminary dialogue on the theme, "How Do We Encounter Christ?" Under the leadership of Rev. Dr Appold (Lutheran) and Dr Jean-Daniel Plüss (Pentecostal), the group met annually between 2005 and 2010, discussing how we encounter Christ (a) when we speak of the "pure gospel" (Lutherans) or the "full gospel" (Pentecostals), in (b) proclamation, (c) in the sacraments and ordinances, and (d) in the charisms. This "proto-dialogue" ultimately published a booklet titled *Lutherans and Pentecostals in Dialogue*.[1] The LWF provided official approval of a dialogue with Pentecostals following its Eleventh Assembly in 2010.

(7) Rev. Dr Walter Altmann (Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil) has served as the Lutheran Co-Chair, and Dr Jean-Daniel Plüss (Swiss Pentecostal Mission, Switzerland) has served as the Pentecostal Co-Chair, throughout our time together. In 2016 we were

[1] Lutherans and Pentecostals in Dialogue (Strasbourg, France: Institute for Ecumenical Research / Pasadena, CA, USA: The David J. Du Plessis Center for Christian Spirituality / Zürich, Switzerland: The European Pentecostal Charismatic Research Association, 2010), 84 pp.

hosted by Asia Pacific Theological Seminary in Baguio, Philippines, under the rubric of "Sent by the Spirit—Identity in Christ." In honor of the Reformation anniversary, our 2017 meeting took place in Wittenberg, Germany, which focused on the theme "God Has Anointed Me to Proclaim." In 2018 the dialogue met in Santiago, Chile, to discuss "Proclaiming Good News to the Poor." The Malagasy Lutheran Church in Antananarivo, Madagascar, hosted the 2019 dialogue meeting on the theme, "Proclaim Release to the Captives and Recovery of Sight to the Blind, to Let the Oppressed Go Free." Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, participants were unable to meet in person in 2020 and 2021, but through personal correspondence and Zoom meetings we worked to draft this report. Our fifth and final in-person meeting was hosted by Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California, United States of America (USA) in 2022 and finalized this Dialogue Statement.

Who We Are

(8) From the outset of our dialogue, we did not intend to engage in a basic exchange of information resulting in a comparative theological study. We have understood from the beginning that both Lutherans and Pentecostals find their true identity in Christ. Together we confess that we have a common understanding of the Trinity.[2] Together we confess that Jesus Christ is our Lord and Savior, which gives all that we say and do a Christocentric orientation. Together we also confess that the Holy Spirit is at work in our lives, in the church, and in the world. We recognize and confess the centrality of the word of God in our churches and in our lives. We both expect Christ's presence in our worship, and we both experience worship in all of its diversity as centrally formative of our Christian lives. We both understand the meaning of the gospel as salvation that God the Father bestows through Jesus Christ. We understand that we are sent out to serve the world in proclamation, diakonia, and mission. And we both seek to contextualize the gospel in diverse settings throughout the world. All of these confessions and understandings point to our unity in Christ.

[2] Although the overwhelming majority of Classical Pentecostals believe and confess the Holy Trinity, some Pentecostals, who share the same historic roots, are known as Oneness or Jesus' Name Pentecostals. They do not hold to the Trinitarian doctrine of God of the early church councils. Only Trinitarian Pentecostals are represented in this dialogue.

(9) Yet with all of these common confessions and understandings, we are different. The church by definition contains diversity. We have different histories. We have different church cultures. We prioritize our commitments in different ways. Sometimes we use words differently or fill them with different meanings. We want to understand one another better than we have in the past. As a result, at certain points in this document, we speak from our respective historical or ecclesial perspectives with the hope that we can grow together in our understanding of one another, as well as in our common life in Christ and in his church.

Lutherans: Identity

(10) Lutheranism began as a distinct movement within the Western church in the sixteenth century. Augustinian friar Martin Luther, in no way intending to start a new church, raised questions about late medieval teaching and practice. While he quickly gained supporters in his native Germany and regions of northern and central Europe, he also gained many enemies. His teachings led to his eventual excommunication by the papacy (1521). In the years that followed, Luther translated the Bible into German, composed hymns, model sermons, and devotional materials, and wrote Catechisms that have profoundly shaped Lutheran spirituality ever since. Together with many colleagues, Luther reformed church practices, notably permitting clergy to marry and allowing the laity to receive the cup at communion. Efforts to resolve the conflict between Luther's supporters and opponents were also pursued throughout the 1520s and culminated in the presentation of the Augsburg Confession in 1530 at the Diet of Augsburg. However, this effort did not achieve consensus. As a result, the Lutheran confessing movement (at the time simply called *evangelisch* or "evangelical") and those who remained within the papal church developed along different trajectories thereafter. Tragically, this conflict within the church led to a division into multiple mutually exclusive churches, as well as political partisanship and outright war. In the centuries to come, Lutheranism spread throughout Europe and traveled to every other continent by means of immigration and mission.

(11) While Lutherans recognized each other and studied with each other across national boundaries, formal efforts toward global fellowship arose only in the twentieth century, first with the Lutheran World Convention (1923–1947) and then in 1947 with the establishment of the LWF. In 1984 at its Seventh Assembly in Budapest, Hungary,

the LWF established full altar and pulpit fellowship among its member churches. In 1990 at the Eighth Assembly in Curitiba, Brazil, the LWF redefined its status in this way: "The Lutheran World Federation is a communion of churches which confess the triune God, agree in the proclamation of the word of God and are united in pulpit and altar fellowship" (LWF Constitution III.1). Today the LWF is comprised of 149 churches with a membership of 77 million people from 99 countries.[3]

Lutherans: Doctrine

(12) Lutherans self-identify confessionally, meaning that they are not identified by a particular church structure, liturgy, or experience, but rather by their teaching. The Scripture is the *norma normans*—that is, the chief and final judge of all Christian teaching and practice. Lutherans also teach and confess the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds. They ascribe special and binding importance to the Lutheran Confessions of the sixteenth century. LWF member churches accept Martin Luther's Small Catechism (1529) and the Augsburg Confession (1530) as their doctrinal standard; most LWF member churches additionally recognize the entire Book of Concord (1580). Luther's other theological, devotional, and exegetical writings have been tremendously important as well, along with his hymns. Lutheran churches ever since have continued to engage all these texts, interpreting them for their varied settings around the world and striving to teach according to them.

(13) Among typical Lutheran emphases, in the context of this dialogue we wish to highlight in particular the following: confession of God the Holy Trinity; that Jesus Christ, truly human and truly divine, is both Savior and Lord; salvation as a purely gracious gift of God; justification by faith, which is a gift of the Holy Spirit and a "living, busy, active, mighty thing,"[4] and from which good works spring; the gracious and efficacious action of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper; that pure preaching of the gospel and the right administration of the sacraments are sufficient for the unity of the church; the necessity of an ordered, public ministry; the distinction between Law and gospel; and the freedom of the Christian.

[3] https://www.lutheranworld.org/content/member-churches.

[4] Martin Luther, "Preface to the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans," in Luther's Works vol. 35 (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1960), 370.

Lutherans: Experience

(14) Although Lutherans identify themselves by their confessional teaching, this does not mean that they reject, deny, or disdain experience. Indeed, there are many and rich experiences that are typical of Lutheran practice: the hearing and reading of Scripture, hearing the word preached in sermons, the reception of the sacraments, prayer, singing, the forgiveness of sins, koinonia, vocational calling, and faith itself. Furthermore, Pietist and charismatic movements within Lutheranism have particularly sought to enrich spiritual experience.

(15) It is true, however, that Lutherans will often approach experience with caution. This itself may be said to be the result of their historical *experience* of the dangers the church runs when it accumulates practices and teachings without sufficient theological discernment. Further, Lutherans seek to test any given experience not only against Scripture, creeds, and confessions, but also against the experience of other persons, the congregation, the synod or national assembly, the global communion of the LWF, and the church throughout its two thousand-year journey. Following Luther's terminology in the Heidelberg Disputation, many Lutherans appeal to "the theology of the cross" as a criterion for spiritual discernment.

(16) Luther comments: "This life, therefore, is not godliness but the process of becoming godly, not health but getting well, not being but becoming, not rest but exercise. We are not now what we shall be, but we are on the way. The process is not yet finished, but it is actively going on. This is not the goal but it is the right road. At present, everything does not gleam and sparkle, but everything is being cleansed."[5]

Pentecostals: Identity

(17) The Pentecostal team represents Classical Pentecostals, whose roots go back to the beginning of the twentieth century. The best-known revival that gave rise to global Pentecostalism took place in 1906 at the Azusa Street Mission in Los Angeles, California, USA, itself foreshadowed by an experience of the outpouring of the Spirit in Topeka, Kansas, USA, in 1901. Alongside those revivals, there are recorded outpourings of Spirit at the turn of the twentieth century in

[5] Martin Luther, "Defense and Explanation of the All the Articles," in *Luther's Works* vol. 32 (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1958), 24.

India and elsewhere. Classical Pentecostals are found in all global contexts and number around 270 million. The diversity among them is considerable, which is why some people prefer to use the plural term "Pentecostalisms." Alongside Classical Pentecostals, scholars identify two other related church groups. The first is the Charismatic Renewal, made up of members of historically older churches whose worship and practice is akin to those of Pentecostals. The second is the Neo-Charismatic movement, which includes all other charismatically-oriented Christian groups and churches that are not part of either Classical Pentecostals or Charismatics in historic churches. The total number of these three groups amounts to more than 600 million worldwide.

Pentecostals: Experience

(18) Pentecostal identity, differing from that of churches whose origins lie farther back in history, is not based primarily on confessions, doctrinal formulae, or a united structure, but rather on a particular type of spiritual or charismatic experience, which is accompanied by the bestowal of spiritual gifts or charisms (1 Cor. 12:4–11 and 28; Rom. 12:4–8; Eph. 4:11–13). These gifts include healing, exorcism, and prophecy, though to outside observers the most spectacular and controversial gift is speaking in tongues or glossolalia. Accordingly, for Pentecostals, experience came first, and doctrine followed, which Pentecostals understand to reflect the reality of the earliest period of the church.

(19) Contrary to popular misunderstandings, Pentecostal spirituality has never focused or fixated on the Holy Spirit alone. Rather, it focuses on Jesus Christ. Pentecostals see their own experiences correlating with the narratives of the New Testament, particularly those in the gospels and Acts in which Jesus Christ figures prominently as savior, healer, and helper in human need. Out of that experience-based, biblically-informed reflection process there has emerged what has been called the "Full gospel" or "Foursquare gospel" or "Fivefold gospel" (depending on how much emphasis is given to sanctification). This means that, in the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ is continuing the ministry that he was doing in biblical times in his various roles as:

a. Savior who pronounces forgiveness of sins and justifies by faith.
b. Sanctifier who cleanses a justified life on the way toward holiness and purity. Reflecting the legacy of Holiness movements, all Pentecostals affirm holiness in the Christian life.

c. Healer who delivers from illness, both physical and mental, and liberates from the power of evil spirits.
d. Baptizer with the Spirit who empowers Christians for witness and service by endowing with diverse spiritual gifts.
e. Soon-Coming King whose imminent return is a powerful catalyst for urgency in mission, proclamation, and service.

Pentecostals: Doctrine

(20) Pentecostal identity is based upon charismatic spirituality rather than formally stated confessions, but that is not to say that doctrine plays no role in the movement. From their earliest days, Pentecostals have drafted various types of statements, reflecting on the meaning, significance, and implications of their experience and faith as they drew inspiration from their ecclesial traditions of origin. There was a need to test, judge, and discern whether proposed teachings were in keeping with the biblical witness and certain aspects of historical teaching.

(21) Even when Pentecostals saw it necessary to give doctrinal form to their beliefs, particularly those that were distinctive—like Spirit baptism, glossolalia, healing, and other charisms—they remained suspicious of doctrinal or theological formulae, lest they become rigid and lifeless. Their apparent neglect of creeds and their arguments against their inclusion rarely had anything to do with the content. What worried Pentecostals was what they perceived as the lack of personal faith among believers in older traditions that retained the creeds. However, there is in principle nothing in Pentecostal doctrine that is not fully compatible with the creeds of the early church and its councils.

(22) In keeping with their practically- and biblically-oriented charismatic spirituality and ministry, most Pentecostal pastors and leaders to date have received little or no formal theological education and minimal ministerial training. A number of highly educated academic Pentecostal pastors and theologians is emerging and actively contributing to a growing body of serious Pentecostal theology.

Conclusion

(23) We have outlined some aspects of our two church families. The reader may have noticed that the respective ordering of the subsections

that cover identity, experience, and doctrine is different. Lutherans usually begin with doctrine before speaking of experience, whereas as Pentecostals usually begin with experience before moving on to doctrine. However, despite this difference in framing, the content of our identities overlaps in many areas. Together we confess God the Holy Trinity. We believe in Jesus Christ, truly human and truly divine, who is our Savior and Lord. We hold that salvation is a purely gracious and free gift of God, and that sinners are justified by faith, which sets us free and sends us out into the world to serve. We interpret our experiences through holy Scripture and with the help of both the local and the global church. It is in the joyful recognition of these convergences in our Christian faith and practice that we can proceed to deeper exploration of the topics that follow.

Part II: Mission and Proclamation

"…he has anointed me to bring good news…"

The Trinitarian Mission of Salvation

(24) Together we believe that God has a mission (*missio Dei*). This mission emanates from the heart of God, and the Trinity is a paradigm for a holistic understanding of this mission. This holistic mission includes: a) care for creation, as represented by the Father's command in Genesis 1:28, b) love for others, as represented by the Son's command in John 13:34–35, and c) the proclamation of the gospel, as represented by the outpouring of the Spirit upon the apostles in Acts 1–2. In the power of the Holy Spirit, the church is called to a transforming and missionary discipleship. The ministry of Jesus on earth is the model for the church as it fulfills the divine mission. Just as Jesus was anointed to proclaim the Good News (Lk. 4:18) on earth, the church has the same mission. It is a proclamation to be carried out through word and deed.

(25) As Christians we respond in multiple ways to God's life-giving mission on earth. Equipped by the Holy Spirit, we are encouraged to build a community of hope wherever the gospel is shared and lived across the globe. Whether presented by direct evangelism or demonstrated in acts of love, the message of the gospel is always the same. This proclamation is at the very center of what the church is called to do: "All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation" (2 Cor. 5:18–19). Our proclamation is therefore Christ-centered and scripturally based. After all, it is Christ who commissions us to proclaim the gospel and Scripture gives us the content of our proclamation of that gospel. In proclaiming this message, we always hope that the conversion of human subjects will take place, resulting in their transformation, reconciliation, and empowerment. The church's goal is the salvation of the world to the glory of the triune God.

Proclamation in Word

(26) The words of the prophet Isaiah, read and claimed by Jesus for his own ministry (Lk. 4:18), provide a template for the Christian ministry: we have been called and empowered to bring that Good News to others. This mandate comes through both the words of Jesus (Mt. 28:19–20) and the teaching of the apostles (2 Tim. 2:1–2).

(27) The Good News is the wordof God, the incarnate Jesus Christ, as witnessed by the Scripture. Christ himself is the message that God has provided the way of salvation, that sin can be forgiven, and that Jesus is the one through whom salvation is given and received: the power of God unto salvation given without cost to all who receive it (Rom. 1:16). It is God's desire that everyone should be saved (1 Tim. 2:4). The Good News frees us from captivity to sin, death, the devil, and the powers and principalities, and so opens up a new and abundant life for us. God's saving and transforming acts also reach beyond humankind and include all creation (Gen. 2:7; Jn. 3:8, 20:22; Rom. 8:18–22).

(28) Proclamation takes place in various ways. Creation declares the glory of God (Ps. 19:1). A primary way we proclaim the Good News is through our lives and actions. We are also encouraged to speak to others of this message (Rom. 10:13–15). Proclamation takes place from the pulpit, in evangelistic meetings, through personal testimony, in Bible studies, in small groups, in songs and music, and in all kinds of personal encounters. All who are part of the church have the joy, the right, and the obligation to share with others the Good News of Jesus Christ. In short, we have been called to be Christ's witnesses before the world (Acts 1:8). Some followers of Jesus have been specially gifted and called to proclaim the Good News (Eph. 4:11), but all who are followers of Jesus Christ have the privilege of sharing the Good News by bearing witness to their encounter with him and its effects upon their lives. The encounter with God transforms our lives, moving us from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light (Col. 1:13–14) and giving us an abundance of life (Jn. 10:10).

(29) Whenever we celebrate baptism and the Lord's Supper, we live as a community that is called into fellowship with our Lord and Savior. In baptism we die and rise with Christ (Rom. 6:3–11) and in the Lord's Supper, eating the bread and drinking the cup, we proclaim the Lord's death till he comes (1 Cor. 11:26). Any action or deed that

is freely offered to others in the light of God's love and in the power of His Spirit may communicate the Good News of Jesus Christ (Mt. 25:34–36). Thus, the message of the gospel is proclaimed first through the word of God in Scripture, then in the words of those who follow Jesus and the godly lives that they live (Mt. 5:13–15), and in the various actions or deeds they perform as they seek the welfare of all human beings and the earth.

Proclamation in Deed

(30) We affirm that the biblical mandate of proclamation must be translated into real-time engagement in acts of love and works of mercy within the community, so that the message we proclaim would remain credible and relevant.

(31) One way proclamation in action is accomplished is through our lives offered up to God, reflecting the ongoing transformation that takes place in the minds, hearts, and lives of all who place their faith in Jesus Christ (Rom. 12:1–2). What we do is as important as what we say. The proclamation of the gospel, therefore, requires living our lives consistently with the Good News we have received.

(32) Furthermore, in our deeds, the interrelation between God's commandments to care for the world, love our neighbor, and proclaim the gospel must constantly be kept in mind. Our mission practice must be carried out in solidarity with people who suffer and also address the root causes of injustice and oppression. In this way we are not only hearers of the word but also doers (Jas. 1:22). Together we affirm that people living in poverty and on the margins across the globe are not only recipients but also agents of mission, whose voices and lives need to be respected and heard in our respective churches.

(33) Works of mercy begin with respect for human dignity, based not on generic philosophical tenets but as a call from God: "Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will repay him for his deed" (Prov. 19:17). As we listen faithfully to Scripture, so also we listen attentively to the cries and struggles of the people around us, all of them created in the image of God. Participation in God's mission calls every community to look beyond its own comfort zones and walls in order to embrace fully its missional commitment in the world. Connecting with the struggles of the community is a vital

part of understanding the relevance of the gospel of Christ and our mandate to proclaim it. For this reason we agree that faith ought to be reflected in actions of mercy practiced within the community and beyond, as in the example of Tabitha in Acts 9:36.

(34) Hence, there is always an opportunity waiting for those who want to follow Jesus' example and offer their service in love through actions of mercy. Further, it ought to be noted that the cross presupposes the fact that the peace that the world receives from Christ cannot be fully enjoyed if some people are still left unhealed and suffering. The pain of the world should therefore connect Christians with all of God's creation. In this way Christian proclamation in word and Christian mercy in deed go hand in hand.

* * *

Case Studies in Proclamation

The Lutheran commitment to proclaiming the word of God in the vernacular is beautifully exemplified by nineteenth-century evangelist-translators Onesimos Nesib and Aster Ganno of Ethiopia. Both were captured and enslaved in their youth; later, when they were freed, they became Christian and worked with Swedish missions in Ethiopia and Eritrea. While Onesimos had a burning passion to share the gospel with his compatriots, he had been kidnapped from his homeland at such an early age that his Oromo vocabulary was rather poor. Aster, by contrast, not only had a larger vocabulary but a phenomenal memory, compiling a grammar and a fifteen-thousand word dictionary of Oromo, as well as five hundred songs, tales, riddles, and proverbs from the Oromo. Together, Onesimos and Aster translated the entire Bible into Oromo for the first time, which was published in 1899. They dedicated the rest of their lives to preaching missions and setting up schools for literacy, giving Oromos their written language and the Good News together.

Proclaiming the Good News and teaching the word of God go together in Pentecostal settings, as an example from Papua New Guinea shows. Especially in the remote areas, evangelism began with telling gospel stories presenting the message of salvation. Missionaries started schools to teach the Papuans to read and write. Pentecostals were also involved in the translation of the Bible into the many indigenous languages of Papua New Guinea. In 1986, the Assemblies of God established the International

Correspondence Institute (now Global University) that within two years rose to an enrollment of 30,000. The program began with an evangelistically-oriented course called "The Great Question of Life," which was followed by a catechetical course called "Highlights in the Life of Christ" and "Your Helpful Friend" about the Holy Spirit. "The Christian Life Series" is a discipleship course, and later a leadership program was initiated called "The Christian Service Series." The basic courses have been administered free of charge. Today Global University continues to offer evangelistic and discipleship courses, and at the same time it has expanded into college-level and post-graduate education for ministers.

* * *

Common Concerns and Challenges

(35) Building on our shared agreement on the Trinitarian mission of God and the nature of proclamation in word and deed, we take up now specific areas of concern or challenge.

(36) *Ethics*. The most significant area of concern we share is the ethics of mission. Both of our teams have observed dishonest and dishonorable forms of mission, strategies of "by whatever means necessary" that disregard both the high standard of holiness demanded of apostolic witnesses and the full humanity of all people. We are dismayed when missionaries carry out their programs in total ignorance of the local culture or history. We are frustrated and ashamed when Christians attempt to "evangelize" members of other churches as if those other churches simply did not exist. We agree on the importance of recognizing that the Holy Spirit is the primary agent of mission, both in the church's proclaiming and in the hearers' response to what is proclaimed. This theological insight should make us humble as to our calling, our missional activities, and how we engage others. Proselytism disrespects the potential recipient as a person and violates other Christian communities that seek to proclaim the Good News as well.[6]

(37) *Unity of the church*. We are mindful of the fact that the quest for Christian unity has its source in Jesus' high priestly prayer (Jn. 17) and the renewed relevance in the missionary movement, most fa-

[6] Call to Mission and Perceptions of Proselytism: A Reader for a Global Conversation, ed. John Baxter Brown (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2022).

mously the Edinburgh Missionary Conference of 1910, when for the first time Christians faced up to the scandal of their hostility and competition in the mission field. While we deplore "sheep-stealing," we also recognize that Christians may leave a church on account of its failures to carry out the whole mission of God, and we invite all churches to serious self-critical assessment. We also observe that the apparent success of Christian churches in a society can actually drive division, while persecution and minority status can foster close cooperation. We commend complementary partnerships between churches that seek not to "steal" members but to strengthen one another. We also stress the importance of visible aspects of unity alongside spiritual or invisible unity. Our dialogue has shown that trust can be built, expressions of unity can be fostered, and common witness is possible.

(38) *Eschatology*. At one time eschatological urgency was a major motivating factor in Pentecostal missions, especially the expectation that Christ would return again soon in glory. While this theme is not as emphasized today as it was at the beginning of the movement, Pentecostals still think of themselves in terms of living in the "last days," which is a key motivation for reaching the lost (Lk. 15). However, with the passage of more than a hundred years since the first revivals, Pentecostals have faced the task of building for the long-term, for example in establishing schools and hospitals, resulting in a more holistic mission. For their part, Lutherans recall that the earliest days of the Reformation were also marked by an eschatological urgency, which over time was transmuted to a principled amillennial stance, leading instead to extensive socioeconomic reforms such as the common chest, poor relief, schools for children and university reform, and health care initiatives, which have continued to the present day. This same dynamic of a developing eschatology is at work in the New Testament itself.

(39) *Interfaith and intercultural dialogue*. Together we recognize that mission work often takes place locally, among people who share Christians' own language and culture. While even this requires sensitivity and wisdom, how much more when Christians cross the boundaries of language, culture, ethnicity, and religion. Together we acknowledge that dialogue with peoples of other faiths is complementary to mission work, neither an alternative nor a threat to mission. It is an expression of respect and love for our neighbors and for the work God may be doing among them (Mt. 2:1–12, Jn. 16:5–11, Acts 17:16–34).

Likewise, reflecting on the often distressing history of cultural and political imperialism, together we urge respectful and attentive engagement with cultures other than our own, listening well before we attempt to speak, for the upbuilding of just and peaceful societies.

(40) *Contextualization of the gospel*. Together we recognize that the church is required always to explore meaningful ways of interacting with different religions and cultures. Here the church's greatest challenge is the contextualization of the Christian message with a positive yet discerning attitude toward the local culture. Contextualization is the process that attempts to interpret Scripture with the context of the recipients in mind, in order to make it more understandable to them while respecting their full humanity. Concerns about syncretism and the danger of culture undermining divine truth must not be overlooked. We are both "called out" of the world to worship (1 Pet. 2:5–9) and "sent back" into the world to serve as effective witnesses (Jn. 17:18, 20:21). But such concerns must not dampen or suppress our efforts toward contextualization. This dialogue between Pentecostals and Lutherans illustrates the benefits of different Christian traditions engaging together to find ways to be a meaningful witness of Christ to all.

Part III: Mission and the Poor

"…to bring good news to the poor…"

Introduction

(41) As Christians, we take seriously the call we have received, that in following Jesus we are to carry a message of "good news to the poor," which includes all who are vulnerable, marginalized, living with disability, or otherwise in need. It would be easy to be selective in our readings of the Bible, noting, for instance, that even Jesus observed, "You always have the poor with you" (Mt. 26:11). Anyone hearing these words might conclude that poverty is an intractable problem. But Scripture has much to say about the poor and their care (Deut. 15:11, Prov. 14:31, Is. 58:6–10, Mt. 25:40, 1 Jn. 3:17–18), and above all, "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God" (Lk. 6:20).

(42) Jesus was himself born of a poor woman in humble circumstances. Mary, expecting the child promised by the angel, sings a joyful song (Lk. 1:46–55). This song became known as the Magnificat, because in it Mary exalted God's marvelous mercy towards her. In his explanation of the Magnificat, Luther pointed out that God did not regard Mary's "humility" as a moral virtue, but her "low estate," her being poor, her "nothingness." It was precisely Mary, a poor woman, who was chosen to be God's servant and to be called by all generations a blessed one.[7]

(43) In his inaugural sermon, Jesus began with the words of the prophet Isaiah, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor" (Lk. 4:18). When Jesus was approached by a rich young man inquiring how he might receive eternal life, Jesus instructed him to sell all he had and give the proceeds to the poor (Mt. 19:21) and follow him. When Jesus saw the poor widow giving out of her poverty, he honored her (Mk. 12:42–44). In the parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus invites his disciples to reflect on neighborly love, both in serving the one in need, and

[7] Martin Luther, "Commentary on the Magnificat," in Luther's Works vol. 21 (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1968), 297–358.

using the despised Samaritan as an example of neighborly love (Lk. 10:29). God has called the followers of Jesus to care for the poor, the marginalized, the migrant and refugee, and especially the widow and orphan, following the tradition of the Old Testament law (Lev. 19:9–10 and 34) and the prophets (Is. 10:1–2, Zech. 7:10). All human beings are made in the image of God (Gen. 1:27). All are to be regarded with dignity and respect as people who have the opportunity to hear and to share the Good News, to bring hope and the possibility of flourishing through a full and abundant life (Jn. 10:10).

(44) Through God's generosity, the earth has the capacity to produce enough to satisfy the needs of every human being in it. This is part of God's good creation that should be proclaimed as good news. Due to sinful human actions and the brokenness of our world, all are not granted equal access to what God has already provided. Wars, oppression, corruption, mismanagement, environmental destruction, selfishness, greed, and unjust social, economic, and political systems result in unequal access, unjust distribution, and unfair vulnerability for some members of the human family. Throughout the world, individuals, organizations, governments, and even churches have quite often acted in ways that participate in structures that support those who would take advantage of the situation, leaving many people vulnerable to their abuse of power. Clearly, such actions contribute to famine and poverty that affect so much of the world and from which it is often difficult to escape. As such, we believe that inescapable poverty is an injustice that we are to work to overcome.

Engagement with the Poor in Our Churches

(45) We understand that, as followers of Jesus, we have been called to carry the Good News of Jesus Christ to the world in a holistic mission of word and deed. Just as Jesus instructed his first followers to go to Jerusalem and wait for the coming of the Holy Spirit, so we trust that we also, like the followers of Jesus in the early church, have received the Spirit and are thereby equipped to become his witnesses throughout the world (Acts 1:8). In serving the poor, believers both share Jesus Christ with the poor and also encounter Jesus Christ in the poor, which leads to mutual transformation (Mt. 25:31–46).

(46) At the origin of both of our movements, the poor played a significant role. Already in his famous Ninety-Five Theses (1517), Luther made

it clear that he was deeply concerned about the exploitation of the poor by certain church practices.[8] The Reformation spread and was taken up in conditions of late medieval poverty, and even centuries later, the LWF had its origins in addressing the refugee crises of two World Wars. Pentecostalism originated among the poor ministering to one another in places like India, Chile, and the USA. Both Lutherans and Pentecostals have seen tremendous growth in the Global South, an area of the world that experiences overall higher levels of poverty than elsewhere.

(47) Our communities have always been concerned with serving those in need and showing solidarity with the poor and oppressed. For example, in many countries Lutheran and Pentecostal missions have been active among the most destitute, such as the Dalits in India, which has led to the formation of many churches. Our churches have established and also cooperate with many different institutions offering humanitarian aid, from refugee resettlement to disaster relief to development work, including the Convoy of Hope and LWF World Service.

(48) Striving to be faithful to our calling, we teach the depth of God's generosity, as well as the need to trust in God's promises and provision. Even when Pentecostals have moved up socially and economically, they have remained aware of the needs of the poor, and as such, they frequently speak not only to the spiritual needs of others but also to their material needs. They reflect upon and emphasize the importance of stewardship, the giving of tithes, offerings, and other sacrificial gifts to be used to meet the needs of others. Pentecostals frequently emphasize God's promise of faithfulness to supply the needs of those who put their trust in him (Prov. 28:25). They typically view this promise, however, in terms of a sense of well-being, *shalom*, fullness or purposefulness in life. This way of looking at their gifts enables them to rejoice when these gifts bear fruit in the salvation of others. Historically, in response to God's graciousness, Lutherans have shared generously out of their resources to help those in need. Lutherans, too, emphasize the importance of stewardship and offerings to be used to meet the needs of others. They respond individually and communally to God's invitation to participate in the building of just and safe societies for all people, through advocacy, education, and various diaconal projects.

[8] Martin Luther, "The Ninety-Five Theses," nos. 43 and 45, in *Luther's Works* vol. 31 (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1957), 29.

* * *

Case Studies in Mission to the Poor

When Luther wrote to the German nobility in 1520, stressing their responsibility as "secular" authorities nevertheless always acting before God to serve the people, he also advanced a comprehensive list of social and economic reforms.[9] Among other things, Luther advocated for wide educational programs for both boys and girls, the latter of which was highly unusual in his time. He also supported the creation of common chests of public funds to provide for the needs of the poor, widows, the elderly, and the sick. Luther returned to these reforms throughout his career, in addition to harshly criticizing authorities that acted in self-interest only or secured personal privileges for themselves.

A contemporary Lutheran example of holistic service is the expanding diaconal work in and around the Church of St. Clare in Stockholm, Sweden. From the early 1990s onwards, this church has created strong networks of people, private companies, and public institutions mobilizing resources to address urban poverty. Hundreds of people, including asylum seekers, daily receive food and shelter, clothing, pastoral counseling, and legal advice. Over the weekends, teams of clergy and laity assist people in the streets suffering from alcoholism, drug abuse, and prostitution. Sunday worship retains a traditional Lutheran liturgical order combined with many charismatic elements. Proclamation in word and deed go together hand in hand.

Solidarity in proclamation and service may lead to an identification with the life conditions of poor people. As an example, we can mention Roberto Zwetsch and Lori Altmann, Brazilian Lutheran missionaries among an indigenous population in the Amazon region in the state of Acre in northwestern Brazil. In the 1980s they decided to live amidst the indigenous Kulina-Madihá people in a village located seven days by boat upstream from the nearest modern settlement. When the couple was expecting their second child, they faced the difficult dilemma of deciding where to give birth. Should they leave the indigenous community, go to a city, check in to a hospital, and afterwards return to live with the indigenous? They realized that, if they did this, they might lose the confidence of the indigenous people. They decided to stay. And there, without hospital,

[9] Martin Luther, "To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation Concerning the Reform of the Christian Estate," in *Luther's Work* vol. 44 (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1966), 123-217.

doctors, nurses, or even a bed, but surrounded by the care, love, and natural knowledge of the indigenous women, Lori safely gave birth, according to local custom, to her second child, a boy, who then received an indigenous name, Pamalomid. Later Lori wrote that she would never trade that profoundly human experience for the technical assistance she had had when giving birth to her first child, the daughter Pamalomid, a unique name given by the Paíter-Suruí people, in the state of Rondonia, also in the Amazon region.[10]

An early example of Pentecostal ministry to the marginalized was that of Lillian Trasher (1887–1955), who in 1912 founded an orphanage in Egypt and became known as the "Nile Mother." Later she also helped to set up a home for widows and a place for the blind. Her work, funded by the Assemblies of God, eventually won support also from Presbyterian churches as well as other Christian, humanitarian, and governmental organizations.[11]

Pentecostal civic engagement has been increasingly recognized as empowering the lives of the poor. For instance, a squatter community moved into a quarry at the edge of Baguio City, Philippines, because farming could no longer sustain their families, and they hoped to support themselves by sorting trash or cleaning houses. A Pentecostal church under the leadership of Pastor Joel Tejedo helped these settlers with a feeding project for the children; skills- and livelihood-training followed. Since many of the couples who already had children were too poor to afford a wedding ceremony, the church organized a wedding for twelve couples. This gave the couples an official status and increased their sense of self-worth. The church also became a hub for finding employment for these people.[12]

In similar fashion, a Pentecostal pastor in Peru organized a program that includes a soup kitchen, a medical office, and educational programs in one of the poorest districts of Lima. In cooperation with doctors, he created free healthcare programs that take place in the church. During the COVID-19 pandemic he moved the soup kitchen outdoors to provide nutritious meals, especially for children and the neediest. Workshops and training are provided to the residents on topics such as nutrition, ecology, feminism, and the

[10] Lori Altmann and Roberto Zwetsch, Paíter: o povo Suruí e o compromisso missionário (Chapecó: Caderno do Povo-PU, 1980). Also: Roberto Zwetsch, Partejando a esperança (Brasília, Porantim, 1984, VII, nr. 65/66, July/Aug 1984, p.17).

[11] https://www.handsalongthenile.org/causes/lillian-trasher-orphanage-assiut/

[12] Joel A. Tejedo, "Doing Pentecostal Civic Engagement in the Squatter Area of Lower Rock Quarry, Baguio City, Philippines," International Review of Mission 107/1 (2018): 159–178.

prevention of anemia, among others. The pastor's motivation is to serve his community as Christ would, addressing spiritual, social, and bodily needs.

* * *

Weaknesses and Challenges

(49) Together we critique and condemn the abuses of the biblical idea of prosperity in the teaching of certain Neo-charismatic and Independent churches, and not unknown even in some Classical Pentecostal, Lutheran, and other historic churches.

(50) The so-called "prosperity gospel" has its roots in nineteenth-century American "positive thinking" movements, and only later was picked up by certain Christian church leaders. The fundamental idea behind it is that both Christ's atonement and the Christian's faith function like legal contracts, obligating God to reward the believer with material wealth and physical health in return for faith and sacrificial giving. This is based on the notion that on the cross Jesus overcame every instance of poverty, sickness, and death, but it ignores Jesus' call to believers to carry their own cross (Mk. 8:34–35) and suffer with him and one another (Col. 1:24, 1 Cor. 12:26). This teaching is misleading and becomes destructive when continuing poverty and suffering are taken as proof of inadequate faith. It is equally destructive when it convinces the wealthy and successful that their advantages are due to their own flawless faith, and when it licenses church leaders to demand donations from their flocks with the false promise that it will lead to equally great wealth on the part of the donor. This is an unfaithful response to Christians who struggle in poverty hoping for a compassionate intervention from God to release them from their hardships (Ex. 33:19, Is. 49:10).

(51) Preachers of the prosperity gospel are not necessarily motivated by personal greed. Sometimes they are responding to the extreme need of their community and hope in this way to inspire the self-confidence that comes from knowing some of the genuine promises of prosperity in Scripture. This teaching may appear attractive to the poor as it promises a way out of misery. But the long-term consequences of prosperity teaching are so destructive on both individuals and communities that it must be opposed and replaced with a better understanding of the prosperity that God intends for all people.

(52) Together we acknowledge in our own histories and practices certain tendencies that may have led to a breach of solidarity with the poor, creating a vacuum filled in by prosperity preachers. For example, Pentecostals are at times guilty of triumphalism, issuing promises of victorious life that may mislead believers regarding what they can expect in this life, as well as an over-spiritualization of faith, leading to neglect of this-worldly concerns. For their part, the early Lutheran commitment to caring for the poor has sometimes turned into a delegation of this responsibility to charitable agencies or the state, absolving individuals of personal engagement with the poor and vulnerable. There have also been occasions when too-rigid distinctions between the "two kingdoms" and a misunderstanding of "passive righteousness" have excused Lutheran neglect of the needy.

(53) In addition, together we recognize that the exercise of governmental authority can be an efficient way of serving people in need, but it also presents heavy temptations to use such power to secure unjust advantages and privileges. We believe that it is important for our churches to admit that we have at times become supporters of unjust and even oppressive regimes and systems, or have sought advantages personally or for our own church institutions rather than for the common good. We are reminded that Jesus himself, before starting his public ministry, had to face the temptation of power but resisted it by rebuking the devil with the words: "You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve" (Mt. 4:10).

Faithful and Unfaithful Approaches to Prosperity

(54) Together we commend to all Christian believers a faithful teaching on the abundance of God's gifts, given so that the whole human family and the earth may flourish. God wishes to bless us, but this is always a free divine gift, never a matter of obligation or coercion. Furthermore, God's promise of blessing does not exclude the possibility of illness, economic hardship, persecution, suffering, and indeed death, as evident in our Savior's own experience.

(55) Recognizing the specific false teaching of the prosperity gospel, the Assemblies of God (to give one example) published the document "The Believer and Positive Confession" in 1980, condemning the

false promises associated with that teaching.[13] Both Pentecostals and Lutherans are appreciative of ecumenical Christian statements against false prosperity teaching, such as the Lausanne Theology Working Group's "Statement on the Prosperity gospel" (2009).[14]

(56) To help Christians navigate true from false teachings about the prosperity that God intends for us, we commend these four questions to ask about any promise of prosperity:

(57) *What exactly is being promised and on what grounds?* Does God actually promise such things, or has the text of the Bible been read selectively or dishonestly?

(58) *At what cost?* For example, is the earth exploited or is civic life corrupted by the appeal to a promised prosperity?

(59) *At whose expense?* Is one believer or community being lifted up at the expense of, or in disregard of, another?

(60) *For what motive?* Do preachers or wealthy and healthy people seek their own self-interest, or is love of neighbor paramount? Is one organization or ministry being elevated to the disadvantage or defamation of another? Does it contribute to proselytism?

(61) Looking at the issue positively, Christians can affirm the riches they have received in Christ (Eph. 2:5–8, Phil. 4:19), the fact that they are incorporated into a caring and resourceful community that seeks the advancement of God's kingdom and its righteousness (Mt. 6:33, 2 Cor. 9:9–11), and that their new life in Christ, with the assistance of the Holy Spirit, empowers them to serve the common good (Jn. 13:12–17, Rom. 12:6, 1 Cor. 12:4–7) to the glory of God (Mt. 5:16).

Conclusion

(62) We rejoice that although our churches use terminologies and emphases that at times vary, we are of one mind in our commitment to serving the poor as fellow human beings who are created in the image of God and worthy of dignity and respect. Together we affirm

[13] https://ag.org/Beliefs/Position-Papers/the-believer-and-positive-confession
[14] https://www.lausanne.org/content/a-statement-on-the-prosperity-gospel

a commitment to a holistic understanding of mission that includes the proclamation of the Good News to the poor along with joining in solidarity with the poor, always keeping in mind that God became poor in Jesus Christ (Phil. 2:5–11).

(63) Nonviolent efforts to overcome poverty and the causes that lead to it are legitimate and valuable, because the Bible teaches us to come to the defense of the poor. Such engagement with the suffering of others may bring us into situations that lead to our own suffering in the struggle to overcome the suffering of others. This can be understood as an experience of bearing the cross of Jesus Christ, conscious that Jesus Christ suffered for us so that we may receive the fullness of life.

(64) Although we reject a theology of prosperity which offers false promises and runs the risk of turning God into an object of our desires, we do affirm an understanding of prosperity as a blessing of God freely given and affirm Jesus' promise to bring abundant life for all people. Those who are so blessed are called to be a blessing to others and to work for the betterment of all society, to overcome injustices, and to care for all of God's creation.

Part IV: Healing and Deliverance

"…to proclaim release to the captives,
and recovery of sight to the blind,
and let the oppressed go free…"

Biblical Foundations

(65) As already seen in previous sections of this statement, together we look to the Scriptures to inform and guide our teaching and practice regarding healing and deliverance from evil.

(66) As Scripture testifies, God's intention for his good creation has always been its wholeness and flourishing. Even after the broken trust that is human sin, God has cared for the earth and the people created in his image. God has blessed the sick, the suffering, and those afflicted by evil spirits with physical healing, spiritual healing, and communal reconciliation. Healing and deliverance have not been restricted to the people of God but have been extended to those on the "outside," such as Naaman the Syrian (2 Kings. 5:1–27) and the Syrophoenician woman (Mk. 7:24–30).

(67) The ministry of Jesus Christ was especially distinctive for its emphasis on healing and deliverance alongside feeding, teaching, and proclaiming the kingdom of God. He commissioned his disciples to do the same. The apostles healed in Jesus' name throughout the book of Acts (e.g. 3:1–10, 9:32–34, 14:8–10). Paul identifies healing as a spiritual gift (1 Cor. 12:9). James 5:13–15 commends prayer for and anointing of the sick.

(68) While healing and deliverance testify to God's good and saving intention for people already now in this life, these things at the same time always point toward the eschatological horizon of the final healing that will take place in the resurrection of the dead (Rev. 22:1–3). Healing in this life does not spare anyone from death. The absence of healing does not indicate inadequate faith or that God does not care.

Healing from Illness

(69) Though we pray for the end of the physical illness and the patient's full recovery, we recognize healing as a broader concept. Healing encompasses also spiritual and relational dimensions. Sometimes a person dies of an illness or endures a chronic condition, yet in the process comes to a deeper trust in God, and loves and receives love from others in a profound new way. It is important for the church and its leaders to guide people in their spiritual reckoning with their illness, while always keeping the good news of Jesus Christ at the forefront.

(70) Nevertheless, there is a danger in interpreting healing only in a spiritual sense, and even more so in assigning a spiritual causality to all illnesses. Jesus warns sharply against those who simplistically equate illness or other bodily harm with punishment for sin (Jn. 9, Lk. 13:4). It is equally disastrous to reject all forms of medical intervention as the only proper expression of faith in God.

(71) Because sickness is not part of the envisioned kingdom of God, Christ has given the church several means by which healing is conveyed to hurting people. Baptism first of all grants us a share in Christ's own death and resurrection (Rom. 6:3–4) and washes us in the regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5). Prayer is both commanded and commended for the sake of healing of both self and others; fasting is encouraged. The faithful may lay hands on the sick and anoint them with oil.

(72) Among our churches we see further development of healing ministries with various kinds of structures, including informal prayer groups and prayer chains, church-run clinics and hospitals, and trained ministers of healing and pastoral care, both lay and ordained.

(73) No illness or injury is too mild or too severe to ask for God's intervention. We give thanks to God for all kinds of healing, just as we grieve when healing is not granted. We trust that God can effect healing when all human means have been exhausted, and we recognize that God in his sovereignty finally takes all the sick, suffering, and dying into his care. We caution against extremes: on the one hand, denying any but scientific means of healing, and, on the other side, denying any but miraculous means of healing.

(74) All prayers and interventions for healing are premised on faith in the goodness of God our Creator who desires his creatures to live with

him eternally. But faith itself is not the cause of healing and should never be treated as a weapon against God or a guarantee for believers. We have seen people being disappointed and losing faith after being falsely promised a healing that did not come. God desires the healing and wholeness of his people. Yet we are still subject to sin, evil, corruption, illness, vulnerability, and mortality while we await the arrival of the kingdom of God in its fullness. When relief is not granted, we are to turn toward the suffering of Christ on his cross and his call to his followers to take up their own cross. We also take the example of Paul, whose thorn in the flesh was not removed even after earnest prayer (2 Cor. 12:7–9). Suffering remains in this life, and sometimes instead of being spared it we are asked to endure it. We do so in faith and hope for the final restoration.

Pentecostal Commentary

(75) On the whole, Pentecostals believe that all of the spiritual gifts, including the so-called miraculous or supernatural gifts, are bestowed by the Holy Spirit as a powerful means of evangelism, and that they continue to operate within the church in the present age. Among these gifts is included the gift of healing, which correlates to Pentecostal christology acclaiming Jesus as Healer. Divine healing is included in the atoning work of Christ; healing is part of salvation itself. Pentecostals believe that miraculous healing by God, which is carried out through servants of Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit, can bring many people to faith in the Lord.

(76) Some Pentecostals have deduced that if a Christian could only generate enough faith, healing would always occur. However, Classical Pentecostals rightly balance this with other themes pervading the New Testament. For example, sometimes a miracle occurs where there is little or no faith, precisely in order to instill belief in Jesus as the Son of God (Mt. 8:26). In addition, faith was frequently spoken of as the result rather than the precondition of the healing power of Jesus (Mt. 9:18–22, 15:31). Although the gospels point out that Jesus "did not do many mighty works" (Mt. 13:58, Mk. 6:5) in his hometown because of unbelief, nowhere is anyone's failure to be healed attributed to the lack of faith on the part of the sick person. This means that while it is essential for us to have faith in God and his ability to heal, healing is solely the sovereign will of God.

Lutheran Commentary

(77) Healing as such was not by any means the center of the Lutheran Reformation. However, we do find examples of prayer for healing and thanksgiving when it has been granted. Luther advised believers to "pray to [God] for everything that attacks even our bodily welfare."[15] He prayed for the restoration of the health of his close friends, and allowed that holy communion offers healing to body as well as soul. At the same time, he endured the grief of the death of two of his children, whose lives were not spared despite his and Katharina's prayers.

(78) Lutherans bring a Law-gospel framework to the matter of healing. As Luther writes in the Large Catechism, prayer is "as strictly and solemnly commanded as all the other commandments," and therefore we should pray faithfully and ardently for healing.[16] At the same time, the promise of the gospel to have fellowship with God now and eternal life with him hereafter is *not* the same as a promise of perfect healing in this life. To believe in the promise of the gospel means to reject all false promises, including those that guarantee healing to the "truly" faithful, thereby suggesting that those who are not healed did not adequately believe.

* * *

Case Studies in Healing and Deliverance

Lutherans remember the example of Johann Christoph Blumhardt (1805–1880), a German pastor and advocate of world mission and spiritual revival. Blumhardt was confronted with a deeply disturbed and suffering young woman named Gottliebin Dittus in his rural Swabian congregation. After a year and a half of patient prayer and exhortation by Blumhardt and other congregational leaders, Gottliebin was delivered from her affliction. The news spread throughout the congregation, leading to a spiritual revival, and soon Blumhardt's church became a spontaneous center of healing ministry. In time he moved with his family to an abandoned estate, so as to accommodate the seven hundred or so seekers who arrived every

[15] Martin Luther, "The Lord's Prayer," Large Catechism, in The Book of Concord (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000), 456.
[16] Martin Luther, "The Lord's Prayer," Large Catechism, in The Book of Concord (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000), 441.

year. Blumhardt's central tenet was: "Jesus is victor." He recognized and commended the power of prayer, the necessity of repentance, and the acceptance of death when healing is not granted. He understood miracles to be ordinary, not extraordinary, events, the regular intervention of God in the lives of his people. But all healings and miracles were ultimately signs of the coming kingdom of God and invitations to place all trust in life and death in God alone.

Pentecostals remember two women who influenced Pentecostal healing practice in the early twentieth century, Maria Beulah Woodworth-Etter and Aimee Semple McPherson, both in North America. A wide swath of Pentecostal churches endorsed their healing ministries. Both held mass meetings and preached the gospel in the power of the Spirit by laying hands on people and praying for them. The accompanying signs and wonders appealed across denominational lines, and both evangelists ministered ecumenically. Woodworth-Etter's evangelistic and healing ministry was a direct continuation of the Holiness revival of the nineteenth century. She held mass meetings before the onset of the Pentecostal movement, but joined it in 1912 and became a major force in spreading the Pentecostal message. Posters advertising her meetings read: "Jesus heals!" and "Salvation for soul, healing for body." As for McPherson, she proclaimed in her vivid sermons that Jesus is Savior, Healer, Baptizer in the Spirit, and the Soon-Coming King. She was a prolific writer and newscaster who helped consolidate the Pentecostal emphasis on salvation and healing.

Deliverance from Evil

(79) In the Lord's Prayer we ask our heavenly Father to deliver us from evil. By evil we mean the "principalities and powers" (Rom. 8:38–39, Eph. 6:12) that grind down and extinguish humanity, break trust in God, and render love among people impossible. Evil is not something with which we should negotiate; we can only be rescued from it. Sin and oppression serve the evil one but are not identical to it.

(80) One of the tasks of the church and faithful Christians is to discern the spirits, identifying those that are evil or unclean (1 Cor. 12:10, 1 Jn. 4:1–6). Because the faithful are and remain sinners, liable to the seduction of evil, this is a difficult and dangerous task. Discernment of evil spirits must be undertaken communally, carefully, and with constant prayer for the Holy Spirit's guidance. As part of the discernment process, and the same as in the case of physical healing,

we urge the responsible use of such tools as psychology, psychiatry, and medicine to diagnose the suffering person's condition and select appropriate means of restoration. It is also entirely possible that medical intervention and deliverance ministry will work best in concert with one another.

(81) Not all experience of evil is possession by evil spirits. People, both believers and non-believers, may be afflicted by the evil one without consenting to evil. One of the tasks of the apostolic ministry is to intercede for deliverance from this kind of affliction. In many parts of the world, such intercession has been an important aspect of evangelical outreach.

(82) It is also essential for the church to believe and act in the conviction that the battle is not finally theirs, but God's alone. The victory of Christ is not an excuse for self-indulgent living but the very present action of the crucified and risen Christ now, in our world, for our salvation. The Christian tradition has testified to this power in a variety of ways, from the "Christus Victor" motif of atonement to hymns singing of "Power in the Blood."

(83) The church, therefore, seeks to serve God in delivering the afflicted from evil. This happens through proclamation and preaching, through baptism and the Lord's Supper, through prayer and the laying on of hands, and through ministries specifically aiming at deliverance.

(84) Scripture exhorts believers to be on their guard against evil, resist the devil, repent of sin, obey God, pray, and bear witness to the salvation offered through Jesus Christ. "Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour" (1 Pet. 5:8).

(85) However, evil must never be used as an excuse for human sinfulness. There is no place in the church for a "devil made me do it" defense. Believers are always to take responsibility for their sins, confess and repent, and undo whatever damage they can.

(86) Likewise, leaders of the church may not exploit the notion of "spiritual warfare" for their own personal, financial, or ideological purposes. We encourage strong practices of communal discernment and mutual accountability before any deliverance practice is undertaken.

Pentecostal Commentary

(87) From their earliest days, because of their holistic approach to salvation in Christ, Pentecostals paid attention to the reality of Satan's influence, demonic oppression, and the powers of evil. Consequently, they included practices of dealing with these powers through deliverance, breaking curses, exorcism and spiritual warfare, whereas most Protestant churches at the time were less likely to do so. Pentecostals understood this to be a necessary corrective to the omission of such ministries in these churches, though it brought its own problems, such as associating every sort of evil with a corresponding demon, irresponsible interpretations of Bible passages giving rise to wild speculation, and taking away human responsibility for evil. It is not a theology of fear that should dominate Christian views on the reality of evil, but rather the assurance that Christ overcame all evil at the cross and that the children of God can confidently call upon the Holy Spirit to bring them peace and the power to challenge evil in Jesus' name.

(88) With regard to the presence of evil in the world, Pentecostals proclaim a theology of victory in Jesus (1 Cor. 15:17, 2 Cor. 2:14). At the same time, however, there is also a biblical emphasis on suffering for Christ's sake (Phil. 1:29, 3:10; Rom. 8:17; 1 Pet. 4:19). They often refer to the exhortation that Christians are called to put on the whole armor of God (Eph. 6:10–18) in order to withstand evil.

Lutheran Commentary

(89) Luther's sense of the predatory presence of the devil is well known and given voice by Lutherans throughout the world as they sing "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God" to join themselves in battle against the evil one. Though the battle in the hymn is dramatic, Luther also experienced the chronic, demoralizing sense of *Anfechtung* or anguish of being under spiritual attack. In this as in all other matters, he constantly referred believers to the promises of Christ: "for God himself fights by our side with weapons of the Spirit."

(90) Lutherans also recognize, however, the dark side of detecting the presence of evil, namely the temptation to demonize one's enemies. Luther culpably did so, which must be continually rejected. Failure of faith and demonization of other people go hand in hand. The antidote to demonizing others is to trust more fully in God and learn

to love our enemies, just as Jesus taught us and God has done (Mt. 5:44, Rom. 5:6).

(91) Lutheran approaches to the ministry of deliverance vary widely across the world. Some have well-developed exorcism ministries (see the case study below); some question or doubt the existence of supernatural evil or the devil altogether and regard all such efforts with suspicion. Here again we encourage mutual, communal discernment and the willingness to learn from one another's practices and critiques, both within the Lutheran fold and between Lutherans and other Christian traditions.

* * *

Case Studies in Deliverance Ministry

As one session of our dialogue took place in Madagascar, the Lutherans would particularly like to commend the example of the Malagasy Lutheran Church (MLC). Since its founding in the late nineteenth century, the MLC has experienced four major revival movements, all of which have focused on preaching, repentance, and deliverance from evil. The MLC has developed an office of ministry called *mpiandry* or "shepherds," laypeople who train under a pastor for two years to undertake deliverance ministry. Many of them wear distinctive vestments during their ministry work. Embedded in a traditional Lutheran liturgical order is a time for the *mpiandry* to cite Scripture that exhorts Christ's followers to release the afflicted from their bondage. They then move through the worship space casting out demons and praying specifically over those who ask for it. Often the seekers are given an opportunity to testify to God's healing and liberating work in their lives. Among the best-known of the MLC's shepherds was the prophetess Nenilava (1918–1998). She spent her entire life preaching throughout Madagascar, calling people to repentance, healing them, and delivering them from the grip of evil spirits. All of the revival movements and their *mpiandry* have led to the dramatic growth of the MLC. Other Christian churches have also turned to them to learn the ministry of deliverance, which has done much to foster positive ecumenical relationships.

Pentecostals pray for the sick and afflicted during regular worship services if there is a need or request to do so. In such cases, the sick are oftentimes invited to come forward. Pastors and elders anoint them with oil, lay hands on them, and pray with them. Some Pentecostal churches have established

prayer centers where the sick or spiritually oppressed come to stay for an extended period of time. Special services for deliverance and healing are held with the support of deliverance teams and prayer warriors. The Church of Pentecost, with its headquarters in Ghana, although not actively promoting such prayer centers on its own, has accepted some that have been initiated by individuals. The Executive Council of the Church of Pentecost annually organizes special training sessions for the leaders of such prayer centers.

* * *

Conclusion

(92) We encourage one another and our churches to continue to pray for the sick, suffering, and afflicted. We encourage one another to seek all holy avenues for healing and wholeness, from the bodily and personal to the communal and institutional. When healing is granted, let us give thanks and recognize the sign of the Kingdom of God in our midst. When healing is withheld or a life is lost, let us commend the person to God and entrust ourselves afresh to his sovereign wisdom and goodness. When we encounter the oppression of evil, let us turn to God in earnest prayer for deliverance. For we are "sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:38–39).

Part V: Looking toward the Future

Mutual Learning

(93) Together we have been on a journey of mutual learning. Over the years of our dialogue, we spent time with students and professors at theological seminaries, such as Asia Pacific Theological Seminary in the Philippines, and with pastors and parishioners in churches and other religious institutions. We cleared away misunderstandings and discovered a closeness in theology, prayer, and mission. This discovery has been continually broadened and deepened as we have engaged the sources of our faith in Scripture and in the cross and resurrection of Christ. We bear one another's burdens and turn outward to the world in service as disciples of Jesus.

(94) Throughout the process, we have been brought together by worship which we have experienced in a diversity of ways but all of them giving glory to God, celebrating the redemption found in Christ, beseeching the Holy Spirit to be with us, guide us, lead us, and empower us as we go out into the world in service and mission. Worship has been transformative for our work together and for the building up of our community of dialogue over the past years.

(95) This process has been marked by asking questions for greater clarification, and listening to the Spirit and to each other, with the purpose of ultimately strengthening the commonalities already present but perhaps not always recognized. We realized that we had different emphases and practices, but what we have in common is much greater, as this dialogue statement has demonstrated at length.

(96) Building on what we discussed in Bible study and theological papers, our methodology included engagement with the contexts in which we met that provided the case studies detailed in the preceding pages. Visiting ministries to the poor in Chile and attending deliverance worship in Madagascar, we came to realize how similar our spirituality and mission are in many ways. This insight lays a claim on us to act together so that the world may know God (Jn. 17:23).

(97) Both of us witness in a world that is itself characterized by polarization and pluralism. We are often confronted by the same challenges. When we met in Wittenberg, we discussed the impact of secularism

on both of our churches. On several occasions we discussed the need to discern the use of power and the prevalence of injustice in a fallen world.

(98) This document, finalized at Fuller Theological Seminary in the USA., has been written from the experience of fellowship in the Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 13:13), a fellowship that is deeply embedded in both of our churches, though in different ways. Theologically, we understand the Spirit's work as one of continual creation, reconciliation, and renewal. We are humbled by the realization that it is God who calls our churches to the same mission (*missio Dei*).

(99) This fellowship in Christ is alive and has potential to grow in the many contexts where Lutherans and Pentecostals live and encounter one another. Local and regional ecclesial fellowship may open up rich opportunities for exploring our common theological roots, our diverse forms of worship, and our shared calling from God to be a light to the world.

27 September 2022
Pasadena, California, USA

Participants

Pentecostal participants:

Dr Jean-Daniel Plüss, Switzerland, Co-Chair
Rev. President Tham-Wan Yee, Philippines
Rev. Gani Wiyono, Indonesia
Rev. Prof. Dr Cecil M. Robeck, USA
Apostle Prof. Dr Opoku Onyinah, Ghana
Rev. Dr Olga Zaprometova, Russia
Rev. Prof. Dr Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, USA/Finland

Lutheran participants:

Rev. Prof. Dr Walter Altmann, Co-Chair, Brazil
Rev. Dr Tamás Gáncs, Hungary
Rev. Prof. Dr Cheryl M. Peterson, USA
Rev. Dr Johannes Zeiler, Sweden
Rev. Dr Wilfred John Samuel, Malaysia

Consultants

Rev. Dr Sarah Hinlicky Wilson, Japan / Institute for Ecumenical Research Strasbourg, France

Staff (The Lutheran World Federation)

Rev. Prof. Dr Dirk Lange, Switzerland, Co-Secretary (2020-2022)
Rev. Dr Anne Burghardt, Estonia, Co-Secretary (2018-2020)
Rev. Dr Kaisamari Hintikka, Finland, Co-Secretary (2016-2018)

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me to bring good news
to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

— Luke 4:18–19

ISBN 978-2-940642-61-8

The Lutheran World Federation
and Pentecostal World Fellowship