

Evangelical Church
of Westphalia

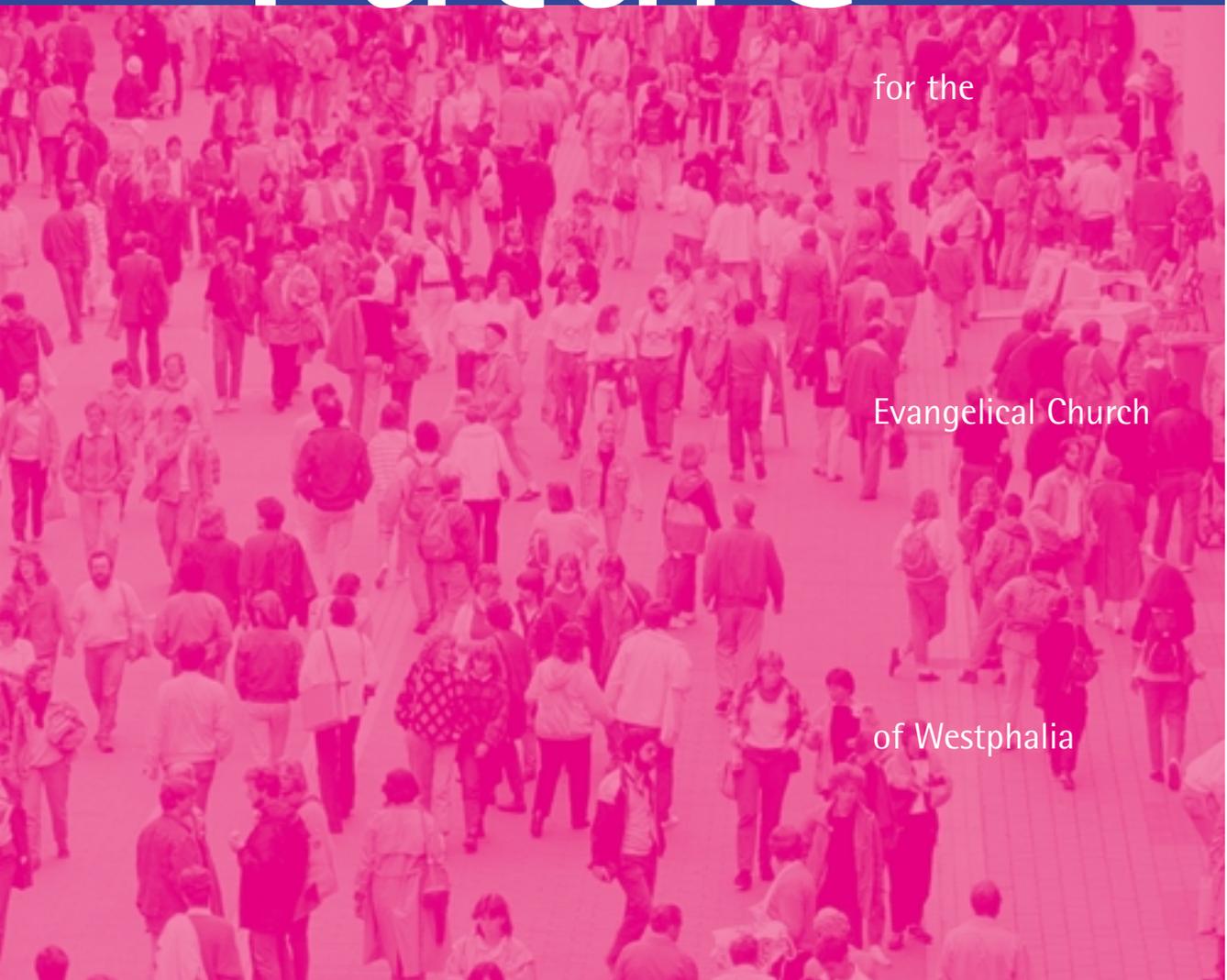
Church with a Future

Goal-setting

for the

Evangelical Church

of Westphalia



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Church with a Future

This is the title of a draft proposal for reform of the Church of Westphalia. The Church Board hereby presents this proposal to the congregations and church districts, the departments, organisations and groups, for consultation and responses. It was drawn up, at the request of the Board, by the Structure and Planning Committee and its project groups. The Committee took into consideration the results of reform processes which are already under way in many parts of the Evangelical Church of Westphalia, and developed them into concrete suggestions and models which are included in this proposal. But this proposal for reform also opens up a much broader view, because it seeks to include everyone who belongs to the church, or whom we would like to win over to the church's cause, in the process. The Board is hoping for a wide-ranging and committed discussion of this draft proposal, and also for willingness to take concrete steps together.

We are asking for responses to be submitted, after consultation in presbyteries and Synod bodies, to the Church office in Bielefeld by 30 April 2001.

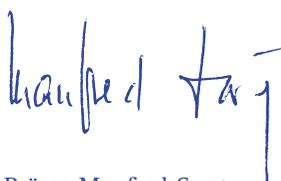
Church with a future. "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matthew 28.18 ff.) These are the opening words of the section of this draft proposal entitled "Nature and Mission of the Church" – words of hope for the future. Hope is so bound up with the future that the good news of the Gospel opens up a vision of future promise.

The hopes of each of us for our personal future and for a new creation are founded on God's faithfulness. This will be our guide in all structural reforms in our church.

The way that God shows us opens up the future to us. Remember Jacob, Joseph and Ruth in the Old Testament. Remember the people of Israel setting out on their journey and returning to their God.

Jesus Christ lived in such a way that in his proclamation, in word and deed, the Kingdom of God itself comes near to us. His crucifixion and resurrection open the future to us. As he did to the disciples at Emmaus, he opens our eyes. And in this future he gives our church a place.

I invite you to study this draft proposal for reform, and to join in working towards a good future for our church.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Manfred Sorg".

Präses Manfred Sorg
(President of the Church Board)

What we want ... Setting goals for our church

Only a church “which takes its own mission seriously in a new way can convincingly take its place in society”, said Wolfgang Huber. However, the Protestant church must also re-examine the structures and forms with which it works in order to be viable in the future. This means an improvement in church work, which can only come about when, in the words of Rüdiger Schloz, the church moves ahead at the structural level with a “change from bureaucratic structures and mentality to a member-friendly and enterprising organisation, i. e. one with initiative, effective and flexible”.

1. In our lack of faith and premature scepticism we have for too long assumed it is inevitable that acceptance of the church is waning, traditions are being abandoned and the numbers of those leaving the church would stabilise at a high level. The most important goal of the restructure we are considering is to improve the conditions which could break this trend and help the church fulfil its responsibility more efficiently. This also means we have to take “our own message” seriously, take the offensive in presenting the church publicly and renew our faith in the power of the Gospel to put itself forward.

We want to grow against the trend!

2. There is a growing readiness for reform within the church. In many congregations and areas of church work new ideas are being tried. Many no longer want to go on as they have been doing. But in many other places the church still looks like an institution of the past in the programmes it offers and the form they take. We need competitions to innovate within the church, to make our structures and ways of working viable for the future.

We want consistent promotion of ideas and initiatives in the church!

3. Church work up to now has been carried out as a wide range of programmatic offerings, often with parallel structures and a not very friendly public face. As a national church we still need pluralism and diversity, but we also need a clear image. Thus we cannot continue all trying to cover the whole field and do everything.

We want church work to be differentiated and have a clear image, and purposeful combining of people and resources!

4. We have always leaned strongly towards the function of the local congregation as the core community (parochia) in the church. In future we need to find ways of access to the church which go beyond the local congregation, and support these through other forms of community.

We want a new distribution of parochial and regional tasks, and of congregational services and functional services!

5. Compared with other areas of work in the society, church work is done in considerable freedom. As desirable as this is, it also has its drawbacks. The work is subject to personal whims and inclinations without accountability. There are too many people in the church who do what they like without any check on their activities. In church work in the future we need much more goal-setting which includes forms of accountability.

We want obligatory standards and agreement on goals, and regular checks on work being done in the church!

6. So far, the discussion about dwindling numbers, decreasing acceptance and the need for new kinds of church work has come through to committed church staff members as stronger pressure to work harder and do more. Still, many staff members feel that they are not really respected for the work they do for the church. They are entitled to regular and appreciative conversations with superiors. Reforms, restructuring and especially cutbacks must be accompanied by acknowledgement for the work which has been done, often over many years. We need a new culture of attentiveness in the church.

We want regular, personal discussions with staff about their work and careers!

7. Initiative and accomplishment have not been sufficiently rewarded in the church; too little notice is taken of special qualifications and gifts. In future the church must be more concerned with the motivation of its staff members; it must honour unusual commitment, make better use of talents and qualifications and promote these in a more goal-oriented way. It must matter whether staff members do a lot or a little, take initiatives or just let things go.

We want attention to and promotion of special gifts, qualifications and accomplishments in the church!

8. The church needs staff members who work at a high professional level in their fields, with up-to-date methods. However, until now the church has left professional continuing education too much to the discretion of staff members.

We want a clear obligation for staff to continue their professional education!

9. The greatest resource which the church has is found in the people who work within it, especially volunteers. There has been only

a beginning of staff development efforts in the church. There is no doubt that in the future the church will have to accomplish its mission with fewer paid staff rather than more. As it looks to the future, there is hardly any more important task for the church than to recruit staff, train them, promote them purposefully and care for them.

We want future-oriented staff development and more participation by laypersons in the work of the church!

10. In recent years the Protestant church has discussed a great variety of topics, produced proposals and taken decisions, the practical implementation of which either advanced extremely sluggishly or made hardly any definite difference. We in the church must therefore develop our competence in strategic planning, so that when considering proposals and decisions we immediately consider how they will be communicated, how they will be implemented on the ground and how they will be evaluated.

We want clear descriptions of tasks and clearly thought-out strategic planning, even in the church!

11. The presbyterial and synodal order of our church makes broad participation possible. But this must not lead to delay in taking urgent decisions, and must not make the necessary exercise of leadership in the church more difficult. A new balance must be found between needed participation and the capacity to make quick decisions.

We want the broadest participation possible in decision-making processes, but also the exercise of leadership in the church!

12. It is right that the Protestant church values the participation of as many persons as possible in decision-making processes. But

there are now too many committees, working groups, advisory councils and other bodies even for insiders to keep track of them all. Often the conclusions of these bodies have no relevance for church members, but rather serve to keep the mechanics of church business running smoothly. This gives an impression of “church people doing church for church people”.

We want all the committees, working groups, advisory councils and other bodies sifted through with an eye to urgent reasons and clear necessities for their existence!

13. The church too often presents a bureaucratic face to its members, that of a difficult entity governed by tried and true rules and by whose job it is to do what. Reasonable enquiries, new developments or outside influences often provoke a rather defensive response, or one that comes too late. To do justice to the changing interests of members and participants, the church has to outgrow its defensive mentality and develop ways of communicating which are appropriate to the times, as well as friendly and flexible ways of serving and being in contact with its members.

We want flexibility and initiative in the church!

14. The church does not need to conceal itself and its work from the public eye. Many of its congregational, functional and social services are indispensable tasks for society. But the church has difficulty in self-confidently standing up in public for the value and the importance of this work. Many church staff members also feel inwardly distant from the church, and many do not want to be recognised in public as persons who work for the church. But a self-confident stance in favour of the value of church work and identification of staff with our common

goals are essential if we want to develop a feeling of “we” in our church.

We want identification with our common goals and a stronger feeling of “we” in our church!

15. We have for too long taken for granted that the public image of the Protestant church is not very convincing, especially for younger people. The church appears dusty and outmoded. To change this will take professional public relations work among other things. In future public relations must therefore be a major task, to be strategically planned and carried out, in every local church, church district, and at the regional church level.

We want a new professional approach to public relations work in the church!

1. The nature, mission and tasks of the church

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1.1. Nature and mission of the church

*Go therefore
into all the world*

Jesus says: “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28.18–20)

With this good news, our church goes out to meet people – it goes with the message of hope for a personal future and with the promise of a new creation. The love of God is irrevocable, it is given once for all to the world and to humankind in Jesus Christ.

The Bible has various images for the community of faithful people. From the Old Testament comes the image of the travelling people of God (Exodus 13.17–20), which is taken up again in the New Testament (Hebrews 13.13). From the Apostle Paul we have received the image of the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12.12). The words “You are the salt of the earth” and “You are the light of the world” (Matthew 5.13–14) call upon Christians to witness to Christ like a light in the world and to proclaim God’s kingdom. As the “salt of the earth” they have the prophetic mission of standing up for the dignity of all people and for justice.

Besides the Biblical texts, confessional texts give information about the characteristics of the church and what its mission is.

“Also they teach that one holy Church is to continue forever. The Church is the congregation of the saints, in which the Gospel is rightly taught and the Sacraments are rightly administered.” (Confessio Augustana, Art. VII)

“Since, then, faith alone makes us share in Christ and all his benefits, where does such faith originate? The Holy Spirit creates it in our hearts by the preaching of the holy Gospel, and confirms it by the use of the holy Sacraments.” (Heidelberg Catechism, Question 65)

The church has Christ’s promise of his presence until the end of the world. Until then, its “mission is to use its gifts and possibilities to proclaim the Gospel to all people, to gather them into the congregation of Jesus Christ, to forgive their sins and to take up responsibly the cause of life for all people in the conflicts and hardships of society” (*). It should fulfil this mission in such a way as to bring into force the various basic dimensions of the church:

- **Witness (martyria):** the church is present as a witnessing community so that people may encounter the Gospel in their personal lives.
- **Worship (leiturgia):** the church is present as a worshipping community to praise God, to proclaim and celebrate together God’s nearness to human beings.
- **Service (diakonia):** The church is present as a serving community to befriend people through word and deed, protection and help.
- **Community (koinonia):** The church is present as a communicating community, a place of mutual acceptance and Christian empathy, in which the dignity of every individual person is respected.

(*) From: *Kirche mit Hoffnung (Church with Hope), guidelines for future church work in East Germany*. Commissioned by the EKD Church Office, ed. Helmut Zeddies, Hanover 1998, p. 6

1.2. Structural reforms must be oriented towards the nature and the mission of the church

Previous structural changes in the Evangelical Church of Westphalia have been largely determined by the need for financial rehabilitation. They involved reducing duplicate structures and combining comparable areas of church work. These are not unreasonable cutbacks but rather attempts to gain the sort of effectiveness which has long been a matter of course elsewhere. If it is to endure, however, financial reform must be undertaken together with putting into practice a previously established set of priorities. Clearing up the financial situation does not in itself answer the question of how to deal with the contemporary crisis of the Protestant church with regard to its image and acceptance.

To gain a forward-looking perspective for church action, we need guidelines for church work which are oriented towards the mission of the church, but also take into account the changed situation in the society.

Thus the goal of church structural reform cannot be simply to improve our cost-effectiveness or attractiveness. The church is, in effect, in a market situation, but its message does not come in “marketable” form. Whatever priorities are set for church work must therefore be founded on the central and basic mission of the church. Still, there is no doubt that in a scene set by secularisation and plurality the church can only do justice to its mission by being people-friendly, communicative and clear about its message.

1.3. Tasks for the church

More specifically, the mission of the church can be briefly summarised in eight basic tasks.

1.3.1. Bringing the Gospel to people

The task on which the church is founded is to bring the Gospel to people, that they may understand and accept it as a reason for hope for their lives and as help for their daily living. The church must publicly keep the question of God alive. Part of this missionary task is to communicate Christian conviction in such a way that people who are distant from the church also may find in it a message which is relevant for them personally. This calls for knowledge of contemporary life, and willingness to engage in conversation with people about their life stories and their ideas about life. For example, women’s experiences differ in many ways from those of men, the experiences of younger persons differ from those of older persons, those of the rich differ from those of the poor, those of persons without disabilities differ from those of persons living with disabilities.

Precisely in matters of faith, the church today is not always seen as competent and helpful. “That which we really want to communicate to people, to make the message of the Gospel real for them, is not something we often talk about ... in our local churches and with our colleagues.” (*) More than ever, it must become the task of everyone who works for the church to enter into conversations with people who are seeking religious meaning or who have distanced themselves from the church. Furthermore, the command of Jesus Christ “Go therefore into all the world ...” is directed not only to church employees, but to the entire congregation as well. Congregations too must become more open to people who have left the church or distanced themselves from it.

“Every society, insurance company or other organisation with a membership has to make efforts to communicate with its members, to

(*) *Kirche mit Hoffnung, op. cit., p. 8*

pay attention to them and show interest in them. The church, however, does not see this as a priority.” (*)

1.3.2. Rituals and celebrations for the decisive moments in people's lives

Being with people at decisive moments in their lives

Most people come into contact with the church at points of transition and new beginnings in their lives: at birth, the end of childhood, marriage and death, but also at times of accidents and illness; crises in relationships, in families and at work; anniversaries and times of celebration. According to a study conducted by McKinsey for the Evangelical Church in Munich, 81 % of those surveyed connect their church membership with the desire for church rituals at the decisive moments in their lives.

A pastoral church

A marketplace has long since developed outside the church as well, which offers “self-made” services and events for life's transitions. For it has become clear that when religious symbols disappear, there is often a loss of human dignity in the observation, celebration or coming to terms with the most existentially important situations in life.

Thus it is essential for the Protestant church to offer its rituals, celebrations and dignified forms of observance, with the texts, symbols and insights of the Christian faith, to help people celebrate and cope with the crises, high points and special times in their lives. Often the experience people have during these contacts with the church, positive or negative, determines their future attitude towards the church. So the church should take great care with the rituals and celebrations, and the pastoral care, which it offers people in their decisive moments. These may become occasions for making new contacts with former members who have drifted away, and for enabling new relationships to begin to grow.

1.3.3. Pastoral care and advice

The church is rightly expected to care for people in their sorrows and problems. Many are those who want the church to pastor them, to be with them in illness and grief, in times of problems in their families and in their lives, of accidents and personal distress, offering comfort, advice and human solidarity.

Our church is challenged in its pastoral role to contribute to individual persons' ability to be themselves, to discover who they are. Pastoral care in the postmodern age must take account of the individualism and pluralism which characterise our society. The task for our church is to promote individuals' chances and possibilities in this society, but also to counter the dangers of their being overwhelmed by it, and the harmful consequences for them.

Pastoral care and advice can help by pointing out chances for greater autonomy, learning to distinguish between the structural constraints of the society and the limits one has set oneself as the result of one's own history.

Pastoral care can offer a place of safety, but based on its religious perspective and the Christian view of humanity it also offers the potential for change. Pastoral care and advice encourage persons to get out of their ruts and support them in overcoming their resistance to change. The Christian tradition encourages awareness of the finite and fragmentary nature of every human life, but also encourages persons to transcend it and the constraints of the society.

Pastoral care and advice take many forms – crisis intervention and assistance, listening and concrete support, attentiveness to the person with whom one is speaking, words of liberating forgiveness. They take place

(*) *Fremde Heimat Kirche (The Church – an Unfamiliar Home). The third EKD survey on church membership, ed. Klaus Engelhardt, Hermann von Loewenich and Peter Steinacker, Gütersloh 1997, p. 357*

through visits and conversations in work within the local church as well as in advice centres, hospitals and special institutions.

Through pastoral care and advice, the church gets involved with people's searches and questions, stays with them patiently and without needing to offer ready-made "solutions". Pastoral care is competent when it meets individual persons with their life plans and their questions without prejudging them, and offers them guidance in their search for solutions which are appropriate for their particular situations. But pastoral competence also means naming unhealthy structures clearly and working with persons to change them.

1.3.4. Religious education

In proclaiming the Gospel, the church seeks to help people understand for themselves what it means to be a Christian. But nowadays we are seeing a development which has been described as "religious illiteracy". Many people can no longer find words for what they themselves believe and what keeps them in the church. The store of basic religious knowledge and practice is becoming thinner from generation to generation. For a majority of persons, childhood and youth are decisive for their relationship to religion and the church. It is therefore indispensable for the future of the church to give a high priority to working with children and youth.

The approach to faith must be seen as a task for education, just as much as growing and remaining in the faith. This includes the question of how faith is experienced in one's life. Someone who cannot say in his or her own words why she or he is a Christian and a member of the church, will probably leave at some point. So it becomes the task of education to communicate to people, including adults, how their lives can become richer and truer through faith.

Every local church and church establishment should be concerned to offer seeking Christians and non-Christians places and times where their needs are accepted without prejudice, opportunities that meet them where they are in their search for guidance.

The opportunities offered must be adapted in form and content to the various target groups and to the level of education of each group.

For example, "spending a week with disadvantaged persons, focussing on social issues" opens up new ways of seeing for many people.

1.3.5. Social action

An important task for the church (in the eyes of the public as well) is to take up the cause of the powerless and those in need, to offer them protection and to stand up for their rights, that they might be enabled to live in dignity. Social action is a central expression of the life of the church. This is why the church is involved in social concerns and engages in public debate, even with regard to political issues.

For persons in need of help and care and their families, social service must continue to be clearly recognisable as a service offered by the church. Under no circumstances may the church neglect its social service tasks, even though church social service agencies may find themselves in competitive "market" situations. The increasing emphasis on economics is bringing about a divided and a colder-feeling society. The church should offer, through its "culture of helping", a warm-hearted and empathetic way of accompanying disadvantaged persons. But this does not relieve the church of the duty to expose and criticise the processes that lead to disadvantages for people, and to help in working to overcome them.

A culture of helping

The approach to faith - also a task for education

1.3.6. Responsibility towards society and the world

Justice, peace and the integrity of creation

Standing up for justice, peace and the integrity of creation is a priority for Christians, congregations and the church as a whole.

Those who have economic and political power and influence must be enlisted in taking responsibility for those who live under unjust conditions. The disadvantaged must also be encouraged to stand up for their own cause, and enabled to contribute whatever they can. This is what Christians can contribute to a modern, sustainable democracy.

The church is a worldwide community

Responsibility for the creation is shown not only in isolated “eco-projects”, but also in awareness of how energy and raw materials are used in church buildings and building plans.

Developments in medicine and biology are posing new questions about responsible dealings with life and with dying. This affects not only individuals in pastoral care, but also those who carry responsibility in hospitals and scientific establishments, who should continue to bring up the basic questions of Christian ethics.

All these responsibilities show that the church cannot withdraw into itself at either the local or the regional level. It must maintain contacts with local governments, the working world, the press and politics, if it is not to ignore the existential issues confronting many people. This succeeds best when the church finds the right language to use, always speaking plainly and in particular situations not being afraid of conflict.

In view of the increasing privatization of religion nowadays, the church must redefine its public task and fulfil it with a new self-confidence. “The church in its public role

must develop and preserve a self-confident independence, not only with regard to the state, but also with regard to economics, the media and other forces in the society.” (*)

1.3.7. Ecumenical relations

Ecumenical and worldwide community are of the essence of the church. Every local congregation exists as a part of world-wide Christianity; thus many congregations and church districts maintain partner relationships with Christians in other continents, to learn from one another about our faith and to receive inspiration from the spiritual riches of their ecumenical partners. Often the conditions and problems of their lives point to the responsibility we share. They challenge us, on issues of world trade, the interconnections of capital and alliances among power elites, to take up the cause of the poor and of the over-exploited natural world.

“Ecumenical relations are the blood vessels and nerves which bind together all the members of the Body of Christ and ensure that they have circulation, exchange and fresh oxygen.” (Rainer Groth)

The reduction of theological and organizational divisions among the churches must also stay on the agenda. The unity of the churches should not merely be an occasion for solemn ceremonies. The churches must reach out to one another, sharing worship and action.

God is greater than all human knowledge of God. The church must therefore seek dialogue among religions, based on mutual respect, and agree on concrete forms of cooperation, for the sake of all humankind. But dialogue only becomes serious when one’s own identity is made clear and the questions of truth and power are asked.

(*) Wolfgang Huber, *Kirche – Wohin? (Whither the Church?)*, in: *Glauben und Lernen*, Vol. 10, 1995, p. 103

1.3.8. The priesthood of all believers

The participation of its members is what keeps the church alive. It was the understanding of the Reformation that Christians themselves are called and empowered through their baptism to take up the tasks of the church, to consult and to make decisions. Women and men, young and old should work together as equal partners, according to their gifts and abilities, in the various tasks, offices and services of the church.

In practice, however, we do not always have a participatory church. The Protestant church in Germany has developed to a disturbing extent into a church of full-time and part-time employees.

Volunteer workers are the church's greatest capital. But the church has only the beginnings of any sort of vocational development for its members.

“The future of our local churches will be determined by the new weight and value given to volunteer work. The particular ‘image’ of a local church will result from the gifts of its members, which are brought out and put to use through their encouragement of one another. It will be the task of pastors as well as of others working in the church to discover these gifts and help them to blossom. Congregational planning will be oriented towards the gifts which are discovered and put to use – not the other way around.” (*)

*Encouraging
one another*

(*) Wolfgang Huber, *Kirche in der Zeitenwende, Gesellschaftlicher Wandel und Erneuerung der Kirche* (Church at the Turn of the Millennium – Social Change and Renewal of the Church), Gütersloh 1998, p. 327

2. Our current situation

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2.1. Radical changes for the church

Church facing competition

The Protestant church is in a situation of radical change in its local churches and its shared ministries. It is facing increased competition. It also has to face a process of change and secularisation in the society, respond to the escalating loss of religious affiliation and of Christian values, and adapt its own structures in response to these changes.

2.2. Factors in the society

Secularisation and changing values

To react appropriately to this situation, it is essential to be aware of the factors in the society which have shaped the religious landscape in recent decades.

■ It is in Western Europe that secularisation is most advanced. Nowhere else have religion and its institutions lost so much of their private and public importance. This is especially true of the Christian churches. Their religious practices are regarded, in broad sectors of the society, as culturally largely irrelevant. The formerly powerful, and often problematical, influence of the church on public life is hardly noticeable any more. Religion and the church have not disappeared completely from most people's lives, but have been pushed into the background. When needed at some point in a person's history they are "brought out" again.

■ Scientific and technological progress, rising affluence and liberal attitudes have widened the choice of personal lifestyles for many people in Germany. Individualistic and pluralistic trends have characterised the society in recent decades. But these developments have their drawbacks: on one hand, opportunities to live autonomously are greater, but on the other, the traditional sources of meaning such as church, family and occupation have lost their naturally reassuring role. Many people find it over-

whelming to be expected to choose and be responsible for their own goals, way of life and lifestyle.

■ The power of the church to keep connected to and to shape people's lives has decreased noticeably, as has people's readiness for political or social involvement. The tendency to make use of institutions without contributing anything to their maintenance or renewal is also being felt by the churches.

■ The shift in the direction of individual self-assertion and self-determination results essentially from contemporary changes in values. This trend is reinforced by the dynamic of globalization of markets, which is increasingly shaping the climate of the society as well. It favours values oriented to self-assertion and seeking one's own advantage. All calculations are based on market values. Norms which set any limit on self-realisation and self-assertion are no longer taken for granted. It is not only young people of today who prefer a pragmatic life, free of ideology, rather than tie themselves to ideas and ideals.

The cost-benefit-analysis is also applied to the church. People ask openly, What does the church do for me? What do I get out of it? If the answers are not satisfactory, they consider leaving.

■ Christianity depends on the content and practice of the faith being passed from generation to generation. But German families have largely become tongue-tied and conspicuously helpless when it comes to communicating religious conviction. The family used to be the primary place where the Christian tradition was passed on – now this task falls largely to the church itself. And finally, communication of Christianity cannot succeed if it is not supported by a social community.

2.

*The world of media
and the leisure society*

■ The Federal Republic of Germany in recent decades has become a multicultural and increasingly also a multi-religious country. The arrival of immigrants of other Christian confessions (for example from Russia or Kazakhstan), and of other religious origins (such as Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism) has coincided with an important period of abandonment of traditions and a process of secularisation. So the real problem is no longer how differing religious convictions can exist side by side, but rather that the encounter with other religions in Germany is taking place in a secularised society. This has caused an indifference to religion which makes real dialogue difficult.

■ Our image of the world is increasingly shaped by the communications media. A culture of pictures and signs is replacing the culture of words. The media environment and the computerisation of daily life which is taken more and more for granted are gaining control over communication and work procedures, but also over the way people experience and assimilate reality.

■ In all areas of life, knowledge is expanding with an intensity and speed which can hardly be imagined. The totality of specialised knowledge in many areas of work doubles every two to five years. In future people will change their field of activity several times during their careers. But the scientific and information society sharpens social distinctions. Knowledge increases the gap between successful persons and others. Further, the constant flood of information paradoxically produces a loss of orientation. The more we know, the less we can tell what is important and what is not.

■ Thanks to the reduced work week and the relative affluence of those who are in work, we live in a leisure society of high consumption and strong drives towards mobil-

ity and new experiences. For most people, their own leisure time has come to have a high value, so that church events and programmes, much more than before, come into conflict with the leisure interests of wider sectors of the population.

2.3. Problems within the church

The above-mentioned tendencies in the society will continue to influence the work of the church in the future. They cannot be reversed, but rather will have to be considered in all processes of change in the church.

In addition to these prevailing trends, the Protestant church has problems which have begun within it, which it alone must solve, even if this must be a matter of long-term development.

■ Self-secularisation

“The response of the Protestant church to the process of secularisation in the society has to a large extent been a process of self-secularisation.” (*) The ethical demands of religion have become the dominant theme. The question of God and the encounter with the holy have taken a back seat. Often enough, church work is seen as serving the secular society as it is now, without any missionary purpose. Thus the church today is living largely on the warmth given off by a source of energy, for the continued existence of which it is not showing enough concern.

■ “Come here” structure

Church work is still based too much on the expectation that people will come to the church, instead of the church going to them. Such an attitude does not take into account the case of people who are looking for an “occasional church”, but do not want to have long-term claims made on them.

*Problems which
begin at home*

*Self-secularisation
process*

(*) Wolfgang Huber, *Auftrag und Freiheit der Kirche in der pluralistischen Gesellschaft* (The Church's Task and Freedom in a Pluralised Society), in: Rudolf Weth (ed.), *Was hat die Kirche heute zu sagen? (What Does the Church Have to Say Today?)*, Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1998, p. 17

■ A too narrow environment

The church has devoted a lot of energy and time, especially in local churches, to the concerns and needs of children and older people. This is greatly appreciated. But sometimes the concentration on these age groups and on certain sectors of the society leads to too few opportunities being offered to other groups of members. Congregational life grows when it is inviting for everyone.

Crisis as opportunity

■ Inwardly-oriented

A large part of church work is devoted to maintaining the inside business of the church – with well-developed procedures for participation from within, and postponement of clear decisions which call for rapid implementation.

■ Inward distancing

We in the Protestant church are a long way from a natural feeling of “we”. It is not just the current structural changes which have led to many employees’ inwardly distancing themselves from the “institutional church”, even though they are working for it and are on its payroll.

The persistence of a marked “church-tower” kind of thinking also has led to a situation in which goals set for the whole church and Synod decisions are not receiving general support. Special interests have developed around particular groups, societies, and issues affecting certain persons. However, commitment to agreements made, identification with common goals and loyalty to areas of work other than one’s own are necessities for our work together in the Protestant church.

2.4. Challenges for the work of the church

There is no doubt that the church has the wind in its face at this time. Not only in the church, but also in the media, a “crisis” of the church is a topic of public discussion.

But it has become a truism that a crisis is also an opportunity. It not only shows us what has gone wrong, but also gives the signal that things cannot go on in this way, and thus gives us a realistic opportunity for change.

2.4.1. Crisis of acceptance

Like other institutions, the Protestant church finds itself in a crisis of acceptance. One’s religious orientation, decision as to church membership or type of relationship to a church have become in our society, as never before, a matter for individual decision. “The control over who belongs to the church is no longer in the hands of the church, but in those of the citizens.” (*) This does not necessarily mean a turning away from Christianity. But many people can no longer relate the traditional Christian teachings to what they experience in everyday life, so they make their own religious rhyme and reason out of the questions and experiences which are their lot.

The two majority churches have lost their monopoly over religious issues. There is now a “market of possibilities” of religions and churches which has never existed before. A great many people, however, never explore these possibilities – instead, they become wanderers in a religious “no-man’s-land”.

As a result people are distancing themselves from the institutional church. This is more pronounced in urban than in rural areas, and among younger people than among their elders. All institutions today are facing a cri-

(*) Paul M. Zulehner, *Pastoraltheologie*, Vol. 1, Düsseldorf 1989, p. 202

2.

sis of acceptance. The churches are no better off than political parties, trade unions or schools.

Obviously the church has lost much of its influence in the society. The proof is not only in the Day of Repentance and Prayer being dropped as a public holiday, and in the discussions about religious instruction in public schools, or places of business being open on Sundays, but also in the declarations of a “new generation” which is now in control of politics, the economy and administration, saying that religion is a private affair.

2.4.2. Image crisis

The Protestant church is in crisis with regard to its public image. In recent decades much of the work of the church has become differentiated: youth work, advice for debtors, small groups, Protestant academies, crafts for bazaars, initiatives by the unemployed, mediathèques, marriage and family guidance, senior citizens’ holidays, tutoring for schoolchildren, asylum groups in churches, women’s auxiliaries, cultural groups, S.O.S. telephone service – the image of the church has become more colourful, open and varied. The Kirchentag (Church Convention) with its colourful palette of offerings has become the symbol of a church breaking out of the narrowness of traditional forms. Church leaders have considered it their job to do justice to this diversity with new areas of work and church institutions.

However, they have not succeeded in making the connections among these many and diverse activities, either within the church or outwardly, in such a way “that one can really experience how far the church goes in its services for the sake of individual persons and the shaping of the society.” (*1)

Many people find that this pluralistic appearance of the church no longer appeals to them. The attractive, colourful variety has led to a loss of image. People cannot see, with all these activities, what we stand for as a church.

But the church must not withdraw into looking after its internal affairs, but rather put itself on the world’s agenda and thereby gain an image. It must bring its plurality and image together and keep them together: “As a helper in the midst of the confusion of life today, our church must be able to afford and to represent diversity.” And “To make our contribution in the marketplace of society, we must be recognisable and identifiable as the Protestant church.” (*2)

2.4.3. Membership trends

The statistics of the Evangelical Church of Westphalia show a steady decrease in membership.

At the beginning of 1998 the figure was 2,834,260 – almost the same as in 1950. Membership in the Church of Westphalia was at its peak in 1969, with 3.68 million. Since then, over not quite three decades, there has been a continual decrease totalling almost 850,000 members.

Three factors have contributed to this, to different degrees in the course of the years:

- the “demographic factor” – the relation between the numbers of those baptised and those who died;
- the migration factor – the relation between those moving in and those moving away;
- the “active membership behaviour” factor – the balance of new members and those leaving the church.

The figures for all these factors have shown a negative balance since 1970, with one exception: during the last 10 years the

Being recognisable as church

(*1) *Fremde Heimat Kirche, op. cit., p. 354*
(*2) *Präses Manfred Sorg, Minutes of the Synod of the Evangelical Church of Westphalia, 1996, p. 36*

2

Church of Westphalia has gained more members than it lost each year due to migration. This has been caused by the large numbers of Protestant ethnic Germans returning from eastern Europe, a trend which is now clearly coming to an end.

For the demographic factor, the rule of thumb for the last 10 years has been that over 10,000 more people died than were baptised in the Church of Westphalia (in 1998 the difference was exactly 10,003). Contrary to suppositions, this factor has not increased in significance; to the contrary. In 1975 to 1985 the difference was half again as much. These figures reflect on one hand the actual proportion of different birth years in the population, and on the other hand the increase in life expectancy.

The numbers of those who left the Evangelical Church in Westphalia remained in the neighbourhood of 10,000 per year for the 15 years up to 1990.

When the solidarity tax was introduced (at the reunification of Germany, for the economic development of East Germany), resignations from the church's membership suddenly doubled from one year to the next (11,622 in 1990, 23,427 in 1991). The peak year was 1992, with 25,177. In 1998, 17,133 resignations were registered, over against 5,641 new members. For over 20 years the number of those joining the church has risen gradually, but steadily (in 1974, 1,796 people joined). The statistics include as "new members" youths who are baptised shortly before confirmation, provided they have reached their 14th birthday at the time of baptism.

Until 1990 the demographic factor was by far the most important in the yearly decrease in membership. Since 1991, it has been the balance between new members and those who resign. In the last three years the two factors have come closer together.

Membership trends in the Church of Westphalia within cities and districts, as projected up to 2015, are highly differentiated. They range from 15% growth in the district of Coesfeld to 30% loss in Dortmund. The graph illustrates the completely different trends in the different regions.

These differentiated, but overall plainly negative, membership trends in the Church of Westphalia have consequences at every level. The church cannot do anything about the demographic trend. But our church can approach people without a religious affiliation and those who have left the church or distanced themselves from it, in an inviting way, to motivate them to return or to begin a new relationship.



Projected membership changes in the Church of Westphalia to 2015 (by districts and by cities)

2.4.4. Financial situation

Financially the Evangelical Church of Westphalia is not poor, especially from an ecumenical perspective. But at present it has severe problems in financing the work which has been built up over the past decades and paying all church employees appropriately.

Since 1992/1993 it has become increasingly difficult for all the regional churches to balance their budgets. The reasons for the loss in income each year have to do with high unemployment and low increases in salaries, changes in state tax policies, demographic trends to the detriment of Protestant churches and resignations from the church of tax-paying members. In addition there are the financial costs of reunification of the

churches in East and West. At present barely 30% of church members are taxpayers – a figure which astonishes even critics of the church.

The financial situation of the Evangelical Church of Westphalia, however, is also due to the fact that the demographic problem, though recognised since 1985, has not been dealt with promptly through forward-looking and affordable personnel planning.

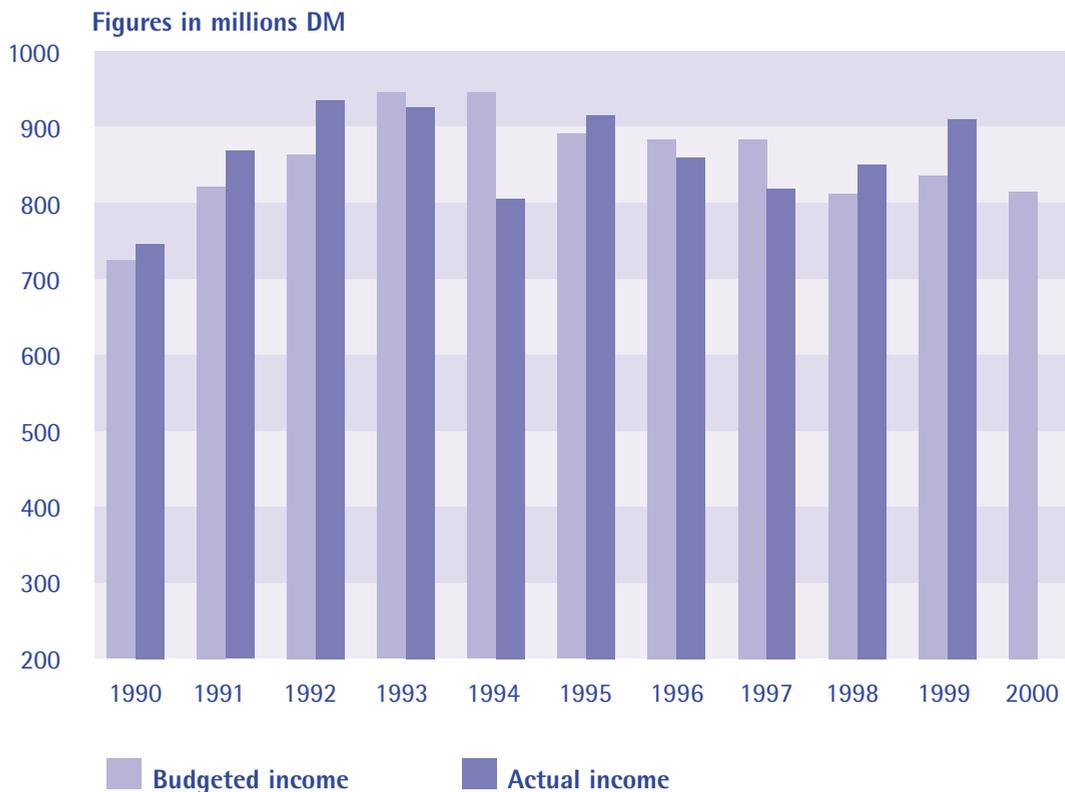
In the years 1970 to 1997 the Church of Westphalia lost about 20% of its membership, but also increased the number of its employees by almost 90%.

Changes in numbers of gainfully employed members in the Church of Westphalia 1973/1997 (source: Regional Church office statistics)

	1973	1997	% of increase
Employees in church and social welfare work	32,524	61,037	+87.7 %
Employees in church work (constitutional church entities)	18,027	24,024	+33.3 %
Theologically trained employees	1,498	2,258	+50.7 %

Here it must be recognised that for a long time, though membership decreased, income from church taxes was on the rise. However, this trend was broken several years ago (see graph below).

With reference to the year 1992, in which the Church of Westphalia received its highest income from church taxes – 933.1 million DM – the financial strength of the church has decreased almost continually.



2.

The prospective financial situation remains tense, even if in one budget year or another (as in 1999) there is a slight temporary recovery. A decisive factor in the long term is the demographic trend in members who are gainfully employed. And this is definitely on the decrease.

The significant influence of membership trends on the financial situation can be made clear, for example, through the following calculation:

The average amount of church tax paid per member of the Church of Westphalia, as of 1999, was about DM 326 per year. The loss of membership forecast until 2015, about 450,000 persons, indicates a loss of income of up to DM 150 million by 2015.

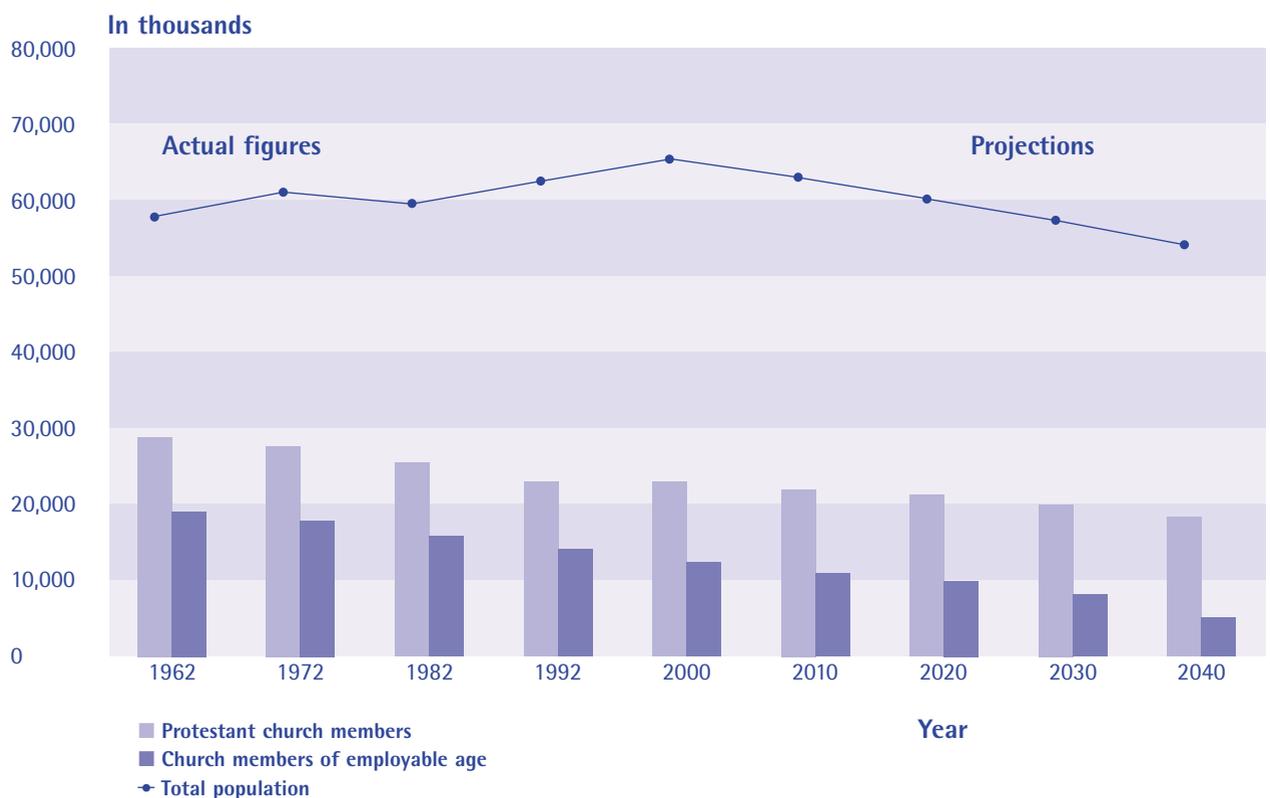
This unfavourable development is reinforced by two further trends:

- The solidarity tax and tax reforms have demonstrated that the great majority of members who have resigned from the church were those who paid church taxes.

- The proportion of older people in the society and in the church is growing steadily; that is, the number of those who actually pay church taxes is steadily decreasing (see graph below).

2.4.5. Structural problems and impediments to reform

The crises and challenges described in the preceding chapters have shown that the swift changes in the society are not passing over the Church of Westphalia. The definite decline in membership, the income from church taxes which increased at first but has been showing definite decreases since the mid-1990s, the decreasing numbers of participants in church programmes, the clearly



Structural development against the tide of prevailing conditions

greater readiness to resign from one's church membership, are only a few decisive points. During the same period, however, we have seen a steep rise in the number of full-time jobs in the church including those of pastors, the number of church congregations, and the number of preaching points and local church centres. Structural development is thus running completely against the decisive trends. Even so, especially in the Ruhr area, there are growing congregations around Münster, in Paderborn and in the upper Sauerland district.

Nevertheless, a majority of church districts overall will have to reckon with slumps in the average membership of local churches, in some cases quite drastic reductions.

Three-quarters of the Church of Westphalia's local churches, about 500, are already of a size which employ one or two pastors only. The smallest local churches have 500 members, the largest over 29,000.

If one enquires how these small local churches came to be, the rural community structure is often mentioned, or a particular Protestant minority situation in the area. However, these factors are not borne out by the statistics.

Independently of historical development, the stark differences in sizes of local churches, positions for pastors etc. cannot be explained in terms of traditional factors like urban versus rural areas or Protestant majority versus minority areas. It is particularly striking how little these factors are recognisably present in the case of size of local churches. Instead, it seems that regional traditions and other criteria play an important role, but one which is hard to demonstrate. For example, the small average size of parishes is especially striking in the Paderborn/Höxter, upper Sauerland district, Mark district and Olpe regions.

However, there is a definite urban-rural difference with regard to 1. numbers of pastors in specialised ministries and 2. the tendency to resign one's church membership.

1. In dense urban areas a much greater proportion of pastors are in specialised ministries, as opposed to pastors of congregations, than in rural areas. The main causes of this are surely, for one, the geographical nearness of local churches which makes it easier to reach activities shared among local churches, and for another the greater need and acceptability of specialised services which exist in competition with the programmes of non-church sources.

2. This aspect of competition is also reflected in the tendency towards resigning from the church. Positive identification with the Church of Westphalia is clearly less strong in the much more anonymous urban social structure than in the country, where "the church is still at the centre of the village."

Structural changes are also needed with regard to the district synods. At present, 11 of these synods have more than 150 members each. At this order of magnitude the working capability of the synod is quite limited. In addition, the large number of synod officers and committees depicts a wealth of church activities, but makes goal-oriented strategic action almost impossible.

3. A member-oriented church

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3.1. An example to begin with ...

A couple comes to the church office to arrange for their child to be baptised. That is, they try to arrange for their child to be baptised. First they are given the pastor's telephone number. After several attempts they finally reach him. They are told that the next possible date for a baptism is several weeks away. But they would rather not wait so long, and ask if a baptismal service on Saturday afternoon might be possible. They have heard of this as a solution in another local church. The pastor rejects this suggestion on principle – according to his theological understanding of baptism, it is an act of the congregation. Therefore a service “just for the family” is against the spirit of the Gospel. The family finds it hard to follow this argument. They are strangers to the Sunday morning congregation, but they could imagine a nice baptismal service shared with the other families in their parents-and-toddlers group. They fear that their child would disturb the Sunday morning service. And they don't want to wait several weeks. Since parents and pastor cannot find a compromise, the parents back off and decide to try another local church. When they ask their pastor for a transfer out of his congregation, they can feel his annoyance.

Awareness and appreciation of all members

The church has a lot of catching up to do in becoming aware of and valuing all its members. One of the problems the church has created for itself is that it often reacts to the expectations of members who don't consider themselves part of the “core congregation” in a regimented and unfeeling way. The church frequently gives the impression of a bureaucracy, which responds to its members' expectations according to a book of rules which are often hard to understand. Members react to this treatment with in-

creasing feelings of alienation, until they finally leave the church. And it is no way to gain new members.

3.2. Reversing the trend: three steps to growth

- Putting into practice a more member-oriented approach, giving all present members a chance to feel positive again about their membership: “I'm glad I'm in the church!”
- Winning back members who have left the church in the past.
- Winning over persons who have never been members of a Protestant church.

The first step is the hardest. By taking it, we can turn the corner. The two further steps must then follow gradually. This is why being “member-oriented” comes before the other considerations.

3.3. What does it mean to be member-oriented?

3.3.1. Theological aspects

The Gospel reaches, motivates and is the daily companion of more people than professionals or volunteers whose focus is inside the church often realise. It is part of the church's mission, in bringing the Gospel to all people, to be sensitive and open to these people and the manner of their faith.

Being member-oriented means to be aware of and respect all the ideas and patterns of thought which Christians have evolved which make their daily lives meaningful.

Being member-oriented means also seeing all church members as Christians, not only those who make themselves known or who make certain contributions.

3.

Being member-oriented in this context does not mean, however, trying to be all things to all members. The church is not there just to offer whatever someone wants.

3.3.2. Conversation face-to-face

Only through personal contact with people is it possible to know what moves them, what concerns them. Keeping faith as the subject of conversation is an important part of being member-oriented.

The picture of a member-oriented church is a church which relies on charisms, gifts and skills, which takes pleasure in its members. Being a member-oriented church means offering to be a presence which people can count on, one which makes possible conversation at “eye level”, face to face.

3.3.3. Implications for organising church work

In future a more strongly differentiated programme must be developed. Church congregations and institutions must have a basic programme, plus a variety of offerings which take into account the expectations of local people. This differentiation of the programme, however, calls for clearer and more manageable structures, so that members do not have to run or telephone around from pillar to post. Clear structures call for centrally located and reachable decentralised programme offerings and channels of information.

It is obvious that members with expectations create work! This recognition has consequences at the structural level. The church must structure its programme so as to provide spaces for contact, and have information materials available at the local level.

3.4. What is keeping us from being more member-oriented?

In the example described above, the pastor’s theological argument is not understandable from the viewpoint of the parents who want their child baptised. They certainly have a desire for community, but the community they see as theirs is not the congregation on Sunday morning, but rather the families in the parents-and-toddlers group. When the one group is valued more than the other, the result is de facto classification of members, in which only those who come on Sunday are full members.

Furthermore, the relationship to the congregation is not the only aspect of our church’s understanding of baptism. If a local church places that much value on the relationship to the congregation, it should be a matter of course that there are also ways to meet other expectations, and for example the contact with another congregation could be provided.

Perhaps the pastor does not have time on Saturday afternoon, or the organist cannot come. Neither can he give definite information about what possibilities may be offered in the neighbouring parish.

Organisational obstacles just happen, and cannot all be prevented. But then they should be treated as such. In any case, there should be ways to help the parents fulfil their wish to have their child baptised. This calls for consideration of their real interests.

3.5. Different ways of exercising church membership

The members of our church participate in church programmes, even today, in very different ways. It is more helpful, rather than making generalisations and value judgments such as “core congregation” and those who

Face-to-face conversation

have “distanced” themselves, to be more precisely aware of the various ways of exercising membership in the church and show respect for them. These are not to be seen as alternative forms of membership, but are combined in various ways by some groups of persons. Changing circumstances or particular situations in someone’s life can lead the person to look for a different intensity or form of participation.

1. Participation based on family background, exercised according to life situations and events (church-related participation)

Official ceremonies and important worship services in the church year, such as Christmas Eve, are appreciated and expected. Participation in religious instruction and confirmation classes is taken for granted. The church’s presence is desired in certain situations such as a hospital or a home for the elderly.

2. The church serves as the immediately available social space (local community participation)

This is mainly regular participation in such offerings as Sunday worship or group meetings (clubs and associations, women’s auxiliaries, choirs, Bible study, parent-toddler or youth groups, local church cafés, etc.) These are especially attractive to members who are tied down to the place where they live. The group opportunities in particular are made possible by members’ devoted volunteer work, often over many years.

3. Participation in groups for the sake of content, not necessarily near to where one lives

The sharing of a programmatic interest among like-minded persons is the main-spring of this form of participation. For such

projects or groups as special church music, asylum seekers’ groups or Internet cafés, some persons may travel considerable distances.

4. Groups in which participants share a particular piety or lifestyle, independently of where they come from

Even more devoted than those with common programmatic interests are groups whose members are committed to a particular piety or lifestyle, such as religious communities, house fellowships or Christian initiatives such as soup kitchens.

5. Participation which seeks competence in certain areas, educational, cultural, advice and social centres

For this form of participation, competence is the deciding factor. The programme offerings of social service and advice centres are regarded as professional services; persons attend precisely those they seek, and sometimes pay for them. Participation depends upon the quality of what is offered. This applies also to series of sermons (for example, “political preaching”) or projects in the arts.

6. Attendance for the sake of space and resources

Self-help groups, “Round Tables” or tenants’ groups, for example, are looking for respect from the church rather than supervision, and appreciate support in the form of available meeting rooms.

7. Participation as fulfilment of social responsibility

One way of conceiving of church membership is willingness to pay church taxes or make donations regularly. For these members the continued existence of the church

3.

is important, even though they do not participate actively in its programmes. This form of membership includes those who commit themselves to short-term or longer-term social causes (for example the “Green Ladies”).

3.6. A member-oriented programme

Our church offers a great variety of activities and programmes. At present it is not easy for staff working in the church to have an overview of this abundance of church activities, nor is it possible in the view offered to outsiders. This wealth of expressions of church life needs to be shaped into a network of interrelated activities, so that it is possible to have an overall view of it both from within and from outside.

This does not mean that every single local church must be a reflection of the entire network – to the contrary.

The church is a body with many interrelated and mutually interdependent parts. Nevertheless, a member-oriented church must make available to each local parish a basic programme which can be counted on by its members.

3.6.1. A basic programme

Every church congregation offers, on its own if it is large or in cooperation with other congregations if it is small, a basic church programme oriented to its members. What is the basic programme of a local church, offered to every member? What can a member count on finding in his or her church?

It includes worship, a Sunday children’s programme, dependable office hours, pastoral advice and counsel, a newsletter, a group for parents and children, weekends for youth, church school classes, and so on.

The basic programme is not to be confused with the tasks of the local pastor. The shared ministries, church offices, charitable and other institutions must each decide on a basic programme.

There must be a process of agreement in the Evangelical Church of Westphalia as to what this basic programme should include and at what level it should be found.

A proposal concerning it must be prepared for discussion at the regional church level.

3.6.2. A differentiated programme

In addition to the basic programme, there are other tasks for the church, in its local churches as well as in its shared ministries, which it must consider with an eye to the future. Each local congregation should think about how it can help, together with other congregations and with the shared ministries, to make possible a varied programme of offerings:

- a) a variety of worship services and other forms of spirituality;
- b) a programme of work with children and youth;
- c) initiatives to reach “the faithful unchurched”;
- d) promotion, support and recruitment of volunteer staff;
- e) a programme in fulfilment of its educational responsibility;
- f) a concept for the fulfilment of its social and diaconal responsibility and work with others in its local setting, planned and put into practice;
- g) a concept for effective public relations work, planned and put into practice.

A basic programme

A varied programme

Key tasks In addition, for each local church there are specific challenges, for which the congregation must find the right “key”. Every church body must find out what its particular challenges are, define the resulting key tasks (i. e. work with the homeless, or meetings for unemployed persons), and tackle them. Further key tasks should be developed in co-operation with other local churches and the shared ministries.

Finally, every member of our church in every locality must be able to get information about where to find every programmatic offering in the neighbourhood, in the area, in the church district, in the region, or in our entire church.

A single local church must be big enough to be able to offer the church’s basic programme, plus at least one “key” activity.

Complementarity between local church and shared ministries

This includes the ability to provide the necessary personnel. And it must be assumed that the basic programme and the key offering cannot both be carried by one person alone.

3.7. Member-oriented church work

The diversity of church programme offerings does not mean that they are in competition, but rather that local churches and shared ministries are both providing them equally. Each level offers its basic programme. However, for carrying out “key” tasks, networking makes sense:

- Shared ministries support the individual local churches.
- Local churches help one another, or undertake tasks on behalf of others.
- Shared ministries work together in a network.

In this way, shared ministries can often reach people whose interests are not met in the programme of their local church, or who do not want to have contact with it. They address church members for whom the church has become a place where they are not at home. Many people only participate in a community if it has a specific function. They decide consciously for certain forms of church work as the expression of their faith and action, and identify with those particular areas of work.

When the survey results for church districts are compared, it is clear that in urban areas there is a wider range of shared ministries than in rural areas. Current developments in the society, not only in urban areas, increase the challenges faced by the church, which are reflected in the diversity and differentiation of shared ministries.

In the public eye the church must appear as a unity. Therefore good teamwork and mutual complementarity between local churches and shared ministries are absolutely essential. But in practice this is not the case in many places. There is a lack of consultation, mutual loyalty and cooperation.

Staff members of shared ministries often experience a lack of awareness of their work in the local churches. Not enough use is made of the possibilities for working together. The local congregations themselves complain that what is offered is not sufficiently adapted to their way of doing things. Their staff fear that cooperation will make more work for them. The common goal of developing complementary forms of church work is not in sight.

There are often complaints that social welfare activities have moved further and further away from the local churches. On one hand, due to the increasing professional expectations and independence of social

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services, many social tasks which used to be carried out in local churches have been taken over by church district social welfare agencies or other sponsors. On the other, congregations do not show much interest in tasks which are not the responsibility of their presbytery. Opportunities to influence the content of the work are not taken up.

We need to rely on the local professionals at the local level, but we also need the specialised areas in which the shared ministries and the social welfare agencies work. If the church is to make its presence felt in our society in future, and to stimulate its future members to participate, we need a network of services and functions which are provided by all partners on an equal basis.

Network

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4.1. Volunteer work

Workers with God

The Biblical idea of the church community compares it to a body with many members (1 Cor 12.12ff.), in which no one organ can take the place of another. They are all equally important, and they need one another. In this sense, all persons who work in the church are workers with God, regardless of whether they are paid for what they do. Volunteer workers make available their time, their strength, their experience and their competence. Compared to other institutions in the society, readiness to do volunteer work is very high in the church.

According to Allensbach, around a third of all Germans are basically willing to volunteer for social service. This explains the great interest shown by young people in doing a year of voluntary social or ecological service.

Our church needs voluntary service. For the Church of Westphalia with its presbyterial-synodal structure, cooperation between full-time staff and volunteers has been essential from the beginning. The commitment of volunteers in the life of congregations, church associations and social welfare work is characteristic of the self-understanding of the church and its daily life.

There has been a rediscovery of the importance of volunteer work in today's society. However, this is a "new" voluntary service in both self-understanding and practice. In our Church of Westphalia, in the process of discussing the "Community of Women and Men in the Church", voluntary service has been intensively taken up as a main point of the discussion. The Regional Synod of 1994 adopted "Principles for volunteer work in the Church of Westphalia", to do justice to honorary, unpaid and voluntary commitment, including particularly that of women. Volunteer work is cherished in our church and deserves great recognition.

The process of discussion has continued in our church since 1994. After the nationwide campaign "Certification for Volunteer Work" by a number of women's associations in 1997, the governing board of the Church of Westphalia, following a pilot project with our Women's Auxiliary, decided to establish certificates for voluntary service and training to augment the "Principles for volunteer work in the Church of Westphalia" which were already in use. Forms for this purpose are printed in brochure form, to be available to all volunteers for personal use, as well as to sponsors of volunteer work for distribution to volunteers working in their sphere (i.e. local church, club or association). The sponsors are responsible for seeing that the "Principles for volunteer work" are distributed and respected along with the certificates among all full-time and volunteer staff. This booklet attesting to voluntary service rendered belongs in the hands of all those working in the Church of Westphalia and its offices and agencies, either as volunteers or as full-time staff who are responsible for directing volunteers. For example, if a local congregation is a sponsor, its presbytery can designate someone who is responsible for volunteer work to verify the accuracy of entries in the certification form for each person.

Voluntary service takes different forms:

Volunteer work

Those who freely offer their unpaid services are largely free to decide how much and what kind of work they will undertake, and a minimum of commitment and continuity is necessary. They work in local churches, initiative groups, social service agencies, hospitals, advice centres, telephone counselling etc.

Voluntary office-holding

This includes carrying responsibility and assignments on behalf of others, or the whole organisation, as a result of being elected or appointed to an office. Examples are representing the parents of a day care centre for children, or serving as a member of a presbytery or synod, the board or administrative council of a social welfare agency, an aid association or the board of a church foundation. Here a higher degree of commitment is expected, and as a rule for a longer time.

The following observations can be made:

■ Motivation for voluntary service

Volunteer workers usually receive a great deal personally from the work they do: discovery of their own capabilities, recognition of issues in their own lives, the experience of being needed, etc.

However, in recent years it has become less possible to take for granted that volunteer tasks can be passed on to the next generations.

The lack of voluntary service which we are increasingly seeing in our communities is due not only to trends in the entire society such as the growing tendency towards individualisation and changes in traditional roles, but also to institutional fatigue. This occurs especially among younger people, who say, it's fine to volunteer, but not in the old-time, self-effacing way; we needn't be at everyone's beck and call!

Today other motives for voluntary service have largely taken precedence. People are more definitely asking, What's in it for me? Voluntary involvement may arise from consciousness of social responsibility, and/or the expectation of personal enrichment.

Good examples of those who have in view a new motivation for voluntary service or office-holding are "volunteer agencies" which match up assignments and interested persons, such as new projects on behalf of the poor – see the "Tafel" in various cities (collection of no longer saleable but good food from markets and shops and making it available to the poor at appropriate prices), Hospice initiatives and the founding of local self-help groups.

Telephone counselling services succeed in finding volunteers through advertisements in daily newspapers. Through a selection process they gain persons who can become qualified through comprehensive training for this service. The supervision under which this demanding work is carried out helps make it so attractive that new candidates can always be found.

■ Consideration for the high proportion of women in volunteer work

Voluntary service performed by men in church and social welfare often takes the form of holding an "office", while the majority of those who do practical, social, helping work in the broadest sense are women. In spite of the double loads they carry, gainful employment plus homemaking and especially child-raising, many women are willing. However, they frequently can no longer commit themselves to long-term tasks, as many women used to consider it natural to do while raising their families. Spaces and possibilities must be created in which women feel that they are accepted by their church in the same way as any persons who want to limit the time they can offer. The tendency towards "project-related" volunteer work calls for a re-thinking of work done by full-time staff and volunteers together.

*"Caring for others arises from caring for ourselves."
(Wuthnow)*

■ Volunteers and full-time staff working together

Since the 19th century there has been an increasing development of paid jobs, which has pushed volunteers out of so-called helping positions. Voluntary service as the “natural expression of one’s faith” has been questioned in view of a call for more professionalism. Objectively the quality of church work has been (is being) raised, but this has made some volunteers feel that their work is now regarded as “second-class”.

This feeling is strengthened when the same work, because of strained finances or fluctuation in numbers, is given back in part or in full, at least temporarily, to volunteers (“Oh, so now we’re good enough after all!”). Here there are not enough convincing criteria for making the difference between paid and unpaid work. Volunteer work can be just as “professional” as paid work. In future there must be more emphasis on the promotion of volunteer work by full-time staff. Otherwise the Protestant church can develop in the direction of a church which only has full-time and part-time paid staff. On the other hand, volunteer “old hands” must be persuaded that professionalisation is necessary, so that they will not confront new full-time staff with “then let the paid employee do it, but she’d better do it twice as well as a volunteer!”

Recommendations

For the future organisation of volunteer work, the following recommendations are offered:

■ Voluntary service is indispensable to church life everywhere and in every field of action!

■ Every form of work in the church, paid or unpaid, calls for basic Christian attitudes in accordance with the Christian concept of humanity.

■ In addition, there should be sufficient space for (informal) recognition: for example, a party to say thank you to volunteers and their families, birthday visits and presents, honouring volunteers through installation in and retirement from service during a worship service or other suitable occasion (cf. Church Constitution, Art. 44), mentioning them in a press release or church newsletter.

■ The more responsibility a volunteer carries, especially in governing bodies, the greater the obligation should be for appropriate further education to be provided, or sought by the volunteer him- or herself. For example: “The Presbytery as Employer”, “Moderating a Presbytery”, or training for special tasks such as Finance Officer or Building Supervisor for the church.

■ It is true that most volunteers continue not to expect any payment for their efforts. However, the following should be regarded as matters of course:

- reimbursement for travel, mailing and telephone expenses and for materials for church work;
- full or partial reimbursement of fees for further education;
- a generally recognised system for recognition of volunteer time contributed and qualifications earned.

■ Volunteers should not have to come and ask for these things. Instead of their having to insist on their rights, it is the church which should come forward to fulfil them, in every place and every field of work!

■ Clear agreements should be made in advance regarding volunteers’ working hours, what is included in their tasks and which expenses will be reimbursed. In addition, the possibility for further education should be regularly offered (expenses paid) to volunteers, including any necessary child

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care during class time, and certification of successfully completed courses of study, or of volunteer tasks undertaken and/or hours of work contributed.

- Agreements made should be reviewed regularly.

- To combat the tendency towards decline in the number of volunteers, there must be a reevaluation of volunteer work of a very different sort from those carried out in the business world, including participation in planning, problem-solving, responsibility and decision-making. Guidelines for the whole church should be revised, establishing an obligation to create more uniform conditions and clearer lines of responsibility. These forms of participation help to express more strongly that volunteer work is valued.

- An open concept in every field of work, inviting participation, creates transparency for full-time, part-time and volunteer workers, strengthens the feeling of “we” and increases the identification of all staff with the area in which they work.

- The participation of volunteers in goal-setting, inventory and planning is indispensable. Thus an up-to-date list must be kept of all areas in which volunteers are needed, with their names and the amounts of time they have contributed. A member of the governing body must be specially delegated to do this. There should be an assembly of all volunteer workers at least once a year.

- Members of governing bodies and full-time staff should not take volunteers for granted. They should include them in the work as partners, and be respectful of the time which each volunteer is able to contribute.

Corresponding rules and instructions for full-time and volunteer staff, and training for both together, reinforce trust and cooperation.

- Increasingly we must reckon with volunteers who have only very limited time to give, for example for a single project such as a children’s Bible camp once a year.

Furthermore we must be aware that there are types of work which demand so much time and skill that they cannot be carried by unpaid volunteers, such as caring for the elderly, helping foreigners to become integrated, providing guidance to single parents. An evaluation should be made as to whether, in the course of time, experience and further education, a volunteer has acquired the equivalent of qualifications which would normally justify remuneration – especially when comparable service in other contexts, such as adult education teaching or workers’ welfare organisation, would be remunerated.

In fields in which volunteers work there must be cooperation between them and full-time staff. Instructions must make clear which tasks are for professionals and which can be undertaken by volunteers. Roles and assignments must be clearly designated and there must be communication about mutual expectations. Volunteer work must not be squeezed out by full-time staff. But the growing tendency to replace full-time staff with volunteers, for example as church janitor, or in youth work, must also be resisted.

Professionals also should not be allowed to push out other qualified employees (cf. Resolution 217, Regional Synod of 1997).

A feeling of “we”

4.2. Full-time employees

4.2.1. The community of service

The working community

Church life depends upon the work of all church members, on the diversity of their gifts and capabilities. This includes the work of women and men who are employed full-time in the church. Just as much as pastors and volunteers, full-time staff in church careers represent the church. Many fields in which the church is involved – especially the areas of social work, teaching and nursing – are increasingly influenced by demands for quality and legal requirements, and now require a higher degree of professionalism. By being specially qualified, church staff contribute to the church’s credibility in fulfilling its tasks appropriately. At the same time, the employees in these areas represent the Christian faith in a special way, and transmit it to others. In the classical area of worship life, professional church musicians promote high standards, the preservation of liturgical traditions and innovative musical projects. All these employees, of whom many have completed courses of training especially developed by the church, have a commitment to the mission, goals and tasks of the church.

Goal and task-oriented

The various groups of professional church employees are increasingly under the threat of having their jobs eliminated or their working hours reduced. The number of jobs in which church employees can make a living has been steadily decreasing in the past few years. This represents a loss to the church of well-trained, professionally qualified and church-committed persons. Even when structures are changed, a certain number of full-time personnel must be kept on. Opportunities to earn qualifications and career prospects must be further developed. The model of the “community of service” has been developed for the system of different services of the church working together.

“Service in the church is governed by the mission to proclaim the Gospel in word and deed. All women and men working in church and diaconal professions are co-workers in fulfilling this mission. The shared responsibility for service and social welfare work in the church binds office heads and employees together in a community of service, and commits them to trusting cooperation.” (Preamble to Staff Council Rules of the EKD, 1992).

The structures we have often made work together very difficult. In the spirit of the fourth thesis of the Barmen Theological Declaration of 31 May 1934, these structural hindrances must be reduced. Persons should be part of the mission of the church and its tasks in a setting of equality and not one of ranking and submission.

For people in different professional groups really to work together in the church, the goal should be to determine superior and subordinate roles in terms of task and skill requirements and not according to profession.

Another basic prerequisite for constructive work together as a church family, among different professional groups, is to introduce personnel policies in which the criteria are “goal and task-oriented”, “quality-oriented”, and “clearly structured”.

- All areas of work must be clearly and precisely described.
- The roles and lines of responsibility of employees who have received different kinds of training for work in the same field must be clearly discussed and agreed upon!
- Concept-related, transparent employment and personnel development plans and realistic middle-term needs planning at all church levels are among the tasks needed for

responsible and sustainable structuring. Furthermore, it is of basic importance for all employers in a church region to cooperate on an active personnel policy, in order to safeguard and develop fields of work and enable employees to plan their lives and careers.

The Evangelical Church of Westphalia is one of only a few regional churches which have adopted a regulation promoting the actual equality of women and men in the working world of the church. It considers the effective implementation of this ruling a necessity at state, district and local levels. Women are still experiencing discrimination, and that means there is not real equality of opportunity and sharing. This is especially noticeable in the low number of women in leadership and management positions.

4.2.2. Joint personnel planning and development

The consultations and decisions on finance and structure in recent years have undermined the sense of security of many employees at all levels of our church. Many have lost their jobs in the church, or have not been able to find the jobs for which they were trained in church-related institutions.

If we are to preserve church jobs and develop a high-performance church organisation, the competence and motivation of all employees serving the church must be strengthened. This includes continuing to develop definitions of specific tasks and demands made of church professions.

With this in mind, a comprehensive inventory has been made of the employment situation. The facts which have been learned should help develop transparency and our grasp of the overall picture, as well as a strategy for preserving jobs.

The different levels and relationships in our Regional Church must be structurally connected to form an intra-church employment market, in such a way that the church can present itself as a unified employer! The goal is an open job market in which it is easier to change from one field of work to another. This means in practice:

- Task-oriented personnel planning and development for all professional groups at the same planning level, including the pastoral ministry, with security for fields of work; none are to be suppressed. The necessary structures and regulations must be created.
- Integration of measures promoting equality of opportunity for women into personnel planning and development, as required by the rule on equality.
- Filling positions with employees whose training fits the job definition; janitorial duties are not to be combined with administrative tasks, and theologians not to be placed in educational jobs.
- Further education which enhances staff members' qualifications and furthers their careers, the right to supervision and reliable career planning are essentials for staff development!
- The church must continue to receive the benefit of its investment in training and further education for its employees, and of the professional knowledge they have gained.
- The narrow concentration of educational positions in local churches on work with children and youth must be overcome, for the benefit of other tasks such as adult education and counselling. Employers need information and help with definitions of various professions.

Equality of women and men

Strengthening of competencies

■ Wherever jobs have been refinanced using public funds (education, public youth work, day nurseries etc.), interest must be shown in these employees and their work as belonging to the work of the church. The danger of work in these areas becoming separate from the church must be combatted at the level of thinking about goals and concepts. The integration of these staff members into the church's work as a whole, into its communications and decision-making structures must be ensured.

A culture of appreciation and recognition

Last but not least, appreciation and recognition are important. A culture of recognition and promotion of its employees would become our church well, and should be developed!

4.3. Reforming the image of the pastor

In the first letter of Peter, the Christian community is described as "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation ..." which is to "proclaim the mighty acts of him" who called it "out of darkness into his marvelous light". (1 Pet 2.9) Within the community of all Christians, however, pastors constitute the group on whom the office of preaching the Gospel and administering the sacraments has been conferred in a special way.

This job is becoming more and more difficult, to the degree that church membership or talking about faith is becoming less natural in this day and age. Those in the pastoral ministry encounter the crisis of the church described above with every step they take.

Thus in almost all regional churches discussions are taking place on basic issues with regard to the pastoral ministry:

– How many theologians should there be in proportion to other church employees, and

in view of decreasing membership in local churches?

– Are pastors being properly trained for their demanding job?

– Aren't many pastors much too unworldly, in view of rapid developments in our society?

– Everyone is talking about quality, and every other area of work in the church has to be evaluated regularly – but who holds pastors accountable for the quality of their work?

4.3.1. On the current situation of pastors in Westphalia

Since the cuts were made in their salaries many of our pastors feel not only a particular financial loss, but also a loss of motivation, and that their commitment is not appreciated enough. Insecurity and a loss of trust characterise, for many, their relationship to the church. Many of those called to congregations experience the special situation of living in a parsonage, or perhaps the problem of finding any free time for their private lives, as difficult. Pastors working in specialised ministries usually have orderly work structures, but congregational life departments often make them feel second-class. Those who have decided to work part-time, or are ordered to do so by the mission department, are frequently confronted with expectations and demands which they can hardly fulfil within the time budgeted for them.

The group of pastors who are sent on home mission assignments, furthermore, have trouble understanding why their jobs are regarded as having caused the shift in the distribution of finances in recent years, but not all the jobs held by those who had studied theology. The next generation coming

from theological schools has been made very insecure by the “emergency brakes” being put on for reasons of personnel policy, which, however, was necessary. At the same time, access was being limited for further generations of young theology students. In addition, selection processes were introduced in which capabilities are being requested, for those wishing to serve as pastors, beyond the qualifications which can be acquired during the academic study of theology.

4.3.2. The pastoral ministry – an opportunity for the church

When church structures and the shape of the entire church change as a result of developments in the society, this is bound to have an effect on the pastoral ministry. Pastors continue to have great importance for the development of the church and the way it is perceived in the society. They are seen as trusted representatives of the church in public.

In member surveys and most published writings on the pastoral ministry in recent years, a key role for the church is thus attributed to them. Most of them are very conscious of this and, like other employees, promote intensively their work in local churches and specialised ministries.

Having made these observations we must now clarify, with reference to the mission of the church, which way the pastoral ministry should be developed in response to the contemporary needs of the church and the society.

The goal must be to take advantage of the particular opportunities which the pastoral ministry still represents for the church today, by meeting the needs for good training, valuing of commitment, promotion of capabilities, and clarification of tasks.

4.3.3. Definition of tasks in the church constitution and expectations from church members and the public

On consulting the Constitution of our church we find a broad spectrum of tasks defined for pastors (Art. 19–21, Constitution):

A. The pastoral ministry

Article 19

(1) The ministry of Word and sacrament is carried out primarily by pastors.

(2) 1 The call to the pastoral ministry establishes a life-long, public and legally-based working relationship. 2 The working relationship normally begins with the first assignment to the position of pastor in a congregation, a church district, a church association or the Regional Church.

(3) Raising the funds for the pastor's salary and benefits, and providing a flat for him or her, is the responsibility of the body in which he or she serves.

(4) The educational requirements and employment rights of pastors are established by church law.

Article 20

(1) 1 It is the task of pastors to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to administer the sacraments. 2 They must provide instruction in the faith and pastoral care.

(2) 1 Pastors are called to lead the congregation, sharing this responsibility with the members of the presbytery. 2 They serve as ex officio members of the presbytery.

Article 21

(1) 1 The particular tasks of the pastor include leading public worship and performing the rites of the church. 2 They must practise pas-

Person and vocation

toral care, including home and hospital visits, with words of comfort and admonishment. 3 They should receive personal confessions with the promise of God's forgiveness. 4 They should promote and take part in church work with children, youth and adults, that the church's mission may be fulfilled and love and justice may reign.

(2) 1 Pastors have a duty towards the ministry of the whole church, insofar as this does not interfere with duties to their congregations. 2 They can be assigned tasks outside the congregation by the governing bodies of church districts and the Regional Church. 3 Pastors have a duty to participate in pastors' conferences held in their district.

(3) The duties of a pastoral ministry are established by a job description which is drawn up by the local presbytery and must have the approval of the Regional Church office.

Expectations

In addition to these tasks there are many expectations, some justifiable, some impossible to fulfil. Pastors should also be:

Credibility

knowledgeable in different areas such as social welfare, education, pastoral counselling, etc.; able and committed in thinking along with church members in their professional and family worries; spiritual directors or social directors, whatever people are looking for; able to discuss the needs of schools and hospitals; skilled newsletter editors and press relations professionals; managers, but also everyone's brother or sister; an impressive example to others, but at the same time "one of us".

However, all this should not lead to their being subjected to overwhelming demands, to being "on duty all the time". This has especially to do with how much free time pastors should have, and the issue of credibility.

Precisely because, for pastors, the person and his or her calling are so closely and indivisibly interwoven, the private life and free time of a pastor deserves special protection, even from the church and its governing bodies. Because this problem often affects not only the pastor's own person, we should mention here what the ministry means for the families of pastors. The pastors' wives' organisation of the EKD wrote in 1993:

"The parsonage ... is a sign of the presence of the church in the home life of the members of the local church. This is a value which should not be let go carelessly ... Despite the advantages, the disadvantages for the pastor's family of having to live in the parsonage should not be overlooked ... Often there is no separation between the pastor's work space and the private rooms, making it difficult to have a private home life ... The family experiences a high degree of social control. The long tradition of the parsonage still influences expectations that its inhabitants lead an exemplary moral life ..." (*).

Particularly the last aspect, the credibility of pastors (and their families) is a controversial topic of discussion.

"Because our pluralistic society no longer seems to recognise a canon of values, there is a stronger need for moral standards and orientation. And especially when there are few basic convictions about what is needed for a successful community life – such as protection of life, dependability of relationships, trust in contracts and promises – when these norms are violated it is that much more painful ... An institution cannot teach values anonymously. They must be represented by persons ... on the other hand, we must not make persons into idols. This goes for pastors, and not only with regard to expecting infallibility. If we demand that they live a dignified and spotless life, we will destroy them with our expectations, force them into

(*) From *Veränderungen im Pfarrhaus* (Changes in the Parsonage), an article by the pastors' wives organisation of the EKD, Mühlheim, 1993 – pp 21f.

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hypocrisy, create an atmosphere in the parsonage that can mean psychic destruction, at least for the second generation ... The true witness to the faith says: do not believe in us, but in God. Then the way in which people live can be authentic, for it is oriented towards the Gospel.” (*)

4.3.4. A basic guide to pastoral theology, based on an understanding of the church

In view of this almost incomprehensible mass of tasks and expectations, it is high time we brought the picture of the pastoral ministry into focus and set some clear priorities. However, this can only be done in the context of the overall mission of the church.

The distinction is helpful which the Reformation made between the general priesthood of all the baptised (sacerdotium) and the special office (ministerium) to which a congregation calls individuals from its midst. The two offices are related and refer to one another. The special office is to be respected and highly valued; it is necessary because the congregation grows from and is edified by preaching and sacraments (Confessio Augustana [CA] V). At the same time, the special office belongs within the congregation (CA VII) and is a service among other special services in the congregation. It is a public office (CA XIV). “Public” means here that the office relates to the whole congregation and is performed as a special responsibility towards the congregation.

Contemporary literature on pastoral theology makes many suggestions for the organisation of the pastoral ministry. It makes little sense to propose a single model for the entire Church of Westphalia. Instead there should be a process of development of models which could help congregations, church districts, and church institutions to clarify which pas-

toral-theological model is most suitable with reference to the membership and/or the local conditions (such as a Protestant minority situation), or which approaches should be used in combination.

These considerations give rise to a series of general stipulations regarding the basic personal attitudes of pastors, which are also applicable to many other professions, such as credibility, friendliness, trustworthiness.

■ Other fundamental prerequisites for suitability as a pastor are enjoyment of being with people and a particular ability to communicate. These in turn give rise to such important criteria as personal adaptability, ability to handle criticism and conflict, conscious dealing with strengths and weaknesses (in oneself and others) and with different roles, collegiality and ability to work in a team, and flexibility in working in different settings.

■ With this background, an appropriate missionary performance of pastoral duties becomes possible, which is especially important for the future of the church: readiness to preach the Gospel with care, seeking to attract people and persuade them of its helpfulness for their lives, in a manner oriented towards the hearers of any age, and independent of any particular piety. This with respect for different forms of church membership and those who think differently, readiness to win over new members and to join in dialogue in a common search for the truth.

■ Finally, identification with and attachment to the institutional church is an indispensable prerequisite for pastors.

Besides the necessary basic attitudes, the pastoral ministry calls for knowledge and skills related to carrying out pastoral duties, which may be described as follows:

Bringing the image of the pastoral ministry into focus

(*) From Manfred Kock, *Altes Bild in neuem Rahmen? (An Old Picture in a New Frame?)*, in: *Kirche braucht Bildung (Education Needed in the Church)*, ed. Hans-Martin Lübking, 1998 – pp 113f.

Basic attitudes
Knowledge
Skills

Theological competence

The power of theological judgment, reflection, reasoned argument and dialogue with those of other minds, integration of theological insights into one's life, construction of meaningful patterns of understanding, persuasive advocacy of one's own position

Spiritual awareness

Spiritually-oriented; cultivation of personal faith and transmission of it to others in daily work, responsible planning and practice of worship with regard to both liturgy and preaching, having the congregation share in worship planning; ability to speak the language of religion

Skill in pastoral care

Sensitivity to one's own behaviour in communicative relationships, sensitivity and empathy for others' situations, ability to conduct a guidance conversation in an aware and professional manner, readiness to be there for others, ability to make the Christian faith relevant in interpersonal relationships

Teaching skills

Consideration for the didactic and methodical aspects of all areas of the pastoral ministry; ability to be thoughtfully open and offer support to learning processes, consideration of the target group in educational work, ability to make use of psychological and sociological insights, pedagogically responsible transmission of the Christian faith in schools, confirmation classes and in congregational educational activities

Social and diaconal awareness

Awareness of social, cultural and political realities, knowledge of the conditions of the welfare state, readiness for concrete involvement, help and guidance; identification with social welfare work as an essential part of church life

Ecumenical awareness

Awareness of the breadth and diversity of Christian faith and life, readiness to be open to other confessional identities while affirming one's own, readiness to expand one's ecumenical knowledge and enable others to do so, introducing the ecumenical dimension into concrete actions, openness to inter-confessional and interreligious dialogue

"Cybernetic" skills

Capacity for planned and goal-oriented action, for self-organisation, priority-setting, being future-oriented; leadership and guidance skills, knowledge of different methods (for example in moderating a meeting, teaching, group processes), ability to check the results of one's work, basic knowledge of administration, finances, law and building construction

Attitudes as well as knowledge and skills are important factors in the employability of pastors, besides the qualifications they have earned in their theological studies. However, they cannot just "study it" once and "pass a test in it" once for all. It is rather a question of development throughout one's training and regular deepening and broadening through further education.

4.3.5. Reforms at the local church level

The tasks of the pastoral ministry are dependent on the field of work.

■ Pastoral tasks include the core tasks which are common to all, plus the emphases in each case. Neither can be clarified generally and independently of the field of work, but every pastor must examine the relationship of common core tasks and personal emphases, in thinking about his or her job. The core tasks must not expand to the point of not allowing any time for particular emphases, but neither should the latter lead to neglect of the core tasks.

4.

Concept – job description – explanation of tasks – setting of working hours

■ Every congregation needs a congregational concept, which is regularly reviewed and updated. Like all other employees, a pastor should have a needs profile and job description for his or her job. This should make the distinction between core tasks and specific tasks, as no pastor must or can be responsible for everything. Every pastor also receives a set of instructions in which the tasks which he or she is to perform are described concretely. The Regional Church should provide model sets of instructions for congregational use.

■ Special attention should be paid to part-time jobs for pastors, which require that the list of assignments be reduced.

■ The proportion of administrative, leadership and management tasks should not exceed 15% of a pastor's working hours. When it is necessary to relieve a pastor of such work to allow more time for pastoral activities, this can be done by transferring administrative tasks to suitable staff members in an institution, local church or association of local churches. In each case, the service structures which are present (administrative offices, synod services etc.) must be so organised that they can be used for appropriate specialised tasks. In addition, it is recommended that combined staffs be organised within an association of neighbouring local churches, as a helpful way to organise the work within local churches and beyond.

■ Besides further education for specific tasks, an appropriate qualification is needed for those pastors who have responsibility for managing an office and personnel. Superintendents should ensure this in their supervisory role. A special problem is the possibility of conflicts between the roles of pas-

tor and of superior. Training and further education for pastors should include reflection on this problem of roles, so that they can deal with it properly.

■ In the spirit of a presbyterial-synodal church, some work at regional and higher (i.e. district/programme planning region) levels should be expected of every pastor. The amount of this work should be concretely defined in the job description in relation to other tasks, and securely established in practice.

■ In the pastoral ministry it is difficult if not impossible to establish firm working hours, because the vocation pertains to the whole person and his or her whole life. Nevertheless, pastors need time to themselves, also in order to work competently – free time for private relationships, to practice their personal spirituality, to rest. According to law this is granted them, but at present it does not get enough consideration in actual daily life. Thus when the pastor's instructions are drawn up, care should be taken that with the list of tasks goes a realistic time frame, and that the governing bodies stand behind it. The educational institutions should provide the necessary knowledge of time management.

■ The principle of productivity which is in general use in labour relations under public law should apply to pastors, when the special character of pastoral ministry has been taken into account. First of all, measures must be provided which give information to pastors themselves as well as their employers about their achievements, both quantitative and qualitative, in fulfilling their tasks. To promote quality even in the pastoral ministry there should be reflection at regular intervals regarding pastors' work, in the form of congregational consultations, supervision, conversations with the Superintendent, reports etc.

Congregational concept to be reviewed

Realistic limits on working hours

Filling pastoral positions

Needs profile

■ “In order not to have to develop standards for choosing (a pastor) beginning from what the applicants offer, and then start floundering, the expectations of the congregation or church institution should be clarified before the position is advertised.

A needs profile contains the requirements for characteristics and competencies of the person who is to hold the position. It is helpful to define these requirements unambiguously ...” and “throughout the process to take care that ...” the needs profile “does not get changed along the way.” (*1) Besides the aspects having to do with content, this also includes the question as to whether the position can be advertised as full-time or part-time (shared).

■ Many congregations are still oriented, in seeking a pastor, to certain lifestyles or family models, and to the idea of the husband as the full-time professional and his wife working as a volunteer in the congregation. It is time to overcome this one-sided picture of the pastoral ministry. “Our church constitution says in several places that we seek to give equal consideration, as far as possible, to women and men. The same goes for applicants for positions as pastors, especially if (more) men or women occupy the other positions in the same local situation.” (*2) Presbyteries which have to choose a new pastor should prepare themselves carefully for the task, and may need the guidance of qualified persons and the synod executive committee (cf. § 3, paragraph 4 of the Regulations on Filling Pastoral Vacancies).

Availability/residence requirement

■ Through the division of times to be on call for pastoral emergencies among a combined staff of pastors, and of different office hours in neighbouring local churches, as well as

using certain technical aids, the greatest possible availability can be arranged. There must be a schedule of times when each pastor is personally available. Positive experiences with models of these arrangements should be shared so that they can be put to use everywhere. The schedule agreed among pastors for days on call and days off, and places where people can come for help, should regularly be made public, i. e. on a special page in the church newsletter.

■ The obligation to live within the local church area must absolutely be retained for reasons of availability. However, congregations should discuss ways in which the problems connected with living in the parsonage can be alleviated. The obligation to live in the apartment provided can be fulfilled in different ways by different persons.

The increasing number of enquiries from pastors and congregations, as to whether the apartment provided to a pastor as parsonage can be given up, point to a strong need for clarification and decision. In principle there are certain minimum requirements of the pastor’s home, derived from the character of the pastoral ministry: the possibility for a pastoral conversation in an appropriate atmosphere (confidentiality), and the need for all members of the local church to be able to reach the pastor’s home easily (openness). In future, the pastor’s obligation to live in the apartment provided must be reviewed by congregations and church districts with reference to its appropriateness for them. Whether the work and structures of the local church are harmed, enhanced or untouched cannot be decided in a uniform way for the entire Regional Church, but must be evaluated in a responsible way by each congregation and district. A new basis should be created for this in the regulations.

Availability

(*1+2) *Eine Pfarrstelle wird frei ... was ist zu tun? (A Pastor's Position is Vacant ...*

What Must We Do?) Information for Presbyteries on Choosing a Pastor, published by the church office of the ECW, 1999, p. 7

4.3.6. Reforms at church district level

At the level of the church district there is also a need for agreement on goals, emphases and programme offerings. Within the framework of an overall concept, it should be clarified which programmes should be carried out in local churches and which in shared ministries. The church district is the level at which this should be planned. Services offered at local church level and through shared ministries should be linked together in a network.

4.3.7. Reforms at the regional church level

Training, continuing and further education

■ The training of pastors must provide them with the qualifications described above and develop the gifts they bring. The corresponding needs profile and the standards to be met must be made plain from the beginning of the course of study. The educational concepts being used must therefore be reviewed regularly and changed if necessary. Even in the earliest stage of training a sound, demanding programme of theological study should be more strongly related to practice. In the middle of the programme there should be a thorough period of “field work” in a local church which is carefully evaluated, so that it will become clear early enough whether the student has the interest in and aptitude for the pastoral ministry.

■ The new concept of training during service as a vicar needs to be evaluated regularly, so that weaknesses can be recognised in time and changes made before it is too late. The pastor of the congregation should be more involved in these deliberations than has been the case. In order not to keep loading new elements of pastoral training onto

the period of work as a vicar, a coherent concept must be developed for training and continuing education of pastors.

■ Continuing and further education must be made obligatory during the early years of a pastoral ministry. In certain areas, continuing education concepts in relation to the person and to the job should be developed and offered to pastors.

Personnel and job planning issues

■ Solutions should be found to avert the threatened entrenchment of differences in status among the theologically trained. Consideration should be given to making certain positions into project or staff positions, with fixed terms and clearly defined tasks. Like other areas of church work, these are subject to goal-setting and review with reference to goals.

■ Superintendents, directors of personnel and congregational mentors must be able to make recommendations which are taken into consideration in applications and in filling positions.

■ In the spirit of a “culture of change”, and as is recommended in the rules of the Evangelical Church of the Union, pastors who have been in one position for 10 years should be advised to move. More frequent changes than is currently the practice make sense, so that individuals do not sway a local church or institution too long in a particular direction. The Church of Westphalia should create a regulation in this regard, and the entirety of the regulations regarding filling of pastoral positions should be re-examined.

■ For the sake of further development of local churches and church districts, it would make sense to have a regulation permitting a change of pastors when necessary for cooperation among or merging of two or more

“Culture of change”

local churches, or when a local church is no longer of adequate size to have its own pastor.

■ Structures must be created for representation and promotion of personnel, which make possible advice, information and negotiation outside of the workplace.

Part-time service

■ Pastors who serve part-time are particularly likely to bring knowledge of other areas of life and special competencies to their pastoral role. This is a reason to continue promoting the possibility of part-time pastoral ministries. Part-time service on a voluntary, fixed-term basis can be very satisfying for a pastor. But it presents problems as an instrument of personnel and financial policy, because it makes the pastor's identification with his or her work and employer more difficult.

Employment relations under public law

■ The resolutions currently in force place some pastors sent on home mission assignments in difficult economic situations (50% of those in salary category A 12). Their part-time employment and duties should be so described that they can accept additional part-time work.

■ Pastors who have retired should avoid doing anything to make the work of their successors more difficult (cf. rules for pastoral service § 57).

■ The Regional Synod of 1996 charged the church leaders to "find ways in which the principles of equal treatment can be made as effective as possible for pastors, vicars and preachers of both sexes." This review has not yet been carried out. Until its results have been obtained, the Regional Church office should report regularly on the proportions of women and men employed as pastors, by church district. (latest figures, for 1999: 228 female pastors, of whom 176 are full-time, 52 part-time; 1,264 male pastors, of whom

1,189 are full-time, 75 part-time; 1 full-time female pastoral personnel manager, 8 full-time male pastoral personnel managers; no figures for pastors in probationary serve). These data document the need to implement the Synod's resolution, which it reaffirmed in 1999. In addition, all legal measures are to be exhausted in cases where applications by equally qualified women for advertised positions are not given the same consideration, in the selection of candidates and in the process of voting, as those of men.

Employment and compensation rights

■ Employment as pastors confers certain rights and defined duties upon those employed. In accepting and fulfilling the duties of their office, pastors enter into an employment relationship under public law.

■ The salaries paid to pastors should remain oriented towards those in civil service.

■ If salary cuts are unavoidable, employers should see if it is possible to provide compensation, such as an increase in holiday and further education time.

5. Management practices at all levels

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5.1. The problem

The Evangelical Church of Westphalia is structured according to the presbyterial-synodal order. Congregations and church districts have responsibility for their own affairs. They must observe the church constitution, other church regulations and the laws of the state which are binding on everyone. The local churches are grouped in districts, which all together make up the Evangelical Church of Westphalia. These various levels are related to one another and bound up with one another for purposes of formulation of objectives and decision-making processes. The presbyterial-synodal order has proved its usefulness; it allows considerable room for modern management practices.

A survey of all 33 church districts in summer 1999 showed the following problems in the area of management responsibilities:

- A management crisis is noted, encompassing all bodies and levels (too little strategising in the governing bodies), which is attributed particularly to insufficient definition of roles and lack of business management.

- The size, composition and terms of office of governing bodies were very frequently mentioned as problems.

- Governing bodies were criticised for concerning themselves with individual problems and small details of operational tasks and thus not being in a position to practice effective, strategic and conceptual management.

- It was noted that committees very often do not have a clear definition either of their task or of their competence to do it.

- There were complaints that in many cases office-holders lack personal qualifications and competence, or enough time, to fulfil their assignments. Volunteer office-holders too are often not in a position to do justice to the full extent and the many aspects of their tasks.

- It was pointed out that in many areas the rules for administration (for example in approval of requests) are too inflexible.

5.2. Responsible management as strategic management and as direction of personnel

Responsible management is carried out in two ways:

- Strategic management is perceiving and analysing the actual areas of work, formulating goals (spiritual leadership) and strategies for attaining them, planning which measures to take and evaluating them with reference to the goals set.

The presbyterial-synodal order of the Evangelical Church of Westphalia assigns strategic management tasks to specific bodies: local churches are managed by presbyteries, districts by district synods and by their executive committees on their behalf, and the Regional Church by the Regional Synod and by the Church Board on its behalf.

- Direction of personnel and staff means implementing the strategic decisions through the work assigned to staff and to volunteers. It includes making a plan of operation (division of the work into its parts), choice and further training of workers (personnel development), resolving conflicts, and regular review of the work accomplished (yearly evaluation, individual discussions with staff).

*Strategic management
in governing bodies*

*Direction of staff
by their superiors*

The constitution of the Evangelical Church of Westphalia assigns the direction of its work force to specific positions, thus to specific individuals as having supervisory duties. As a rule these persons are also members of the governing bodies: the moderator of the presbytery, the pastor, the Superintendent hold important supervisory positions, but by no means the only such in our church.

5.3. Strategic management as the improvement and safeguarding of quality

How can strategic management be carried out responsibly?

Essential goals of strategic management are safeguarding and improving the quality of church work. To do this, the following steps are required:

- The governing bodies must clearly define standards and require that they be met. This includes the type and extent of the church programme (basic and diverse elements), as well as the way in which it is carried out and evaluated. This is to be done at four levels:

- How does the programme offered represent the mission and programme of the church? (focus on the church's image)
- To whom is the programme offered (focus on the church members)
- Who carries out the programme? (focus on those who work in the church)
- What resources are available? (focus on the church's finances)

- The management and decision-making structures must make possible the continuous planning, review and improvement of the type and extent of the programme.

- The work of management structures must be documented and the programme must be

carried out in a concept-oriented way, so that there can be transparency both internally and externally.

How can the governing bodies be supported in their work?

The responsibilities and competencies of presbyteries, church districts, and district executive committees, as well as of the Regional Synod and Church Board, must be focussed on the essential content of the work of the church and on theological issues and questions of principle for the church. Changes will be needed in the way presbyteries and district synods work and in the areas of work for which they are responsible (Church constitution, Articles 56 and 57 on the presbytery, Article 87 on the district synod), and they must delegate ongoing administrative matters as follows:

- in local churches: for example to committees, the moderator of the presbytery, officers of the congregation

- in districts: for example to committees, to the district synod executive committee, to the Superintendent or the church district office.

In future, all governing bodies should have business management support. For a local church this can be carried out by the pastor as part of his or her responsibilities, and by a local church office with appropriate staff. For a church district, this is the task of the Superintendent's or administrative office.

How large should governing bodies be, and how should they best be composed?

The number of persons serving on presbyteries and district synods, and their makeup, need to be examined critically with a view to their effectiveness and efficiency.

*Safeguarding of quality
Improving quality*

*Composition of
presbyteries and
district synods*

The following questions are to be asked:

■ Size and term of office:

In addition to the minimum number established in Article 40 of the Church constitution, should there be a top limit for the number of those serving on a presbytery? Should there be a top limit for members of a district synod?

If the term of office for presbytery members were made shorter, for example 4–5 years, following the example of municipal administrations, would it make this job more attractive?

■ Composition and qualifications:

In future, should all serving pastors continue to be ex officio members of their presbyteries and/or district synods? Should other full-time church employees continue to be excluded from membership on presbyteries?

How can we ensure that the gifts and qualifications of members of governing bodies and their committees are really taken into consideration?

How can regular continuing education for presbyters be ensured? (constitution Article 113, paragraph 3)?

How can younger members of the congregation be motivated to serve as presbyters?

■ Moderation and business management:

What instruments must be created for the support of the moderator of a presbytery, so that presbyters will see this task as within their reach and will be more often willing to undertake it?

Could it contribute to the continuity and efficiency of presbytery work if an especial-

ly qualified pastor also could be re-elected as moderator?

Would it be helpful for larger congregations if a “business management committee” were formed within the presbytery?

How can the work of their governing bodies be made transparent for congregations and for church districts?

How can committee work be improved?

Articles 73, 74 and 102 of the Church constitution provide for committees to be formed at the congregational and district levels. This way of dealing with specialised tasks relieves the burdens on the governing bodies and is to be encouraged in the interests of efficiency. However, there should be only a few committees, so that there will be enough qualified persons available to serve on them.

■ Each committee should have a precise description of its duties. This should include the decision-making powers delegated to it, along with the procedures for steering and evaluation of results, budgeting, goal-setting, checking progress and quality, and regular reporting. These procedures ensure feedback to the governing body.

■ To the degree to which the governing body’s work is entrusted to the committees, the professional functioning of the work is enhanced, and the bodies themselves can focus on the essentials, when ongoing business is taken care of in the committees.

■ Committee chairpersons are also the ones to be consulted in their particular areas of work, so that it is not necessary to name persons to be responsible for these areas. This does not mean that individuals need never be asked to take over particular assignments.

Precise description of committee's tasks

5.

- In future it should be presbyteries and executive committees of district synods which appoint persons to jobs, and not the district synods themselves.

- Special tasks should be undertaken by project teams appointed to serve for a fixed time period. Working in this way not only suits the needs of many qualified volunteers, but also makes it possible to define a task and its accomplishment clearly.

What suggestions can be given for ongoing management?

Every congregation, every district, the Regional Church and every church institution can use the following questions in strategically evaluating its areas of work and its programme offerings:

- What do we now have on our programme, and when and why was it begun? What are the specific tasks and problems of our local church or institution or shared ministries?

- How many people come? Which persons? (Age, occupation, how closely related to the church, etc.)

- What do these people feel that they gain from this part of the programme?

- How many people are involved as full-time or part-time staff, or as volunteers, in preparing and carrying out this programme item? How much time do they invest? Does the relationship between the effort and the return on it make sense?

- What resources (financial, space, etc.) are available for this programme item? Does the relationship between the investment and the return on it here make sense?

- Which parts of the programme are going well, and where are there difficulties?

- What are the goals and what is the value of these activities in relation to the fundamental mission of the church? Where are we not doing enough, and what needs are we failing to meet altogether?

- What are our ideas for the future? What goals shall we set for ourselves?

On the basis of the answers to these questions, the presbytery or other governing body decides, together with paid staff and volunteers (and outside help if they choose), what should be continued, what should be dropped, what should be improved, and what new activities might possibly be initiated.

An annual planning meeting can be a means to the necessary inventory. Topics would be goals, progress towards their accomplishment, and new ideas. Minutes should be taken and read at the next planning meeting.

- Local churches: The district Superintendent or a specially appointed officer should hold annual planning meetings with each presbytery and all shared ministries in the district.

- Districts: The Regional Church through its District Officers should hold annual planning meetings with the executive committee of each district synod and with all offices and agencies.

What consequences must necessarily be drawn from these discussions?

Presbyteries and governing bodies of shared ministries must be enabled to take strategic action, in these ways:

- Setting up a business committee to prepare and carry out operating tasks.

Project teams

Planning meetings are necessary

Governing bodies must be enabled to take strategic action

- Planning for mutual consultation and support.

- Reorganising administrative procedures to be more flexible and user-friendly, in view of setting up business committees for governing bodies.

- Advice and support to congregations, districts and church institutions in developing and implementing quality profiles, by offices and agencies of the Church of Westphalia, using the services of outside consultants as needed.

- Introducing required standards for the conduct of planning meetings, and for the qualifications of those to be in charge (Superintendents and District Officers from the Regional Church office).

Presbyteries and shared ministries governing bodies should be enabled to carry out their supervisory and monitoring functions, in these ways:

- Naming of bodies and persons, at congregational as well as district/institutional level, to be responsible for reviewing the standards of quality which have been agreed.

- Visits to every congregation every five years, in a simplified process to be carried out by the district. Simple and effective forms for use by districts need to be developed by the Regional Church office. Comparable time periods and corresponding forms would be agreed for districts and church institutions. This should be established in a revised set of regulations for visitation.

- continuous recording of successes and changes needed through standardised reporting (for example, annual reports).

Clear job descriptions, clear structures, goal-setting, personnel development

The appropriate standards and documents are to be developed by the Regional Church office, as follows:

- Preparation of test sheets (“user tests” or “feedback sheets”) to be filled in as an evaluation of church work by participants in events and by “outside persons”.

- reorganising administrative procedures to be more flexible and user-friendly with regard to the supervisory and evaluating functions of governing bodies.

5.4. Direction of personnel for improvement and safeguarding of quality

How can direction of personnel be carried out responsibly?

Quality-oriented direction of personnel is guided by the following four criteria:

- Clear job descriptions

Concrete tasks and lines of responsibility, based on concepts and agreed goals, must be described and job descriptions written for volunteers, paid staff, pastors, Superintendents, officials of the Regional Church, etc. These are then used in needs profiles for vacancies to be filled and in instructions for staff in the context of their workplace. They also promote transparency and help in overcoming conflicts having to do with structures.

- Clear structures

Workplace and professional supervision of personnel are to be unambiguously organised and defined by the content of the work. Wherever there is responsibility for management, its extent and specific assignments are to be defined and understandably set down in writing for both sides. Managers are

to have appropriate qualifications for their jobs as managers. The place of management in the overall structure of an organisation should be made clear and understandable, through an organigram, for everyone involved.

■ Goal-setting and review

Supervisors and employees (pastors, teaching and other staff) should make concrete plans together in individual or team discussions. They should set interim goals toward the implementation of overall goals, for well-defined time periods. Goals must be concrete, realistic, and it must be possible to check whether they have been accomplished. In this way the assignments agreed among staff can be competently fulfilled. In some cases training and combinations of various competencies are called for. When the time specified in the plan has ended, staff should check together whether the goals have been reached before doing any further planning.

■ Personnel development

At least once a year each employee should meet with his or her superior (director of an institution with each employee, Superintendent with each pastor, Regional Church District Officer with each district Superintendent, etc.). From both sides there should be reactions to their work together, open sharing of expectations and wishes, and ideas for development possibilities. Individual plans for further education, about which both sides have ideas, should be agreed at this time.

Supervisors are to check that employees fulfil their obligations for continuing education. Personnel departments must keep the needed information available in a data system. Supervisory staff should be trained in conducting these discussions with employees. At the level of district management or

other regional bodies, persons must be appointed whose job includes planning for personnel development (needs planning, needs profiles, recruitment, updating of job plans, etc.); a network of continuing education institutions should be available to them. Personnel managers should also develop their departments' expertise in their field.

How can supervisory staff be supported in their duties?

For supervisors to be able to carry out directly the responsibilities described above, they should not be directly supervising more than 15 persons. In this way they can meaningfully deal with personnel development as well as supervision and pastoral care.

The survey of the districts brought out clearly the problem of combining supervision and pastoral care, for staff members with supervisory responsibilities. This combination should continue to be expected of them, but it is urgently necessary that they be required to receive training for it.

Under present customary ratios of employees to supervisors, it is impossible for them to have the regular individual meetings needed for supervision and personnel development. The usual ratios of Superintendents to full-time staff, including pastors, of 1:30 up to 1:100, lead instead, to a large degree, to an absence of supervision.

To obtain the best possible ratios, supervisory functions urgently need to be delegated. The following example shows how this can be done in the case of Superintendents, but can be adapted for the benefit of local church pastors and all other staff with supervisory duties.

Delegation of supervisory tasks

5.5. Management practices in the office of the Superintendent

The church's constitution indicates in Articles 112–116 four basic functions for the office of the Superintendent:

- spiritual leadership
- pastoral care and counselling
- supervision
- representing the church to the outside world.

From the survey of the districts it has been learned that the following functions must be more clearly brought out:

- responsibility for the unity of the church in the region;
- promoting cooperation between church and society;
- responsibility for a competent presentation of the church to the general public;
- involvement in work of the Regional Church.

These duties and functions must of necessity be kept together in the office of one person. But this office must be structured and built up through delegation of tasks, training for the officeholder, and prioritising of the tasks to be undertaken, as follows:

- Delegation of personnel supervisory functions (meetings with individual employees, pastoral care and advice), primarily to the Vice-Moderator of the synod executive committee and his/her deputies, as well as to the synod Recording Secretary and his/her deputies, and to the synod executive committee members who are elected by the synod. Thus a maximum of six further persons would be available to take over tasks from this one office. In addition, other tasks could be assigned to the other members of the synod executive committee, the administrative director and other leaders in the district.

– Assignment of three to six deputies of the Superintendent to the synod executive committee (Vice-Moderator and deputies, Recording Secretary and deputies), to assure an overview and coordination at district level

– Formation of regional networks of 10–15 pastors, to be cared for by the Superintendent or his/her deputy according to modern personnel practices.

- A clear and binding distribution and delegation of tasks in the office of Superintendent calls for priorities to be set first: What is of prime importance – and which activities can be dispensed with altogether?

These questions must be answered by a presbytery or synod executive committee as the governing body.

- Of urgent necessity for those who take over duties connected with the Superintendent's office, if they are to perform them according to the principles of modern management, is obligatory training. It is proposed that the Evangelical Church of Westphalia introduce an educational period for those elected to the office of Superintendent, between their election and their installation in office. The obligation to continue one's education should continue throughout one's term in office, and should also apply to persons to whom tasks in the Superintendent's office are delegated.

- The church's constitution requires as prerequisite for the office of Superintendent, in Article 108, paragraph 2, five years' service as an elected pastor in a congregation. Consideration should be given to allowing this to be replaced, in part or in full, with other practical experience, and/or to introducing additional prerequisites.

Obligatory qualification through training

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6.1. The administrative task

In 1968 a Commission on Administration was appointed by the Evangelical Church of Westphalia to make recommendations for the way administration should be organised in local churches and districts. The proposals made then have remained relevant in many areas.

However, administration today also poses new challenges, in view of increasingly complex and difficult conditions in the society. Church bodies as well as others are caught up in the legal, economic, social and organisational situation and must take it into account. Doing so, and the changes that this makes necessary, are a focus of administrative work.

Governing bodies can delegate tasks to the administration

In this way administration does its part in carrying out the mission of the church, especially in carrying out the decisions of governing bodies. It works according to their instructions, but independently and on its own responsibility. As the governing bodies work to fulfil the mission of the church, they can delegate specific tasks to the administration.

6.2. Decisive points for an administrative needs profile

Every administration is expected to work correctly, quickly and economically, that is, with the least possible use of effort and resources. Its structure should be as simple and easily manageable as possible. These goals call for a trim administrative organisation with clear regulations regarding lines of responsibility, decision-making powers and work procedures, as well as the following:

- thorough professional training and qualifications for staff

The issue of training and further education for staff of church administrative offices must receive particular attention, so that productivity may be raised to and maintained at the highest level possible. Staff with executive responsibility for administrative work should in future be expected to pass the second-level examination in administration.

- the use of EDP (electronic data processing) as well as information and communications technology

Economical administration requires that the different areas of work be appropriately equipped with EDP and information technology. The various organisational units, including local church offices, should also be linked as completely as possible in a network. It would be desirable for an overall EDP and information technology concept to be developed at regional level for the entire church.

- present-day administrative rules

The rules for administration presently in force in the church should be made even more simple, for example by delegating supervision back to the Superintendent's office, on the principle of "as little supervision as possible, and as much supervision as needed".

- safeguarding quality

Every administration must regularly check on the standards of quality which it has developed for its work, to ensure that they are being met and preserved, and must make any adaptations necessary.

6.3. Organisation of administration in the church

6.3.1. Local church office/contact office

In the past it has proven useful for administrative tasks which need to be done as locally as possible to be performed in a pastor's office or local/contact office in the locality. This rule will continue to be indispensable for the future. It should free pastors from the "technical" aspects of their office, leaving them as free as possible for their own pastoral work. The work of a local or contact office includes, for example:

- correspondence, other written work
- managing a small local cash desk
- organising and managing collections
- registering official acts (marriages, etc.)
- making appointments
- book-keeping for the congregation, etc. ...

In principle there is no intention of being able to keep such an office in every parish. The local or contact office can be organised in different ways according to local conditions. For example there could be one local office to serve as a contact point for the people in one part of a city (municipal district). Local conditions in rural minority areas will certainly call for other forms of organisation.

6.3.2. Centralised administrative services office

The church constitution provides in Article 104, paragraph 2 for each church district to have a central administrative office. Most districts up to now have had their own church district offices, which do concept-related and planning-related work and also the ongoing business on behalf of congregations

which is not handled in local church offices. These business tasks include, for example:

- budget, financial and economic planning for local churches and the district
- personnel matters relating to civil service and labour laws
- administration of buildings and property
- registration procedures, EDP and information and communications technology

Experience shows that these administrative tasks can definitely be dealt with more efficiently beyond the church district level. If EDP and communications technology are sensibly put to use, geographical distances are no longer significant in handling non-local administrative tasks, as they used to be years ago. Establishment of administrative offices above the district level, covering the whole programme planning region, makes sense and should be pursued.

The establishment of such offices could be covered by an agreement under church law, or an inter-district association could be formed under association law.

In connection with setting up centralised administrative services offices at the level of the programme planning region, the assignment of work to the local church offices should be re-examined, according to local circumstances.

6.4. Prospects

The administrative models which have been described, and the requirements for setting them up, have only been conceived in principle. The development of a detailed concept for setting up a centralised administrative services office at the level of the programme planning region must take place when this idea is implemented. Such a detailed concept must include, among other things:

Local office as point of contact

Centralised administrative offices

- organisation of the inner structure and procedures for the local church offices and the central administrative office which serves them, as well as their internal and external interfaces
- description of the competencies of each unit and office (organisation of direction and management)
- personnel planning
- communications and information structures, including use of EDP and information technology
- instruments for the new steering procedures (auditing, calculation of costs and productivity, etc.)

7

7. Clear structures and networking

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7.1. Why change anything?

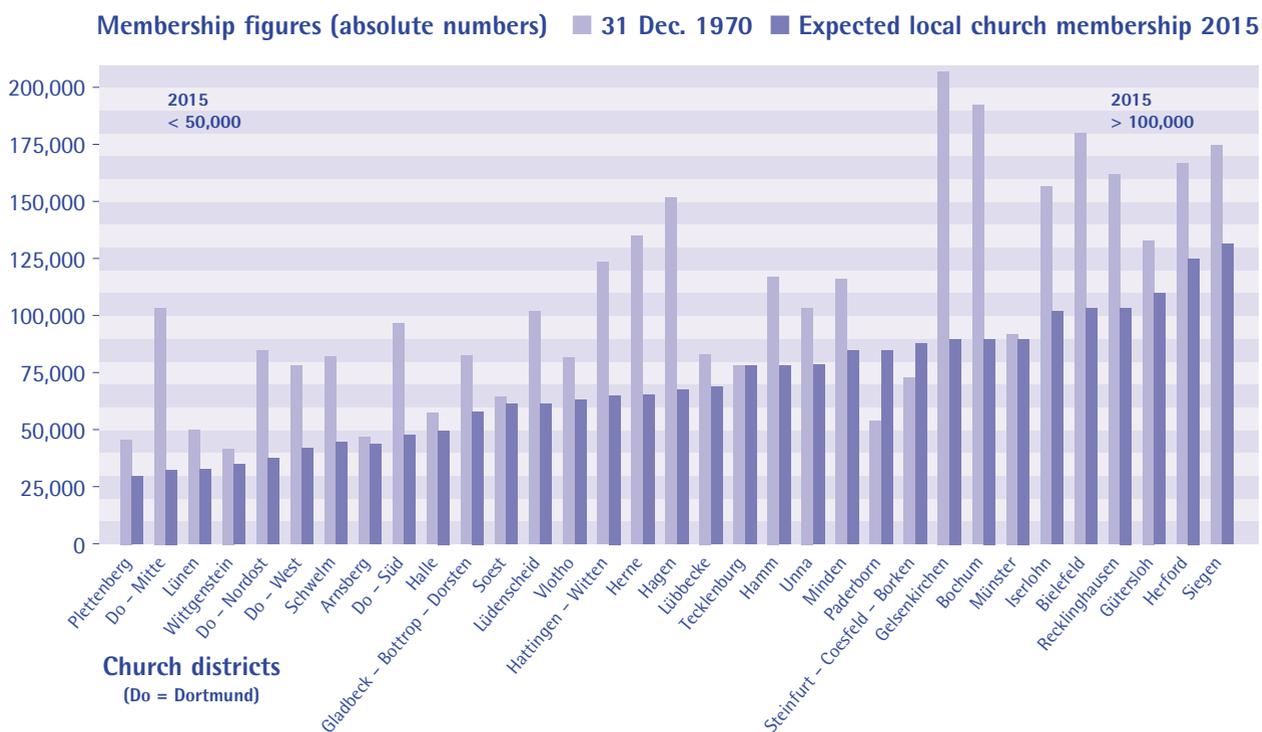
In the previous sections, the fundamental idea developed was that of a member-oriented church.

At all levels, members should be offered a basic programme and a diverse programme. This cannot be accomplished by small units and “lone hunters”. Ways must be found for local churches and districts to be linked together and to cooperate.

Making the work present in each place is only possible when neighbouring local churches and districts join themselves together, step by step. The result, of course,

will be larger units, but only in larger units can we have a staff with differing talents and qualifications, who can offer a varied programme and thus more possibilities for reaching all members.

The analysis of our current situation (Chapter 2) showed that most local churches and districts, because of expected membership losses, are clearly expected to decrease in size. The accompanying financial developments will reduce the resources available for their budgets. A few districts have already reacted by merging with others.



Any structural change must, of course, take into account the particular conditions and the traditions which have grown up in a locality. However, if the object is to reach people, future viability must be considered above all. This proposal is intended to encourage us to find new forms of cooperation and begin new traditions as we pursue the needed changes.

In the spring of 1999, the Church Board established the following guidelines for structural reform in the Church of Westphalia:

- An important criterium for church structure and organisation at the middle level is the principle that church boundaries should correspond to those of the locality.
- As long as regional cooperation is not harmed, creation of a fourth level in constitutional terms is not foreseen. Any additional level raises the danger of overlapping and redundant areas of responsibility. Instead, existing association structures should be considered.
- The current form in which the presbyterial-synodal order is organised in our church should be re-examined.

These guidelines were confirmed and amplified by the Regional Synod in November 1999 as follows:

- Programme planning regions should become recognisable as fields of action which can survive and be viable in the future (i. e. in 2015 and after, in view of the membership levels at that time).
- Various types of church bodies should be possible to have within the planning regions.
- Having structures that correspond to cities, municipal districts and local communities,

and being part of the society along with them, is an important feature in planning.

The changes which will be necessary affect all levels of the church. In the following paragraphs the different levels and their work together will be taken up systematically. These are the local churches, shared ministries, church districts, programme planning regions, and the Regional Church.

The changes must be directed towards common goals.

7.2. Goals in creating structures for member-oriented church work

To make member-oriented church work possible by means of structures, the following goals may be formulated:

- Availability of full-time staff, and the possibility of stand-ins during holidays and illness, must be guaranteed.
- As a rule, pastors at local church level should form networks of several together, so that there are least two pastors per local church. In minority areas, special solutions will be needed.
- At the level of shared ministries, services should seek to cooperate by forming pools, or networks among church districts.
- To increase availability further, local church offices should have longer opening hours, to serve as contact points.
- Professional networks and distribution of tasks according to talents must be enabled.
- No one should serve in a ministry alone, since not all conceivable tasks can be covered by one person.
- This means at least two pastors per local

Needed changes will affect all levels of the church

Availability and networking

church, and professional networks covering shared ministries in a programme planning region.

- Pastors must have time for their pastoral work, and therefore should be relieved of administrative and janitorial tasks.

■ Local churches and church districts must become more outward-looking and improve their public presence.

- If a local church serves the entire municipality or city district where the members live, they will be more likely to see it as belonging to their world, and public awareness of it will be increased.

- A local church office serves as a contact point and should establish a relationship to the municipality, in order to increase awareness of its presence. All church members in the area should be able to obtain meaningful information, support and help here.

■ Awareness of a varied programme must be made possible, by developing the images of different locations within a local community or a church district.

- In order to make a varied programme possible, there must as a rule be fewer locations than pastors.

- Each location need not offer a complete "basic programme", in view of the mobility of many members within a community or city district.

- Rural churches must be able to organise and present themselves differently from those in the city. The same goes for minority and majority situations.

■ Local churches and church districts must work towards assuming the size at which they will be viable and sustainable in the future.

- They must have a sufficient financial basis to continue to invest in the future, and to ensure that they can continue their activities despite shrinking income from church taxes.

- Local churches and church districts must have enough members to ensure that governing bodies and committees will have the professional competence needed.

7.

7.3. Models for local churches

Local church in a city district

More specialisation in the city district to include in networks

- at least four pastors
- at least 10,000 local church members
- markedly fewer preaching points than pastors
- an office as contact point
- local and/or shared ministries (such as youth work)

Church in a municipality

Church is identified with the locality in which the members live

- at least three pastors
- at least 7,500 local church members
- fewer preaching points than pastors
- an office as contact point
- shared ministries (such as youth work)

Four types of models for local churches which seek to put the stated goals into practice

Church in a rural area

Closeness to a village, personal availability

- at least two pastors
- at least 4,000 local church members
- 2–4 preaching points
- an office in the village as contact point
- arrangements for mutual standing-in within the region or an association

Church in a rural minority situation

Closeness to a village, coverage of a limited area

- at least one pastor
- at least 1,500 local church members
- 1–5 preaching points
- an office in the village as contact point
- arrangements for mutual standing-in within the region or an association

Following are descriptions of two examples showing how these models might work. They are intended more as suggestions and explanations than as conclusive and restrictive definitions.

Member-oriented model local church in the city or a larger municipality

A local church which is identified with a city district or municipality is seen by the public as belonging to the community in which they live. Since people do not have far to travel to most locations, the church can concentrate on just a few. Availability is assured by a centrally located church office (contact point) which is open all day. Here members can obtain information, make appointments and get in contact with the church pastors.

Volunteers can find here materials, a photocopier and other things they need for their work.

A varied programme is assured by clearly associating events with places. In the older church building, traditional worship is held on Sunday morning with organ music and a familiar liturgy. In the worship space at the church community centre not far away, there is a gospel service on Sunday evening with a band and guest preachers. The church's educational programme is open to the whole congregation, which can choose between weekly and project-oriented formats.

A varied programme

Visits and pastoral care are organised within each neighbourhood parish. For rites such as baptism members can choose, in prin-

Visits and pastoral care

ple, which pastor they would like to officiate. The size of the church community makes it possible to finance nursery schools, youth work, church music by professional musicians and other opportunities.

Cooperation with other local churches

Cooperation between local churches makes sense, so that the already varied local programme can be made more diverse and attractive, while still within reach of those interested. One could think of a region encompassing two to four local churches. Pastors, full-time staff and volunteers would form one combined staff serving this region, working together on each of the different tasks of the varied programme.

Combined staff

This combined staff would also include volunteers who are qualified and responsible, for the region, for specific areas of the joint programme. The combined staff as a whole is responsible for the work as a whole, and for standing in for one another as needed. The presbyteries of the participating churches, too, each must have its share of the responsibility. This could be done by having each presbytery be responsible for a certain programme area, but on the steering committee for that area there would also be representatives of the other presbyteries (task-oriented model).

Member-oriented model church in a rural area and/or minority situation

The local church serves an area including one or more villages. In this way the public sees the church as identified with its living space. This suggests a localised programme structure with one location in each village. Availability is ensured through a church office (contact point), centrally located and open at least half-days. Here members can obtain information, make appointments and get in contact with the church pastors. Volunteers can find here materials, a photocopier and other things they need for their

work. Contacts are also possible by telephone, fax and Internet, and there must be a set schedule of pastors' office hours.

Of first importance is the basic programme offered locally. It must take into consideration the particular local situation. A new housing area with young families will call for a different programme from that needed in a village where people have lived for generations. Pastors take turns preaching, and exchange with other congregations, to provide theological and human diversity. A varied programme can be held with different events associated with different locations, and contacts should be sought with other local churches. Local churches can join together in offering certain events for their combined area. According to the number of youth, the educational programme can be offered locally or regionally.

Each village is considered a parish, if large enough, otherwise two or more villages can be combined into a parish, for purposes of visitation, pastoral care and other aspects of the basic church programme. For rites such as baptism, the local pastor normally officiates. The size of the congregation suggests that other programme items such as youth work, nursery schools or church music by professionals be financed in cooperation with neighbouring local churches.

Cooperation between local churches is needed so that additional possibilities and an attractive church programme can be available within reach of all those who are interested. Four to six churches could form such a region. Pastors, full-time staff and volunteers would form one combined staff as described above, working together on the different tasks of the varied programme.

7.

7.4. Model approaches to Shared Ministries

What do Shared Ministries stand for?

Shared Ministries reach people who do not feel that the local church programmes are relevant for them.

Shared Ministries stand for:

- Providing social services for marginalised and problem groups and their advocates.
- The church's openness towards an increasingly differentiated society.
- A programme in addition to those of the local churches.

Shared Ministries are organised:

- by local churches in cooperation (for example, youth work)
- by a church district (for example, a hospital chaplaincy)
- by two or more church districts in cooperation (for example, industrial missions and social work)
- by the Regional Church (for example, the Institute for Church and Society).

How can the work of Shared Ministries be improved structurally?

■ By redefining its programme: It must offer member-oriented ministries which extend from the "occasional church", through being present in particular life situations and stages, emphasis on certain subjects or on certain viewpoints, all the way to dependable, continuous support and guidance for people's lives.

■ By structuring it to be member-oriented: To be member-oriented, to win new members, structures must be created which make face-to-face conversations possible, so that lasting contacts and relationships can be formed and cultivated; the church must come within the reach of people.

To put its programme within people's reach, and to work professionally, Shared Ministries must pool its efforts, whether at church district level or among districts. Those working together in a pool should create joint programme offerings, joint publicity for them, and present a common image that is well-recognised.

■ By developing its image: Here the clear discrepancy between the inside and the outside view must be acknowledged. This is not only a question of optimising public relations work, but also a question of image. The Church of Westphalia cannot afford to keep relying on a complicated jungle of barely comprehensible structures, lines of responsibility, legal relationships and sponsorships. The range and diversity of its ministries present both a great opportunity and a great danger. As a rule, plurality ensures being able to meet many different interests and needs. The dangers lie in the loss of a unified image and a common message to the society.

■ By clarifying its possibilities for networking and cooperation: To ensure professionalism and to create synergies, it is important to consider which ministries it makes sense to combine. Ministries offered locally are just as important as those concentrated regionally. In a constantly changing society, the structures of Shared Ministries should be so designed that they will continue in the future to be flexible and open to questions and challenges from people.

Shared Ministries

Developing our image

Coordination and cooperation

What questions and ideas are relevant to future Shared Ministries work?

- How can the work of Shared Ministries be appropriately provided for in the church constitution?
- What basic Shared Ministries tasks must remain within a church district, a region or a programme planning region?
- What Shared Ministries are needed in addition to enhance the visibility of a particular church district?
- How can the increased need for Shared Ministries in large cities and urbanised areas be adequately met?
- Where should Shared Ministries be based in the structures: at the local (regionalised) level, at the district level, at the level of the programme planning region or that of the Regional Church?
- How can the ousting of one professional group by another be prevented?

What will be the consequences?

- A clear management structure is a prerequisite for quality-oriented and well-coordinated work. Models must be developed in which Shared Ministries are clearly integrated into the present management structures.
- In view of developments in the society, services provided by local churches should only be given priority over shared ministries, structurally and with regard to their percentage share, according to a balanced relationship which is standard for the entire church. This can be measured in terms of the relative shares of church tax funds distributed. The relationship between local church

pastorates and those in specialised ministries must be clarified for this purpose.

7.5. Models for church districts

The church district, as defined in the constitution, serves to link together the local churches in a region. If the local churches of a district want to improve their work together, it makes sense for smaller groups of congregations within the district to develop cooperation.

Important tasks for church districts during the reform phase include:

- to support their local churches during the process of change,
- to help local churches improve cooperation among themselves,
- to provide training for management personnel of the local churches,
- to support shared ministries.

It is proposed that every district draw up a schedule for the process of increasing cooperation among its local churches. Executive committees of district synods are asked to moderate this process.

With regard to the number, size and structure of church districts, a number of indications emerged from the survey:

How the management of a district is related to its size

Present sizes of church districts range from 37,000 to 148,000 total membership in local churches. For Superintendents, this means a ratio of about 1:30 up to 1:100 full-time staff, including pastors.

Cooperation and mergers among districts

The readiness of church districts to enter into cooperation and mergers has increased in recent years. Through the development of information and communications technologies, which can make a merger easier, the technical problems involved can certainly be overcome. For other reasons, however, mergers are often seen as problematical. Everywhere where mergers are being considered, each was preceded by a long period of “increased cooperation”.

Current difficulties in the overall management of districts

At present the overall management of a district is carried out almost exclusively through financial allocations. Wherever flat rates per local church member are provided for in the financial system, these are usually not connected with programme criteria.

When flat rates per pastor are a criterion of distribution of church tax funds, they tend to conserve structures.

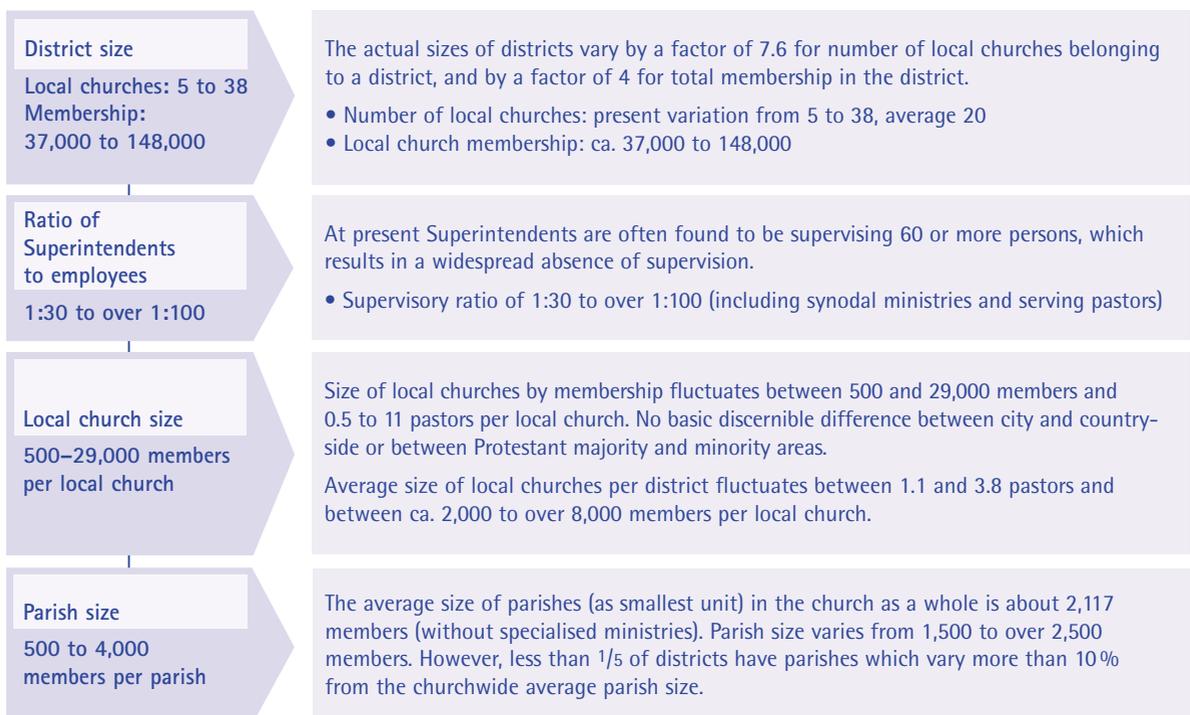
The basic data obtained through the survey are summarised in the table at the bottom of this page.

How can cooperation be improved structurally in districts?

To set new parameters for the optimal size and borders for church districts, thus for the further development of those which exist, the following aspects must be taken into consideration:

- The size of a district with regard to its representation and illustration of the church’s unity in a region
- Supervisory ratio for the office of the Superintendent to employees

ACTUAL calculated sizes of districts and local churches



■ The number and average size of the local churches belonging to it.

For example, a reasonable size for a district could be arrived at through the following calculations:

Delegation of management tasks

■ assignment of 3–6 deputy superintendents to the district synod executive committee (Vice-Moderator and his/her deputy, Recording Secretary and his/her deputy), to assure oversight and coordination at district level (internal delegation of management tasks);

■ linking together of 10–15 pastoral positions in a region under the Superintendent or a deputy, to be supervised according to modern personnel management practice.

■ On this basis, a church district of 120,000 to 150,000 local church members, organised into regions, can be effectively and optimally managed and directed from a spiritual, administrative and church policy perspective. For the church as a whole, this would mean that by the year 2015 we might envision some 15–20 church districts.

The following chart shows the way implementation of these calculated sizes might work.

PROPOSED calculated sizes for districts and local churches



7.6. Model for setting up programme planning regions

A programme planning region is not a constitutional level of church structure, but rather creates neighbourhoods and helps to link together the church districts in a region. In much the same way as local churches should cooperate, it is proposed that districts form programme planning regions with one another. The districts participating decide among themselves on the extent and depth of their cooperation.

It is proposed that beforehand the existing district boundaries be made to conform essentially with municipal boundaries. According to the constitution, the Regional Synod has the power to make such decisions.

Thus the following proposals should be considered from two viewpoints:

- Will the proposed boundary changes be accepted?
- Will the proposed forms of cooperation among districts be accepted?

It must be kept in mind that the solution to the boundary problem cannot be approached solely from the viewpoint of one local church or districts, or of only a few of them. Every change has in some way far-reaching consequences for the overall structural concept.

What criteria must be considered in setting up programme planning regions?

- Already existing contacts and cooperation among church districts
- Making programme planning regions correspond to municipal districts or cities
- Making each programme planning region easily distinguishable from its neighbours
- Approximately comparable density of membership (i. e. rural/urban area, etc.) differentiating each programme planning region from its neighbours
- Similarity of local church structure (Protestant majority or minority, urban or rural area), and the present size of parishes.
- Similarity of projected membership levels (growing, stagnating or shrinking) within the programme planning region
- Efficiency of possibilities for organising shared work (synodal ministries, diaconal work, administration).

What model has the Church Board developed for programme planning regions?

Based on the above criteria and principles for programme planning regions, the Church Board at its meeting on 16 September 1999 designated eleven programme planning regions, which were given interim approval by the Regional Synod of 1999 (see table on next page).

Criteria

Programme planning areas bring neighbour districts together

Oriented to municipal boundaries

7. Clear structures and networking

Programme planning regions designated by the Church office

No.	Current church districts	Municipal districts, cities	Protestant inhabitants (districts, cities)	Protestant inhabitants total for region	Projected 2015 (new)
Col. 1	Col. 2	Col. 3	Col. 4	Col. 5	Col. 6
1	Steinfurt-Coesfeld-Borken, Tecklenburg, Münster, Gütersloh (WAF), Hamm (WAF)	Münster	59,253	296,887	292,537
		Warendorf	52,700		
		Steinfurt	108,227		
		Coesfeld	32,321		
		Borken	44,395		
2	Dortmund-West, -Nordost, -Mitte, -Süd	Dortmund	226,873	226,873	158,806
3	Iserlohn (MK), Lüdenschied, Plettenberg, Siegen (Olpe)	Märkischer Kreis	180,034	196,527	162,302
		Olpe	16,493		
4	Hattingen-Witten, Schwelm, Hagen, Iserlohn (Hohenlimburg)	Ennepe-Ruhr	166,916	252,314	189,008
		Hagen	85,398		
5	Hamm, Unna, Iserlohn (Schwerte), Lünen	Unna	174,974	240,062	195,932
		Hamm	65,088		
		Hochsauerlandkreis	48,382		
6	Soest, Arnsberg, Paderborn, Wittgenstein (HSK)	Soest	78,796	207,308	201,052
		Paderborn	47,388		
		Höxter + Lügde	32,792		
7	Gütersloh, Bielefeld, Halle	Bielefeld	164,371	284,780	246,949
		Gütersloh	120,409		
8	Herford, Minden, Lübbecke, Vlotho	Herford	170,888	384,292	341,544
		Minden-Lübbecke	213,404		
9	Bochum, Gelsenkirchen and Wattenscheid (BO), Herne	Bochum	148,723	213,858	158,112
		Herne	65,135		
10	Gladbeck-Bottrop-Dorsten, Gelsenkirchen and Wattenscheid (GE), Recklinghausen, Herne (Castrop-Rauxel)	Gelsenkirchen	104,016	335,282	255,772
		Bottrop	29,004		
		Recklinghausen	(RE) 129,422		
			(Castrop) 26,619		
			(Dorsten) 21,025		
	(Gladbeck) 25,196				
11	Siegen, Wittgenstein	Siegen-Wittgenstein	(Siegen) 141,493	176,278	157,785
			(Wittgenstein) 34,785		
11 programme planning regions		26 districts/cities		2,814,461	2,359,799

(Explanatory notes: Column 4: as of 31 December 1997, source: Church Registration, East Westphalian Data Centre for Church and Diaconia, exceptions: due to substantial changes in Dortmund, Paderborn and Höxter, more recent figures provided by the church districts themselves were used; Column 5 in each row is the sum of Column 4; Column 6: data based on the population projection 1996–2015/2040, basic variant of the State Data and Statistics Office of North Rhine–Westphalia. More recent data are not available, since from 1997 on the NRW population projection no longer distinguishes between German citizens and aliens. Projection of births/deaths and migration based on data from State of North Rhine–Westphalia. The balance of new members/resignations was calculated for each region using statistics from the Regional Church office.)

How can the further development of the church districts take place within the programme planning region?

Criteria for cooperation among districts within a programme planning region can be formulated as follows:

- Church districts which have independent status according to the constitution, and adjoining territories, are linked together
- for the purpose of coming closer together, through a process as yet undetermined,
- to develop ways of working together (i. e. task-sharing or association structures),
- to undertake together, in a cooperative and coordinated way, work which they had previously done separately (administration, Shared Ministries, social welfare),
- to use their capacities and competencies more effectively and efficiently than before,
- to balance their divergent interests,
- to bring out the things they have in common,
- conduct jointly their relations with others,
- and set in motion a process of active co-operation, possibly leading to a merger.

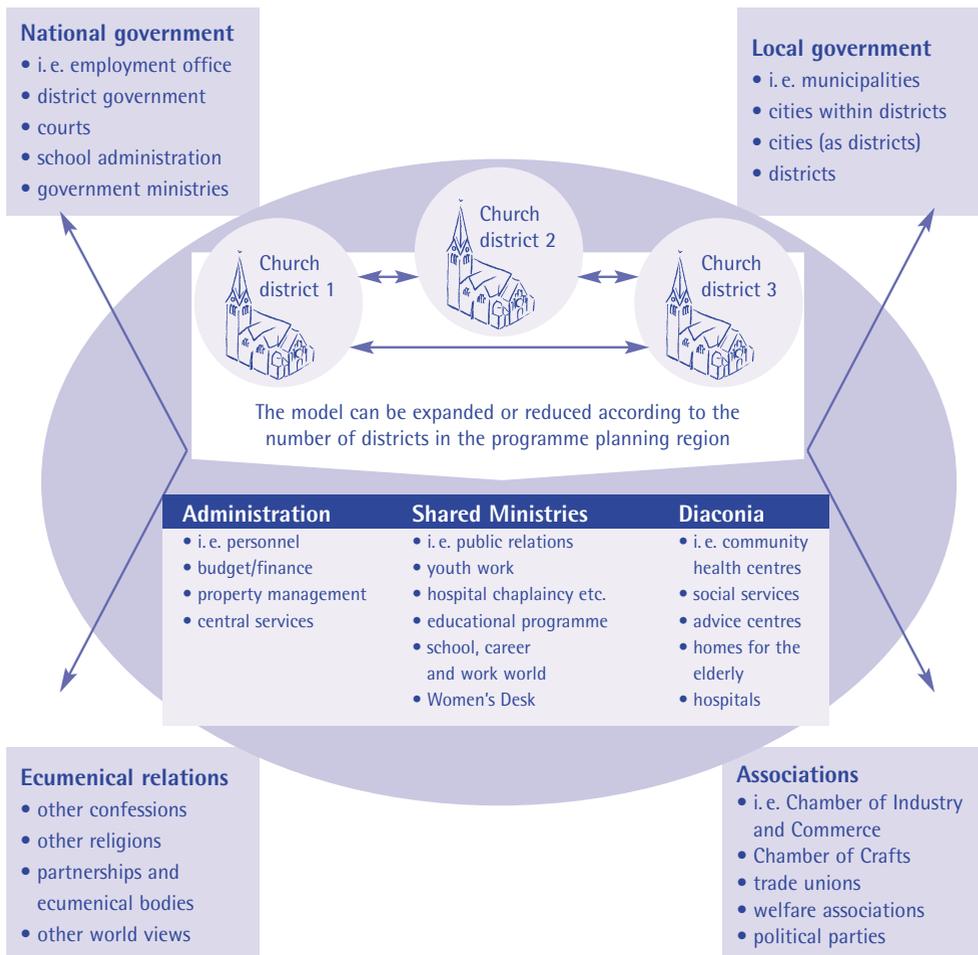
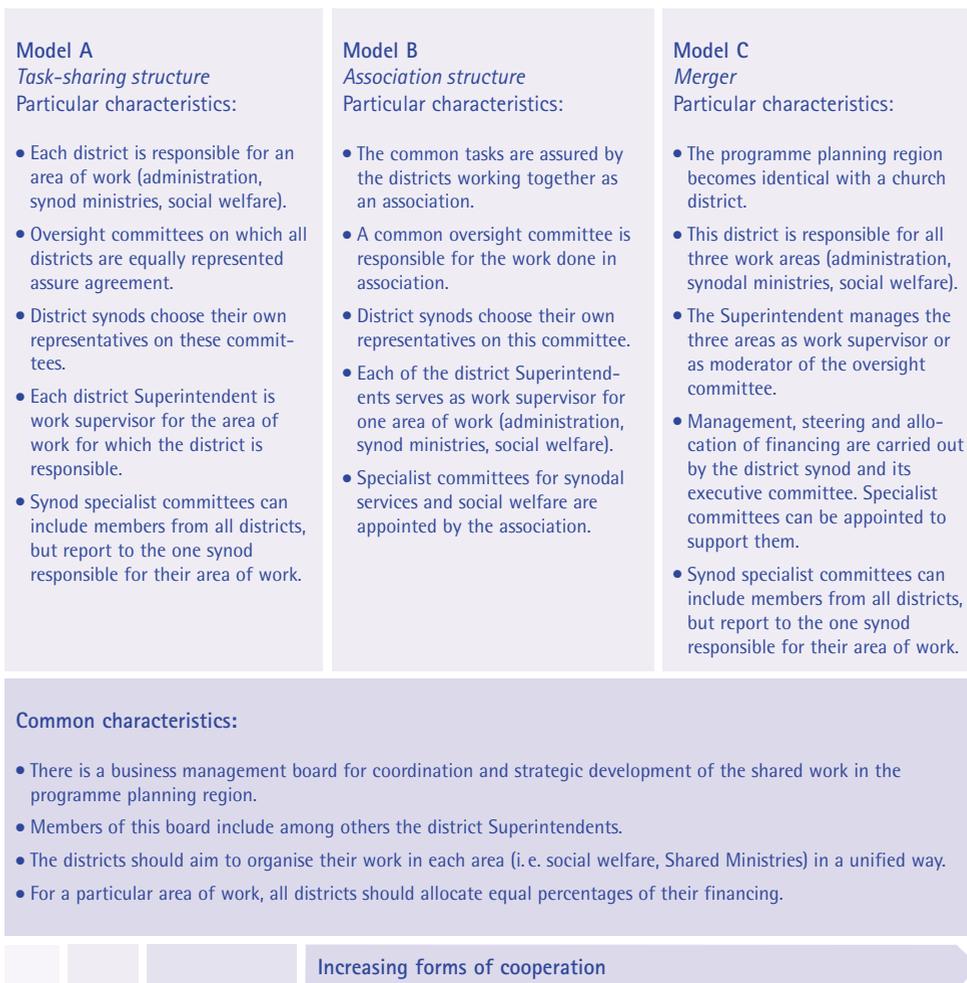


Diagram of model programme planning region



Within a programme planning region, three forms of working together can be described, in ascending order from coordination to cooperation to merger.

7.

- **From Model A -> to merger:**

Two districts: one undertakes the administration for both, the other the synod ministries; social welfare is operated jointly as a registered charity. After many years of working together, the two district synods decide on a merger.

- **From Model B -> to partial merger:**

Four districts, joined in an association for the areas of administration, synod ministries and social welfare. Two of the districts decide to merge, but the association is retained. Another merger within the association is not urgently necessary, but possible.

- **From limited cooperation -> to Model A/B:**

Three districts which have been working together in limited ways decide on joint social services work under a registered charity, a task-designated joint administration assumed by one of the districts, and shared synod ministries as associated districts.

- **From varied intensity of cooperation -> to partial merger and Model B:**

Three districts: two have been working closely together and have loose ties with the third. The first two decide to merge; the third enters into an association with the newly merged district in the areas of administration, synod ministries and social welfare.

Future development within programme planning regions will take place differently in different regions! These model examples for possible development show how steps toward cooperation make sense.

7.7. Areas for discussion

The request for responses which was sent to all districts made possible a first evaluation in the autumn of 1999. There was broad agreement with the proposed concept, but several general areas for discussion were indicated, i. e. questioning and rejection of particular reassignments (of individual parishes or local churches) and overall (of districts).

1. Joining together of two programme planning regions
2. Reassignment of entire districts to a programme planning region
3. Reassignment of individual local churches to a programme planning region

Joining of two programme planning regions

Who is affected?	What is proposed in the concept of the 11 programme planning regions?	What arguments speak for this concept?	What arguments speak against the concept as presented?	Consequence for the overall concept
Church districts Bochum, Herne Gelsenkirchen and Wattenscheid, Gladbeck-Bottrop-Dorsten, Recklinghausen	Grouping of the five church districts into two programme planning regions, with possible division of church district Gelsenkirchen (with Wattenscheid assigned to Bochum), and division of church district Herne (with Castrop assigned to Recklinghausen)	<p>Division into two programme planning regions has the advantage of creating two clear structures of comparable size within the Church of Westphalia. It is more plausible to combine Gelsenkirchen and Wattenscheid with Bochum/Herne, than with the district of Recklinghausen and Bottrop etc.</p> <p>There is no precedent for putting five church districts of this size together (United Church Districts of Dortmund have about half as many local church members)</p>	<p>Division of Herne district is problematic because it would be difficult to take into consideration this district's particular image.</p> <p>The Emscher-Lippe region characteristically holds together and has a sense of identity.</p> <p>In the area of industrial mission there is already intensive reflection on possibilities for cooperation.</p>	<p>If this change is made as proposed, then:</p> <p>the scale of structures within the Church of Westphalia will no longer be comparable, since by the year 2015 the new Emscher-Lippe programme planning region will probably be three or four times larger than other programme planning regions.</p>

Reassignment of entire church districts to a different programme planning region

Who is affected?	What does the concept propose?	What arguments speak for the concept?	What arguments speak against the concept?	Consequence for the overall concept
<p>Church district of Lünen</p> <p>United Church Districts of Dortmund (gaining)</p> <p>Programme planning region Hamm-Unna (giving up)</p>	Reassignment of the church district of Lünen, with 5 local churches, 16 pastors and ca. 42,000 local church members, to programme planning region municipal district of Unna – city of Hamm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structural similarity (density of members etc.) to Unna district, but not to the city of Dortmund • Location in municipal district of Unna 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This district belongs to the United Church Districts of Dortmund, as part of the programme planning region which has grown up around it • Lünen is clearly related to Dortmund (Chamber of Industry and Commerce, police, trade unions, employment office etc.) • transport connections • experience of municipal restructure 	<p>If this change is made as proposed, then:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the principle of correspondence between municipal and church boundaries is abandoned • Unna becomes too small as a programme planning region

Reassignment of entire church districts to a different programme planning region

Who is affected?	What does the concept propose?	What arguments speak for the concept as presented?	What arguments speak against the concept as presented?	Consequence for the overall concept
<p>Church district Paderborn</p> <p>Church district Bielefeld, Gütersloh, Halle (gaining)</p> <p>Church district Arnsberg, Soest (giving up)</p>	<p>Reassignment of church district Paderborn (which is identical with the municipal district of Paderborn and Höxter) to programme planning region Arnsberg-Soest</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structural similarity (density of members, minority area etc.) • No problem with transport services (fast train Paderborn-Soest 20 min.; Motorway A 44) • Programme planning region 7 is not limited to Bielefeld, and the logic of forming it by separation from Warendorf district does not fit Paderborn (separation of a minority from a majority area) • Assigning church district Paderborn to planning region 7 (Bielefeld/Gütersloh) would make the latter uncommonly large (320,000 local church members in 2015) • Soest and Arnsberg agree to this planning region. 	<p>Externally:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District government and schools are those of Detmold • press • radio and television • economic associations • political parties • transport services to Bielefeld • shared cultural programmes <p>Internally:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • shared history with Bielefeld • regular Superintendents' and administrators' conferences • cooperation on religious education in schools • shared financing of radio programmes • regional ministry for World Mission and Ecumenism • cooperation in youth work with Bielefeld and auditing of accounts with Gütersloh • No relationships have grown up with Soest or Arnsberg 	<p>If this change is made as proposed, then:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal church reasons (local church structure etc.) would have a lower priority than external reasons • Programme planning regions which are too large decrease the potential for future changes • Reassignment of church district Paderborn to planning region 7 endangers planning region 6 (Upper Sauerland municipal district /Soest), which becomes too small.

Reassignment of individual local churches to a different programme planning region

Who is affected?	What does the concept propose?	What arguments speak in favour of the concept?	What arguments speak against the concept?	Consequence for the overall concept
<p>Local churches of Schwerte, Ergste, part of Westhofen</p>	<p>That two local churches plus part of another, with 10 pastors and ca. 24,000 members, be changed to church district of Unna</p>	<p>The local churches are in the municipal districts of Unna or Hagen, their external communications are with Unna, Dortmund and Hagen. Their connections with Iserlohn exist only within the church. Schwerte and Ergste are basically open to the change. This also applies to social welfare work.</p>	<p>The Iserlohn church district and many local congregations are opposed. The affected congregations are still investigating the advantages and disadvantages. Oral (Schwerte) and written (Ergste) arguments include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The change does not address the crisis described • Structures for cooperation in diaconal and synod ministries must be set up, or are no longer viable • Westhofen-Garenfeld has the additional problem that Garenfeld is part of the city of Hagen. It fears that it will lose its local pastor. 	<p>If this change is made as proposed, then:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the principle of correspondence between municipal and church boundaries is abandoned • the programme planning region becomes quite small, especially if Lünen also stays in the Dortmund planning region.
<p>Local churches of Hohenlimburg, Eisey, Berchum, part of Westhofen</p>	<p>That three local churches and part of another, with 7 pastors and ca. 13,000 members, be changed to church district of Hagen</p>	<p>The local churches are located in the city of Hagen. This would definitely make it easier to conduct social welfare business.</p>	<p>The Iserlohn church district and many congregations, including those affected, are currently opposed. In addition to the above reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hohenlimburg does not have a clear preference for communication with Hagen. 	<p>If this change is made as proposed, then:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the principle of correspondence between municipal and church boundaries is abandoned

Reassignment of individual local churches to a different programme planning region

Who is affected?	What does the concept propose?	What arguments speak in favour of the concept?	What arguments speak against the concept?	Consequence for the overall concept
Local churches of Ahlen, Sendenhorst, part of Bockum-Hövel, in municipal districts of Warendorf and Coesfeld	That two local churches and one parish, with 7 pastors and ca. 18,000 members, be changed to church district of Münster or of Steinfurt-Coesfeld-Borken	The local churches are part of the municipal districts of Warendorf and Coesfeld (the local church of Sendenhorst belongs to three municipal districts). The local church of Hilbeck is located in the town of Werl (municipal district of Soest). They have different structures from the other church district, Hamm (extensive, minority area). They are largely oriented towards Münster (Hilbeck is oriented towards Werl).	The synod executive committee of Hamm church district agrees in principle, with the following reservations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ahlen is culturally part of the eastern Ruhr area advice is needed in Sendenhorst (the parish of Herbern in the local church of Bockum-Hövel is not mentioned in the exec. committee's response) 	<p>If the change is made as proposed, then:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the principle of correspondence between municipal and church boundaries is abandoned data concerning internal church structures are not taken into account
Local church of Hilbeck in municipal district of Soest	That one local church with one pastor and ca. 800 members be changed to church district of Soest	The local churches are part of the municipal district of Warendorf. They have different structures from the other church district, Gütersloh (extensive, minority area). They are largely oriented towards Münster.	The church district of Gütersloh is opposed; the congregations affected have not yet sent their own replies. Arguments include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A unit of 100,000–120,000 local church members should not be broken up The Warendorf congregations have no real connection or relationship with Münster The economising effect this would have in actual figures is not apparent Existing forms of cooperation should not be overlooked. 	<p>If the change is made as proposed, then:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the principle of correspondence between municipal and church boundaries is abandoned data concerning internal church structures are not taken into account
Local churches of Beckum, Neubeckum, Ennigerloh, Wadersloh-Liesborn, Oelde in municipal district of Warendorf II	That five local churches with 7 pastors and ca. 17,500 members be changed from church district of Gütersloh to that of Münster	Their present assignment to the church district of Gütersloh brings about a division into three totally differently structured areas (city of Bielefeld, munic. districts of Gütersloh and Warendorf). This separation would make merger with Halle church district easier.		
Who is affected?	What does the concept propose?	What arguments speak in favour of the concept?	What arguments speak against the concept?	Consequence for the overall concept
The local church of Olpe and parts of Krombach	That one local church and parts of another, with three pastors and ca. 7,500 members, be changed to church district Lüdenscheld-Plettenberg	Correspondence to municipal boundaries would be put right, as part of Olpe municipal district already belongs to the church district of Plettenberg. Siegen church district is Reformed, Olpe is Lutheran (like Plettenberg)	The local church of Olpe and Siegen church district are not in favour. Written arguments from Olpe and oral ones from Siegen include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The confessional difference is enriching theologically. The churches have had a common tradition since their founding. Removal of Olpe would be a definite financial loss for Siegen church district. 	<p>If the change is made as proposed, then:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the programme planning region Märkischer Kreis/ Olpe would be quite small. the principle of correspondence between municipal and church boundaries is abandoned internal church factors are not given consideration.
Local churches of Dorlar, Gleidorf, Winterberg, Girkhausen-Langewiese	That 3 local churches and part of another, with 4 pastors and ca. 6,000 members, be changed to the church district of Arnsberg. The local church of Girkhausen-Langewiese would be divided, and Langewiese would be changed to the church district of Arnsberg.	The other local churches of the Upper Sauerland municipal district belong to Arnsberg church district. The town of Winterberg has at present four different local churches, some of which already belong to Arnsberg church district. The Upper Sauerland churches are Lutheran, Wittgenstein church district is Reformed. The structural reform would bring together that which belongs together confessionally and municipally.	Wittgenstein church district, the affected congregations and individual organisations etc. are not in favour. Reasons include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Congregations fear possible further reductions in number of pastors Structures have grown up which work well Wittgenstein church district is already small (37,000). The loss of these congregations would mean the final loss of its independence. 	<p>If the change is made as proposed, then:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the principle of correspondence between municipal and church boundaries is abandoned internal church factors are not given consideration.

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7.8. At regional church level

The process of merging and reorganising the offices and institutions of the Church of Westphalia was completed by the end of 1998. In the process, the Regional Church implemented the networking of the various programme areas by content.

The guiding purpose of these measures is to bring staff and service institutions together in networks, professionally and personally, to make the programmes more member-oriented and of higher quality.

■ Thus, the Institute for Training and Further Education, the Teacher Training Institute and the Youth Work Office are now all located in Villigst House in Schwerte.

■ At Ortlohn House in Iserlohn, institutions connected with the church's social responsibility are gathered together in the Institute for Church and Society.

■ The Women's Desk, the Office for Mission, Ecumenical Affairs and the Church's World Responsibility, the Mission Services office and the Protestant Adult Education Agency of Westphalia and Lippe are located together in Dortmund in the Regional Church services building.

■ In addition the Regional Church office was restructured in 1999 after a process of consultation. The purpose was a clearer assignment of professional tasks to departments and the elimination of redundant structures.

An important task to be done at regional church level in future will be supporting the various processes of change at all levels and relating them to one another. The present restructure proposal is important in facilitating agreement on the goals of these processes of change.

Linking of and support for the processes of change

8. Experiences from the ongoing processes of change in the church districts

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8.1. Situational analysis and reports on practical experience

In the survey of church districts, 126 different ongoing processes of change were mentioned. These made it especially clear that a management crisis (due to lack of strategic planning in governing bodies) is being experienced at all levels.

The processes of change described overall showed a particular awareness of a financial crisis. Often it was the impetus leading to reflections on “membership trends” and “identity crisis”, as well as theological issues.

The processes of change mentioned at church district level varied a great deal in the goals defined and ways of proceeding. This is due to differences in the problems confronted (i. e. growth in the Münster area, dwindling membership in the Ruhr area, structural particularities like Protestant minority vs. majority areas).

The central problems mentioned at local church level are reductions in number of pastors and lowering expenses within the existing local churches. Mergers of local churches under consideration have been carried out only in isolated cases.

The large number of processes of change described reflects a basic openness of church districts and congregations towards future changes.

The survey also made clear the need for external and internal advice for congregations and church districts, and for help to be available in implementing plans (for example model schedules for mergers).

Structural reform has taken place at the regional church level, leading to the restructuring of the Regional Church office and the other offices and institutions. Various church districts have redoubled their efforts at cooperation; a few are working towards mergers. Local churches have merged, others are planning to do so, and still others are trying out various forms of cooperation. At the different levels there is a concentration on how best to carry out the work. A few changes came about because the number of pastors was reduced. A series of model discussions was held which increased awareness of the problem. Experience shows that change is worthwhile – for individuals and for congregations.

8.2. Recommendations

Processes of change take time. First, awareness of the problem must grow. If important developments and difficulties are recognised as early as possible, time can be gained for more possible ways of reacting and for the necessary consequences to be taken. Successful handling of processes of change calls for networking of competencies and perpetual learning.

■ We recommend that the Church of Westphalia set up an information exchange:

The survey of church districts brought out a great deal of information on experience with processes of change. To make this experience accessible, it was summarised under different groupings and written up in the form of specifications. In this way it should be possible to have at a glance the important types of experience and possible contact addresses. These sets of specifications cover 12 fields of action:

1	Merger of church districts
2	Model church district
3	Departments in a church district
4	Regionalisation in a church district
5	New activities in a church district
6	Model for nursery schools/day care

7	Merger of local churches
8	Organisational structures for a local church
9	Closing a church or congregational centre
10	Linking of local churches through pastor's office
11	Merging of administrations
12	EDP network of local church and district offices

These and other innovative ideas should be presented in future, in the sense of an information exchange for the entire Church of Westphalia, in the following ways:

- On the Church of Westphalia's Web site, a new "Innovative Ideas" page should be started and kept up to date. Besides an overview of the sets of specifications available and other ideas, it should offer the possibility of downloading brief explanatory texts and contact addresses.

- "Innovations markets" linked to this page should offer detailed presentations of individual processes for those interested, including discussions of consequences and problems.

- "Our Church" and "Info for Pastors" pages should present topics for discussion, with brief descriptions and contact addresses, in forum format.

Besides the stimuli from existing processes of change, innovative ideas should also be promoted through invitations from Regional Church institutions to submit projects (incl. funding and/or other support), as well as invitations and competitions organised by the Regional Church (especially in the area of public relations).

To promote networking of competencies and innovation at regional church level:

Information exchange

- A Project Handbook should describe, using examples from local church experience, the seven steps necessary in a process of change:

Project handbook

- Step 1: description of the problem
- Step 2: description of the goal
- Step 3: development of alternative possibilities for correcting the problem
- Step 4: evaluation and decision
- Step 5: carrying out the solution chosen
- Step 6: evaluation
- Step 7: checking the results

- We recommend that support be offered for processes of change:

- Professional reinforcement of Regional Church counselling work, offering to moderate or provide professional advice in support of processes of change at local church, district or programme planning region level.

Support for processes of change

To clarify the future role of District Officers in the Regional Church office:

- that District Officers promote and initiate processes of change
- that District Officers communicate to one another the decisions taken.

An organisation that learns

To determine the consequences of the processes of change:

The results of the restructure changes must be analysed and evaluated with reference to the goals set, to see whether the decisions taken led towards the goal, or had no effect.

- That a secure space be created for mergers of local churches and of church districts.
- That a model schedule be developed for local churches and church districts, showing the steps from working side by side through increasingly closer cooperation to merger.
- That the Regional Church establish a clear procedure to be used in merging church districts.

Setting out to be an “organisation that learns” by drawing up and implementing a personnel development concept, including staff with theology degrees, managers and other staff:

- Development of a concept
- Drawing up job descriptions that match the positions available
- Centralised steering of the training and further education offerings to make needed further education courses available soon
- Obligatory individual staff conferences with superiors
- Improvement of public relations work with regard to processes of change
- Development of a unified public image
- Preparation of a catalogue of programme offerings for use in local churches, with descriptions of target groups and examples of implementation.

9. Schedule and support for the reform process

9.	Schedule and support for the reform process	89
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We hope that when this proposal has been published, responses will be received indicating a broad discussion at all levels of our Regional Church.

At its meeting in November 2000, our Regional Synod will make a provisional appraisal.

30 April 2001 Presbyteries and synod bodies are requested to send responses to this proposal to the Regional Church office by 30 April 2001.

Based on these, the Structure and Planning Committee will develop guidelines which, together with suggested decisions, will be presented by the Church Board to the Regional Synod in November 2001.

This does not exclude the possibility for local churches and church districts to begin seeking contacts now, along the lines of the proposal, and preparing the way for cooperation or for a merger. Many steps have already been taken and procedures set in motion.

Regional Synod 2001 The process of change does not end after the Regional Synod meeting in the autumn of 2001, but rather enters the next phase. Final results should be obtained by the year 2005.

The advisory role of the District Officers in the Regional Church office should be undergirded by the appointment of moderators who are available to be consulted locally. Local churches and church districts should thus be able to call for practical help.

The Regional Church institutions will contribute their competencies and develop programmes which they can offer.

Enquiries with regard to the role of moderators, and regarding the advice and events to be offered, can be directed to the Project Office.

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10. The outlook

10. The outlook 91

Steps taken towards change and reform in our church have always been motivated and dictated by the need to restore our finances to a healthy state and to eliminate duplication of structures. But a real reform should not confine itself to assuring the church's continued financial survival, or to developing a more effective administration. The reform should broaden our scope for action, free up powers for planning programme content and strengthen the meaning of the church in public life. Reform should concentrate on the church's mission to bring the Gospel to human beings in the midst of their lives.

The church is not an end in itself, but rather is there for people. The church must therefore pay attention to the living conditions influencing the people who turn to the church with their expectations. It does not need to fulfil all expectations, but it must do justice to the people who call upon it, so that they will not turn away in disappointment.

This goes first of all for the church's own members. Our church has a lot of catching up to do in its awareness and appreciation of them.

The quality of church work is measured both from the internal church perspective and from the external perspective, in which people recognise and know what they can count on from their Protestant church. The church must come to meet them as an available and reliable partner.

We therefore need a process which leads to obligatory consultation as to which church programmes will be organised, where and by whom:

- within the local churches in their communities, and between local churches;
- at church district level, together with the functional ministries;
- between church districts in the programme planning regions, together with the Church of Westphalia's offices, agencies and institutions.

We need public relations work both within the church and outside it, which makes known the activities which have been agreed upon through this process.

We need stations along the way where we stop to re-examine together the structures and emphases of our work, and in some cases adapt them to new challenges.

Our church needs to convey an image of its programme which is both diverse and clearly recognisable.

All those who commit themselves to working in the church must conduct themselves responsibly towards one another and with our church's resources. Then involvement in the church will mean not only work, but also joy in what we do.

The process of change in the church cannot remain limited only to the Church of Westphalia. Much of its work, i. e. in the areas of personnel or public relations, could be more effectively and quickly taken care of in the community of the Evangelical Church in Germany. Inspiration from the world-wide ecumenical community, as well as suggestions from outside the church altogether, can contribute to strengthening and clarifying

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the process of reform. In developing particular fields of church work, it also makes sense to consult with other churches, so that here too we may combine resources and employ persons in responsible ways. But in ecumenical partnerships as well as in Protestant cooperation beyond our regional churches, narrow boundaries still exist. As we now take practical steps towards the reform of our church, we are not giving up such grand visions of change, but rather hoping that in small ways we are preparing the way for them.

We pray for God's guidance in the steps we are taking. We trust that we will find our bearings in Jesus Christ as we venture onto the new pathways which are being shown to us.

We believe in the church as the one, living Body of Christ, a body with many members. The reform of our church should have the aim that in its actions, in the public perception of its unity, the working together of its many ministries and its liveliness, our church may be strengthened in the presence of Christ's spirit.

11. Appendix

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List of names of those who helped to prepare this proposal	96

List of names of those who helped to prepare this proposal

- Structure and Planning Committee (SPA)
- Project Group I (PG I):
 - Local churches and church districts (basic models)
- Project Group II (PG II):
 - Processes of change in the Evangelical Church of Westphalia
- Project Group III (PG III):
 - Picture of the church
 - Picture of the pastor
 - Staff development
- Project Office (PB)
- BSL Management Consultants plc (BSL)

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Reform Proposal 2000
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of Westphalia